

at full length before it. My black companions had procured some honey in the course of the day, and had killed an opossum and a large dew-lizard, which is very well tasted, somewhat resembling the flesh of chickens in flavour. I gave to the blacks a larger portion of flour than usual, in exchange for their honey, which I employed to sweeten my tea, as the sugar was lost when the pack-horse fell into the river. We brought sufficient water to the top of the range in the baskets of the wild natives with us. These baskets were made of the leaf of a large aquatic plant, and were perfectly water tight. As to our horses we allowed them to drink plentifully at the foot of the range. The blacks being in good spirits, on account of our return towards the MacLeay, indulged for two or three hours in loud singing as they lay extended on the grass. It is astonishing what a fondness the Australian natives display for the tribes to which they belong, and the localities in which they are accustomed to roam ; they cannot bear even a short separation from their fellows, and their usual haunts, without feeling a strong desire to return to them.

The glen of the Bellengen, and the surrounding mountains, appeared singularly romantic from the high range on which we bivouacked, beneath the clear moonlight sky. The deep narrow valley yawned in misty obscurity, like a fathomless abyss at our feet, whilst the lofty mountains, which bounded it to the northward, stood forth in bold,

well defined outline against the illuminated sky. Around us, and down the steep slopes of the range we were upon, the dazzling whiteness of the branches, and upper parts of the trunks of the huge black-butt trees, and the grassy slopes bathed in mellow moonlight, formed a strong contrast to the pitchy darkness of the glen and the mountains opposite. The weather being beautifully serene, and there being no musquitos, ticks, or other noxious insects on the mountains, I enjoyed an unbroken invigorating sleep until daylight.

*March 13th.*--This morning we descended from the range, and watered our horses in the Odalberree river. We saw a number of fish in the waters of this clear pebbly stream, being of that kind vulgarly called in the colony, "fresh-water herrings." We next crossed the range bounding the Nambucca, some miles lower down than we had done before, and after crossing one of the Nambucca streams, we stopped for the night on a high range. Our supply of provisions was almost expended, as I did not calculate on having so many blacks in my train; we had only a small quantity of flour and a piece of cheese left, so I had taken the opportunity, before we left the range, on which we had passed the preceding night, to shoot a number of parrots, which had alighted in swarms on the black-butt trees. This evening we broiled them on the embers, and I now intimated to the Nambucca blacks that they must leave us next morning, as I could not

afford to give them any more flour, for which they had formed a great predilection.

I was sorry to see that the horses, which were first-rate ones, and possessed extraordinary powers of endurance, frequently exemplified on previous occasions, were nearly knocked up, although we had walked on foot all this day, with the exception of a short distance on the more gently inclined lower slopes of the ranges: they had abundance of good grass and water during this excursion, but the steepness of the hills was almost too much for them, and they had, on two or three occasions this day, made stumbles at the sides of gullies, into which they narrowly escaped falling.

*March 14th.*—This morning we crossed another of the Nambucca streams. As we entered the brush we heard the loud shouts of the blacks who were busily engaged in hunting. The plan adopted by the natives in this pursuit, was somewhat similar, on a small scale, to the mode of hunting pursued by some of the Indian princes. The blacks first of all dispersed, and formed in the brush a circle of a quarter of a mile in diameter, and then, on a given signal, they all commenced shouting and advancing towards the centre, gradually lessening the circle. The brush-kangaroos or pademellas were thus gradually enclosed, and driven into a small space, where, being surrounded on all sides, they were dispatched by the natives, who carried for this purpose short cylindrical pieces of wood, formed from a species of tree

growing in the brushes, and which is of greater specific gravity than any wood I am acquainted with. This tribe was the same we had met a few days before, and to which the five blacks, whom I had just dismissed, belonged. They had apparently been performing a corroberree dance on the preceding evening, as their bodies still preserved traces of the pigments with which they adorn themselves for that occasion. Among these blacks were several old men with white beards, and one man surprised me very much, as his skin was variegated by white patches. On inquiring from my two tame blacks the cause of this, they told me he had been burnt, but in what manner I could not ascertain. On emerging from the brush, we passed the encampment of these natives, where we saw a number of women and boys, who seemed excessively alarmed at our appearance. We now travelled back along our former track, and refreshed our horses on the grassy conical hill I have previously mentioned. Whilst here we encountered the tribe to which my two blacks belonged, and who were *en route*, either to dance a corroberree, or else fight with the Nambucca tribe. These blacks crowded round the two natives with me, to hear the news respecting those whom we had lately seen; they were all acquaintances of mine, and spoke fluently the jargon in which the whites and blacks converse. They gave to the natives accompanying me a wooden bowl full of cobberra, a long white worm, eaten by them,