

soursop, the custard apples and other fruit trees. Besides these, maize, rice and tapioca were cultivated, the priests working harder than navvies—as the man who drove the dog-cart out from Palmerston told me—and trying to set an example to the natives and to train them to industrious habits. But the poor creatures would only work now and then, and not at all unless they got pay in the shape of food and tobacco; and when they got that, they would not work any more, as long as it lasted.

How could men be so foolish as work when they were not hungry, was the question that could never be answered to their satisfaction? You see, it is very easy for them to get all the food they need and in that warm climate they see no necessity for clothes. They eat roots and wild fruits and berries. Sometimes they catch fish or spear a Kangaroo, or catch lizards, or, when they have guns, shoot wild geese or duck; and they never think of the morrow. The Kangaroo, I should tell you, belongs to the kind of animals called Marsupial. It leaps on its two hind legs instead of walking on all four, just as if it had not yet learned to walk as a quadruped; and between its hind legs where our cows have udders, it has a pouch or pocket into which its young ones leap when they wish to suckle, or when their mother wishes to carry them. The Kangaroo weighs from fifteen to fifty pounds, and its flesh is good to eat though very dry. The bandicoot is much better eating. It burrows in the ground, is something like a very large rat with fur like a bear, and its flesh is almost as nice as a chicken's. The soursop is a fruit that hangs on a tree, and is as big as a small pumpkin. The custard apple is smaller and sweeter. It does not much care for either, nor for bananas, plaintains, or pine apples. Our own common apples are I think far better. At any rate, you do not get tired of them so soon.

Well, the blacks at Rapid Creek soon had enough of working at the Mission Station. They could not understand what was preached to them, and thought that while this new religion might do for white fellows it would not do for them. Besides

they found that they could sell their work or their lulas, (a common name for their women), in Palmerston for more tobacco than they could get at the mission, or for different kinds of food or even strong drink. So, they thought it better to go back to their old lives in the woods, except when it suited them to wander into the town to beg or steal or do a little chopping or other chores there. Their chiefs in particular voted "religion no good," because it interfered with their old powers, and gave them none of the things that they cared most for. In a word, the idleness and inconstancy of the natives and the nearness to Palmerston, combined with the fact that the Government did nothing to confine them to their Reserves, proved disastrous to the Rapid Creek Station.

The missionaries therefore decided two or three years ago to begin another, at a much greater distance from the town, at a place called River Daly. Here I am told that they are doing some good; but the field is about as unpromising as I know. The Australian savage is almost incurable as a nomad, and he is so degraded that it is difficult to convey the simplest new idea to him, except it bears upon his appetites.

From Port Darwin, the steamer I was on bore away North, with a little to the West, across the Arafura Sea, the Banda Sea, the Celebes Sea and the Bulu or Mindoro Sea, past beautiful islands where the great nutmeg and clove and other spice gardens of the world have been cultivated by the Dutch Government for two or three hundred years. We sailed on

"From Island unto Island at the gateway of the day."

We saw what Tennyson happily describes as

" Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster;

Knots of Paradise."

The sea was often smooth as oil; at other times rippled only by light breezes, or broken into white-caps by tides and currents. Generally it was blue as sapphire or the blue darkened into indigo; but at sunrise and sunset it took on every con-