

PIRATES, BLACKBIRDERS, AND OTHER SHADY CHARACTERS

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Queensland, especially in the frontier years of last century, had some picturesque ruffians, who made their mark, albeit a black mark, on our history. Because of the plenitude of material, it is necessary to be selective, and for this reason I have chosen some of the more colourful maritime scamps and knaves for this historical parade of the picaresque. Because for many years also there was a close, and even politically uncomfortable association between Queensland and the South Seas, I propose to introduce a few of that type of gentry known as blackbirders, who in their heyday flitted between Queensland ports and the Pacific Islands with cargoes of kanakas for the sugar fields.

Brisbane, which began as a penal settlement in 1824—a mosquito-ridden dumping ground for Sydney's incorrigibles—ante-dated as a Pacific hellhole by 40 years the notorious penal colony of New Caledonia. The use of Ile Nou at Noumea for penal purposes started in 1864 and went on until 1895. About 40,000 prisoners were transported there, with all the usual horrors of penal settlement. Here we introduce the first group in our cast of villains. As you know, desperate men were willing to take any risks to escape from Logan's lash. Many made their escape and "went bush" to live with the blacks.¹ Others plotted to escape by sea, but this way to freedom was well-nigh impossible. However, in 1831, eleven convicts succeeded in seizing the schooner "Caledonia" and escaped to the South Seas.

The "Caledonia" had sailed from Sydney on December, 1831, on a voyage to the inside passage of Torres Strait to salvage what remained of the cargo and timbers of the barque "America"² which had been wrecked on one of the Strait islands earlier in the year while on a voyage to Batavia. Survivors of the "America" had made their way down the Queensland coast in two boats, and reached Moreton Bay. But that story does

not rightly belong here. The "America" was sold by auction in Sydney for what she would bring, and was knocked down to Messrs. Mackay and Folkard, Sydney merchants.

They chartered the schooner "Caledonia" for the voyage and placed the ship in command of Captain George Browning,³ 24-year-old master mariner of Sydney. Mackay accompanied him, and after an uneventful voyage from Sydney, the "Caledonia" dropped anchor on December 24, 1831, inside the estuary of the Brisbane River, to pick up the boats in which the shipwrecked crew of the "America" had journeyed from Torres Strait.

After anchoring, Captain Browning sent word to the Commandant at Moreton Bay, Captain J. O. Clunie (from 1830 to 1835), asking that the boats be taken down the river to the "Caledonia." Captain Clunie accordingly ordered the two ship's boats to be taken down to the river mouth where the "Caledonia" was lying. Three large Government whaleboats, manned by convicts, were required to tow the "America's" boats which were leaking badly and required constant bailing.

The pilot at Amity Point station,⁴ Moreton Island, was a free man, but his boat's crew were convicts. Three soldiers were stationed at the pilot's house as a garrison. The convicts in the boats from Brisbane included eleven desperate characters who plotted to escape.

Overpowered the Watch

Although united in this desire they were split by a bitter feud into two factions, and strange as it may seem in such hardened characters, the feud had its origin in religious differences. A number of them had been merchant seamen before they were "lagged," and one had been a seaman in the Royal Navy, but had been sentenced to life transportation for mutiny and assault. By mutual consent they "buried the hatchet" when the opportunity to escape by sea presented itself with the selection of boats' crews to take the "America's" boats down the river to the "Caledonia." They succeeded in having themselves assigned with other convicts to the task of towing the "America's" boats. On arrival at the mouth of the river a few days later, they agreed to seize the "Caledonia." Early next morning they stole five muskets and two sabres from

the pilot hut, launched the pilot's boats, and in the fog of early morning overpowered the watch on deck.

They marooned the crew, including Mackay also, and forced Captain Browning to navigate the ship, and set a course for the Pacific Islands. They were barely thirty miles from Moreton Bay when the feud broke out again. One faction, led by William Evans, a short-statured and solidly-built ruffian, quarrelled with William Vaughan and his followers of the other faction.

Vaughan and another man were shot down in cold blood, and a third man jumped overboard. Risking his own life, Captain Browning prevented a fourth killing.

The Ship Scuttled

After the schooner made land in the New Hebrides, Hastings, one of Evans' faction who had rebelled against his authority, was marooned, with a bag of bread and a pistol. At Rotuma, one of the convicts escaped ashore with the connivance of friendly natives, and three others fled from the ship at night in a native canoe. At Savai, in the Samoan Islands, Evans and his associates scuttled the ship, and Browning, with Evans and the two remaining convicts, reached Tofua in a whaleboat. They were befriended by the natives, but Browning, who had become a favourite of the chief, was separated from Evans and his two companions who were sent to another village.

Several weeks later the "Oldham," an English whaler, appeared off Tofua. When Browning reached the ship he found Evans bargaining with Captain Johnstone for a pair of pocket pistols as the price of a passage in the whaler. Browning denounced him to the captain, relating the full story of the seizure of the "Caledonia" in Moreton Bay and the subsequent happenings. Evans was put in irons and the "Oldham," with Browning on board, sailed for Wallis Island.

On the first day out, Evans, who had been freed of his irons and allowed up on deck, jumped overboard, shouting that he preferred death to a return to the hell of Sydney.

At Wallis Island, Captain West, of the American whaling barque "Milo," agreed to give Browning a passage to Sydney. Four weeks later, on July 22, 1832, Browning set foot in Sydney. He learnt afterwards that the day after the "Milo" sailed for Sydney a horde

of Wallis Islanders had boarded the "Oldham" and massacred all except one of the entire crew and officers, totalling 36 men.

In March, 1853, the townsmen of Brisbane were alarmed by reports that a gang of pirates were infesting Moreton Bay.⁵ The "pirates" in this instance were convicts who had escaped from Norfolk Island in an open boat. I mention them only in passing because a very full account of their brief career appears both in J. J. Knight's "In the Early Days" and T. Welsby's "Memories of Amity." (See appendices.)

Pugh's Almanac for 1862 recorded that on September 10 the American whaler "Marion" had been wrecked on Stewart's Island on September 1. The crew took to the four boats and in one of the boats the steward and two island natives succeeded in reaching Cape Moreton after being six days at sea in an open boat without provisions.

Two days later, on September 12, was the announcement that a telegram received from Newcastle, N.S.W., stated that the ship "Briton's Queen" had just arrived there and that while off the coast of New Caledonia, and while the captain was absent visiting the whaler "Marion," the mate and two of the seamen seized the vessel, steered away, tried to kill the sailing master, and ultimately left in one of the boats, helping themselves to whatever supplies they fancied. The vessel was heading for Wide Bay at the time, and on that account the information was sent to the Brisbane police. Suspicion immediately pointed to the three men who had represented themselves as castaways from the (falsely reported) wreck of the "Marion." They were promptly arrested. Subsequently telegrams from Newcastle, statements by the men themselves, and stolen articles found in the boat rendered identification complete. The men were sent under guard to Sydney for trial.

On October 7 the mutineers of the "Briton's Queen," after trial in Sydney, were dealt with as follows: Ball, the mate and ringleader, two years' penal servitude; Pearl, the steward, was acquitted, having turned approver; Harry Makeola, native, was not arraigned.

Escapes from St. Helena

St. Helena, first used as a prison settlement in 1868, had been preceded by the prison hulks "Julia

Percy" and "Proserpine."⁶ It was continuously used thereafter until as late as 1931, after which all prisoners there were transferred to Boggo Road. St. Helena derived its name from the fact that in March 1828 a native named Nogoon, who was said to bear a remarkable physical resemblance to Napoleon Bonaparte, was caught stealing an axe at Dunwich, and exiled on the neighbouring island as a punishment. Thereafter the island was called St. Helena.

From about 1868, and for some years afterwards, the Queensland Government grew sugar cane on the island with penal labour. The horse-driven mill, supplied by a Brisbane foundry, turned out half a ton of sugar a day. Several prisoners over the years attempted to escape from St. Helena.

Alpin McPherson, who was sentenced to 25 years' gaol in 1866 for bushranging, had served nine years of his sentence at St. Helena when he tried to escape. The boats on the beach were carefully guarded but that did not deter the Wild Scotsman. One moonless night he broke out of his cell, and taking a sugar cooler, a shallow wooden box about 8ft. square and a foot deep, he dragged it to the water's edge. In this frail craft he braved the choppy waters of the Bay and the menace of sharks, but was recaptured before reaching the mainland.

Charles Leslie, alias Ryan, Deacon, Deakin, and Hayes, escaped on a raft in November, 1924, and was never recaptured. Frederick Hamilton twice attempted to escape and on the second occasion almost succeeded in reaching Fisherman's Island before he was picked up by the Water Police who found him sitting on a form paddling for the shore. Burketown Peter, a full-blooded aboriginal, escaped from his cell in January, 1921, and put to sea in a raft of planks. He was seen and pursued. Diving from the raft, he did not return to the surface and was probably taken by sharks.

Possibly the most remarkable story of an escapee from St. Helena who returned to prison of his own volition was that of John Willas Stelling (25) who, on September 27, 1934, surrendered himself to the Brisbane gaol authorities—more than four years after he and a companion had made a sensational escape from St. Helena. It is a classic example of what the old Anglo-Saxons called The Again-bite of Inwit, or as we would say to-day The Remorse of Conscience. The story

was told in the "Courier-Mail" of September 29, 1934. From the newspaper account, the following facts are summarised:

"Shortly after eight o'clock on the night of September 27 the superintendent of the gaol (Mr. J. F. Whitney) was informed by a warder that a man wished to see him at the gate of his quarters. To Stelling's surprise Mr. Whitney recognised him immediately. Before being transferred to St. Helena early in 1930 the escapee had served portion of his sentence at the Brisbane gaol.

"'You got away from St. Helena four years ago,' said the superintendent. 'This is a strange place for you to visit.'

"'Yes, I am Stelling,' replied the escapee. 'I want to get this business over; can you tell me what to do?'

"Mr. Whitney communicated with the police, who shared his surprise at Stelling's reappearance.

"Clad once more in prison garb, Stelling told the gaol authorities of his wanderings since his escape from St. Helena on the night of March 15, 1930. With a companion, William Newberry, he had been sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment on several charges, one of which concerned the theft from the Brisbane River of a yacht valued at £2,000. They were captured after the craft had become stranded at the mouth of the river.

"After their transfer to St. Helena, they were assigned to duties in various parts of the island, and laid plans for their escape. Creeping down to the shore at dusk on March 30 they forced the padlock of a boat-shed, and removed a dinghy and a pair of oars. The alarm was given at 8 p.m., but the fugitives, weathering a comparatively rough sea, had got away. Early on the following morning they left the dinghy in Lota Creek, near Wynnum, about half a mile from the mouth of the stream. Although it was only six miles from the island, they had rowed many times that distance before they reached the shore. They then separated, and Stelling had not since heard what had become of Newberry. Prison officials informed him, however, that his companion had been arrested some time ago.

"Stelling, an engineer by trade, was anxious to obtain a position on an overseas vessel. With that end in view, he set out for Sydney. Without money he was

faced with the prospect of covering the journey on foot, but he was able to make his task easier by hailing passing vehicles.

"Fortune favoured him when he arrived in Sydney, and within a few days he was on the high seas, booked as an engine-room hand in a cargo vessel. In England he was able to obtain only irregular employment, and eventually found himself once more afloat—this time bound for America.

"In 1933 he returned to England. Throughout his wanderings, he declared, he was unhappy in the knowledge that he was a fugitive from justice, and his varying fortunes convinced him that he would have been wiser to have served the remaining four months of his sentence.

"Though he was able to obtain regular employment, his return to England did nothing to improve his peace of mind, and he determined to come back to Australia, disclose his identity, and serve the remainder of his term. 'I am anxious,' he said yesterday, 'to get this wretched business over, and start again with a clean slate.'

"To accomplish his purpose, he obtained a berth in an Australia-bound steamer, and reached Melbourne. He arrived in Brisbane by train on Thursday afternoon (September 27), and four hours later was lodged once more in prison. That he had not been driven to his decision by dire necessity was evidenced by the fact that, when he called on Mr. Whitney, Stelling was well dressed and had money in his pockets.

"In the Police Court on September 28, Stelling was sentenced to serve a month's imprisonment, in addition to his four months' unexpired term. He told the prison authorities that he had been treated more leniently than he expected, and that his mental anguish during the last four years had more than off-set the success of his bid for liberty."

Strike Leaders Gaoled

St. Helena was also notable as the prison to which the leaders of the 1891 shearers' strike were sent to serve their sentences. On March 25, 1891, when the country was on the verge of civil war and the whole Central-West was aflame with revolt both metaphorically and literally—for some union hotheads resorted to burning down shearing sheds and setting grass fires on

station properties — the Government effected a coup d'etat by arresting the members of the Queensland strike committee at Barcaldine.

The prisoners were indicted for conspiracy under an old law dating back to the reign of George IV, and were hurried to Rockhampton for trial. Two were discharged but the remaining twelve were each sentenced to three years' hard labour, and were summarily despatched to serve their time at St. Helena. Two amongst these prisoners later became politicians. One of these was William Hamilton, who had taken a leading part in the strike. Hamilton was then 33. He had been a pioneer unionist from the age of 16, as drover, shearer, and miner. He had joined in the rush to the Croydon goldfields, but resumed his old occupation of shearing in 1889. Eleven years after the strike, when Hamilton was President of the Queensland Legislative Council, he was one of a party of politicians who made a visit of inspection to St. Helena. Coming to a short flight of steps, the chief prison warder uttered the deferential warning: "Mind the steps, Mr. Hamilton." Hamilton dryly retorted: "Mind the steps, d'you say? Many's the time I've scrubbed the blasted things!"

A Galaxy of Blackbirders

And now for a galaxy of blackbirders—and a maritime ghost for good measure. In 1863 Captain the Hon. Robert Towns, a Sydney merchant and member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, established Townsville, a 4,000-acre cotton plantation on the Logan River. He conceived the notion of following the example of Benjamin Robert Boyd in employing native labour from the Pacific Islands. In 1847 Boyd,⁷ who had been variously described in literature as "a cool scamp," "an enterprising capitalist," and "the greatest of scoundrels," established Boydton at Twofold Bay, 250 miles south of Sydney, as a major port of the Australian Colonies. He brought 65 New Hebrideans in a sandalwood ship and employed them as shepherds on his Monaro and Riverina sheep stations. They died quickly and Boyd got into strife with the British authorities because there were strong grounds for suspecting that they had been forcibly abducted.

Thus, Towns initiated in Queensland the labour trade or traffic known as "blackbirding," the object of

which was to supply cheap plantation labour in tropical Queensland where white men, it was firmly believed, could not work. Flora Shaw wrote in 1893 of the difference between a black man and a white man working in the tropical sun as "the difference between a humming bird and a sick sparrow."⁸

Blackbirds in the Cane

People with these notions were well in the saddle in 1863, and the humming birds, or rather the blackbirds, were brought over by shiploads for the canefields following Towns' successful introduction of them. Towns proposed to let his natives out on hire at 10/- a month, and to return them after 12 months. He addressed a letter to the missionaries in the New Hebrides, dated Sydney, May 29, 1863. It read:

Rev. Sir.—Should this meet the eye of any gentleman in that sacred calling I beg to explain the nature of the voyage upon which I am to despatch the bearer Captain Graeber, with the schooner "Don Juan" . . . Suffice to say, I have embarked considerable capital in Queensland in the cultivation of cotton, and as so much depends on the *rate of labour* in the ultimate success . . . I am endeavouring to try out natives from the islands. I with my cotton emigration (returning them every six or twelve months) will do more towards civilising the natives in one year than you can possibly in ten . . . You may be able to point out to the poor unsuspecting natives that they have nothing to fear, as I will bind myself to return them within twelve months of the day they leave, and more likely in six months . . . I send an interpreter, a man who says he can speak the language; this is very important, to make the poor fellows understand. . . .

(Signed) R. TOWNS.

Quite a nice gentlemanly letter; evidently Towns was a man of Christian ethics, but he made a bad choice of the interpreter-mate of the happily named "Don Juan." His name was Henry Ross Lewin, who in a very few years won the doubtful reputation of being the toughest villain in the South Seas. Lewin was the first of the blackbirders, and he was also one of the most colourful of the adventurers, pirates, and gun smugglers who infested the South Seas until well into the 'eighties of last century. Freebooters, hard fighters, and hard drinkers, they would have held their own in picturesque villainy with the cut-throat horde of pirates and buccaneers who infested the Caribbean a century or so earlier. Over 6ft. in height, with massive chest, rippling muscles and iron fists, and absolutely fearless, Lewin was born out of due time, a hangover from the age of buccaneers. As a lad from an English village he had run away to sea. He enlisted in the Royal Navy and served in Chinese waters during the China War. Constantly in brawls and scrapes ashore he was too much of a handful even for that renowned

breaker of tough men, the British Navy, and they were glad to get rid of him. In 1863 Lewin worked his way out to Australia. He first appears on the stage of Queensland history in that year when he became associated with Towns and the "Don Juan." The "Don Juan," 130 tons, set sail for the South Seas in search of recruits, and on August 17, 1863, she dropped anchor in the Brisbane River and unloaded the first shipload of 67 kanakas to work on Towns' plantation.⁹ Lewin, as recruiter and interpreter, had strict instructions from Towns to treat the natives "with the greatest kindness and on no account to allow them to be ill-used."

Sea Wolf of Pacific

Lewin was not worried by any such scruples. Whether or not Towns found out the true character of this sea-wolf, they soon parted company, and Lewin set up in business for himself in the lucrative trade of recruiter for the sugar plantations. In 1867 he was living in Stanley Street, South Brisbane, and on April 26 of that year he advertised in Brisbane newspapers offering to recruit kanakas for the plantations at £7 a head. The advertisement read :

"SUGAR PLANTERS! COTTON GROWERS! AND OTHERS!"

Henry Ross Lewin, for many years engaged in trade in the South Sea Islands, begs to inform his friends and the public that he intends immediately visiting the South Sea Islands and will be happy to receive orders for the importation of South Sea natives to work on the cotton and sugar plantations now rapidly springing up in this Colony. Parties favouring H.R.L. with orders may rely on having the best and most serviceable natives to be had amongst the islands.

HENRY ROSS LEWIN, opposite Donovan's Railway Hotel, Stanley Street, South Brisbane.
Terms, £7 each man.

His two schooners, "Spunkie" and "Daphne," regularly ran cargoes of kanakas to Brisbane, northern ports, and Fiji, from Tanna and other islands in the New Hebrides. He had established a permanent recruiting station on Tanna. Two years later the "Daphne" was unlucky enough to put into Levuka, Fiji, while H.M.S. "Rosario" was there. An inquisitive party of bluejackets from the "Rosario" searched the ship and

found 100 naked natives huddled together with barely enough room to move. Captain Palmer of the "Rosario" accordingly seized the "Daphne" on a charge of illegal kidnapping. Captain Palmer made no bones about telling the "Sydney Morning Herald" (May 25, 1869) that a wholesale system of slave traffic in its worst form existed in the New Hebrides.

However, in court, His Honour, Sir Alfred Stevens, dismissed the charge, refusing to accept native testimony. Nevertheless, the evidence against Lewin was sufficiently strong to cause the Queensland Government to revoke his licence as a recruiter. But deprivation of an official licence meant little to Lewin. He continued to supply natives to other recruiters. Commodore Wilson, in a report on the kanaka trade to the Queensland Government in 1882, pungently described Lewin as the most successful man-stealer in the Pacific.¹⁰

Lewin and his kind would resort to any lengths to obtain kanakas for the sugar plantations of Fiji and Queensland. Fierce competition between rival recruiters sometimes broke out in open warfare. Every schooner carried its armoury of rifles and revolvers and a collection of handcuffs. Recruiters would encourage tribal warfare and arm one tribe against another. Several young men could be bought from a chief for the price of a musket. After a time, however, the price went up; one kanaka was worth one musket! The trade was enormously lucrative. One shipload of kanakas could be worth more than £2,000. After paying £3 Government licence fee for each recruit, the blackbirder would still net up to £20 on each man.

The Mackay Affair

The Mackay district was a prolific user of kanaka labour. What became known as the Mackay racecourse affair caused an outbreak of race hatred. December 23, 1883, was a race day holiday in Mackay. Bad blood between whites and kanakas had been brewing for some time. Some kanakas got drunk at the race meeting. Liquor booths on the ground, oases for the slaking of tropical thirst, did a brisk trade. Dimmock, a Mackay publican, had a large marquee and he and his perspiring assistants could not keep up with the demand for refreshment. A group of sullen Malaita boys, already inflamed with liquor, watched the jostling white men crowding the bar and guzzling glasses of beer. After a

moment's hesitation they swaggered up to the bar. Shouldering their way through the crowd and thumping some silver on the counter they demanded beer. Dimmock refused to serve them and told them to clear out. One of the kanakas thereupon picked up a glass of beer which had just been put down in front of a white man, gulped down the contents, and then hurled the empty glass at the shelf of bottles at the back of the bar. A free-for-all brawl began immediately, with fists, bottles and sheath knives. Palings were stripped from the nearby fence to use as weapons. Several white men broke away from the melee and ran for their horses. Many of the planters had their metal-handled and loaded riding crops, others cut off their stirrup leathers and irons. Then, mounted in a compact body, they charged the milling mob of kanakas, lashing out with their riding crops and stirrup irons. It was never established exactly how many kanakas were killed that day. Scores were injured. The few police on duty were powerless to stem the tide of mob violence.

The Mackay Affair had serious repercussions throughout the Pacific Island trade. Kanakas returning to the islands at the end of their period of indenture recounted the story which lost nothing in the telling, and it spread far and wide in the Solomons and other islands. Because of what happened at Mackay, many a white man met his death in the islands and many more had narrow escapes. For years afterwards Port Mackay had an evil reputation among the kanakas. Because recruiters found kanakas unwilling to work on plantations in the Mackay district, the less scrupulous among them tricked the natives by pretending that they were being recruited for Maryborough and Bundaberg, and then drafted the natives to Mackay, thus breeding more hatreds. Natives told Commodore Goonenough (1875) that "port Mackay very bad man; he shoot, he kill blackfellow."

Lewin's Fortress

It was Lewin's boast, proved in many a rough and tumble scrap, that he feared no man living. Nevertheless, he took no chances with the safety of himself, his wife, and child. His home, a spacious bungalow with wide verandahs, was constructed with all the strength of a medieval fortress. In building it, he emulated Henry Christophe, the mad emperor of Haiti who built

his castle, La Citadelle, on the crest of a mountain, half a mile above sea level.¹¹ Forty thousand negroes toiled under whips and the musket butts of the guards, dragging huge blocks of granite, timber, and heavy brass cannon up the side of the almost inaccessible mountain.

Similarly, on a smaller scale, hundreds of natives from Tanna and neighbouring islands raided by Lewin for slave labour, sweated under the threat of Lewin's savage retainers to build his spacious bungalow fortress. Huge blocks of rock and coral, up to 4ft. in thickness, were dragged more than a mile from the beach, up a road cleared through the jungle-clad slope of a steep hill, and cemented into position on the summit. Loopholes pierced the solid walls for protection against possible attack and the walls themselves were thick enough to withstand cannon balls. A private army of 100 well-armed Mallicolo warriors formed Lewin's trusted bodyguard, as well as being taskmasters for his slave gangs. They were hereditary enemies of the Tanna natives whom they treated with merciless cruelty. Their armoury ranged from primitive weapons to muskets, and included bone-tipped arrows poisoned in deadly fungus growths, needle-pointed palmwood javelins, spears with clusters of bristling points made of bone, and heavy carved stone clubs.

Tortuga of South Seas

For ten years Lewin reigned as uncrowned king of Tanna. He prospered and became one of the most powerful figures in the New Hebrides. He developed a large plantation, bred horses, grew Indian corn and cotton, which he shipped away. Other white men joined Lewin on Tanna. Among his boon companions were Captain Winchester, who appropriately traded in guns; Major Carter, late of the Indian Army, Captain Mac-Leod, the Bell Brothers, Antonio Francisco, and others. The place became notorious. Shooting duels were frequent. The native concoction of kava¹² and the more deadly white man's gin made an explosive brew for volcanic human passions. Two ruffians took pot shots at each other at a distance of a few feet and obligingly cancelled each other out. A roysterer, merry with kava, playfully fired his Colt into a barrel of gunpowder and exploded it and himself as well.

But the population of this wild community, a veritable Tortuga of the South Seas, had a rough code of justice of their own. One of Lewin's white retainers stole a revolver from the captain of a visiting ship. For this outrageous breach of hospitality, he was triced up to a palm tree and given six lashes on the bare back "not as a punishment, Lewin explained, but as a disgrace, and to show the natives that white men are equally liable for punishment as themselves if they broke his laws."

Captain McLeod had a large plantation at Efate, which was developing into a considerable trading centre in the 'seventies. In 1867, H.M.S. "Falcon" had shelled native villages as reprisal for the massacre of two ships' crews, one of a long series of bloody incidents dating from the days of the sandalwood traders. In 1871 McLeod quarrelled with his companion Trueman, who was fatally shot. He was taken to Brisbane and tried in the Supreme Court on a charge of murder, but the evidence against him was not sufficient, and the case was dismissed. McLeod then became ardently pro-French, and with Lewin and other settlers in 1875 petitioned for annexation by France.

Timbertoe and One-Eye

French recruiting for New Caledonia was brisk in the 'seventies and Kanakas died by the score in the nickel mines. McLeod's ship, the "Caledonian," had as captain a picturesque one-legged character with a pawkish sense of humour, known all over the South Seas as Timbertoe Proctor, who adopted novel and successful methods of recruiting. He had a wooden leg which he screwed on and off at will and also carried a reserve supply of wooden legs aboard ship. To impress the kanakas on his recruiting expeditions, he would put his foot upon the gunwale of the shore boat and shoot a bullet through it. Then he would draw his sheath knife and stab his leg with all his force—clean through a prepared slot in the timber. One day, while he stood grinning with the knife blade through his leg, a precocious native, endowed with a commendable spirit of scientific research, stuck a pocket knife in the seat of Timbertoe's pants to discover whether the white man with the magic leg was equally invulnerable in that portion of his anatomy. As a result, Timbertoe was forced to eat his meals standing up for a few days. His

shipmate, Jock Cromar,¹³ warned him to give up the knife trick. Proctor ruefully agreed that it might be wise to drop it from his repertoire because "they might try a blankety blank bayonet next time!"

A boon companion of Timbertoe's was Captain One-Eye Jemmy. Jemmy wore a hooded costume like a Ku Klux Klansman, underneath which was a big waterproof bag. He would pretend to drink great quantities of seawater which went into the bag so that Jimmy appeared to be enormously distended. He would entertain the natives with conjuring tricks, would walk on his hands or swim out to sea and pretend to drown. After presenting them with gifts he would casually mention that if a stated number of recruits were not produced he would cause an eye to fall out of the socket of every man on the island. He would prove his powers by plucking out his glass eye and dropping it on the sand. It is probable that the story of the copra trader who left his glass eye on watch to see that his native labourers did not loaf on the job had its origin in Captain One-Eye's tricks. The plan was successful. The natives worked hard while "eye belong master 'im 'e stop look look me feller!" But one day a bright lad bought a hat from the store. The white man noticed that the volume of work seemed to be slackening. He spied on the natives and saw one of them creep to his glass eye from behind and suddenly cover it with his hat, exclaiming: "Master 'e time belong you feller 'e sleep!"

To prove their joint magical powers Timbertoe would unscrew his wooden leg and place it alongside Jemmy's glass eye.

End of a Dictator

Lewin suffered the fate that overtakes all dictators. He died quickly and violently, being shot in the back by a kanaka whose relative he had killed for stealing a bunch of bananas. Panicking at the loss of their master, the bodyguard, fearing an uprising by the Tanna natives, raced down to the beach, manned their canoes, and set off back to their own island. Lewin's brother and four faithful native houseboys smuggled Mrs. Lewin and her child by night to the beach, the boys carrying Lewin's body on a stretcher. They boarded Lewin's cutter and made their escape to a mission station on the other side of the island where Lewin's

body was buried. Months afterwards Mrs. Lewin made a sad farewell to the South Seas of tragic memory and returned with the child to her people in Townsville.*

George de Lautour was another colourful rascal. A Queensland recruiter, he settled on Aore Island, in the New Hebrides, in 1883, where he established himself, Lewin style, on a large estate with hundreds of coconut trees and fields of corn and maize. Hundreds of natives supplied his labour force. He lived here in a two-storyed house, with his son and retainers. In 1886, Government Agent Douglas Rannie visited Lautour's estate, and had lunch with him. During the meal, Lautour's son Willie entered the dining room, and said: "Father, a dog has come in the gate." Lautour took a gun down from the rack on the wall, and instantly shot the dog dead. As he returned, he told Rannie: "I would serve the dog's master exactly the same if he dared to disobey my orders."

Thirty or forty natives waited for him at the gate, neither they nor their dogs daring to enter. Each gate post was surmounted with a human skull and under each skull were nailed to the post human thigh bones, crossed. On a nearby tree, the following notice was printed:

NOTICE

Dogs and Niggers are forbidden to enter
inside the Portals of these gates. Any
dogs or niggers found therein will suffer
the penalty of Death.

By Order of George de Lautour,
British Resident.

Lautour came to the usual grisly end of dictators, big and small. One morning, in September 1890, while he was lying on a couch reading, a native crept up to the side of the house and shot him through the lattice wall, and then rushed in to finish him off with a knife.**

Lautour's son Willie was outside chopping firewood when it happened. The killers approached him and told him in pidgin they liked him very much, but because he had been a witness to what had happened they would have to kill him too. He was seized and held

* Cummins and Campbell's Magazine, December 1946.

** An account of the murders appeared in *The Brisbane Courier*, November 20, 1890.

while one of his father's murderers killed him with a tomahawk.

In retribution, a punitive naval expedition burnt the village and a landing party lined up the natives and shot them down in scores. The two principal murderers were hanged at the scene of the crime. Aore is now the headquarters of the Seventh Day Adventist Mission. Scarcely any of the original tribe remain on the island.

O'Keefe, the Irish King

David Dean O'Keefe, who came originally from Sligo, became a South Sea king—sovereign monarch of Yap, Maipa, and Sonsorol, in the Carolines. His life story is stranger than anything in fiction. While engaged in blockade running from Savannah, Georgia, during the American Civil War, he stunned a drunken seaman with his fist, thought he had killed the man, and fled. He became mate in a sailing ship which was wrecked on a coral reef off Yap Island. Only O'Keefe reached the shore alive. He built a home on Yap, subjugated rival chiefs to his authority, and ruled over 10,000 islanders. When Bully Hayes came to Yap with a crew of desperadoes, O'Keefe knocked him senseless on his own deck, and ordered him to clear out fast. O'Keefe had his own fleet of vessels, and his own private army of 40 Sonsorol natives, mounted a cannon in his front garden commanding the harbour, and flew his own flag with a shamrock, coconuts, and his initials in the design. For a dozen years O'Keefe ruled in peace. Then the Spaniards and the Germans moved in, each with a garrison and a governor. For months three flags were flying—the Kaiser's, the Spanish king's, and O'Keefe's. The question of the ownership of the island was submitted to Pope Leo XIII for arbitration. In December 1885 he confirmed the Spanish claim provided citizens of other nations were allowed to trade without restriction. The Spanish regime made no difference to O'Keefe; the easy-going Spanish governor was his friend and leaned on his knowledge and prestige. Then in 1898 Spain declared war on the United States, and O'Keefe received a demand to surrender. He had a talk with the Spanish governor, and no more was heard of surrendering until the news was received of American victory. Then it was the Spanish governor who had to surrender. After the Spanish-American War, Germany bought the islands from Spain, and a German garrison

was installed there in 1899. The Germans were less tolerant than the Spaniards of a private merchant who had bodyguards, a cannon in the front garden, and a flag of his own. O'Keefe, now over 70, was just another trader to them. He sailed from Yap on May 10, 1900, aboard his ship "Santa Cruz." Two days later a typhoon swept the area, and neither O'Keefe nor the "Santa Cruz" were ever seen again.

After the 1914-1918 War, Yap was transferred to Japan under Mandate, and became a United States possession after World War II. Under the Treaty of Versailles (1919) Japan was appointed mandatory to the former German possessions north of the Equator. These consisted of some 98 inhabited islands and atolls, including Yap, with a total land mass of 687 square miles. After the Second World War, control of Yap and other islands passed into the control of the United States. On July 18, 1947, the United States formally took over rule of the mandated islands under trusteeship. To-day Yap has a population of 5,500.

The Notorious "Bully" Hayes

Bully Hayes was possibly the most spectacular and notorious—and certainly the most unctuously hypocritical—of them all.

In 1863 he decided that transporting kanakas to Queensland might be more profitable than carrying cargoes of Chinese to Australia. He reaped a harvest of home-sick blackbirds which he shanghaied in the brig "Rona," after a cruise over 2,000 miles of ocean, from the Loyalty Islands, to the Fijis, north to the Ellice and Gilbert groups, north-west to the Carolines, to the Solomons, and to New Guinea. They were battened beneath hatches and eventually dumped on the Queensland coast. But the trade Hayes did in blackbirding was small compared with Lewin and others. The "Polynesian Act of 1868" discouraged him. Under that Act no islanders might be brought to Queensland except by a licensed trader, and the licensee was required under bond to refrain from kidnapping and to return labourers to their islands at the end of three years. It was against Hayes' principles to obtain a licence for anything, and he transferred his energies and peculiar talents to less worrying and even more profitable activities. He would raid an island where the natives had copra stored ready for a trader to call in

two or three weeks' time. A few days before the trader was due to arrive, Hayes would appear, drive the natives into the jungle, and fade over the horizon with the copra aboard. It was as a result of one of these adventures that in January 1870 a consular court of Samoa found Hayes guilty of blackbirding, cruelty, and murder. No ship's captain, however, would volunteer to take the infamous rogue to Sydney for further trial. Incarcerated in the home of Williams, the British Consul, to await transport, he charmed his host with his music, gentlemanly manners, and sparkling conversation. When his friend, Ben Pease, sailed into the harbour two months later, he was able to smuggle his crony aboard. Pease, another hangover from the golden age of Henry Morgan and Blackbeard, was a cashiered lieutenant of the United States Navy, and his 300-ton "Pioneer," built for the China opium trade, was reported to be the fastest sailing ship in the Pacific. The "Pioneer" sailed for Manila where the Spanish authorities most inconsiderately arrested Pease on a charge of murdering natives to barter their heads with head-hunters for Bird of Paradise plumes. Hayes upped anchor, and cleared off in the "Pioneer," leaving Pease to hang. It is a pity we can't spare any more time to the unique Mr. Hayes.

This was only one of the many adventures in which Hayes figured during his incredible career, which ended suddenly and violently one day in October 1876, when the Norwegian cook of the schooner "Lotus" knocked him overboard with a billet of wood while the "Lotus," a stolen ship, was running west through the Marshalls, with a stolen cargo of copra and a stolen woman from San Francisco aboard. By way of epitaph let it be said that of all his undeniable talents, Bully Hayes' greatest talent was his "gift of the gab." He could tell such a plausible story that whenever he was arrested he was always able to talk himself out of it. On one occasion the captain of the American warship "Narragansett" arrested him on a charge of piracy. He was not only acquitted, but made the gift of a cannon as a sympathetic gesture to a maligned and misunderstood man.

A Spurious Austrian Count

A brief sketch of one of the most successful imposters and swindlers in history might appropriately conclude our survey. After sweeping the society in Sydney

and Melbourne off their feet, Von Attems arrived in Brisbane in June 1868, and was lionised by all the leading citizens. He became particularly friendly with George Harris, the wealthy Brisbane merchant from whom he purchased for £500, on borrowed money, the pleasure yacht "Hamlet's Ghost," which had been built in 1863 in the Chesterfield Group from the timbers of a wrecked whaler, the schooner "Prince of Denmark." Von Attems mounted six small cannon on swivels on the deck of the "Hamlet's Ghost." On a trip down the Bay he amused himself firing at the channel buoys; one of the cannon flashed back from the touch-hole, with a powder blaze, badly singeing the Count's luxuriant beard. On July 8 Von Attems, with master and crew, left Brisbane on a voyage up the coast. Before departing he "sacked" Captain Hamlin for scraping the side of a ship anchored in the river, and engaged Captain Howes as master in his place. When the "Hamlet's Ghost" reached Maryborough he quarrelled with and "sacked" the mate McQuade. The "Hamlet's Ghost" reached Somerset, Cape York, on August 15. The day before, Colonel Samuel Wesley Blackall had arrived in Brisbane from overseas to take up his appointment as Governor. He learnt with considerable astonishment that his great friend Count von Attems, whose funeral he had attended at Sierra Leone, had miraculously come to life again in Brisbane! A sensation, accompanied by much lamentation and gnashing of teeth, was caused in social and commercial circles in Brisbane when the news leaked out that the Governor had identified a photograph of the pseudo Count taken in Brisbane as a portrait of the deceased count's valet, who had embarked on a career of swindling on the Continent.

There was much consternation also in Sydney and Melbourne, as scores of dupes lamented their expensive credulity. The imposter had swindled them of many thousands of pounds, and the newspapers made the most of it.

A warrant was issued in Brisbane for the arrest of the pseudo Count, and despatched to Somerset by the schooner "Captain Cook." A detachment of native troopers was also sent from Bowen to intercept him at Somerset.

Showdown at Somerset

Meanwhile, trouble was brewing aboard the "Hamlet's Ghost." Captain Howes became suspicious when

the Austrian warship failed to appear on the horizon. He questioned the Count, who cursed him with some choice Austrian expletives and ordered the crew to put Howes in irons. When they refused, von Attems threatened them with 25 lashes each when the warship did arrive. At Somerset, where the "Hamlet's Ghost" called for water and supplies, Howes overheard von Attems plotting with his valet to shoot him and dump him overboard. Howes confronted von Attems, who threatened him with a revolver. Howes hit him over the head with a belaying pin, stunning him. In response to rocket signals which Howes sent up, Magistrate Jardine arrived with a squad of troopers, but pooh-poohed the captain's allegations, preferring to believe the smooth story told by the pseudo Count. Howes left the ship. Von Attems found a new master for his yacht in Captain Austin of the brig "Reliance." During the eight days he was at Somerset the spurious Count swaggered about in the uniform of an Austrian cavalry officer, wearing sabre and spurs while ashore. He left behind at Somerset letters for the captain of a mythical Austrian frigate, and orders for the warship to follow him to Timor, also letters for his "bankers" in Sydney. He paid for fresh supplies with bills which proved to be worthless.

Two days after the "Hamlet's Ghost" left Somerset for Batavia, the schooner "Captain Cook" arrived with the warrant for the imposter's arrest.

On the way to Batavia, he fired a shot across the bows of the British schooner "Diamond" when she failed to dip her colours in salute. In due course the "Hamlet's Ghost" arrived at Sourabaya. Here retribution overtook the imposter. A commercial firm at Batavia had received a message from Australia warning the principals to look out for an "Austrian Count" who had obtained possession of a yacht by questionable means. These suspicions were telegraphed to Sourabaya, where the "Count" already had discounted a bill of exchange for a large sum. When other reports arrived of imposition and frauds practised in Europe in the previous year by a person pretending to be an Austrian Count, the so-called Graf von Attems was arrested and placed on trial. The Dutch authorities were able to prove that he was identical with the swindler who had reaped a rich harvest in Europe.

The "Count" confessed that his real name was Kurt Schmalz. He was 22 years old. It was established that he had assumed the identity of the real von Attems after the latter's death, had perpetrated several frauds on the Continent, and had arrived at Morley's Hotel, Trafalgar Square, London, in 1867. He engaged a valet, Auguste Stelzer, obtained several suits of clothes from Bond Street tailors, and sailed for Sydney in the "Northampton" on January 11, 1868. Schmalz was sentenced to 22 years' imprisonment.

The "Hamlet's Ghost" was sold by public auction at Sourabaya on December 4, 1868, for 2,500 guilders (then about £200). Nothing more was heard of her afterwards, and the members of her crew eventually reached Brisbane destitute.

A paragraph in "Pugh's Diary of Queensland Events" for December 1872 furnished an appropriate epilogue to the pseudo Count's colourful career:

"Notorious Von Attems, ci-devant Count, has sent two pairs of boots made by him in prison at Sourabaya to certain distinguished members of the Australian Club in Melbourne."

It was Kurt Schmalz's last grand gesture as a gentleman's gentleman!

APPENDICES AND REFERENCES

1. See Wild White Men In Queensland, Cilento and Lack, "Special Centenary Journal, R.H.S.Q.", 1959, p. 73.
2. Survivors of the barque "America" had made their way down the Queensland coast in two boats. After a terrible voyage, they reached the Moreton Bay penal settlement nearly dead with hunger and thirst. The shipwrecked crew were returned to Sydney in one of the Government ships which plied between Sydney and Brisbane bringing supplies and batches of convicts for the settlement.
3. Accounts of the seizure of the "Caledonia" appear in the "Sydney Morning Herald" and "Sydney Gazette" of May 17, 1832. Captain Browning died in Sydney in 1887. He was a brother-in-law of John Ericsson (1803-1889), the famous Swedish-American marine engineer who in 1836 invented the screw propeller, but he was chiefly notable for designing and building the Federal ironclad "Monitor" which on March 9, 1862, fought for three hours an indecisive duel with the Confederate ironclad "Merrimac" in the War between the States. The "Merrimac" previously had sunk two Federal wooden warships, one by ramming and one by gunfire. This was the first sea battle in history between ironclads. In a single afternoon every wooden warship in the navies of the world became obsolete. Among Captain Browning's papers after his death was found a journal of the seizure of the "Caledonia" and her

voyage to the South Seas, and Browning's subsequent adventures in Samoa and on Wallis Island. These are now in the possession of the Mitchell Library in Sydney.

4. Thos. Welsby, "Memories of Amity," records that long before 1847 a pilot station had been established at Amity Point. At this station were ticket-of-leave convicts or assigned men from Brisbane acting as oarsmen for the pilots. Captain Browning in his journal stated that the pilot station was at Bulwer, but E. V. Stevens says ("Hist. Soc. of Q'land Journal," Vol. IV, Dec. 1952, p. 667) that the pilot station was not established at Bulwer till 1848. ("N.S.W. Gazette," Vol. II, p. 523).

5. After a voyage of more than 800 miles from Norfolk Island, subsisting on a few biscuits and potatoes and a beaker of water, they stranded on the shore at Stradbroke Island. They seized a boat belonging to a Manilaman, Fernandez Gonzales, a fisherman who made a living catching dugong and turtle; had an affray with some blacks who came to the aid of Gonzales, and made off, leaving three of their number prisoners of the blacks. The remaining seven convicts embarked on a brief piratical career in Moreton Bay, during which, in an hilarious interlude, they ambushed the Brisbane harbourmaster and his crew, seized their boat, gave them Gonzales' boat in exchange, and forced them to exchange their trim uniforms and boots for the rags of the convicts; pillaged the pilot station at Bulwer, and indulged in a wild carouse with the liquor supply. The crestfallen harbourmaster and his crew made a laborious and ignominious return to Brisbane, working the boat as best they could with a few pieces of board, their oars having been confiscated by the convicts. When the exhausted men reached Brisbane they suffered a final indignity: they were mistaken for the convicts and arrested.

Meanwhile, armed police and black-trackers by land and armed parties by sea scoured the coast and its waters. Three days later (May 12, 1853) a pursuing party of police and black-trackers caught up with the convicts near the Cleveland Road, about eight miles from Brisbane. The fugitives were in a sorry plight. They were weak and exhausted, having been without food for four days, and were captured with little or no resistance. They said that after robbing the pilot station they had worked their way along the northern coast. They had intended to land at Wide Bay, but were driven back to their boat by a mob of hostile blacks. They then worked their way back to Moreton Bay with the intention of abandoning the boat and escaping into the interior. At the Circuit Court on May 19, 1853, the seven convicts, plus their three companions who had been made prisoner by the blacks, were each sentenced to 15 years' penal servitude and returned to Sydney.

6. From information received from the Prisons Department it appears that the first reference to the use of a prison hulk in prison records was noted when the site of the first prison established in 1824 at Humpybong was considered unsuitable for health reasons and the convicts were removed to Brisbane and confined in penal barracks and in a "hulk" moored in the Brisbane River. The prison records are obviously scanty and vague on this point and they could give me very little data on this early period. Mr. S. Kerr, Comptroller-General, advises under date February 2, 1960:

"In 1866 the prison at St. Helena Island in Moreton Bay was built. At this time the hulk "Proserpine" was anchored at the mouth of the river, and over thirty convicts were confined in cells on the hulk, the sentences of these men ranging

from one to ten years. The convicts were confined on the hulk to relieve the overcrowded gaol at Brisbane. About thirty prisoners were taken to St. Helena every morning and brought back at night. The convicts were employed in well-sinking, scrub clearing, and building a jetty. The water police were stationed on the hulk to carry out water police duties, apprehend sailors, to see that the Port Regulations were carried out properly, and visit Dunwich (which was also being used when required as a Quarantine Station). The Inspector of Water Police was Mr. John McDonald, who, later, became the first Superintendent of St. Helena. The water police on the hulk consisted of the superintendent, two coxswains, a carpenter, eight constables, and a cook. There were also two turnkeys belonging to the gaol. Convicts were first confined in the hulk about 1865. When the Health Officer wished to visit a ship arriving in the bay, he would obtain a boat and crew from the hulk and be rowed out to the ship. It was not an unusual sight to see the Health Officer being rowed to the ship with a crew of convicts in their convicts' dress with an armed turnkey or constable sitting over them."

It would appear that long before the 'sixties, then, prison hulks were in use in the Brisbane River, but actual data on this point is up to the present not available. The first official record of a hulk ante-dating the "Proserpine" relates to the "Julia Percy," a brig purchased from Hayes, Brown and Co. for £200 in January 1863, and several hundred pounds were spent in fitting her up as a prison ship (*Queensland Votes and Proceedings, 1863*). In this period of Queensland's history the Water Police formed an entirely separate police establishment, and all offences against maritime law came under their jurisdiction. They had their own magistrate and court, and floating gaol for the incarceration of offenders. The "Julia Percy" was located off Fisherman Island. She was condemned in the same year, and sold to Andrew Muir, who patched and re-rigged her as a brigantine. In 1868, a "Julia Percy"—presumably the same ship—under the command of Captain William Banner, pioneered the Queensland pearl industry by fishing the first cargo of pearlshell from Warrior Reef (see Paper "Taming of the Great Barrier Reef" by Clem Lack, "*Special Centenary Journal*," Sept. 1959).

The second prison hulk had been one of Captain Towns' fleet. She was the "Margaret and Eliza" barque, of 505 tons, and had been built in the U.S.A. The Government purchased her from Towns for £3,000 in January 1864. After being re-fitted as a prison ship she was re-named "Proserpine" and towed to Fisherman Island. Occasionally she was shifted to new sites, being variously anchored off St. Helena, Lytton, and other places along the course of the river. During the smallpox epidemic of 1882 she was anchored in Lytton Reach and used as a quarantine vessel. Finally, as a derelict, she was towed to St. Helena in February 1882.

The "Proserpine" was a prison for many of Queensland's criminal offenders, but mutinous seamen from the mercantile marine and similar types of offenders were also gaoled there. A Water Police guard lived aboard the vessel, and made use of the prisoners as oarsmen when the services of boats' crews were required for the quarantine doctor then stationed at Lytton, and for other purposes.

In those days, the sailing ships of the mercantile marine were veritable hell-ships, many of the crews being men who had been

"shanghaied" or tricked against their will into service. Attempted mutinies were of frequent occurrence. Among the prisoners on the hulk "Julia Percy" in June and July 1863 were fifteen members of the crew of the British ship "Ariadne," who had attempted to stage a mutiny while the ship was on the voyage to Moreton Bay. Keeping them company in the cells were 16 members of the crew of the full-rigged ship "Prince Consort," then in Hervey Bay; ten seamen from the ship "Vernon"; one seaman from the ship "Salamander"; and two deserters from the ship "Legion of Honour." Soon afterwards they were joined by 14 seamen from the "Earl Russell" and 17 from the "Queen of the Colonies." The sentences of these seamen ranged from a month to six months and more. Embezzlement figured prominently on the charge sheets, many of the seafaring offenders having been caught raiding the cook's galley and ship's stores, grog being a favourite objective. A seaman from the "Earl Russell" received a six months' sentence for broaching a bottle of ale. The "Queen of the Colonies" was a notorious hell-ship of those days of man-killing captains and bucko mates. Three of her seamen who had already done a term in the prison ship had gone back to the "Queen of the Colonies" which was then loading wool in the Bay. Breaking into the ship's stores one night they stole 30 bottles of ale, and had a wild carouse, during which they paid back old scores on the chief officer by giving him a hiding. So back they went to the prison hulk.

Among those who did a term of imprisonment on the "Proserpine" were some members of the crew of the famous American clipper "Flying Cloud." Horse thieves and bushrangers were also involuntary guests aboard the "Proserpine." The roads to the gold-fields were then infested with "gentlemen of the road," and sentences of up to 15 years' imprisonment were frequent. One of the boarders on the "Proserpine" was the Wild Scotsman, James Alpin McPherson, Queensland's most colourful bushranger, who was sentenced to 25 years' gaol in 1866. He was one of the working party which was taken each day from the hulk to St. Helena Island and employed in scrub clearing, well sinking, and building of the stone jetty and other buildings. Upon completion of the prison buildings at St. Helena, all the prisoners from the hulk were transferred there, and the island for many years afterwards until well into the present century was Queensland's Aleatraz for long-term offenders and major criminals.

7. In 1848 Boyd was at the height of his colourful career. In that year the exports from Boydton (where Boyd had established a whaling station not only as a rendezvous for his own nine whalers but for other ships in the trade as well) were worth nearly £100,000. They included 2,000 bales of wool, 10,000 sheep, 2,000 cattle, 700 tons of whale oil, as well as tallow, hides, whalebone, and dairy produce. The crash came in 1849. Boyd's dream of a huge pastoral and whaling empire in southern New South Wales collapsed, and all he salvaged from the disaster was the yacht "Wanderer," three small whaling ships, and some land at Twofold Bay. Boyd was almost certainly murdered by the natives of the Solomons in 1851, when he was cruising in the islands after the collapse of his Australian fortune. According to one member of his crew he had hoped to found a Papuan Republic and was looking for a suitable island on which to establish his headquarters. In the collection of the Australian Museum, in College Street, Sydney, is a human skull that 105 years ago was the subject of anxious debate among the substantial citizens of Sydney. . . . Was this

skull the sole relic of the colourful adventurer Benjamin Boyd? Or had the cannibals of the Solomon Islands palmed off in exchange for 20 tomahawks the skull of one of their innumerable native victims? Eventually doctors decided that the skull could not be that of a white man. An undated entry in the Museum register refers to it simply as "Skull of a Polynesian, Guadaleanar; sent as Captain Boyd's."

The skull had been brought back in December 1854 by an expedition financed by a group of Sydney merchants, one of whom was Captain Towns, to investigate rumours that Boyd was still alive in the Solomons. Rumours had been current in Sydney for three years previously about a wild white man on Guadaleanar. In October 1854 the cutter "Oberon" arrived with 1,400 lb. of tortoise shell and more circumstantial native stories about a mysterious bearded white man in the Solomons. The real fate of Ben Boyd, merchant, pastoralist, whaler, and builder of Boydton, and one of the most remarkable figures of our early Australian history, remains as big a mystery as ever.

8. Illustrating the extraordinary ideas then held and indeed held in some quarters well into the present century until they were exploded by our President, Sir Raphael Cilento, Dr. Breinl, and other leaders in the field of tropical medicine and hygiene, is the following extract from a publication by the late Dr. J. P. Thomson in 1904. Dr. Thomson, who was for many years hon. secretary of the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland, wrote: "To those who have studied the problem of man in relation to climate and environment it is perfectly clear that the resources of tropical Queensland can only be adequately developed by the aid of coloured races or by people adapted by nature to the climatic conditions of the country. For well-known scientific reasons the white man is not fit to take the place of the Kanaka or Polynesian worker in the cane-fields of Queensland. It is a generally recognised fact that white people who live in the tropics become anaemic and suffer more or less from malaria, the former disease resulting from a diminished supply of oxygen in the air which by expansion becomes rarer in the high temperature of the tropical regions than in the temperate zone. This daily loss of oxygen, which I may say is very considerable, exercises an insidious influence on the blood stream and organs of the body, rendering the latter more susceptible to climatic changes and disease. Medical authorities tell us that the liver and spleen become enlarged and the skin and viscera have double work to perform. Thus the resistive powers of the body are greatly lowered, the digestive organs undergo some marked changes, the nerve system is weakened, and disease manifests itself sooner or later, in some form or another. One of the first symptoms of the anaemic condition of the imported European is the loss of energy, the disinclination for physical or mental exertion, and indifference to surrounding conditions. Influence of climate is very marked on the children of European parents, in whom physical and mental degeneration manifests itself after six or seven years of age, the contrast between them and English children of the same age being very noticeable. We have a vast Equatorial belt encircling the Globe in which Nature has planted a dark-skinned race of people suitable to the climate and conditions of life there, whereas the white-skinned peoples have been evolved on soils and in climates more congenial to their requirements and more suitable for their constitutional development and they have not yet acquired the power of thriving between the two

Tropics. Whether future generations may ever succeed in doing so is possible, but viewed in the light of the present, it is hardly probable. Here we see from actual experience, and as a result of scientific investigation, that the tropical canefields are inimical to Europeans, who in consequence cannot hope to ever compete with the natives of the tropics in cane culture there." And so on and so forth.

Apart from the poor advertisement for Queensland, which was then spending large sums to induce British people to emigrate to Queensland, it was so much pseudo-scientific nonsense. At least Dr. Thomson lived long enough to see his notions about the white man in the sugar industry confounded in the most signal fashion.

9. One day the citizens of Brisbane awakened to see black men, quite unlike the aborigines with which they were so familiar, driving bullock teams hauling drays laden with cotton bales over old wooden Victoria Bridge to Queen's Wharf for shipment to England. Towns was violently attacked by the Press of the day and accused of introducing the "slave trade" to Queensland. (The American Civil War, between the Federal North and the Confederate South, was raging at the time.) Towns retorted that the natives were properly hired and well provided for in the barracks he had built, and that they were "British subjects" and "full colonists for twelve months."

A record of Towns' Memorandum of Agreement for engaging natives, his written instructions to Captain Graueber, and to Lewin, appears in "Queensland Votes and Proceedings," 1863.

10. Commodore Wilson's Report on the Labour Trade in the Western Pacific, "Votes and Proceedings," Queensland, Session of 1882, p. 575 et seq:

"... I find that, amongst the licences recently granted by the Governor of New South Wales, is one given to a man called Leeman, well known as about the most unscrupulous person in the Western Pacific. I met him as one of the recruiting agents in the American schooner 'Sadie F. Caller' at Sandwich Island, New Hebrides, in 1879, when my attention was called to the more than doubtful proceedings of that vessel, and especially Leeman, by Baron Miklouho-Macklay, who was then a passenger in her. This was also at one time in the employ of the noted Ross Lewin, who had the unenviable reputation of being the most successful man-stealer in the Pacific.

"Ross Lewin, who has a plantation on the west side of the island (Tanna) would long ago have been killed but that he is protected by a force of 100 natives from other islands who are well armed." — A. H. Markham, "The Cruise of the Rosario," London, 1873.

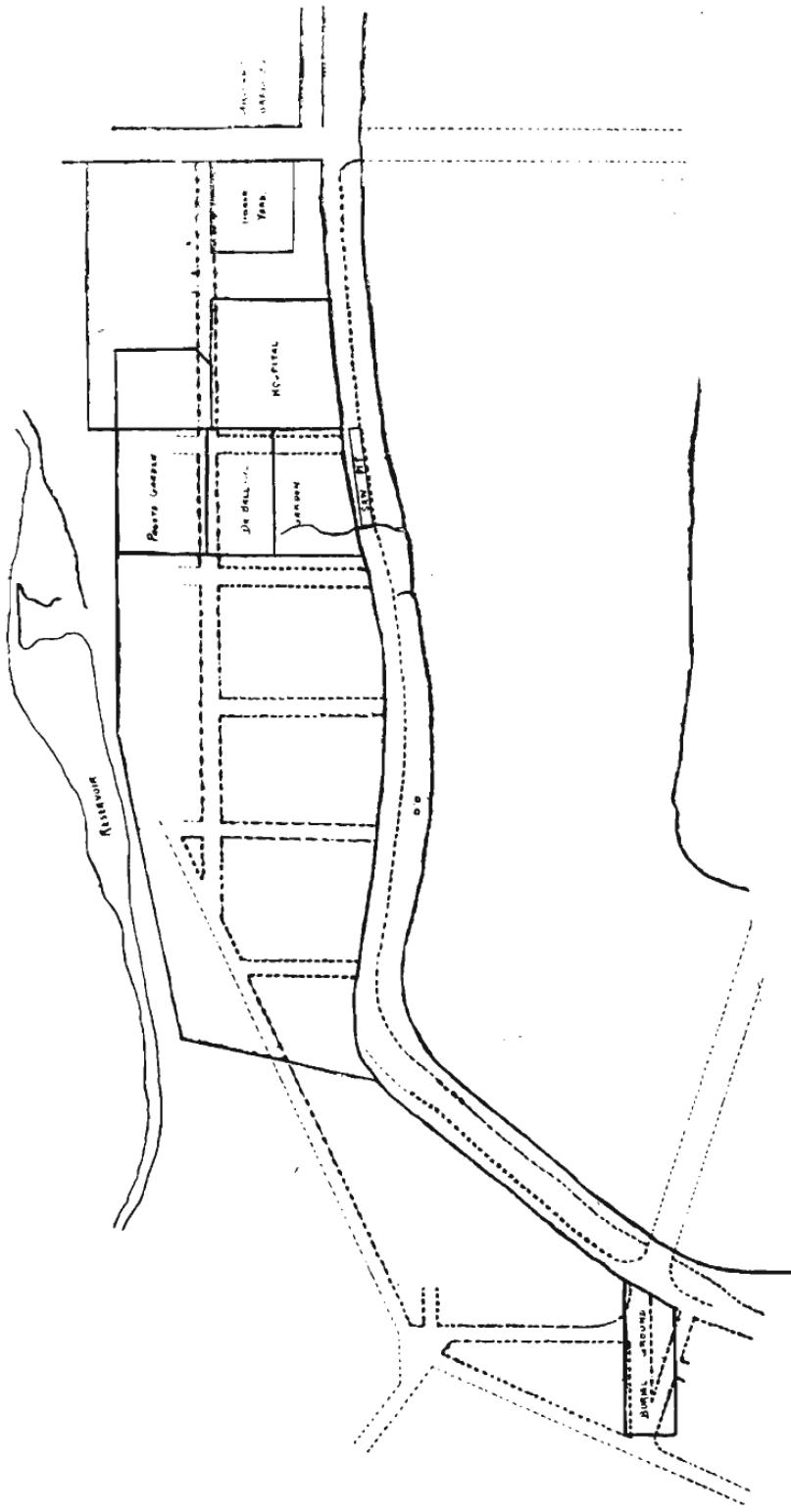
11. La Citadelle was designed like a ship of stone; the prow alone was 325ft. long and the citadel housed 365 cannon and 20,000 troops.

12. Kava is a drug, from the plant "Piper methysticum," a sort of pepper that grows well under cultivation in damp places in the New Hebrides. Its cousin is "Piper betle, used with betel nut, the drug of the islands farther north. Harrisson ("Savage Civilisation") records: "Kava negatives the legs. You cannot walk any more when you get enough of it on board. Your arms later get almost unliftable. . . . You don't get drunk on kava, but it

speeds up your increasing slowness. . . . You feel friendly; not beer sentimental; never cross. . . . You cannot hate with kava in you. And so it is used in the making up of quarrels and in peace-making. . . .”

13. Cromar, J.—“Jock of the Islands,” London, 1935.

General References: “Votes and Proceedings, Queensland Parliament,” Pugh’s Almanac, 1862; Records, Prisons Department; Mitchell and Oxley Memorial Libraries and Parliamentary Library; Georges Bourge, “Les Nouvelles-Hebrides,” Paris 1906; W. B. Churchward, “Blackbirding in the South Pacific,” London, 1888; G. Palmer, “Kidnapping in the South Seas,” being a “Narrative of a Three Months’ Cruise of H.M. Ship, Rosario,” Edinburgh, 1871; D. Rannie, “My Adventures Among South Sea Cannibals,” London, 1912; Edward Shann, “An Economic History of Australia,” 1930; W. T. Wawn, “The South Sea Islands,” London, 1893; Louis Becke, “By Reef and Palm”; Basil Lubbock, “Bully Hayes, South Sea Pirate.”



LEGEND

Existing streets—shown by dotted lines—superimposed on Dixon's 1840 Plan of Brisbane Town.

Burial Ground on left of plan, covering Skew Street—Heildon Spa Co. area.

Saw Pit below Dr. Ballou's garden, next to Hospital.

Two small squares on the riverside of North Quay, and almost in line with the eastern end of Herschell Street and North Quay, indicate isolated graves.