

present memoir. Mention has been made of his brother being with him at the first settling of the colony. This brother was Thomas George Shortland, and on 1st March, 1802, was raised to the dignified office of post captain in the Royal Navy. In 1810 he commanded H.M.S. Iris, and commanded other vessels for some years afterwards. By the death of his brother, Captain John Shortland, he and his mother and two sisters became very disconsolate, and within a short period of time fell to that land from which no traveller returns. We are told that "men's characters are best illustrated by their actions." We are further informed, "It is not the magnitude of the object that makes courage or zeal conspicuous, or merit more apparent. The private captain in fighting even a sloop of war may manifest that professional skill and ability which shall hereafter point him out to his country as qualified to be trusted with her highest and most important commands." In conclusion, one may ejaculate—

"Peace to each manly soul that sleepeth!
Rest to each faithful eye that weepeth!
Long may the fat and brave
Sigh o'er the hero's grave."

(To be continued on Friday).

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1897.

History of Newcastle

AND THE

Northern District.

By H. W. H. HUNTINGTON.

(All Rights Reserved)

No. 14.

FIRST OVERLAND JOURNEY BETWEEN NEWCASTLE DISTRICT AND BROKEN BAY IN 1796

WRITING with the consciousness of this truth that the early history of Newcastle has never appeared in its true and proper colours, the writer is ambitious of being authentic and impar-

tial in his records. His attention to diaries written at the time of the proceedings and to the public records have carried him to the genuine spring from which he could gather historical information with regard to a period which seems to have been involved in great obscurity and darkness. The year 1796 will ever be memorable as the year when coal was first discovered at Newcastle. Various have been the theories and speculations of ingenious writers on the coal discovery, but recent researches establish beyond doubt that the bay near Port Stephens where the fishermen in June, 1796, secured near the beach a quantity of good coal could not have been any other harbour than the one on which the second city in the colony now stands. Several circumstances confirm this belief, and the writer has recently discovered additional proof in the diary of Captain Collins, the Colonial Secretary of the colony. It appears that the same fishermen had acquired by the coal discovery spread through the settlement at Sydney, and apparently inspired some others with a spirit of enterprise to reach the scene of the new El Dorado. Under date July, 1796, Captain Collins writes about the natives at Sydney being less troublesome than they had been for some months past, and then he proceeds to detail the following interesting event:—"The people of a fishing boat which had been cast on shore in some bad weather near Port Stephens met with some of these people, (the aboriginals), who, without much entreaty or any hope of reward, readily put them into a path from thence to Broken Bay, and conducted them the greatest part of the way." To any intelligent mind it is obvious that these fishermen, being cast ashore near Port Stephens, were within the region of Newcastle, although it is left to conjecture on which side of the Hunter River they were wrecked. If on the north side, it is quite possible the natives rowed them across the Hunter in their canoes, as they have done to others times out of number in later years, and especially when Newcastle was visited by coal and timber

getters, and after it was first settled in June, 1801, by Lieutenant-Governor Paterson under the orders of Governor King. There can be little or no exaggeration in thinking that these fishermen who were escorted by the natives from a place near Port Stephens to Broken Bay performed the first overland journey between Newcastle and the Hawkesbury.

FRIENDLY DISPOSITION OF NEWCASTLE NATIVES.

It is the opinion of many who have lived among the natives and supported by many well established facts that the natives are not the cruel and cold-blooded savages which many writers have painted them. Their treatment of Tarwood and his companions as well as the fishermen prove conclusively that their kindness and hospitality is scarcely equalled by any other uncivilised people. They are sincere in their friendships, but bitter and determined in their resentments, often pursuing their enemies through the woods and surmounting every difficulty in order to be revenged. The improvement of the talents which Nature has given them is, of course, proportionately small. They have neither foresight nor disposition to form complicated arrangements with respect to their future conduct. It is the genius of the savage to act from the impulse of present passion, and in all their warlike enterprises they are led by persuasion, for their society allows no compulsion. What civilised nations enforce upon their subjects by compulsory measures they effect by the will of their chiefs. Of their bravery and address in war they have given us unqualified proofs, but their puny weapons of defence cannot withstand the savage oratory of firearms. In short, there appears to be much truth in the observation that we call them savages because their manners differ from ours, which we think the perfection of humanity, while they think the same of theirs.

WHITE WOMAN REPORTED LIVING WITH THE NORTHERN BLACKS.

Captain Collins records the natives having reported to the fishermen the existence of a white woman living

with the natives of Newcastle district in these words:—"During their little journey these friendly people made them understand that they had seen a white woman among some natives to the northward. On their reporting this at Sydney this unfortunate female was conjectured to be Mary Morgan, a prisoner, who it was now said had failed in her attempt to get on board the Resolution storeship, which sailed from hence in 1794. There was indeed a woman, one Ann Smith, who ran away a few days after our sitting down in this place, and whose fate was not exactly ascertained; if she could have survived the hardships and wretchedness of such a life as must have been hers during so many years' residence among the natives of New Holland, how much information must it have been in her power to afford! But humanity shuddered at the idea of purchasing it at so dear a price." When the writer stumbled across this choice morsel of historical news he thought of William Buckley, the wild white man, among the Port Phillip blacks from 1803 to 1836, when he was discovered, and found to have lost his mother tongue, and sunk to the level of a black fellow. He thought of young James Davies, who absconded from Captain Logan's exploring expedition in 1824, and lived with the Moreton Bay blacks until 1842, when he was returned to civilised life by Mr. Andrew Petrie. He pictured to himself the shipwrecked James Morriil, who lived with the Port Danison blacks from 1846 to 1863; also John Renton, the sailor, who was rescued from the North Queensland blacks in July, 1874, after living with them for upwards of 20 years. All these strange events flitted through his mind, and he determined to solve the problem of the wild white woman among the Newcastle aboriginals.

SEARCH FOR THE WILD WHITE WOMAN.

After diligent search the writer came across an entry in the Colonial Secretary's diary under date, April, 1797, in these words:—"Some re-

ports being again circulated respecting the situation of Mary Morgan, the woman said to be detained among the natives to the northward of Broken Bay, a boat with some people who had volunteered the service was sent to the north part of that harbour where it was said she had lately been seen with some of her black friends. The people were directed, if possible, to bring her away unless she preferred the life she now led, upon which more than three years' experience of it would certainly enable her to decide. They were absent about 10 days and returned without success, not even having heard anything of her."

THE WOMAN IN ENGLAND ALL THE TIME.

The search for the wild white woman, Mary Morgan, was a failure. How could it be otherwise when she was domiciled in London, where she preferred to lead a "gay" life than to rusticate among the half-starved black and white people of the antipodes. It appeared that on 9th November, 1794, two ships, the Resolution and Salamander, left Sydney Cove on a whale-fishing voyage, and soon after they left Mary Morgan and John Randall and his wife were missing. Lieutenant-Governor Paterson sent a boat down the harbour to the heads to search the Resolution, on board of which they were alleged to be concealed. Sergeants William Day and David Jones searched the vessel, but found no stowaways. They told the captain (John Locke) that they had sent the pilot to the Lieutenant-Governor for further instructions, and that the ship could not go to sea without having a certificate of the number of persons he had on board belonging to the colony. The captain had been permitted to ship some convicts as seamen. With many execrations the captain said he would not furnish the sergeants and their search party of four privates with a boat from the ship, but that he would land them on some desolate part of the coast if they persisted in waiting for the boat from Sydney. Fearing he would put his threats into execution, the sergeants

called a boat belonging to the Salamander, who took their party ashore. The captain swore he would sink the Sydney boat if there was any attempt made to board him, and Dr. Blackburn and the ship's officers prepared the firearms for an expected attack. All this happened while the ship was eight miles from Sydney Heads. It afterwards transpired that Captain Locke had clandestinely taken from the settlement not only Mary Morgan, but 13 convicts whose terms of transportation had not expired.

DISCOVERY OF TUGGERAH LAKE.

The search after the wild white woman was not without some good and useful information concerning the geography of the northern coast. The search party were landed at the north part of Broken Bay in the vicinity of Brisbane Water. They marched along the coast line, when their progress was stopped by the waters of a "lagoon within the sea beach, of about 20 miles in length, and running parallel with the sea coast." This lagoon is now called Tuggerah Lake, and those who know the locality will readily understand how their efforts to reach overland any place near Port Stephens would be frustrated.

THE MISSING WOMAN SMITH.

With respect to the Colonial Secretary's remark about a woman named Ann Smith having left the settlement soon after it was founded, Governor Phillip reported to the Home Secretary in July, 1788, that "eleven male and one female convicts have been missing since we landed," while another official, Dr. Arthur Bowes, in his diary under date, March 11th, 1788, records—"This day two of the women eloped with their beds and baggage, and it is supposed they have gone towards Botany Bay to join some other runaway convicts." The writer has many accounts of white men as well as women cohabiting with the blacks in the early days, and it can hardly be a subject of surprise to the student of early colonial history to find a wild white woman among the natives to the northward of Broken Bay.