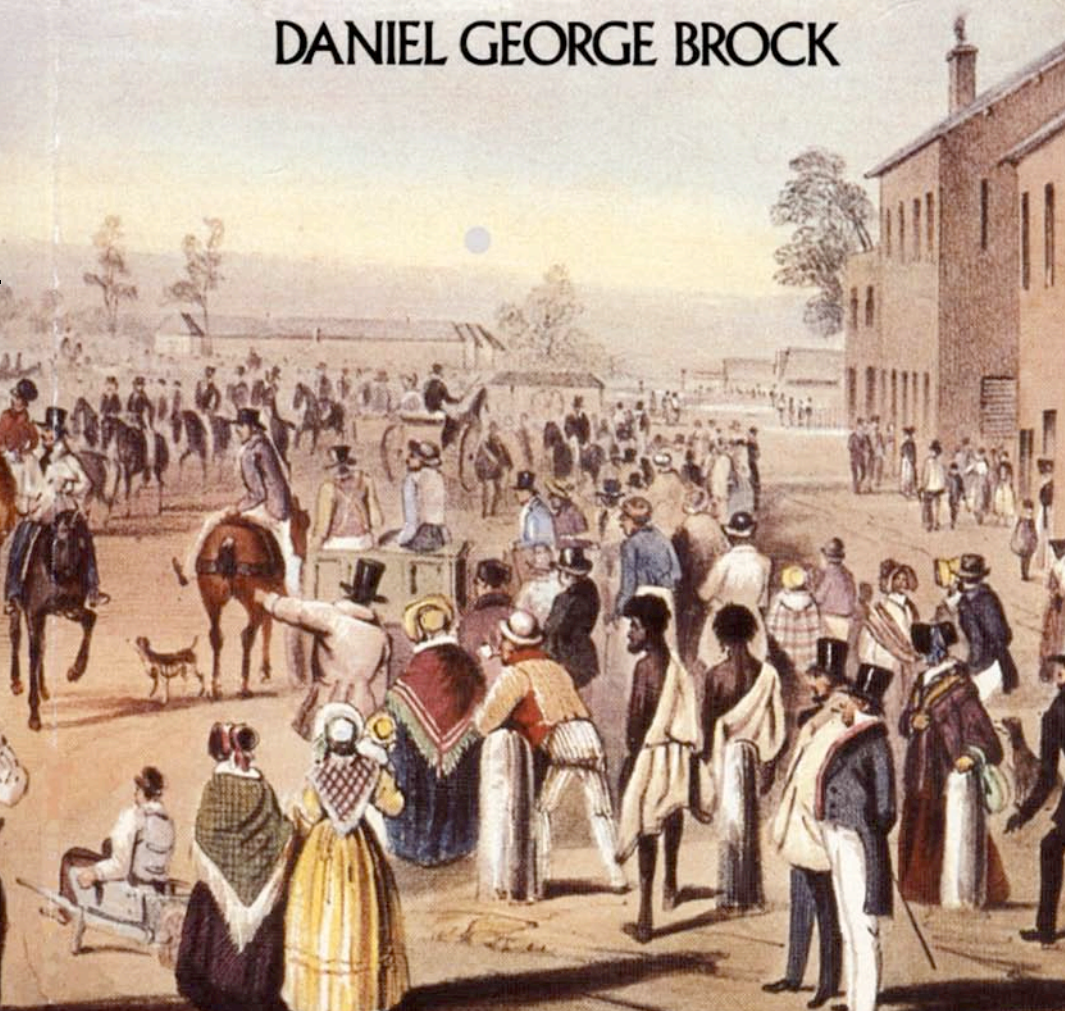
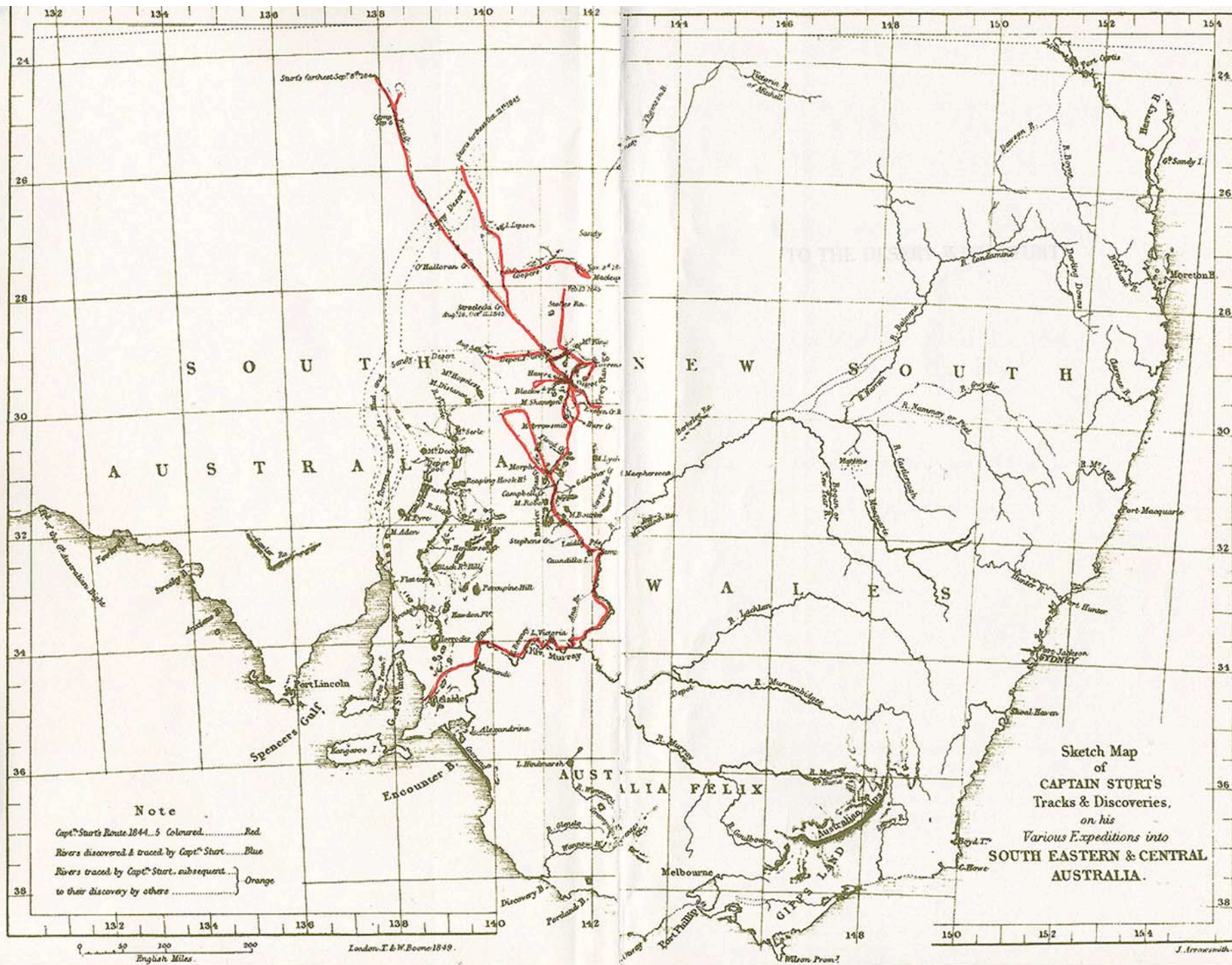


To the Desert with Sturt

DANIEL GEORGE BROCK





TO THE DESERT WITH STURT

A Diary of the 1844 Expedition

By

DANIEL GEORGE BROCK

Edited with a Preface and Introduction

by

KENNETH PEAKE-JONES

South Australian Government Printer
in association with the
Royal Geographical Society of Australasia
(South Australian Branch) Incorporated

Adelaide 1988

**Reproduced by permission of the Royal Geographical Society of
Australasia (South Australian Branch) Incorporated**

Cover print:

George French Angas

“The departure of Captn. Sturt”

First published 1975 by the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia,
South Australian Branch Incorporated

Reprinted in paperback with corrections 1988

South Australian Government Printer
282 Richmond Road
NETLEY SA 5037

Copyright - Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, South
Australian Branch Incorporated

All rights reserved
National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Brock, Daniel George, 1811-1867. To the
desert with Sturt.

ISBN 0 7243 6509 5.

1. Brock, Daniel George, 1811-1867 -Diaries.
2. Sturt, Charles, 1795-1869.
3. Australia-Discovery and exploration.
4. New South Wales-Discovery and exploration.
5. South Australia-Discovery and exploration.
- I. Peake-Jones, Kenneth. II. Title. 919X042

919.4'042

Printed and bound by the South Australian Government Printer

PREFACE

In 1938 the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, South Australian Branch, received the gift of a manuscript diary. The donor was Mrs. Hector Reid, of St. Lucia, British West Indies, a granddaughter of Daniel Brock, who had kept the diary while a member of Captain Charles Sturt's inland expedition in 1844-1846. Mrs. Reid wished the diary to return to South Australia, where Brock had spent most of his adult life, and to be preserved by a public body rather than remain the private possession of one of his descendants. The gift was acknowledged and the diary lodged on a shelf in the Society's library, but its importance does not seem to have been realized, and in course of time even its existence was apparently forgotten.

The diary came to light again in 1966, when the Society was co-operating with the Sturt Memorial Museum Trust in planning an exhibition to commemorate the centenary of Charles Sturt's death. In searching for material Mr. K. T. Borrow, a member of the Society's Council and also of the Trust, came across the diary and realized its historical importance. It was exhibited in the Sturt Exhibition as part of the Adelaide Festival of Arts, 1966, and the public was made aware of the nature of its contents by Mrs. Elizabeth Lawrenson, who wrote several newspaper articles and delivered a paper to the Society, *New Light on Captain Sturt's Northern Expedition*.

The publicity accorded to the diary elicited the fact that there was another one in existence, written by Brock in 1843, when he was a stock inspector for the South Australian Company. This diary, *Recollections of D.C.B. 1843*, was presented to the South Australian Archives by another Brock descendant, Mrs. Joan Salter of Balmoral, Victoria. Photostat copies were made for the State library, and the Society's library. Copies of the expedition diary were also made for the Archives, the State Library, and the Society's library, and one was presented to the Brock family in the person of the late Mr. Ken Brock of Beaumont, South Australia. The original was withdrawn from the Society's library and locked away on the advice of the State Librarian that any unnecessary handling, or even further use for photostating, was to be avoided.

The Society's council considered the publication of the expedition diary, wholly or in part. There were reasons for hesitation. Brock was highly critical of other members of the party, including Sturt himself, and the great explorer's centenary hardly seemed the ideal moment to publish such material. On the other hand, an expurgated edition would remove much of the point and force of the work without adding significantly to historical knowledge. The decisive factors were the sheer interest and literary merit of the work, which were enough to over-ride all but the strongest misgivings. It was therefore resolved that eventually the entire text should be published, but as the Society did not then have the resources to do this, all that could be done was to make a start on preparing the text and considering the most suitable form of presentation.

In the meantime, the photostat copies were made available to researchers. Not only Mrs. Lawrenson's work, already mentioned, but also references to and quotations from the diary in Michael Langley's definitive biography, *Sturt of the Murray* (Robert Hale, London, 1969), deal specifically with Brock's condemnations of Sturt, so that the matter has become common knowledge. Both Mrs. Lawrenson and Mr. Langley take the view (with which the present writer agrees) that Sturt's great reputation is not seriously assailed by such criticisms, and a fuller discussion of this will be found in the Introduction.

In presenting this work to the public, the Society desires to thank the following: as already mentioned, Mr. K. T. Borrow and Mrs. R. A. Guy (formerly Mrs. Elizabeth Lawrenson); the late Mr. R. M. Laffer and the late Mr. K. A. Brock, whose bequests made publication possible; several descendants of Daniel Brock, especially Mrs. Joan Salter and Mrs. Jocelyn Russell; Mr. H. C. Brideson, who as State Librarian gave valuable assistance and advice in the early stages; the late Mrs. Marjorie Findlay, who had the difficult task of typing the first draft; and Mrs. Jill Conlon, who typed the revised draft for the printers.

CONTENTS

PREFACE v

INTRODUCTION xi

THE PARTY xxii

Facsimile Pages from Sturt's Journal

FACSIMILE PAGES xxiv
Brock's Handwriting

CHAPTER 1

Page

1844: 10th JUNE to 12th SEPTEMBER

The Expedition—My dream—I leave my family—Progress to Morunde—
Sturt addresses the men—Our guides, Nitebook and Careena—Mr Eyre to
accompany us part of the way—On the Murray—1 begin work on the
birds—Chaining on Lake Bonney —Bad character of some of party—Underhand
dealing—The gun
taken away from me—Mr Eyre leaves us 1

CHAPTER 11

1844: 13th SEPTEMBER to 27th OCTOBER

Expedition poorly managed—Am given charge of sheep—Hatred of
Piesse—Wet weather—Tuando joins us—Encounters with natives—News of a
massacre—Accident to Flood—Rations reduced—We reach the Darling—I fall foul
of Poole—Large body of natives—Diffi cult travelling—False alarm of native
attack Message from the Governor—Camp near Laidley's Ponds—Brush with
Flood—More chaining 2

CHAPTER III

1844: 28th OCTOBER to 10th DECEMBER

We break camp-Heat and dust-Animals suffer—I feel poorly My relations with Piesse – Pleasant country — A waterhole Thunderstorm – Heavy rain – Native huts – Dense scrub – Driving the sheep – Sturt dissatisfied – Divine Consolation – Camp on Flood's Creek. 57

CHAPTER IV

1844: 11th DECEMBER, to 1845, 28th JANUARY

Encamped on Flood's Creek-Officers ride in search of water-Sudden storm-Natives-Bird hunt with Sullivan-Heat, Flies. Mosquitoes-Sturt pleased-Dray catches fire-Browne and Poole find water-We move camp-Poole leads us astray-The Pine forest-Moses rescues us-The Acacia plain-Flood finds water-Sturt suffering from blindness-My birthday-Loose dray wheels-Officers again search for water-I suffer from blindness-Cooler weather-Foulkes sick-Sturt returns-God's Grace-Find large body of water Depot formed. 83

CHAPTER V

1845: 29th JANUARY to 25th FEBRUARY

Encamped at the depot-Building an underground house – Joseph—Hunting birds with the doctor-Repairs, Handiwork-Dangerous position of party—Blasphemy — Bible reading – Scenery – Seed gathering – Sturt again returns

CHAPTER VI

1845: 28th FEBRUARY to 16th AUGUST

Encamped at the depot-Unjust treatment-Sturt spies on us-Rations again reduced-Short of water-A big snake-I rely on God's word-Rain-It does not last-I explore to the E with Sturt and doctor-Meeting with natives-Return to camp-Dysentery-Cooler weather—Poole ill—Piesse's meanness-My prayers - Poole helpless-To be sent home-Stuart in charge of camp -arrogance – Complaint to Sturt - Injustice-Marquee catches fire camp -arrogance -Complaint to Sturt--Injustice-Marquee catches fire--I send money home -Poole's escort leaves--We advance NNW--Poole's death--Return to depot-Piesse sent home-We start again-Chaining-Natives-horrible country-A malicious tongue thwarts my hopes--Sturt starts for centre--Stockade to be built-Stuart's arrogance again-Sturt's injustice.126

CONTENTS

x

CHAPTER VII

1845- 7th AUGUST to 8th OCTOBER

Encamped at Fort Grey – God's promises – Visits by natives – Rain – Self examination – Stockade finished – Stuart's oppression – Summer approaching – Anxiety for Sturt-Flood's perfidy revealed – Sturt returns – Sufferings of his party – He prepares to go out again – Browne refuses to return home.177

CHAPTER VIII

1845: 9th OCTOBER to 78th NOVEMBER

Encamped at Fort Grey-Sturt, Morgan and Stuart leave-Browne in charge of camp-Natives visit-All hands sick-Slight hopes for Sturt-Heat increases-Retreat to depot-Scurvy-Browne very sick-Sturt returns-His desperate condition-Preparations for home. 193

CHAPTER IX

1845: 79th NOVEMBER to 1846, 28th JANUARY

Encamped at the depot-Sturt determines to push for the Darling – commend myself to God-flood searching for water-I sew journal into jacket-Water bottle made from bullock skin-Sturt very ill--Our determination to save him-Browne finds water-We start – Thunderstorm – God's goodness – Natives – My brave dog – Piesse's party meets us – News of my son's death – Reach the Darling – More Injustice – Morunde – Home. 203

ENDPAPERS

Reproduced from Arrowsmith's map of Sturt's journeys

INTRODUCTION

Captain Charles Sturt set out from Adelaide, with fifteen companions In 1844, on his last journey of exploration, to find the inland sea which he believed must exist in the interior of Australia. Among his men was Daniel George Brock, a 33-year-old Englishman who had been born at Honiton in Devon on 1st January, 1811. His father had died when he was a baby, and his mother had married James Bridle. They had moved at an unknown date to Barnstaple.

On reaching manhood young Daniel had, it seems, sown a few wild oats and failed to settle down to any of the jobs which his stepfather found for him; hence his departure for South Australia in September 1837, in the *Royal Admiral*. How well equipped he was for life in a young colony, one can only guess. His upbringing in rural Devon and Cornwall can hardly have been a handicap; he was reasonably well educated, and he had manual skill and a knowledge of firearms, perhaps inherited or acquired from the Brock family, who were Dutch clockmakers and later, in England, celebrated manufacturers of fireworks. At any rate he soon "went bush", serving under Captain Pullen, an early explorer of the Murray Mouth. He kept a journal of this experience and sent it home to his mother, but its existence is known only from her letter of thanks.

On 24th January, 1842 he married Delia Mellor in Stow Church, Adelaide. Their first child, William, was born sixteen months later. In the latter part of 1843 Daniel took a job as a stock inspector, probably with the South Australian Company. His work took him on horseback northwards through the Barossa Valley and southwards through Strathalbyn to the Inman and Hindmarsh Valleys. He again wrote a journal and sent it to his mother in Barnstaple, together with "a lock of Hair from her Grandson's Poll-in South Australia-He has a Bony* head!"

This second diary, *Recollections of DGB 1843*, remained in the family until 1966, when Brock's great-granddaughter, Mrs. K. Salter, presented it to the South Australian Archives. More mundane and less copious than the 1844 diary, it none the less shows distinct individuality. The handwriting, style and content are those of an educated man, somewhat refined and sensitive; moody, introspective and quick to take offence. He is a keen observer, with an eye for landscape and considerable descriptive power. The diary has a confessional quality, foreshadowing the almost embarrassing outpourings of 1844-6.

The stock-inspector's job lasted only three months, and by June, 1844 the family fortunes were low. The baby William was seriously ill, and Daniel was out of work. "My way was hedged up", he says. Then came a miracle. He had a strange dream-encounter, repeated in reality in Hindley Street the next day, as a result of which he learned of Sturt's inland expedition and applied to join it. He was accepted, and as on the two previous occasions, resolved to record his experiences and send them to his mother.

*I take this to mean "Bonny"-Ed.

This third journal, entitled "Expedition June 1844", eventually returned to Adelaide as related in the Preface, and is here published for the first time. A pencilled note on the fly-leaf indicates that it reached Norwich (where Daniel's elder brother William lived) on 8th September, 1847.

Though Daniel Brock enlisted through economic necessity adequate, perhaps even impressive; he was selected out of 300 applicants. Sturt remarks that he was a gunsmith by trade; his fitness for the enterprise must have seemed to Sturt a qualification that was to prove useful to the party on many occasions. He was a skilled wood-carver and general handyman: he could make walking-sticks, gunstocks, ramrods, pipes and razor-handles. He was an experienced traveller, a good observer, handy with sheep, and fond of "the stirring bush life". Sturt engaged him as armourer and as collector, to shoot, stuff and preserve specimens of birds. In this, Brock had had no previous experience or training, and his early failures to please Sturt preyed upon his mind. Later, he did better; but this starting "on the wrong foot" may have sown some seeds of discontent. A greater cause of discontent was the composition of the party. Like all expeditions of that time, it consisted of a small group of officers, drawn from the gentry or accorded that status, known and addressed as "Mister"; and the rank and file, the hewers of wood and drawers of water, known and addressed by their surnames.

In camp, the officers had their own quarters, and ate separately from the men. Communication between the two groups seems to have been strictly formal and Sturt, Olympian in his private marquee, kept the men at arm's length.

It was Brock's misfortune that he belonged naturally to neither group, and his temperament allowed of no adaptation. He found the men with whom he was forced to associate an uncouth, blasphemous riff-raff, and they doubtless found him a superior, oversensitive prig. His touchiest point is religion, and here too, he is on his own, a misfit: equally out of tune with the blasphemous pagans and the conventional Anglicans-"I stand alone: the Methodist"¹. His opinion of the other men was not baseless, for Dr. Browne wrote in his unfinished journal that they were a "great set of ruffians ... There are some exceptions, but several are old convicts, worse principled men I never met."

Thus, side by side with Brock's delight in the country, the river, the aborigines, the "stirring bush life" that he loved, there appears a growing animosity, first towards his ribald companions, then towards the officers, and then towards each individual in turn, until there remain only two who escape his embittered pen: Harris Browne, the surgeon, to whom he refers invariably with admiration and respect, and old Foulkes, the bullock-driver, who seems to have been a steadier and more amenable character than the rest. Some of his charges can be dismissed as petty, and others may well be exaggerated for personal reasons. Piesse, for example, who comes in for the bitterest and most consistent abuse, had been Brock's rival for the hand of Delia, and Brock believed that Piesse was biased against him on that account.

¹ In later life, however, he was a Baptist

It is with his criticisms of Sturt, however, that we are chiefly concerned here. Factually, Brock's narrative does not differ in any important respect from Sturt's official account, so if he sheds any new light on the expedition, it must be light on the quality of Sturt as a leader, and on the personal relations between all members of the party. According to Brock, Sturt was unfair, had his favourites, listened to tale-bearing; condoned dishonesty in his subordinates; and worse still, was unfit, physically and mentally, to lead the expedition.

These charges can neither be accepted at their face value, nor dismissed as figments of the imagination. To reject them out of hand is no doubt a natural wish in persons who have long been familiar only with Sturt's version; for Sturt, in common with most great leaders, omits all reference to strife, dissension, or shortcomings on the part of his subordinates, and it is hardly to be expected that he would draw attention to weaknesses, if there were any, in himself. A leader has more important things to think about, and record in his journal, than complaints about rations or unfair distribution of work. An isolated, sensitive man like Brock, on the other hand, will record every incident, real or fancied, which adds fuel to his resentment, and perhaps all the more eagerly if what he is really doing is running for sympathy to his mother, for whom he is writing the account. Thus we have one-sided records of a number of incidents in which Brock thought Sturt was unfair or unreasonable, and we can never hear Sturt's side of the story.

The more serious charge, that Sturt was unfit to lead, can be examined more objectively. Sturt was 49, and his health had suffered through the hardships and privations of his earlier journeys. After his return from the boat voyage down the Murray, he had been totally blind for four months, and his sight had never been completely restored. Brock refers on several occasions to Sturt's poor eyesight, not indeed without sympathy, but mainly to complain that his leader could not read a sextant properly. In the closing stages of the expedition Sturt's body, because of the relentless manner in which he drove it in repeated attempts to penetrate the desert, collapsed and his life was in jeopardy. It was at this point that Brock recorded one of his rare impulses of generosity, when he joined in the party's general resolve to carry their leader, if necessary, to the last step, and die before they would consider abandoning him.

But generosity is not Brock's strong point. He shows no understanding of the responsibilities of command, of the isolation of leadership, but sees every action of his superiors chiefly as it affects him personally; a common enough human failing, especially among members of the "lower deck", and an almost inevitable one in a personality so introverted, guilt- and persecution-ridden as Brock's.

On one plane of criticism, Brock's attitude to his companions, and especially to Sturt, is despicable; but if he was lacking in charity, those who judge him need not fall into the same error. In almost any group of men thrown together for many months in conditions of hardship, toil and danger, there will be some whose temperament will fail to stand the strain. And the strains to which this party was subjected were as severe as almost any in the history of exploration. Take, first, the heat. Recent physiological research has shown that an ambient temperature rising above 32° (90°F.) causes a rapid deterioration in mental acuity, causing errors in simple calculations and mechanical tasks. It goes without saying that such temperatures have equally serious effects on one's attitude to others. And these men were subjected, day after day, to temperatures far higher than 32° frequently in the region of 49° (120°F.), and high enough on one occasion to burst the thermometer. The wheels of the drays were *constantly shrinking* so that the iron tires fell off; screws fell out of boxes, horn instrument handles split into fine pieces, the ink dried on their pens as they wrote, lead dropped out of pencils, candles had to be buried. Then, too, they were tormented by flies and mosquitoes, sickened by bad water and food, constantly threatened with scurvy and eventually all attacked by it. Worst of all, perhaps, was the knowledge throughout their five months at Depot Creek that they were marooned, with waterless desert both in front and behind. For Brock, at least, there was added anxiety for his family; his son William did in fact die while he was away. In Sturt's words, "This ruinous detention paralyzed the efforts and enervated the strength of the expedition, by constitutionally affecting both men and animals, and depriving them of the elasticity and energy with which they commenced their labours."

These harsh conditions could explain both Brock's uncharitableness and the appearance, which may at times have been a reality, of Sturt's unfitness. There is also a facet of Sturt's literary style which may lend some colour to Brock's insinuations. It is extremely impersonal. Seldom, in the pages of his journal, do the members of his party come to life. Even the officers, on most occasions, are mere ciphers; as for the men, one sometimes wonders if he could tell one from another. Brock's name occurs only four times: once in the list of the party, once to say he was a gunsmith, and twice more in reference to care of the sheep. The work of mounting birds, for which he was engaged and which cost him such anguish, is never even mentioned. A particularly happy passage in Brock's diary describes a journey from Depot Creek to the eastward with Sturt, Browne and Joseph, between 12th and 20th March, 1845. He was very proud to be chosen for one of Sturt's personal reconnaissances; his account of it is so circumstantial, and his pleasure so manifest, that he cannot have imagined it. Yet according to Sturt he was not one of the party. Browne, Flood, Lewis and Joseph are named, but never Brock. It may be objected that this is a natural error such as anyone might make under stress, but that is exactly the point: that Sturt, under stress, did make mistakes, and Brock, under stress, exaggerated them.

This Olympian quality of Sturt's is one of the great merits of his journal. It is the writing of a man who, in an experience of great suffering, could rise superior to personalities and petty annoyance. Brock, who suffered perhaps less, but still greatly, could not. So his is, in a sense, a lesser, more ordinary viewpoint. Yet all viewpoints, if they are sincere, have their own validity, and Brock's extreme sensitivity has one great advantage: it is not all in the field of personality. He can describe a scene, an atmosphere, an encounter with natives, a change of weather, the finding of a flower, animal or bird, with greater sympathy, more true realism, than Sturt. In fact, the two journals complement each other. Ideally, one should read Sturt's first and then Brock's, but one should certainly read them both. And then one could look at Harris Browne's uncompleted journal, published in *South Australiana*, Vol. V, No. 1, March 1966.

It is rumoured that there also exists somewhere a manuscript journal by Piesse. At this distance in time all such accounts can be read dispassionately, and each must add something to our appreciation of this superb and terrible feat of exploration.

Daniel Brock spent the remainder of his life in South Australia. He lived at Alberton, near Port Adelaide, and died there on 8th June 1867, at the age of 56. At the time of his death he was a shipping agent. On 10th August 1858, there appeared in the *South Australian Register* the report of a speech in which he said of Captain Sturt ". . . nobody but those who had been with him on his journies could know his courage and his coolness. Often when the safety of the whole party hung upon his next movement, they knew that he would do all that was possible for man to do, and they trusted him." As usual, time had proved a great healer.

The preparation of the Diary for publication presented certain problems. Brock's spelling and grammar are usually correct, but his handwriting is sometimes very difficult to read, and he uses a system of punctuation so out of keeping with modern practice as to be positively baffling. In the interest of the general reader, since it is for him rather than the scholar that this edition is intended, the punctuation and occasionally the spelling have been modernized, abbreviations dispensed with, and in a very few instances, where the sense is obviously incomplete or corrupt, attempts have been made to restore it. In the case of one badly damaged leaf, even this has not been attempted, but the eroded words have been left incomplete. For ease of reading, also, the work has been divided into chapters, and chapter-summaries have been supplied. In both the division and the summaries, Sturt's journal has been used as a model, so that as far as possible the two journals parallel each other. A few footnotes have been provided where it seems useful to comment on similarities or differences between the two accounts. Words underlined by Brock, of which there are many, have been italicized.

At all times the editor has had in mind the sort of preparation the MS. might have received had Brock published it in his lifetime. He has not, however, felt as free to alter and amend as the author himself might have done. Apart from punctuation, alteration has been kept to a minimum, and it is hoped that the style has been reasonably well preserved. As for the story, nothing has been altered or omitted. It is one that will stand on its merits, without apology or excuse.

K. PEAKE-JONES
Mt. Torrens,
South Australia.
1975

Captain Sturt, *Leader*.

Mr. James Poole, *Assistant*.

Mr. John Harris Browne, *Surgeon*.

Mr. M'Dougate Stuart, *Draftsman*.

Mr. Louis Piesse, *Storekeeper*.

Daniel Brock, *Collector*.

George Davenport, *Servants*.

Joseph Cowley, "

Robert Flood, *Stockman*.

David Morgan, *with horses*.

Hugh Foulkes, *Bullock drivers*

John Jones, "

Turpin, "

William Lewis, *sailor* "

John Mack, "

John Kerby, *with sheep*.

11 horses ; 30 bullocks ; 1 boat and boat carriage ;

1 horse dray ; 1 spring cart ; 3 drays. 200 sheep;

4 kangaroo dogs ; 2 sheep dogs.

The box of instruments sent from England for the use of the expedition had been received, and opened in Adelaide. The most important of them were two sextants, three prismatic compasses, two false horizons, and a barometer. One of the sextants was a very good instrument, but the glasses of the other were not clear, and unfortunately the barometer was broken and useless, since it had the syphon tube, which could not be replaced in the colony. I exceedingly regretted this accident, for I had been particularly anxious to carry on a series

of observations, to determine the level of the interior. I manufactured a barometer, for the tube of which I was indebted to Captain Frome, the Surveyor-General, and I took with me an excellent house barometer, together with two brewer's thermometers, for ascertaining the boiling point of water on Sykes' principle. The first of the barometers was unfortunately broken on the way up to Moorundi, so that I was a second time disappointed.

It appears to me that the tubes of these delicate instruments are not secured with sufficient care in the case, that the corks placed to steady them are at too great intervals, and that the elasticity of the tube is consequently too great for the weight of mercury it contains. The thermometers sent from England, graduated to 127° only, were too low for the temperature into which I went, and consequently useless at times, when the temperature in the shade exceeded that number of degrees. One of them was found broken in its case, the other burst when set to try the temperature, by the over expansion of mercury in the bulb.

The party had left Adelaide in such haste that it became necessary before we should again move, to rearrange the loads. On Monday, the 18th, therefore I desired Mr. Piesse to attend to this necessary duty, and not only to equalize the loads on the drays, and ascertain what stores we had, but to put everything in its place, so as to be procured at a moment's notice.

The avenue at Moorundi presented a busy scene

Facsimile pages from Sturt's "Expedition into Central Australia", showing the names of the party, John McDouall Stuart's name is incorrectly given.

accompanied by two Natives, from the Refug., the
old fellow had sent on the dispatch he was charged
with, and had bot back to start another, - these
communications are respecting, the supposed
murder, a party I suppose are at Lake Victoria
in case we should be annoyed by the Natives (they
think, we have had a son) - they will come to
our assistance in the hot wind passed away
towards the evening and we were called to
Prayer

21st The Cap. & J^r taking with them two men &
Louisa the Native, started this morning to the
N. & W. to review the country. previous to our
breaking away from our present camp.

Stewart with a Party chasing around the Pond.
at night according to instructions, a Rocket was
fired

22nd Having left the River Darling, it might be well
to state, we first encamped on it about 20 miles from
its junction with the Murray. the spot which we
have lost left. - known by the Natives by the name of
"Will-ye-yarra" - is nearly 100 miles from the junction

our present camping ground, is pleasant. the
creek losing itself in one of the immense basins
its banks been lined with Gum Saplings - away
to the N. & S. in the basin, - all hands - except "Lewis"
idle. this man is very busy in getting the gear of
the boat ready - the Natives call this place
Caron-dillah

23. & 24 The weather oppressive, the Glass standing
109 -

25th During the night a little rain - which has
made it much cooler the flies are very bothering
26th This morning it blew very heavily, indicating
rain - the cold was as extreme as the heat was,

About 4 P.M. the Cap & party returned - the
report made ^{by} Mr. Packer in reference to the
large body ^{of water} turns out to be fudge - this must
annoy Stuart - has he in the last dispatch had
made this supposed fact - to appear with the greatest
importance - It was a Mirage - we shall
not float yet. what we might do by & by:

CHAPTER 1

1844: 10th June to 12th September

THE EXPEDITION — MY DREAM — I LEAVE MY FAMILY —
PROGRESS TO MORUNDE — STURT ADDRESSES THE MEN—
OUR GUIDES, NITEBOOK AND CAREENA—MR EYRE TO
ACCOMPANY US PART OF THE WAY—ON THE MURRAY—I
BEGIN WORK ON THE BIRDS — CHAINING ON LAKE BONNEY—
BAD CHARACTER OF SOME OF PARTY—UNDERHAND
DEALING—THE GUN TAKEN AWAY FROM ME—MR EYRE
LEAVES US.

Among the scientific world, there has been a great desire to obtain a knowledge of the central portion of New Holland. Captain Sturt, ever alive to enlarge the boundaries of geographical knowledge, submitted to the home government certain representations upon which it was determined to fit out a party under the Captain and proceed into the interior, and attempt to lift off the curtain which has hitherto been so impenetrable-on this interesting country.

In the month of June 1844 per *Taglioni* the Captain received dispatches from Lord Stanley, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, to select men, and make arrangements and at once to proceed. Having done which, the Captain took a farewell of his friends, and started. Seventeen comprised the force; five bullock drays (four teams of eight and one of six), two horse carts—one of three horses—the other two—and six other horses, 200 sheep—provisions for a twelve month.

Providence ordereth all things. I was in pecuniary difficulties. My way was hedged up-and though some may smile at dreams, yet in this instance, without any previous intimation, I dreamt an individual came to me peculiarly clothed speaking to me about some such an undertaking, and much passed in this interview which left a deep impression on my mind.

In the morning-during the following day—I was passing through Hindley Street when I met the object of my dream dressed precisely as I had seen him, we spoke and he asked me if I was going with Captain Sturt. I knew nothing then of the Expedition.

I in the course of the day upon some consideration made application, and was led not to expect I should go. Every circumstance connected with me showed I should not be out of my path in attempting to go, but I left the issue and used the means. I dreamt the brother of the person in my dream was trying to be engaged and I thought I had the same chance as he. Hundreds made application and out of more than 300 I was chosen one of the 14 men as a spare hand, to look after the fire-arms, skin birds, &c.

I was engaged on the 22nd of July-previous to our starting, the gentlemen of Adelaide invited us to breakfast, the Governor being present, O'Halloran in the Chair. Many fine speeches were made, much success wished us, and then we were escorted out of town. This was on the 10th August.

10th. After the breakfast, I went home to take farewell of my wife and boy..

Delia and myself retired and commended each other to the care and keeping of our Heavenly Father. I thought it hard to part—my boy was sleeping on his grandmother's knee—he was slowly recovering from a dangerous illness. As we proceeded on the road it was lined with people taking leave of us, many supposing we should never return. The horsemen with the Captain passed on at a round trot, leaving us behind, he went as far as the Dry Creek. There he took a last farewell, and crossed the country; the riders returning, in doing which as they did in parties among which were not a few carriages containing females, hands were shaken, and heartily well wished; about 4 p.m. we made the Dry Creek, where were still a numerous party, they behaved handsomely by leaving money so that we may have wine.

Our Overseer, Piesse, and Draughtsman wanted to issue ball cartridge, to set watch, and act as if we were surrounded with natives. It was very farcical, at all events, the marquee must be pitched, which was done. Charles Calton and Edwards during the night looked in upon us as the wine was being drunk, made some speeches, behaved kindly. I felt no relish and as soon as I could I made for a dray which had a good tarpaulin and made my bed and turned in. It had rained much in the morning, and the ground was damp. I felt very uncomfortable.

11th Sunday. Remained at the Dry Creek during the afternoon Turner and Walker came to wish me well, they brought me the pleasing intelligence that my boy still continued better.

12th. Yoked up the bullocks during a heavy storm of rain and moved on, the little Para brought up during the evening. I had an interview with Mrs. Foster.

13th. Made Caltons; had a great bother in crossing the river.

14th. Calton handsomely provided a public breakfast, at which the inhabitants of Gawler Town were present to take a kind leave of us. After breakfast bottles of brandy were introduced, Dr. Cotter in the chair. About 11 we moved off, one of our bullocks suffered dreadfully through the young grass; we moved on slowly, passing through Lyndoch valley, we had to procure logs, and in a measure to fill up a creek ere we could cross it with our boat dray—it took us an hour, about 4 p.m. we brought up at Jacob's Station, "Moororoo".

15th. The valley is just at this time beautiful and green. About 11 a.m. we came to Captain Hall's station where we were fortunate in being able to obtain another bullock instead of our sick one; our teams are first rate. Towards evening we drew upon Angaston. Having passed a little out of our way, a man came to direct us on our road, I found it to be Mr. Sawle, my old Cornish friend. His house stood on the hill, to which I repaired and got some tea; I felt queer in my digestive organs through the change of diet. We brought up at Angas's—young John was very kind, he gave up to us his kitchen and his boy baked us bread and meat. I fell in here with old acquaintances; among others I observed Mr. Prior, we did not speak—had some conversation with Coleman, took tea with them. After I was turned in, I received an invitation from Prior to breakfast.

16th. Accepting the invitation I took breakfast with Prior. Mrs. P. was kind, no reference to what had passed was made² Taking leave of my friends here, excepting Prior who had gone after his cows, we moved off, young Angas accompanying us to direct us as to the best road; soon he left us, we proceed on through his father's magnificent property. We have now left almost all the stations, our progress every hour approximates more to the stirring bush life; very soon, our help must arise only from ourselves.

During our route a beautiful and picturesque picture presented itself. In the midst of striking scenery our six drays were descending a steep hill at the bottom of which was a beautiful flat, and the river Para flowing rapidly through it. Some of our drays were down, others just at the pinch, one individual only of the party wearing a red shirt, which gave a distinguishing feature to the scene, he being planted upon an eminence, giving directions. We had some little difficulty in crossing the stream, the ground on either side being so soft; we however by adding additional bullocks to a dray, got over safe, we were obliged for some distance to add bullocks as it was ascent and the bottom very bad. Towards the close of the afternoon we made the duck ponds, and though so little ground had been crossed over it was deemed expedient to encamp, as it was uncertain whether our bullocks could hold on until we made water further ahead.

² Probably an allusion to 22nd September, 1843, when Brock was refused shelter at Angaston during a storm: see *Recollections of D.G.B. 1843*.

17th. During the night our bullocks parted, which caused some delay in our start. We found the road very heavy so that our progress was slow. About noon we made the old beaten road to the Murray, when our drays rattled on famously. Soon after the Captain, Poole and the Doctor joined us, gave us general orders and passed on to the Murray at Eyre's Station.

Our route lay over the ranges which bound the Murray Scrub to the south—we found it very rugged and stony, it well tried the strength of our drays, all having upwards of 33 hundred on them. About sundown, we made a station called the Dust Hole occupied by Jeffery. The Rhine waters it. Having to make the Murray the following night and it being a bad country the bullocks were chained to trees so we should not be delayed. Flood was here with the sheep.

18th. I assisted Flood in driving the sheep, the drays passing over the road grandly, as it was so good. We were soon left behind, the man Flood afoot, myself on horseback, with my dog Serjeant to assist we had difficult work to get the sheep along, as the road though hard and good passed through an immense scrub-on our drawing near to the Murray. at the bottom of a hill which we had to descend, we found our horse cart had met with an accident-the shaft having got broken. We found the Captain at it, anything but pleased at what he deemed the carelessness of the driver.

the change of the native toward the European. Another change is this locality has become a settlement bearing the name Morunde.³ A small company of soldiers are stationed here, who have rather an elegant barracks which with the substantial stone house of Mr. Eyre has an appearance rather strange amidst the wild and beautiful scenery which is here so striking. I received a letter from my dear Delia.

19th. The men engaged busily in preparing their drays for travelling, such as equalizing the loads, greasing the wheels. The man who has the charge of the sheep having yarded Again I am treading the banks of the noble Murray River-many years ago I passed the spot on which we are now encamped. What a change has come over them, the native dared not to be hardly seen by our party, looking on us and our motions with the greatest suspicion, and from what I recollect we were anything but divested of fear as it regarded them, but on this my second visit, I am surrounded. I hear the Queen's English jabbered by a dozen tongues, and the kindest spirit manifested possible. The white man is as safe among them as he would be with his own countrymen—much is due to Mr. Eyre, as the wise and judicious treatment shown by him has been the cause of this pleasing alteration, in them for the night and believing all safe, some of us availed ourselves of the offer of the barrack room belonging to the Morunde police, (who by the bye have two of their force also stationed here) to write home.

³ Moorundi: Sturt.

While we were thus absent, something disturbed the sheep, so that they broke away from the netting by which they were enclosed, and away they scampered. It was a very dark night. On our return we found all in turmoil, the officer under the Captain—a Mr. Poole, a red hot Irishman—blowing up Piesse, the Storekeeper, who remained sitting on a log by the fire, perhaps too lazy or too frightened to assist in again securing the sheep. After scouring on all sides the flat, they were found, and more firmly secured.

20th. I have been busy all day in cleaning the fire arms.

21st. Having received instructions to start, the bullocks were brought in and yoked. Previous to our moving the Captain called all hands—addressed us, in reference to our duty generally, and in particular our conduct towards the natives with whom we might be brought in contact, to treat them with kindness, to avoid illicit association; after which a prayer was read by him, that we might be protected in our perilous travel. It certainly appeared affecting, the men bending upon their bullock whips in the apparent act of devotion. We were perhaps *for ever* to pass away into the unknown interior and dangers of many characters were anticipated, we were now about to leave the last link that bound us to our homes and loved ones.

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"⁴. After a toilsome journey through a heavy sand, late in the day, we unyoked.

22nd. Last night commenced the duty of watch, three men compose it during the night, relieving each other every three hours I formed one of the first. Our starting being delayed on account of the horses getting away, I took the gun and accompanied by the two natives went to look after ducks in a neighbouring lagoon. I reached the place, I heard the report of a gun which I found to proceed from a party on the river who were about to accompany our party by water some distance at this place I also fell in with some gentlemen who were spending their time in boating and bush amusement. They invited me to some refreshment, which I accepted. They had their encampment rather romantically situated, it being on a shelf of a high cliff overhanging the river; nothing could be more secluded, or more secure from the weather. Here were strewed quart pots, pannakins, damper, codfish, blankets, ducks, birdskins. I did not pass on to the lagoon, as I heard in the distance the crack of the bullock whip, intimating that our party was near, which soon after coming up, Poole determined to encamp.

⁴ Nadbuck and Camboli: Sturt

23rd. The Murray has on its banks what is known as "flats", sometimes for one or two miles in length, and half a mile in breadth, covered at some seasons with reeds, extremely nutritious for cattle. These flats are far between. However, it often is, that when the flat ceases to be on one bank, being succeeded by cliffs, the opposite bank has the cliffs bending away from the river, and a flat to succeed. In these flats are to be found large bodies of water known as lagoons whose bosom is often covered with waterfowl, pelicans and (rarely) a flock of swans. We started early this morning, but there was evinced but little judgment in our Officer as to the route; the Captain had remained at Morunde; we were sometimes right and sometimes wrong; after a long journey we encamped by a lagoon.

24th. The road we have had to pass over today has been very heavy sand, which causes it to be extreme fatiguing work for our poor bullocks—we were called to encamp at a considerable distance from the river. Piesse appears to me altogether unfit for the situation he says he fills—an overseer.

25th. This being Sunday I had hoped some respect would have been paid to it, Instead of which Mr. Poole gave orders to proceed. Just as we were on the point of starting, Capt. Sturt with Mr. Eyre joined us. The Captain had remained behind at Morunde, to make *his* final arrangements, having sent on the party under the command of Poole, who was attended by the Dr., a Mr. Browne, a young gentleman of quiet unassuming manners and of high scientific attainments, a botanist and naturalist.

Mr. Eyre will accompany us some distance up the river, being attended by a policeman-we might now say we have now passed away from the dwelling of civilized man, and our future home will be in the wilds and wastes of this singularly constituted Island have we to pass through regions fair and fertile, or through a region of sterility, bareness, and misery, this is a question which is often asked; hopes are sanguine. I feel a loneliness, I am surrounded or rather I should say associated with men who evince depraved tastes, and an utter disregard to all the claims of a righteous God-May I remember who is my helper, who will be my stay and protector.

Our journey today has been through a very dense sandy scrub and the heat has been very oppressive.

26th. 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.

One European fell from it beneath a shower of spears, and his grave was dug close by where he fell. How many of the opposite party were killed was not known, but they were beaten off. It is a singular spot, at the base of the cliff lie huge detached blocks of sandstone of which the cliff is composed, thrown together pell mell, occasioned no doubt by having been subjected to the action of water.

27th. A cold miserable morning, a heavy boar frost. Before the encampment broke up, I pushed away to some lagoons in search of ducks-but I failed in getting a shot-returning to camp and getting my morning meal over, I again visited the lagoons, Poole having expressed a great desire to feast and fatten upon wild fowl, and I was anxious to please but I was foiled again and again. The drays passed on and I lingered behind, watching and crawling through the rushes, but the scoundrels were so shy that when I made up my mind that I should eventually thin their numbers, away they would go, with their quack, quack, quack-and what made it unpleasant, I was near placing my hand upon an enormous yellow-backed snake in progressing stealthily through the rushes. I observed it in time, and the big creature rolled away, and at last after much bother I succeeded in getting a shot at the ducks, and one— only one — remained behind, and it fell on the opposite side. It was dead, but how was I to get it?

I must either walk a long way round, or I must strip and swim for it. Though it was very, very cold, I determined on the latter mode I felt the cold benumbing all my limbs as I was swimming, yet I was determined not to lose my bird. On reaching it I caught it between my teeth and in coming back I thought if my friends only saw me, with the duck in my mouth, the wildness of the scenery, there would be something more than a smile on their countenances. On my dressing I felt so chilled I feared some heavy cold would ensue, but walking very fast, I soon got into a glow of heat, and I was enabled to enjoy the delightful scenery which presented itself as I passed far above the river, which was rolling more than 100 feet beneath. After some miles walking I overtook the drays as they were descending a flat, where we encamped for the night.

28th. In order to obtain birds, I have to pass away from the drays; it occurs to me sometimes if the natives (of whom we have indications of not being very far off) were so disposed, how easily they could pass a spear through me, but I have no dread about them; on my joining the party I found that some men had visited the drays but were very friendly.

I feel very awkward in skinning, but with practice I hope to get over this. I expected from what Capt. Sturt said to me when referring to bird skinning in Adelaide, he would have been able to have assisted me, but I find he knows nothing about it—but I must do my best. I had a beautiful white stork to do, I did it tolerable.

29th. Today I deemed it prudent to keep near the drays as natives are hanging about and no doubt are closely watching our movements. The river is evidently rising, what a pity such a wretched country should be watered by so noble a stream—nothing but scrub, sometimes sand, and sometimes stone, but never soil that would raise even a radish—except in the flats, which at seasons are overflowed. When Capt. Sturt published his account of his memorable expedition⁵ he stated that this country was adapted (highly so) for pastoral and agricultural purposes. "Travellers see strange things".

Mr. Poole is a wild strange animal, all bustle and little work, a creature of impulses, I fear no principle. I experienced some of his bad humour, but conscious of not deserving it I took little notice of it, endeavouring to manifest the spirit of a Christian.

30th. It being part of Capt. Sturt's plan, I suppose, the work of chaining a portion of our track to a lake some eight miles ahead of us was this morning completed—Poole taking the bearings, myself and two others engaged with the chain, encamped on the lake known as "Lake Bonney" late in the afternoon.

31st. This lake lies situated about four miles from the river. It is about ten miles round, with a scrubby country down to its very banks, nothing is remarkable about it but the extreme whiteness of the sand.

⁵ *Two Expeditions into the Centre of South Australia, 1828-31.*

Some parts of the year it is nearly dry. It is supplied from the river; as the rain flood comes on, occasioned by the snow dissolving in the high country between Port Phillip and Sydney, the river overflows its banks, and every flat lagoon and lake soon gets filled, as is the case now—the waters are rising every hour.

Engaged in chaining round the lakes.

1st September. The Sabbath. "There are no Sundays in the bush" was an expression which I heard drop from the Doctor as I with others were busy with the chain. I felt happy to recollect that God was in the bush, and although called to labor, yet my soul I trust was often in communion with him—had my heart misgiven me as to my having joined Capt. Sturt I should feel wretched, but my course was so evident, that I can look up to my heavenly father with confidence, I know he will enable me to bear up under the various trials which are lying before me.

After finishing chaining the lake, which we did early, I was employed in skinning birds—birds which were shot by a gentleman who has been accompanying us up this far in his boat—he has with him a young fellow who sadly wants to join us, he calls himself a draughtsman. Capt. Sturt *applied to his cook*—to know if it would not be better to send back Piesse who is a lazy drone, and take this other man in his place, but Mr. Cook, after weighing the matter over in his mind, and consulting his own supposed interests, although he hated Piesse, yet he had not to cook for him, and if the other came on it was probable he would take his meals with the Captain,

which would throw extra work on himself—Piesse received the benefit of the cook and did not get sent back.

2nd. It being requisite to obtain a lunar observation we remained encamped. During the day a few natives came up to us.

3rd. We moved early, breaking through the scrub to a point of the river some 16 or 18 miles—the bends often of the river are very great as is the case today. Having a hard bottom, the drays moved on at a good pace. At night I am always glad to turn in, though hard and cheerless be my lodging room, yet sleep comes on, and for a time my unpleasant situation is forgotten—I find I am among wicked men, of no ordinary character, my soul sickens when I contemplate the several characters, many of whom have been banished from their country as felons and for all I know, for greater crimes than housebreaking. There is no one kindred spirit—I stand alone, the "*Methodist*".

5th. We this day crossed the eastern boundary line of South Australia. The land we are now in may be called Borderland as it belongs neither to Adelaide or Sydney—the country it is true is more open, but still it is only a miserable scrub.

Our attention was engaged during our day's journey with the tracks of wild cattle many of which have strayed from the herds as they have been driven from Sydney to Adelaide, and the cows having dropped their calves, much young stock appears to be among the herd. In this neighbourhood, on the natives (some of whom came up to us) telling us they could direct us to where the herds were feeding, three of our party on horseback dashed after them.

We brought up towards evening on a flat, encamping on a gut up which the water of the Murray is flowing and soon will cover the flat. The men returned having fallen in with the cattle and succeeded in shooting one. Sending off the cart the splendid beast was brought to camp; it must have weighed upwards of 1,000 pounds weight and although little or no grass grows on which these cattle could feed, yet it seems the character of the scrub off which the cattle subsist—and of which they are very fond—is possessive of most fattening qualities. Reserving to ourselves the prime pieces, the rest was given to the natives. Poor creatures, they will live by it until they have consumed the whole—had we had salt we might have secured beef as a change from mutton for a considerable time. However, short as was the quantity of salt, Mr. Poole must needs have some fine salting pieces cured for the use of the Captain.

6th. Remained stationary in consequence of not being able to find our bullocks, so many wild cattle being about. Although I have much to do for myself such as washing and suchlike things yet I can get no time, always busy, such has been the case today. Tonight the bullocks were brought home and to secure them for the morrow, were yoked and chained to trees.

7th. Making an early start we soon fell in again with the river, and in no part of our past journeying on it, have we observed so beautiful and picturesque scenery as we observed today. Almost the water was up to the banks on either side, so magnificently timbered; it was not the size, but so grouped as to give the highest effect, and it is surprising that birds are so scarce and common.

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 chaunting 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.

8th. Sunday—Yet no regard to the day. Passing through an open bare miserable country the eye is pleased, and a person feels delighted with the scenery on the river, but when he looks away his eye rests upon wretched bareness; it chills the heart, and throws a melancholy over the spirits.

9th. I perceived much underhand dealing going on, side whisperings. Poole and the Doctor think I could get more birds, if I looked for them. Although nothing has been said to me, yet a young fellow has been proposed as a better shot, and it would be advisable for him to take the gun. The Captain sent for me, assuring me that he had no fault to find with me and a good deal more of such soft soap. He thought it better for Sullivan to take the gun. I have always had enough to do without shooting, and though my friends did it not for my benefit, yet I was glad to be relieved—if Sullivan is half as anxious as I have been, he will do his duty—he certainly is a much better shot than I profess to be, having been before he joined a wild rambling chap—more taken with shooting perhaps than work.

During the early part of our journey today, we had to travel through some close heavy scrub, emerging from this we again came into open country. We for miles had to pass the verge of high towering cliffs. At the base rolled on the deep, deep water. A pretty picture presented itself—from this table land, at one place which had receded back from the river a little, forming something like a semicircle—a deep ravine, I observed, of great depth.

Up its beautiful slopes, the strata appeared as cones rising one above another, I believe it is sandstone and clay, of a deep yellow, sobered with grey color, and at no great distance was a magnificent bend, assuming the form of a vast amphitheatre, basement rising over basement to the very summit. I should have lingered longer, and examined more carefully, had I not observed the Captain and Poole below sketching. We encamped about three miles S.W. of the gut known as the "Rufus".

10th. 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.

11th. As Mr. Eyre and his attendant are about leaving us, and the Captain wishes to chain up the "Rufus", from its junction with the river, up to a lake into which it pours the waters of the overflowing Murray, we are remaining in camp. Dr. Browne and Flood have started this morning to form a route on to the Darling River up which our party will move. This journey is to find out if we can reach the Darling without running up the Murray to the junction of the two rivers; it will save much time if we can so do. Busy in writing to Delia, as I shall have an opportunity of sending home by Eyre—orders are issued no letter is to be sent home, till it has been seen by Capt. Sturt—Sturt is a most mean man, or a very suspicious one.

12th. Mr. Eyre left us. It would have been well if he had continued with us—he expressed himself surprised that Sturt should have suffered such a man in his party as Flood; it seems he knows this party but too well. After he left we broke up the camp and moved up the Rufus, a party chaining a distance of 5 miles, and we came upon a most magnificent lake—known as 'Lake Victoria'. It is about 24 miles round. In the distance away to the Eastward, it was girt with rather low sand ridges; where we came on it the banks present nothing but park-like scenery groups of gum trees most tastefully disposed. It is certainly a most enchanting spot—the expanse of water, on which are innumerable waterfowl, the majestic swan, the screaming long-billed "Navarette" and beautiful spur-winged Plover, forms a beautiful picture.

CHAPTER II

1844: 13th September to 27th October

EXPEDITION POORLY MANAGED—AM GIVEN CHARGE OF SHEEP
—HATRED OF PIESSE—WET WEATHER—TUANDO JOINS US
ENCOUNTERS WITH NATIVES—NEWS OF A MASSACRE—
ACCIDENT TO FLOOD —RATIONS REDUCED—WE REACH THE
DARLING—I FALL FOUL OF POOLE—LARGE BODY OF
NATIVES—DIFFICULT TRAVELLING—FALSE ALARM OF
NATIVE ATTACK—MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-CAMP
NEAR LAIDLEY'S PONDS—BRUSH WITH FLOOD—MORE CHAINING.

13th. It appears to me that Sturt is a man who has formed no plan for his party to be regulated by, for things go on most disjointedly, there is a total want of management in the various duties to be performed, and I grieve to observe, the Captain is very fond of having "Yarns" (as they are called)—and becoming prejudiced or prepossessed, as the character of the communication may happen to be. Mr. Flood is deep in his counsels.

Having been relieved from the gun, I received instructions to take care of the sheep, as well as to skin birds, look after the fire arms, and other matters which come within my province. I hope in what concerns myself, I shall always act so, that in truth nothing shall be said to my prejudice did I dare give way to the immoral jocular spirit that prevails, I

should be thought very differently of – but because I maintain a distance when subjects are discussed, of an evil and impure tendency, there is a dead set against me, but I would rather suffer reproach, for righteousness sake, than be a "Hale fellow well met" amongst them.

The lake is being chained.

14th. Breaking up our encampment we moved round the lake some six or seven miles. Busy skinning—my sheep were taken care of by a native boy who came with Eyre, who will accompany us. He is an inoffensive kind lad known by the name of Tam-pi-wam.⁶ With determinate perseverance I am over-coming the difficulties I first met with in skinning birds. We are about 250 miles from Adelaide. The Dr. and Flood returned, having succeeded in fixing our route without having to hug the Murray.

15th. Some alteration taking place in the party who have been engaged in chaining the lake, I was called upon to leave the sheep and follow after the party who had proceeded on to the work. Heavy rain set in, which made it very uncomfortable. The camp having broken up, as we finished for the day we joined the drays which were pushing round to the Nor-East side of the Lake.

In consequence of certain false representations made to the Captain by Piesse, one of the men, our cook, determined to return back—not being present I

⁶ Tampwang: Sturt

know what passed but by hearsay, it seems the Captain believed all that Piesse told him, and expressed himself in no measured terms. This man Piesse is gathering hate to himself every day and it grieved me to hear the expressions made use of—he is certainly everything that is useless and disgusting—but I keep clear of him, as much as possible.

16th. After some heavy chaining, we finished the lake: heavy through having to drag the chain through water half-way up our legs—and now it is done would it not have been better to have left such work and have been pushing on our course?

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 til 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.

17th. It being so very stormy with much rain, we remained stationary, I feel it to be very irksome to watch the sheep in this wet weather. Some underhand work or it would not have fallen to my lot, but never mind. An unusual feeling pervades the party in consequence of some indistinct communication we have received of an attack being made by the blacks on the River Darling, on a party of Europeans, we can hardly make out the matter, the intelligence has been brought down by a native from the Darling, and while this fellow was speaking about it to the tribe localling here, our native boy overheard the conversation, but he being almost unable to understand the dialect spoken, he could gather but imperfectly the news, but what he did understand he at once made the Dr. acquainted with. Old Mr. "Nite-book" seemed very shy in divulging the secret—after much questioning he gave us to know the affair took place about 6 days journey from our present encampment. It was a party coming down the river consisting of 15 men and a woman, having 10 "wheelbarrows" (which is what they call bullock drays), they were taken by surprise (being asleep) and have their limbs broken. Now to me, there is much mystery in all this, where from have these unfortunate creatures come? The route is altogether a strange one, without the party be from the North of Sydney a great way—which is highly improbable, however we shall soon know more about the matter. The Captain says he will revenge the murder to the greatest extent—is it possible scenes of blood are opening up before us in our path?

A dispatch is now being forwarded to the Governor, a native being our courier, he takes it as far as "Morunde". In events of moment, such as this appears to be, distant tribes are brought acquainted with them. A native noted for his speed of foot is selected by his chief and sent off—his character as messenger secures him from any danger, his wants are supplied wherever he stops, in this supply is included a female associate. Here am I called upon to leave my sheep and make cartridges. I know not from one hour to the other how I shall be employed.

18th. Breaking up the camp very early we passed away from this beautiful lake, striking off in an easterly direction, passing through belts of scrub. The late rains make our travelling slow and tedious, however I hope the weather is settling, for it is anything but pleasant to sleep on damp ground.

The country is becoming partially more open, and more depressed, being very little above the level of the sea. Camped on a lagoon, very few birds are obtained, no more than when I had the gun.

19th. During our journey today we have again observed tracks of a numerous herd of wild cattle, which no doubt are depasturing at no great distance. In the afternoon, we again struck upon the River Murray—it retains all its magnificent characteristics—certainly it presents just at this time a greater body of water than at other seasons, as it is become swollen, through the melting snows away to the ESE. We see trees just now, on the flats, submerged more than three parts, but little more than the upper branches visible.

20th. Having birds to secure I was called from my sheep. As the certainty of cattle being at no great distance became known, a party were sent off to endeavor to shoot one for use, and also one for the natives. Some two or three hours had elapsed when Flood returned, with his right hand severely wounded, some of his fingers having been shot off. The ramrod of the Doctor's gun getting fast in the barrel, while in the act of hauling away, so as to get it out, the Doctor holding on at one end; at the same time, the other barrel being loaded, it accidentally got discharged, and effected this sad affair. The cattle were bellowing all around them at the time. Expecting as we all do, soon to be brought into an engagement with the natives, the loss of this man's assistance has thrown a gloom over the party.

As it regards my own feelings, I am very happy in my mind contemplating the possibility of an untimely issue in the coming affray, the happiness arising from the conviction of my interest in Jesus, but when I think of *home*, my wife and child, a sickness of soul comes over me, but I trust in the promise of my Heavenly Father, and can without one wavering doubt exclaim, "Not my will but thine be done".

One bullock only was shot, which was brought to the camp—and with it, an enormous big snake killed by the natives.

Two or three nights since, which I forgot to note at the time, the Captain called us together, made a speech to us, telling us we all did every thing to his satisfaction—in short we were very first rate fellows

he gave us instructions how we were to act, if called upon, in slaying the murderers of our countrymen.

21st. It being very wet and stormy we did not move away from our encampment—I have been busy in sharpening swords, examining and cleaning the firearms, after which I secured the skin of the snake which had been brought home yesterday (I use the word home, for want of a more appropriate term, but the camp *at its best* is a *sorry home*. The snake is of the species known as the "carpet"; it measured 7 feet 4 inches. The weather is still anything but settled, very windy, being about the Equinox. Our rations of flour have been reduced 2 lbs. a man per week—we have now 8 lb. instead of 10—How is this? Our rations were not to be reduced, only under peculiar circumstances—here we have been but a very few weeks from town, and how can it be in justice said it is a matter imperatively called for? It is evident certainly that there has been a great want of judgement in selecting the stores and other things necessary for the Expedition, and among other things deficient is flour—there should be 12 months rations of flour, at 10 lb. per week, tea $\frac{1}{4}$ lb., sugar 2 lb., mutton 10 lbs. There is nothing connected with the known demand on these rations which should induce them being reduced thus early.

22nd. Sunday. No cessation from labor—can a blessing be expected to rest on us when the Lord's day is so desecrated? Although my views, in reference to this day, differ from those generally received:

yet, in this instance, it shows a contempt and disregard to God—manifested by our chief Officer which must lead to bad results.

About 9 we broke up and moved along the Murray some few miles, when we struck a creek, or what is very likely to be an Anabranh of the River Darling. Leaving the Murray, we followed up this branch keeping a northerly course. We shall see no more, until we return, the waters of the Murray—which may never be. Still the same country, in all its sterility. There is no variety in scene, the never-ending low scrub. After we had formed into camp and evening drew on, we were ordered to prayers—what the reason of this is appears to all us to be on account of the late accident, and what we are in anticipation of. During the day cursing and swearing; can the service be anything but sheer mockery? It being my first watch, I did not go.

23rd. The monotony of our journey was broken today by a fine run our dogs had, after kangaroo—we could discern the whole chase. The poor beast after a severe struggle was killed. The native who introduced himself to our party, and was the one we received the intelligence of the attack on the Europeans from, appears a most intelligent man. He is accompanied by a boy and young man. He calls himself "Tuan-do".⁷ Wishing to obtain information in reference to a point at which the party are supposed to have formed a depot, the Captain has been interrogating "Tuando". on paper, but in doing so had made some mistake which the native at once detecting, took the pencil and corrected.

⁷ Toonda: Sturt

He drew the different lagoons intervening between our present situation, and the one we are making for, in the sand, which Stuart⁸ the Draughtsman copied Early in the afternoon we encamped on the bank of the Anabranh. The meaning of the term "Ana" is running beside, or parallel, with anything else, at least I believe so.

A remarkable instance of memory was instanced this evening. A small party of natives came to the camp; on their arrival, as is his custom, Sturt came out of his marquee to communicate with them. One of the natives, an elderly man, on the Captain's appearance, seemed extremely excited; he earnestly fixed his eye on the Captain; after gazing some little time, he began jumping round the Captain with every manifestation of pleasure. His antics were all a mystery till he became composed, for every muscle had been brought into full play, he told "Nitebook" he had seen the Captain many moons ago with a boat in the Murray, referring to the memorable expedition of Sturt when he ran down the Murray some 15 years ago.

As we are drawing near to the unfriendly tribes, it is proposed to set a double watch-that is two men being on at a time-it is rather ludicrous, Poole seems terribly afraid. He proposed that all should take their turn, he as well as the Doctor-when it came that he, according to his proposition, should be at his post, he feigned sick.

⁸ John McDouall Stuart; spelt Stewart here and throughout the Diary.

It was all a farce his thus proposing, he only wanted the men to do this extra, *and all felt it to be* a necessary duty, and by the Officers thus joining it would the more readily be acceded to by the men on whom the watching fell for be it spoken, there were some who were exempted. There is such shuffling and unofficer-like work, which will most assuredly retard, rather than forward the views of the originators of the Expedition.

24th. The water which we find in this creek flows in from the Murray, and as it has flowed but a little farther up the creek than where we are now encamped, we this morn early struck off for the River Darling, Tuando guiding us; we had followed up the branch about 20 miles. Our course now is east by north, heavy work for our bullocks, so very sandy, as well as through a very dense scrub, more dense than any we have yet passed. We find the native fruit, called by Major Mitchell the prickly pear, in great abundance; we have fallen in with this fruit when passing up the Murray but the fruit was not ripe; but what we gather now is really very palatable. It is rather larger than the very large cherries which are grown at home (England). It has not much fruit, though thus large, for its kernel is so large as to leave only a thickness of a shilling, but what you get is good, a tart taste. The stone is full of indentations. It refreshes us in our journey.

Very late in the day we made the river. Previous to our approaching it we had to pass through heavy belts of timber, then opened up the distant line of magnificent gum trees.

The scene at this time was really enchanting, vegetation was green and luxuriant, the gum most gracefully grouped, relieved by the graceful "Acacia", the foliage the harbor of the parroquet. The sun has just set, and the golden drapery of clouds hanging in a thousand forms over the western line, which the vast orb had but just passed, threw (yet still) a strong, though a chastened mellowed light through the avenues of trees down which we had to pass in approaching the river, on the banks of which we were soon encamped. This our first impression of the Darling was pleasing, our camp being in a bend. The character of this river is altogether different from the Murray. Though it be a noble course, yet greatly inferior in width to the Murray-yet possibly it is in places as deep-its banks have no towering cliffs, but what is more pleasing it has beautiful timber. To give some idea of the river, the deep embankments which I remember to have seen in parts of a rail road present a similar view. At this time the waters are extremely low, in the shallows which intervene between the deep holes you might walk across, and be hardly over the ankle. You can just perceive it running and that be all.

25th. Our bullocks are becoming much fatigued through the uninterrupted travelling, the ground over which we have to pass being so very loose-we encamped very early in consequence of our bullocks.

26th. We find all along the banks of the river the feed is very abundant for our stock. It is rather strange as yet we have observed not a native. A long and heavy day's journey.

27th. We find the river extremely sinuous, bearing much to the eastward; we expected it taking a much more northerly course. I suffer much in my feet, in consequence of the constant travelling. It is a good job there is scarcely a stone, otherwise I do know how I should get on. Amidst all my miseries, I look forward with hope, bye and bye my reward will come; I endeavour to suit myself as much as I possibly can to the position in which I am placed.

Today, we have observed indications of natives not being very distant, evidently watching us, but none shew themselves.

It would perhaps be well if I state how matters are arranged in our drawing into camp at night, and breaking up camp in the morning. Some time before the day's journey is completed, the horsemen ride ahead, when a convenient place is chosen. When we come up, the first thing we observe are the horses unsaddled and tethered. In the distance under a gum tree will be seen reclining Sturt, Poole and the Doctor. We draw up the drays so as to form a square, near to fallen timber for our fire. The bullocks are unyoked, and away they go, the drivers arranging their yokes for the morrow's start. The drays are unlashed, the Captain's marquee is got out, and what spare hands there are turn to and pitch it. While this is doing the two cooks are getting up a fire, getting the dinner under way. After the marquee is pitched there is the Officers' bell tent; that is pitched, and against the camp stools, tables and bedding are got in.

It gets near time for dinner. If there have been no birds shot, I sometimes have to assist with the marquee, sometimes guarding the sheep. In starting in the morning, by daylight some of the dray men are away for the cattle, against the drays are loaded; the breakfast is ready, all the hands at camp turn to, after which when the bullocks are brought, they are yoked. The Captain's things are all brought out—the tents struck, stowed away on the drays, lashed, the pipe being filled and lit, away we go; the horsemen a little ahead, the drays, then the horse carts, then the sheep—with myself and another man bringing up the rear. My companion is a wild Irishman, positively a cranky fellow at times, having being a soldier in the same company with Sturt; he has been in India, where all regiments go after being so long in these colonies. This chap is continually talking as we walk on; it passes away the time, but often I would rather he would let me enjoy undisturbed my own reflections.

28th. The sheep of course at daylight are turned out to feed; this morning while I was out with them, the Captain sent for me to assist at the marquee. Hitherto when I have been called from my sheep, the black boy has been sent to mind them; supposing such was the case now, I at once turned to at the marquee. When all was ready for starting, I looked out for the sheep—seeing the black boy, I asked him where they were; he told me he had not been with them. Poole, who was mounted, heard me thus ask—"Och! Captain Sturt the sheep are gone," he seemed as a man entirely bereft, charging me with neglect and a lot besides.

The sheep were very quietly feeding in a hollow not 200 yards from the camp. The matter annoyed me, seeing I had been called away to some other duty, but I quietly took it, hoping by patiently enduring such things that I be able to recommend the principles I profess to be regulated by. I know Poole has a strong prejudice against me. It arose I believe when we were chaining to Lake Bonney, something had got adrift connected with the stand on which he rested his compass; he blamed me for it. When I told him to the contrary, he said I was telling him a lie "That, Sir, is what I dare not do, let the consequence be what it may" —"Och! dear, a Methodist you are thin"—"Be what I may be, *I dare not lie*, Mr Poole" - He was in high dudgeon.

The river is rapidly rising, when but yesterday we could have walked across without being up to the knee, now we should be up to the middle.

A serious error is discovered in Major Mitchell's calculation of the course which the Darling takes, it should have been 23 miles more to the eastward. It may be so, but it appears to all hands that Poole scarcely knows how to take an observation, and Captain Sturt is near sighted, and cannot scarcely discern a planet; the Doctor is called upon occasionally to use the instrument, but he does not profess to be able to read the instrument.

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 moment of deep solicitude the spears were dropped and one after another came across the river, to the number of 50. Old Mr Nite. took 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 blood-shedding 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.

"Murder will out"—It appears the report we had when on Lake Victoria was altogether misunderstood. A murder has been committed, but it occurred some years ago—but the murdered party was a native woman and her child, by one of the men forming Mitchell's party.

29th. Sunday—As usual no rest—we moved away about half past seven. Our course since we have made the Darling up to today has been NE by E and even SE—but today it has been a point to the West of N.

The river is rapidly rising and soon the lagoons which are very numerous will be filled. The country adjacent to the river is in some respects superior to that on the Murray; the scenery is pleasant, the river presents an appearance not unlike a canal, the banks being finely timbered, and flowers being observed on either hand. Some of the natives have again joined us, and will pass us on through many tribes in safety. We experience a heavy but transient thunder storm, a high wind accompanying it—*No Prayers. Flood's hand is getting better.*

30th. The river has risen 12 feet in as many hours; I have seen the fish from high banks, the water was so low and clear, but now the stream is rapid and turbid, indicative of a great fall of water somewhere in the interior; no conjecture that is satisfactory can be formed.

In observing the implements which the native in these wastes seems to deem indispensable for his getting on in the world with, I noticed a piece of hard wood about 2 feet 8 inches long, being slightly hollowed, having a point bevelling off—not unlike a turner's chisel. This is used as a spade—to throw away the soil from beneath trees, to discover the holes formed by a large white-colored grub, which grub is highly esteemed. As soon as the hole is found, (which is as a glutinous case or pipe running 10 or 12 feet beneath the surface) their bobbing-hook is brought into use.

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.

1st . October—Our course is now a point N of W. Although the country through which we are now passing presents such a lovely appearance, at another season, it would be altogether as dreary and miserable; we are here after the wet season, and herbage is green and luxuriant, marshmallows and flowers everywhere abounding.

2nd. I observe with deep concern, a feeling of jealousy and smothered hatred, gaining the ascendancy in the minds of several of the party—if the Captain notices a man, some of the party at once take fire, and plot and intrigue, to insinuate into the Captain's mind all that which is evil against such an one—here is Morgan abusing Piesse, and Flood covertly abusing Morgan.

We find great assistance from old fat Nite-book and Tuando, they being so well acquainted with every bend of "Te yanke" as they call the Darling, that we are able to cut across from one bend to another, without the trouble of having to run down the river. As it is, we are unable to bear up on our right course, which is N, in consequence of the river trending so much to the Eastward.

3rd. Hitherto the road over which we have travelled has generally been good, but today, the character of the country is altering for the worse answering the description given it by Mr Eyre—it being rotten ground full of deep holes into which the wheels of our drays are constantly getting, and being so very heavily loaded the poor jaded bullocks have as much as they can do to get along. We are very anxious to reach the place appointed, where it is supposed we shall have to form a depot. More natives visited us but very friendly.

4th. 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.

In travelling I often am caused to smile by Nitebook—he is aware of my being married, and having a son; behind a bush which I might be passing, the old fellow hides himself, and when I am passed I hear his voice, singing out "Brock Lubra Delia"—and the awful grin this conceit causes to pass over his features irresistibly draws me on to grin too. The Indigo plant is found here in abundance, bearing a flower similar to the pea.

5th. Other arrangements being made, as soon as we encamp, I have to attend only to skinning. The Captain appears satisfied.

We have been so long in a country where there has been neither rise nor fall that today it was quite a relief to see every now and again something like rising ground, succeeded by a corresponding depression—this variation leads us to hope soon to come upon a hilly country. Trees are climbed, but still, the same flat monotonous characteristics present themselves.

6th. 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 can not 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 2 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.

7th. We find great difficulty in getting our drays along—the beasts are almost beaten, the very horses find it quite as much as they can do to travel over this rotten country. It pains one to see the poor bullocks, whose necks after travelling a little distance are covered with blood—this the pressure of the yokes. We have been bothered today in consequence of a dray pole getting broken, and soon after the shaft of the horsecart—it detained us for 4 or 5 hours, which made it very late before we formed camp, which we did on a very extensive lagoon.

8th. 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. Early in our journey this morning many natives joined us, expressing the most lively astonishment, and we presume pleasure, at every thing 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.

The day's journey has been very fatiguing, the heavy roads, the jaded bullocks, and the heat which has been excessive. We encamped under a huge gum tree; it was of an enormous size, and what made it more remarkable, on almost all of its huge limbs were immense excrescences—nearly as big as a 10 gallon cask, some of them were.

10th. After travelling some 4 or 5 miles a most pleasing break in the character and features of the country took place, away to the NNE we observed a fine range of hills, and a line of timber indicating a water course breaking off from the river. We are supposed to be not far from where we shall make a depot, from which depot we hope to push into the interior. We here find no feed for our cattle, but notwithstanding this the Captain determined to encamp. Some two or three hours after doing this, a number of natives came down to us, the finest set of fellows I have yet seen—they were fierce looking, and there was something in their manner, which shewed something like distrust.

11th. 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.

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.

12th. In consequence of the extreme bareness which everywhere is existing near where we have encamped, our cattle and sheep scarcely being able to get any thing to eat, Mr. Browne, our Surgeon, accompanied by Nite-book, went in search of a better camping ground.

After an absence of a few hours he returned, having discovered both feed and water; he states, that what he supposes to be Laidley's Ponds are altogether destitute of water, but there is a creek leading out of the Darling into them, up which there is water flowing—and no doubt at times, when a very heavy flood comes down the river, the immense beds with which this creek is connected are covered with water, and only under such circumstances does water exist in these *shallow* basins. The theory which was formed that we should here find a tributary to the Darling issuing out of the interior from the NNW is found false, - and the question again arises, from whence come the waters which are now so rapidly rolling down the course of the Darling.

Reference has been made in some of the past pages as to the bitter hate which exists in the minds of some of the men. Morgan, the man who has driven the heavy horse cart, appears to me to be quite reckless and careless—he thinks he has not had justice done him, according to the agreement he made with Captain Sturt. He has hitherto been civil with me, but I cannot like his ways—he is a loud talker, with a plenty of swagger, and has a heavy dash of the theatre. Now this man has expressed himself most bitterly against Piesse; could he have hanged him, he would have gladly bought the rope. Now were we all surprised this morning, to be informed that Morgan had agreed to cook for Piesse—to be something of a Valet de Sham—for a payment of 2/- per week. He of course fulfils this engagement as well as carry on the work to which he is appointed.

13th. Sunday. We are to remain in camp—a very cheerless morning. I wonder what my Adelaide friends are just now doing, would that I were with them. After having finished some birds which I had to skin, I set about darning my socks, and mend my clothes which have got torn in the scrub, as I cannot command an hour either on this day or any other. I deem I am quite justified in embracing this opportunity in making these necessary repairs and still leaving me I trust not unmindful of my relationship to God, I would suffer anything rather than not in spirit to be keeping His testimonies and to walk before Him in all holiness—my situation is altogether ungenial to the Christian, yet though I am separated from all earthly spiritual associations, yet I am able to draw at once consolation and encouragement from the fountain of Mercy.

About 4 p.m. the camp was put all astir through hearing at some distance a native most terrificly 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.

The native was one of the blacks who had been with us from the time of our leaving Morunde till we had killed the first bullock, when he had remained by the carcass, after which he returned to Morunde. When he was posted off to us (distant 300 miles) he had been told ere he started it was a letter for Jacky (the cook, who had well fed the fellow) and he would get flour and a tomahawk, if he travelled quick; which he did in eleven days. It was laughable to see the old fellow, although extremely hungry, he with his big mouth full of mutton and damper could not tell his tale half fast enough, his eyes rolling with delight; and all mixed up with "Jacky". He and his companions were dreadfully tired, but the old fellow could not sleep for joy, and about an hour after midnight he was up again talking away to the Watch as loud and full as ever; so much the creatures of passion.

14th. Mr. Flood—the fellow who had his fingers shot away—since he has recovered, has been assuming a mighty deal of importance. This morning I heard him singing out for me; wondering what he wanted I went to him, he most authoritatively ordered me to take the sheep out. I at first took no notice, but on his again ordering me to do it, I quietly told him I should attend to no order emanating from him. "Then", says he, "I will make you"—surely things are coming to a pretty pass, when such a fellow as this should have the power of thus issuing his orders

—a man who has been twice a convict, the latter time sentenced to Norfolk Island, and who previous to his joining our party robbed his employer, and would have been taken into custody, if he had not obtained leave to go ahead of the party to select the sheep which were for our use. After this Mr. Browne sent for me to his tent. When I told him of the order I had received and that I had not attended to it, he expressed himself as disgusted with Flood—yet he wished me to get my breakfast and then take the sheep to some sandhills where I should find some feed for them, and that I should be relieved during the day—which I was—and devoted the time after in writing to Delia.

15th. About noon Mr. Poole and Stuart returned bringing encouraging intelligence, they had fallen in with water, and had observed a large body in the distance. This has made Sturt all alive—he fancies we shall soon come upon the great waters of the interior, after we have fairly pushed into the interior, in this the NNW direction. Nothing is heard but about the boat.

16th. All hands under Mr. Poole commenced chaining a "Base Line". As it is usual in this work to proceed with flags to obtain accurately a straight line, flags were of course planted. On leaving the work for the day a flag was left stuck in the ground—we had not left it long when stealthily a native, under the cover of a bough, crept up to it and bolted with staff and bunting.

I observe an indication of bad feeling in these natives towards us.

Old Nitebook seems in a study, however, somewhat before the day closed in, as a considerable body of natives were seated jabbering away, old Nitebook opened out upon them, and a more perfect piece of Bouncing Bullyism could not well be, than the way he talked to them. The substance of his talk was that we were very good fellows, and if we were injured "Ucumatta" would come up with the police, and destroy them, as had been done in a great measure with the tribe to which he belonged on the Rufus. This Ucumatta is Mr. Eyre. He (Nitebook) during his harangue had been standing near a dray, against the wheel of which was leaning a gun in the midst of his fury—to give force to his argument—he threw his hand back and grasped the gun, his eye flashing with passion. When they still seemed adverse—you could have heard him for half a mile just then—his left arm was stretched out in the direction where the natives had been slaughtered, his right holding the gun was thrown back—there was something truly wild and majestic about him. The old fellow conquered, and there was a visible change at once in their manner towards us.

It is no wonder they should have meditated evil against us, for this is the very tribe which were so shamefully injured by Mitchell's party. I will here relate the circumstances. As was customary, Mitchell had encamped 2 or three miles from the river. One of the men, on coming to the river for water, had had an interview with a female native, and promised her a kettle, if she would gratify his lust. A day or two after, the wretch again came to the river and the poor creature, who had an infant at her back, came for her kettle, having with her two or three others.

It appears he first knocked her down, and she as soon as she could ran to the river, but just as she was jumping in, the brute fired, and instead of falling into the water, she fell back on the bank a corpse. The white fellow came up to her and finished his butchery by taking the child by its heels, and dashing its brains out against a gum tree; and then observing the natives (who were with the unfortunate female) crouching behind a tree on the opposite bank, he fired a volley at them. To conclude the scene—one of these behind the tree was a young lad—he is now a tall fine young man, named Tou-pa⁹ has shewn us the grave, the tree where the child perished, the tree behind which he crouched, in which were the marks of three balls. Well might Mitchell say "Oh! that my good name is entrusted with such men". It was this circumstance that gave rise to the report that murder had been committed. After this Mitchell was obliged to make a hasty retreat.

17th. This morning our faithful friend "Nitebook left us with the native "Jacky" and others, bearing a dispatch from Sturt to the Governor. They were supplied with provisions, they carry water in a "Wallaby" bottle, which will hold a gallon. They skin this animal, almost without making an incision, keeping the hair on the innermost side.

⁹ Topar: Sturt

The thermometer very high—102—we broke up our camp and started for a spot selected by the Doctor on the creek running out of the Darling, where we shall find more feed for our cattle—the Captain remained behind to take or rather to get taken, a lunar observation, he poor man cannot see the moon by day. During our travelling we observed the delusive mirage, it causes the unwary traveller to believe his parching thirst will soon be relieved. The appearance of water could not be more so, if veritable water it was, but it is refraction—I observed it in the distance on the margin of an immense bed, which has been filled with water at some time—the Laidley Ponds of Mitchell. About 3 in the afternoon we came to our camping ground, being on the creek, near which is very good feed. We here found some of the natives, which were present when Nitebook delivered his speech—they seemed to dislike our disturbing them, for they soon packed up and went away, leaving behind them in preparation rushes, from which they make their twine with which they make birding nets, such as will go across the creek, and as the ducks are dashing on, they get stopped. Emu also are caught in nets made from a strong twine. The rushes are put into a deep hole, which has been well heated. With the rushes are put in a salsolaceous plant, which contains a great quantity of moisture, the whole is then well covered in, and the steam arising from the plant saturates the rush, and after being thus subjected, it becomes extremely tough, and gets torn abroad, and is then twisted, which is done with the ball of the hand on the thigh.

I felt queer, very, on seeing one of the women having a young puppy dog in her arms which was sucking away at her breast, I felt I do not know how at the sight.

18th. The base line which had been commenced was today to get finished. Having the spring cart, myself and others under the direction of Mr. Poole started for the work, we found it very dangerous travelling in consequence of the ground being so extremely rotten. As we were jogging on one of our horses broke through into an enormous hole, and was nearly smothered—and during the work as I was walking with the chain I found the ground give away beneath me, and down I sank almost up to my middle. A very large snake was killed. The day hot, the flies bothering, but the heart rather light and cheersome. Finished the chaining in good time and returned home, in doing which we had to cross the creek. In the morning, there was no appearance of water where we crossed, but on returning we found the water rapidly flowing. In attempting to cross, one of our horses was again nearly lost—it being bad enough without water but tenfold worse with.

The flag that had been stolen was returned, through the influence of an old chief—this man is a very remarkable old fellow, his person highly 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 dress like a woven nightcap—it being the human hair and the white fur of an animal they call 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.

20th. Sunday. The morning opened fine but warm. It however came on to blow-very hard, it was one of the pestilential hot winds; it continued nearly all day; dreadful. Being encamped on sandy ground we were at all times nearly buried. During the day old Nitebook again made the camp, accompanied by two natives from the Rufus. The old fellow had sent on the dispatch he was charged with, and had brought back to Sturt another. These communications are respecting the supposed murder. A party I suppose are at Lake Victoria in case we should be annoyed by the natives (they think we have had a row). They will come to our assistance. The hot wind passed away towards the evening and we were called to prayers.

21st. The Captain and Doctor, taking with them two men and Toupa the native, started this morning to the N and W to review the country previous to our breaking away from our present Camp. Stuart With a party chaining the "Pond". At night, according to instructions, a rocket was fired.

22nd. Having left the River Darling, it might be well to state we first encamped on it about 20 miles from its junction with the Murray. The spot which we have last left (known by the natives by the name of "Will-ye-yarra"¹⁰) is nearly 100 miles from the junction. Our present camping ground is pleasant, the creek losing itself in one of the immense basins, its banks being lined with gum saplings. Away to the W and SW is the basin. All hands except Lewis idle—this man is very busy in getting the gear of the boat ready. The natives call this place "Cawn-dillah".¹¹

23rd and 24th. The weather oppressive, the glass standing 109.

25th. During the night a little rain which has made it much cooler. The flies are very bothering.

26th. This morning it blew very heavily, indicating rain – the cold was as extreme as the heat was.

¹⁰ Williorara: Sturt.

¹¹ Cawndilla: Sturt

About 4 p.m. the Captain and party returned—the report made by Mr. Poole in reference to the large body of water turns out to be fudge. This must annoy Sturt as he in the last dispatch had made this supposed fact to appear with the greatest importance. It was a mirage—we shall not float again—what we might do by and by As the captain and Party were journeying they unexpectedly came upon a black fellow who became so frightened that he bolted into neighbouring wombat hole to hide.

27th. Sunday. Old Nitebook again started for Morunde with a dispatch. Our other native “Tuando” seems all on the fidgets to return, he dreads going with us into a country, he says, where there is no water. The poor fellow got a real or pretended fit of the bellyache—the Doctor gave him a strong dose of Spirits of Wine which made him drunk. Although so quiet and inoffensive in his manners, he became, through the influence of the potion, maddened and infuriated, having to be held till the fellow fell asleep.

CHAPTER III

1844: 28th October to 10th December

WE BREAK CAMP— HEAT AND DUST— ANIMALS SUFFER— I FEEL POORLY— MY RELATIONS WITH PIESSE— PLEASANT COUNTRY— A WATERHOLE—THUNDERSTORM—HEAVY RAIN—NATIVE HUTS— DENSE SCRUB— DRIVING THE SHEEP— STURT DISSATISFIED— DIVINE CONSOLATION — CAMP ON FLOOD'S CREEK.

28th. At day break all hands were up, busy in getting things ready for a start—we have a long journey before we expect to fall in with water. Our untrodden country is before us. If we can succeed in pushing into the interior from this point in a NW direction, it will be a point of great advantage, because if we fail from here we shall have to fall back again on the Darling and follow it up some hundreds of miles ere we shall be able with the least chance of success of penetrating.

About 8 a.m. we broke from our camp, taking a westerly course, leaving the ranges bearing north of us. Our bullocks evincing much freshness, being in good condition. As the day wore, the heat became very oppressive. About noon we halted to rest and refresh ourselves with tea &c., having ten 8 and 5 gallon casks—they were all filled ere we started. After 2 hours we again were on the move, the heavy horse cart having preceded us some time.

Mr. Poole and Stuart were away in the hills, taking the different bearings. We experienced the misery of overwhelming dust. The wind being strong, and soil being torn up with our cattle, it caused us often to be almost choked. The poor sheep suffered dreadfully—one died. We were travelling over an immense plain, covered with a low scrub—the soil, a deep red sand -increasingly hot and dusty. The sun set, still we travelled, the moon got up, still we travelled; about 10, a long way ahead of us, we observed a fire, about half past twelve we came up to it. The heavy horse cart had reached this far—but the horses were beaten and could go no further. Here we halted, securing the cattle with chains to the wheels. I was thankful to be able to coil in my blankets—for I had caught a severe cold, through the late sudden transition in the weather—I could hardly move my limbs. I had to get up on one of the drays—this is a sorry place for a man to be sick.

29th. About 6 a.m. we again started, our bullocks looking very queer. After travelling about an hour or so, they evinced signs of distress. We had fallen upon a creek, but no water—we could only move on very slow, and about 11 a.m. one of the bullocks fell -we could do nothing but let it lie. However, after we had boiled some tea and rested some time it got up, and after much toil we succeeded in reaching water,¹² but before the bullocks could get at it we were obliged to clear away the sand, and then only two could drink at a time, having to clear out after each pair.

¹² Curnapaga: Sturt

It was simply the draining of the creek into a hollow under an ironstone rock, which caused it to be strongly impregnated with iron, so much so that after being some time in a tin pot it turned quite black. Engaged in skinning a beautiful white hawk, I felt very poorly—got some medicine.

30th. 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.

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 water¹³ 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. 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.

¹³ Parnari: Sturt

2nd. 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.

3rd. Sunday. High winds and very hot; the water on which we are encamped is rapidly disappearing. Altogether this is a most disagreeable spot—so much loose sand—and it is as much as we can do to get under our drays, the wheels of which are sunk so very deep. Mr. Piesse has been figuring today in such a manner as to induce me to report him to Captain Sturt—I preferred doing this rather than retaliate upon him in throwing back in his face the malicious allusions which he made. Previous to our present association he has often when in Adelaide asked me to his house. He was intimate with my wife's family, having come to this colony in the ship¹⁴ with them.

¹⁴ The Fairlee, 1840

It seems he felt desirous to get Delia for a wife, when I spoiled his plans by marrying her myself ; for this he entertains for me the bitterest hate—which when in town he smothered. He today certainly annoyed me, but I could not afford to resent it in the way which my unscrupulous comrades would have wished. Orders issued to prepare for a start on the morrow.

4th. About 2 p.m. the camp was broke up. After travelling some little time we entered among the ranges through which the creek flows. As the day closed in, it was really delightful, the delight arising from the fragrant odours produced from the multitude of flowers and herbs which strewn our path. The scenery was so different from what we have been accustomed to since we left Adelaide, peak rising on peak on either side of us, and in the distance vegetated to their very summits with shrubs. About sundown, we passed out of the gorge and entered upon more open country-and very soon came upon a hole in a branch creek containing a 6 weeks supply of water, with abundance of feed for our cattle.

5th. Skinned a bird of the parrot tribe, a very splendid specimen. About 9 a.m. the Captain and Doctor started upon what is known among us as a Scouring Expedition to find water & beyond our present camp. The before-mentioned bacon case, duly filled with water, was fastened into the heavy horse cart, and is to be taken a given distance and then left to supply the horses.

Although Tuando and Nappa, the other native, have come thus far with us, I think they will go no further. The spot where we are now encamped is very pleasant; we are sat down in an *Acacia* shrubbery, some species of this shrub being now covered with delicate white flowers, and the soil seems pretty good.

6th. After making sundry preparations our two friendly useful blacks Tuando and Nappa, with little ceremony, wished us goodbye, and have returned to their tribe. About 5 p.m. Lewis returned with the bacon case, which from the weight of water had bursted. Sullivan, who had also been, had broken the Captain's favorite gun—I am thankful it was not I. These men give a poor account of the country ahead. The best draught horse but one we have, is returned lamed in its shoulder.

7th. The camp visited by three emus but they were very shy. While sitting on a log this evening yarning with Turpin, and smoking our pipes, my eye was attracted by a most luminous light in the horizon away to the NW. It was a surprising large meteor falling, in doing which it exploded, emitting a most brilliant light, leaving for several minutes an altitudinal luminous body—had it been darker it would have appeared to much greater advantage.

8th. All hands busy in digging a well some little distance down the creek at its junction with a branch creek. Plenty of water of course was found, but it was only drainings—we inserted a bread cask in the well, tamping it well in and then covered it over with boughs. Piesse, in the issue of rations, has seen fit to get permission to reduce our tobacco, so unnecessary a reduction—all hands displeased; Piesse is wished most undesirable things.

9th. Strolled among the hills with Kirby; poor fellow is certainly "wanting a shingle". Returned very soon and overhauled my socks, turned to and had two or three hours occupation in darning them. I also skinned two birds—got the gun mended—by this time it was near time to turn in, but I thought it desirable to take some medicine ere I did so when I went to my medicine chest (which by the bye was simply a pill box) I found some friends had taken all my stock of medicine (10 pills). Old Kirby has been complaining, it is hard to judge him.

10th. Sunday—It is very hot—the glass ranging from 90 to 98 and even to 109 - poor Poole grunts and puffs—he sleeps half of his time—yet with all he is getting very fat. Today he read the Church Service. After this was over I went away among the ranges and ascended one which commanded a fine view away to the N and E, and below me lay embosomed our camp, formed as it was in a square, the white canvas of the tents relieving the heavier hue of the tarpaulins which were covering the drays. The broken yet magnificent ranges—the sinuous course of the creek, traceable a long way by its shining sandy bed and line of timber on its banks—a beautiful picture lay before me—here away from observation did I enjoy sweet intercourse with heaven.

The day was closing in, the sun had set—everything wore the air of consummate quietude, the fly had ceased her humming, the mosquito was not on its wing—all spoke peace, yet I felt I was away from home, from those I loved. The charms of scenery like this I am now looking on lose much of their attractiveness, when thus viewed *in loneliness*.

11th. Engaged in digging a trench in the creek plenty of water soon oozed through the sand into it but we found none away from the bed of the creek, though we sunk 9 or 10 feet, and deeper we should have gone, but we have no tools—never could a party have been worse supplied with positively necessary implements to meet the various exigencies constantly occurring, than we are supplied.

12th. Mr. Poole deeming it necessary to erect on different heights in the ranges marks for observation, we commenced one today 4 miles SW of the camp, first forming a pile with large stones, then getting a long tree and sticking it on the top, securing it by piling big stones around it.

The appearance among the ranges is *desolation*-gloomy- no verdure-but peak rising upon peak. The stratum is composed of mica, quartz, the mica protruding perpendicularly above the surface in flakes having edges sharp as knives, it cuts our shoes, and near cripples us.

13th. Away to another range NE of the camp some 8 or 9 miles, and erected a corresponding object with that of yesterday. Our road when going this morning was dreadful, climbing over one range on to another for two or three miles, but we returned another way and cut off much bad ground.

We passed homeward down a ravine in which was scenery highly picturesque, the breaks in the rocks being so precipitously abrupt. We found water in two places; in one I had a refreshing bathe, the other place we could scarcely get at it. We obtained a large supply of what we call peaches (the prickly pear).

14th. Again we were away to the southern range and erected another mark. The heat very great, the glass up to 105—it would make us more comfortable, if we had a little rain, to lay the dust in our camp and for several days past heavy clouds have been passing with slight thunder. We are tormented with the flies, which are innumerable, and especially are we tormented with a fly which is scarcely perceptible, which gets into our eyes and causes instantaneous swellings, making us blind.

15th. About 2 p.m., a violent thunderstorm came on—the lightning most brilliant, the thunder heavy its violence lasted about an hour; when it ceased the rain gently coming down invigorating all around, and dispersing all the flies, which made it more desirable still.

16th. During the past night it blew most fearfully, the rain coming down in torrents—the thunder almost without cessation.

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.

During the first watch the weather was really fearful, I have never in my life witnessed so heavy a fall of rain, had it continued much longer, we should have been washed from beneath our drays. I cannot help it, but the thoughts of home are constantly uppermost in my mind, I lie for hours tossing about in my blankets; still, home is uppermost.

17th. Sunday. The rain continues—it has supplied us with an abundant supply—several of the branch creeks having water rapidly flowing down them. Mr. Poole read the Church Service and not long after the Captain and Doctor returned, leaving Flood and Morgan to follow—it is really amusing to hear the Captain asserting that he has been very near a large body of water because they saw large clouds, as if pending over some such body; however, he did not see it. They might have been near Lake Torrens. As it was they fared badly through the scarcity of water. During the journey an emu was shot; on Morgan getting to it, it not being dead, he was about finishing it, having a gun in his hand. The bird, however, finished the gun with a kick which sent the stock flying—it was fortunate it was not the fellow's leg it would have smashed it in pieces, for they kick worse than a horse.

18th. Engaged in clearing the Captain's pistols, also in making a ramrod for Poole's gun. The Acacia which we have here is a beautiful dark wood, and if large enough would make most beautiful furniture. It looks well and answers well for ramrods—Poole was highly pleased with it. The rain has ceased.

19th. All hands busy, preparatory to our pushing ahead - the day beautiful and clear.

19th All hands busy, preparatory to our pushing ahead—the day beautiful and clear.

20th. About 10 last night it began again to thunder and lighten, the rain coming down in torrents, it continued throughout the night. I would have preferred any other bedroom than the one I was in the possession of. The water was rising all round our drays, and every flash of lightning was taken advantage of to mark the near and nearer approach of the water to the space on which our skins and blankets were huddled. We had no other shelter but our drays, and had it continued longer than it did, we must have sat in water. It, however, ceased about 8 this morning and we presented a most miserable appearance as we surrounded the fire, which with difficulty we were able to light. Fearing the cessation would be but transient, we dug deep trenches around and about the drays which would carry off the water, and it was fortunate we did this for about 1 p.m. it came down as violently as ever.

Poole with the Doctor and Morgan started away to the westward, to hit Lake Torrens before it came on to rain. I very much question if Poole's pluck will keep him from returning.

21st. About 9 last night the rain ceased, it coming on to blow heavy, this morning broke calm and lovely. We should have moved away from our encampment, but the ground is soft, and our drays would hardly get along. A conical hill to the NE of our camp which has been named "Piesse's Nob" as well as the contiguous ranges, is composed almost of Iron Stone--so much so as to affect the compass 30 degrees. I forgot to note among our flock of sheep was one ewe--on the 3rd of this month, at our last camp, it dropped a lamb; he escaped during the late rains. The many branch creeks which fall into the main creek (which by the way is known to us by the name of "Iron Stone Creek") have full bodies of water flowing, but the main creek shews but little appearance of water as its bed is so deep in sand, which takes in like a sponge.

22nd. About 11 we broke up, moving up the left bank of Iron Stone Creek. We found the travelling heavy but better than we expected. After travelling about seven miles we encamped having water on the plain, none to be seen in the creek.

23rd. About 9 we were again on the move. It is pleasing to have some ground for hoping we shall be able to get into the interior--our dependence however is alone upon rain, for the natives intimate to us that their supply depends only upon rain, lifting their hands over their heads and rapidly pulling them down.

It is presumed from observation taken that we are now in Latitude W31°, Longitude 141 East.

We could no longer follow up the creek on its left bank, and therefore crossed over, and was obliged to follow up the creek, though very considerably out of our course—as on the plains, it was almost a bog.

I was rather pleased during our journey with observing a natural cistern, which contained a large body of water. It was granite—the walls of about 9 feet high were about 5 yards apart and were upwards of 30 yards long—and the ends were broken abrupt pieces of granite. It appeared singular, being so isolated; it appeared valuable, for it may possibly retain its precious liquid—which may help us in some future need.

We have really gained but very little in our journey today—we encamped at the junction of a branch creek with the main one, where we had plenty of water—having the dividing range some 3 miles distant. We here again fell in with a sort of vegetable which we found on the Murray, it has a sweet taste, shaped something like an elongated egg, growing on a parasitic plant. Many strange grasses I observe growing as well as the kangaroo and spear grass. This latter grass penetrates our clothes, and causes an irritating pain, and it is difficult to get rid of these bottle screw torments, for they readily leave the parent stem, and being spiral, they force their way through the thickest clothing. The sheep suffer dreadfully, it passes right through the fleece and buries itself beneath the skin, for the breast and shoulders we find crammed after the sheep is killed and dressed.

Then it is no wise agreeable to sleep in blankets when having been inadvertently laid down on this grass.

24th. Sunday. The weather mild, the glass at 60—the Church service was read—remained encamped.

25th. Starting early our course was NW. Entering through the Dividing Range through an easy gap with a very easy ascent, we were soon through the range and an open country appeared before us. The creek—the Iron Stone Creek—takes its rise in this range, a little to the W of South where we entered. Some fine scenery presented itself just as we were about entering the range, the range sweeping nearly E and W—as we descended what struck us more particularly was the altered dip, it being NW, and coming on a creek, its current is in a corresponding course. Coming on water we encamped amid a country well grassed, moderately timbered and altogether a pleasant country. Native huts to the number of 16 I counted—yet they appear not to have visited them lately.

26th. An accident occurred in our starting, which prevented our moving any further today. Jones's dray pole got broken, it took us all day to mend it.

27th. About 8 we made a more successful start than that of yesterday. We moved up on the right bank of this new creek, but after 3 or 4 miles it bore away too much to the eastward, our course lying N. Lying before us, one high and long extended series of ranges bearing away to the ESE and WNW, over this our course is. On approaching, a dense scrub had to be passed with abundance of spear grass. Our route was obliged to be WSW as we could not ascend the hills on any other, it was heavy work and hot work before we could get to the point from

from which we were to descend, it being better than 4 miles. We did it without accident and when we obtained a view of the country which this mass of hills begirt—what a scene an immense plain lay stretched before us farther than the eye could reach. Bareness and desolation was the picture. True, the eye felt some relief in looking away WNW—we could distinguish a line of Gum trees indicative of a water course. With care we got the drays safely down—it was a long and dangerous descent. We now bore away to the N, hugging the range.

The sheep which I and my dog Serjeant were driving appeared to suffer much through the heat. I could hardly get them along—and what made the matters worse, "Sargy" was getting done, through the same cause. I drove, yet under every bush they would group—what with shouting and thrashing, I nearly got done myself. I found it no joke to be thus situated with no assistance, the heat and dust made me in need of water and the drays were a long way ahead. During my toil and vexation (for vexed I was—for as one lot were driven from beneath the bush, another lot would get huddled under another) during this Mr. Piesse who had lingered behind passed me at some little distance—I asked him either to help me himself or pass on and send back Sullivan who had passed on with drays—from Piesse I received no answer, but supposing he would not fail in sending back some of the spare hands, I got them on as well as I was able, till at last they all laid down.

My only course was to leave them and overtake the drays, and getting Master Sullivan's return. About one or two miles hard walking I came up with the party; I found them resting beside a water hole. I buried my head in the water, and requiring Sullivan to return, he objected. During my urging the unfairness of his conduct in refusing his help Captain Sturt came up, who had remained behind on the range with Stuart to make some necessary observations. I experienced from him a volley of abuse for going away and leaving the sheep. It not being the time to explain matters, I only told him I came on to get assistance. Sullivan returned with me, and we both of us were able to get them on. Mr. Piesse is a bad man or he would have caused Sullivan, at once after he had slaked his own thirst, to have come to my help.

We encamped after a trying, laborious day's travel on the creek which we encamped on, on the other side of the range. This creek passes through the range in an easterly direction, but when again issuing it flows away to WSW. There being no water in the creek nearer than 3 or 4 miles up it, we were fortunate in getting a supply from a pool that was found on the plain, from the late rains. In this creek we find good feed for the cattle. The range which we have crossed is almost destitute of vegetation: bare, naked rock.

28th. The Captain very anxious to continue on in this direction, sent Flood with two other men in the light cart to dig for water in a creek about 24 miles ahead—it is possible we shall yet have to fall back on the Darling as so little water is existing in these sterile regions.

The glass stood up to 119. Among our minor troubles are the pestiferous mosquito. The bullocks yoked and chained up so that we might start very early in the morning.

29th. About 4 we started, a delightful change in the air, it being cool with a gentle breeze. Travelling 5 miles we came to a creek in which we found a little water. The country over which we are now passing is destitute of wood of any kind, as far as the eye can reach all is destitution, save a low brown scrub-soil stone and sand—yet we saw emus in the distance; they must subsist on the vegetation which is found in the several creeks.

About noon we stopped to rest, and get breakfast, which was on a creek but no water in it. Captain Sturt and Stuart had left the drays and had ridden to the ranges; we were following the light cart track. About 5 in the afternoon we came up with Flood, who we found alongside a miserable small quantity of water left by the rains—he had made some blunder, otherwise we should not have been here; we ought to have been miles to the west. I had today much less bother with the sheep—it being so much cooler, my faithful dog Serjeant helped me famously—the late journey he failed through the great heat and dust with the want of water.

A white hawk being shot, on the Captain joining us, although almost dark he expected me to skin it—I had walked and drove the sheep 30 miles—but there is no feeling for the tired one—of course we did not ship to get tired; it is worse than folly to expect sympathy.

30th. Started for the point which we should have made last night and reached it after two hours travelling. I at once turned to at the hawk which was shot last night. One would have supposed that every thing would have been provided so as to secure the birds after they were skinned—such as paper—but such is not the case—the birds are skinned and then thrown into the Doctor's chest. With this hawk, all the time I was engaged with it, it was blowing hard; although I could hardly keep the feathers in their place, yet when I finished it looked well, but for the want of paper. I could not with this bird as with all others keep its wings snug into the body without paper, pins and other things. On my taking the bird to Sturt, he expressed himself highly dissatisfied, because I could not fix the wings. I felt thoroughly disheartened, for I knew somebody had been poisoning his mind—and do what I could all would be wrong. He told me I had deceived him by telling him in Adelaide I was a finished bird skinner. He was telling me a bare-faced lie, and he knew it, but I thought it best to say nothing as there was at this time little chance of convincing him of his error. I left the tent dreadfully depressed, for though I record it, I studied to fulfil to the utmost extent my engagement with him, and to receive such treatment led me little to hope. I hope it will make me more humble, more prayerful; the throne of Grace is immeasurably valuable; my God sees the end from the beginning. The air is cold—the glass being below 60.

Ist. December Sunday — The Church Service was read.

2nd. Mr. Poole and the Doctor returned but had experienced disappointment, they found what they suppose the lake to be a mere mud hole liquid mud, unfit for use. They must have fared badly, as through the country to the lake they found but little water it has been altogether a failure.

3rd. Busy with birds—being constitutionally nervous I felt indescribable agony of mind; I could not divest myself of this feeling—until I took my case simply to the throne of Mercy—I poured out my sorrows before him who was tried in all points like unto his people. I felt happier, composed, and comfortable. I pray that I might not forget whose servant I am but quietly submit to all the passing untoward circumstances—so that it might make me more holy, more careful and to look for peace alone from the promises of a faithful God.

4th. The man Flood, who is at the bottom of all this ill feeling of the Captain towards me, is away with another man to look for water ahead. During their absence we remain stationary. We fixed a mark for observation, and also chained a "base line". If I am not at the birds, my labor is thrown into the passing requirements of camp duties, and for this I have no care, but there seems to me an utter hopelessness to please, and was it not for my character, and the loved ones at home, and my sense of what is required at my hands, as one professes to be actuated by the high and holy principles of the Gospel, I should become reckless—careless whether Sturt was pleased or not.

5th. Started early in the light cart under Mr. Poole some 9 miles from the camp, and erected another mark for observation, after which chained our distance home. The day was very hot, very—we are certainly in the midst of a most miserable country. Our camp is at the junction of two creeks—in the branch creek only is there water, although our camp is supplied from a trench dug in the sand; it is only drainings. We have some miles up this branch several large holes filled by the late rains of these holes no one knew anything till our cattle found them out since we left the Darling, the most of the water we have been supplied with has been found in branch creeks. The gum trees which are found on the banks of these creeks are few and small. Passing away from the bank not a tree nor shrub is observable—the brown stunted scrub growing up between stones is the general vegetation of this vast plain. In the range, there is one peak higher than the others, and is put down as the Mt. Lyall, noted by Mitchell.

6th. Again experienced a growl from the Captain about the birds. I will here state how I manage. I get my bird, or birds, when travelling, when we come into camp, and if we are stationary soon after they are shot. They first having been shewn to the Captain, I get my knife, wadding, soap and powder, get on the sheltered side of the dray, and down I sit on the ground, and skin away—blow high, blow low—as soon as the skin leaves the body the heat is so great, that the moisture of the skin soon passes away—from this it causes me no little trouble in neatly bringing back the skin over the head.

In addition to the heat and frequently an unaccommodating wind, I have the flies by myriads, covering my face, and almost preventing me seeing. My birds are finished; I now require paper, pins, etc., but I have none, as the Doctor cannot open his chest at all times. I am supplied with a frail tea chest, to keep them till he can stow them away, this tea chest has no cover and I often find a heavy weight upon my birds when in the draybullock drivers are no wise nice; what chance has a man to be able to get his birds to retain a natural form, under these circumstances? If Sturt wishes to see birds soon after they are skinned, the wings having no support will surely fall down; if they remain a day or so, the skin dries and all is snug - save that the neck gets endangered of being longer than it should.

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 re. turned; 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.

7th. There is never a start but ye hear dreadful growls between the bullock drivers—one fearing he shall have a heavier load than another, all the loads have been weighed.

The altercation this morning among them was such as to induce Poole to interfere, for Piesse, with all his cleverness, is so much hated by these men, that if he attempted any adjustment he would get any thing but thanks for his trouble. Poole threatened to put Jones in irons—all these things arise from the want of system—system there is, to annoy and irritate. Sturt is the tool, whatever he is told is for the best, without knowing any reason why it should not be for the worse, he adopts the system.

Previous to our starting the Captain sent for me—in a much milder mood he gave me instructions about the birds. Availing myself of the presence of the Doctor I was determined to rebut the charge he made against me of deceiving him. After stating to him no man could have striven harder than I had done to please him, I referred to our agreement in Adelaide, which was simply this: I offered and agreed to keep the fire arms in order, to make and repair what would be possible under the circumstances in which we might be placed—giving in a small list of tools which I should require and to make myself generally useful. I had never referred to birds, as I understood he was about engaging a bird skinner. The same night which he determined on my forming one of the party, I was given to understand (by the party himself) that the bird skinner was not going—requiring a higher salary than Sturt would give. When I heard this, and having to see Sturt after, I spoke to him about bird skinning. He asked me if I could skin birds; I told him I knew but very little; all I knew, was what I picked up many years ago in England I remember using the following words, "Captain Sturt, you must fully bear in mind I am no professed bird skinner—but I will do my best".

His reply was, "I can tell you what you don't know, as I for many years had the charge of the Museum in Sydney", and with this I was engaged.

Having said I had deceived him and had told his cook so, I was glad to get the Doctor present, and repeated what had passed in reference to the birds in his office of a Saturday night. He did not dissent, for he could not from what I now brought to his recollection—I also now spoke to him why I left the sheep the other day, and other things in which I felt aggrieved, and got some thing like satisfaction. The Doctor told the Captain that much allowance ought to be made for the birds, as I had to contend with so many inconveniences, having nowhere to skin my birds and thereby exposed to the heat, wind, and flies: it was almost impossible to keep the skin moist long enough to be able properly to bring it back again. This all was truth, and I got the benefit of it. We begin afresh. My prayer is that whether under frowns or favour, do nothing say nothing that will dishonour God. What am I heir to—what is there treasured up for me Jesus to thee how much do I owe-yet so foolish am I that the petulance of man unhinges me. May I as a servant act as in the sight of God, leaving the residue with him.

8th. The heat very great. The Church Service was read.

9th. About 8 a.m. we broke up our encampment, bearing away to the E of N. The range presents a fine magnificent appearance, its sides being so destitute of vegetation all its massiveness at once strikes the eye. As we travel on the stones become more numerous. Travelling some 8 or 9 miles, the eye was relieved by viewing in the distance a line of timber skirting a water course, on reaching the creek we found an abundant supply of water. On this creek I observed the remains of an emu trap—constructed at a favorite point of the emus in their repairing for water—it is nothing more than a rude fence open at one side to admit the bird, on this fence is hung a large net, and when the game is fairly in the water the native with his companions close up the gap, when they are able to kill them. On this creek were many small circles of stones, very likely being thus formed by the younger fry in their playful moods, or it might be for some more important purpose; it was here the three females with their children were seen by Flood. We have crossed several creeks today and at some seasons large bodies of waters must flow down them.

Very late at night we brought up on a small water hole—a fracas between Poole and the Captain. The fact is Mr. Poole is hardly able to perform any one duty which devolves upon him as chief officer; through a feeling of delicacy the Doctor, though much more qualified, both as it regards the right using of instruments, and the general carrying on of the work, declines as much as possible from doing that which Mr. Poole is supposed to do.

It causes a smile—but Poole cannot bear for the Doctor to be appealed to for his assistance. The Captain felt sulky, and would not have a tent pitched, but after the Doctor persuading him he was poorly, he consented to a bell tent being pitched.

10th. About 5 a.m. we were again on the move, the air was chilly, our travelling was bad on account of the stony ground—destitution and bareness—is the greatest body we have fallen in with since we left the Darling—the heat at noon very great.

CHAPTER IV

1844, 11th December, to 1845, 28th January

ENCAMPED ON FLOOD'S CREEK-OFFICERS RIDE IN SEARCH OF WATER - SUDDEN STORM - NATIVES - BIRD HUNT WITH SULLIVAN - HEAT, FLIES, MOSQUITOES - STURT PLEASED DRAY CATCHES FIRE-BROWNE AND POOLE FIND WATER WE MOVE CAMP - POOLE LEADS US ASTRAY - THE PINE FOREST - MOSES RESCUES US-THE ACACIA PLAIN - FLOOD FINDS WATER - STURT SUFFERING FROM BLINDNESS - MY BIRTHDAY - LOOSE DRAY WHEELS - OFFICERS AGAIN SEARCH FOR WATER - I SUFFER FROM BLINDNESS - COOLER WEATHER - FOULKES SICK - STURT RETURNS - GOD'S GRACE - FIND LARGE BODY OF WATER - DEPOT FORMED.

11th December. Poole, the Doctor and *Moses* left us to discover water ahead-I believe this sudden departure has arisen out of the past rumpus with Poole and the Captain. Poole, on his journey to the lake, observed to the Doctor that there would be no eclat if two or three men were not lost ere we returned—he is certainly anxious to build his fame upon a base anything but desirable to us common fellows. The day has been very cloudy, the glass up to 103; during the evening some lightning with distant thunder, it came on as black as ink boding a most fearful thunder storm—about 11 it came on to blow very heavy, with very little rain – it was a perfect hurricane. Talk of the Zephyrs—this was Boreas let loose—it capsized tents, marquee, and very nearly the drays.

The Captain was busy writing in his marquee, over goes the canvas right over his head, upsetting him tables and all—such little respect is rarely shewn to papers, chronometers, and abstruse calculation as was now shewn—every thing was Pell Mell. All hands were immediately engaged in securing what they could, and scarcely any thing would have been saved had we not burned blue lights, and during their fitful glare we had to work—so dark—so densely dark. It lasted about an hour, a few drops of rain, and all again was calm as a summer's eve.

12th. 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 in 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 any thing 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.

13th. The creek on which we are encamped, as well as most which we have crossed on this side of the range, flows from the E to WSW, the range bending away to the SE, bearing up towards the Darling, which is about 200 miles distant. We find in this neighbourhood abundance of water, which is very providential for I question if almost all the water which we have left in the several creeks is not almost gone, through absorption, and very possibly we shall not be able to go much further ahead till rain falls. Into the creek on which we are, are flowing several other creeks—some contain a little water, some none. A tolerable good cattle station might be formed here, if it was come-at-able—great abundance of feed, and the water might be throughout the year.

A kind of lucerne is found on the banks of the creek, as is also a large species of the kangaroo grass bearing a grain somewhat like the black oat; but the most interesting was the cucumbers, which in taste and form strictly resembles the cultivated esculent; the vine we here observe has on it many about the size of the gerkin.

A point of a range seen by Mitchell, which he names Mt. Lyall,¹⁵ is a source of trouble to Sturt; it should be somewhere in the adjacent ranges, but they cannot make it out. The Captain with Stuart and Flood passed away in an E direction to pick it up if they can. Sullivan and myself received instructions to run up the creek to obtain birds—Sullivan to shoot and I to skin.

14th. Accordingly getting some provisions and a blanket we started. Finding nothing on the main creek we bore away to the N and E, and fell in with another creek which loses itself in sheoak scrub. Getting no water Sullivan was for pushing home, I overruled him so far as to rest in the creek while I went away among the hills in search of some; fortunately I stumbled upon some, a very little seep among some stones, enough to last us three or four meals.—I fell back to pick up my comrade, which with some trouble—I did, and by the time we reached our precious little water hole it was night. Our quart tin pots were soon off our belts, and shewing their sides to a fire—our tea was soon made, and though we had only damper to eat with it, it was a delicious meal—talk of picnics—they are less than a bagatelle to this.

¹⁵ Lyell: Sturt

Rolling in our blankets with a stone under our heads, for a time indulging in the fragrant pipe for to be able rightly to appreciate this luxury parties must be circumstanced similarly to ourselves—under other circumstances, it is a *bad, very bad habit*—after smoking we fell off to sleep, and our slumber was unbroken till day dawn.

15th. Sunday. Securing one bird and getting our breakfast we pushed away to another creek, but not a bird was to be seen. In the afternoon we returned to the camp, which we should not have done, could we have obtained water. We found the Captain returned but had not found Mt. Lyall. In the evening the Church service was read—I mourn for the courts of God's house my heart does not condemn me, on account of my engagement on this, because I cannot order it otherwise if I was to speak to Sturt about it, my motives would be sneered at and it would be unaltered.

16th. Not very busy.

17th. 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.

Some take delight in the cackling of a goose, the grunt of a pig, and it is positive harmony to some to hear the yelping of a kennel of hounds-but-I think there is not a being existing who would have a feeling of pleasure pervade his mind at the hour of midnight on an unknown creek, to be awakened out of his sleep by a pack of wild dogs howling—they on one side of a water hole, and he on the other. Such a ravenous pack of visitors paid us a visit, and being deeply sunk in sleep it was some time ere we could collect our senses, and on our moving to get our guns they took to their heels. I had left my dog behind, the poor fellow's feet having become exceedingly sore through travelling over the hot sands; had he being lying at my feet, he would have done his best to have wakened his master; a more faithful creature could not be.

18th. Followed down the creek—the birds exceedingly scarce. The heat being so terrible we laid by during the middle part of the day, during which time—I secured my birds, which we had shot. Lewis, having been out gathering seeds, fell in with us; having the bodies of some ducks, we regaled him with the game of these wastes.

19th. Having a continuance of water we still followed down the creek till we could go no further in consequence of sandhills closing up the creek. Having more birds to secure we deemed it best for Sullivan to push some distance on these sandhills to obtain what birds more he could, while I should remain. During my work, I was dreadfully tormented with the flies—no one can conceive the numbers that were on my face and hands, almost driving me mad.

After a walk of 6 or 7 miles Sullivan returned, giving a most doleful account of the country as far as he could see, sand ridge upon sand ridge. Gathering some wild mint, we made mint tea, to save our ration tea, and early turned in to our blankets, for the heat during the day had been so great, that the lassitude it had occasioned made us glad to throw off our clothing. Though it was cooler as night drew on, it was still very hot, and keep beneath, and completely enveloped in, the blankets we were compelled to, for the mosquitoes were in myriads, and some of them most fearfully large; if accidentally a foot or a hand became exposed, they settled on them by dozens, boring away for blood like so many well sinkers.

20th. We moved homeward slowly, lingering on the banks of the creek, which was covered with a lovely verdure, although 100 yards or less from it a low brown scrub only existed; not a tree—not even a shrub was to be seen. Reaching home and reporting ourselves, I shewed what birds we had obtained to the Captain—he expressed himself as much pleased with them, and the neatness with which I had secured them, as he had found fault before.

The glass, which is hung against a tree in the shade, was beyond 116. Observed a beautiful comet to the WSW—it is small, but both the Nebula and Coma are beautifully brilliant. Our ration of tea and sugar is reduced; we have now 3 oz. tea, 8 lb. flour and 1 ½ lb sugar.

21st. In consequence of the flies, I became almost blind.

22nd. Sunday. The natives have not returned, as they gave us 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 blackfellow returned from the grave, and in consequence of the change has become white. The Church service read.

23rd. Flood and Lewis left the camp. Lewis goes to gather seeds. Lewis is a honest little fellow in the main, a sailor, consequently very handy at many things. His only fault perhaps is he makes himself too busy, and he's too apt to be stubborn and foolhardy, but withal he is as useful a man as needs be. Yet somehow he is not in much favor, which in this party is a criterion of a man's being something like a straightforward man.

24th. The mosquitoes being so tormenting, we can get but very little rest for them; to dissipate them bullock dung is burned, the smoke from which in a measure effects this. The dray under which I reside in camp was this morning nearly being destroyed with rations which it contained. The driver, Jones, had some time previous to his watch ending, which would be at 12 o'clock, lit one of these dung fires to drive out the insects; on his turning in, he had he supposed extinguished the fire, and had caused to fall down the end of the dray's tarpaulin, which came in contact

I was getting a snooze after a sleepless night, when I was frightened out of it by hearing my name sung out, "Brock, Brock, the dray's on fire," and sure enough on jumping up the flames were bursting forth, and being so inflammable, when this once took place, it rapidly spread. The getting out of my bedding, bag &c was not the work of a minute, and with difficulty we got off the burning tarpaulin from the dray—the medicine chest was burning at several places, but we soon put it out, and very fortunate we were able so soon to do so, for it contained among other matters a very considerable quantity of Spirits of Wine. A piece of paper on opening it was found just ignited; had the wine caught fire, the chest with its contents and highly probably a great part if not the whole of the tea and flour would have been destroyed. There was an attempt made to lay the cause of the accident to my pipe, but Jones told the Captain how it occurred, and that the dung fire which he supposed extinguished was the cause. It was so apparent, the fire commencing close by his bed, at the back of the dray, and I occupied the very front, so it would not do.

25th. Xmas Day-Home, Delia and my boy, but I cannot dwell upon them—the Doctor and Poole returned, they have found water ahead. An issue of raisins, for a Xmas Pudding-the Church service was read.

26th. The heat intense, busy preparing for moving on.

28th. About—1 a.m. the camp was broken up, and we took a course N and E.

The country flat and sandy, it well might be called a desert. The heat was so great that the Captain determines to avail himself of the night and travel on; we kept moving till it became dark, when we halted for refreshment and to wait for the moon's rising-taking the advantage of her light, we were again on the move about 10. Poole is making out our course, but there appears to be something like as if he was not quite confident that we are right; we I observe are trending more northerly; he says this is to avoid some very dense scrub. About midnight we entered upon an acacia scrub. I began to feel very tired, no one can tell how gladly I embraced an opportunity of lying down, making my dog Serjeant my pillow. A yoke broke and it took upwards of twenty minutes to replace it with another. Poor Serjy, I knew, would not let me sleep when the drays moved on. About half past two, I felt dreadfully annoyed: Mr. Piesse had obtained a chance to ride, and to lead another horse—my sheep go on with little trouble when they can push their noses under the hind part of a dray, and thus I had had but little trouble only to walk after them—but Mr. Piesse must needs fall in the rear of the hindmost dray, thus cutting off the sheep. I soon found the difference and I asked the man if he would ride alongside, instead of behind his only answer was such as I cannot repeat—I told him, he deserved to be made to move, but there he stuck till day dawn. I fondly hoped ere much of the day wore away we should be encamped on a water hole.

29th. Sunday. As the day came on, the heat which was dreadfully oppressive during the night increased. The pitter-patter of the sheep caused volumes of dust, but all would be forgotten bye and bye, when at the water hole. About 11 we rested and got some breakfast—there is evidently something wrong—Kirby was ordered to assist me, and we were to take the sheep on after the light cart, with Mr. Poole and Stuart, Flood and Morgan leading horses ahead of it, the drays to follow in the track. We were in the midst of a sand pine scrub—no sooner was Poole free from the Captain and Doctor when he began to hasten his pace, and necessarily the cart had to do the same to keep the horsemen in sight. Poole did not know where he was, and acted the bad bushman by losing his confidence, some times riding on in one course, then in another. I found it to be impossible for the sheep to travel at this rate; I determined to coil the sheep and wait the coming up of the drays. This I did beside a salt water lagoon (dry)—high towering sand ridges in every direction. About an hour the drays arrived, the bullocks appearing very distressed. The heat was dreadful, what breeze there was enough almost to suffocate one, the sand was that hot neither us nor the bullocks could bear to stand on it. After severe toil and making little way the Captain thought it best to leave two drays and add the teams to the others; this added little speed to our progress but it did not last long, the bullocks were beaten and the drivers suffered intolerably, having to shout and thrash through dust and heat greater than the mind can well imagine.

It was now 3 in the afternoon; up to this time we had followed Poole—when *Moses* (who had been with Poole and the Doctor to the water we were now trying to reach) told a Driver loud enough for the Doctor to hear him, "if we followed Poole's track any further, not a beast would be saved". We were at a standstill, we could not get an inch further. The Captain anxiously enquired of *Moses* if he could form an idea in what direction the water was, "Yes Sir," and pointed almost at an oblique angle opposite the course we were moving on—"You are right, *Moses*", said the Doctor, "we shall find water only in the direction you point to". Strange the Doctor should have kept the Captain on Poole's track so long—but the Captain is a stubborn man, and here the Doctor failed through false delicacy to Poole, for in the past night the Doctor offered to lead the camp, but Poole felt in high dudgeon that a reflexion should be thus cast upon his skill. The consequences of Poole's skill us poor chaps experienced—water nearly expended—bullocks and sheep knocked up in the midst of an awful scrub—*Moses* gave his advice which was to unyoke the bullocks and drive them to water, leaving the drays in the care of the men, to this the Captain assented, and also that the sheep were to follow the cattle, after giving them a little rest. Resting about an hour, having the black boy and Sullivan, I commenced anew—with the hopes of getting to water by dark. The black passed on ahead keeping the tracks, I and my companion driving them, poor Serjy tried to do his best as well.

I felt surprising considering how I have had to toil, but hope put energy in me. Sand ridge after sand ridge we passed and the sun was setting—we were now passing up a hollow, in which the scenery was so wild, yet though so positively desolate, and circumstanced as I was, I felt a charm pervade my mind; in looking round me there were a few scattered acacias, very beautiful in form and foliage, these contrasted by the red sand which received an additional tinge from the parting rays of the sun which were being darted up the hollow, and the still silence which reigned, produced for a moment a charm greater than I can describe.

Just before it became dark I perceived at a little distance beyond me a bullock; my hopes were, I thought, about to be realized, regarding the water—but I discovered my mistake; the poor thing had got this far but could get no further, its eyes brilliant as burning fires it appeared mad, and it was very dangerous to pass him. We pushed on till poor Bob could no longer discern the track, when I determined to bring up, causing the boy to lie on the track, coiling the sheep at some little distance Sullivan and myself to keep watch and watch about, for had we not done so the sheep would have been off to search for water; it was distressing to hear them. I took the first watch, while Sullivan slept—it was a melancholy watch—the beautiful comet was burning beautifully away in the SW horizon, I thought of the fact with something like approaching pleasure, those I loved in Adelaide no doubt often watched it but I was far, far from them—thirsty and weary and almost fearing to think of the issue of the coming day.

Deeming it time to arouse my companion and snatch a little sleep, I lay me down, and somehow I could not sleep. It was a fortunate circumstance; turning my eyes to the sheep I could not distinguish them, they had moved away from where they were coiled, and I was just in time to perceive the last ones; another five minutes they would have been lost. My companion was sound asleep—the moon rose I determined to be on the move. I, however, first ventured to smoke; dangerous as was the act I ventured, Nature wanted something I drew a few whiffs—it was delicious. We travelled on till day dawn, when an alteration took place in the scrub—it was now Acacia with a better bottom.

30th. Travelling about an hour or so we freed ourselves from the scrub and came upon the verge of a large plain—being on an eminence, we obtained a long view beyond us, how eagerly did our eyes pass on in the distance, to discern anything like a line of gum trees—but the heart turned sick; nothing indicating a water course was visible. The sun rose higher and hotter, the thirst we were beginning to feel intolerable. On this plain were every now and again hollows, in which water remains at times, these were composed of an incrustated white sand, which glistened in the sun, so much so as to attract the attention of the sheep, and away they would scamper, hoping to slake their raging thirst. We experienced great difficulty in getting them back on the track—which added immensely to our distress; our limbs were that stiff we could ill manage to walk, much less to run and seize them on the course.

A thought crossed my mind that it was highly probable the cattle could not find water, and no one could tell the distance we should have to travel on in their track; the sheep could not hold out much longer was a fact we could not shut our eyes to; the danger of our situation grew stronger, as we had passed the large plain and had opened up upon another, with no signs of water in the distance.

Home and the loved ones then rose before me; there was a possibility of our never more meeting. Anguish of mind for a time filled my soul—when to Him whose eye is ever over his people I offered up my prayer, that he would prepare me for all suffering and to deliver me from evil I felt happier, and reassured. About half an hour after this, I fancied I observed a horseman in the distance, but fearing to hope, I said nothing, until the black boy sung out "Flood is coming." He soon joined us—my first question to him was, "Have you come from a water hole?" He answered me by putting in my hands a little keg of water. As the liquid was moistening my parched throat, the tear of gratitude rolled down my cheek. I had experienced the fulfilment of the promise, we were safe, having but 7 miles further to travel ere we should come upon the water. Each of us having drank sparingly of the water, giving Serjeant his share out of the crown of my cap, and pushed on some little way. Morgan joined us on his way to the drays to get two casks and so to be able to fill them and get them back again to the drays for the relief of the men.

Morgan, though having so lately left water, must needs beg the little we had remaining; the keg was put into his hands; *he drank it all*. We parted, he riding to the drays, we for the water hole. Another bullock lay dying in our path. We at last were on the banks of a lagoon, near to a large creek—it was full of water; in the creek was none.

The sheep were up to their necks and Serjy among them—poor dog, he is a game creature, the first part of this perilous journey he had worked well, but has shewed signs of distress. Yester afternoon, hoarse with barking, his thirst must have been dreadful – sore footed—this morning I gave up all hopes of his surviving – he crawled after me from bush to bush, and would growl at me, because I would not let him lie beneath the shade I would have shot him if I had had fire arms with me, to end his sufferings. When he was at his worst, this morning, he provoked me; as he was getting away from a bush to follow me, a rat jumped up just before his nose; he lost all his sense of fatigue, the fool must needs give chase, which lasted nearly five minutes, and he fell; soon after this Flood came up and he rallied again, through the water.

In reporting myself to Sturt, and the sheep being safe, he seemed pleased. It was a good job I had not followed Poole yesterday; Stuart tells me he would ride away to the N—then to the NW—suddenly he would change his course to the E, then NE and back again to the N.

Is this a fit man¹⁶ to be Captain Sturt's chief officer, to lead a large party through an unknown country, Captain Sturt himself being unfit, through blindness *having to be led* himself? Sturt should have never applied to have commanded a party on this expedition, knowing as he did his *physical defects*—neither should he have had so inefficient a man as his assistant as Mr. Poole—Poole came, because he accepted the mean salary, which others refused whose talents were known to be high, men every way suited to assist Sturt, in all his exigencies.

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.

¹⁶ Sturt's journal reads at this point: "At this time-I was exceedingly anxious both about Mr. Poole and Mr. Browne, who were neither of them well. The former particularly complained of great pain, and I regretted to observe that he was by no means strong."

The Jessamine is found here, fragrant in the extreme.

31st. Morgan returned this morning, but had only brought some tea and flour, having not been able to bring on the kegs – according to his account he was on his journey home, when feeling sleepy he had taken off the kegs from the horse, and had as he supposed safely secured it from getting away; then lying down to sleep, on waking he found the horse gone. Thus through his own shewing he has been highly culpable – but higher culpability he is suspected of, as his horse was seen at the water, about the same time as Morgan came home – they say he left the kegs and rode home, because they encumbered him in riding. Flood was immediately dispatched to bring the kegs. The men at the drays must now have been a long time without water. Flood returned, and having all the bullocks collected, the Captain, Moses, Flood, and Sullivan started for the drays. On reaching the drays, they found the men in great suffering; they had fortunately picked up poor Kirby, who had left the drays and was wandering far off the track. The bullocks had gone off their track and it was in getting them back that Kirby was seen; another quarter of an hour later, he would have been lost. Irishman like, he said he would take his carbine and walk as far as he could, then he would fire a military salute over his grave, and would *then die*. The heat in these sand hills is intolerable, the air being charged as if from a furnace.

Lst. January 1845. Captain Sturt determined to leave 2 drays in the care of Jones, leaving him 3 gallons of water with an assurance that he should be relieved on the Friday, this being Wednesday. This is my birthday, when I look back what marked instances of God's care present themselves to my recollection -and instances marked, fearfully marked, of my own ungrateful declensions. Enter not into judgement, with me Oh God! The very peculiar situation in which I am placed gave a correspondent ardor to my devotional exercises on the past evening, which I trust originated not in a baseless imaginary feeling, but from a deep sense of God's goodness and faithfulness to me, one so utterly unworthy of any mercy at his hands-it is with humble gratitude I record it. The Old Year passed from me, the New One entered, and unspeakable mercy. Vile as I am I could plead and did plead the merits of Jesus. I was before the Mercy Seat—what grace, what love bestowed on me that I should have a desire to draw near to God.

2nd. Poole has some strange notion in his head that the water here is injuring him, true it is not so good as running water. The Doctor, to please him, passed over to the creek, myself accompanying him with a shovel, to see if any water could be found in the bed. About a mile, we came upon a drainage, and on the three drays arriving which they did today, instead of encamping them where was plenty of water he (Poole) must needs have the camp formed on the bank of the creek abreast of the discovered drainage.

Two hours exhausted the supply—then we had to enlarge and deepen the place, but though it was untouched, no water oozed in. It is annoying, seeing we have to fetch our water in casks on our shoulders full of a mile—What consideration! what indifference to the well being and comfort of the men—he of all men ought to have been the last to have proposed such a step, knowing what imminent danger he lately placed the party in.

3rd. We kept as much as possible out of the sun.

4th. The bullocks started for the remaining drays; they met Jones on his road to the camp, having been without water two days and a night; Sturt promised to be with him with the bullocks on Friday, instead of that it was on the Sunday.

5th. Sunday. The remaining drays safely arrived in camp. It ought to serve as a lesson—we were within an ace of losing all the bullocks, and human life was imperilled.

6th. Engaged in cobbling up the drays, the tires of the wheels having become nearly all loose, through the heat having shrunk the timber.

7th. Late in the afternoon we were again on the move, keeping a northerly direction, a range of hills to the W 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. Some time after night closed in we encamped on a creek where we obtained a very scanty supply of water.

8th. 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.

9th. The camp remained unbroken to refresh the bullocks. I was engaged in skinning birds, which drew down on me the mouthy praise of Sturt—he lays it on as thick as sometime since he scraped it. He speaks highly of my late conduct in the scrub in bringing the sheep safely I did no more than I engaged to do, that was in every case *to do my best*. It is safer for me to be in adversity – although I hope I am not unmindful of the mercies I am recipient of, nor do I forget the Mercy seat when things go on more than usually smiling, yet in the hour of perplexity is there a deeper tone in my devotion, my helplessness is more felt.

10th. Soon after noon, we broke up and again moved northerly, the range of hills holding the same course. The ground is sand and stony—stones as round as so many marbles, and as big as what the boys in Honiton call "Long toys". The heat rather stiff; we travelled on during the early part of the night, when we halted, chaining our bullocks for an early start. These night encampments present a strikingly picturesque appearance. The Captain and Officers reclining round a fire appropriated to their use; around another, some of the men are sitting on their strapped blankets, their heads buried in their hands, watching old Kirby the cook preparing the evening meal; others, more tired, have thrown their bodies on the ground, drawing in the fumes of the fragrant tobacco; the background being the dingy drays, more or less distinguishable, as the fitful glare of the fires arises, and the poor bullocks, with the clanking of their chains which fasten them to the wheels, the tame sheep strolling about and among us feeding, others of them coiled all together; the scene is peculiar to a party circumstanced as we are.

11th. At break of day we moved away, still bearing up to the N. The scenery which opened up before us was striking and fine; the range of hills which we had been running parallel with assumed a bolder and finer appearance, bearing round to the westward. The country was diversified with creeks thickly timbered with gum and peppermint, and often were seen groups of beautiful acacias. The soil is no better: sand, with small stones-flint and quartz. Early in the forenoon, we came upon the creek on which it is rumoured we shall have to be for some time.

One thing, there is but a scanty supply of water where we are to encamp, but here also is to be seen indications of immense torrents at times, as is seen 40 yards from the banks in the limbs of trees—drift wood which has been washed down. The acacia is found here in great perfection, it is a splendid shrubby tree; its foliage is green and beautiful. Of this acacia, the varieties are extremely numerous, from a lowly shrub to high straight trunked trees; other timber is very abundant on this creek. They say we are only 30 miles to east of the eastern boundary line of South Australia and in latitude, 29°30'. Our flour reduced to 7 lb. per week.

12th. Sunday. The glass in the shade has been up to 118.

13th. As hot as yesterday—thunder with indications of rain, more especially at night.

14th. The Captain with the Doctor accompanied by 2 men, off to the N—he is as sanguine as ever of falling in with a large body of water—if any body wants to please him, they have only to tell him they heard swans, which seemed to pass to the NW. This is one secret of Flood being so high a favorite; this fellow sees things that nobody else sees, and the Captain swallows greedily such information. Mr. Poole, with Moses, travels with Sturt some distance, in search of water, so that the party can be moved on if necessary.

15th. A perfect idle day.

16th. This evening Poole returned, but had found no available water.

The Doctor and Poole came as far as this creek, to the west—they on their return reported they saw water which would last for years. The creek we left, ere we entered upon the late fearful pine scrub, is called Flood's Creek.

17th. Engaged in skinning birds, a beautiful species of the pidgeon. The flies are horrible, they are in myriads, attracted by the flesh of the birds.

18th. Quite blind in one eye from being stung yesterday. I have birds to finish, which makes it very difficult—however, blind as I was, Jones went out and shot two beautiful pink birds, which in securing caused me to suffer dreadfully.

19th. 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.

The Church service was read—what mockery is this service—sad delusion, that this service can be called acceptable to God—it was my mercy at night to be able to enjoy sweet communion with Him who condescends to listen to the prayers of his poor and despised people. What bath made me to differ, why do I not now come in to the secret of the wicked—all of Grace—what it is to have fellowship with the sufferings of Christ—“If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him”.

20th. 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 cattle. 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. Mr. Poole fancying there is a large lake of water away to the SE left the camp this morning to determine the matter. One of the bullock drivers, an elderly man,¹⁷ has taken very sick-Poole says it is occasioned by having nothing to do. Towards midnight Poole returned—no water did he see yet where can all the water pass to, which we have such undoubted reason to believe flows down these creeks?

¹⁷ Foulkes: Sturt

It passes over immense plains—the processes of evaporation and absorption are immense—the great heat and the loose sandy soil; yet on the plains is but little vegetation, only a stinted white-coloured scrub. A question also arises, does it not happen, when a greater than usual quantity of rain falls and the plains get thoroughly saturated, the surplus water flows on, and eventually finds its way to the Darling—as might have been the cause of the sudden rise which we perceived in this river soon after we came upon its banks? The probability is great, seeing that the waters were greatly mixed with soil.

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.

22nd. Idle.

23rd. I believe this is the anniversary of my marriage. It would be better for my whole history to be blotted from my mind, save and except that which is identified with high and heavenly principles, than I should forget the boon—I was put in possession of when I was united to Delia—if any one being has reason to be proud of his wife more than another it is myself. Notwithstanding all the many disadvantages she labored under in her earlier years, she is a most desirable worthy woman. I count my union with her the greatest temporal Mercy—I have ever received. May our reunion be sanctified, that we may promote one another's well being, leading and urging one another on towards the high mark of our calling—May God bless her.

24th. The weather is very sultry and close, it ill agrees with us. The man who was sick has become better, he was supposed bound for the grave. Poole made him worse by giving him medicine, through which and his complaint he became quite delirious. We physicked him ourselves, we gave him a dose of turpentine, and positively he rallied after, astonishingly.

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 every thing was left around this fearful object, for there still swung the knife.

25th. Our expectation of having a protracted stay out is rather abated – the Captain intends to take the drays no further, but finish his work with his horses. He examined the birds I had secured during his absence, he expressed most unqualified satisfaction.

26th. Sunday. How many more will it be ere—I mingle in the assembly with my beloved brethren, to receive instruction and encouragement? It is all fighting here, one enemy after another, but the greatest is my wicked ungrateful heart—my Lord passed through much greater trials-greater conflicts; I would walk in his steps—He ordereth all things well—Oh but the thought of the result is delightful-everlasting deliverance from sin, a perfect freedom, a full enjoyment of heavenly, holy liberty. My Soul is vexed on account of the filthy polluting conversation of my associates, it is to me matter of astonishment we have been so preserved as we have been; what a mercy that I am made so much to differ from these men; once I was equally depraved, but the Lord had compassion on me and bid me live. Immeasurable Grace, can—I forget him, can I render my supreme love to another? Alas I too often do—the creature is uppermost; strange infatuation, idolizing his gift-when at a stroke he could lay prostrate the Idol – or the Idolator. More and more is becoming evinced the inward depravity of the heart.

27th. The supply of water where we are at present encamped becoming exhausted, we today broke up and moved away to the NW and encamped on a branch creek, close by the range of hills, where we find a very large supply of water—apparently continuous.

28th. 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.

CHAPTER V

1845: 29th January to 25th February

ENCAMPED AT THE DEPOT — BUILDING AN UNDERGROUND HOUSE — JOSEPH — HUNTING BIRDS WITH THE DOCTOR — REPAIRS, HANDIWORK — DANGEROUS POSITION OF PARTY — BLASPHEMY — BIBLE READING — SCENERY — SEED GATHERING—STURT AGAIN RETURNS.

29th January 1845. 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.

2nd. Sunday—

5th. 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.

8th. During the past few days the Captain attended by Poole, ran up the creek on which we are encamped; on their returning home they observed thousands of pigeons in a flock, probably migrating. Water was found but a few miles up the creek, in short he effected nothing, wanting everything but bad country, of which he found plenty—but he is far from being easy at home, which is quite natural, having as yet done nothing.

Today he mustered everything that he could carry water in, and took the light cart and started away to the N and push to the point which he last visited when trying this course before, and the last water hole will supply him with perhaps sufficient to fill all the vessels he takes with him, and endeavor to push through the scrub.

Joseph (a young man who is rapidly learning the profane obscene language of the party—but for this would be a decent lad, he has expressed himself as being deeply attached to his old parents, who are both decrepit—his half pay is devoted to their support; it makes one grieve to find him often outdoing his instructors—which makes him a great favorite with these *penal* gentlemen) attends the Captain, as do Flood and Stuart; the latter two wait at the last water, while the Captain and Joseph push ahead.

The Doctor with myself and Sullivan started to look after the pigeons, to endeavor to ensnare them with horsehair nooses. We have about half a mile to the west of our camp a range through which the creek flows; in the gorge is some striking scenery, but what delighted me most was the presence of such large bodies of water which we find here, so sheltered as to lead me to hope it never entirely disappears. After some rough up and down travelling we came to the last water hole on the creek, and where Poole saw (as he says) more than 10,000 pigeons. The first thing we did was to light a fire and get some refreshment, after which we very carefully laid our snares for the pigeons *which were long to come*—night drew on, yet not a rascal has shewed its feather—we turned in, and a very pleasant hour I spent, the Doctor keeping up a lively and interesting conversation till sleep came over us.

9th. Sunday. Gathering up our snares, after breakfast we returned home. During the walk the Doctor was near being bit with a snake scaping from it, it was shot, being more than six feet long.

Every day I feel more miserable on account of my companions—I cannot mix with them—if I ever do enter into conversation, they are so sunk, so depraved, that I am not long before I am assailed with awful profanity and its accompaniments – therefore, I am forced to be secluded—I often pray for them, it is all I can do.

10th. Six months since I left my beloved wife, and when shall we be again united, *when!!*

11th. All hands idle. The Doctor having dropped a hint to me about his spurs wanting rowels, and he did not know how he should do for the want of them, I today turned over in my mind how I could make him a pair, so as they would be hard and serviceable. We have nothing in the shape of drills, in fact we are short, and that fearfully so, of everything which even in our position we might have had, had a person of common sagacity seen after them, when the stores were being provided. That man would be a fool to expect no wants, no make shifts, under our circumstances, but that man must be a rogue, who would broadly state that there should be a supply of flour, tea, sugar, &c. for a twelve month, at a given ration per week of each—and to suffer the drays to leave Adelaide with only such a provision as to induce a reduction within a month of our leaving Adelaide that rogue was *Captain Sturt*.

12th. Busy in preparing a kind of drill, to bore a hole through a piece of hoop iron, of which I think I can supply the Doctor with rowels. After some bother, I got two holes bored, this was a point gained, the getting them fitted to the spurs was nothing, comparatively; the next point was to harden them.

13th. Getting some sheep trotters hoofs, burning them and pounding the cinder, I availed myself of a ladle, and fully succeeded in hardening them and made a very good job of the rowels, so much so that Poole expressed great surprise in my effecting the hardening of them, he sadly wanted to know how I managed the thing—the Doctor was highly pleased.

14th. Having nothing to do, rather than be idle I turned to at walking stick making from the acacia which grows so plentifully on this creek. I also sawed out some ramrods.

15th. A change has taken place in the weather, the mornings and nights are very pleasant, the heat during the middle of the day is much abated. Had a shot at an emu, but missed it.

16th. Sunday. The Apostle tells the Ephesians to “rejoice evermore”. The believer has much reason to rejoice, but I have much reason to mourn on account of my coldness and deadness – but still Paul is right—what but Sin can prevent the full experience of the most unqualified joy? Believing in Jesus creates peace.

The faith that is in untiring operation causes a full abiding in a Savior's love-resting upon it, satisfied with it—jealous of every thing that would protrude itself in opposition to it—but alas for me, how often am I at a broken cistern, till through grace I am enabled to detect the nauseating draught and turn again to the living waters. About this time my beloved brethren are met—would that I was with them to unite in partaking of the emblems of my Lord's death. May they love more—be growing more up into his image, constantly waiting for his coming.

Our present position is one which may very possibly become a very critical one. We have no water to fall back on nor any that we know of to go forward to—it is true we have a large supply of water up the creek, among the rocks in the gorges, and also we are encamped upon a large body, but it is surprising how rapidly it is passing away through the absorption, and if the rains which we are now depending on fail, the consequences most likely will be fatal. The party but little care for that Being who can bid his clouds to pass on without discharging its precious stores—I cannot describe the debasing blasphemous conversation which is unceasingly carried on; I take every opportunity to shew how much I loathe it, for perhaps in a necessary communication I might have to make, and being anxious to appear right free and kind, I am forced to leave. As to future events I have but little anxiety—I believe in Jehovah's promise, his faithfulness is my stay.

The formation of the range through which our creek passes is of a kind of mica (not being acquainted with strata I call it slate) immense blocks heaped one upon another to a great height, masses of this slate or mica or whatever it be protruding its sharp edges above the surface of the water. Water fowl are found here plentifully.

The country wretched, sandy, stony, with low dirty-colored scrub-our poor cattle pass away down the creek some 15 miles where the feed is better and where is also a water hole, but at this hole the water is almost gone, which five weeks since one would have supposed would have lasted six months. The sheep live on the scrub and the bits of grass which grows up here and there, but is brown as a berry. Very few birds are found here excepting the hawk-they are extremely numerous, and so daring that they will skim over a person's head near to touch him. The little frogs are a source of amusement to me of an evening (any thing is amusing which breaks the monotony of our lives) – these frogs are seen—yet I can sit by the hour, and watch them.

16th. Sunday—

18th. All hands idle—I employ myself in roughing out sticks for those who ask me, making razor handles, tobacco-pipes—Very hot. No signs of rain.

21st. Mr. Poole having given me and Sullivan instructions to push down the creek (east) to procure acacia seeds and also birds (Mr. Poole is very anxious to get seeds for some friends of his in "Ould Ireland"—but this is under the bush) we during the day started off.

Towards the close of the day we made our last encampment, but we had to push on a mile or so further, where we hoped to obtain water, which we did, but the supply on the surface would have but little more than filled a bucket, and as green as a leek. Some little distance from it we scooped out a hole in the sand, which acting as a filterer, we obtained it tolerably good. This water is all that remains of a body full 100 yards long, 15 yards broad, and generally chin deep. We used to bathe here ere we moved up to our present encampment. After we had refreshed ourselves with a pot of tea, some pidgeons came to drink, one of which was shot. It is a beautiful bird, many of which we have alive at the camp. Its belly is of a slate color, back deep brown, the wings are brown mixed with a pearl color, splendidly bronzed at the tip. The male bird has a slate and white colored head, the female is distinguished by her head being all brown.

22nd. Secured the pidgeon and got breakfast. When we were on the move more easterly down the creek, about noon we came upon a small body of water, the creek here passing under the spur of a small range, detached, having on its either end two strikingly beautiful conical elevations, the one rising up overshadowing the creek being the highest – this is known to us by the name of the Bluff. The heat very great, not a bird was to be seen, and Sullivan and I were glad to coil under a gum tree in the creek for shelter; while thus Lewis, being out looking for seeds, came to the water, but he took up his rest under another tree, for Sullivan and him having words before we left the camp, it was a case of sulks with them.

Lewis had nothing but a little bread with him, and a bit of sugar, gathering mint when he wanted a pot of tea (which by the way we did alternate meals). We having some bacon, on his passing us to get a pot of water I had just frizzled some and asked him if he would share; he took part in his hand and passed up to his own fire. I could not help smiling to see him, seated on his haunches, regularly mumchancing it, he at one fire, we at another. I endeavored to reconcile them, but it was a case of no go.

23rd. Sunday. Engaged in part in looking for seeds, but not finding any, I returned to my shady tree, and found comfort in reading out of my little testament, which I ever carry with me, in a pouch at my back. As the evening was coming on, I strolled away and climbed to the top of the Bluff. I then obtained a most extensive view of the surrounding country—it was a fine picture for the artist—there was every thing in the scene purely Australasiatic—the extended plain, the distant range and the marked line of the sinuous bed of the creek for seventeen miles till it was lost in its passage through the gorge a little above our camp, lined on either side with the graceful acacia, in groups most beautiful, and the greenery of the gum formed a striking contrast to the parched burned up stunted scrub upon the desolate looking plain. During my stay on the hill I was enabled to pass a truly profitable hour contemplating the character of my Heavenly Father, the hopes I have what—ever may be the sequel of my present course.

Unto him be all the praise I am a poor unworthy creature ever prone to forget Jesus, and his example. Yet it will not be that I shall have always to contend-the victory will be at last-I have been buried with him in the likeness of his death, and I trust I shall experience the power of his resurrection.

24th. Having secured two birds, all that we could get hold of, we moved away up the creek, and passed the night at our first coiling place.

25th. 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.

¹⁸ On 19th February Sturt had recorded a shade temperature of 132° F., and 157° F. in the sun.

The Captain *thinks he was within 20* miles of Lake Torrens—it is mostly conjecture with our party. On joining Joseph it was found the wheels of the cart were in such a state that it was deemed advisable to leave it and Joseph, and for the horsemen to push for the camp and send off a bullock dray to fetch it home. The Captain has told his cook that for the future I shall have to attend him in these lateral excursions; birds are seen and shot, but they cannot be secured. I certainly have succeeded very well in overcoming the difficulty of pleasing the Captain in reference to the birds. It has been a struggle; however, I have managed it.

CHAPTER VI

1845: 26th February to 16th August

ENCAMPED AT THE DEPOT—UNJUST TREATMENT—STURT SPIES ON US—RATIONS AGAIN REDUCED—SHORT OF WATER—A BIG SNAKE—I RELY ON GOD'S WORD—RAIN—IT DOES NOT LAST—I EXPLORE TO THE E WITH STURT AND DOCTOR—MEETINGS WITH NATIVES—RETURN TO CAMP—DYSENTERY—COOLER WEATHER—POOLE ILL—PIESSE'S MEANNESS—MY PRAYERS—POOLE HELPLESS—TO BE SENT HOME—STUART IN CHARGE OF CAMP—HIS ARROGANCE—COMPLAINT TO STURT—INJUSTICE—MARQUEE CATCHES FIRE—I SEND MONEY HOME—POOLE'S ESCORT LEAVES—WE ADVANCE NNW—POOLE'S DEATH—RETURN TO DEPOT—PIESSE SENT HOME—WE START AGAIN—CHAINING—NATIVES—HORRIBLE COUNTRY—A MALICIOUS TONGUE THWARTS MY HOPES—STURT STARTS FOR CENTRE—STOCKADE TO BE BUILT—STUART'S ARROGANCE AGAIN—STURT'S INJUSTICE.

26th February 1845. Busy mending my clothes.

27th. The nights are becoming very cool and we are free of mosquitoes, yet during the day the glass is often to 108°. On opening a chest of tea for issuing, it was found to have become mouldy and almost unfit for use. Mr. Poole and Mr. Piesse have been in communication about the matter, the result of which was, this damaged tea was to be issued to the men while the good was to be reserved solely for the Captain. The Captain, poor man, is made Poole's stalking horse; this reservation was not so much for the Captain as for Poole.

Common men will talk too about such sort of things, and it was generally thought Mr. Poole could do as well upon the damaged tea (for by the way, it was some he had selected from a friend of his himself) as we could. I ever was careful to mix myself up as little as possible in things pertaining to grumblement, that I was little aware of the feeling being so deep as it was till today, being under Foulkes's dray—most of party were met talking over this affair—Mr. Flood was the loudest in his strictures upon Poole. Cautious ever when in company with this man, to say nothing that could not be repeated, again I was a listener. Flood proposed a paper should be drawn up stating our grievance, and each man to sign it; to this mode the assent was pretty general. It struck me, what a useful bit of paper this would be if anything should occur hereafter—"My lads", I says, "take my advice—put no names to paper—if needs be let us go personally to the Captain." My plan was thought best, with this difference, instead of all going, let one go—Foulkes being willing, went and stated all things to the Captain fairly stating the willingness of all the men, to deny themselves of anything to promote his, the Captain's comfort but as for Poole—he should with the men share and share alike. During the evening all hands were summoned to appear at the marquee, at the door of which stood Sturt working himself up in a glorious passion—biting his lips and other little interesting manoeuvres. How dared we to question the propriety or impropriety of what our officers did—and after giving us a downright thrashing—"Now", says he, "men, I tell you what it is—be careful what you say and what you do, for all that passes among you I am made acquainted with, and by one of your own messmates."

The enquiry at once was who the man was—but all the answer was 'I shall not tell you.' This accounts to Foulkes for the expression used to him by the Captain this morning, "I know what you are come about." Can Captain Sturt be an honorable man to encourage Flood (for this is the man) to supply him with the small talk of men, men by and bye on whose courage and exertions he will have to rely—perhaps for his own safety—is there ought high minded or honorable in such cravings after what the men say and do around their burning gum log.

28th. The rapid decrease in our stock of flour, and the little appearance of a change in the weather, induced a further reduction in our rations, with which reduction we were perfectly satisfied, as it is necessary, otherwise when the rain comes, the Captain will have to push home, instead of being able to push ahead. There is but one feeling in the party, a hearty wish the Captain may be able to succeed, reaching the point he started for, the centre of New Holland. Our rations now are 6 lbs. flour, 1 lb. sugar, 2 oz. tea, 1 oz. soap, 3 oz. tobacco. With this reduction, our stores will last 23 weeks. Although all are quite willing as regards this reduction, yet the feeling of having a spy over our words and actions induces a most unpleasant spirit, and it is not only this, but the capricious conduct which all of us more or less experience.

Last day of another month.

1st. I find my stock of worsted is done so no more darning.

2nd. Sunday. Laboring under a heavy cold, felt all day very unhappy.

3rd. All hands busy in cutting down acacia trees, out of which Poole says he can make soap. I very much question if the soap trade will answer—Poole some time since discovered his stock of gloves were expended; to supply his wants he commenced the tanning business; if it had succeeded a glove trade would have been opened. Poole's hands are very delicate (with a hook)—It is a source of anxiety to perceive as we do the rapid passing away of our stock of water—the nearest we know of is 300 miles, which is the Darling. The Doctor and Flood started away to a creek which two months ago Poole and the Doctor were on—it then contained water which they thought would last for seven years – they found in it not enough to water our cattle two days, when thus visited a second time. If we have no rain what follows? Our lives in imminent peril—yet I hear some of our fine fellows wishing it might not rain for three months, so that if they should succeed in getting back they would have a larger sum of money to take in wages.

4th. Tampiwan the black boy has ever since we left the Darling taken care of the sheep when we are in camp. This morning the poor boy was sick, so I took them out to feed.

While strolling on after them, writing in my journal, my ears were struck with the hiss of a snake, on looking down near to my foot one of the big venomous snakes was passing away—having no stick and for a moment not seeing any stones, I feared it would get away, but having picked up some stones which were at a distance, when I came back the brute showed fight; I broke its back—but having no more stones it wriggled away beneath some scrub. It is surprising how very fat the sheep get upon what we all supposed would not fatten a flea—the scrub; the sheep having got used to it, it is liked.

5th. I generally find some thing to do when I have no birds. When I have them, I am obliged to skin them as fast as possible, other wise they would become unfit. A slight indication of a change in the weather.

6th. Flood went off to the eastward looking for water—the Captain wishes to be able to proceed as far as possible in this direction, thereby being able to connect this tract of country with the Darling. Thinking of the very great possibility of our losing our water I was led to the reflection—if I have to appear before God, how would it be with me? It is all of Grace—I feel a scriptural hope of being found in Christ—here is my only hope. Although I deserve death and the full consequence of sin, I look back on Calvary—there was an atonement made for such as me. I have no anxiety as to the issue of our present position; I rely on his word—he has delivered hitherto and if it is his will he will yet deliver from (what to an unbeliever would be) the dire calamity of death.

I am no wise dead to earthly love and association. My beloved Delia—thinking of her sometimes interrupts that full resignation which is so desirable. I have committed her into the hands of my heavenly father and all must be well if she is in his keeping. She is very often the subject of my hopes and fears. If ever we are again suffered to meet again in this world I pray most ardently the bias will be more heavenward—helping on each other in the difficult yet happy path that leadeth unto life. Our children, may they be God's people, pillars in the Church below that may shine as stars in a happy world. About this period my thoughts are homeward – yet all will be well—I am sure all will be well.

7th. Flood has returned, having found water, which will enable the Captain to move away to the eastward. The Doctor brought me a halfpenny and a shot pouch—it has lost the stopper. How am I to mend it with no tools, and how to get a sufficiency of metal to form a joint for the lever to work in, and to carry a screw? Necessity is the mother of invention, I beat up the piece of copper, and by keeping it well annealed I succeeded in getting it thick enough. I made a shift to repair the pouch, and it answered as well as I could wish; it did for the Doctor anyhow.

8th. Idle.

9th. Sunday. A new moon, but no signs of any change in the weather. Some of the stout – hearted reckless ones I believe are wishing for rain. Poor fellows, I fear they would make a sorry figure, if Death approached them.

10th. Strong indication of a change—much thunder and lightning. The sky became overcast in the afternoon, and it positively rained upwards of half an hour. Although it ceased, there was every appearance as night drew on, it would come down in good earnest.

11th. Disappointment, the night passed away and this morning broke; every vestige of rain was gone. The Captain is off to the east; I form one of the party. The certainty of a large body of water existing somewhere away in this direction, is because Captain Sturt on his previous trip down the Darling was told by the natives, that water existed away to the NW, and something of a similar communication was made to Mitchell, and all the creeks seem to trend towards the eastward, *therefore this certainty*—conjecture.

12th. After breakfast the Captain, Doctor and Flood, myself and Joseph¹⁹ in the light cart started on our journey—we took in the cart all the water kegs. On reaching our old encampment we found several puddles of water left by the late rains, sufficient to water our horses. About noon we reached the Bluff, where we stayed a short time to refresh, getting a pot of tea; we carry water with us. All the water which Sullivan and I found here the other day is gone. The heat is oppressive. The water hole to which we are going is distant from the Bluff some fifteen miles, and in passing towards it, the country assumed a better aspect, the soil quite good—grasses were luxuriant. We encamped about 4 o'clock.

¹⁹ Sturt's journal reads: "I proceeded on my excursion, accompanied by Mr. Browne, Flood, and another of the men."

13th. 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 sped. 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.

14th. 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 once 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.

15th. Sturt being anxious to push as far to the E as possible to ascertain if water did exist in a large body in that quarter, also to join as much as possible, the country which he had now opened up and the country known to him jutting out from the Darling, he determined to pass back again to the water we first made, distant some five miles from hence, and from there to make a start, we left our black friends and arrived early to the water.

I was engaged during the day in securing cockatoos. In the evening we filled all the casks to be ready for starting for the morning. We found the mosquitoes very troublesome, the heat very great. We spread our blankets in the bed of the creek, and should have been very comfortable, if the mosquitoes had been less troublesome.

16th. Sunday. We were very early astir, and it took us till near 7 o'clock before we could move off—our course was N of E—we found it difficult travelling, sand ridges continually crossing our course, and otherwise heavy broken ground. After travelling 18 or 20 miles we came upon the margin of an immense lake, sand as white as possible, and no appearance of any water. We were in a dismal place, nothing but the white glistening sand before us, and a few salsolaceous plants around us. Seeing an eminence in the distance some three miles in the lake, we made for it, and there encamped. To the NE the lake extended probably 12 miles and trended down to the south a much greater distance, and no doubt at seasons is covered with water, as the creeks coming in from the N and NW empty themselves into it. Having to be sparing of our water, we gave it only to three of the horses—turned in.

17th. Making the most of what time we had, we turned out before daylight, making arrangements for the journey.

The water that was left overnight in the casks was given to the three horses going with Sturt, giving scarcely a quart apiece to the other two. The Captain, Doctor and Flood went their way to the east, Joe and I came ours to get a fresh supply of water.²⁰ We were not so very long in getting back, as the poor horses we were driving were so dreadfully dry, and they knew they were going to the water. We got casks filled and then turned in.

18th. Up before the light, boiling a pot of tea, we were away again to join the Captain—it was possible he might have fallen in with water, but it was more probable he had not. The Captain is a man who spares neither himself nor the beast he rides, when thus journeying haphazard. We were very anxious again to join him, for the poor horses sake, as the heat would cause them ill to bear up without water. We had to travel more than fifteen miles, when we met them returning. The poor horses as soon as we got the kegs out of the cart could hardly be kept back, and the allowance they had rather made them more anxious than otherwise they would lick the outsides of the vessels, go a little distance and then back to us again.

The Captain had passed still easterly from the lake about 30 miles through desolation; they passed a series of lagoons, slightly encrusted with salt. He deemed it advisable to return, as he could form a good idea of the intervening country. Towards the evening, the horses manifesting so much uneasiness, we were afraid they would break from their tethers and leave us.

²⁰ Sturt: "I had deemed it prudent to send Joseph and Lewis back to the creek for a further supply." (Editor's italics.)

We gave them the rest of the water, and started for the water, at which we arrived about eleven at night, having been lit on our journey with a brilliant moon.

19th. Remained encamped.

20th. The Doctor taking Flood with him and all the provisions we could spare, started away for the ranges to the NE of the lake, to ascertain the fact if the creeks in this direction emptied themselves into the large lake. The Captain, I and Joe started for the home station. I was glad to return, for I was suffering from a violent attack of dysentery. We reached home in the afternoon. I could not any wise forbear from giving way to a fit of laughter: Old Turpin was trying all he knew to convert fat into soap—he had stirred ash, water and fat hour after hour, but it was nohow convertible.

Well, I have been out upon a lateral expedition²¹ I have every reason to believe Sturt was highly satisfied with my birds—and I did as well as I knew how with the horses. I enjoyed during the trip several profitable and delightful seasons; Jesus is precious, very precious.

21st. Good Friday. Very sick—very. The Doctor came back; the creeks were all found, as was conjectured, to empty themselves in the lake. Having got Kirby to mix me some flour and water and boil it, I was able to eat it, for I was sinking for something, I felt it to do me a deal of good.

²¹ Brock's name is not mentioned anywhere in Sturt's account of this "lateral expedition".

22nd. I found myself wonderfully better this morning, quite a new man. During the day I made a ramrod for the Doctor's gun. The day quite cold.

27th. The occupation of our time is day after day very similar. The evenings and mornings are very pleasant, but no signs of rain, all is at a standstill, when we shall be able to push on, no one can say if we are able to finish our work, and be home by Xmas it will be as much as I expect.

30th. Sunday. I adore my God for his continued mercies. Truly can I say he ordereth all things well upon consolation has been afforded me, not of man but of God—in the midst of malice and reproach I have been enabled to look unto Jesus. Oh may I never suffer as an evil doer. It is dreadful to the Christian to have to be only occasionally with the blasphemer, but no one can tell how very heart aching, how truly miserable, is the position of that renewed mind, who has to be always in association with men of unclean lips, whose constant conversation is of uncleanness, fearfully interlineated with blasphemy. Was it not for the Grace of God—where, Oh where should I be? I find relief in the word of God, this word is truly beyond all price, under my circumstances what should I do without it – it is my stay, my only comfort.

May this my season of trial be so sanctified as to leave a lasting influence, that when again permitted to mingle with my brethren, I might be a blessing. Sturt expresses continually as being highly satisfied—it is too much of a thing.

April 4th. Piesse has adopted the gun—Sullivan never has cared about getting birds—he prefers what is called here "Banging it"—that is, ever lying under the dray. Piesse makes a deal of fuss with his new employment—birds come in but very slow—the fact is there is scarcely anything worth securing but of the hawk tribe, of which Piesse has obtained two or three very good specimens.

I have found much pleasure and amusement in darning the holes of my socks. I do not understand how it is, but whenever I have been thus employed a train of thought has sprung up of a most pleasing hopeful character—I verily believe our good old Grandmother's benevolence has been kept alive, through having stockings to darn. The picture—an old lady, broad rim spectacles, on easy chair, the left hand snugly pressing a dilapidated hose against her side, while carefully insinuating alternately over and under the long darning needle—every line of the face relaxed, excepting at one corner of the mouth, where lies lingering the remnant of a smile that has passed, or a presage of the one that is coming.

The weather is just now really beautiful, did we not want rain, of which there is not the slightest indication. The water in the creek is rapidly passing off—I have no anxiety, God's time is the best time. The ration of flour reduced to 5 lb. per week—not a man in the party made the least objection, rather contrariwise. As there is yet a plenty of tobacco, we determined to speak to Sturt, to get our full allowance, which through Piesse's advising has been reduced a considerable time to three sticks; four was ordered to be issued for the future.

The country all around us presents a dreadful aspect; all vegetation is dying, except on the creeks, which exhibit a more cheerful face the gum is an evergreen as is the acacia, which trees are numerous scattered upon the banks. The poor bullocks fare very badly. It is spoken of as likely that the bullock driver will be sent with them to the eastern water hole, in the neighborhood of which feed is abundant.

10th. I can always find something to do—repairing knives, compasses, making sail needles, and other sorts of odd jobs, it keeps my mind occupied. These few days past we have experienced strong winds from the SW but no signs of rain. Today commences the ninth month of our being out—with what an association have I to spend eight more I am watched on every hand but I quietly pursue my way, there is one who bath his eye over me for good; the promise to the Jew is applicable to my own case. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, every tongue arising in judgement thou shalt condemn—this promise is to all God's people, it is their heritage. I have great need to cultivate the spirit of humility, to exercise great caution.

13th. My dear Delia, about this time, perhaps has been sorely distressed—what a distressing feeling to have to remain in ignorance of all that is transpiring at home yet God will be with her, to support and strengthen her.

The country has become so utterly destitute of water, that we often observe the emu stalking stealthily to the water we are on, to quench its thirst. Yesterday four natives came to the camp—one of them we recognized as being one of those we had fallen in with to the eastward. They have been hanging about our camp for several days, being afraid. Piesse on his excursion up the creek fell in with them—there must have been a mutual case of fright, for Piesse is one of the most arrant cowards imaginable.

19th. This morning broke very cloudy and mild, every indication of a change. About ten we experienced a refreshing shower with a little thunder, our hopes were raised high, but the weather cleared up about noon.

20th. Sunday. A decided change in the atmosphere, it having become cold. Our water is drying up very fast, we have other holes in the gorge, otherwise we should have very soon to run-but where? The Captain is very uneasy and well he might, he is going to push to the west and hopes to make the Lake Torrens; he calculates on the late rain to supply him; as few hands as possible are to attend him.

22nd. The Captain with Doctor and Flood, leading a pack horse, started.

25th. The party returned, quite disappointed. Though having pushed more than 50 miles, there was no appearance of a lake it is possible it lies somewhat farther than they think. The Captain's sight being so bad, he cannot use an instrument or determine our position, but has to take every thing upon credit—the readings might be correct—they might be wrong.

27th. Mr. Poole has taken ill, the disease seems to be in his limbs, which assume divers colors as if from severe bruises. I perceive a coolness on the part of Sturt towards me for which I know no reason—evidently the effect of some interesting yarn—what a mercy to know however man may plot, God is sure to bring evil plotting to nought, or cause it to work for their good—it shews the believer how directly dependent he is upon his Heavenly Father, how very consolatory to the tried Christian to have Israel's God as his keeper; all his enemies are chained, by sufferance only can they ever perplex, and when thus suffered it is often that faith may be brought into fuller exercise.

30th. The last day of another month – true it is the sky is often overcast and our hopes rise high in consequence, but it soon clears all away. The men who were hoping, but a few weeks since, that no rain might fall are now shewing signs of disquietude; talking as they were, how very little they could live on, are now the first to disclaim upon any further reduction of rations. Our time is principally employed about sticks, pipes, razor handles, which we make from the acacia; it wiles away the time. Our water shrinks fearfully, but I cannot but think we shall find it sufficient.

May 1st. Mr. Poole is getting worse—he has no heart to struggle against the disease. The Doctor is affected in the same way, but in spite of pain he exerts himself by walking—Poole lies on his back. A rumour is afloat that a party will be sent back with Poole.

4th. Sunday. Poole much worse. Piesse certainly possesses as large a share of malice as much as any man I ever knew. Since he has taken upon himself to obtain birds—which by the way have been very few—I have to clean the Captain's gun which he uses. It seems he has returned time after time with no luck, and the fool tells Sturt he has missed several specimens through the gun having been done something to by me, which prevents it going off when it should. I from my heart forgive him, I can truly pray for him. No matter what I have to do for Sturt, birds or anything else, I can always please; it is not now as when we started—then my birds were anything but as they should have been, but now there is that neatness and shape, which causes much less attention to insinuations to my prejudice than formerly. Perseverance is everything.

9th. The new moon to which we have been looking forward with the hope of bringing a change has appeared, but all is serene and clear—last night for a few minutes rain fell, but so gentle that it was like the descent of gossamer.

Piesse has again been cutting his capers. Today in issuing the rations he displayed a piece of roguery which brought on himself the curses of many of the party. It appears the plan has been that Piesse, Morgan and Stuart have of late refrained from drawing their rations of tobacco—it was not good—today a fresh cask was opened, which proving to be good, they have issued to them their back rations out of this good sample, so that through Piesse's connivance they have shuffled out of getting the bad, which we have all along been receiving.

Poor old Foulkes determined to report this to Sturt, and it was so barefaced a trick, that even in this venal party it was not suffered to pass—Sturt gave orders, that each man who had been receiving the rubbish should give back six sticks, which Piesse has to appropriate to himself and friends, and for which he has to return an equivalent in weight of the nice square cakes which he thought to have reserved for himself. The fellow only wants opportunity, and his own interests not interfering, to be a perfect Turk.

11th. 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.

Mr. Poole is becoming as helpless as an infant. What can we do with him? He has already nearly emptied the medicine chest.

12th. 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.

A most terrific squall of wind visited us, having been preceded by a dead calm.

14th. Poor Poole gave me his razors to fit acacia handles to them, which I finished today. It causes me to smile, but no one can tell how jealous some of the party are, that everything I do answers as regards these razor handles. Davenport, having an opportunity, caused some razors which had been handled by himself or some other party to be brought to the tent to be compared with mine—they had seen how I had done mine, and had improved perhaps upon my work. It was done to rob me of my glory – they say as soon as Poole and the Doctor saw the difference, my poor work was condemned—I just mention this foolish matter to shew how unpleasant it is to an honest mind to have to be thus associated, a constant trial to distress—the select Sydney and Van Diemen gentlemen of this party cannot endure the man who happens to be associated with them, who is unacquainted with sentences of judges and the clanking of fetters. I have months before me to be thus associated with enfranchised felons, but I pray my Heavenly Father that he will not leave me, that I may not grow indifferent to his testimonies—that I may ever act who hath been purchased with the blood of his dear Son. He says in the Psalms "I will preserve thee from *all evil*." He is a shade upon my right hand – I shall be preserved in my going out and my coming in.

May I abide in his love, keeping his commandments—I every day see more the necessity of watchfulness, for my heart and foolish tongue are always ready—but he knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation—not the careless presumptuous man but the godly one who feels the need of His gracious interposition. May I be kept from a spirit of pride carelessness is sure to follow. I remark—one night last week I felt while wrestling in prayer a holy feeling of assurance, I was on the Mount, my union to God in Christ was delightfully experienced, yet as every Mount has its Valley, so was it with me, for several days after I had need of much humiliation Pride had been present and it had hurled me to the bottom—darkness prevailed, no spirituality, no life; perhaps I was in better case in the Valley, for I met my Savior there.

15th. 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 ½ 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.

18th. Sunday. It is decided that the party is to be divided, one party to return for rations with Mr. Poole, the other to remain with Sturt, but who are to remain or who to go, is unknown to us. Whatever be my lot may God be my guide even to the end. Tonight there appears to be taking place a change in the weather, but I am led to think the rainy seasons are not much before August, when the immense flats towards the SE become covered, the surplus waters passing off in different channels into the Darling.

22nd. 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.

Two beautiful cranes have engaged my attention. Some time ago a bird of this species was given to the Captain's cook, he having been anxious to set up as bird skinner, but he regularly spoiled it. The fellows are so jealous that I so well succeed, that they would do anything to break me down. When the above two birds were shewn to Sturt after being shot, some one proposed that George should skin them, as I should be wanted to join a party to chain the commencement of a base line "Oh no—the last he attempted he spoiled—Brock must do them." I made no comment to add to the chagrin, but otherwise I endeavored to get the birds done, so as to be able to join the chaining party, but they were so delicate and rare a pair of birds I found I was not able, which I told Sturt; he ordered another man to go in my place. It is no joke to chain over a heavy sandy country, with no water it is the first time I have been free from the heavy work.

23rd. The chaining party started—cursing me and the man who shot the birds. Made a neat job of the birds—they really look beautiful.

25th. Sunday. The weather indicates a change, a light shower fell.

27th. The air very cold, alternate clouds and fair sky. Poor Poole is become so helpless, he cannot help himself in the least—a couch is being prepared for him to travel in home. The dray under which I have hitherto passed my time is to convey him, so I have to get fresh lodgings.

I have made a good exchange under old Foulkes's dray, at once well secured, and in every way more comfortable than it was under Jones's dray. Hope is almost gone that any rain will fall so as to enable the Captain to go ahead. The rations are fearfully diminishing. Perhaps we shall all go home. My soul yearns for home—the objects there are becoming every day dearer. I pray that whether I go or stay I might be able cheerfully to submit to what God deems fittest for me. Oh may I never—never dishonor my Savior, ever keeping in mind his death and sufferings—he is at times very precious, yes always precious—Paul says, “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe in him but also to suffer for his sake”—happy sufferings if it be as a Christian welcomes sufferings, if Grace come with it—without Grace I fear I shall be a murmurer.

June 1st to 13th. We have these past days had the air very warm and oppressive—we were surprised this morning by Kirby bringing a piece of ice, veritable ice, it infused into our hearts the hope that it will eventualize in rain. Last Tuesday it threatened and a little rain fell; the Captain was in high spirits, birds were being packed up, geological specimens re-examined and secured, letters were written—but the rain all passed away. I commenced a letter to Delia, for I have no hope of returning on account of the birds which may yet be found. It was a disappointment—however trivial the circumstances, if it only breaks the monotony, it is hailed by us with unqualified pleasure.

Such a break we occasionally have, by the hawks, which are extremely numerous here. We are all at our meal—the hawks all fluttering and flying over us perhaps some chap unwittingly has placed his bit of damper and junk of mutton beside him on the gum log—while he gets a drink of tea, before he has power to prevent it, a hawk sees the prize and with one fell swoop, dashes by and the next moment the fellow's dinner is gone. However personally teasing, it causes a general grin. Then, to be revenged on the thieves, he will get the frying pan, and get pieces of fat made burning hot, and as the hawks are skimming about, fling up these pieces in the air, which are never suffered to drop to the ground before being caught, and it causes one to smile to see how the rascals act in so trying a case, a delicious morsel—but too hot to hold. To have but two slight meals in twenty four hours, the loss to the individual of almost one of them by the hawk is a very serious affair, but there is something to me cruel in thus burning the poor birds.

We have at our present issue of rations somewhere about 25 weeks provisions, but Piesse has suggested the reduction in our meat, of which there is a considerable preponderance. It is in these cutting and paring movements that the man becomes so great a favorite with Sturt.

15th. Sunday. Windy—but I believe we shall have no rain. It is alternately cold and hot.

22nd. During the past week the nights have been breaks the monotony, it is hailed by us with unqualified pleasure.

Foulkes is a man who has been for a long time past exerting himself to get birds for the Captain, and what was quite natural, solicited the favor of obtaining a few for himself, and for me to skin them, which I do with much pleasure for the old man, for it is with this man alone I can enter into conversation. The Captain made a great fuss before he consented to the request of Foulkes, however he did so, desiring me to shew all the birds I secured to him. Foulkes had shot some pretty parrots and was to have a pair. After I had finished them I laid aside the best for Sturt, and the others were for the old man. It seems before I received the birds, the Captain had pointed out which of the birds were to be reserved, of this I was quite ignorant, and it seems the very ones I had given to Foulkes were the ones Sturt had chosen. The fish was all in the fire—I was charged with having tricked the Captain and a great deal more. However, on explaining to the Captain the circumstances, he drew it more kindly, and during my middle watch, while arranging the fire which is lighted every night before Sturt's tent door, he came out, and I resumed the subject, when he entirely exonerated me from blame it would be well, could we always have the opportunity to explain matters to Sturt—there would be much less unpleasant feeling.

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 Tampiawam 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 womerars. This incident induced the Captain to make a different arrangement in reference to the charge of the sheep. At night, while all hands were at the fire, Piesse joined the party; after some time he broke his message with a lot of ahems! and ahas!—commencing thus—"Men, I have news"—meaning the bullock drivers "You are to take turns in minding the sheep." He made quite a mumbling affair in delivering himself of his burden, and hung his head down in concluding, and standing as I was, near him, I could only catch part of his last sentence and "you go out with them in the morning"—most of the others did not even hear this. He retired at once expecting to be heavily cursed. The question now arose, who was to go out with the sheep in the morning; the bullock drivers thought it quite enough to look after the bullocks without the additional duty of minding sheep—there were men in the camp who had nothing to do, why should not they be called upon, the fellows growled and grumbled, quite without a cause. I proposed to Morgan and Sullivan, seeing that we had no care of the bullocks, if the Captain would suffer it, for us three to take the sheep, for it grieved me to see the dissatisfaction. Morgan shuffled and made an objection, but before I turned in I understood Sullivan would take them out, no one knew, I knew it was not myself, because he would have rejoiced to have borne the disagreeable message, and I had birds on hand.

23rd. The bullock drivers, determined to go to Sturt in order to get freed from the extra duty (poor fellows) as may be supposed, they caused the ire of Sturt, and Moses was ordered from the tent. Very much disagreeableness was caused by the manner of Piesse delivering his message—his course was plain, he had received instructions, which he should have plainly and distinctly made known to the parties intended; instead of that he left the men half apprised. It seems Turpin was to have taken the sheep this morning, and on being asked the reason of not attending to the order, all he could say was "I never understood from Piesse, I was appointed." Piesse was sent for the question was put to him, most emphatically put to him, "Who did you tell to get out with the sheep this morning?" "Turpin." "And he heard you?" "Yes." The consequence was the man was knocked off duty and his wages forfeited, and although all hands told Sturt the manner in which the order was given, Piesse was believed. I copy this incident, simply to shew how dreadfully unpleasant our circumstances are, altogether independent of the dangers to which we may be exposed. One expression of Sturt's surprised me; we were all called up about something, when he gave us distinctly to understand that he was made acquainted with everything that passed, either in our conversation or actions—one of our own men brought to him an account of everything. On his thus speaking he was asked who it was—I shall not tell you, but I would have you beware how you act and what you say,

" Sturt, Sturt, where is the honour of a gentleman in this, to set a spy upon the lips and actions of men, and receiving information upon which you judge whether it be lies or truth, without calling the parties face to face? We look, naturally so, upon each other, as the man hinted at—it causes a so indescribable, miserable feeling. Much no doubt is referred to when the men surround their gum log at night, which has reference to the general circumstances of the party, and how liable are men placed as we are, without anything to alter the current, to speak of what the Captain, Poole or the Doctor might do; some things may be said, taken apart from context, which would furnish the spy with a nice little yarn, nowise complimentary to the Captain or the Chief Officer. I have ever been very cautious, so that there should be no chance given to any of my friends, to make me the subject of a marquee gossip. A tale bearer is a liar—and again I iterate the sentiment, Sturt cannot possess much native honor or generous feeling, to encourage any one in bringing to him matters which might come off any unadvised lip. The party suspected is Flood, and feeling very indignant at being supposed guilty, he got the Captain to call all hands together.

29th. Which the Captain did today – but instead of clearing Flood or anybody else, he threatened if any instance of disobedience arose, the party should lose his wages—he was in a terrible passion, again and again invoking the name of his Maker that such should be the case.

I have never disobeyed and I hope I never shall, but I feel very uneasy on account of Piesse, who is a most unprincipled man, as was made so manifest in the case of Turpin. He, having to issue an order, forbears doing so, consequently the Captain's wish is unattended to—and Piesse says he did give the instructions—his *ipse dixit* is believed. I hope I shall be very wise—it would be hard after toiling and striving as I have done, and the sacrifice I have made of leaving home &c, to lose my recompense through the malice of Piesse. However, in these late disturbances things have fallen out rather to my advantage than otherwise, the Captain expresses himself highly pleased with every bird I bring him, and talks about forming a Museum when he returns to Adelaide, cautioning me to exercise great care in all the birds I do—whatever depended upon it I cannot be more careful than I am.

A serious accident was near occurring, the Captain's marquee took fire, but we succeeded in extinguishing it before it did much damage.

1st. July. Another month has come in and here we are still. Poole is quite helpless.

2nd. Clouds are rising all around. Orders have been issued to weigh out eight weeks rations for the home party—expectation is again high that our departure is at hand.

3rd. The clouds still passing over us, the air is moist, so much so that we can almost feel the moisture on our cheeks—fresh orders for preparation to break up our long engagement.

4th. Although no rain, it is still very cloudy. While this is the case we have hope—towards evening the clouds seemed all to pass away.

5th. This morning the moon changed, and a lovelier morning never broke in upon man, than did this morning. How much do these disappointments shew me the utter helplessness of man—he delineates his course, decides upon his plan, but there is the let, the *hindrance*—*God*, the supreme disposer of all events. He withholds this, or sends that, and the poor worm has in a moment all his wisely matured plans thwarted and set aside. The Apostle James hath it, "Say not I will go and do this or that," but he reminds us of the supremacy of God—"if God wills". In this last case of ours it was said it must come now (the rain) but the time was not come—may I recollect my dependence upon God's care, I can speak much of the long suffering and deliverance I have received, but alas how vile and vain am I in my imagination. Pride is continually rising in my wicked heart—how do I forget what I have been and what I am now. If I had an abiding influential sense of my worthlessness I should have no room for pride. They call me hypocrite, do I follow that which is good; I must again examine myself—surely I can gain nothing like favor in my present position by holding myself distinct from blasphemy, unchaste jokes and an utter disregard of God's law. I do pray over and mourn my unfaithfulness and occasional petulance of spirit, and through Mercy I have been able in many instances to quell the rising of my proud spirit, and manifest a spirit of forbearance and not to render evil for evil but am I a follower of that which is good, which Peter speaks of when referring to a Christian's sufferings?

I do humbly hope I strive through my conduct to bring no reproach upon the name of Jesus I find when most distressed in my mind and when able to look most unto Jesus and to apprehend something of that which He has done for me, that then I am the most fearful and most jealous of myself and walk the more carefully. Oh! I would rather endure anything than I would cause the name of my Savior to be spoken against, for he has been to me a great deliverer. He has rescued me out of the mire of iniquity when I was swallowing Sin as the ox doth water. Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest I love thee. How great an instance of goodness have we continually before us in the sufficient supply of water we appear to have—Oh that men would praise the Lord.

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 observed running the tracks of the horses. Pappas might have been one; never having seen a horse the 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 is, we lie here, neither able to go one way or the other.

The weather as clear and serene as possible.

6th. Sunday. Busy all day in skinning birds; my conscience does not condemn me when thus employed, because I cannot prevent it. Had I my choice of assembling with the people of God, and let secular engagement prevent me, I should in this instance evidence little love to Jesus—I do long for the courts of God's House. When shall I again tread them?

10th. Eleven calendar months have rolled away, and we are still encamped, and half our work to be done. What changes might have been at home during this past period. My Delia perhaps is laid in the grave or has been laid on the bed of suffering. When I contemplate my return to Adelaide I tremble, but I know Jeshurun's God is faithful and full of compassion, and with every trouble there will be a corresponding balm. The nights are very cold and frosty, the appearance of the horizon is often such as if snow might yet visit us.

13th. Sunday. The rain has continued all night, a gentle but constant fall, so that all will be on the move on the morrow. Anxious on account of Delia, I thought it advisable, if Sturt would grant it, to get him to send home an order for some money. On my applying for 5 pounds or so. I was told I could draw 15 pounds. Of course I was glad of the offer and accepted it, and sent home two long letters. The rain ceased towards night, but sufficient has fallen to enable us to move.

14th. The rain again fell in torrents through the night, and this morning every one was on the move. The home bound party start today. Mr. Poole's dray, with its invalid appurtenances, being duly prepared, the poor man was lifted into it, nominally the director of the party. They are gone, Joseph as Poole's attendant and first fogleman; Turpin, Foulkes, Sullivan, poor mad Kirby and the black boy Tampiwam. A strong feeling on the part of some was felt at thus parting—perhaps never again to meet. Although in our early career I experienced much harsh and unjust treatment from Mr. Poole, yet I have long since forgiven him, and from my inmost soul feel for him and pity him, *so fallen*. He is gone, may he be conducted in safety home. It was no small matter for me to reconcile myself to part with my dog, Serjeant, which I consented to, to be as a watch under Poole's dray. The poor fellow has been indeed a very faithful brute companion. The ground has become so saturated with the rain, that it is difficult to move about our encampment; the feet sink at every step. Busy preparing for our morrow's start.

15th. Early getting our drays ready, we broke away from our long and wearisome encampment. I have while dwelling here not been without a large share of the enjoyment of the consolation of the truth. I have often experienced the very great blessedness of an union with Christ, taking away from Death all its sting. Oh! my dear Savior, thou art a very precious Savior, always ready at hand to help and succour thy brethren.

The Word I hope has been rightly valued by me, its promises have been sweet. The truth has been blessed to my soul. Having made it a practice since I slept under Foulkes's dray to read a portion to these poor benighted fellows every night ere we went to sleep, I have left them without excuse at the day of judgment. I pray it may be the means of their salvation, the simple reading of the Word is better than a thousand frothy sermons.

I received orders to join Piesse, Stuart and Morgan, and to pass ahead taking with us the light cart to take up the chaining where the former party left off, and chain on to the creek which Stuart had mapped down, leading into that beautiful flat which the Captain and he discovered when out to the north. We are to strike the creek some 15 miles to the east of this flat. We found the travelling exceedingly tedious, the ground being so very soft and rotten. It might well be supposed how peculiarly I am circumstanced with Piesse, but I determine to maintain a quiet forbearing spirit with him. After severe toil and driving we found the horses unable to get on any further, so we encamped for the night. Travelled about 10 miles.

16th. Early in the morning we were on the move, and right glad I was to, for Piesse manifested a most abominable spirit of unkindness. It would scarcely be credited the state of the ground over which we have to travel, the horses constantly floundering. After urging the horses about a mile or so, we heard some one cooing behind us, on halting we perceived Flood in the distance, on joining us he informed us Mr. Poole was dead, and that Piesse was to return home to Adelaide.

The death of poor Poole was no more than we all expected, the fact of Piesse leaving was a source of unthought joy; we pushed back but could not reach the camp.

17th. 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.

His body was well secured from the wild dog. Cutting his initials in the tree over him, he was left.²²

18th. Piesse received his final orders and departed, disliked and in many cases hated.²³ *He was a bad man, very.* Joe, who was to have returned to Adelaide, remains with us. Our party including all are nine men, five have left. We again started, keeping a course NW. After travelling about six miles, the bullocks were beaten; we encamped in a sandy acacia scrub.

20th. Sunday. Indications of rain, as yesterday the ground was very bad, and made but comparative little progress.

21st. The country getting worse and worse, sand ridge after sand ridge, with a very thick acacia scrub. Reaching the end of the line which had been previously chained, carried on the work 2 miles.

22nd. Morgan and myself at the chain. Water lies in every hollow. Chained 8 miles. To day we have been out 13 months I really feel solitary and isolate. I am one entirely by myself, yet there appears manifested a much kinder spirit; I hope it will continue. I find 11 oz. of bread a day altogether at variance with the severe labor of dragging a heavy chain through bog and scrub.

²² Sturt records the inscription 'J.P. 1845'.

²³ Sturt: ". . . I had every reason to be satisfied, -, with him, and I witnessed his departure with regret. A more trustworthy, or a more anxious officer could not have been attached to such a service as that in which he was employed."

23rd. At the chain. The sand ridges running in all directions forming large and small basins, they ask where does all the drainage of this part of the country pass to—these hollows receive all and retain all. 8 miles.

24th. The country horrible, none in the world can be much worse-chained 8 miles. We were to have fallen upon the creek some time today, but we can see no signs of anything like a creek. Away in the distance we perceive several native signal fires. In these solitudes scarcely a bird is to be seen, truly is it called a desert. We are not now annoyed with either flies or mosquitoes. Nights cold and frosty, the days lovely. It is fortunate for us no more rain falls, if it did our present route would be impassable. I mark again the arrangements of a kind providence.

25th. Heavy work this chaining—whatever intervenes in our course the chain has to be drawn through—we have sometimes been floundering half way up our legs in bog, sometimes a belt of spinifex brings us up. This spinifex grows so thick that a mouse can hardly pass through, it throws out points of spears as long and equally as sharp as a long sized darning needle, it makes the legs in a sad plight. Chained 8 miles, nearly, but no signs of a creek. We were to have made it a day or two ago—surely some error in the calculation of the party who determined the position of the creek. We should be critically circumstanced, if we had not in every hollow a supply of water. The drays not coming up we returned to them; Flood, who had been sent off to see if he could fall in with the creek, had returned unsuccessful. While engaged in forming the camp, my dog discovered a nest of "Jeboas" or Kangaroo Mice—it is a beautiful species of the Kangaroo.

We secured alive three of them, three were unfortunately killed, which I secured.

26th. 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. What a mercy to have God for a leader, for a councillor. Oh! the depth of the riches of that Grace, that I am enabled to rest on Him as a child, that I can look upward with confidence and see in God a reconciled Father. Oh how precious is Jesus, it is his arm that hath wrought this all surprising union.

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.

The draughtsman is well able to map his work, but he makes a sorry figure in the use of the instrument! That so much display should have been made, and so disjointed and inefficient affair as this party turns out to be Sturt, you should have remained at home. Killed an emu.

28th. The chaining is to be carried on to the west until we fall in with Lake Torrens. The drays pass over to the place named the "Park," while the chaining party carries on their work. Morgan, myself, Joe and the Doctor are the party who effect the chaining. Chained 8 miles. The country *desert*.

1st July.²⁴ 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.

²⁴ Brock is in error here—it was 1st August.

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. The Captain with Flood joined us.

2nd. 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.

3rd. After chaining about 4 miles, our eyes were delighted by viewing in the distance a line of trees indicating a creek—which we found to be so.

In it was water salt as the ocean's tide and as translucent as can be imagined. The Captain determined to encamp here, for fresh water had been left by the rains. The country becomes more open—*more desolate*. The Captain passed ahead, on his return informed us we were within a little distance of Lake Torrens—which we should have been long since, if calculations were correct—we have chained today 12 miles.

4th. After chaining about 4½ miles we came upon the shore of what has been once an immense body of water but now comparatively dry—what water was in the bed, is from the rains. We struck it on its eastern bank, just distinguishable to the west was a line of trees or what appeared to be such. There was a great haze brooding over the *lake* when we first came on it. This haze passing in some measure away we observed to the S and SW high table land, and nearer from the point of observation was a range distinct apparently from any other prominent mass, having an abrupt bold bluff at its southern end, and the north face sloped very ruggedly. The Mt. Hopeless of Mr. Eyre, this bluff is conjectured to be. The view we thus obtained might have extended 30-40 or more miles. A small body of water was perceived to the NW, which was found to extend but over a very small area.

The Captain feels dreadfully chagrined that the lake is *dry*—the most sanguine hopes have been entertained that we should float the boat on Lake Torrens, but there is barely water to float a duck.

The bed of the lake was too soft to travel on, as the Captain and Doctor proved; in essaying to cross over it the horses got bogged. We encamped, the Captain and Doctor proceeding away on the bank trending north. Stuart took an opposite course S. I have been speaking of the country over which we have been passing as desolate, but this scene which we now pass our eyes over, is the Climax of Desolation—no trees, no shrubs, all bleak barren undulating sand. Miserable! Horrible!

5th. The light cart was sent back to the last 12 mile encampment. We remained chaining a line 5½ miles, after doing which we returned, having 16 miles to walk. Sturt is all frown, he has been kindly informed of some interesting circumstances, but what I can't guess.

6th to the 9th. Returning to the general camp, 16, 17, and 19 miles walking in this country is no joke. Arrived—right tired of the chain.

10th. Thirteen calendar months²⁵ today from Adelaide, Well, has it been for the better or the worse? It has been a fearful trial of my faith and patience, opposed as I have necessarily been to the ways, habits and conversation of my fellow men. To maintain a conscience void of offence, it has been attended with much suffering, reproach and contempt. Striving as I have done to live quietly without compromising my principles has been a task which I could not have thus far done, had it not have been for the Grace of God.

²⁵ Another strange error. It was in fact, as Sturt records, the anniversary of their departure from Adelaide. See also the entry for 22nd July (p. 166).

With much gratitude I look back upon the many indications of God's goodness and presence, I also with sorrow recollect how very heinously I have forgotten God, so frequently forgetting as I have done the manifesting that spirit which should ever characterize one like me, professing to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, being buried with Christ, hid in Christ until the day of his appearing. I still (through Grace) can say, I live by faith on the Son of God—amidst all my troubles I shall be safely brought through, and withal I shall not be ashamed. I have been given to understand, during our late trip, that when the Captain pushes away to the NW, as he intends to do either tomorrow or the following day, I am to form one of the party, consequently I have been very busy in mending my clothes. However, this afternoon it has been whispered, that the Captain is offended with me and that Lewis is to go in my place. This was a source of malicious joy to the men who have long wished to turn the tide of favor that was setting in to myself. The fact was confirmed; the Captain sent for me and surlily ordered me to mend the frying pan; after doing it, my next orders were to look out my arsenical soap, wadding and skinning tools. I had no room to ask the reason why I was not going, for I had never received any official notice to prepare for the journey. I just supplied the things as if I knew nothing, hoping something would be said which would give me fair grounds to enquire what I had offended in, but no such opportunity presented itself; Sturt was as sulky as could be desirable.

Flood is at the bottom of it he has been saying something to my prejudice, I am quite certain, but what I know not. It however will relieve me of much fatigue; had I gone I would have striven to the uttermost to have done my part in effecting Sturt's wish.

15th. This morning Sturt, with the Doctor, Flood, Joe and Lewis started for the Centre, leaving Stuart to act as commandant till his return. May God bless the party, restoring them in all safety. Soon after the departure Stuart walked forth, right pompously displaying a folded paper, and issued his order for all hands to hear read the instructions the Captain had given. A stockade is to be erected as a defence against any attack from the natives so far all well—and some other matters were disposed of—"Brock is to mind the sheep and you are to report to me on my return, if he does not take them out in proper time in the morning, feed them at a proper distance," &c-a lot more of the like. Now could any honest mind feel very comfortable at this implied threat? I can challenge Sturt if ever since I have joined him he can point to one instance of neglect of duty on my part. He knows he cannot—I require *no threat* to induce me to do my duty—I should deny the faith if I did so. Had I been a blackguard *and something worse*, I should have succeeded in pleasing on this party. If I had been a jolly good fellow at the fire, joined in the beastly jests that passed, in short if I had made shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience I should have been one of the favored ones—but I had rather suffer affliction than to bask in any such sunshine.

Peter's reference to the Christian slave has comforted me, the Lord's "Fear not" has strengthened me, the faithfulness of God's promises cheers and encourages me. Previous to our trip to the lake, I enjoyed at least the thought if not in great favor with Sturt I at least was giving satisfaction, and by its being determined I should attend him in his last and what was to be his memorable trip evidenced it—so the offence must have been within these last few days. How much more honorable, if a man gives offence, 'twould be to tell the man and hear what he has to say in exculpation, and then to condemn him if he deserved it—not to act as Sturt has done in almost every instance, to hear one side of the case, and that one only. Misrepresentation has been, I am satisfied, the game that has been played—I should care but little about the matter was it not for my Adelaide associations, knowing to what lengths ill feeling and prejudice might carry them in untrue statements. The sympathies of the public will be with Sturt, and the poor man who has suffered wrongfully on the expedition will be looked upon on his return as a man who has failed in his duty to the Honble. Captain Sturt.

Our present encampment is comparatively a pleasant one, surrounded as we are by such a desolate country—it presents in some respects the appearance of a park. Numerous box trees are prettily grouped; it is four or five miles long and more than a mile in width, having a creek passing some distance into the flat, and here terminating, the waters when the creek is full passing over, forming a kind of lagoon.

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.

CHAPTER VII

1845: 17th August to 8th October

ENCAMPED AT FORT GREY—GOD'S PROMISES—VISITS BY
NATIVES—RAIN—SELF EXAMINATION—STOCKADE FINISHED
— STUART'S OPPRESSION—SUMMER APPROACHING—ANXIETY
FOR STURT — FLOOD'S PERFIDY REVEALED — STURT
RETURNS—SUFFERINGS OF HIS PARTY—HE PREPARES TO GO
OUT AGAIN—BROWNE REFUSES TO RETURN HOME.

17th Sunday. I experience much peace in contemplating the several promises, and though sometimes I doubt as to my having any right to appropriate them to myself, yet surely Christ is my portion, for whom have I in Heaven so desirable, or who on earth can I compare with him? The future is the Lord's and not mine, my duty is to abide in a Savior's love, keeping his commandments, and to leave all that concerns me into his hands, whether it be life or death, adversity or prosperity, reproach or honor, all—all I leave to him—remembering that wonderful and astounding truth, uttered by the Apostle "Our life is hid with Christ in God, and when He who is our life shall appear we shall appear with him also"—"all things are yours." Now to be in Christ is to be a "New Creature." Am I a new creature? Have I, am I daily crucifying the flesh with its lusts, living afraid of sin, watching and praying against Sin? It is easy to say I am in Christ *but* am I bringing forth fruit unto holiness? Help me, Oh Lord help me!

I am a poor wicked unfaithful servant, all my offerings, all my doings must be through thy name—Tonight Stuart read prayers—what a mockery—I listened to the scriptures and prayed that the truths read (2nd Peter, 2nd Chapter) might be sanctified.

21st. 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. 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!*

26th. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth—before I was afflicted I went astray—I can bear humble grateful testimony that the promises of God are Yea and Amen to them who rely on them—out of my present trials I believe I shall come forth a better man. I have in days that are gone turned my attention to the work of instructing others in the ways of truth, but how much better had it been if I had felt more my need of instruction, had I been less arrogant and proud of my very small stock of Christian experience and knowledge—I see every day more what I owe to God, that I should have been spared thus amidst all my follies and wickedness, that now the bias of my mind should be heavenward, aiming to keep the testimonies of Jehovah, not outwardly only but in the inner man, where no eye can penetrate but God's.

I am still as ever prone to deviate, forget and wander, but His Grace keeps me, I enjoy the mercy of the sanctifying influences of the Spirit leading and teaching me I question not one moment the allwise dealings of my heavenly Father in bringing my soul into such deep distress; it has led me more humbly more prayerfully to rely upon him. It has been the case with me, that too often have I been listening to the surmising of a doubting guilty heart; the cruel insinuations of Satan have kept an influence upon my mind, dishonoring to God, questioning the truth of his promises. I could not submit, selfishness and pride were dominant—but what does he tell me—"Hearken unto me, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings." I am through Grace, now able unreservedly to cast my burden upon him and I feel that he is sustaining it. My business is ever to be in the way he has appointed, not only in conversation but in spirit, quietly doing my duty as a servant, and to render good for evil. Despised I may be, hated I may be, spoken against I may be—but all these things I leave—all I can do is to pray for these men, I can do no more than this, and act in all points as one who has been redeemed – it is his Grace which makes a difference, for in scarcely one point can I assimilate with my fellow men on this party—what concord can exist between a lover of Jesus and those who hate a Savior and all who strive to follow Christ?

Yet in every thing when I can meet with them I do, trying all I know how I can remove their prejudices, showing them I do not treat unkindness with callous indifference, but being conscious of the unkindness, at the same time forgive, and act towards these men with meekness, quietness and forbearance. Yet I should fail in this was it not for the strength given from day to day, for I am naturally proud, selfish, petulant and heady—I hourly feel my sinfulness. In my approaching to the Mercy Seat I lay this before him who knows me altogether, and my earnest prayer is that I may experience power and dominion over my besetting sins and be able to evince a spirit which will evidence the truth of my being one with Christ. What delightful seasons have I lately experienced, when away from the camp feeding the sheep—Bogatsky and my Bible, and the throne of Grace. I have truly held communion with God—my joy, my peace has arisen from the fact that in Him I find everything suited to my case as a sinner, His character of love, and the assurance of being justified and freed from the curse of the law through the work of my Savior. "What can harm you if ye be followers of that which is good—truly indeed what can harm when we have Jesus for our portion-united to him?

7th. September. Time is rolling on—the stockade is finished, though I think it will never be needed. The winter is rapidly passing away—a piece of ground which from the first had been prepared and sowed with various seeds, in hopes we should be able to get some little supply of vegetables, displays but a poor appearance.

Even cress which will grow on a stocking cannot grow in this miserable soil. It has evidently tried to do its best, as here and there we see plants in one and twos, and the melon; some have commenced throwing out the first tendrils, but the case was hopeless, and vegetation gave up. We have devised a plan whereby we make our damper assume a bulkier form; in the bacon cases was the remains of bran, which the bacon was packed in, we mix a portion of this with our flour. It does not add in verity much additional sustenance, but it appears bigger, and fancy goes a great way.

The general business of the camp is carried on in peace and quietness, the evenings are spent at the fire, but it is seldom I can join. I feel miserable when thus passing an hour, the running conversation being the late unfortunate Poole and unchaste jokes. I am silent. I smile to myself some times at its being thought by the men how much I dislike having to mind the sheep. When away feeding them, they little know the hours thus spent are my happiest ones I sing, I read, I pray—Jesus says "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father", and further adds, "We will come and make our abode with him." Have I indeed such a guest—how ought I to garnish the place where such a being condescends to abide? I have been very anxious before now, when a friend was about to visit my home, that everything should be prepared so as to render such a visit pleasant and agreeable to my friend. Oh! then when I think who has become my visitant, who it is that has taken up his abode with me, how unfit do I find my house, how unclean, how destitute of the graces of the spirit.

Lord, I would make no shift, have no subterfuge, but will tell thee how poor I am, covering over nothing with a shewy tawdry covering, so as to make things appear different from what they are. No, but freely confess all and let all be as Jesus finds it. His blood will cleanse, His righteousness will cover, His Grace will enrich, His Spirit will sanctify. Can I be alone? Can I be destitute? Should I be miserable? "His banner over me is love." His sympathy and encouragement—"Let not your heart be troubled." The gracious provision, "I have provided, all things are ready, eat, Oh my friends, drink, my beloved". Can I refrain from loving such a gracious Savior? What has he not done for me, although so vile, so worthless? He has sanctified my soul and body and made it a temple in which He taketh delight to dwell. May I aim more constantly for the possession of more holiness. May I crave after sanctification more than for any earthly good. Love Him, yes—I have reasons to love Him, for I have been saved from wrath by his death, and I have become reconciled to God through His blood—and by His life what is opening up before me? Present safety and future glory. May I never presume, may I never trifle. I feel as if I had again to begin my spiritual war. What I have yet done has not been rooting out the "Old Man", more like a compromise, a thrust now and again, more shew than effect—but I pray my God that "he will work in me to will and to do", so that I may not wait for the assault to come from my enemy, but become so that I may search out the strongholds of sin, destroy its foundations, give no room for its growth, cutting off everything which would have a tendency to strengthen, to foster sin in my heart.

14th. Sunday. During the past. week I have observed very much in Stuart (the young man who is left in command) which very much convinces me, if he has any chance he will fully report anything which may arise to my disadvantage on Sturt's return. I have been very careful. Last Monday afternoon, some little time before the sheep began to move away from the camp for their evening meal, I got some birds to skin, but ere I could finish the whole of them I had to attend my charge, the sheep, leaving one bird which was a good specimen for the morning, to secure it before I let the sheep out. (In the cutting of the timber for the stockade I had spoken to Stuart if I could not assist in the morning, before I turned the sheep out; he was quite agreeable to this.) As in the instance of the timber, so I acted in reference to the birds, turned to early to secure it. My Lord Commander, hearing the sheep, issued from his marquee, and strutted up to the dray which I inhabit, and arrogantly demanded the reason of the sheep being in the yard. I was at the time getting the skin back over the skull. On looking up, this mushroom's face wore a mighty dignified flush, his little body seemed inflated with indignation at this dereliction of duty. I was near forgetting myself and to give him some deserving answer, for it was wounding to my pride to be subject to such a drunkard and scapegrace as he was, when acting as he had been doing,

previous to joining the party as a hutkeeper at a sheep station—a situation which is the last refuge of broken down profligates like himself. All this in an instant flashed across my mind and made my blood boil. I quietly told him the bird would not have been fit to skin if I had left it till further on in the day, and that the Captain would warrant my act. “I order you, Sir, for the future to take the sheep out at day-break as the black boy used to do.” I swallowed my disgust and answered, “Well, Mr. Stuart, it shall be done.” Having delivered himself, he again retired to his marquee. I had mastered my temper and felt my due reward. I will not, if I can anywise help it, give him room to have anything to report.

15th. Yesterday afternoon, as usual, I moved away after the sheep. After feeding them upon some young grass, which I fell in with some two or three flats from the one in which we are encamped, and it drawing towards time for turning home, I turned the creatures, the sun appearing about an hour high, letting them feed as long as possible. Very suddenly the sky became overcast, and the light was rapidly departing, yet I felt certain that at best twenty minutes would bring me home, as I fancied I had but three sand ridges to get over. I continued driving, and it became darker and darker, and no camp. Here was a pretty job—“I now felt certain that I was in a strange flat, and my best plan was to coil the sheep, and watch them through the night. As it was so dark, if I tried to gain the camp, I might get astray.

So discovering a favorable spot, I secured the sheep in a bush fence, and a job I had sure enough, for before I could rear the fence sufficiently, while away getting limbs of trees, the rascals took advantage of my absence, and when I came back, they were all out. Still I worked, bringing log after log, branch after branch, till at last my trouble was over, as far as the penning stood; but a little thing would startle them, and rush they would, and I could but entertain small hopes of my fence standing. My dependence was on Serjeant keeping the wild dogs off. The night passed away and my sheep were safe. I found myself little better than two miles from the camp—I must have taken one flat for another last night.

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. 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.

21st. Sunday. Time is sliding by. We shall have some bother, I expect, ere we yet see the Darling River.

In looking over the last letter I received from Delia, a remark in it made by her sister Hannah caused me to reflect how much I stood in need of affliction, to shew me how little I was acquainted with experimental godliness—how much ignorance, pride and selfishness reigned in my very wicked heart, and also the superficial acquaintance with its pollutedness and depravity I possessed. Had I been more sensible, how much more appropriate the blood and righteousness of Jesus would have appeared. If out of my present circumstances is produced a deeper and more abiding knowledge of the state of my soul before God, and to be enabled to realize the full assurance of faith in Christ Jesus, crucifying the flesh with its lusts, and to walk as one who has been planted with Jesus in his death, and to experience what it is to walk in newness of Life—not only outwardly but in the inmost soul, where no eye but the eye of Jehovah can pierce—There, Oh! there may it be "Holiness unto the Lord."

26th. Today we have received an issue of bacon at the rate of 4 lbs. per man per week – this is to save the sheep.

28th. The summer appears to be again set in with all its attendant annoyances, hot winds, mosquitoes and flies, the glass up to 115. We begin to feel very anxious about the Captain—we dread the precarious supply of water on his account.

Things come out by degrees. Today I became partially acquainted with the circumstance which had given the Captain so much offence, so much so as to place Lewis in my place, and cause me to remain in camp.

It was just this. It was a matter to be desired by most of us that our own particular self should attend Sturt as one of the party who should go with him to the full length of the expedition. Flood did all he knew to bring me in disfavor, which he could not do until he hit upon the following felonious plan. Availing himself of an opportunity, he enquired of Sturt if I had not been anxious, ere the party which had returned to Adelaide left, to get an order for 15 pound—"Yes, but what of that?" "Oh, he only wanted to secure as much money as possible, before he returned, that if he failed in his duty he should not have much to lose, for this 15 pound and the half pay his wife is drawing, would not leave much coming to him. You will find, Sir, he will be quite careless." All this told, my friend Flood got Lewis on the party in my place. Poor Flood, if he but knew the pleasure of doing right, he would have obtained some of his wages and sent it to some of those in whose debt he is so deep. In this matter I rejoice. In getting the order in a straight—forward manner, and for a holier and higher purpose than the one attributed-Flood I forgive you.

30th. 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.

1st October. This evening the Captain and Doctor and Flood returned,²⁶ leaving Lewis and Joe to follow on with the cart. I am given to understand they passed into 24° 30' a distance from this about 550 miles. A country most wretched, flats nearly 70 miles across, at seasons evidently entirely flooded, having several creeks of considerable size terminating in them; very little vegetation adapted for the poor horses, seed growing in prodigious quantity and precariously watered. High and abrupt sandhills, and these immense flats, compose the whole character of the country. After the rains travelling would be utterly impossible. In this doleful region, fish were obtained in one of the creeks which was fallen in with. The dip seems to be from the ENE—the water's flow appeared to be in this direction—do these fish found come from the more inhabited waters away to the ENE? Is it not possible in high floods, these fish get washed on with the current, and become deposited in the deep water holes? The horses have suffered severely; they are mere skeletons. One died, supposed through eating some poisonous herb. Natives were not numerous, neither were they very friendly; little apparently to eat but seed.

2nd. Today the cart came home. Joe, who previous to this last trip was a stout healthy looking lad, indicated how severe had been the toil; he was wasted to a mere skeleton;

²⁶ According to Sturt, they returned "on the evening of the 2nd of October, after an absence of seven weeks, during which we had ridden more than 800 miles."

he looks as one would do just after a long and severe illness.²⁷

I had obtained during the Captain's absence several birds in pairs. They had been well shot, and certainly looked very pretty and unruffled. The Captain seemed quite pleased. He said when a man deserved it he liked to praise, which I had given him reasons to do, in the birds I had secured. In reply, I thanked him, and said I had in every instance exerted myself to the utmost to give him satisfaction. I felt much, at this, better feeling on the part of Sturt. He left an impression on my mind when he parted for the last trip deeper and more gloomy than I can express; I thought, "After all my toil is it come to this?" It, however, I hope, wrought in me more carefulness, gave me a fuller insight in the pride of my heart—a sin perhaps I have not hitherto watched against as I ought to have done. It gave me also matter for the throne of Grace; again and again, have I felt the blessedness of communion with God.

The Captain it seems was within 200 miles of the Centre, no water. Ah, instead of wasting the month in chaining to the lake as he did, but had he at once pushed, he would have had a supply to have enabled him to have reached the point so desired by him. He failed for once in his judgement—that deeply cherished theory of an inland sea would tend much to pervert it. Will he try it again? The men say who have returned, that not an inch would they go if called upon to attend him again, let the consequences be what they may.

²⁷ Sturt: "Mr. Browne found it necessary to put all the men on the sick list ..."

If no rains fall, I fain believe we shall return.

5th. 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. 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.

Indications of a thunder storm. The Captain is determined to go again—in consequence of this, high words arose between Sturt and the Doctor, even to the declaration that the Doctor would resign having anything more to do with the party—he wants the Captain to return, which the Captain won't do.

"I require you, Dr. Browne, to take the party back to Adelaide leaving me two men,²⁸ and of course the Doctor would not thus act.²⁹ Sturt has failed, and that most signally failed, and he would care nothing if he perished. His pride is hurt—he has done nothing.

²⁸ Three: Sturt

²⁹ According to Sturt, Browne said: "I can never consent to leave you in this dreadful desert. Ask me to do anything else, and I will do it; but I cannot and will not desert you."

CHAPTER VIII

1845: 9th October to 8th November

ENCAMPED AT FORT GREY-STURT, MORGAN AND STUART
LEAVE — BROWNE IN CHARGE OF CAMP — NATIVES VISIT —
ALL HANDS SICK—SLIGHT HOPES FOR STURT-HEAT
INCREASESRETREAT TO DEPOT — SCURVY— BROWNE VERY
SICK — STURT RETURNS — HIS DESPERATE — CONDITION —
PREPARATIONS FOR HOME.

9th. This morning Sturt, Morgan and Stuart³⁰ left the camp, the Captain pledging his word to the Doctor he would return within 20 days, if he saw no more than he had done on the last trip—but anybody could see the man's purpose. On leaving us the tears rolled down his cheeks – he took 10 weeks provisions, and every horse, leaving the cart behind – to the very death Sturt is determined to go. The glass in the shade is beyond 100 and their nearest water is distant 80 miles.

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.

³⁰ Sturt: ". . . left the depot camp at Fort Grey with Mr. Stuart, Morgan and Mack . . ."

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 well examine it before they will appropriate it to their own use.

12th. The Doctor read no prayers.

19th. Sunday. The weather has become very cold and windy, but no rain, this is a very changeable country.

The time is passing very heavily, our thoughts are constantly passing on to Sturt. The Doctor says if he pushes on his old tracks there is a doubt of his ever returning. What makes it unpleasant, on leaving he left no instructions with the Doctor in case of any emergency—he therefore has tied the Doctor down, whose feeling of honor, and as a man, must necessarily shackle his future movements—we can only hope Sturt will soon return. In a stroll which some of our party took, they discovered a native encampment—instead of being welcomed (for it were natives who had frequently visited us) they manifested great displeasure at the intrusion – so much so that they rapidly gathered all their necessaries on their backs and left their camp, or were about doing so when our party, seeing how matters stood, prevented them by at once retiring. The women were highly incensed, more so than the men.

24th. I have been very sick these last few days, I had foolishly thrown off a flannel, and the cold winds coming on gave me a violent cold, generally I have enjoyed very good health.

28th. All hands sick—what I took to be the occasion of my being sick was the change of weather, but it is now evident it arises from the water we have to drink. It is quite putrid, and although we strain it when we use it, it is just the consistency of cream. We swallow as much mud as we do water. I, however, am getting better of the bowel attack, but I am suffering in my eyes, almost blind. Yet I have birds to skin, which causes me additional pain, and retards their getting well.

The flies are really horrible, literally covering the face and eyes.

The 20 days are expired since the Captain left us; he pledged his word to the Doctor he would be home by this day. Slight hopes are entertained of his return. What water was found on the last trip within 200 miles of this must be by this time all gone. Our safety is very much to be questioned, for we cannot return yet, having to wait to the very last on Sturt's account. Shall I ever forget the privilege, the value of the Christian's privilege, when I am again permitted to enjoy them—as iron sharpeneth iron so does the face, that of his friend — but now I hear no voice which hath learned to praise the Redeemer, I see no face that is turned Zionward — all my familiars are enemies to the Cross. It is true I often hear the dread name of Jehovah—but it is in blasphemy; the name of Jesus is often mentioned, but it is in contempt; the Holy Spirit is often invoked, but in fearful blasphemy—no poor Christian can tell what a withering influence on the soul such an association as my present one has; the ebon wing of Satan could scarcely leave a worse effect. Yet what a mercy, out of this company, I should be found walking in the fear of God. I was once vile as the vilest, but through Grace I am washed, I am sanctified. Bless the Lord, Oh my soul out of this valley of the shadow of death shall I yet be delivered, for I hear a voice—the voice of one whom my soul loveth, the chiefest among ten thousand. Sometimes through my unfaithfulness my way is dark, but light again springs up—with fresh struggles I find fresh Grace.

2nd. November. Sunday. The heat is dreadful, beyond 111 in the shade. We have commenced digging a hole in the creek, so as to insure the water as much as possible for the Captain if he ever returns. We hope by well covering this hole, into which we shall let the water, it will prevent the excessive absorption.

6th. Finishing the reservoir for the Captain and leaving the bottle secreted under a tree, throwing away almost all the bacon, and other things we could do without, we yoked up the bullocks and started for the Depot Creek. We experienced an invigorating cool breeze, it was. about 2 p.m. when we left. Travelling on till about 5, we struck our old track, and availing ourselves of a young moon we travelled on till 10 o'clock, when we brought up, a nice cool breeze helping us. Through weakness, I felt very tired and stiff.

7th. At peep of day we were again on the move. Most surprising that in this our need the weather should ' have so strangely altered-it was this morning so cold—how marked is this Providence. We were very much bothered, on account of the tires of the dray wheels getting loose. With clips and chains we managed to keep the tires on. We stopped about 12 a.m. for refreshment, the poor sheep appearing sadly distressed, their feet are getting extremely tender. Resting an hour we again moved on, and as the day closed in, we were miles distant from the water. We all felt weak and weary, but what cheered us was the fact when having reached our journey's end we should get a good drink of water.

The sheep were getting fearfully beaten, having been so long feeding where the ground sunk beneath them as they fed, and now having to travel over loose stones. Many of them lost their hoofs. The poor things would walk on only in the wheel ruts, for in these ruts they found a smoother, firmer footing. The bullocks shewed no sign of distress, but we felt great anxiety about the drays—we expected some of the wheels would fall to pieces. Oh, my poor back was ready to part in two—this must have originated through weakness. I would pass on before the drays, and get a large stone and get it under the small part of my back and lie on it till the drays and sheep were passed—it gave me a slight relief – but at last I found in doing this I could only after great difficulty get up, and I stood in great danger of being left behind, fixed on a stone. The sheep beginning to drop—and at last our fears were realized in reference to the drays. The wheels of one, with all our cobbling, fell to pieces—fortunately for us it was no great distance from water, which we reached about an hour past midnight.

8th. Late in the day did we open our eyes, we were this far safe, would that Sturt was with us. The fact of his absence threw a gloom over us in the late journey – we were not just going home, we had yet perhaps weeks to wait ere we should move away and attempt to reach the Darling. We have an instance how rapidly the water passes away, in the creek on which we are now resting.

We left it when we were pushing away to the west after breaking away from the Depot. It was then from 12 to 14 foot deep and more than 50 yards in length—now, the water is all but gone. All the tea was issued—we have managed to save a little out of our rations for the home journey. We all feel very stiff and unwell. The Doctor says whatever happens to us he has no medicine left which he could administer. Jones's gums are swelled, and indicate the presence of scurvy. The poor sheep, some of them have not moved 10 yards since they came to this resting place.

9th. Sunday. We are beginning to feel fresh creatures, rest and good water effecting this. The poor sheep, the most of them yet, are cripples.

I sometimes fear this journal, after all my care, will fall into the hands of those who will never suffer me to use it for the purpose I intend—the fireside book for a revered parent. As is my custom when spending an hour in dotting down the circumstances passing, I pass away from the camp—and choose the largest brushy, shady spot I can find. Just now I am thus circumstanced, and while deeply engrossed, I hear a stealthy cautious footfall, as if some one is anxious to see my employment. "I am caught at last," was my ejaculation, as I slipped my book into the pocket. "Caught at last" again escaped me as I lifted up my head, to see who had thus been watching me, but judge my surprise, instead of Mr. Flood it was a beautiful emu, less than 10 feet from me. Pacing backward and forwards, throwing out its neck to be able better to know who I was or what I was,

the poor thing had no doubt been coming to assuage its apparent deep thirst, for its beak was open, at the water hole, but my figure had attracted its attention. When our bullocks or horses have been feeding, it was quite a common thing to see two or three emus in among them feeding as well. The poor thing, in my case, was not quite free from alarm, for it began to throw off those singular sounds, which are produced through a strange construction of cartilage in its throat. This sound is not unlike the ring from a blacksmith's anvil. On my raising myself it quietly strode away and then broke into a trot. Their speed is much greater than the swiftest race horse, and when being caught by the dogs it is principally owing to their getting bothered.

10th. Busy wedging up the dray wheels. There was a dray left by the home party which is to be brought back.

11th.³¹ Lewis and Joe started for the purpose and on the 12th returned, being accompanied by three natives. These fellows make signs of the great scarcity of water throughout the country-we entertain great fears that the Captain will never be able to rejoin us. The poor Doctor is very unwell, we are all weak. Our blood is become so impoverished through the quantity and character of our food that very little sickness would terminate in death.

³¹ It was on this day that Sturt, approaching Fort Grey from the north, recorded 125°F. Thinking the thermometer must be giving a false reading, he placed it in shade out of the wind. An hour later it had risen to its limit of 127° F., and burst.

What a mercy do I feel it that excepting the last indisposition I have enjoyed generally such good health. God has been very mindful of me indeed, the past keeps alive my confidence as to the future. His faithfulness ever endures I feel quite happy sometimes when dwelling upon the great probability of never returning to my wife and home. My hope is sure and steadfast. I have my anchor in Jesus who is passed into the holiest, nothing can move this stay. I avoid as much as possible dwelling in thought upon my beloved home and Delia—it only makes me feel miserable and uncomfortable. It is like opium eating; for the time I am lost in fond reverie, and when brought back again to my present association my spirit fails me, I feel a sickness at the heart. Says one, “May the rain keep off, I don't want to be home”—poor fellow, he has no home but what he finds in the houses of the vile and dissolute.

13th. 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.

14th. The wheels of the dray which Lewis had brought back happen to fit the axle of the broken down dray, they were of course made to take the place of the broken ones.

Breaking up, we moved away to the old camp—we, however, passed about one mile below. The recollections, I suppose, connected with the spot, would not make it just now anything like agreeable.

17th. 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 creek³² – 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.

18th. Preparations for home.

³² Sturt: I gave the name of Cooper's Creek to the fine watercourse we had so anxiously traced, as proof of my great respect for Mr. Cooper, the Judge of South Australia."

CHAPTER IX

1845, 19th November to 1846, 28th January

ENCAMPED AT THE DEPOT — STURT DETERMINES TO PUSH FOR THE DARLIN — COMMEND MYSELF TO GOD — FLOOD SEARCHING FOR WATER—I SEW JOURNAL INTO JACKET—WATER BOTTLE MADE FROM BULLOCK SKIN — STURT VERY ILL — OUR DETERMINATION TO SAVE HIM—BROWNE FINDS WATER — WE START — THUNDERSTORM — GOD'S GOODNESS — NATIVES — MY BRAVE DOG — PIESSE'S PARTY MEETS US — NEWS OF MY SON'S DEATH — REACH THE DARLING — MORE INJUSTICE — MORUNDE — HOME.

19th. Flood sent off to look for water.

20th. He has returned-no vestige of any could he find, and he thinks there is none beyond the distance he travelled. Under every circumstance Sturt is determined to venture all, and push for the Darling. I feel delighted at the thought of his doing this, rather would I fall upon the goodness of God, than remain longer with a party such as this, who in the receipt of so many signal Providences in our favor, are more blasphemous and obscene than anybody can imagine it possible, depraved as Man is. Have I found mercy? Yes. Am I in Jesus? *Yes*. Have I aught to fear when called to judgement? There is no condemnation, for Jesus hath died, the just for the *unjust*. I deserve everlasting woe, I am unworthy of any mercy, but I look to Jesus. For such as me he offered himself.

He that believeth in Jesus hath life. He is all precious to my soul. There is so much appropriateness in the Gospel to my case — I cannot save myself, neither have I aught to bring to make propitiation. "Come without money," says the Lord Jesus, therefore I come. I throw myself on Jesus. If I should never on earth again meet my friends, it is possible this journal might come to hand. For them I entertain the liveliest and most ardent love again and again I have commended them to the care of Him who has ever been *my* keeper. He who kept Israel, He has brought me to the present hour, and could I detail my history, the suitableness of the psalmist's expression would appear in my case "Surely mercy and goodness bath followed me all the days of my life"—and I look forward with joy to the *rest*, the glorious rest which remains for all them who love the appearing of the Lord, those "who are His." Under my present circumstances, what should I have to cheer me, to enable me to look upon the future with calmness, if I had not the hope of the Gospel—this hope has nothing to do with flesh and blood. Oh no! it is far more secure— *This is it*—Our life is hid with Christ in God—My Heavenly Father must cease to be, ere my hope can be disturbed. Bless the Lord, Oh my Soul!

21st. Flood received instructions to get ready to pass away to the eastward, to ascertain if any water remained in that quarter—if so, we are to try to work home that way. However, clouds rising thick and heavy one upon another, he is detained, hoping as we do, a thunder storm may break upon us—and if should be only a fall of two hours rain it will enable us to move.

The thunder pealed, louder and louder, our hearts rose up into our mouths as it were the *hope of rain*. The rain it fell, but not sufficient to wet our shirts—all became hushed, cloud after cloud passed away and the heavens became again as brass. All hope being gone, Flood started.

22nd. Flood returned but has fallen in with no water. Every hole he came to was dry—consequently our hopes as to this route are cut off. The question is, is there water in Flood's Creek? It is distant from this about 110 or 120 miles—if not we are cut off this creek is the last remnant of our hope. The Doctor will endeavor to reach the creek, to ascertain.

I now close these papers. It is very possible some friendly hand might become possessed of them, and convey them safely to my beloved wife. I acknowledge the many mercies I have received at the hand of God while on this journey. I confess I have too often deserved his anger—"Lord be merciful to me a Sinner." Amidst all my unfaithfulness, ingratitude and forgetfulness, he has again and again made his goodness pass before me. Morning and at eventide has he vouchsafed to me His great mercies.

In conclusion I beg to assure my dear wife, my mind is stayed upon the promises of a faithful God and amidst all my past difficulties and distress I have experienced the truth, that godliness is great gain—as to the future, my hope is in the blood of the Atonement in the Righteousness of Jesus—I shall have to bless his Grace through all eternity.

I commend you to the care of our Heavenly Father. I can do no more. Make him your guide and counsellor in all your trials and difficulties, ever repose in unshaken confidence upon His love, His truth. If my boy lives—train him up so that he will have to bless his mother as I have reason to bless mine. Whatever be your future domestic arrangement, never concede to his evil temper—never deal or suffer others to deal capriciously harsh with him. My dear wife, I leave you—but I hope soon to welcome you and all my friends to³³ . . . everlasting home, to unite with me in the holy and delightful service of Heaven—farewell—to my dear friends in Adelaide and England farewell—if this should reach you recopy it and send it home again I bid you all farewell—D. G. Brock.

I would here remark that I deemed it prudent to secure all my papers up to this date, and sew them in one of the pockets of a velveteen jacket. In pushing for the Darling, if a man fell through exhaustion, his comrades would be little able to help him, there he would be left to his fate. I thought it possible my coat would remain a long time, so long p . . . as some traveller, would fall in with it—and the first thing would be an examination of what it might have secured in it—I directed the parcel appealing to the "finder's honor to deliver it."

³³ This leaf of the MS. is loose and somewhat frayed. Some words occurring at the edges of pp. 257 and 258 are partly or totally illegible.

23rd. November. This afternoon the Doctor, attended by Flood, started to look for water in a creek WSW of the.... The Captain is unable to rise from his couch—the f . . . disease is strongly upon him.

25th. The Doctor returned, having found a little water in a direction but of little use to us. It would . . . s on our route barely 10 miles—and it would ta . . . to reach it.

The Doctor preparing to start for Flood's Creek. Among the preparations is the forming a bullock hide into a bottle. A bullock was shot and drawn up by its neck, and carefully skinned from the neck downwards, the skin being drawn back over the carcass, leaving the hairy side inwards. It is lashed in a dray, the water poured into the neck, and the huge bottle filled when safe. The orifice was carefully sewed up. In drawing off the water, a string is unfastened at the tail which acts as a spout. Any quantity can be drawn off that may be required. Everything being adjusted for the Doctor's departure Jones . . . with the dray which bears the precious bottle . . . in the afternoon. The Doctor with Flood followed it in the light cart. Jones will go on 30 or 40 miles and leave the dray. The Doctor will here water his horse, leaving Flood, and he alone to push on to ... Creek.

Ere this year closes we shall be safe on the banks of the Darling or we shall be in an eternal ... ed. The thought is fraught with the most momentous . . . st.

How shall I appear before my judge is the question I ask myself. It is an affecting solemn . . . tion. A sinner, vile polluted sinner, unworthy the breath I draw, much less to be door keeper in the Lord's House, having been an apostate from the truth, living for years in this apostacy, how shall I appear? The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin—I throw myself and all my sins upon Jesus—if I perish it shall be with urging the plea—*The Blood and Righteousness of Jesus*. I know my Redeemer liveth, I know faith in Him is all that is required. Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. I rest upon Christ. Oh! what a mercy that now, when death is apparently so near, I am able to cast my soul upon this rock, amidst all my apostacy I should have had my life preserved, and now in my hour of need, I feel so truly composed and happy, a happiness arising from the contemplation of what is treasured up in Jesus. I have often very severe trials when thinking about my dear Delia, for human affections are strong, very strong within me, and my prayer is if it be possible, let my life be spared. Yet I must try to forget all earthly ties, for I shall have to struggle all alone. I shall have quite enough to bear when heart and flesh faileth. It would be pleasing when death approaches to hear the voice of those I love consoling and comforting me—but if the will of God is, that I put off my vile body in this lone desolate wilderness, I cheerfully submit. I pray I might be able to glorify His Name in my last moments, and that I may experience the consolation of Jesus, who when His hour approached felt troubled, and He has promised to sustain me.

Who is there that can harm you? If God be for us who can be against us? Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, what is laid up for those who love Jesus. The mercy of God is better than life. What would be my feelings if I had no hope? Into thy hands, Oh my Heavenly Father, I commend my Spirit—

27th. To enable us in some measure to meet our coming trials, the Captain has ordered us an additional 2 lb. of flour, and ½ lb. to convert into coffee, and with the beef, of which we have plenty, we hope to get a little more strength. The heat is great—it is more like burning than anything else. Jones has returned, he speaks of the skin bottle as a splendid affair—it retained the water admirably. This evening the hopes of all of us were raised by observing away to the west a most promising appearance of a coming thunder storm-cloud rising over cloud—the barometer too is indicating some change, it being very low, but so frequently have we observed such indications *all vanish*, that now we hope against hope.

28th. The sky has lost all appearance of rain.

30th. Sunday. The Captain is very ill.

2nd December. Early this morning the Doctor returned, how did our hearts beat when we heard his voice, "Cheer up, Captain Sturt—all is right – throw away your lame legs—plenty of water in Flood's Creek."³⁴

³⁴ According to Sturt, Browne returned on 6th December, and his words were: "There is still water in the creek, but that is all I can say. What there is is as black as ink, and we must make haste, for in a week it will be gone."

God is better than our fears. Our hopes of life are again sprung up—true it will be a hard struggle to travel through the dense scrub before us a distance of more than a 100 miles, and no water. The Doctor informs us the skin had begun to smell, and consequently had tainted the water, but orders have been issued to kill two more bullocks and endeavour to get the fat more perfectly from the skin.

If my life is spared, what principles should regulate and influence my future conduct? It must be a soul devoted to the Lord Jesus. May I never forget God's mercies and my obligations. Will it be—when friends are surrounding me, and comforts are abounding—shall I under such circumstances decline into a moral lethargy, a spiritual sleep, becoming proud, become presumptuous, knowing in a measure the inbred weakness and vileness of my nature? Without I am kept by the Grace of God I should be guilty of all this and more; but this I know—if I come daily, hourly for strength, I never shall fall. Lord, work in me to do thy will. Never leave nor forsake me. I know those who keep a Savior's law will ever abide in a Savior's love.

7th. Sunday. Up to last night we have all been busy in making those preparations necessary for our journey, repairing the wheels of the drays &c. The light cart will convey Sturt—he will have his couch in it.

As we were busy in sewing up bags which we could carry flour in at our backs—for we expect not to get either the bullocks or horses through to the Darling – a question was asked by one of us, if the horses knocked up, how we were to act with Captain? He can not help himself. The plan was at once decided upon, at what ever cost we would drag him through in the light cart. This being settled among ourselves, it was to remain a secret. As may be supposed, everything was thrown away but what was absolutely necessary—we anticipate meeting supplies on the Darling if we succeed in breaking through. This has been to me and to most of us, a harassing tiring day—I am beginning to feel the scurvy in the balls of my feet and in the calves of my legs.

All things being ready we started in high spirits for the Darling at 8 o'clock at night. Having the moon's light we were highly favored. The early part of the night it was very hot and sultry. Glares of lightning continually shone away to the south. As the day began to break this lightning became extremely vivid and forked, and as the morn came in we observed away to the south a small, very small bank of clouds. One of our bottles bursted during the night.

8th. We halted for a rest, 1½ hour by the watch, all the time that we should be justified in sparing. We were delighted to feel a change from the intense heat to a cool delightful breeze. The little bank of clouds rose higher, and eventually the sky became altogether overcast. The lightning became more frequent and its near approach was made known to us by the reverberation of thunder.

In the afternoon it rained for about half an hour—was this not a mercy? Little as was the rain it invigorated all our cattle, it caused them to feel fresher. About 3 o'clock we reached the lagoon in which we found last Christmas the water, after the fearful struggle through the pine scrub. Passing on from this we about 4 turned the bullocks out for an hour and a half. We for the first time presented them with the water in the hides, but they would not touch it. Finding this to be the case we filled the buckets half with sand and then poured on it the water, well mixing it. This was drank by some of the bullocks but by a very few. The water was dreadfully tainted. Between 6 and 7 we again moved on, about 10 entered the memorable scrub, but the Doctor took us his route. This scrub which had been so much dreaded by us—in this scrub, through a gracious providence, we now found water. The thunder storm (which we had the past day observed in this direction, and a small portion of the rain had just reached us) had broken over it, and on the hard hollows which abound, this water had remained. It met our wants—it supplied the cattle, the horses and the sheep. We travelled with difficulty through the scrub, and as the moon set, the Doctor deemed it necessary to remain stationary till daylight.

9th. We experience the marked goodness of God, most particularly so in the extreme coldness of the atmosphere which enables our cattle to get along so well. We travelled on till about 3 o'clock, when we rested about two hours, being free from the scrub and again on our old track.

The light cart proceeded on before the drays. The Captain bears up very well, considering. We followed, every step bringing us nearer to the creek. Nobody can tell, how we got on, considering — and at 3 o'clock on the 10th, Wednesday morning, we again encamped on a water hole — *We are so far safe*—Oh! that men would praise the Lord — His ear was open to the poor man's cry, and He delivered him. As soon as possible the wheels were wedged together. I was busy in repairing two carbines. My vice was a saw slit in the bark of a gum tree, a small hand saw, file, a four square rimer and my skinning knife were the tools I had, with which I mended a stock almost in two pieces, it having gone from the lock side pin hole. When I finished it, it was as strong as ever. This afternoon the Doctor and Flood away ahead looking for water.

12th. Flood returned, with the cheering news that there was water about eighteen miles ahead; the Doctor has pushed on. About 7 in the evening we were again on the move. I suffer dreadful pain in my feet and legs. About 3 o'clock on the 13th, we again came to water. Resting about two hours, we pushed on, though not aware what water was before us, trusting when the Doctor joined us his news would be good, if not to fall back and fill our skins. About 2 p.m. we joined the Doctor on the creek known to us as Horse Cart Creek (we last year left a cart here). The Doctor had found water in the hills. Resting two hours, we were again on the move, and on the 14th, just before day dawn, we drew in on the creek which passes through the grand dividing ranges.

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.

15th. 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.

16th. Resting ourselves, waiting for Flood to return.

17th. 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.

19th. We are distant from the Darling 60 miles. Early we started, we continued travelling without intermission till near midnight, when we brought up for two hours – heavy and weary were our bodies. Just before day dawn on the 20th—when the Doctor's voice was heard ahead, cheerfully shouting “They are on the Darling”! – meaning the party from Adelaide—our road was blocked up by branches of trees, and our attention was directed to a marked caper tree beneath which were letters intimating to us that Piesse was on the Darling. Late in the forenoon we reached our camp at Laidley's Ponds, or Cawndillah. We found here a little water, but although it stunk, and was every thing bad, we could not get on further. The bullocks were turned out. The Doctor and Stuart had pushed ahead to have an interview with the "Escort", as Piesse described his party, and in the evening the great man arrived from the Darling on his horse, bearing with him for our refreshment $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. Tea – My heart beat when I asked him the question—"Did you see or hear anything about my family?" "Your wife I saw, she was well. Your son is dead, and Mrs. Brock has a daughter."

21st. Sunday. We are once more on the banks of the Darling. I cannot explain my feelings. I found my dear wife had sent me a box containing many comforts. Her letters spoke of heavy trials, a wife's deep solicitude, a mother's loss, a father's gain. I look with additional thankfulness to Him who bath sustained both of us. My poor Delia has had to bear much but the "Wind has been tempered." Our first born has been removed to the land where angels dwell. We found the Escort to consist of 10 men under the management of Piesse. Wine, lime juice and vinegar were among the supplies sent from town. The wine was Sturt's private stores, the other was not. Piesse gave instructions to his storekeeper to issue to us our rations, which consisted of flour, tea, sugar and rice – the rice was extra—and how were we confounded: the $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of tea which had been brought to us at Cawndillah was to be deducted from us. We cared nothing about the tea, but the injustice of the act so long struggling, upon such short rations, and now to recommence his old game. The men would not take the rations.

22nd. The Captain is again listening to Piesse. Where is generosity, that the men should be subject to the tyranny of Piesse, who is now upon the high horse — everything is sixes and sevens. We had been led to expect lime juice and lots besides, but instead of lime and vinegar we get nothing, men every one of us more or less feeling the scurvy. How grateful would be a little vinegar, but none comes to our share, although there is more on the dray than we could use.

25th. Matters are arranged, the tea is not to be deducted. The Captain seems to have turned his back upon the Old Hands and find ten thousand virtues in the Escort. We all most heartily wish we had never met them, than to have met them under Piesse, for he is now having his sweet revenge. I avoid him as much as possible. It being Christmas Day, an extra issue as a gratuity to our mess, 4 lb. sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. tea. Some of the party would not consent to this. In a great measure it would be better if some would not carry things so far, they feel themselves aggrieved after having suffered so much with Captain Sturt, that we should experience such bad treatment from Sturt. The most bitter hate is openly professed towards Piesse, for they declare (and with good reason too) that Piesse is carrying on his old game with Sturt, and this unjust treatment would not enter Sturt's head, if it was not for the malicious suggestions of this redoubtable gentleman.

I am so happy in contemplating upon the great probability of soon being free not only from Sturt but from the party generally, that I care little about anybody's malice. I take care to place myself out of everybody's power. The Doctor out of his private store sent us a supply of rum and brandy.

We find the waters in the Darling very low, it being only in holes. The hole on which we are encamped is a most magnificent sheet of water, but above and below us it is quite dry. I am certain in my own mind that in some measure this river is affected by the rains passing over those immense flats, and forcing its way into the channel.

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.

26th. Started for Adelaide.

28th. A very unpleasant feeling is produced among the party, in consequence of Piesse's Escort bullock driver being knocked off watch and made overseer over the bullocks. This roused the wrath of the old hands, and there were continual murmurs, till the Captain called the drivers together to know what the grievance was. Sturt was all frown, and Mack after a little off hand conversation put the following question – “Captain Sturt, during the past eighteen months, did you ever find the bullocks neglected, or when you required the bullocks at a given time, were you ever kept waiting?” The answer was, “No.” “Then, Sir,” says Mack, “we think it very hard after being with you so long, and have always kept the bullocks together, you should put a stranger over us, a man whom we know is not so well acquainted with the teams as us chaps who have had to watch them under so many trying circumstances.” This put the Captain in a furious passion. Poor Mack was discharged, another man of Piesse's Escort was appointed to drive Mack's team. This Mack of all men in the party had striven hard for the Captain. Look for honorable generous feeling in Captain Sturt, you would be as likely to find water in an empty water butt.

5th. January 1846. We have left the Darling behind us. Nothing worth recording has taken place. The scurvy manifesting itself rather increasingly in my feet and legs, I spoke to the Doctor, after which he sent me a bottle of vinegar. It was a prize. This was a day or two ago—today it came to my ears that Flood has been saying half of this vinegar was intended for him, but he should let me finish it, and then he should ask me for it. Fortunate for me, the Doctor had not left. As soon as I was told of this, I went to the Doctor and asked him if he intended my sharing with Flood. "Of course not, Brock—it was sent for your own individual use." The Doctor leaves us tomorrow—Flood would then have told Sturt how he had acted, but I stopped him in this instance.

6th. 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.³⁵ 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,

³⁵ Sturt gives this man's name as "Pulcanti".

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.

A scene occurred at the Captain's tent between one of the men and Flood—it was the Captain's cook. Flood was told in the presence of Sturt, by the Cook, if Flood had caused him so much injury as he had caused some of the men, he would have shot him as sure as his name was Flood, and left his bones bleaching in the desert. What a mercy that I shall so soon be free from such a party. All the bad feeling that has ever existed originated with Sturt. Had he been an upright, stern commander, there would have been nothing to have caused ill feeling, for every man would have had to keep his place, every man would have received his meed, whether it would have been encouragement or censure. Some men here have been able to steal the horse, while others dare not look over the hedge.

23rd. The Captain having left us some days back, Piesse has had full command. Made Morunde. Piesse discharged all hands but Morgan and myself.

I have been so careful to prevent this. The men discharged are Lewis, Jones, Davenport. Their things were thrown off the drays, which they will have to carry into Adelaide on their backs, 100 miles—shame—.

28th.

I ARRIVED HOME—