

**SOME REFERENCES TO ABORIGINAL LIFE IN THE MORETON REGION
FROM STOBART'S JOURNAL (1853)**

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INTRODUCTION

In the previous issue of **Q.A.R.** it was noted that G.K.E. Fairholme had three articles published in the **Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London** in 1856 (Love 1984:97). Further research indicates that these were based upon information obtained during a trip down Moreton Bay in the company of the Lord Montagu party in 1853. This was revealed in the extensive Letter-Journal prepared by the Reverend Henry Stobart M.A., Tutor to Lord Montagu (Stobart 1896). It was compiled from letters he sent home to his mother in England.

The Moreton Bay trip included Stradbroke Island, St. Helena Island, Pine River entrance, Bribie Island, Durundur, the Bunya scrub and Nerang Creek. Like Fairholme, Stobart writes about local Aboriginal culture and thus provides a rare set of first-hand notes of use to archaeologist and culture historian alike.

The following textual excerpts are part of a transcription of the letter-journal which was made available to the National Library of Australia by Mrs. W.S. Newman. The quoted sections below are unedited, being faithful reproductions of the original typescript.

AUGUST 4th., 1853


"Since Monday week until Tuesday we have been absent from Brisbane and I sit down with a very bad grace to write up my journal of a week which has been full of interest and amusement. For it is the most wearisome of all occupations that I know to make up the back work of a journal, especially when you would like to put down a good deal - besides, so much is lost of the freshness which it has when written at the time. I took paper and pen down with me to the Bay where we have been, but with five in a small tent and no table and above all no spare time, it is impossible to keep it up. I must try and recall as well as I can.

We left at 7 a.m. on Monday morning (25th) in the Custom House boat with Mr. Duncan and Mr. Sheridan - the first the Chief and the second the next in office in Her Majesty's Customs here. The Boat was a very nice one with 3 sails and a crew of four and laden with two tents and a

Canteen of provisions and necessaries for camping out. To the mouth of the river, which is about seventeen miles, we had the tide with us - the banks do not vary at all, being bordered with thick mangrove bushes. We were uncertain at first what point to make for in the Bay, as it was of importance to have the Blacks with us as we did not know what they then were. They were continually moving about from place to place. We met, however, a boat in the Bay from which we learned that they were at Amity Point on Stradbroke Island, the most southerly of the three islands which shut out Moreton Bay from the sea. The Bay is very large - in length from N. to S. it cannot be much under 80 or 90 miles. Stradbroke Island is 39 m. in length, Moreton Island 28, I think, and Bribie Island, the most northerly, some 18 miles. In breadth from E. to W., from the sea beach on the further side of the island to the entrance of the river it must be about 40 miles.

The Amity Point Blacks as they are called, from their chiefly stopping at the N. point of Stradbroke Island which is so called - from no other reason that I could learn than that a great many of them had been killed there! - have as their "run" Stradbroke and Moreton Bay Islands. They had just come from Dunwich which is about the middle of the former island, which they had left because they had just buried two of their tribe there, and they immediately leave a spot for a time where they have buried any of their people.

Their mode of burial, or rather disposing of their dead, varies in different parts; in some they dig a deep grave and lay the body on strips of bark and make a strong arch of boughs above the body so that the earth never touches it; elsewhere they place their dead in strips of bark on the summit of trees and there leave them; with some there is the custom of burning them; they have a practice also of carrying about with them, chiefly the women, the bones of the deceased. They never among themselves mention the name of the deceased after his death, and if any word or name of a place is the same or very similar to the name of the dead they alter the name or put the word out of their language. It is very difficult to discover what belief they have with respect to what follows death: they do believe, I think, in a resurrection, or at any rate some change and, it may or may not be that they have learned it from the whites. They say the good go up, where they will have endless fishing or shooting, according, I suppose, as they are inland or coast blacks, while the bad go somewhere or other - one said to Sydney - where they are roasted by the bad spirits. Some are said to believe that they "fall down black fellow, jump up white fellow"! They have a great fear of ghosts, or of a ghost which travels about at night and infests water-holes and places of that sort, for which reason they never journey after sun-down.

As we drew near to the shore of Stradbroke Island we saw a boat belonging to the Blacks (given them by Government for saving the lives of 2 or 3 persons) also approaching and several blacks awaiting on the beach. Several came to meet us as we landed and they soon recognised Mr. D. and Mr. S. who have often visited them. They were delighted to see us for they were sure we had with us some provisions for them. They had just caught a junger (a French Dugong), a species of sea calf which abounds here and which they reckon a great delicacy and affords a great feast for them. All the men were collected round it and one was busy in cutting off its head. It is a huge beast some 8 or 9 feet in length with a very thick brown skin, a large head with very diminutive eyes and a tail  this shape which was about 4 feet in breadth at the end. It has also two large tusks. There is a sort of ceremony takes place, I

was told, when it is brought on shore, but I suppose we were just too late; the women and the younger boys and children are not allowed to be present nor the women even to see the animal at all, though they have portions - the least choice I fear - sent to them. They pitched the head unskinned on the fire, those who assisted at the killing of it have the first slices and the rest seemed more as guests. It was a very strange and truly savage sight; the men, about 30, sat in a circle on a slightly rising ground around the fire - a huge fire was in the midst which, making the darkness greater without the circle, threw its changing livid light on the wildest company I had ever seen. All were quite naked and with their shaggy matted hair and faces where all was black as night, except when their white teeth were shown through their grinning mouths, presented a true scene of savage life. Some were tearing away and devouring the food, while their dogs were fighting over the bones. Their tents, if they may be called such, were a short way off. Our own tents were pitched a little further along the shore.

We were anxious to witness a "borobbarey" or native dance, and about nine o'clock after some persuasion and promises of tobacco &c. a few men, some 8 or 9, with 3 women came; the remainder had overeaten themselves and were too much oppressed to join in it. The dances, for there were 3 or 4 kinds, consisted chiefly in moving from side to side and throwing their arms and wheeling about, accompanying themselves at the same time with wild singing but keeping excellent time. The women sat on the ground and joined in the singing and beat time with both hands on their bare stomachs!

All the Blacks have English names - Jackey or Tommy or Charlie &c. One young fellow called "Jimmy Alexander" who was as naked and savage as any of them had, strange to say, been seven years in England, been taught to read and write and could talk English perfectly. He however pined, I suppose, after his own land and returned about 2 years and a half ago. For some little time he kept aloof from his own people and did work in Brisbane and dressed well; but, induced I suppose by his tribe, he returned to them and is again a perfect savage. He talked about England, danced a Polka for us, sang English songs and imitated the Flageolet capitally. He said his people did not believe all the stories he was accustomed to tell about England. How strange it is that he should return again to this, but it has been the case, I believe, with every one of them who have been at all civilised. They will do work now and then for a few weeks together, but then a sudden fancy seems to seize them and they are off again to their wild life. There must be - one can imagine there are some charms in a savage state - the perfect freedom from all restraint - the perfect idleness except when necessity compels them to seek food. These, I doubt not, are very alluring to those who have once experienced them.

Among themselves, in their own tribe, they live in a great peace together - husbands, I believe, beat their wives at times (I saw one woman who beat her husband!) but they seldom inflict any punishment on their children. The quarrels between tribes have their origin almost always in the abduction of some "Ghin" (as the women are called). The men very seldom marry in their own tribe, and if they do the degree of relationship within which they marry are much wider than among ourselves, but their mode of getting a wife is generally by carrying one off by force. The women do not object but a fight, generally bloodless, follows between the tribes. The wives, as among all uncivilized nations, are made to do the labour for the men - on a journey they always carry such things as they have; the men fish and hunt, eat the

best parts and give the leavings to their poor ghins. The wives go equally naked with the men; Government distributed blankets among them yearly in every district, chiefly to the old men and the women. But those who have them seldom wear them in the daytime; when they come to the townships, however, they are obliged to get some substitute-or-other for covering, and strange indeed are the shifts which they use. I remember seeing one little girl in one of those short woollen particoloured Polka jackets! - Nothing more! The men are very fond of getting blue woollen shirts - they don't care so much for a pair of trousers.

We were rather a close fit in our tent: we had no stretchers but lay on the ground with blankets above and below. I slept outside in the open air the first night, but as the dew was rather heavy I did not do it afterwards. I was disturbed once or twice by some species of rat running about me. We had a fine large fire kindled just before our tent and there was no difficulty in keeping ourselves warm. I can't say I prefer sleeping with my clothes on, but during the week we were at the Bay I was able to have a dip in the sea every morning the first thing, which dispelled the chief discomfort of it.

On the second day we passed the morning in sailing about dredging for shells, and the Blacks fishing for the Dugong. They saw several - harpooned one but it escaped. There was rather too strong a breeze for catching turtle which abound here. The Blacks see them on the bottom and dive down and seizing them by the backs turn them up and rise to the top of the water with them in this position, when a running bowline is passed round their fins by those in the boat and they are hauled in. We were unfortunate not to see one caught during our stay in the Bay. I witnessed, however, their manner of net fishing and can now vouch from personal sight of the fact of their making use, whether by mutual understanding or not, of the Porpoises in catching their fish. The accompanying will give you an idea of the form of their nets and of the manner in which they are used. Each man carries two of these semi-circular nets, one in each hand, and they run along the shore and immediately they see the porpoises, which swim only a few yards from the water's edge, several of them rush into the water, form a circle and each man joins his two nets, thus forming a circle of them, and I never saw them come out without some fish in them. They dip their nets beneath the water and then join them, the porpoise the meanwhile not moving the least out of the way or showing any signs of alarm. They are very expert, too, in spearing fish. I saw them hurl their spears into the water and pierce their game right through the middle. They reserved a certain quantity of fish for us and the rest they cooked there and then on a fire by the sea shore.

The beach of the island is beautiful, the afternoon was bright and warm and the whole was a perfect realisation of a most interesting scene of savage life: not that the natives of this country are, so far as we have seen, to be called strictly savages, for they are far from being blood-thirsty or cruel, and they are possessed of much natural intelligence. I should say they were quite equal to white men in quickness and readiness: they are only perfectly uncivilised and living in a state of nature. They have in most cases, I am grieved to say, received very ill treatment from the colonists; merely for stealing a sheep they have been chased and shot like kangaroos - and what else could be expected from them; we have come and taken possession of their homes and hunting grounds and every allowance and excuse must be made for them. They have retaliated upon the white people as was natural, but in very few cases have they ever sought or taken life except out of revenge for positive

injuries. From all I hear, the squatters who have treated them with kindness and consideration have suffered no injury from them. Under the circumstances their taking a sheep or a bullock when hard pressed by hunger was a light and readily excusable offence. From all I have seen of them they are the most harmless savages imaginable.

We had another much larger borobbary on the second evening of our stay at Amity Point. The whole encampment, men, women and children were there. They get very excited at these dances. The moon rose upon the wild scene, which I wish I could paint for you. I can never forget it myself; our tents pitched on the shore between the water and the dark forest, the groups of wild naked beings, some dressed up with boughs and tails of the native dogs and their dark bodies striped with white ashes, then shouting and singing in their wild fashion while they represented in their dance a battle or a hunt; the women on the ground, grouped around the tents, joining in the wild choruses and beating their portable drums; the huge blazing fire in the centre, and then, in strange contrast, the moon rising above the forest so solemn and still - (upon what varied scenes it looks upon in its course). It would have been strange had not melancholy feelings been excited at the sight of human immortal creatures so utterly without knowledge of anything beyond this present life. Theirs is a most sad case; the conversion of them to Christianity is almost now abandoned as hopeless: there have been English, Italian and German missionaries among them, but alas! they had been brought first in contact with the worst specimens of so-called Christians - the refuse of our land, the convict population, and it has been found impossible to make anything of them. I do not know of one instance of a native of this country becoming and remaining a Christian. Can anything be more sad? The only happy thing is that the period of their existence is likely to be but short, they are year by year diminishing in numbers and a few years more may see but a few remaining where the white man has set his foot.

Monday, August 8th. I continue my account of our trip to the Bay, but as the Steamer takes back the Mail very early tomorrow morning I fear I must be very brief where I should have liked to have been more lengthy: not that I have much to say that will prove much worth hearing to others, but yet sufficiently interesting to myself hereafter.

We left Stradbroke Island on the morning after the second night of our stay there. We twice, by day and by night, visited their tents and saw their ghins: many were sick from the influenza which has prevailed so much. I have seen other blacks sulky, but I must say these were the very reverse, always smiling and laughing when you look at them; some of the women were making dillies - netted bags made of a dried seed, of which I have one or two specimens; the women and generally the men carry one over their left shoulder to hold the few odds and ends they possess - bits of tobacco, meat, bones, etc. They are used to carry the bones of their dead friends at times, and Mr. Hope told me yesterday that his stockman told him that he had often turned out the contents of these dillies that the women carried and had found bones of children which he believed they had eaten. It seems impossible to help believing that they are cannibals to some degree, but under what circumstances they are so seems equally uncertain and impossible to discover. They always deny the fact to Europeans. I must just put down for remembrance the name of "Old Glory" who was one of the nicest and most amusing of the tribe at Amity Point, and also "Funny eye" who was a sad villain, always begging. He did not appear on the morning we left for he was afraid he would be removed from his post of Captain of the boat with which Mr. Duncan had threatened him.

A splendid breeze carried us away from the island and determined us upon the course we should follow, for we had no particular plans and only came to see the Bay, and with our tents we were quite independent; so we took advantage of the breeze and sailed to another island in the Bay called St. Helena, the very opposite, I fancy, from the other island of that name, being flat and covered with a rich scrub; we remained two or three hours here, Mr. D. and S. searching the scrub for plants and the rest searching for game. They brought back a great number of Flying Foxes as they are called - a species of vampyre or Bat which abound here. Mr. D. and S. saw there at a distance an immense flight of them in the air above the trees. Schomberg shot 5 at one shot. They might have killed hundreds of them; they hang from the branches with their heads downwards and have large batlike wings with 5 claws on each; their smell is very disagreeable, but the blacks are very fond of them and ate them greedily the next day at Bribie Island, just tossing them unskinned on the fire and devouring them half raw. St. Helena is a pretty island and would be a pleasant place to come to in the heat of the summer. The Government, however, reserves all islands to itself and never sells one.

From St. Helena we sailed to the mainland and encamped after dark at the entrance of the Pine river, a good broad stream, but like all others very shallow; it could be navigated, however, I believe, by small vessels for some miles. We had intended to remain here the following day to shoot kangaroo &c., but the wind blowing favourably for Bribie Island it was thought we should see more there. Bribie Island, as I said, is the most northerly of the three largest islands at the entrance of the Bay. There is a distinct tribe of blacks who hold it as their territory; they have the name of being a wild set, I suppose because they have had less intercourse with white people, very few whites ever visiting this island and the mainland directly opposite, and from which it is only divided by a channel of less than a mile in width, not being held by any squatter as a cattle or sheep run. We passed on the way some good looking ground on the mainland, well elevated above the water, near a point which is called "Humpty Bong" or "house of the dead", so called by the blacks who came here and found a settlement which had begun to be formed, deserted by the whites. We landed upon it on our return passage. On approaching Bribie Island we looked out for the smoke of the blacks' fires, which are always to be seen and which they are never without. They met us on the shore and evinced great delight at our coming - prospects of tobacco and flour calling it forth! We had fixed our camp on the mainland, not feeling quite confident in our sable friends; but we remained two or three hours, during which we had an unsuccessful beat for kangaroos, the blacks assisting us and whooping and hallooing in order to drive them towards us. There are plenty of kangaroos here but I suppose something had disturbed them and frightened them to the other side of the island. It came on to rain enough to wet us all a good deal. One or two white men, escaped convicts, have at different times lived among this tribe, turning savage like them and taking wives from them. One who is now a blacksmith in Brisbane lived 14 years thus, and it is believed there is one yet among them who keeps himself well blackened with charcoal to escape detection. Mr. Duncan recovered here a boat which had been lost here by the vessel some time back; the blacks were very unwilling to give it up.

As we were sailing between the island and the mainland we came upon a flock of some hundred black swans. This is their moulting season during which they are unable to fly, so that between this day and the next we succeeded in shooting some half dozen: the skin with the down on

it is very beautiful. The ducks here too were in great abundance. This is the prettiest part of all the Bay; the channel is covered with small islands, little more than sandbanks; indeed, at high water they are covered, but the mangroves upon them, with the appearance of growing out of the water, look very pretty.

Before reaching Bribie Island and from our camp there we had a good view in the distance of a series of very regular hills called "the Glass Houses", rising immediately out of the midst of a level country. They are some seven or eight in number and I believe are all basaltic, for my expedition to inspect them turned out disastrously as I must tell, for leaving the rest of the party the next morning about 12 p.m. to shoot swans, &c., Mr. Duncan and I started off with two blacks and Peter the coxswain of the Custom House Boat, and an enquiring mind, to walk what we had been led to believe was a distance between the water and the mountains of only 5 or 6 miles. The mountains seemed close to the water and we could most distinctly see the reflections of them in it. In place, however, of the distance proving 6 miles it turned out about sixteen and took us three hours and a half to walk, and then we had only reached a rising hill with a large deep ravine intervening between us and the principal one of the Houses. The rest stood at considerable distances from each other. What was to be done? We had promised to be back at the boat by six o'clock, and if we had started off immediately we could not be there before 7 o'clock. We both felt the annoyance of walking so far without having really seen anything of the wonders we had come to examine. Yet it was far too late to do so and hope to reach the camp that night. Mr. D. thought it wiser to return at once, but I prevailed in persuading him to send back Peter and one of the blacks and for us to proceed with the other one and endeavour to make that night a station which we believed to be at no great distance, and where we hoped to procure horses the next day both to visit the Glass Houses and to return to the boat with. So we divided - we had great difficulty in persuading the black we wished to accompany us; he declared he did not know the road and that he was afraid of the blacks of another tribe with which his own was not on friendly terms. The promise of tobacco, &c., however, prevailed, and, writing a few words by Peter, we took our different roads.

It was nearly five when we started and we trusted to make the station of Durrundeer before dark. But alas for human expectations! On we trudged at the heels of Diamond, our black guide, up hill and down hill, through bush and swamp, and we came to no sign of station - no track or mark of any kind. We startled a wild dog from her lair, and putting our hands into the dead tree from which she had leaped heard the whining of her puppies. At last we were fairly benighted. Diamond became unwilling to proceed as all blacks are in the dark, and kept continually turning round to Mr. Duncan and saying: "Misser Duncan, where you sleep tonight?" to which we made our firm protestation of sleeping at the station. But it was of no avail, it was no use any longer pooh-poohing Diamond's hints of halting; we kept on in a vain hope until an hour after dark, when we saw that we must make up our minds to sleep in the bush.

Diamond had a "fire-stick", a piece of lighted wood without which the blacks never move, and we set fire to a dead log and made a good fire - pulled the leaves (if such they may be called) of some great trees and spread them as a pretence for a bed. Mr. D. was very footsore - we had not a scrap of food. Diamond and I took torches of teatree bush and wandered about and were at last successful in discovering some

water. The night fortunately was clear and beautiful. It is a great secret when in the..... to light a fire both in the front and rear - a practice the blacks always follow. We heard the Australian cuckoo uttering its nightly cry, which is exactly the note of our English harbinger of spring, though the birds differ greatly in appearance, the Australian cuckoo more resembling the colour and make of an owl - it has a large mouth and lives chiefly upon moths xc. We slept and woke and slept and sat up and talked and laughed at our position. We were off again as soon as "piggy jumped up" (the black expression for the sun rising), fully hoping that our eyes would be very shortly gladdened by the sight of the station. But we were from 6 a.m. until 2 p.m. before we reached it, and never was I so much knocked up - thoroughly beaten. We had to force our way through grass, soaked and heavy with dew, reaching up to our middles, and through a thick scrub above our heads. Once or twice we had to lie down in complete inability to go on. We tried to induce Diamond to go in advance and get some food for us, but he was afraid. Our strength, too, received no help from our being uncertain all the while whether or not we were on the right road. Diamond had declared positively the night before when darkness was coming on that he did not know the road, but yet he kept on an....walk and we trusted to the acuteness for which the blacks are celebrated.

I have no time to write more - it is quite late and the post leaves at 7 a.m. tomorrow - indeed the post is closed but these will be sent in the ship's private bag."

BRISBANE, August 15th, 1853

"I wrote my last journal in a great hurry, but I really cannot find time to write it as I should like, so you must not grumble at the necessary haste in which it is written.

In my last I had reached Durrundur, I think, with Mr. Duncan after one of the most fatiguing journeys I ever had. We were a strange figure as we dragged ourselves up to the station. When we saw by the tracks and other indications that we were approaching the Station, Mr. D. stripped himself of two pairs of trousers which he was wearing and gave the inner pair to Diamond, whose only dress had hitherto consisted of an old pipe stuck in his hair and a gun over his shoulder! He gave him one brace, too, which he put over his bare shoulders. We had to cross a Creek called the Stanley, over which a more respectable bridge than usual of piles had just been completed. On the other side a few blacks were encamped whom Diamond hailed with ill grace, for it is an open sign of hostility to pass a camp without exchanging words of salutation, but I was amused by the little signs of cordiality which Diamond manifested although an old Ghin who came sat beside him on the log and began stroking him and uttering a series of whining notes of affectionate recognition, to which Diamond made not the least return. He declared afterwards that she was a sister of his - but a sister may include any relation - and that she had been stolen from his tribe. He, however, evinced no signs of joy at meeting with her or her friends - whether he really had cause of dislike or fear I could not understand. He was evidently uncomfortable during the whole of the time we were at Durrundur and declined all invitations to sleep at the Camp or in the "Humpy" (house) which the blacks working on the Station had for use. Diamond slept in the kitchen with the gun, which he begged from us, by his side.

The people at the Station could not make us out. Mr. D. limped up - he had a beard of a week's growth and a semi-official seedy old coat

with brass buttons, which in its dirty state only seemed rather to disguise respectability. I added a large rent in the leg of my trousers as a finish to the dirty plight I was in. The boards on my back for Ferns gave the only seeming hint as to our profession, and they conjectured that we were Surveyors.

Mr. Cameron, the Superintendent of the Station, was absent and a young man, by name Risien, son of a West India Captain who trades to Liverpool, was in charge. After our long abstinence, the amount of salt junk and Tea (the usual Bush fare) that we consumed was frightful. Durrundur is a Cattle Station, for breeding, not for fattening, and was originally held by two brothers of the name of Archer, but has lately been purchased by a Mr. Maconnell. There are about 100 cows kept for the purpose of Cheese-making - a number of pigs also, which it was curious to see rushing in from all around to be fed at the sound of the cracking of a stock whip. There used formerly to be a very good garden here but it has been of late neglected - the best Pines in the country are said to have been grown here. We remained at the Station until the next morning. We suffered from the misbehaviour of some former visitors who had borrowed a horse from Mr. Cameron and either killed it or nearly rode it to death - and Mr. C. had left word that no horse had to leave the Station without his permission, so that we were driven to buy a horse from one of the men about the place, and fortunately met with a man who was leading a horse down to Brisbane belonging to a gentleman we knew there. Another man agreed to alter his route from the direct road and accompany us to our Camp.

We had intended to have visited the Bunya Bunya Scrub (*Araucaria Bidwellii*) - not many miles from this being the chief seat of its growth - and we had hoped to have ridden and made a good examination of the Glass Houses; but this difficulty about the horses prevented us, and we were obliged to start directly for the Camp opposite Bribe Island. Mr. D. was much incensed at what he considered the inhospitality of the Station, and when it did come to the ears of Mr. Cameron he was greatly shocked and blamed Mr. Risien very much for not providing us with horses. We started hoping to reach the Camp easily in one day, but an old Black who accompanied us - to show us a short cut - led us, I believe, a great round, and after travelling on until 8 o'clock at night we saw no signs of our "gran gran Humpy" (house made of canvas), and were compelled to "bush it" for another night and lie down supperless on the ground to sleep - yet not quite supperless, for we had a little tea and I had shot a Swamp Pheasant, which was, however, very small, tough, and tasteless, and in addition I brought myself to eat a little piece of a Snake which we killed - a big Carpet snake nearly 9 feet in length, out of which we had taken a whole Bandicoot - the Blacks are very fond of them. These Carpet Snakes are a species of Boa, killing their prey by crushing and not by a bite. It smelt very savoury and I was induced to eat a little bit much in violence of a natural repugnance which I fancy all human creatures possess against every species of the Serpent tribe.

The man who accompanied us, who was an old convict, seemed to amuse us a good deal by bullying Diamond, who returned upon him with great spirit. The poor old Black from Durrundur was quite knocked up - the day's journey had been too much for him - and I never saw so great a change. He had started with us with a carriage as erect and a step as light and active as well could be. He had a high forehead and a fine white beard, but the day's work had altered him into a worn out old man. He did not complain, but the poor old fellow was completely knocked up.

He left us to make his way back again the next morning; he was starting off, leaning on a stick and limping from a sprained ankle, without saying a word of goodbye or asking for any return. I called him back and gave him something, and allowed him to take a Tomahawk we had had lent us at Durrundur, in order that he might cut grubs from the Trees to eat. Have I said how fond the blacks are of these grubs? They find them in the stumps of the dead grass, Trees, or under the bark of certain Trees - they can discern at once if a grub is there, and with a couple of strokes remove the bark and take out a fat white monster with a green head, some 2 inches in length at times, which they eat alive. They eat it as an Italian does Maccaroni, leaving a long piece hanging from their mouth and gradually drawing it in as they devour it - it sounds as if it were toast, so sharp and crisp. Mr. Fairholme told me he had eaten them both alive and fried and declared them excellent. They just resemble an enormous white Caterpillar.

After about 3 or 4 hours' travelling on the following day we reached our former camping ground, and to our dismay found no Tent or Boat there. We learned from some blacks that Mr. Sheridan and Lord H. and S. had returned on Saturday in the Custom House Boat to Brisbane, and that the Boats which had been recovered from the blacks had been taken down by the Crew, which had been left, to the spot where we had started from 3 days before. A black immediately, however, started off for us, and running down to the shore of the island, hailed our people from the opposite side, and about 3 or 4 o'clock they arrived. We were obliged to spend the night there, it being too late to start for Brisbane.

I ventured into one of the canoes which the blacks use - they are of the rudest description, made of a large strip of bark sewn together at each end, and the two sides kept apart by pieces of wood. They are the most rickety machines I ever ventured into on the water - the rower stands at the prow and holds a straight pole by the middle and paddles with half of it, first on one side and then on the other with the other half. They stand up while they do it, and the least motion in excess to one side or the other would immediately upset the frail bark. We reached Brisbane the next day about 8 o'clock in the Evening, having delayed on the way to hunt, unsuccessfully, for Turtle. We found they were getting slightly alarmed for us and had resolved to start off in search of us the next day.

August 23rd. Having been absent on another expedition to the Bay and living in a Tent, I have been compelled to make another break in my Journal, and the interval must therefore be recounted very briefly.

A few days after my return from Bribie Island etc., Schomberg and I, Henry preferring to remain at home, started off very early one morning alone to ride 50 miles to Durrundur (where Mr. Duncan and I had lately been) determined not to leave the neighborhood without seeing the Bunya Scrub and the Glass Houses. Our journey was not perhaps altogether so unfortunate as my last, but it was not without its mishaps. Sixty miles is a long ride at any time, as well for horse as rider, and it proved too much for my poor beast which had carried me so well through the country hitherto. It was knocked up on our arrival at Brisbane - after our ride up from Sydney - but it had been idle ever since, although running out in a paddock which at this season of the year is very poor and horses fall away in place of gaining condition. S. and I got over 35 miles by midday, rested for 2 hours at some deserted huts, and made ourselves a pot of Tea. We had hoped to have reached Durrundur in very good time, but when about 12 miles off my poor

beast fairly broke down - scarcely able to put one leg before another. I could not leave it in the Bush, where I should have lost it, so I had no alternative but to get off and run behind it, beating it into a walk or trot, either one or other of which it was no easy work to do. The poor animal could scarcely move, and I was compelled to lay on him most unmercifully. Darkness overtook us, which added the additional misery of uncertainty of the road. We at last contrived to get to the Station about 7 o'clock. I had seen Mr. Cameron, the Superintendent, at Brisbane, and came provided with a note to Mr. Risien with strict injunctions to make up for the former inhospitality. My poor beast of a horse was so fatigued that when the saddle was taken off him he was unable to move away from the door and lay down there.

The following morning we were provided with fresh horses and two blacks as guides, and in about 5 or 7 miles we reached a Scrub where some of the splendid Bunya Bunya Trees were growing. At a greater distance there are some Mountains, called the Bunya Range, where they are found in much greater abundance - but we saw very fine specimens at the Scrub we visited. The Trees could not have been less than 100 or 120 feet high, as straight as an arrow, and with a circumference at the base, half of which I could just take in with my two arms. We dug about 20 small Trees, but I fear they will not live to reach England. In the same Scrub were some enormous specimens of the Moreton Bay Pine, a tree almost as beautiful as the Bunya, and equalling it in height and straightness and exceeding it in girth. These Bunya trees bear a fruit which the blacks are extremely fond of, and which they come from great distances to eat. The trees only bear in any abundance every third year, and the Blacks beat down the Fruit and make a sort of Flour of it. I believe there is an order in Council forbidding any of the large Bunyas to be cut down on this account. These Scrubs are most interesting to a Botanist, so full of little known and beautiful Trees and Shrubs. They are what are really best worth seeing in the whole of this part of the country - the number and beauty of the vines and creepers, orchids and parasites of all kinds are very great.

I regret we shall not be here a little later on in the Spring and so not see many of them in flower - some are already out and are most beautiful. During the past week we have been down, all three of us, with Mr. Duncan, Mr. Sheridan and a Mr. Rawnsley, a naturalist, and have visited some of the Scrubs at the south part of the Bay - and we were very sorry to be able to examine them so slightly. You might spend any length of time among them; it is very severe work going through them - at every step you are caught by some trailing shrub or prickly creeper and unceremoniously held back, and it is sometimes no easy work to disentangle yourself. There is one especial enemy which goes by the name of the "Lawyer" from the tenacity with which he detains you when once in his clutches - you are sure to scratch your hands in your endeavour to free yourself, and often only bind yourself more closely. A good temper is requisite, for you find yourself twitched and pulled at on every side, tripped up and suddenly brought to a standstill at every moment. The most beautiful birds are found in the thickest of the Scrub, but you require great practice before you can see them - they are all so silent and only resort to the trees on which they feed. Some Scrubs are much more damp than others and these are richer in variety of trees and shrubs.

But I have wandered away from Durrundur from which, on the day following our visit to the Bunya Scrub, we made an excursion to the Glass Houses. But the fates seemed determined I should not see them.

The distance which had proved to us so long and weary before proved, by the short cut the blacks took us, to be only some 8 or 9 miles - but shortly after leaving Durrundur it began to rain and continued to pour down in torrents all day. We did not turn back, and reached the same Mountain, though at a different side, which Mr. Duncan and I had previously been near. Schomberg and I left our horses at the foot and managed to get up about a quarter of the way. Even if the day had been fine I doubt the possibility of our climbing to the summit by the side we were at, but in the rain and mist it was impossible. The water was running in streams down the almost perpendicular sides of the Mountain, which rises up one vast mass of Granite from the centre of a thick surrounding Bush. I should much have liked to have reached the summit - the only consolation we had was in finding a new Fern, and another in seed, which we had not previously found so. We had to make our way back to Durrundur wet to the skin and on soaking saddles. We met with a great number of kangaroo and had a shot at one and a gallop after another. The female kangaroo, when hard pressed, toss away their young from their pouch - the one chased did so, but on returning we were unable to find it. We met a Black afterwards who was carrying home a little one, and I bought it of him for sixpence, and carried it in one pocket and another little one Mr. Risien gave me in the other - all the way back to Brisbane."...

"During the last week we were down at the Bay as I have said, but I have nothing very particular to relate of our trip. We sailed about 80 miles from Brisbane to a creek called the "Nerang Creek" which falls into the sea close at the southernmost entrance of the Bay. The Passage of the Bay is very intricate, owing to the numberless islands which are strewn about between Stradbroke Island, the largest and outermost, and the mainland. They are chiefly little more than low swamps covered with Mangroves and abounding in Water Fowl. We saw many hundreds of Pelicans - one flock I counted as many as 60 together. You can see them miles away, a long white streak which you take at times for a long streak of white sand. They are enormous birds and their size is magnified by the sand and the refraction. We saw besides the white Ibis, Spoonbill, white Crane, the Native Companion, several species of Curlew and of Ducks, etc. Henry and Mr. Sheridan killed two very singular sharp headed Sharks - perhaps they were a species of Ray.

In the Scrubs which we visited the Coomera Tree abounds, which bears a fruit which the blacks feed and grow very fat on at a certain time of the year. We also found and brought away with us a large number of a kind of Palm which the natives call Meechia, I think. They are very pretty and make excellent walking sticks. I have sent a good number of them home, as they make inexpensive presents.

The Aborigines in this part rarely see white men, except very bad specimens of them - Sawyers chiefly, engaged in cutting timber - from whom they have learnt little else of our language excepting oaths, and by whom they are, I fear, in too many cases treated very inhumanly. We walked to the Scrub almost immediately after landing and passed on our road by some of their tents which we found quite deserted excepted by two men, one a very aged one and the other suffering from disease - all the women and children had fled and were hidden, I have no doubt, somewhere near. They would easily recognise the Government Boat and might fancy, perhaps, that we were constables in search of some of their tribe who had committed depredations - at any rate they were afraid but on discovering the peaceable object of our visit they regained their confidence, and in returning we found their Camp well inhabited and that

night and the following day many of them came to our Tents. They appeared, however, a lower tribe of blacks than our friends at Amity Point and Bribie Island.

Both Schomberg and I discovered a very singular fern, which we expect may be hitherto unknown. The Blacks caught some fish, but it was very poor beside that which we eat on our previous visit to the Bay. We were favoured by the wind in returning to Brisbane; we called at Cleveland again and lunched with Mr. Bigge. The Blacks brought in a Turtle which they had just killed - with what precision they can throw the Harpoon was shown by the poor animal having its head cloven directly through the centre, the Harpoon remaining fixed in. The shell of the Turtle, however, is much thinner than one would imagine - not thicker than a sixpence, I believe."

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