THE "BLACKFELLOWS."

Graphic Description of the Natives of Australia.

Miserable Condition of the Women—A People Who are Independent of French Cooks.

DEAR SIGNAL,—Some months have elapsed since my last letter appeared in your columns, but having some leisure, and knowing that these epistles to a certain extent are appreciated—none having been as yet consigned to the waste-basket—I have decided to give you another series on Australia and Australian matters. There are many interesting subjects pertaining to the Southern Hemisphere which my two years' residence in the colonies gives me familiarity with, and ample scope to write on. The theme chosen for this letter is one that no doubt will interest your many readers. The "blackfellow," as he is styled by the colonists, I will deal with, as I have seen them personally, and for many of the facts I am indebted to an old colonist, who described them to me as he witnessed them.

THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINE

is of the Papuan race, but in many respects the lowest type of race. They number probably 40,000, but owing to their nomadic mode of life it is impossible to arrive at anything like an accurate estimate. They are black, but not of the negro type, for their hair is long and disposed to be curly—not woolly—and they pride themselves in the growth of a profuse beard and moustache. They are about the average European height, but slight in build. The women or Gins, (and by the same token I never could find out why they were called gins unless in acknowledgement of their superior capabilities for consuming the juice of the juniper), are not so good looking as the men, owing, no doubt, to the fact that they are subjected to very cruel treatment, and are early exposed to every hardship and drudgery by their lords and masters. While in Queensland, I saw a great number of blacks, (they are much more numerous there than in any other colony), and a truly deplorable picture of humanity they presented. They generally travel about the haunts of civilization in twos and threes; the gins invariably with a short black clay pipe in their mouth, a possum skin fastened on the back in which she carries her infant, and a cast-off dress or petticoat completes her make-up. None of them are passably good-looking, and

ONE OLD HAG

I particularly remember seeing was absolutely hideous. One of our fellow lodgers offered to wager with me that when this gin came beneath the verandah to beg for a penny, he would shut his eyes, turn around three times, and throw the penny, she would be certain to catch it in her mouth, so extensive was that cavity. Suiting the action to the word he threw the penny. We lost our bet. It is necessary to add, however, in justice to the size of the mouth, the accuracy of the thrower's aim and in justification of our lost bet, that she was an expert at catching pennies and made her living by it. The hair is carefully neglected, and in no instance have I seen an aborigine dress the head in the elaborate fashion the Samoan or Figi Islanders do. Before civilization came among them, their dress was indeed very primitive. I have in my possession

A COMPLETE FULL DRESS SUIT

of a young aborigine belle. It consists of a small apron, about the size of a man's hand made of strips of skin worn round the loins, a bone three inches in length worn in a hole pierced through the septum of the nose, and a necklace made of the teeth of possums—a kind of squirrel. The females have no love for flowers nor adornments of any kind; they do not tattoo themselves nor wear ornaments of metals, such as bracletes or rings on the ankles as many savage tribes do. Their chief virtue, like all savage nations, is their power of enduring hardships. Character, personal appearance and art aspirations are neither cultivated nor sought after. The "blackfellow" is low in intellegence, probably having no inferior except the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands. They are sharp thieves, as many of the colonists know to their sorrow. They are treacherous and cruel and very cowardly. Like our North American Indians, they paint their bodies, but only on the occasion of their great dance, Corrobboree, a general jubilee which corresponds in some degree to the Indian war-dance, but I will refer to it further on. Eat!

WHAT WILL THEY NOT EAT?

They of all animals are justly entitled omnivorous. Anything that contains nutriment or helps to sustain life they can include in their bill of fare. Every animal, whether kangaroo or mouse, bird or reptile, fish or insect is familiar to him. For drink, before the white man came, he prepared a mixture which if not intoxicating was at least exhilarating; he did not use tobacco, but smoked a weed somewhat similar. But now civilization has introduced plenty of the genuine "firewater," and his old weed is entirely discarded and in its stead he begs borrows or steals the improved and civilized indispensable article in the shape of a "chaw of baccy" which is sufficient inducement to cause "King Billy," or "King Jackey," or any other of the mighty potentates who are continually hanging around the towns and cities to stand on their heads, sing songs, go through one of their fantastic dances, steal up behind a man and knock him down, or fulfil any other like playful request. But to return to the food. The principal part of their subsistence is kangaroo, wallaby, wombat, opossum and native bear. They are experts at catching birds and fish, and should

A WHALE

be thrown on their shores no greater delicacy can the native partake of. The finder rubs himself all over with the oil, he then anoints his wives, and thus prepared cuts his way into the eatable part. Others soon come and by night they dance and sing, and by day they eat and sleep; thus for days the revelry continues, and they remain by the putrid carcass, rubbed from head to foot with blubber, out of temper with indigestion, quarrelling and fighting among themselves, and altogether a disgusting spectacle. Another particularly relished morsel of food is obtained from decayed timber. It consists of the worms and insects which they diligently and speedily gather in handfuls, and singe on hot ashes, and thus prepared the blackfellow has a dish on which he thrives and fattens. Besides all this they have a great variety of vegetable food; roots, tubers, leaves and fruit go a long way towards the completion of the bill of fare. They have no cooking utensils; all they require is a fire to roast their food. They convey water for drink in a wooden vessel, but as they do not wash themselves, a second vessel is not requisite. They carry all their possessions about with them. The man's equipment consists of a small kind of hatchet, fashioned from stone and fastened securely to a wooden handle by thongs of skin; a throwing stick; several spears which they throw with their toes nearly as expertly as with the hand:

AND A BOOMERANG,

a weapon peculiar to the Australian aborigines. This strange contrivance I will try to describe. It is about 20 inches in length from point to point, 2½ inches in width, and ½ an inch thick. It is a flat curved blade and from the peculiarity of its shape and the skill with which it is thrown it returns to the feet of the thrower. When in Queensland I purchased one of these weapons from an old native "king"—every petty chief is styled "king" by the colonists—who was conspicuous by a large brass plate shaped like a half-moon suspended from his neck with his name engraved on it. These marks of distinction I learn are given to them by their adopted mother, Queen Victoria, when she adopted their hunting grounds. The wily savage assured me that this murderous weapon, (which he had just finished making that he might supply himself with another bottle of rum), had killed "many lots whiteman." When thrown by "his excellency" it described various zig-zag movements through the air and made a circuit, returning to within a few feet of the thrower. But, notwithstanding the fact that Perseverance built the Pyramids, reared the seven hilled city, and opened the watery highway to our great land, I must acknowledge its inability to cause that boomerang to return to my feet after leaving my hand. To recover it I was forced to travel, probably in an opposite direction to that intended by my aim, but never, notwithstanding industry and perseverance worthy a better cause, could I succeed in throwing it to return even partly towards me. These savages continually

MOVE ABOUT IN FAMILIES

or small tribes. Seldom, if ever, have they been known to build substantial huts or dwellings in villages like the North American Indians do. Their shelter is of the most primitive style, and consists of sheets of bark laid against a fallen tree or other support. This even is only used in cold weather; a fire at each end of a log, one for the males, another for the females, is all that is required nine month out of the twelve.

THE CORROBBOREE, OR NATIVE DANCE

was no doubt particularly entertaining to the early colonists, providing they were on "speaking terms" with the natives. This jollification resembles the war dance of the New Zealanders, or the red-man of America, with the exception that it introduces mimicry of birds and animals peculiar to Australia. They are held on various special occasions, such as the "making of young men" a mystic rite observed among them, the conquering of a neighboring tribe, the successful capture of a number of young women for wives, or as a charm to frighten away disease. Several hundreds will assemble, the fighting men only taking part in the dance, but the women, children and old men add no small part to the general excitment by their shrill voices and the beating of a kind of drum made by stretching a possum skin over their knees.

THE SONG AND DANCE

is well regulated and measured, and executed with ingenious precision. They are always performed at night with bright fires surrounding the weird spectacle. They paint their bodies with pipe-clay in rings and stripes, thus giving a most horrifying appearance when going through their movements in the firelight. As the drums wax faster, so does the dance, until they work themselves into a state of excitement so great that the human frame could not endure more rapid motion, and the stripes look like so many whirling serpents. Some dances are descriptive of tragedy or farce, or an emu or kangaroo hunt is imitated. In their dance the aborigines shows a wonderful power of mimicry, but their song is void of all poetry, and their music scarcely less than infernal. It is very seldom a corrobboree is held in New South Wales, now so scattered and few are the natives.

The stranger on landing in Sydney or visiting any of the inland towns is most certain to be stopped on the street and asked for a 'penny' by some of these poor dirty miserable relics of a most degenerate race.

THEIR PERCEPTIVE FACULTIES

are acute enough to know you are a stranger to the town. One came running from the opposite side of the street in Brisbane on my first visit there, singling me out from the crowd to beg for a penny. They believe in the existence of a Good Spirit and an evil spirit, but only the men have any future state. A case of "heads I win, tails you lose" with the women, they are entirely "out of it." Their business is simply to get food, cook and prepare shelter for their more fortunate husbands in this mundane sphere; that done their presence and assistance is no further required. Notwithstanding the many efforts that have been made by the government for their civilization, they will not take to any trade or occupation that requires labor or attention, and save a few exceptions, they are never regularly employed by the colonists. Sometimes they are engaged as boundary-riders or bullock drivers, at which owing to their ability to ride the roughest horse they do very well. They have often been of signal service to the government as trackers. Should a mysterious murder occur any place in the country, a black tracker is sent for, who in all probability will detect some trace of the perpetrator which would escape the inexperienced eye. They are

PROTECTED BY THE GOVERNMENT,

in the same manner as are the Canadian Indians—so much allowance made them yearly—and they are privileged for like the Australian member of parliament,—the blackfellow is allowed to travel by train or steamboat free; but notwithstanding the various measures taken for their protection and preservation they are rapidly dying off. The habits and usages brought among them by the Europeans were so different to their wild, natural and simple manner of life, coupled with the outrages by the early convicts, the introduction of vices unknown to them but belonging to civilization (?), and the spread of diseases hitherto unknown, were causes sufficient to speedily decrease this numerous race, leaving today but a remnant of the untold thousands that swarmed the continent on the landing of Captain Cook.

D. E. McC.

NO LADY WHO DELIGHTS IN FLOWERS, and likes to see them do well and bloom abundantly, should be without Hanington's Food for Flowers. Ordinary packages 30c.--sufficient for 20 plants for one year.

How a Farmer Boy Makes Pickles.

A boy whom we know of makes quite a nice sum of money every year by raising a patch of cucumbers for pickles. The month of July is not too late to plant them. He is a hard-working, ambitious boy, who will be sure to make his way in the world. Besides the cucumbers, he has a chicken house, which he built himself. We told you about that once before. He has since got some full-blooded brown Leghorn fowls which he is very proud of. They have given a large number of eggs.

Here is how this industrious boy makes his pickles. The cucumbers should not be larger than the finger. In salting them put a layer of salt on the bottom of the cask; upon this put cucumbers and salt in alternate layers at the rate of three quarts of salt to a bushel of cucumbers; add a little water to make brine, and weight the whole; the cucumbers should be covered with brine within twenty-four hours. In freshening, place in a tub and cover with boiling water once a day for three days, or until fresh. Then place in tubs and cover with vinegar. Add one teaspoonful of mixed spices to the gallon, and a little alum. They are worth from forty to sixty cents per hundred, according to season.

In Season.

It is now in season to warn our readers against the sudden attacks of Cholera, Cramp, Colic, and the various Bowel Complaints incident to the season of ripe fruit, vegetables, etc. Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry is the grand specific for those troubles. 2

The remains of Joseph Cook, a prominent merchant of Kincardine, have been found in the harbor after being two weeks missing.

The Dominion Commercial Travellers' Association will appeal a case to test the constitutionality of the tax imposed on its members in Halifax, St. John and other places.

THE SCOTT ACT WORKERS.

Temperance People Discussing Their Future Policy.

A Big Convention in the Richmond Street Church, Toronto.

From the Toronto World.

Pursuant to a resolution passed at a meeting of the executive of the Dominion Temperance Alliance, held in August, a special convention of the Ontario branch was commenced on Monday Aug. 14th, at the Richmond street Methodist Church, Toronto. The object of the meeting was to consider the duty of temperance workers in relation to the enforcement of the Scott Act and to decide on some policy for the future. The sessions in the afternoon and evening were both well attended, over 200 delegates registering.

In the absence of Hon. S. H. Blake, president of the provincial branch, W. H. Howland, of Toronto, was voted to the chair. A committee was appointed to draw out a program of the business to be transacted at the convention. On recommendation of this committee, a committee composed of representatives from counties where the Scott Act is in force was named to report on the workings and management of the Act. Another committee was appointed to consider a plan of electoral action. At 4.30 the convention adjourned till the evening.

The evening session opened at 7.30. The report of the committee on Scott Act workings represented that the act is a partial success; that although violations of it are numerous, drinking has decreased in the counties where it is in force; that it is an improvement on the licence law; that failure to properly enforce it is due to the apathy and indifference of officials; that the appointment of efficient license inspectors would result in the successful operation of the act, and that the only counties where it is properly enforced are those where officials zealously do their duty. The appointment of police magistrates in each Scott Act county was urgently recommended. A discussion, in which several speakers took part, followed. The substance of the various speeches was very much the same as that of the committee's report. The speakers added, however, that the act has completely done away with the practice of treating; strongly emphasized the appointment of police magistrates in Scott Act counties, and deprecated the reckless manner in which a few physicians granted certificates for liquor. The meeting seemed to be of opinion that the report was not strong enough, and accordingly referred it to the committee for further consideration.

The report of the committee on electoral action recommended that the convention affirm the necessity of electing prohibitionists to all representative bodies, municipal, educational and parliamentary; that it is desirable to form a prohibitory electoral union in each municipality in the province, and that the members should be pledged to support only known prohibitionists. In amendment to a motion to adopt the first clause of the report, Rev. Mr. Ross, of Tilsonburg, moved a lengthy resolution the gist of which was that no temperance elector, no matter of what previous political persuasion, should support any candidate for dominion parliamentary honors who was not a known prohibitionist. If neither party brought out a prohibition candidate, then the temperance people should nominate and support a man of their own. Mr. Ross was opposed to the original report because he argued that if the practice of supporting only prohibition candidates were carried into the minor elections for municipal officials, school trustees, etc., a third party would be formed. His views were supported by several speakers, all of whom were in favor of what they rather indefinitely expressed as a party which would vote for a prohibitionist irrespective of his political views. If both parties brought out temperance candidates each elector should vote according to his political views. A lengthy discussion followed. In spite of several disclaimers, the meeting seemed to be in favor of a solid independent temperance party. Sever speakers voiced the evident sentiment of the meeting by saying that their ultimate aim was not the Scott Act merely, but total prohibition throughout the country. The report was referred back to the committee. The convention adjourned till 9.30 this morning, when the amended reports will be submitted.

SECOND DAY.

The convention of the Ontario branch of the Dominion Temperance Alliance resumed business yesterday morning. The attendance was even larger than Monday.

The amended report of the committee on Scott Act enforcement was discussed, the dritt of the speakers' remarks being substantially the same as that on Monday's discussion. Reports from various counties on the workings of the act and in most cases the difficulty of properly enforcing it were received. The morning was passed in this discussion, after which the following report was adopted:

Your committee appointed to examine into the workings of the Scott Act beg to report as follows:

1. That notwithstanding the great opposition in the counties to the operation of the act, arising chiefly from those engaged in the liquor trade, and the lack of efficient and loyal officers to enforce the law it has resulted in almost totally destroying the treating system, in largely decreasing the volume of drinking, and also in decidedly decreasing crime.

2. That the counties reporting the act as successfully observed are those in which the officers zealously perform their duties and in which the temperance people have sufficient organization.

3. That the delegates who appeared before your committee unanimously recommended the appointment of police magistrates in each county.

4. This committee furthermore deprecates the reckless manner in which a few physicians make use of their power to grant certificates for medicinal use.

In the afternoon the discussion of the report of the committee on electoral action was resumed. The report advised that the recommendations contained in Rev. Mr. Ross' amendment should be referred to the Dominion Alliance executive. The original report which was published yesterday morning was adopted with the following additions:

1. That this convention expresses its warmest approval of the action of those members of the dominion senate who labored during the last session to strengthen the Canada Temperance act, and who opposed the introduction of the wine and beer clause and other efforts to mutilate the act.

That inasmuch as a large majority of that body, including nearly all the members appointed of late years, have shown decided hostility to the act and to temperance and moral legislation generally, and inasmuch as there is no prospect of obtaining from parliament, while that body is constituted as at present, such legislation as is imperatively demanded by the majority of the country, this convention expresses its conviction that the senate should either be reformed in such a way as to bring it into harmony with the moral sentiment of the country, or that it be abolished, and recommends the election of such candicates to the house of commons as will support such a policy.

On the recommendation of the committee on resolutions, it was resolved to instruct the alliance executive to memorialize the government to appoint as commissioners only men who are in sympathy with enforcement of the Scott Act; that in the opinion of the convention the licensing of liquor dealers, instead of druggists, is an outrage on the temperance people, and that efforts should be made for the removal of these appointees; to urge temperance people in counties where the Scott Act is not in force to give special attention to the enforcement of the prohibitory clauses in the Crooks Act, and to continue the agitation till the Scott Act has passed in every county.

A vote of thanks was tendered to the members of the house of commons who by their vote prevented the final passing of the senate wine and beer amendment to the Scott Act. Votes of thanks were also passed to the pastor of the Richmond street church for the use of the building, and to W. H. Howland for the able way in which he fulfilled his duties as chairman. After devotional exercises the convention was dismissed.

The Sweet Singer of Michigan

Tells no story that finds as responsive an echo in all hearts as the comforting and assuring words given in the short extract below. Speaking of one of the painful realities of life—ie.,—an aching corn, C. Cronk, of Dowagic, Michigan, adds testimony to the marvelous results attending the use of that great corn cure—Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor—'I have tried it to my entire satisfaction and though not in my line of business, would like to keep it in stock.' Beware of substitutes and imitations. Sold by druggists and country merchants.

The United States National Tanners' Hide and Leather Association condemns the use of barb wire as damaging more hides than any other cause.

Salt Rheum Cured.

Are you troubled with Salt Rheum, Rough Skin, Pimples or Canker Sores; if so, go at once to Geo. Rhynas' Drug Store and get a package of McGregor & Parke's Carbolic Cerate. Price 25 cents. It was never known to fail. b

Shooting Swindlers.

THE killing of Tom Davis in New York has attracted public attention to the "sawdust swindlers"—those enterprising gentlemen who pretend to sell counterfeit money to dishonest suckers, and ship packages of sawdust instead of the queer. And there does not seem to be any law in the state of New York to punish them. One judge has made a precedent by holding that a man who receives sawdust instead of the counterfeits he wanted to buy got more than he bargained for, for while he might make some use of the sawdust the counterfeits were absolutely worthless and could not be put to any use. The judge may be legally right or he may be wrong; but no respectable person will find fault with his decision. The scoundrel who seeks to buy counterfeit money, that he may swindle other people, deserves to be himself swindled. When the New York legislators tackle this question they would be doing a good stroke of business in making a law that would send both seller and buyer to the penitentiary.

A Malarial Neighborhood.

People so unfortunate as to reside in a malarial region should cleanse and thoroughly tone up the system with Burdock Blood Bitters, that promptly acts upon the Stomach, Bowels, Liver and Kidneys, thus prevents Ague and all Bilious Complaints. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. 2

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