

1871.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

INFORMATION RESPECTING

THE

HABITS AND CUSTOMS

OF THE

ABORIGINAL INHABITANTS

OF

WESTERN AUSTRALIA,

COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.

~~~~~  
*Presented to the Legislative Council by His Excellency's Command.*  
~~~~~

PERTH:

BY AUTHORITY: RICHARD PETHER, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1871.

No. 2.

INFORMATION RESPECTING THE ABORIGINAL NATIVES OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

His Lordship Rosendo Salvado, Bishop of Port Victoria, to The Hon. The Colonial Secretary.

SIR,

New Norcia, 19th February, 1864.

Profiting of His Excellency the Governor's kind invitation, dated 30th January, ultimo, to give any information I may think it desirable to furnish regarding this Mission of New Norcia, I do myself the honor to submit, that

When in the month of October, 1860, I had been verbally requested by a private gentleman to fill up a printed copy of a form of Return for Colonial Schools exclusively or principally attended by Native children, I complied with his desire by filling up the blanks of the tables, and by laconically answering to the questions therein made.

In filling up the Table of Deaths I had not much trouble, for since my residence here, for the second time (February, 1857), till up to that time (October, 1860), I had had not a single case of death to record among the thirty-five native boys admitted at this Mission till that time, nor had I any one of them to record as having left it for ill-health.

At the latter end of 1860, the measles, introduced about that time in this colony, reached here, and since then several of our native boys died, their death being attributed to that plague and to its effects.

I am not a medical man, nor have I here anyone that has any claim to that scientific profession, and I regret to say I cannot easily obtain the attendance of any professional man in case of sickness, the nearest of them being fifty miles, at least, from this place. This being the case, renders it quite impossible for me to give the technical name, nor any precise details of the sickness and diseases of the aboriginal natives that died here. Much I regret this state of things, but unfortunately I have not the means to improve it.

Indeed it is very discouraging to hear that the Aborigines of Australia, as a race, are dying off and disappearing; but, why so? Because of the consumption, the bronchitis, the syphilis, the liver complaints, and several other diseases? If that is the true reason of it, then we may conclude, also, that all human races must die and disappear, for there is no country, that I am aware of, where there are not the same, nay, in several countries, even worse sickness and diseases than those that are said to be the cause of the Aborigines of Australia dying off and disappearing. I cannot help thinking that the true reason must be another. I do not wonder at the Aborigines dying, as the Europeans must die of one or other disease; but what seems rather strange is to see so few sick aborigines restored to health, whereas, in a given similar case, so few Europeans would die.

A native, I will suppose, is taken ill and brought to an hospital or private house; there the Doctor attends him daily and with care: nothing is wanting, nevertheless the native grows worse every day, and after a short time his life is despaired of. An European, in the same case, would have recovered his health by that time, but the unfortunate native is dying, there is no remedy for him. His disease has baffled the Doctor's skill and care, and, as the last resource, the native is consigned to his relatives or friends, by whom he is brought to the woods and there by them taken care of in their own way. If an European, in the case of that native, had been sent to the open air in the bush, surely he would have died a few days, nay, a few hours, after; yet, that dying native a few weeks afterwards, and when everyone that knew him in his dying state believes him to be already dead and buried, there he is as healthy and as strong as ever, having perhaps travelled already fifty or more miles on foot. He had taken no medicine whatever since he had left the hospital or private house, yet he has perfectly recovered his health and his strength. To some one this case may seem a fancy or simply a supposition, but I assure him of its being a fact.

What,

What, then, ought we to conclude from such a fact, nay facts? If I was not considered too presumptuous in advancing an opinion, I should be tempted to say either the disease had not been well understood or the medicines administered were not in harmony with the constitution of that native. The medicines administered to him would in time, and in all probability, have killed him; therefore, it seems clear enough those medicines were by no means healing remedies for him.

Another case: a strong and healthy young native, who never in his life knew what strong liquors or European vices were, is admitted in a private house, mission, or establishment; for some time he goes on well, gay and full of life; but few months, or perhaps after a couple of years, a fatal melancholy takes possession of him. Being asked what is the matter with him, he answers, "Nothing!" "Do you feel sick?" "No, sir." "Do you suffer any pain?" "No, sir." "Why are you not so cheerful as before?" "I do not know." He takes his meals as regular as ever, he has no fever, yet he daily and almost at sight loses his flesh, strength, and health. What is the technical name of such a disease*? Perhaps consumption, perhaps liver complaint. Let it be so; but is there no remedy for such diseases? Are there no preventives of their causes? Yes, there are; but, nevertheless, that native died shortly after.

On various occasions I consulted several medical doctors on these and similar other points, but I regret to say all to no purpose. Nevertheless, one of them disclosed to me his utter ignorance of the diseases of the Aborigines, saying that he knew no more about them than a man in the moon. I asked him if he had ever made a post-mortem examination of their bodies, and he replied that he had done it repeatedly, but, after all, he knew no better or more than before! To this he added, that, as a general rule, every time he had taken under his especial care any sick native, he succeeded only, he regretted to say, in killing him the sooner!

Almost every one, in some degree conversant with the Aborigines of Australia, knows that a severe wound, which would oblige any European to keep his bed for a long time, would be considered by a native as nothing. An European perhaps would have died of it, but a native would be healed in an incredible short time. Medical men themselves are really astonished at how quick a native heals and recovers of his severe wounds, and on the other hand at in what a short time he dies of a disease. They wonder, and with reason, at both extreme cases, because the causes of both extreme cases are equally unknown to them.

Miss Florence Nightingale's question "Can we civilize the Aborigines without killing them?" is not a simple question but a difficult problem, which heaven knows when will be solved. The natives of Australia seem to be as yet a mystery to the medical world. Miss Nightingale, at page 14 of her pamphlet entitled "Sanitary Statistics of Native Colonial Schools and Hospitals," says that "The Hospital Returns throw little light on the causes of the disappearance of native races, unless these are to be found in the great prevalence of tubercular and chest diseases." And again at page 15, "the discovery of the causes of this must be referred back to the Colonies." It is also said in that pamphlet that "anything which exhausts the constitution will engender these diseases," viz., tubercular and chest diseases. But to this purpose I will relate another case.

A young native has been ploughing here his own field for about three weeks, at the end of which time I ordered him to suspend his ploughing, for I had observed he was unwell. He stayed but unwillingly, seeing the other natives going ahead of him with their ploughing. After a few days continuing still to spit blood, he told me he would be all right in a few days if I would allow him to go hunting horses. I did not want any horses at that time, and much less him to do that hard work, which I considered very injurious to his case, nevertheless I consented to it as a trial. That native, after having been hunting for three or four days, ceased to spit blood, and immediately went again to his ploughing. I may not be right, but I always considered hunting horses as something that exhausts the constitution of any sound person, and the case will be the more aggravating if that person is spitting blood. But if I am right, how was it that that native was healed by doing it?†

When I, in my difficulties, requested a medical man to direct me in the curing the diseases of the Aborigines, his direction has been "Do your best in your own way, for if you follow my advice, and do as I should direct you to do, I am afraid the whole of your sick natives would die the sooner. The aborigines," he added, "cannot stand our recipes." When a sick person is abandoned by the Doctor to the resources of his

* Since I wrote the above, having consulted that case with various medical men in Europe, almost every one of them, after hearing my oral exposition of it, came to the conclusion that "Nostalgia" is the technical name of that sickness; and I think "Home sickness" is the English name for it.

† Nevertheless, I consider that case as an exception, for constant experience has confirmed me more and more in the truth that, as a general rule, the Aboriginal Australians cannot stand our daily hard work. Indeed many of them do look well framed and strong, but only appear what in reality they are not. They may work hard a few consecutive days, but they remain so much exhausted that to oblige them to go on with the same or similar work will be identical to condemn them to an almost certain death. I think the returns, of past times, of the deaths among the Aboriginal offenders at Bottnest may be quoted as an unfortunate but convincing proof of my assertions. Indeed, the law punishing an offender with imprisonment and hard labor, I think ought to be revised and amended as regards the Aboriginal offenders; for as it stands, intending to punish them only with imprisonment and hard labor, in matter of fact punishes them with death. The case in regard to the half-caste natives, I consider to be quite different in all respects, for I believe them strong and well able to stand any work as near as possible, if not as well, as any European man.

his unlearned relatives or friends, we consider it as a desperate case: such seems to be the case of the aborigines. Left to my own unprofessional resources, I followed, in want of any better, a theory of mine. I thought of applying to the sick aborigines cantharides, in order to rise blisters and to take out as much as possible of their bad humor. I thought also that cod liver oil would be indicated either as a preventive or as a curative, as the case may be. I have to thank Dr. Ferguson, our esteemed Colonial Surgeon, for having acquainted me of the curative properties of that oil. Since I began using those two specifics with our sick natives I consider to have saved the life of five of them. Out of those five, three had gone so far off in their sickness that I had lost almost all hopes of their recovery. Nevertheless they did recover, and, with the other two, they are at present as well and as cheerful as ever. I have lost none of the natives, as yet, since I began to administer to them, separately or together, those specifics. Thanks be to God for it. I confess again, and with regret, I am not conversant with those matters, and cannot enter into them as I would wish.

Having fixed my residence here (for the second time) in the year 1857, and admitted successively a good number of native boys, I thought and did establish for them three daily hours of light work in the morning and three daily hours of school in the afternoon, leaving free the other hours of the day for them to play, as necessary gymnastic exercise. My object in fixing them physical work has been threefold, viz., to prevent sickness by the daily development of their exercised body and strength; to have them busy in doing something useful; and to introduce them by degrees into the habits of civilized and industrial life. Although I acknowledged the great advantages of mental work by fixing a certain time for their school, including religious instruction, I greatly feared the deathful consequences of indoor restraint. We ought to bear in mind that the Aborigines are exotic or foreigners to our civilization. They cannot stand, at once, not even our food, much less our daily hard work, let it be mental or physical. For this reason I have always been rather indulgent in the exact keeping of their hours of school or work. In ploughing, shearing, and reaping seasons I dispense them of their school, and every one of them, according to their age and capabilities, is employed in the general work of the season. Indeed the work of most of them is no other thing than a continual childish playwork, but it is playing that they learn by degrees how to work.

Of the two works, viz., physical and mental, I have given the preference to the former, for, according to my own ideas, I believe a native that knows how to cultivate his field to be much more advantageously initiated in the civilized life than another that knows only how to read and write.

I have seen aborigines, males and females, able to read and write quite correctly, as I thought, yet they were nothing the better for it. Reading and writing are things utterly useless to them as far as their living is concerned: for, to keep them from starving, they are obliged to return to the bush to live by hunting, as their forefathers did. We look at them with European eyes, consider them as Europeans, and try to train them as such; but in doing so we delude ourselves. Their case is quite another, quite different from ours, and we ought to bring them to our case and high position, not at once, but by the same way we came to it, by degrees. Physical work, as ploughing and so forth, will bring them the means of their living; mental work, as reading and writing, will bring them, what we have many a time seen, vices and debauchery. There are many things that in theory are really beautiful, yet cannot suffer to be put in practice.

There is an establishment, I will say for the sake of argument, where one hundred or more aborigines have been well and even highly educated, in fact every one of them is a good Christian and a good scholar. Their schooling time is over, and then what? Are they to remain all their lifetime in that establishment? Are they to be supported always and in all their wants by that establishment? If neither can be, nor is intended by the rules of that establishment, can they support themselves and perhaps their wives and children, by their learning, when out of that establishment? Once out of that establishment, where will they go? What will they do? All these questions have already been answered by the fact that all the time, trouble and expenses in having brought them to that state of civilization did them no good; all has been lost: for those aborigines, having no means of support, become the worst specimens of their race. I am well aware that when a Mr. Anybody sees the aborigines of such or such a school to read well their lessons, to write clear in their copy books, and to sing in good time certain favorite songs, he remains highly gratified, and everywhere he goes, and to every one he speaks, he praises it to the skies. He and all will applaud it as a true blessing, never dreaming that the whole of it will have no good result at all, and all will disappear as the smoke before a strong current of wind. That gentleman thought he was seeing all that in a school of European children, but he was mistaken in that as well as in all the preconceptions he thought would follow it.

As

‡ Who will employ any of them as Clerk or Accountant in his office or shop? A philanthropic person may think *many will do it*, but a man of experience shall say rather *not one will do it*.

As a principle, I think that in civilizing the aborigines of Australia the learning of A. B. C., &c., ought to be a secondary thing; religious instruction and physical work, both at the same time, ought to take the first and leading place.

I will make an hypothesis and suppose an establishment where the aborigines are daily and practically instructed in religious matters, and gradually trained in the doings of a well-directed farm. Their daily school is not long, neither is their daily work; yet the latter is encouraged by all means, and the aborigines are paid for it. In many cases, and perhaps in most of them, their work or the benefit of it do not cover the expenses of their support; nevertheless they are rewarded for it, and faithfully. The aborigines, seeing the real and positive advantage they are getting for their work, will exert themselves the more, and thus by degrees they will become acquainted with the various branches and different works of a farm. They are trained in everything save in minding sheep, cattle, pigs, or goats, which thing does them no good. Even tailoring, shoemaking, and similar trades are considered too sedentary and unwholesome for them; nevertheless, if any of them has an inclination to be a shoemaker or to learn any other trade, he is allowed to follow it; but as a general rule they are trained in the branches of agriculture.

When any of them gets to be of a proper age and sufficiently instructed to cultivate by himself a field, a parcel of land is apportioned to him for that purpose. That land is to be cleared by himself, the other natives helping him, for which work the establishment pays them; it pays also for the rooting out of large trees and old stumps, to somebody else, for that work is considered too hard and even injurious to the health of the aborigines; it pays, as well, for the fencing of that land, and then the land is ready for the plough, at the expense of the establishment. At ploughing season that native, being supplied by the same establishment with a team, plough, seed, harrow, and other necessaries, he himself ploughs that parcel of land, or part of it. Having done ploughing, he is employed at the establishment in some work or other, but, as a rule, the aborigines are allowed a few days' rest after the hard work of ploughing and similar doings. At the latter end of November our native is reaping the wheat of his field, and as cheerfully as any man can be. The other natives are paid by the establishment for helping him; the native (owner of the field) is not paid for his reaping, nor has he been paid for his ploughing; he is not paid for any work he does for himself, but he is supported and supplied with everything he may be wanting at those times. The crop of his field is respected as his property, but it is also well understood that whatsoever money that crop will produce to him, that money shall be employed in buying tools and utensils of agriculture, and if those means are enough, a bullock or more are to be bought. Of the money he receives as wages for the work he does at the establishment, he may dispose at his pleasure, although he is often advised to employ it usefully.

If he is a single or unmarried man, the establishment provides him with a cottage at its own expense, but he had been provided with it before that time if married. Should the single native find any of the native girls at the same establishment willing to become his partner, they, supposing them both well instructed in their Christian religious duties, will be married. If there is no girl at the establishment, or none of them are willing to marry him, then he may obtain any from out the establishment, and, when instructed and baptized, he may marry her. That native once married, the establishment supports him, as before, his wife and children (if they have got any) for some time, perhaps for two or three years, and then by degrees the means of the establishment are shortened to him in due proportion to the increase of his own means. The children of that native, or natives, as the case may be, will be a great step further advanced in civilization than their parents were at their age; they will have a better chance of having from their early days a good Christian and civil education, and the children of those children will be farther advanced still. Thus, by the means of practical religious and physical work education, together with but little school in the beginning, and over all by the blessing of the Almighty, in the course of time a native village of industrious small farmers and good Christians will be gradually formed.

To this hypothesis it may be said that after all there is more in it than a theory—indeed it is a theory, but such that the fathers of our grandfathers, by putting it into practice, have fully demonstrated to have been the medium and high road by which they reached their high state of civilization, and even ourselves to the enjoyment of that we have the happiness to possess at present. After religion, I believe reading, writing, and what follows, to be, to the already civilized people, one of the greatest, if not the greatest blessing of civilization, but I do not think it to be so in the case of savages or uncivilized people as the aborigines of Australia are. Nature itself teaches us that the first thing a newly-born child looks for is the breast of its mother; and no man can make use of his mental faculties if he has not the necessary physical powers to enable him to do it. It would be perhaps not out of place to add that even to the

most

most civilized people who do write, their pen is their plough, their ink their seed, and their paper their field. Very few, indeed, are those whose thought and not whose ink is their seed; in fact, the most get their living by the plough, and the privileged exceedingly few by the thought.

Anyhow, that theory has regulated my operations here, and that hypothesis is nothing else but the same theory put here into practice in order to attain our charitable and heartily wished-for end, viz., the conversion and civilization of the aborigines of the province.

There are already better than eighteen years since I first came to this colony, but only seven since it has been my privilege to begin this benevolent work in my own way. For nearly the first four years (out of seven) the whole system worked well; at the latter end of the fourth year the measles and its consequences have been a great drawback to our efforts; nevertheless we continued exerting ourselves, and I have no reason to complain of the general result. A period of seven years is rather too short to expect in it great things from a work and system depending on the age of children. We had several young natives able already to work for themselves when the measles decimated them; but at present, of thirty-three native boys and girls we have with us, four young men only are able to plough for themselves, and their joined crops yielded this year two hundred bushels of wheat, save ten. They had themselves alone ploughed the ground, thrown the seed, harrowed the field, and at the proper season reaped the fruit of their hard labour.

Self interest is the oil that makes every wheel go; take away self interest and not one will move, for nothing is done for nothing.

It seems impossible to some people to believe a native of Australia capable of working or doing any real material good for himself; and if they hear that a native has ploughed his field, has reaped his wheat, has sold it, has with those means bought bullocks and even mares, of which he is the rightful owner, they still will say, "Impossible!" but against a fact no argument can stand. Surely, if the aborigines are left to themselves, they cannot but follow their forefathers' traditions and customs, but if properly and timely trained, I, for one, do not see the impossibility of their being truly civilised. A great deal depends, there is no doubt I think, in the system adopted, and in the way and manner of carrying out that system. The experience of many past years has taught us that the time, the labour, and the expenses in civilising the aborigines of Australia by ONLY teaching them how to read, to write, &c., &c., has been, as yet, an unfortunate failure. I have no doubt that neither want of zeal or of means have been the cause of it, therefore must lie on the system adopted. It seems to me that the physical work system, as adopted in this Benedictine Mission, answers better, the practical result of it shows it, although in a short time and on a small scale. I regret of not being able to carry it out on a larger scale; but the simple reason is no other than our scanty means or private income.

I thankfully acknowledge in this place, in justice and with gratitude to the Colonial Government, for helping us in our charitable work these three years since, with one hundred pounds sterling per annum. An enterprize of this magnitude cannot be properly carried out, even on our small scale, without incurring great expenses (and I know it too well); but, after all, the conversion and regeneration of man is not the work of man alone.

We generally do select the best means as the medium for the better and surer attainment of our ends: but in the conversion of man, not the medium of that system, nor the other; not the scanty means, nor the ample ones; not the management of that man, nor that of the other can alone succeed, for

"Neque qui plantat est aliquid neque qui rigit, sed qui incrementum dat Deus,"

"Neither he that planteth in any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

Nevertheless, if we in such a charitable work comport ourselves as "God coadjutors," and if as such we persevere in doing our best, every one of us "shall receive his own reward according to his labour."

Apologising for my foreign English,

I have, &c.,

ROSENDO SALVADO,

Bishop of Port Victoria.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Perth.

The Reverend V. Garrido to the Honorable The Colonial Secretary.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

MY DEAR SIR,

New Norcia, 21st December, 1867.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter dated 29th ultimo, stating you shall be glad to forward to the Committee of the Aborigines' Protection Society (England) any particulars I may please to furnish you with, in regard to what has been done at New Norcia.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I will endeavor to do so with the greatest pleasure, describing as briefly and plainly as possible how and by whom this Mission has been founded, and the social, intellectual, and moral state of some of the degraded Australian Savages improved: trusting, however, that you will be good enough to excuse my unavoidable delay, and likewise my deficiency in writing in good English the following statement.

Geographically speaking, New Norcia is situated in Longitude E. 116 deg. 16 min., Latitude S. 30 deg. 57 min. 32 sec., according to the latest observations; and at a distance of about 80 miles northward from Perth.

It is now more than twenty years since this Benedictine Mission exists; which was founded by the then Reverend Fathers Serra and Salvado, at present both Bishops, and the latter is actually the Prefect Apostolic and Superior of this Institution.

The plan adopted by the aforesaid Apostolic Missionaries was as follows:—"We shall join the savages which we meet; we shall go with them and share their nomad life, until we are able to fix them in some favorable situation, when we propose to teach them, by our example, how to obtain their subsistence by Agriculture. We shall study their language, manners, and customs, in order that we may speak to them of religion, so as to find in the sons of Australia future fellow-laborers who may assist us in instructing their still savage brethren. This will leave us at liberty to advance further into the interior, and to win other savages to the habits of industry, and to the faith of Jesus Christ."

From this theory, let me proceed at once to give a succinct account of the practical mode in which they commenced to carry out their system.

Having been led to believe that in this country—now called Victoria Plains—the Aborigines were numerous, Fathers Serra and Salvado, in company with two lay-brothers, were sent hither by the Right Reverend Dr. Brady, C. Bishop of Perth. Omitting to mention how many difficulties and hardships these Missionaries endured whilst travelling through arid and trackless plains until they reached a place not far from the present Mission, after having walked about one hundred miles, it may perhaps be interesting to say how they first became acquainted with the Australian natives. Having seen at a short distance a considerable number of Aborigines encamped near a pool of water, Fathers Serra and Salvado alone went to meet them. But, no sooner did the savages perceive them coming than they, as a matter of course, hastened to whirl their *quichis*, or spears, and with eyes darting wild and ferocious glances, remained for some time in that attitude to welcome their new visitors with their dangerous weapons. Instead, however, of showing any fear, the Missionaries—with great courage, and greater confidence in God—succeeded in penetrating into the natives' encampment, making every amicable signs they could imagine, and at the same time offering to them what they were eating, as if the savages were playing as children. The fact was that the inhabitants of those forests appeared then to be quite astonished at a thing which they had perhaps never witnessed before, and throwing down their spears, accepted from the two Priests some sugar, which they, with great repugnance, tried to taste. No sooner had they put it into their mouths, than they spat it on the ground, evidently suspecting that it was some poisonous food. To convince them that such was not the case, the Missionaries ate a little more sugar and invited them again to take some of it: then they did so, and found *it so sweet* and pleasing to the palate, that indeed they would have eaten much more than the new comers had to spare. From that happy interview they won their confidence, and became great friends with those Aboriginal Natives. Profiting, then, by such a favorable opportunity, the Ministers of Christ endeavored as well as they could to explain to them why they had come to live among them, and how much they wished to ameliorate their miserable state; and succeeded at last in at least partially persuading them to remain with them. "Give us to eat," the savages often said,—“and we will not go to the bush.”

The very day after the Missionaries had come to this wilderness, that is, on the 1st March, 1846, they began to clear the forest and construct a hut with branches of trees, where their provisions, and a few articles

articles and agricultural implements could be secured from the inclemency of the weather. When the natives saw what they were doing, they voluntarily helped them to finish that temporary dwelling, as well as their scanty provisions. As soon as the poor Priests had nothing more to give them to eat, the savages, as a matter of course, went away to look for some food elsewhere. Fathers Serra and Salvado followed them to the bush and roamed through the forests whilst the Aborigines went on hunting the emus, kangaroos, opossums, lizards, and other disgusting reptiles which abound in these woods, helping them to carry and eat part of the meat and some grubs and edible roots, which was then their ordinary food; resting at night, like them, in the open air and on the ground: trying thus to make themselves *all* to those savages, to win them *all* to God. During such excursions they devoted themselves to the language of their adopted children with such assiduity that they had not much difficulty in making them comprehend the disinterestedness of their own intentions towards them, and how they intended to guide them to civilized life—to make them men and christians.

Fathers Serra and Salvado knew perfectly well that to make savages turn civilized people, the arts and customs of civil life must and ought to be introduced hand in hand with religious and moral teaching. The Australian Savages among whom they began their mission were living in the most degraded state that can be imagined. All of them—men, women, and children—went often entirely naked, or at times wore a cloak of skins over the shoulders: but when the Missionaries settled themselves here, they ordered them (especially women, and even the youngest of the female children) to wear their *buoka*, a kind of cloak of kangaroo's skins reaching from the neck to the knees; and since then, whenever the natives come to this Mission, they never lay aside this badge of modesty. They lived chiefly upon roots, seeds, and whatever animals they could spear or kill; and in case of great necessity, they used even human flesh to eat! Hunting was therefore their only occupation; while fighting, as a necessary consequence of their having the habit of snatching away each other's women, might be as correctly designated their principal amusement: and on these occasions they united the natural recklessness of the savage for human life with the fierce thirst for human blood which belongs exclusively to the cannibal. Polygamy was universal, or rather marriage as a perpetual state was unknown to this degraded race. The whole country around was thus overrun by savages of a nomadic character; nowhere settled, but one day hunting, dancing, and fighting here, the next day elsewhere. Their arms—a handful of "guichis" or spears, the womera or throwing stick, the kiley, clubs and stone hatchets, were all of the rudest description. The simplest arts of civilized life, and agriculture, even in its rudest form, were utterly unknown to them. One of their customs was that of painting their faces, and even all their bodies, with white, red, and yellow colour. Unused to any authority, accustomed to roam at large through the forests and fastnesses of their mighty land, its deserts at once their cradle, their dwelling place, and their grave, it was equally difficult to convince them of the advantages of a settled mode of life, or to accustom them to the habits of industry entailed by its adoption. Their religious ideas were of the vaguest kind; but for the most part they believed in the after-existence of the soul, and its transmigration from body to body. Among the natives inhabiting the country northward from here, the rite of circumcision is practised, although it has, perhaps, no religious character. They nowhere adored the God who created them: nowhere did they offer Him sacrifice, or address Him a prayer. They only feared "ginga" (the devil—so called by them).

Such was the field, then, presented to the Benedictine Missionaries. It was a mission studded with difficulties and obstacles to the introduction of the habits of civil life and Christianity. Fathers Serra and Salvado, however, applied themselves earnestly to the arduous work, and, extolling the great advantages to be derived by the usages of civilized and Christian life, and from a regular cultivation of the rich alluvial soil, they induced some of the wild inhabitants of these forests to attempt it. Application for some land was to be made, and more provisions and agricultural implements were to be procured. And in order to do so, after a few months had elapsed since they were living in the wilderness among that poor degraded race, it was resolved that Father Salvado should return to Perth and inform the Bishop about the circumstances and wants of their Native Mission, and how the Missionaries were nearly starving there. So then he performed that journey, accompanied by a native, having for their food some reptiles and roots. Unfortunately, Dr. Brady was then so poor that he could not help him, but advised him to open a subscription, calling on the inhabitants of Perth. As that poor Missionary was an excellent musician also, it then occurred to him to give a public concert for the benefit of the Native Mission, by approbation of his ecclesiastical Superior. Some liberal Protestant gentlemen of that metropolis kindly afforded him everything required to do so, and evidently they were so much pleased at hearing him singing and playing on the pianoforte so admirably well, that he was rewarded by them with so great success as to enable him to buy every sort of provisions and articles wanted at his Mission, as well as two bullocks:

and

and a good-hearted Protestant lent him a dray to convey his goods to his adopted home in this wilderness. As soon as Father Salvado returned here, he and his collaborateurs selected a good place for agricultural purposes, and at once they set to work in earnest, putting up a hut and clearing some land for cultivation. But, as he had left in Perth another load of goods belonging to his Mission, that new teamster—the Apostolic Missionary—went thither with the bullock-dray, and brought thence to his fellow-labourers and dear Aborigines many useful articles and agricultural implements.

It is impossible for me to describe how much that Reverend Gentleman suffered, especially while serving so many times as a bullock driver on his various subsequent trips from his Mission to Perth and *vice versa*; cutting his way through miles of dense primeval forests, passing over numerous brooks and rivers—as they are called in this colony—having often to cross streams by swimming himself, and his bullocks, which on several occasions strayed away into the bush, and he had, instead of taking a little rest at the end of his day's journey on his usual bed—the ground under a tree—to spend the nights and days alone looking for the bullocks, exposing himself thus to innumerable dangers and hardships, only for God's sake and the savages whom he wished to convert and save.

In the middle of August, 1846, there only remained Fathers Serra and Salvado at the Mission; the other two fellow-laborers had left here for Europe on account of illness. They were not, however, disheartened at having so vast a field to cultivate. Though the season for sowing wheat here was then too far advanced, yet they continued clearing some more land and ploughing it, Father Serra driving the bullocks, and the other Priest acting as plough-man for the first time. When that was sown, they cultivated another piece of ground for a garden, where they planted a few hundred of vines and fruit trees, some potatoes and vegetables.

Whenever these Missionaries had some time to spare, they spent it in learning the native language, their laws and customs, as well as in assisting the sick aborigines. As the wild natives of this district often fought among themselves, many of them after being wounded came or were brought by their friends to the two Priests, that they might cure them. How many of them had their wounds healed at this Mission! Indeed, more than once they did place themselves between those furious combatants, endeavoring to establish order and peace among them, and, breaking their spears and other weapons, thus prevented bloodshed and saved many lives.

Although they were often many days—nay weeks—without eating bread, but some rice, reptiles, and roots: and they had but one shirt each, their trousers patched with kangaroo's skin, and used shoes made by themselves of a piece of wood for sole and the upper part of some rough skin; yet both Priests enjoyed then a good health, thank God. Again they became destitute almost of everything to eat, consequently how could they support the natives who wished to live with them? It was then easy enough for the Missionaries to announce the gospel of Christ to the Aborigines, who were undoubtedly willing to listen to them; but the consequence was that after some time they felt hungry and asked them to give them also some material bread or corporal food, otherwise they would be under the absolute necessity to rush into the bush again, where they could easily get abundance of meat and many other things to eat. What, then, had the two ministers of God to do? To lead always with the Aboriginal Natives their nomad life, or starve in their hut! By no means. To ameliorate the then present state of the savages, to carry on the peculiar as well as difficult work of civilizing such a degraded race, to advance further into the interior to establish other Missions, more than two Priests were (humanly speaking) required here. Hence, both Father Serra and Father Salvado resolved upon going to Perth, in order to propose to their Bishop to send one of them to Europe, and there collect some alms and get more auxiliaries who would be willing to abandon every thing on earth,—honors, prospects, comforts, relations, and country, to join in their Apostolic undertaking. Leaving, then, a man to mind the place, they went to town, driving, themselves, the bullock-dray. On arriving there they were greatly surprised to hear from his Lordship that some pecuniary assistance had lately been sent for their Mission from Europe, which they duly received and enabled them to buy a good supply of provisions, some cattle, a dray, agricultural implements, and a hand-mill; and as Divine Providence had thus provided them with more means to improve their Native Mission, by approbation of their ecclesiastical Superior they postponed their aforesaid project, and both returned to their post on the 20th December, 1846. But, what a pity it was to find the Mission corn-field, garden, and almost everything in their hut destroyed, *not* by the Aborigines, but by some wild animals! “No matter,” cried out that true Spanish Missionary, the undaunted Father Salvado, “let us begin again, in the name of God!”

Having, then, found a better place for a native village, well supplied with a large pool of good water,

water, which never fails even in the greatest drought (but since the Missionaries made some artificial improvement in it), they settled themselves on the banks of a little river in a beautiful valley at Victoria Plains, on the west side of the water-course called the Moore River. The Aborigines of this territory are known as the "Maura Natives."

The Colonial Government was then so kind as to grant them twenty acres of land which they, helped by some natives, cleared of all bushes and nearly all the large trees on it, and left it ready for the plough. The next work done was a temporary house; but, soon after, Father Salvado went to Perth, driving, himself, the bullock-dray, whence were conveyed to this Mission some friends of his, who kindly offered themselves to aid personally in building a substantial dwelling-place. On the 1st March, 1847, they began to excavate its foundations, on the west side of the aforesaid stream. The ceremony of the blessing and laying down the first stone was performed by the Missionaries, in the presence of many Aborigines, who were then far from understanding the great benefits they and their children would derive by such an establishment. Everyone here did his best to co-operate in the erection of that interesting building, some carting stone, others cutting some timber; and one of the natives brought every morning at least one kangaroo, affording thus, through the Divine Providence, an abundant supply of meat for those builders. So then, in less than two months, the walls and roof were finished. In that same Mission-house a temporary oratory was dedicated to the Most Blessed Trinity: and *then* the two Priests named this place "New Norcia," in grateful remembrance of the birth-place of their Patriarch St. Benedict, which is a town in Italy on the Central Appennines, called Norcia.

As the twenty acres of land already given to this Mission would not suffice for growing as much corn as was required to support all the Aborigines living here, the Colonial Government kindly granted thirty acres more, contiguous to the former grant, for arable purposes, and a Lease of one thousand acres of pastoral land gratis. No sooner the tillage season approached—which here, generally speaking, is at the end of May—than both Priests turned their attention to the cultivation of the soil; and at the beginning of July they had themselves ploughed and sowed about thirty-four acres of land. Winter was not yet over, and father Salvado went to Perth, bringing, for the first time, a native girl aged five years to be educated at the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy. But when attempting to cross the Avon River, it was running so strong that his team of six bullocks upset at a place where the water was sixteen feet deep: however, he saved himself and the poor child by swimming to the opposite side, and likewise he saved his bullocks by unyoking them, and thus enabled them to swim also to the other side, leaving only their yokes and the dray in the bottom of that water-course, where they remained until it was possible to take them out. After giving heartfelt thanks to the Almighty for sparing their lives on such a dangerous occasion, he left his bullocks at the nearest settler's run, and proceeded, walking, and often carrying on his shoulders the little child, two days' journey. As soon as he reached the metropolis he intrusted his adopted child to the Reverend Mother Superioress. Ere long that girl became the first native Christian there; and in better times many more Aboriginal Girls followed her good example, being well educated at the same Convent, where they lived and died as sincere Christians. While he was in town, his fellow-laborer baptized a native "in articulo mortis" at New Norcia, where he died soon.

During the month of November, 1847, Father Salvado bought seven hundred and ten sheep for his Mission, and drove them across sixty miles of a country abounding with poison plants, and none of them died or was lost in all the way. This new acquisition had a double advantage in it; for it not only enabled the Missioners to lure the savages to them by the prospect of having meat to eat without the necessity of hunting in the forests, but also to stock the settlement, and to support them in it until they could be persuaded to labor for themselves. When the Aborigines residing here saw so many sheep belonging to this Mission, they were indeed quite astonished, and everyone of them was willing to mind that flock; but it was then better to leave it in charge of an European shepherd, until they could take proper care of the sheep. Meanwhile, poor Father Serra lost a few head of cattle which he was minding, and, after being four days looking for them, accompanied by a native, they found them in the bush at a place fifty miles from here, and drove them all to this Mission.

Although the two aforesaid Apostolic Missionaries had been born to comforts and station in the good cities of their native land, and had been educated in the haunts of science; although one of them had been a Professor of theology, and the other among many excellent qualifications had held an honorable appointment in Europe; yet they did not hesitate to put aside all human prospects, all worldly comforts, to become poor herdsmen, teamsters, and labourers, for the sake of Jesus Christ, and the temporal and eternal welfare of their beloved adopted black children—the Australian Savages.

At the end of November their corn-field was ready to be reaped, and there were then so many natives to help the Missioners to cut it that in a few days they finished the reaping. The Aborigines only laughed when they first saw the Spanish Priests ploughing and sowing at New Norcia; they openly mocked at the folly, as they ignorantly thought, of throwing the wheat in the ground; but when after the harvest-time they gathered in the first crop and tasted the fruit of these agricultural toils which they had witnessed, but had wisely not been compelled to share, then they began really to comprehend something of the advantages which might accrue to themselves from a settled scheme of life and manual labor. As there was then a considerable number of natives at the Mission, it struck Father Salvado to take advantage of their good disposition to work, and invited them to help him in opening a new line of road towards Perth. As they offered no objection to doing so, he began at once that useful as well as difficult operation, and, assisted by fourteen of them, in a few days they cleared a way as far as Bindoon—thirty miles from New Norcia; which has since then become a public road, not only from the metropolis to this Mission, but also to the remotest settlements northward in this Colony. Soon after they returned here there was a dreadful bush-fire, burning to ashes the adjacent forest, and had such a velocity that no human power could prevent it from destroying the wheat and perhaps everything at this place. But Divine Providence graciously watched over the great wants both of the Missionaries and Aborigines, and just when the devouring flames were near this establishment, the wind changed, and instantly taking another direction, the destructive element left here unburnt, whatever it was, thank God.

The 8th of December, 1847, will ever be a memorable day for this Native Institution, because three Aboriginal boys were willingly presented by their own parents and admitted in the school; whose praiseworthy example was afterwards followed by many more youngsters, some of whom in the course of time went to Europe to complete their education at some of its best colleges. At the beginning of the year 1848, there were at this Mission six native Christian boys. From that time hope dawned upon the Australian race. Perhaps the Aborigines of this country, hitherto abandoned to utter darkness and ignorance, may be destined to receive from the children of St. Benedict the same inappreciable benefits for which the Anglo-Saxons and other ancient nations of Europe are indebted to them, since they were converted and taught the gospel of Christ and every important science by members of the same illustrious Order.

The Bishop of Perth, on a visit to New Norcia during the month of January, 1848, appeared evidently to be well pleased at seeing the spiritual and material improvements of this Mission; and justly considering what a vast field was opened here for Missionary zeal and labour, and how few—only two Priests—were then cultivating it, His Lordship determined at last to send Father Serra to Europe, to get there more labourers and means to carry on this very arduous generous undertaking. Consequently he left this Colony for England ere long, having the pleasure to be accompanied by one of his pupils—a Christian native boy named Benedict Upmèra, who, of course, had first obtained his parents' consent.

Meanwhile, Father Salvado purchased 2,560 acres of land on the east side of Moore River, Victoria Plains, payable at a certain time, and at ten shillings per acre. Nearly the whole amount was paid by him from the money he collected among his friends and religious brethren, the Spanish Benedictines, when he went to his country on the following year. To sign the documents relative to that sale of land he had to go to Perth, whither he took at the same time another Christian Aboriginal girl, about six years old, whose own parents requested him to leave her at the Convent of Sisters. As soon as he returned from that town, some allotments of agricultural land were assigned by him to the native inhabitants at New Norcia, in order that they might have greater interest in cultivating their small fields for their own exclusive benefit. Whenever they worked for the Mission, Father Salvado paid them according to their work. Seeing, however, that some Aborigines did not make a proper use of the money they received from him in payment for their manual labour, it then occurred to him to propose to them an ingenious plan, that is, to deposit their money in a box containing as many divisions as they were, having each of them his name written on it, where everyone could collect as much money as would be required to buy for themselves some useful objects, such as cloth, hens, pigs, cattle, &c., and thus acquire some property. None of them objected to do so, and since then, whenever they received their weekly or monthly wages, nearly all their money was deposited by them as aforesaid; and ere long some of them were enabled to become proprietors of a few articles.

When the next lambing season came, Divine Providence blessed the Mission sheep in such a manner as to increase them to one thousand two hundred; but as they had not sufficient grass to feed on well, the active Superior went out himself exploring the adjacent country in a northward direction, and at

a few miles further from here he found fine runs or pastoral land, which was soon rented by him. Whenever any of the Mission sheep or lambs were lost, the good natives were always very careful to look for them and bring back to the station as many as they could find. The time for ploughing arrived again, and Father Salvado, helped by some Aborigines, ploughed and sowed their corn-field. During that winter he erected a wooden house, which was intended to accommodate the Missioners expected to come out to this country with his old fellow-laborer, Father Serra. Soon after he also attempted to make a causeway at the Moore River, in which useful work twenty natives aided him.

Attendance upon the sick was also one of the most unceasing and arduous occupations of that Priest, for the rude intercourse the poor wild natives had with some vicious Europeans, inhabitants of this district—some shepherds, I suppose—was the cause of their contracting diseases hitherto unknown to them. How many of them have ever since recovered their health, and had their sores healed here. On such occasions every work of spiritual and corporal mercy fell into the hands or care of the Missionary; he had to watch day and night over his patients, to prepare them food and medicines procurable, which charity and kindness often won them to the faith of Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile the time for gathering the winter store approached, and Father Salvado and his adopted native children turned their hands to the sickle and reaped their corn-field, which yielded an abundant crop of wheat that year, thank God. After reaping, he was under the necessity to drive, himself, one bullock-dray, and bring the Mission wool to Perth, and on that occasion some Aborigines went with him to see that town for the first time. Unexpectedly, when he arrived there, Bishop Brady told him to be ready soon to sail for England, on board a ship which was just about to leave this colony; because he had another important mission to do in Europe. He had then no time to take leave from his beloved adopted blacks at New Norcia; but among the natives who came to town with him on that occasion there were two boys who obtained permission from their own parents to accompany him and join their friend Benedict Upimera at the college of Propaganda. On the 8th January, 1849, just the very same day and hour that the Reverend Father R. Salvado had first landed in Western Australia three years before, he left this country, accompanied by his two beloved pupils. These neophytes had the happiness to receive, at their own request, the Benedictine habit from His Holiness the Pope's hands, who at the same time gave the name of Francis Xavier to one, and to the other native boy that of John, after the Holy Father's own christian name. The former died in Rome not long after, and the latter returned to New Norcia in 1855, but unfortunately he came so ill from Europe that ere long he died in this Mission, regretted very much by his own parents and relatives, as well as by all the Missionaries. Three other Christian natives from here had a premature death while studying in Europe, where its climate does not evidently agree with the Australian Aborigines. It affords us, however, not a little consolation that the neophytes of this Mission lived and died there as good Christians.

In the month of August, 1849, the Rev. Father Rosendo Salvado was consecrated Bishop of Port (Essington) Victoria, North Australia, while he was at Naples getting ready to leave for this Colony. But in consequence of some unexpected events, His Lordship remained for some years in Rome till the Holy Father directed him to return to Swan River. While Dr. Salvado was in Naples, he was desired to write an account of the New Norcia Mission, and he published in Rome, in the Italian language, a book under the title—“*Memorie Istoriche intorno all' Australia,*” which was afterwards translated into French and Spanish. Although His Lordship was then absent from his dear Australian savages, yet he did not fail, even while in the old Continent, to do a great deal for their good. Previously to his leaving Europe, Bishop Salvado collected there, but particularly in Spain, abundant means to improve this Mission—above all, a new band composed of more than forty, Missionary Priests and lay-brothers together.

Father Serra having been elevated to the high dignity of Bishop, and appointed Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Perth, at the end of 1849 His Lordship came out to Western Australia with several Priests and lay-brothers. Not long after their arrival in Perth they left there for New Norcia, where the poor Aborigines gave them a hearty welcome. But, unfortunately, no sooner did Dr. Serra and the Missionaries begin to work here than they were all compelled to leave this Mission, on account of circumstances which were out of their power to control. Consequently the unfortunate natives who had already assembled here were then under the necessity to plunge into the bush again. From that deplorable time, little more than nothing was done at New Norcia until Bishop Salvado arrived here with his auxiliaries, in 1853. As soon as they came to this Mission, the peculiar and arduous undertaking of civilising this degraded race was resumed. The Aborigines had then so great a propensity to supply their wants by hunting through these wildernesses, and such a natural dislike of labour, that nothing

but practical example could persuade them to adopt a settled scheme of life. The Missionaries therefore set to work in earnest: some of them clearing the adjacent forest, cutting down and splitting mighty trees for building purposes, and others preparing the land for cultivation. The savages who before roamed at large through the neighbouring woods, began once more to learn the first acts of civil life, and the rudiments of the Christian religion in this Mission. One of the first improvements made then was to erect a new Chapel about 40 x 17 feet, three cottages 24 x 15 feet for as many native families, and a work-shop, all built with bricks made by the Brothers and Aborigines. When the next tillage season came, they cleared, ploughed, and sowed about fifty acres of land, and fenced them in with strong posts and rails split by them. Meanwhile the lambing time arrived, and there were seven hundred lambs, that is, ninety-nine lambs per cent. So then, the sheep belonging to this Mission increased that year to two thousand six hundred. After shearing, some of the brothers and natives carted the Mission wool to Perth: by the amount of which this establishment was then, and every year since, is supplied with all necessary articles—such as clothing, rice, tea, sugar, utensils, farming implements, as well as to pay for pastoral leases, shepherds, and servants' wages, &c.

While Dr. Salvado was at New Norcia, in Nov., 1853, he received a communication from Bishop Serra, requesting him to act for him in this Diocese during his absence, as he was about to leave for Europe. Consequently His Lordship went to Perth; but the affairs and administration of this diocese did not prevent him from visiting occasionally New Norcia. On such occasions he never failed to give, by word and example, practical and useful instructions both to the Missionaries and Aborigines, and afterwards returned to the metropolis, where was his residence.

During the year 1854 the Brothers built a stone house two stories high, roofed with strong rafters and shingles, for the granary and corn-mill. When it was finished they set also the machine for grinding wheat in it; where ever since all their wheat has been ground: say, more than two thousand bushels, which are at present yearly consumed here. At reaping time both Missionaries and Natives reaped and thrashed their wheat; and Divine Providence gave us indeed an abundant crop that year.

It would, doubtless, be too long to describe month by month, and year by year, all that has been done at this Native Institution. From the beginning of the aforesaid year, to the end of 1856, various material and agricultural improvements were made; and the Missionaries not only laboured for their sustenance, but also supported a considerable number of Aborigines, who were adopting the habits and first acts of civilized life, and likewise improved so much in moral and religious practical knowledge as to be, many of them, worthy of being baptized, and a few of whom had the happiness to die as good Christians. But this Mission has, indeed, made a greater progress since the month of February, 1857, when Bishop Salvado was happily enabled once more to come and reside here, in the quality of its Superior. As soon as His Lordship had under his personal direction the management of this establishment, its gradual spiritual and temporal prosperity was positively manifested, notwithstanding the many difficulties and obstacles he then encountered. One of his first cares here was to clear more agricultural land, in order to secure bread enough both for the Missionaries and natives. He did not fail to procure, also, the spiritual food for his fellow-labourers and adopted black children, teaching them practically how "to seek first the Kingdom of God, and of his justice." Many of the savages who were wandering through the bush came here then to place themselves and their own offspring under his paternal care: which laudable example was afterwards followed by not a few of their wilder brethren. The active Superior afforded them every means in his own power to lead a well-civilized and christian life.

Since then the Brothers have, under His Lordship's superintendence or his substitutes, built a beautiful cruciform Church, 102 feet long by 20 feet wide—its walls of stone, the floor all made with mahogany (*Jarrak*) timber, rafters, and boards, and roofed with rafters and shingles: also a pro-Monastery 120 x 20 feet with the same materials, three stories high, having all around a verandah or gallery eight feet wide: two wooden dwelling-houses or rooms, 100 x 18 feet each, one of them for the native boys, the other for the native girls: seven stone and burnt-brick cottages 30 x 17 feet, containing two rooms each, for the christian married natives: some workshops and out-buildings: a stone cottage for the Police Station: a barn and stable about 100 x 20 feet wide, &c. From 100 to 300 acres of land for agricultural purposes have been cleared, and about 200 acres of which are under cultivation yearly here, yielding a crop of about 3,000 bushels of wheat and barley, and fifteen tons of hay: more than three acres of vineyard, out of which over 200 gallons of good wine is made, besides the grapes eaten: there are also about two acres of land as a kitchen garden, whereon various fruit trees grow well, and bear rather too much fruit yearly, abundant vegetables, beans, potatoes; and also the tobacco-plant is cultivated, which yields a crop of about one ton annually.

The cultivation both of the mind and heart of the Australian savages, especially of the native youth, in Christian principles, has always been deemed the most efficacious means of advancing this Mission. While we have endeavoured to announce and explain the saving eternal truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and proclaimed doctrines never heard before by those Aborigines who have come here—particularly from the interior of these woods—of One Almighty God who rewards and punishes all men created by Him, and who reserves for them all a place of eternal happiness or torments in another world, which it is theirs to choose, the poor ignorant creatures cannot but listen to us with marked attention, proceeding, perhaps, not from interest, but from their natural ignorance or habit, which severely forbids contradiction. Sad and disheartening is the hope which the old wild natives afford for Missionary zeal, as long as they roam at large in their forests. It is almost useless to talk for hours to them of the “*Mám-on Kumbur*”—or great Creator who sends the “*kaby*” or water, the kangaroo and the opossum; from Whom they came, and to Whom they shall return. Unfortunately, they appear to have very little or no idea of religion, and are so accustomed to lead a wandering life, that they invariably return again to their native woods, where they so easily find abundance of food for themselves, and far prefer its other very great inconveniences to all the advantages and comforts of civilized life. It is, however, very difficult to believe *all* told of their intellectual inferiority by travellers and other writers. They are, indeed, quite ignorant of the simplest arts of civil life and education; but they have their own standard of right and wrong, which no argument of the white man can change. Good actions and morals they acknowledge and praise as “*Kuoba*”—right; but whatever is bad, they evidently regard and express as “*Winda*”—wicked. If occasionally the wildest Aborigines find a difficulty in defining the difference between killing a sheep and a kangaroo,—both of which are equally fed by grass and roam at large in *their* bush—it should, before condemning them, be first taken into consideration who shows the greatest dulness of moral perception, the unauthorized occupiers of their woods who kill, themselves, as many kangaroos as they can, or the original owners of that land, who take such things as they find upon it for the preservation of life. Yet this practice has, happily, never or very seldom taken place on our Mission runs and sheep stations. Would that the same might be said of every other settlement.

As regards the rising generation or young natives, they are more inclined to work; and occasionally good shepherds and teamsters, as well as first-class stockmen, are found among them. That they are *not* incapable of civilization is the fixed impression with all who have experienced them best. Well-educated native children, and grown-up Christian Aborigines do manifest a true sense of religion. A considerable number of these have been, and still there are some living, as good Christians at this Mission. It has always been easier for their own parents to leave or send them here to be so educated; for, as some of them have often told us—“We are old too much now, we like bush walk and kangaroo hunting, our youngsters will do well if they stay and live as you say: let them be at your school, and give them plenty to eat.” From the foundation of this Native Institution, and more particularly since 1857, many Aboriginal children, and young men and girls, have been admitted and received secular and religious instruction in it. Some of them have learnt how to read and write English a little, and above all have committed to memory the abridgement of the Christian doctrine or catechism, and also they could read and understand, as far as they were capable, the sacred Scripture. The Holy Bible—especially the New Testament—has its high and legitimate place in this Mission, where the natives who can read *do* read it as often as they like, and likewise it is expounded to them and to those who do not know yet how to read. At present there are here more than fifty Aborigines of both sexes and various ages. They have their own respective schools, where the usual rudiments of English education are taught. As a general rule they get up from bed throughout the year at sunrise, dress and wash themselves and say their daily morning prayers. Immediately after, they go to the Church and assist at Mass, and when it is over they sing there the 116th Psalm. At seven o’clock they take their breakfast, after which all go to work until eleven o’clock, during that time they get some lunch. The native boys are employed in such light labour connected with farming pursuits as is proportioned to their respective age and physical strength; and some of them are occupied in learning some trade, two of whom can already make shoes themselves. Respecting the Aboriginal girls and young women, they have almost the same time to work, but their manual occupation is confined to learn how to sew well, and likewise to wash their own clothes, cooking their meals, and any household work, under the supervision of a matron. A good proportion of time is allowed them to play, morning and evening. Boys and girls are not permitted to play together, and are always separated, but they may speak between themselves at certain times. Just at noon every day they get their dinner, and have the same victuals as the Missionaries, at their respective refectories. Both male and female native children have their own separated school—in winter from two to four o’clock, p.m., in summer from three to five o’clock, p.m. They begin and conclude their schooling by blessing

themselves and saying the Lord's Prayer, after which they sing some sacred hymns. Singing is very pleasing to them, not only during school time, but also at any hour in the day, and particularly in the evening. They can sing several religious and school songs with considerable melody, and sometimes they sing also the National Anthem. Of course they are not prevented from singing their own native songs, to their great delight. A pre-eminence is given to religious songs, and indeed they join occasionally the chaunted part of Divine Service, on Saturdays and Sundays particularly. After school they have another lunch, and go to play or take a walk until sunset, when all assemble in the Church and say the evening devotions. Having complied with this sacred duty they all go to take their supper, and afterwards spend the remainder of their time in whatever innocent amusement they like, as playing at marbles, dancing, singing, or reading over their lesson books. The young natives and married men, who are employed at some useful occupation during the day, sometimes have night school after supper. The time for all of them to rest is at eight o'clock, p.m., in winter, and in summer at nine o'clock, p.m., when they say once more a few prayers, and go to bed.

A long experience has evidently taught us that *hard* work does not agree with the enfeebled constitution of these Aborigines—be it mental or physical. Not only must the sort of labour, both mentally and physically, be rather light, but likewise its length of time ought to be very *short*, particularly for those natives newly reclaimed from the bush; for, unaccustomed as they are to the habits and arts of civil life, they are not only more than usually predisposed to contract disease, but once any sickness takes possession of their weak frames, it has almost a deadly effect on them. The system established here seems easy enough to be performed by them. It, doubtless, contributes very much to prevent among them diseases, to develop their mental faculties and bodily strength, to have them occupied with some profitable work either for their own interest or for the general benefit of this Native Institution, to initiate them gradually into the habits of industrial and civilized life, and above all to bring them happily into the practical knowledge of Christian faith and society. As a further precaution against illness from too much confinement or little exercise, every Thursday, and occasionally some other days, all the native boys and girls separately go out through the forest around this Mission, hunting the timid kangaroos, the harmless opossums, poories, pantigoods, &c., which roam at will in the wilds; and sometimes the grown-up natives go on shooting the graceful emu, swans, wild turkeys, ducks, pigeons, parrots, cockatoos, &c. Undoubtedly they enjoy very much such excursions, and whenever they return home after having such a recreation, evidently they appear to have improved their health. For a long time—nay since 1857, our neophytes enjoyed such excellent health that none of them had to leave this Mission in consequence of being ill, and not one of the native children had died here. But when the Measles for the first time made their appearance in this Colony at the end of 1860, it proved so fatal among them that since then a considerable number of our finest native youth have departed from this world to a better one. God's will be done! Were they all alive now, a larger Christian village could be seen at this Institution. However, their vacant places ere long were occupied by some others of their unconverted brethren, who having been since receiving religious and secular instruction here, have in some degree adopted the customs and arts of civil life, and become Christians. They all live here very happy—as they themselves say—and fulfil their respective duties to God and Christian Society.

Next to religious instruction and daily performance of Christian duties, material labour has the preference to intellectual or school occupation here; because it is evidently of greater advantage to any Aboriginal native who learns how to support himself by his industry or manual labour, as an agriculturist, teamster, shepherd, shearer, or tradesman,—as they do at this Mission,—than only to know how to read, write, cipher, or even play on the pianoforte imperfectly. How useless, indeed, it is for some Aborigines, whom philanthropists have been kind enough to teach them the first elements of education, but *not* enabled them how to earn their livelihood by European industry. What, then, will become of them, with all their scientific improvements, if they are incapacitated to labour for their own sustenance?

The possession of private property is, no doubt, an encouragement to industry, and a salutary check upon the natural indolence of the Australian Aborigines. So then, to some of our steadiest natives, who are enabled to cultivate themselves a field, about fifteen acres of arable land have been assigned for their own exclusive benefit, *rent free*. The ground has been cleared of nearly all the trees by themselves, helped by some brothers. At the commencement of the sowing season on the first year they received from this Mission a certain allowance of seed, with the obligation of returning exactly the same quantity after the harvest; horses or bullocks, and agricultural implements, are likewise lent them under a similar stipulation. One of the Brothers is appointed to help them and overlook their labour. They plough and sow their corn fields, as well as they reap their crop of wheat or barley, which is considered their own property. They

keep as much of it as they require for seed on the following year, and the remainder they sell, and by its produce or amount they acquire by degrees some cattle, mares, &c. Some of them are actually proprietors of a few working-bullocks, cows, and mares; but they cannot sell any of that stock, without first obtaining permission from the Superior of this Mission. Whenever they do not work for themselves, they are employed at this establishment in manual labor of any sort which agriculture calls for, or at some other agreeable occupation, as carting, breaking in young horses, stock-hunting, shepherding, shoemaking, carrying shepherds' rations, &c. At shearing time a few of them—the strongest—take the contract to shear the Mission sheep at the usual or general price. This very year, our natives have shorn 5413, that is, one of them (a half-caste) has sheared more than any European shearer employed here, namely 1421 sheep in twenty five days, paid at 4s. 6d. per score, £15 19s. 8½d. A black fellow sheared 990, another young native sheared 838 sheep, and received payment. During the year their monthly wages are from £1 to 40s., and supported. By their salaries they buy cloth, utensils, and any useful articles for their own use. The native boys are also paid occasionally, as after ploughing, lambing time, shearing, reaping, and thrashing. The Aboriginal women and girls receive likewise some just payment for their needle-work, washing of the wool, and reaping, and spend their money in some fancy goods. They are all supported and clothed by this Mission as long as they are not able to labour for their own sustenance. But this Native Institution gratefully acknowledges to have received a few years since from the Local Government £100 annually in aid for their maintenance, and some blankets for them. Whenever our youngsters are ready to get married, the Mission affords them every possible and necessary object, as a cottage, furniture, utensils, and everything or articles wanted. Several native couples have been married here as Christians, and according to the rite of our Church. There are now three marriages of our neophytes in contemplation to take place soon. Their respective nice cottages are ready; and yet many more new dwelling-houses are wanted for some other young natives living here.

An impartial Protestant gentleman, who happened to be at this establishment on an occasion when two Christian Aborigines were married, was of his own accord pleased to send to the Editor of one of our Colonial newspapers the following communication:—"On Sunday, the 25th November, 1866, the very interesting and rare ceremony of the marriage of a native man and woman took place at the Benedictine Mission, Victoria Plains. The bride and bridegroom having been educated at the Mission, were bound together in holy matrimony according to the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. The lady appeared dressed in white, and very neatly dressed too, attended by one bridesmaid, suitably dressed also. The bridegroom appeared also neatly dressed, and accompanied by the best man—a fine looking half-caste—dressed in the most approved fashion. The ceremony being over (and a very interesting and solemn one it is), the married pair, accompanied by their friends, sat down to an excellent breakfast, eight o'clock being the hour at which the marriage rite was performed. I had the pleasure of shaking hands with the happy couple and wishing them the usual amount of good things of this world. In the evening I was present at tea, when about fifty natives were entertained, of all ages; and their conduct and bearing would not have done discredit to any community of whites. To all credit is due for their great kindness to the natives under their care; and to their unwearied attention, their great zeal and wonderful patience, the high state of civilization to which they have brought these natives is due. Not only their religious instruction is attended to, but their worldly interests are not neglected, for the happy couple had a neat cottage of two rooms furnished for them, and neat and comfortable it was. The married natives are all similarly looked after, all have cottages of two rooms furnished. Indeed many of the white settlers of this Colony would be glad to have equal to them. A visit to this settlement will repay anyone the fatigue of a journey from Perth."

The Editor of the same Journal—*Perth Gazette and W. A. Times*—published on the 17th November, 1865, as follows:—"His Lordship the Bishop (Church of England) of Perth's Lectures on the Aborigines have had the effect of rousing general attention to the necessity of something being done towards raising them in the scale of humanity, if possible. We quite agree with the remarks of our correspondent 'Laicus' on this matter, and the success which has attended the efforts of the Benedictines at New Norcia to us clearly points out the only method by which success can be hoped for. But the difficulty for Protestants to get over will be the machinery for working such an institution—the obtaining of such a number of self-denying, patient, and persevering persons willing to undertake the work, and to carry it out to such an extent, as that eventually we may look not merely for success in a few cases, but that a sensible impression will be made upon the greater portion of the native tribes within the Colony. For such a work large funds will in the outset and for many years after be required, and then the question is forced upon us—are those funds likely to be forthcoming?"

It may not be useless to observe that Laicus, and other writers whose letters on the natives have sometimes been published in the local papers, are still unknown to us. A few extracts from them will perhaps be interesting to be added here as an illustration or corroboration of this report.

“To teach (says Laicus) Christianity alone, although done with the power of the Apostles, would avail nothing among the Aborigines of Australia. The first thing to be done with our Savages is to try and make them useful and industrious. This is a more difficult task than to make them nominal Christians. Seek not, however, to raise the first generation beyond the level of the peasant. Could we only get the masses up to that condition, there would be some reason to hope for their posterity. The great mistake is to teach too much. Up to the present time the only true prospect of success is held out by the Roman Catholic Institution at Victoria Plains. There the natives are taught to work, and are beginning to perceive the uses and advantages of labor. Religious Education must follow, not precede, this great necessary lesson. The brain of the native is at present of too low a type to enable him to comprehend abstract principles. The natives might be prepared for a higher order of civilization in a future generation.

“If the object of the Bishop’s lectures be to get up another Institution, let it be more in the style of that at New Norcia: let the youths be trained to cultivate the ground, to tend horses and sheep, to shear, reap, and become good labourers and servants. Let them be taught the comforts and advantages of a settled habitation; to dress and cook their victuals, mend their clothes, make shoes, if really possible, and also, if possible, keep themselves externally decent. The girls had better, by example as well as precept, be taught modesty and a few simple domestic arts.

“We are far from implying that they should receive no religious instruction. It should, however, be of the simplest kind—food adapted to babes. Let them be made Christians by degrees, strong, healthy, muscular—not of the flabby kind. Alas, although we all feel that we ought to do something, there is but little prospect of any Institution for Natives being widely successful. The territorial division of the country among various tribes makes it almost impossible to congregate large numbers in any one locality. This, we suspect, is the chief reason why New Norcia, though founded on correct principles, *after years of incessant toil*, possesses only twenty-five males between the ages of six and twenty-six, and only fifteen females, the oldest of whom is but eighteen.”

There are actually residing in this Mission thirty-three males and twenty-six females, altogether fifty-nine Aborigines; exclusive of several bush natives who occasionally visit their children and friends at this establishment.

The Editor of the *Inquirer*, Perth, 18th Nov., 1867, inserted in his public Journal the following article:—

“THE ABORIGINES MISSION STATION AT NEW NORCIA, VICTORIA PLAINS.—For some years past, and indeed from its inauguration, this establishment in connection with the Roman Catholic Church has steadily and encouragingly increased, under the untiring zeal of the gentlemen under whose individual supervision its affairs have been managed. Many natives who have been trained and educated at the Mission have small tenements on the estate, having married and settled on small blocks of land, on which they produce their own corn, and rear their own stock; while there are now about sixty inmates of the station—men, women, and children—all of whom are being educated and brought up in habits of thrift and industry, and have the opportunity of selecting for themselves any mechanical occupation they choose. About 200 acres of land are cropped with wheat and barley, and a vineyard comprising three or four acres, has been enclosed and planted. A chapel has been erected on the Station, at which upwards of 130 persons attend. The Rev. V. Garrido, the acting principal of the establishment, has kindly promised us several photographic illustrations taken of the natives while employed at their various occupations, many of which we have already seen. They are exceedingly interesting, and clearly show that the benighted denizens of our soil are capable of refinement, and of being brought to a high state of civilization.”

In the *Perth Gazette and W. A. Times*, November 29, 1867, was published a letter signed “Polybius”—an unknown writer to me.

“To the Editor: Sir,—I have been greatly interested by the perusal of a letter that appeared in your columns of the 25th ultimo, advocating the formation of an Institution having for its object the civilization of the Aborigines. The writer plainly shows that the Aborigines both need, and are capable of social, intellectual, and moral improvement, and that principles of christianity bind us to send the

gospel to all. We all know that various attempts have been made by different Societies to improve this poor degraded race, but they have proved a failure, though such Societies deserve great credit for their philanthropic feelings. The reason why these attempts have proved a failure is simply because the first and only person required—the *Missionary*—was wanted.

“Not so with the Roman Catholic Mission, Victoria Plains, where the Missionary is to be found toiling incessantly for the welfare of his adopted children: twenty-one years have gone by since that Mission was founded, and still the Missionary toils to-day with the same zeal and ardour as when he first began; his toils have not been fruitless, nor has the seed of the word of God fallen upon rocks; moral and intellectual improvement has made its progress among the Aborigines under his paternal care.

“Why are we thinking on this or that plan to carry on the civilization of the Aborigines, when we are fully aware that it is the *Missionary only* who can and will effect the desired improvement?”

“The only real difficulty is, where are we to find this Missionary—where can we find men who will abandon everything on earth, honor and riches, and give themselves to be dedicated entirely to the civilization of their fellow creatures: have we not a standing example in the above-mentioned Mission.

“I am as philanthropic as any man can be; but I can see that without Missionary labor, nothing can be done in this respect; to raise funds, to organize societies, and a thousand other plans will prove insufficient; it is the Missionary, his patience and perseverance his self-denial and constant work, who will make savages turn into civilized people, heathens into fervent Christians, and wolves into lambs. Let me conclude by saying, that all attempts to ameliorate the present state of the Aborigines will be useless, if the Missionary is not at the head and bottom of the work.”

I must now omit to quote herein some other favorable remarks relative to this Mission, which have lately appeared in our Colonial newspapers written by philanthropists still unknown to me. Perhaps the aforesaid account is already long enough.

In conclusion, I beg to remark the fact that Dr. Salvado has, with God's help and the co-operation of these Missionaries, solved that exceedingly arduous problem *Whether the Australian Savages are capable of adopting a civil and Christian life*. Indeed, no one who has had friendly and experimental intercourse with these natives will deny that the education of this degraded race is a difficult and lengthened task: evidently it is not the work of one month, nor a year, nor even of a generation. Example, however, has been powerful where force or precept must have failed, and the Aborigines at New Norcia long ago have been persuaded to labor for themselves. And in order to be able to do so, and convince them of the great advantages of leading a laborious life, and thus make them useful upon the soundest principles of self-interest, we found it necessary to supply them with food, clothes, and everything wanted, and by hard personal labour to establish a self-supporting system, so as to provide for ours and their corporal wants, until they could work to support themselves. Their spiritual wants have not been neglected, for frequently the principal articles of the Christian Creed have always been explained to them, and in the course of time they have been so well instructed in religion as to be worthy of receiving the holy Sacraments. In fact, more than one hundred and fifty Australian natives, of both sexes and various ages, have had the happiness to become Christians in this Mission. Of course, except “in articulo vel periculo mortis,” no adults are baptized here unless they have been some years receiving religious instructions, and thus giving us every hope that they will persevere believing and acting all their life according to our practical faith and religion of Jesus Christ. Only the infants from Christian Natives, and but a few other children whose own parents will, doubtless, let them be educated as Christians, receive here also the holy baptism, many of whom go to heaven ere long.

It is now more than three years since Bishop Salvado has been absent from New Norcia, and has been for a long time in Rome laboring for the actual and future well-being of this Native Mission. His Lordship is at present in Spain, endeavouring to establish there a permanent Institution whence additional labourers may come out here to continue his generous undertaking—the civilization and christianization of the Australian Savages.

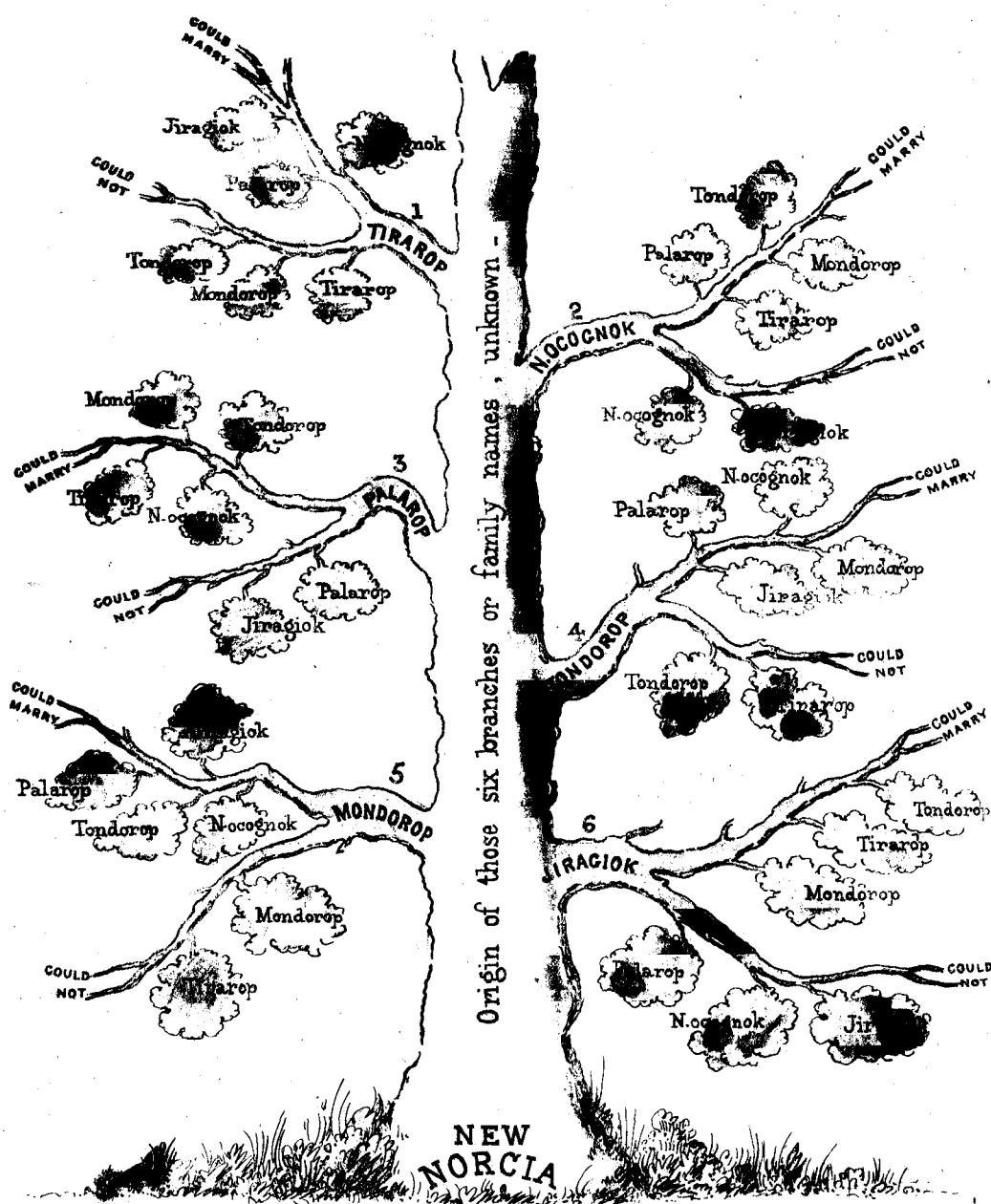
Expecting that the preceding rough sketch may afford the reader some insight into the principles on which this Mission was founded, and what has been done at New Norcia, I beg to conclude, cordially wishing you and the Committee of the Aborigines' Protection Society every prosperity and felicity.

I have, &c.,

V. GARRIDO, O.S.B.

The Honorable The Colonial Secretary.

SIX family names of the Aboriginal natives of NEW NORCIA, and of other places in WESTERN AUSTRALIA ; viz; 1. TIRAROP - 2. N-OCOENOK - 3. PALAROP - 4. TONDOROP - 5. MONDOROP 6. JIRACIOK - Every native, male and female, belongs to ONE of those six family names, which are inherited by the native children, not from their father but from their mother.



No native could marry any of his family name, nor any of the other families but of those only which their law allows, see the branches of the above Tree. - + h. v.

E.C. DEAN Litho: PERTH. W.A. 1871.

THE ANNESFIELD NATIVE INSTITUTION, ALBANY.

A SKETCH OF ITS HISTORY AND PRESENT CONDITION (1868).

The natives of Australia are capable of great improvement, but it will be in some generations hence that much good will be visible, and there must be great extension of the means now in operation.

We are too much inclined to look upon the civilization of this people as a hopeless work, because so little good is apparent from the efforts that have already been made; but multiply the means, have institutions in each district, instead of having only one or two in the whole colony, and these left to the working (and hard-working) of a very few individuals, and the results will then be more encouraging.

To wean them from their wild habits and to give them a little insight into the comforts of civilization, together with teaching them some of the simplest but most important Truths of the Gospel, is as much as can at first be done. "Rome was not built in a day": Nor did Englishmen rise from the condition described in the early parts of English History, to the high state of civilization to which they have now attained, in one generation. So, to expect that the Aborigines may be raised at once from their present wild state into that of perfect civilization is simply to expect what only a miracle could produce. Doubtless it is within *the power* of God to place them on an equality with the most refined and intellectual, at once. The Creator of all, He could make all equal, if he saw fit. But He works by means: and we whom His Providence has placed in this country are the means to effect the salvation of the Aborigines, in the same way as the Roman Christians were sent by and wrought so much for our Saxon Ancestors in early times. The overruling hand of God directed us to the occupying of this land, where we "live and get gain," and He places these objects of compassion before our eyes as trials of our faith in Him: and if we are believers in Him and in the salvation which He has obtained for our race, surely we shall do what we can among this people, though what we individually do may be but as the offering of the widow's mite. It was from an irresistible feeling that something ought to be attempted, though the result might be ever so small, that the Annesfield Institution was commenced. It was begun privately with one child for six months, when a favorable answer was received to an application to Government to support six children. It has now been in operation nearly sixteen years, the one child in question having been received into the House June 21st, 1852.

One thing is clearly proved—that the Aborigines have minds capable of comprehending their need of the Saviour Christ to die, and so to procure for them the forgiveness of sin, and an eternal inheritance in Heaven. That all who are taught believe this, I do not assert, but only that they can comprehend it, which is as much as can be said of hundreds and thousands of white people. There have been, however, several among the children who have died, in regard to whose death I am sure there has been good ground for hope that they savingly believed the Gospel; and one soul saved is worth a life-time of labor.

The native children have all a great fondness for music, and very quickly learn tunes. One little boy whom we adopted ourselves, so as to bring him up in a more refined way than is necessary or desirable for them generally (thereby to test his abilities as a native), gave evidence of a fine ear for music. He would listen untiringly to it, and learnt to play on the Pianoforte with great facility; and there is no doubt had he lived, he would, if properly taught, have become a good performer. He died at the age of ten years and two months. On one occasion the Piano had been tuned when he was absent, and he was not aware of it: when he went to practice in the afternoon, a friend who was sitting by him will never forget the look of ecstasy which he turned upon her, when he struck the notes first, and discovered the improvement. Yet the instrument in the morning was not so much out of tune but that many children might have played without noticing it. He, as is the case with almost all of them, had no application; they are naturally more or less idle. To encourage him at first with his notes and other music exercises, a little black girl was allowed to learn with him, simply as an encouragement to diligence, not at all with the idea of her becoming a performer. But she profited by the opportunity thus given her so far, that three years ago on her being taken by friends to the Eastern Colonies, she on one occasion played the hymns for the afternoon service on the Organ at St. Philip's Church, Sydney, when there was a full congregation, and she for some time, two years in all, played the Harmonium, an instrument with two key-boards, at Albany Church, because there was no one in the place who could play it better, and who was willing to do so. Her knowledge and practice of music, therefore, has been made useful. She is now earning her living very creditably as teacher in a native school in Gipps Land. An extract from the German Missionary's letter of February 28th, 1868, will show that she is giving satisfaction. "B. has been a very good girl ever since she came back from Lake Tyers. She is a great help already in our work,

and puts her hands to every work which we have to do, either with the children (black, and also my own) or in the housework. I feel sure that in due time she will &c., &c." but I forward the whole letter so that you will see what more he says of her, and also of the four others who are at the same station. This letter gives me a "better account," which implies that the last was not good. If anyone undertakes to do anything with the natives and expects it all to be followed by unvarying good, nothing is more certain than that they will be disappointed. It is impossible for them not to go astray, and that not frequently.

The badness of behaviour here referred to by Mr. H——was the running away of two *married* girls who enticed their husbands to accompany them, because they could earn more money at harvest time at other stations than they did at their own; but they all returned, as you will see, the wiser for their loss of home comforts. B——had been on a visit to Lake Tyers.

Another black girl is married to a native convert at the Moravian Wimmera station, and I constantly hear good reports of her and of her husband, who does much real good among his fellow-blacks. They have been married five years. The missionary writes that he will be very glad when I can again send one or more girls; which proves that this young woman gives satisfaction. There are some others married, who are doing well, or not well, just as there are differences in the conduct of white girls who are married, and very much depends upon their husbands, as they are easily led to good or evil. They are great copyists: the manners, the language, the habits of those around them soon become theirs; so that it is not difficult to see when their associates are bad.

Two or three Sundays ago a child of one of these school girls was baptized at the Church. Two young ladies, out of respect to the mother, were the sponsors, together with the husband, a white man; and a nicer and more neatly dressed babe I was told could not be brought to the font. The clothes were made by the mother; they were white, and plain as could be, but so beautifully got up and there was such a wholesome healthy cleanliness about the child, that they could not but admire it. The mother was admitted into this school when about seven or eight years old, and there are few things in a house that she is now not able to do. She is a very good plain cook: she washes and gets up linen very well, makes bread and jams, cures pork when they kill their pigs, &c., &c. And her cottage is the picture of neatness. I often go in, and whether I go unexpectedly or not it is all the same. She also reads and writes very well.

You may perhaps accuse me of picking out one or two instances, and enlarging upon their well-doing, leaving the less favorable cases untouched. I do not wish to mislead by bringing the good forward as if they were all equally satisfactory, or even to pretend that the conduct of the best has been without drawbacks; but it is certainly pleasanter to look on the bright side of any picture, and these instances prove that these poor children of the wilderness will repay efforts made for their welfare in as great a proportion as similar efforts made on behalf of a neglected white population. I could relate distressing circumstances, which have caused many sorrowful hours and anxious nights to those who have had the chief care of the school, and many a weary disappointment, and these circumstances have generally arisen from the wicked example and seduction of those who are of a superior race, working upon the untutored passions of these poor children, and thereby producing deceit and every other evil.

Several of the boys have gone out to service and are doing well; others have not been so satisfactory, but only two have asserted their independence and left the masters under whom we placed them. They are still, however, in the service of white men. I have often had gratuitous testimony to the good behaviour and trust-worthiness of some of them. Last week I was told that his master had not had to reprove one of these boys since he had been with him, now nearly two years, and that he could be thoroughly trusted.

A little girl who was the object of His Excellency's kindness, and who was sent by his direction, together with her little brother, from Guildford, about four years ago, has just brought me her copy-book to look at. I have torn a leaf out of it and enclose it. She reads well, much better than she writes, and works with her needle nicely, besides doing her share of sweeping and cleaning. She has not strength yet to scrub; she has a tiny girl to take care of, and whose pinafores and frocks, &c., she has to patch. This little girl, whom we have had baptized Charlotte Owen, is a smart, intelligent, and very loveable child, and will make a useful woman if she lives; and she is just the character that would have been very troublesome, if she had not been taught, and led to act right.

The children are very observant of dress, and great admirers of it. Little Charlotte was raised up on a bench, so as to be heard, to read for a gentleman one day, (they have all the fault of speaking very

low in school.) She is very shy, and almost turned her back, and hung her head down, so that it surprised me that she saw him at all; but it was evident that her whole attention was not on her book, for as soon as the gentleman had left the room, she ran up to her little school friend, and burst out with a laugh, "Oh! Louisa, that gentleman has got a lady's part." This was that his hair was parted down the middle instead of at the side, which she thought it was the orthodox method.

New shoes, new collars, or gloves, or ribbons, even the minutest change in the dress of any one in the house, is observed immediately by one of them, and very shrewd are the remarks on the new fashion when visitors from the steamers come to see the school. A strange foot-print never escapes their notice. Some gardens were robbed lately of apples and onions, and from the stables saddlegirths and sacks were taken. Several of the school-boys gave considerable help in tracking the party of delinquents six miles and more, so that their usefulness in this work is in no way diminished by their being civilized.

If a tradesman is required in carpentering or building, nothing delights the boys more than to help; and they evince great aptness in learning many useful works. They are not quick, as a rule, at their books, and especially not so at ciphering and the value of money; but they soon learn as much of the latter as is necessary, and many of them read and spell and write very well. Some are really fond of reading. A girl of about eleven or twelve years old, who came into the school much too late (her father had just been hanged, poor fellow! as an accomplice in the murder of another native) is constantly secreting books to read out of school; and at church, besides diligently plodding to follow the prayers, she keeps her prayer-book open throughout the sermon, and almost during the whole time it occupies reads without any signs of weariness; and this is really more profitable to her than listening to the sermon would be, as she does not understand English sufficiently well to comprehend *rapid* or *fluent speaking*. The difficulties are great to the children when they first come to school. The language and habits of their new friends are foreign to them, and they have much to unlearn as well as to learn and acquire. B—— who is now the teacher in Gipps Land, was never without a book in her pocket by day or under her pillow by night. Her love of reading often brought her into scrapes, from reading at inconvenient times, but, notwithstanding, it was very improving to her, as (though she liked as well as any girl to read stories, yet) she is much interested by History, Travels, and more serious works, and she was often referred to if such books were under discussion. Her memory is so very good that she retains what she reads. This girl alone is a sufficient proof of the intelligence of the Aborigines; for she was not chosen by us to receive greater advantages of education than the rest from anything superior in her. She was selected simply because she was the sister of the first child we took, and who died after being in the school three years, and also because she was the daughter of a very faithful old native servant, who died believing in Jesus Christ (as far, I cannot but think, as an untutored mind could comprehend) as his Saviour. We have had many equal, and one or two decidedly superior to B——, and the question is, "Is it right to let such intelligence be wasted, or worse, be turned to evil, without some effort to prevent it?"

I recollect well the kindness of a late Governor, who, when he honored us with a farewell visit—to wish us success with the school, asked if he could do anything for us in England; the only reply made was, laughingly, that what would give us most pleasure would be, if he could influence the lawgivers there to make a law to compel the aborigines and half-caste children to be brought into civilized training, so as to make them useful members of society (if there were no higher motives for raising them) in a country where population is needed and where as they now are—in their degraded state—they are a pest to society. He goodnaturedly answered that such a plan would trench upon the liberty of the British subject, that compulsory education would not be tolerated. Prussia was the only country where it existed. He agreed with us, that the poor natives could not understand what would be for their childrens' good; but yet thought the plan impracticable, though it would be a happy thing if it could be accomplished. Only a few years have passed since this conversation, and now the late English papers tell us that the subject of obliging all classes to have their children educated is under discussion in Parliament. If the lower, or lowest, class of people in England need coercion to act for the good of their children, how much more do these poor wild people need it. How can they understand what is for their childrens' good! The objection many people make, that it is cruel to take their children from them, is not a solid one; because the children, left to the parents' management, or non-management, soon cast off all submission, and all care or love for the parents, so that when the latter become old and helpless, they are almost wholly neglected. When, on the contrary, the children are brought to school, the parents see them whenever they like, and their children are taught to treat them with kindness and consideration.

Since this Institution was commenced there have been fifty-five children, black and half-caste, admitted. Seventeen of these have died; but eleven were ill, almost hopelessly ill, when they came. Of the six who were healthy when they were admitted, but who died afterwards, were: *Matilda*, our first native; she died from inflammation of the lungs consequent on a cold: *Andrew* died at Fremantle; his parents both died of consumption. *Caroline* and *Emma* died in the Melbourne hospital. They were proceeding to Gipps Land, where they were to be married, but took typhus fever soon after their arrival in Melbourne and sank under it. *Sarah* died from scarlatina, at the same time with a baby who was ill when he came. There were sixteen ill in bed at this time, together with the young lady who was my chief help, besides another poor lady in the house who was mentally afflicted. Under more favourable circumstances, humanly speaking, I think Sarah would not have died, as she was a strong girl.

The sixth death of a healthy girl was *Ellen*. She left four or five years ago, and went as servant to a lady who was going to South Australia; I had arranged with friends at Melbourne to look after her, if her mistress should go on to Sydney or Queensland: but unfortunately for the poor girl, she was taken on too. Here she was soon dismissed by her mistress for alleged bad-conduct, and she was thrown upon her own resources. Her own evil passions were seconded by those of wicked people around her, and her life therefore was such as might be expected. But God raised up friends for this poor fallen orphan girl, confirming His word that He is the Father of the Fatherless; and to the last hours of her life she was watched over by a Miss W——, a Wesleyan, whom I do not know; but who constantly gave me information of her, and made the best of any trifle I could send for poor Ellen's benefit. She died in a hopeful, though not much enlightened state, October 2, 1866. Her illness led her to think of the future. The Bishop of Brisbane interested himself much for this poor girl, and kindly proposed to me to raise funds to send her back: but the evils would have been greater in her return than in her remaining, and especially as she was not allowed to suffer want there. A long voyage home, without protection, was very undesirable, and her presence among the school children would not have been good for them. Six out of the eleven children who were sick when they entered the school, and who afterwards died, were babies, without mothers. One of these was only three weeks old. Their sufferings were alleviated by being here, if no other good was done by admission. It may be asked why the girls, after they grow up to be of a useful age, are sent away to the other colonies. Simply for this reason, that there they have Institutions for adult natives and half-castes, where they have farms on which these people can find profitable employment. In the Moravian Missionary stations they wanted wives for the converts, and a teacher for their school. We had girls here who were too old to remain in the school, and to send them to service was to send them to almost certain ruin, as we found in more than one instance to our cost: therefore it was much better, we thought, to send them where they would be appreciated and comfortably married, than to keep them here. The expense to us, personally, is very considerable, in fitting them out and sending them under the care of a matron, though the Government gave aid in the last case of five going, and the Missions there also assist. B—— was very useful here in the school: but we thought it would be good for her to go, as there was the favorable opportunity, because she would supply an urgent need of theirs and at the same time she would learn much herself from the noted industry and usefulness of the Moravian Missionaries' wives. Her engagement is only for two years. Three of these five girls have been married and they have each comfortable little cottages, and they bake (beautiful bread as I have been told) and wash, and cook, and do all that is necessary in a little household. What I have always urged is more than ever essential, viz.:—An Institution in the Colony to receive the boys and girls as they become old enough to work profitably, and where they can marry and live happily and usefully. Until such an Institution is established, the amount of good done will be very small.

Institutions of this kind, under judicious management, would in a few years be self-supporting.

There are at present in the school nineteen Aboriginal and half-caste children, besides three white children, orphan or deserted by the mother. These, of course, are not on the Government list, for maintenance.

ANNIE CAMFIELD.

CUSTOMS AND HABITS OF THE ABORIGINES.

Their rites of Burial.....Mode of Communication with other Tribes, or with each other, when at a distance.....Methods of procuring Game, Fish, &c.....Their Battles and Private Quarrels.....Their Weapons and Implements.....Their Marriages.....Do the women ever have twins, and whether or not it is known that the women are fruitful after intercourse with white men and on again forming connection with blacks.....The structure of their Huts.....Their Language, and English Translation, &c., &c., &c.

RITES OF BURIAL.

The lowland tribes dig the grave East and West. The body is placed on its back, the head to the East, the face turned on one side, so as to look to the mid-day sun; the earth being thrown out in two heaps, the one at the head the other at the foot. The mountain tribes dig the grave North and South, the body placed on the right side, with the head to the South, the face looking to the rising sun, the earth formed into one crescent-like mound on the West side of the grave.

The soul, spirit, the immaterial part of man, never dies with the body, but goes westward across the sea, from whence the natives suppose they originally came, but when or how they cannot say. Spears and other weapons or implements are placed on or near the graves, and if vengeance has been taken for his death, or a sacrifice slain, the trees are scored and marked in numerous places around the spot.

MODE OF COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER TRIBES, AND WITH EACH OTHER WHEN AT A DISTANCE.

This is done by one or more special messengers. A young man will travel quickly from tribe to tribe, as far as considered safe; others are then sent on. If within a proper distance a smoke is made on the hills, &c.; if within a mile or two, and the weather favourable, a shrill call, or coo-ey, with a particular distinct termination or affix, is used for "where"—"here"—"come"—"no" (nothing, unsuccessful)—"coming"—"successful" (laden with game)—&c. Some of these are very difficult for white people to use, and can only be acquired by practice and perseverance in the wilds of the Bush.

METHOD OF PROCURING GAME.

Chiefly by the spear, barbed or stone set. They cautiously creep, watching the movements of the animal feeding, remaining still whilst it looks around, and getting (on the leeward side) gradually nearer, keeping a bush, tree, or rock between them and the game until within spear's throw.

Pitfalls are dug in the beaten track of the Kangaroo near their watering places, &c., in stiff soil, four or five feet deep, so narrow that the animal once in gets wedged up and has no room to spring out. Smaller animals are speared in their lairs, or caught with the wild dog, which they manage to domesticate or half tame. Opossums are found by carefully examining the trees for signs of fresh tracks, which are distinguished from old ones by blowing sharply on the bark, watching whether a few grains of sand fall, which may have clung to the tree on the ascent of the animal wet with the dew of the night or any slight shower.

Fish are speared, taken in weirs made of brushwood and poles, three to six feet in depth. Neither nets nor boats were used when we first landed here. Nets are used to the North, made from spinifex, or bark of trees.

THEIR QUARRELS

Are too often decided by the spear, if serious; and a man that has given sufficient cause has to stand and allow himself to be thrown at several times. They are so skilful in avoiding a spear that an active native will "gwel-gan" or dodge a number of spears without being struck, or before he gets wounded, if thrown one at a time, but the Kylee (Boomerang, or half-moon stick) puzzles them by its rapid rotary motion, and cuts a fearful wound when it strikes. It is not near so useful to them nor under the same command as the spear. These, with the stone-set (in gum) Hammer, and Club (Weer-ba, Dow-ak, or Waddie), are their principal WEAPONS; and their

IMPLEMENTS

Are a stone-set (in gum) chisel, knives made with sharp pieces of quartz, also set in hard gum of the tough-topped Xanthorea or Black Boy (grass tree). Bone needles or skewers, and awls or piercers, made of same material with the aid of rough hard bark, sand, shells, &c., form their stock of rough tools.

MARRIAGES.

The females are betrothed or promised when very young in a certain line of families, or to a particular person in that line, and generally are not supposed to marry or be taken out of it—certainly not to have their own choice. The brother of a deceased native has a right to the widow if he is willing to take her. The women seldom have twins, and appear to have very few children after intercourse with white men.

THEIR HUTS

Are made from bark of trees, grass tree (or blackboy tree) tops, or whatever may be at hand; the earth being heaped around the bottom part outside, to keep out the wind and rain.

LANGUAGE.

There are three dialects used in the neighbourhood of the settled districts: the Lowland, the Mountain, and the Northern,—besides the Champion Bay dialect.

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Of the Language runs thus, and does not always appear to advantage, and in regular order:—

EXAMPLES.

Where are you going?	<i>Nhyn-nee yaan bard-din?</i> You (are) where going.
Why are you going?	<i>Nyte-juk nhynnee bard-din?</i> Why or what for (are) you going.
For Kangaroo.	<i>Yowart uk.</i> Kangaroo for
For Mullet.	<i>Gal-gudda uk.</i> Mullet for
For Spears.	<i>Gid-jee uk.</i> Spears for
When will you return?	<i>Myre-a nam-un garoo mun bard-din?</i> (Fingers or) days how many return. or, <i>Nam-un bidjar wundaga garoo yool.</i> How many sleep down return here.
Are you sulky or not?	<i>Nhynnee gurrang gaduk ka yoo-a-da?~</i> You anger have or not.
I am not sulky, merely going along.	<i>Anya gurrangbroo; yag-ga bard-din.</i> I anger have not (am) merely going.
Have you a cloak or not?	<i>Nhynnee booga gaduk ka yoo-a-da?</i> You cloak have or not.

EXERCISE.

When we first landed here we wanted to be friendly with you natives. Why were you so angry. Why did you spear the white people? We did not want to kill you, or hurt you in any way. Why would you not be friends and let us learn your language. We could shew you how to use a gun, make nets, boats, and many other things, but you set yourselves against us for years, until you found we were the strongest; otherwise you would have killed us all, as you killed the other white people.

Nganneel ingar-ingar nhalla bart nginnaga, nganneel gurrangbroo na-broo; goordoo gwabba
We at first here came reside we angry not, and so on; heart good
nurang-uk; nurang nyte-juk gnalleckuk delluk-a bart? Nyte-juk nurang nganneel in yaga yaga daanugga?
you to; you why us hate? Why you us without cause speared?
Nganneel nureel en gurrang katteege-broo booma-broo na-broo. Nurang nyte-juk goordoo wendang?
We you in anger thought not, beat not, and so on. You why heart bad?
Nganneel garoo nureeluk mya gete katteege met-in. Nganneel garoo nureelin gun gwabbyne
We then your language soon understand correctly. We then you gun good (use)
wurrung-un; net, na may wurrungun, boat ware na ware nyteby nyteby na
shew or tell; net, and such like, shew tell, boat and such (like) and numerous nameless things,
gwabbyne ware warra. Garoo nureel nganneeluk gurrang moordooit. Muggore, Beroke, boola,
good and common. But you us angry strong. Winter, Summer, many,
garoo ngallutta boondojoil bukadge; nureel garoo wangga—Nah! Djanga moordooit-jil. Minning ngullata
then we really fought; you then said—Ah! the whites strong. If we
babba, nurang goora nganneel in booma, moondang-un-un waam-ma mogin.
weak, you long time ago us kill, all others like.

FRANCIS FRASER ARMSTRONG,
Government Interpreter to the Native Tribes of Western Australia.