

### **Supplementary Material 3**

**Diary of Herman Beckler's journey to relieve Lyons and McPherson from 21 December 1860 to 5 January 1861. State Library of Victoria. MS 13071. SLV 2083/3 a.**

Transcribed by Beverley Wood.

**Journey from the Darling to the swamp Duroodoo. Decemb 21.1860 – Jan. 5. 1861.**

**Dispatch, Menindie, dated 6 August 1861.**

**[Journey to rescue Lyons and McPherson]**

**Herman Beckler**

[1.]

**Darling River Depot**

Jan. 22. 1861.

Sir,

You receive with this mail a copy of my journal during the short trip I took to the interior to release McPherson and Lyons.

Mr. Wright only awaited Mr. Hodgkinson's return from town before setting out for the interior, and I was prepared to leave the camp and to take the steamer to return to Victoria.

But as no surgeon had yet arrived, I offered my services to Mr Wright on my own responsibility thinking it my duty not to leave the party without that assistance which I might be capable of giving them and being as anxious as ever to see the interior.

Mr. Wright said he was glad to accept ... [?] my offer: the following day Mr Hodgkinson arrived with news from the metropolis, and he told me that no surgeon would come here to accompany the party, and that left it to my ... [?] to accompany Mr Wright. ~~see note.~~

For this delicacy I send you my best thanks.

During the return journey from the swamp Duroodoo to the Depot I took from Lyons and Mc Pherson a verbatim statement of their journey. ~~This narrative~~ Mr Hodgkinson incloses [encloses] this narrative.

I am

Sir.

To J. Macadam, M.D, M.L.A.

your obid. servant

Honor. Secret. Explor. Committee.

[sgnd.] Herman Beckler

[2.]

### **Journey from the Darling to the swamp Duroodoo.**

**Decemb 21.1860 – Jan. 5. 1861.**

Mr. Burke and party left Menindee on the **19 Octob**, Mr Wright accompanied them for a distance of from 160-190 miles.

Mr. Wright with his native servant Dick returned from the interior on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November. That same day, not knowing of Mr. Wright's return, I left the depot with Mr. Hodgkinson and native, called Peter, for the Scrope ranges, called by the natives Gogirga. Mr. Hodgkinson and Peter returned to the camp, while I remained, expecting Mr Hodgkinson back with provisions for a few days.

Peter came out bringing the news of Mr. Wright's arrival, and accordingly I returned to the depot the morning following.

#### **[Pamamero Lake Depot]**

Trooper Lyons arrived with dispatches for Mr. Burke and with instructions to overtake him, on the **5<sup>th</sup> of Novemb**. He left the depot on the **10<sup>th</sup> of Novemb**. With Mc Pherson, our saddler, and the native, Dick.

They had 3 saddle horses and our packhorse.

Three of the horses had been out with Mr. Burke's party and were brought back by Mr. Wright.

They were to take one month's provisions with them, as Mr. Wright expected, that Mr Burke would stop for about a week on a large lake on his route, not very distant from Duroodoo, the place from which Mr. Wright returned. They were to find some provisions buried by Mr. Burke at Duroodoo, and they would to all expectations overtake Mr. Burke somewhere about Lake Bulla.

[3.] Mr Wright hoped, that Lyons and the native ... [would] return in from 3 – 4 weeks, bringing, probably some horses with them to assist in taking out stores.

Week after week elapsed, and we heard no tidings.

We began to fear for the little party and exhausted our imagination with conjectures.

At last, in the morning of the **19 December**, the native Dick arrived here. I did not recognise him, but it struck me, that if I could see him wearing anything from our stores, it must be Dick, and I soon found he wore one of our grey shirts and carried one of our cantihonk [?] waterflasks. He brought a note for Mr. Becker and another one for Mr. Wright, and we soon knew the leading features of his story, and of what had happened. Lyons and Mc Pherson were in the interior, some 180-190 miles from this, depending for their 'sustenance on the hospitality of some natives. He said they would get plenty to eat from them in the shape of ducks, waterhens and other unknown delicacies of the wild bush, yet he was afraid the natives would soon leave them, to their own fate.

I dispatched Beloodch with the note for Mr. Wright immediately, and that gentleman arrived at the depot on the same day. Mr. Wright thought to go out himself with Beloodch and the native Dick. I offered ~~him~~ my services to Mr. Wright, telling him I was most anxious to see at least something of the interior, and that I would do all in my power to relieve the suffering prisoners as soon as possible. He accepted my offer and we were to leave on the 21<sup>st</sup>, giving Dick a day to recruit himself. Dick, however, became very sick

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[4.] [the] following day, when he felt the exhaustion consequent to his very great hardships more than on the day previous, besides he was suffering from indigestion as he could not be sufficiently guarded from taking too much food after such a long time of privation. Peter was to accompany us instead, the amount of his pay having been displayed before his eyes in shining half crown pieces and shillings the charm of which he could not resist notwithstanding the lamentations of his lubra who tried everything to keep him from accompanying us.

#### **[Pamamero Lake to Pilpa]**

We left Pamamero early on the **21<sup>st</sup> of Decb.** Myself with Beloodch and Peter, three camels and one horse. I hoped to come that day as far as the rocky waterhole, called Pilpa, distant some 37 – 40 miles from the depot. In the afternoon I saw it was in vain to try to go any further than Gogirga or Scrope - ranges. The camels behaved very badly, probably in consequence of their long rest and the sameness of their food for more than two months of which they seemed to get tired, nor ~~did~~ had they eaten much for some back requiring but little after so long a spell.

Mochrani, one of our best male and riding camels had actually to be dragged for the last eight miles from Gogirga. Tambel, a larger female camel of fine proportions and in splendid condition was very obstinate and restive, and Matvala, that vicious animal with which nobody could do anything except Beloodch was so quiet and docile as to astonish us; but we could proceed only at a very slow pace towards Gogirga.

[5.] We arrived at the cave late in the evening.

The abundance of feed in the open glen, which you know already from my former description, restored the strength of Mohrani and soothed the nerves of Tambel, and Matvala ~~seemed to take to his~~ regained usual viciousness. They are particularly fond of a kind of Atriplex, and of a small herbous plant of the Salsolaceae of a bright green, with soft thorns and juicy stems and branches, a plant which we found on many places all along our track. But they have a particular partiality for a large kind of Malva, growing in spots so dense as if it was cultivated, on the banks and in the shallow beds of some creeks to such an extent that it gives the country quite a civilised aspect, the rows of straight yellow stems ~~remain~~ looking like ~~field~~ those of some cultivated cereal.

The country between Pamamero and Gogirga consists first, of a series of sandhills, all uniting to an elevated sandy flat, which stretches in the direction of the mountains for some 10-12 miles, partly

timbered with a low stunted kind of Eucalyptus, a Casuarina, different species of Acacia, partly overgrown with dense scrub, but principally open with a prevailing vegetation of salsolaceous plants and small shrubs of Acacia.

Towards the mountains the country opens in plains, unfortunately waterless, but producing abundance of food for stock of all kind, camels included. The ground is more firm and every now and then strewn with pebbles and sometimes with fragments of quartz.

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[6.] **Decemb. 22.** It was still night, when we let the camels out to feed, and everything promised an early start, but Peter could not find the stupid horse. He was hobbled short, and had worked hard during the greater part of the night, to make his way back to the depot instead of making the best of his time in midst of the abundance of grass which the little valley before the cave offered him.

I think we left the cave at about half past six.

#### **[Pilpa to Bodurga]**

To give Matvala every fair play we left here some of our provisions and parked some on our riding camels. It was of no use. We could not bring him farther than to the rocky waterhole, Pilpa, where we left him, hobbled. Having left some provisions in the cave and Matvala at Pilpa, I resolved not to leave anything more behind, but to pack our riding camels, and to ride only in the forenoon, walking in the afternoon. We commenced at once, and arrived a little after sunset at Bodurga, where we camped. The only waterhole is well shaded from the afternoon sun by shrubs of a salsolaceous plant and polygonum, the water is still good, and the depth all over the hole seven inches. The country gone through was a series of glens and passages between the mountains, salsolaceous plants still prevailing, with a good proportion of grasses and many shrubs, mostly of leguminous plants, as Acacia and Cassia. Soil clayey, sandy, stony, timber scarce, and no mesembryanthemums, on one spot a fine strange looking plant, with fleshy stem and branches, but without leaves, apparently an Asclepiadea. At the rocky waterhole we parted for a time with the mountains and traversed plains, on the far horizon of which we saw from NE to NW. several

[7.] distant ranges of mountains, looking like so many grand monuments of some important period of our planet's life, and reminding us for the first time of the propriety of the name "Barrier ranges" if indeed these distinct mountain groups are part of them. Travelling on, we loose [lose] again sight of the mountains, although our horizon allows us a pretty open view on all sides. The appearance of the county here, in fact all through the native district Binjani has nothing charming.

A little change in the vegetation, one or the other salsolaceous plant, a little change in the soil, a greater or less proportion of superficial sand is all it offers to our eyes. No shrubs, no trees, the scattered small trees of Acacia of from 12 – 16' h. all dry and dead from old fires and increasing only the dreariness of the picture.

Approaching the more or less oval depressions one of which is called Bodurga the country begins to look a little more cheerful, belts of timber are visible, the soft undulations sport some streaks of a lively green, principally from the small salsolaceous plant mentioned above.

**Decbr 23.** Left very early, as the animals gave no trouble and were close at hand. Travel over similar country as yesterday. Cross a dry swamp with a rich and varied vegetation, an Eucalyptus with shining leaves, rich foliage and soft pleasing outlines, a kind of box. Passed a little sandridge, timbered with pines of from 20 - 30' h.

Track good, soil firm, later in the morning loose and deep, of red color, ~~with~~ covered with dense scrub, solanaceous plants frequent. About 10 o'clock a.m. found a spring cart on our

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[8.] track, which, of course, took us by surprise. One of the wheels had been broken, but was mended bushmanlike, and to all appearances, the vehicle was got ready for a start. As we saw no living creature near it, but a large **H** cut into the ground with a spade, we were in fear somebody might have perished here, and we examined the contents of the spring cart, containing sundry provisions. In our haste we upset the cart and a large jar containing water was emptied before we could save any water. This and the track of horses going in our direction let us hope to find the proprietor of the cart near the water in the mountains, and we proceeded. We entered between a group of hills ~~{?}~~ ~~into~~ a pretty open valley with a dry creek running through it, which we crossed, after which our track led through a long valley, about one mile broad and running in a northerly direction, the range close to us on our left exposing the bar [bare] rocks of sandstone, broken and excavated. The scenery was very picturesque and changing in forms and colors and the time passed quickly over us, till we came to a camp of Europeans.

This was the camp of Mr. Haverfield, a gentleman who explores the interior to considerable distances. Meeting an European at so unexpected a place ~~made~~ was, of course, a great event in our day's journey, and Mr Haverfield could afford to show us British hospitality even in the midst of inhospitable mountains. He gave us every information in reference to our journey, he kindly showed me his map, he said he was sorry that he had not heard of Lyons and Mc Pherson, as he would certainly have gone

[9.] out to give them any assistance they wanted and to bring them back, and having heard that we had left provisions at Gogirga he was even so kind as to offer us what provisions we might want on our return journey, and indicated us the spot where we ~~for~~ would find hem buried.

Being anxious to make the next creek in the course of the following day, I could only thank Mr Haverfield for his invitation to stop, and we proceeded on our way. Following our track through the same narrow valley, we found, 3 miles from Mr. Haverfield's camp, Motwinji, another gorge with plenty of water. Passed it and travelled on, walking till sunset, when we camped, having carried water with us from the beautiful rocky water basin near Mr. Haverfields camp. (This basin was quite dry on

our return, Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>, and it contained no less than from 13 – 18” of water on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December. We found however plenty water in the more elevated basins.)

**Decemb.24.** Left our bivouac at 5 a.m. The morning beautifully clear and cool. Our track led still through the same valley. At about 6 a.m. we crossed a considerable dry creek. Passed some picturesque scenery in the hills, large exposures of rocks of grotesque form and a very regularly shaped dome on the top of a hill attracting our attention.

The valley gradually expanded, the hills diminished in height, undulating timbered ranges to our right, and one or two barren hills to our left; recrossed ~~again~~ the neck we had passed, soil sandy but fertile large spots overgrown with Portulac, a dry shallow sandy watercourse running through the middle of the valley, looking still damp and adorned, with

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[10.] a profusion of a large and beautiful Crinum-like lily. Leave the mountains behind us at about 9 a.m. Before us a wide expanse of flat country. Soil loose red sand, the same as we traversed before entering the mountains, the scattered acacia trees again all dead from old fires. A long mountain range in the distant W.

#### **[Nandurungee Creek]**

Arrived at Nandurungee Creek at 1. p.m. The creek a fine sheet of clear water, with a firm, even and gravelly bottom. We resolved to stop here as for all we knew we could not have come to the next creek and would have had to carry water. We cleaned the canvas waterbags, for the water which we had out of them last night had such a nauseous, rancid train oil-like taste that none of us would drink it.

**Decemb. 25.** Crossed the creek at a dry place a little above the camp, travel over a mountain of sand ridges. They are very narrow, but they follow each other closely, so that a little extent of flat country between them is rarely met with. Noticed a beautiful tree, seen for the first time between Bodurga and Mutanie<sup>l</sup>. These sandhills seem to be the proper habitat of it. This tree presents always the same outlines sending light, bending branches off ~~his~~ its trunk from the base upwards. ~~His~~ Its outline is tapering, ~~his~~ its foliage rich, of a characteristic light bright green contrasting with that of all other trees and shrubs around. H. 25'. Largish diam. 7 - 8".

The branches are covered with a thin smooth bark of a yellowish or reddish colour. The trunk is straight of a whitish red almost flesh-color, and quite smooth with exception of the large, rough and blackish cicatrices or scars of insertion which tend downwards in an obtuse angle at the ... [vertex?] of which the branch is inserted.

[11.] Crossed the sandridges and travelled through open, flat or slightly undulating sandy country for some miles till we descended between two barren hills into plains, well grassed but with little timber. Arrived at Wonamente Creek.

### [Wonamente Creek]

The country here bore the marks of a recent flood, of which Mr Haverfield had told us, and which he had found at its height near and on Balrumati Creek to the south of Goningberri Mountains on the 9 of Decemb.

(The rainfall which occasioned this flood must have been distributed over a large tract of country for we found that the flood it had also filled Yellowintchee and Nangavera Creek, distant in a north easterly direction from Wonamente respectively 15 and 40 miles, and the swamp Duroadoo, 60 miles further was equally filled with water.)

Before we arrived at the creek we passed some large claypans, but only one or two contained water. The rest was dry, looking, exceedingly clean and even. Crossed the track of Mr. Haverfields spring cart running in a westerly direction.

We stopped at the creek for an hour to rest ourselves and the animals. The day was oppressively hot. Before leaving I found two beautiful small shrubs, full in blossom, of the Malva kind.

The country travelled over was ~~for~~ almost level at first and without timber. The ground firm, ferruginous clay, strewn with small rounded pebbles, all glittering as if varnished and of different brown hues. Small salsolaceous plants, few grasses, a few Malva like plants and thiny [?] groups of a poor kind of Casuarina from 8 – 12' high were the characteristic features of the vegetation. After about a mile and a half's march, the brown stones disappeared, and the ground was thickly covered with angular and

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[12.] rounded pieces of quartz. On two or three spots, nearer to the creek I noticed layers of slate cropping out, and at some distance considerable quartz rocks which I took at first for a large number of cockatoos. A beautiful range to the North, distant from 16 – 20 miles. Groups of Casuarina to our right. A large Kangaroo made for one of them. To the left, when the undulating stony ground shows a little rise, no timber. After a march of about eight miles we came into lower country and found numerous little watercourses all filled with water. They were shaded by small shrubs, principally a Tecoma like shrub, very frequently met with during our journey and another equally frequent woody shrub, apparently a sapindaceous plant, besides a larger kind of the Salsolaceae. It would have been difficult to recognise these numerous furrows in the ground as even temporary watercourses, but for the shrubs fringing their sides, and all was in diminutive proportions, depth and breadth, banks, shrubs and shade, and the only animal life we could see near there were a few small birds, plenty of tadpoles and numerous mosquitoes. The day was very hot, but with water at every step we actually got tired of drinking.

A long range of low hills to our right about two miles from the track, not remarkable for its outlines, yet forming a strange sight from the streaks of sunlight and shadow thrown on them. At our point we saw again a dome-or cupola shaped rock of considerable size.

All at once we had a creek to our right coming from the N.E. and following now a course parallel with our track for [?] several [?] of miles.

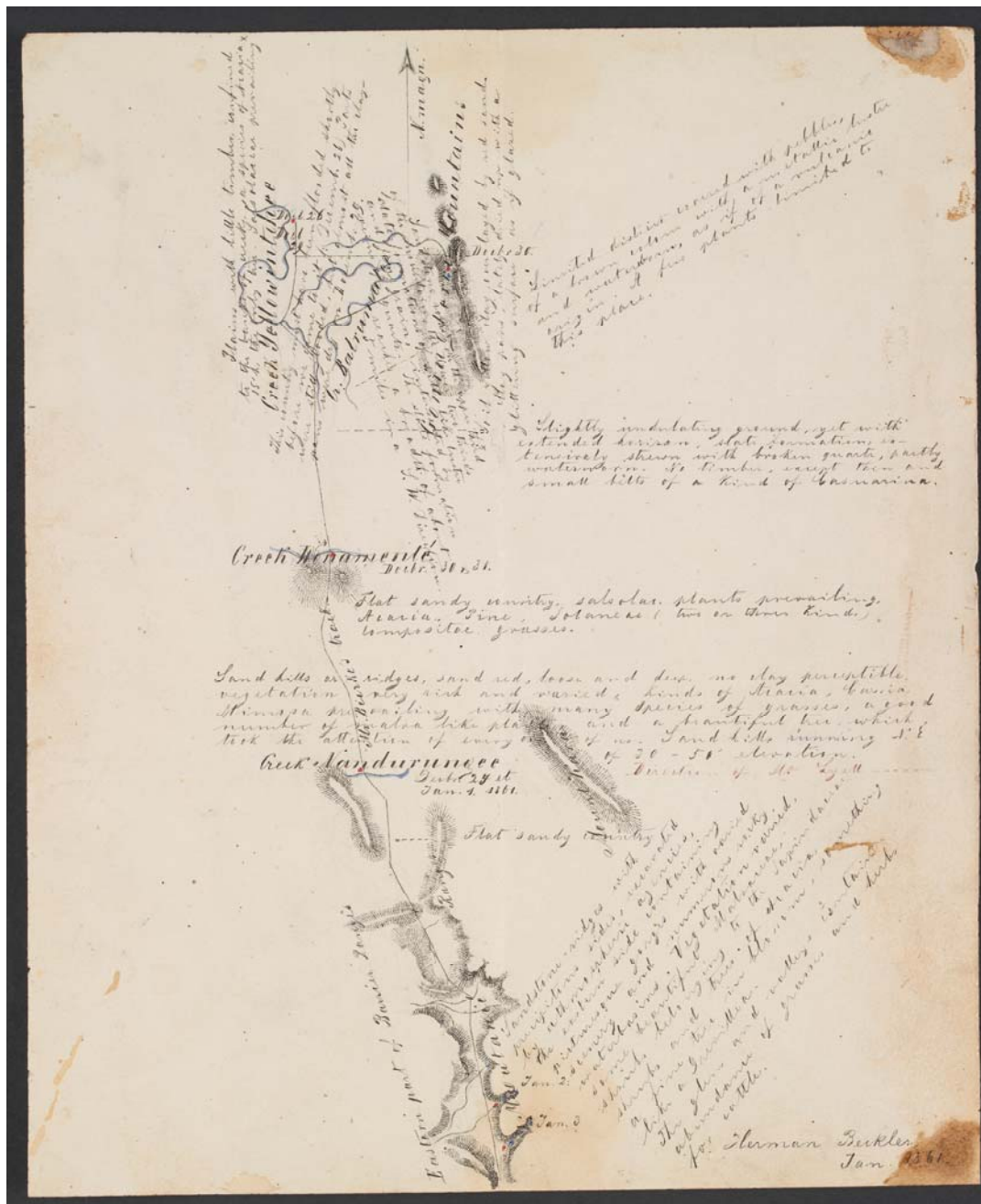


Figure 1: Beckler H. [Map showing the country north of the eastern part of the Barrier Ranges, including geographical descriptions and dates] [January 1861].

State Library of Victoria. SLV H16486.

### [Yellowintchee Creek]

[13.] This was Yellowintchee Creek, and its size, its banks, and the Eucalypts on them give it apparently the character of a permanent or at least a regular and important watercourse.



The country on this side the creek rose to a low ridge leaving only a narrow flat strip between it and the water or sloping down to the bank, on the other or eastern side large plains as far as we could see with the dark lines of Eucalypts marking its course, in the distance the beautiful mountain called Goningberri in the most delicate rose colour.

After crossing the creek on the banks of which I noticed ~~two large~~ shrubs of two large kinds of leguminous plants, like Acacia, but without blossoms or fruits, in general appearance very much like the tops of Italian pines, frequently seen in engravings, and an abundance of the large Malva plant already mentioned, we were again on one old, sober and clean looking ground the clay plains, the only difference in this vegetation from those near the Darling being the want of Mesembryanthemums.

I forgot to mention the appearance of the track of Mr. Burke's party over the hard ground covered with ~~little~~ small rounded stones. The track would ~~be~~ hardly be visible but for the wet weather the party must have had in going over it. The camels had trodden the small white stones into the soft clay, leaving large oval tracks of a bright yellow or reddish colour behind them which will probably be seen for many years.

At sunset we camped, going a little off the track to be at a respectable distance from the creek. The distance however as well as the fire we lighted gave us no

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[14.] protection against the mosquitoes, and we rose very early after our third sleepless night. The camels were very restless too from their diminutive tormentors and we made a fire for them.

**Decemb. 26.** Followed the track through the plains, full of marks of the late inundation. Water in every little crevice and in the shallowest depressions. Waterlily, in blossom, in abundance. The country looks as well as any pastoral country I have seen in the interior.

In the course of the morning we found the saddle which Dick had hung up a tree, when his horse was too weak to carry him any further. We could not see anything of the horse. A little further on, we saw five native dogs. These animals seemed to be very dull. They seemed to hear as little as their ears were long, and they allowed us to approach them to about twenty yards, when they observed us and ran away at their best rate. They were very busy looking for something and we thought they might be about the remains of that poor and clever little horse, the only one left out of the four which Lyons and Mc Pherson had taken with them. We found nothing. These dogs were in a miserable condition, but it seemed that even in good condition they must be ugly, badly proportionate animals. They carry their large clumsy heads downwards their ears standing out-and upwards in an acute angle, body long, thin, limbs clumsy, tail long.

The tail they carry after the fashion of the domestic dog when in great fright. I never thought this sense of hearing was obtuse, almost wanting.

As to the animals themselves they cannot be compared to the handsome lively creatures of their tribe which I saw in the coast country of New South Wales.



firm and hard, covered with stones, principally and on places exclusively fragments of quartz. To our right we passed a ridge-like quartz-vein, running N.E. and at least from 8 – 10' above the plain.

#### [Nangavera Creek]

Early in the afternoon we arrived at Nangavera, a creek with long sheets of pure water. There we had some tea and awaited our native whom we had left a long way behind us. The horse he rode was lazy and the camels had towards noon begun to move on at a rattling pace.

This change from our usual slower pace was agreeable and we allowed them to continue it for some time. An imposing mountain with a flat top lay to the west, distant about 40 miles.

I think it must be Mount Arrowsmith.

The country traversed looked very uninteresting and has the same appearance as the flat clayey tracts frequently gone over during our journey.

In the afternoon we walked 10 – 12 miles farther and arrived at sunset at a dry lake where we were fortunate enough to find about one inch of water in a claypan. The water was of a cream like consistency.

The country about has many claypans in two of which we found still water, and the vegetation here to Duoodoo is richer than over the soft undulating ground nearer to the creek (Nangavery [Nangavera]).

#### [Dooroodoo]

**Decemb. 27.** At about 6½ o'clock a.m. we met with numerous tracks of ~~the~~ natives; according to Peter's expectation we ought to have been near Doroodoo

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[16.] the day before, therefore we hoped to find our lost men very soon. All at once Peter cried out: Aye, aye, and sure enough there was Mac Pherson at short distance from us, apparently searching for something on the ground.

He would certainly have given us a loud welcome, but he could not rise his voice any higher than to a low moan much more expressive of his misery and weakness than of anything else.

He looked like a man who just begins to recover from a serious attack of Typhus fever and his appearance was the best witness for his statement that they had received from the hospitable natives at Duroodoo very little food indeed. Lyons was at the camp, engaged in baking cakes when we came up to him. The seed of which they prepared a coarse meal and out of that either cakes or porridge is not properly a seed, but the sporangium and the spores of a small plant, the leaves of which are very like clover. It is, I believe, a Marsileacea, and everywhere to be met with wherever water stagnates for a time.

At Duroodoo there is at present an abundance of it. I tasted the porridge with a little sugar and found it very good. Without sugar or salt it is almost tasteless.

These two people have suffered very much during this journey from Duroodoo to the interior and back again as well as at Duroodoo. They were when we found them very weak and they had suffered from a string of symptoms all more or less expressions of inanition and its consequent effects

[17.] on the alimentary canal. Mc Pherson had been suffering from dysentery after he had first eaten of the cakes, but he was better already.

I was very anxious to keep them from taking too much food at a time, and I must say they were very moderate. They had also a slight attack of scurvy, their hands and feet became covered with little sores and they say they lost by degrees the whole of their skin.

Mc Pherson took a bath in the afternoon what he had not dared to do for some time, afraid of not being able to come out again.

When he left the Darling he was the most portly of the party, now he was so emaciated that the spines of his shoulder blades cast a shadow on the adjacent parts.

The plant which saved Mc Pherson's and Lyons' lives is called by the natives "Gnadunnëa [ngardu, nardoo], and Peter knew it well from the Darling.

I have seen plants of the same genus in all parts of New South Wales where I have been.

Here I may as well state that the *Portulaca* abounds on the whole of our route, and just now, the first fortnight in January, it begins to blossom. I think it must be a native plant, as otherwise the natives would not use as an article of food nor would they have a native name for it. They call it *Dungërow* and they use the seeds in the same way as the sporangiums of the marsileaceous plant – to make flour.

#### **[Return from Duroodoo to Pamamero Lake Depot]**

As Lyons and Mc Pherson thought they were strong enough for the journey, we left Duroodoo on the following morning, **Decemb. 28.**

15.

[18.] On our return I wanted to pay a short visit to the range called Goningberri, which I could easily do, the mountains not being more than 10 – 12 miles distant from a certain point on our route, and Mc Pherson as well as Lyons requiring a day of rest.

I therefore requested them to proceed with Beloodch who was also complaining to the next creek, Wonamente and to await there my return which I fixed for the evening of the following day. .

#### **[Beckler's side journey to Goningberri]**

I left the party at a short distance from our last camp, December 31, and directed my course due E. which was the bearing of the northern abrupt fall of the mountain.

The soil was firm, clayey with little sand, and strewn with quartz fragments which character of the surface continued up to the mountain near which the quantity and the size of the quartz increased until we found ourselves on ridges of from 100 – 150' high which were crested with large rocks purely quartz and of a dazzling white. On our way to the ridges we startled a large brown snake from its solitary nest, and soon after two emus came in our direction.

They did not seem to be at all alarmed at our appearance but came nearer looking at us for some time. Both of us felt great pleasure at the sight of these swift and elegant birds, with their light swinging motion, their graceful bearing and the waving rise and all of their tail-feathers as they moved over the extensive plains.

At about eight miles from Goningberri we came suddenly upon a creek with Eucalyptus on its banks. It seems to be connected with either Balrumati or Yellowintchee creek, but is too small to

[19.] be considered a permanent watercourse.

When the country assumes a more rocky character the vegetation also is changed, the character of it being represented by different shrubs of Acacia of large circumference and small trees belonging to the same genus. The general appearance of the shrubs is pine like and they form an interesting and pleasing feature, and as a gentle breeze moves the bushes to and fro a silvery grey lustre plays in wave like lines over them.

### **[Mount Goningberri]**

Arrived near the mountain we were first anxious to find water and we had not the slightest doubt to find some before long, as we followed the course of a considerable creek with a gravelly bottom, but exposing frequently its bare rock of a slaty formation. The country had been found flooded on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December by Mr. Haverfield, at the time of my visit not a drop of water could be found.

We followed different watercourses, at last Peter, seeing everything although apparently paying attention to nothing, discovered at the base of some slaty rocks at the bottom of a creek a slight scratch, still damp, where he said, dingoes had been looking for water, and in a very short time we had a supply sufficient for our pose. The day was hot and rather too advanced to permit the ascent of the mountain, so I contented myself with rambling over the smaller ridges and found in the evening that I had not to regret having done so, as the vegetation above them was far too varied for a few hours' collecting.,

Some large shrubs or shrublike forms of [Melaleuca] and a tree, frequent on the bank of the narrow [?], with large bunches of white blossoms

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[20.] like Grevillea and small shrubs of Mimosa and Cassia were the more striking forms met with.

Though we found no ~~oth~~ water besides the small well in the rock the mosquitoes were as troublesome as if we had been encamped near a creek and we had no other consolation than the magnificence of the starry heavens above us.

**Decemb 31.** Early in the morning I ascended what appeared to me to be the highest point of the mountain.

I had seen the evening before through a glass an almost vertical wall of rock girding the whole length of the range at about two thirds of its height, but I found without difficulty a spot where to scramble over. The sides of the mountain are slopes as ~~long~~ far as the slate formation marks, about half the

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height; from thence to the summit the rocks are sandstone, large fragments, very rough and of irregular shape, some being of a softer quality and of a granular appearance, others hard without a granular appearance and exhibiting small facets looking like polished.

I noticed little difference in the color which was of a warm yellowish and often rose-like tints to which latter probably is attributable the beautiful appearance of the mountains seen at a distance. The upper portion of the mountain though so rugged and wild is not wholly destitute of vegetation. It does, however, not differ from that of the surrounding hills with the exception of a Casuarina and a pine. The highest point of this range I would take to be about 1800 – 2000', far less than what one would take it at a distance of from 6 – 10 miles.

[21.] The direction of the range is SSE and NNW. The extent in this direction is about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  - 4 miles. The breadth from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. The top is a very narrow ridge throughout the whole of the length and not more than from 10 – 15' broad. The view though extended does not present any features of beauty, all the country around being apparently flat, of dry aspect and poorly timbered. Towards the S. and the SSW considerable mountains are to be seen in the distance, those to the SW being probably the Mutani Ranges. In a northwest direction a distant mountain which bore on our route further on towards Duroodoo still rises to the W.

It is a huge, compact table top–mountain of great effect even at that distance – about 40 miles – and I took it for Mount Arrowsmith.

Peter and myself left our mountain-camp early in the afternoon, **Decemb 31**, 1860 taking a S.W. course to cross Mr Burke's track in as straight a line as possible.

We travelled for miles over ~~slat~~ layers of slate all of the same bearing, and intersected by considerable quartz-reefs, and the whole of the ground was covered all over with fragments of quartz, presenting for more than three miles an almost snowy appearance.

#### **[Balrumati Creek, then to Wonamente Creek]**

We travelled very leisurely, crossing and recrossing Balrumati Creek the clear water of which helped us greatly to get over the hot day; but having underrated the distance we had to go over, it was one o'clock a.m. before we arrived at Wonamente Creek, the black horse which Dick had taken from Duroodoo and which were fortunate enough find without delay or trouble keeping the track for us what even Peter would not have been able to do.

17:1.

[22.] The evening was not without a little excitement, Peter seeing at about 9 o'clock a fire at a distance the bearing of which was to the left of our track, we made for it, thinking that our party had encamped further up the creek. We were close to the creek when we noticed a large native camp on the opposite bank. The natives came over directly, shouting, laughing and apparently much excited. They evinced great pleasure in seeing one of their own people in such costume, and Peter who spoke the same language, although a native of Menindee, was equally rejoiced and excited. They surrounded

us in a moment, tapping us on the shoulder and beast and continually saying: “Batera, batera, imba, Knappa, Knappa, batera, imba batera” the three only words the meaning of which we knew and which we repeated frequently to the natives.<sup>1</sup> One of the [2] natives knew the camp of our party and after a considerable delay we got off and reached it at two miles distance.

**Jan 1. 1861** ~~At~~ At dawn numbers of natives came to us. Some of whom we gave a little tea and bread, and we presented our guide of last night with a new cotton shirt, after which we packed up and started as quickly as possible.

**[Wonamente Creek to Mutanie/ Ranges]**

They were a long time looking after us, and at last shouted to Peter to come back. This Peter did, when they presented him with a ... [wiri?] and new waterbag, the skin of a kangaroo only sewn in two or three paces, and holding about four gallons.

**[Mutanie/ Ranges to Pilpa and back to Pamamero Lake Depot]**

The rest of the journey did not offer anything remarkable except that we found nearly all the water gone, which circumstance induced us

[23.] to make two long stages, one from Mutanie/ Ranges to Pilpa, the other from the latter plan [plain] to the depot, the two making together about 75 miles.

[sgnd.] Herman Beckler.

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<sup>1</sup> batera = good, imba = you, Knappa = I.