

nicely scanned, how far, with the actual depreciation in the value of wool, it is a prudent speculation to borrow money at ten per cent. to extend its production. Extraordinary fluctuations in the value of wool can seldom be foreseen, nor can any degree of vigilance secure the flocks of the colonists from the mortality resulting from any general epidemic. As regards the individuals engaged in the whaling business, which will be granted is a perfectly legitimate speculation for any man to engage in who is possessed of sufficient capital of his own to undertake it; yet, from its very nature, it partakes of a certain degree of risk that would scarcely warrant a cautious individual in extensively investing the property of another, bearing as it must the burden of colonial interest.

Of all the causes that have been in operation to render the custom general of granting an extended credit, none, perhaps, have had a greater influence than a market habitually glutted. The merchants, anxious to force sales upon indifferent or unwilling customers, hold out the inducement of a distant settling day; though from painful experience they can scarcely fail to be aware that their risk is thereby increased in a geometrical ratio. In New Zealand, according to Mr Petre, most of the importers have been severely punished by accommodating individuals, many of whom never intended to pay them; and in Australia and Van Diemen's Land the same system has been the fruitful source of insolvency and fraudulent assignment—it has crippled the energies of our colonial merchants, and destroyed the peace of many a happy family. These are *facts* that any person well acquainted with the subject will readily grant, and we must not allow the impression they produce to be lessened by any reference to an increase of imports, *apparently* telling a very different tale. This will be found, unless we acquaint ourselves with all the particulars, an extremely equivocal symptom of prosperity. Take, for instance, the case of Van Diemen's Land; we do not select this as differing materially from any of the sister settlements, but merely because it is a recent instance, and convenient for our illustration. In August last Sir John Franklin announced to the Council then assembled, that the imports for the colonial year then ended exceeded those of the previous one by nearly a quarter of a million: but it is matter of notoriety that commercial matters were in anything but a satisfactory state; the wharfs and warehouses

were indeed crowded with goods, but there they remained, unsold, those cases alone excepted in which the proprietors were forced to realize at a tremendous sacrifice to meet pressing engagements. It is true the revenue had been increased by the duties paid into the colonial treasury by these immense importations, and the governor contemplated a balance of 60,000*l.* which would be available for emigration purposes,* and so far the colony is benefited; but the loss to the parties on whose account these importations have been made in the years 1840 and 1841, will be so heavy, that there is every likelihood of a very considerable decline in the revenue of 1842. We are further warranted in our expectations on this subject, from an examination of the very small inducement that now exists to ship merchandise. Not only are prices low, but a difficulty also exists (chiefly caused by this same credit system) of knowing who to trust; and in addition to this the premium on Treasury notes has been raised by orders from home to *five* per cent. Private bills will of course rise in proportion, and such a heavy tax on remittances will abstract the lion's share from the profit of the shipper.

The time required for capital, when employed in the trade to Australasia, to find its way back again to the shipper in England, will astonish those who are unconnected with it; it cannot be stated at less than eighteen months to two years, and we could name many instances in which a much longer period has elapsed. We should allot this period very nearly as follows:—from the time the goods are paid for until the ship arrives out, five or six months; we must then average the time from the date of arrival till they are sold, for which say two months (it is sometimes two years); the credit given we will put down at six months, and in the present day the seller is fortunate if he do not after all have to accept a composition, or (a very undesirable present) a bad debt. In five or six months more, the London shipper gets a bill which varies in the time of its becoming due from two to three months.

The colonist shipping produce to England has far less reason to complain; for our credits are much more moderate. For wool sold in London the time of payment is fourteen days; for oil and whale-

* This sum would suffice to send out three thousand adults; and we are happy to state, that the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners have taken up a ship to convey labourers and artisans to Hobart Town. She leaves London the 23rd of this month, and it is to be hoped that others will succeed her.

bone the same, subject, however, to a discount of two and a half per cent. ; on bark the credit is one month and the same discount.

For our own part, we think nothing would conduce more to the permanent welfare of the colonies than the adoption of the system of selling with a prompt of three months, at the expiration of which time the money must be paid whether the goods are delivered or not; and if an earlier delivery is required, the money must be paid previous. A deposit of, say one-fifth, to be paid at the time the goods are sold, for the purpose of binding the bargain. This plan is well understood and generally adopted in London, for the disposal of East Indian produce; and is found to be convenient for the purchaser, as it enables him, if he thinks well of the market, to purchase with an immediate outlay of very moderate amount, whilst, at the same time, it secures the seller from loss, no delivery taking place till the whole amount is paid.

An illustration will perhaps make this plan more intelligible to our readers. A sells to B six lots of sugar lying in the London Docks; a few days after A sends to B a document for each lot, called a weight note, on which are given the weights, the names of the seller and purchaser, and an invoice of each lot of sugar, from which is deducted the deposit, which B now pays to A. When B wants to clear a lot of sugar he must pay the balance to A, who gives him in return a warrant bearing his signature for the delivery of the goods. But if B finds it will be inconvenient for him to pay for the goods at the end of the three months, or if he have an opportunity of making a profit upon the original price, he may at any time previous to the expiration of the prompt resell the goods to a third party C, to whom he delivers the weight note with his endorsement, claiming of him the deposit money and the difference, if any, between the two prices. C now takes his place, and on paying the balance to A can obtain the warrant.

Probably enough, the present paper may excite the ridicule of some of those who, for the best of all reasons, can exist only upon credit; but however this may be, we are perfectly unconcerned, and shall still retain our old-fashioned opinion, that the quiet, moderate, plodding men of business are the true ornaments—the real safeguards of our colonies. These are the men that honestly accumulate capital, and spread the fame, the glory, and the wealth of Britain to the

uttermost ends of the earth. Far different from these are your dashers at a fortune—those who crowd all sail but carry no ballast—who, mounted on borrowed stilts, run at the top of their speed, and find, when too late, that a very, *very* small pebble will bring them to the dust. Would that this class were less numerous in our colonies; but they are the necessary consequence of the long credit system, and therefore of that system we would say, *delenda est*.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES: THE YAHOO.

THE natives of Australia have, properly speaking, no idea of any supernatural being; at the same time, they believe in the imaginary existence of a class which, in the singular number, they call YAHOO, or, when they wish to be anglicised, *Devil—Devil*. This being they describe as resembling a man, of nearly the same height, but more slender, with long white straight hair hanging down from the head over the features, so as almost entirely to conceal them; the arms as extraordinarily long, furnished at the extremities with great talons, and the feet turned backwards, so that, on flying from man, the imprint of the foot appears as if the being had travelled in the opposite direction. Altogether, they describe it as a hideous monster, of an unearthly character and ape-like appearance.

The dread of this spectre deters them from venturing abroad after sunset, unless in numbers, and having fire with them, which they conceive intimidates the fiend; and it is probable that from this circumstance arises the fact, that settlers and travellers are seldom disturbed at night by even the most daring tribes.

Of the many evil endowments which the natives attribute as belonging to this fanciful creature, that of carrying off children and females, no traces of whom are afterwards found, appears to be most prominent and dreaded. They also affirm, but with less apprehension, that it occasionally attacks men when single-handed and in the dark; but they do not consider it as equal to one of themselves in an encounter by day, and say that it flies from them, only gaining a victory over the enfeebled by cunning and stratagem. The supernatural agency of the YAHOO is very limited, and confined chiefly to such occurrences as the following:—Appearing suddenly and

unaccountably, pouncing upon and destroying the defenceless, and maintaining certain baneful influences over human life. The latter is considered the most prominent of its attributes, regarding it in some measure to be intended as the destroyer of man. Beyond this the YAHOO has no sort of prevalence, nor, indeed, has any other demon, spectre, or deity, for here ends their idea of supernatural agency, without a thought or fear of future existence. Indeed, excepting this bugbear in some few powers, they neither know of nor can conceive any being more exalted than man.

The following narrative will afford some notion of their ignorance or apprehension of a future state.

In 1839 two natives were sentenced to be hanged for murder at Adelaide, and the interpreter was requested by the clergy to endeavour to make them acquainted with a future state of existence; but so utterly incapable were they of comprehending immortality, that they could only conceive it as a change from one country to another, and were very curious to learn from the interpreter what kind of place it was, if it contained plenty sheepy, plenty bullocky, plenty kangaroo, plenty pishy (fish), plenty whale, plenty flour, plenty bickety (biscuit), plenty bacca, plenty grog, &c. &c.; but what appeared very extraordinary was, that they made no inquiry after Lubra (females), although every other sensual gratification within their limited range of knowledge was alluded to. This anecdote serves in some measure as an illustration of the bluntness of their susceptibility, and preponderance of their sensual appetites, and likewise helps us, by comparison with the notions of the American Indians, Africans, and aborigines of most other parts of the world, to estimate the mean and limited capacity of their ideas. The Indian delights in the prospect of boundless plains stocked with an infinitude of game of every description, with the pleasures of the chase, and the never-tiring delight afforded by his bow and arrow; while the Negro revels in the idea of joining his fathers and his kindred, and of welcoming those who will follow him,—of continued sunshine, of endless palm groves and crystal streams. On the contrary, the New Hollander feels no pleasure in the chase, and follows it only to satisfy his appetite. His numerous Lubras (females) have no place in his affections, and society is only of account to him while it yields him protection or profit. Hence, he passes on through life actuated solely by selfish-

ness and individual enjoyment, and dies unregarded and uncared for.

Reverting to our subject, the following is a story related by Mungaroke, a native of a tribe near Adelaide, of a YAHOO. A gentleman, who required to travel from Encounter Bay to Adelaide at the first settling of the colony, took with him some natives for guides. The party continued onwards very satisfactorily, and passed the Onkaparinga, when it rested for a short period in a strangely formed hollow among the sand hills at the mouth of the river. Listless and inactive from fatigue, the whole of them remained, with the exception of Koteragee, who, upon being questioned as to the cause of his restlessness, with evident circumspection informed them that he once had a very serious adventure upon the spot on which they were with a Yahoo. Curiosity being awakened by his statement, he was requested to detail the circumstances, which he did to the following purport. He, Koteragee, accompanied by two males and one female, were returning from a visit to the tribe resident near Adelaide, when they arrived at the banks of the river Onkaparinga, when Munchee Munchee, one of the party, proposed that they should halt and kindle a fire, by which they could cook their lizards, &c., and refresh themselves, as they would meet with no more water on their journey for a long distance. This being agreed to, the males proceeded accordingly to the bottom of the dell for water, when, to their great surprise and dismay, they espied something lying beside the spring apparently in a sound sleep, which they immediately recognised to be a Yahoo, or one of the natives' arch enemies. After a little deliberation the trio wound up their courage, and determined at least to rid the world of one monster. Accordingly, stepping up to the object of their hate and fear as noiselessly as shadows, they simultaneously discharged a shower of blows on the head of their intended victim, notwithstanding which, the semi-incarnate being sprang upon its feet and attempted resolutely to escape; but finding itself hemmed in on every side, it darted at Bidjoke (one of the trio) with its fiendish talons, who, however, eluded the monster by a backward leap; upon which Munchee Munchee flew at the demon, and with a terrible stroke on the temple brought it to the ground; and then, with Bidjoke, fell upon and held the Yahoo fast, while Koteragee drove his waddie through the skull from ear to ear. Being determined to leave no chance of reanimation,

they threw the carcase into the river, and stood a few moments to observe the issue. The body, although apparently motionless, by some unaccountable means floated to the opposite side of the stream, and to their utter consternation and amazement started at once into life, and bounded off into the furze that grew on the opposite bank.

This story, which was subsequently confirmed by Bidjoke, Munchee, and Koteragee, evidently cost poor Mungaroke a great deal of pain; for while he doled it out, the furtive glances that he occasionally cast over his shoulder too plainly told the apprehension he felt of the Yahoo's reappearance, although the native superstition teaches that it will not approach the presence of the white man.

The preceding narrative, although no doubt an exaggerated statement, suggests the possibility that this object of terror to the natives might possibly have been either a man or an animal of lower grade. It would certainly by no means appear improbable that the unfortunate object just alluded to, against which the vengeance of the natives was so fearfully directed, might have been some unfortunate castaway sailor, runaway convict or sealer from Kangaroo Island, unshaven and unshorn for weeks, months, or years. In favour of this suggestion, it should be known that Old Con, a native near Adelaide, tells his white friends that when Captain Sturt first visited Lake Alexandrina, he and his party were taken by the natives for Yahoos.

On the other hand, a contested point has long existed among Australian naturalists whether or no such an animal as the Yahoo existed, one party contending that it does, and that from its scarceness, slyness, and solitary habits, man has not succeeded in obtaining a specimen, and that it is most likely one of the monkey tribe. In favour of this assertion they bring the united testimony of the natives and settlers to support their opinion; from the latter the two following instances of its appearance have been obtained, by the first of which it appears that a few years ago a Yahoo exhibited itself in the government domains of Sydney before several persons, but quickly effected its escape upon their approach. The second account is from a man named Thompson, who for many years lived upon Kangaroo Island; he being questioned upon the subject, gave the following anecdote. Being out one day in a boat along with two or three others he landed at a creek (which he still points out), and to his astonishment observed a being, exactly corresponding to the description

given by the natives of the Yahoo, sitting upon a point of a high isolated rock, viewing him very unconcernedly. Levelling his musket he fired, when the being, shrieking wildly, disappeared among the contiguous recesses. The appearance of this creature, and the peals of agony that burst on his ear after firing, have left such an impression upon this man's mind that at times both are conjured into existence by the bare recital, and not unfrequently by the moaning breeze.

These statements created a great deal of discussion on the subject, but only tended the more to divide public opinion. The opposite party maintain very firmly that the existence of such a being is purely an imaginary fabrication, and is no more connected with reality than ghosts, goblins, fairies, or such like at home.

It is sincerely to be hoped that this latter opinion is the correct one, and that the onslaught made on the Yahoo, whether man or monkey, is of an equally imaginary character.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Journal of Two Expeditions of Discovery to North-west and Western Australia. By George Grey, Esq., Governor of South Australia.
T. W. Boone.

THESE narratives are replete with interest, and blend information and amusement in a very happy manner, so much indeed, that the reader must have a truly morbid appetite who cannot derive a considerable amount of gratification from their perusal.

In the present publication there is an addition to the ordinary character of works upon similar subjects; for the author, instead of confining himself to a monotonous description of land and water, together with opinions thereon, has worked in a vast fund of personal and individual adventure, which considerably heightens the interest created by his graphic description of this newly-trodden land. The purport of Mr Grey's journey appears, according to Lord Glenelg's instructions, to have been to gain information as to the real state of Western Australia, its resources, and the course and direction of its rivers, mountain ranges, &c. &c. In order to accomplish this task, our author, accompanied by an efficient body of men, sailed from Plymouth on the 5th of July, 1837, and after the usual incidents

of a sea voyage, the expedition reached Hanover Bay, the place of its destination, on the second of the ensuing December, from which period until the middle of April, 1838, the date of quitting this coast, misfortune and hardships marked every step of the expedition, and energies of no mean character were required, to contend with the numberless unforeseen difficulties continually presenting themselves. The fatigue and mischances, however, which this exploring party encountered, they considered amply repaid by the discovery of the river Glenelg, and the knowledge gained of the country and climate, in favour of which Mr Grey thus speaks :—

“I conceive the climate of North-western Australia to be one of the finest in the world, and my reasons for thus thinking are grounded upon the following circumstances.

“I was resident there from the beginning of the month of December, 1837, to the middle of the month of April, 1838 ;—a period of four months and a half: and during the whole of this time, the men under my command were exposed to great hardships and privations. On one occasion three of us slept in the open air, without any covering or warm clothes, for five successive nights, during three of which we had constant showers of heavy rain, and yet did not in any way suffer from this exposure.

“Other detached parties were on various occasions subjected, for a shorter period, to exposure of a similar nature, and no instance occurred of any individual suffering in the least from it. One or two cases of slight diarrhœa occurred, but they could always be traced to some food that had been eaten the day before, and never were sufficiently violent to delay us for a single hour.

“Whilst this perfect freedom from disease existed amongst the party, they had not only to bear exposure of the nature above stated, but the provisions with which I was enabled to supply them were sometimes very insufficient for their wants. During the whole month of March, and part of April, their daily full allowance of food was about 1½lbs. of flour, first made into dough, and then baked in the form of a flat cake upon a large stone.

“This low diet, at the same time that they were compelled to work very hard, naturally rendered some of them extremely weak, and several were, on our return to the coast, in a very reduced state.

“I should here state that we were (perhaps fortunately) unable to carry more than one pint of brandy with us ; hence no spirits were issued to the men, and the non-appearance of diseases of an inflammatory nature may, perhaps, in some measure be attributed to this circumstance.

“The opinion of Captain Wickham, R.N., commanding H.M. ship ‘Beagle,’ is perfectly in accordance with my own. He was upon the coast at the same time that we were, and in a letter to me writes thus :—‘Our cruise has been altogether a fortunate one, as we have been enabled to examine the whole coast from Cape Villaret to this place (Port George the Fourth) without any accident, and the climate is so good, that we have had no sick.’”

This is a testimony of too much importance respecting this portion

of Australia to pass without noticing, inasmuch as the favourable locality here presented for establishing a settlement leaves little doubt that at an early period a thriving community will be found availing themselves of the commercial advantages encircling the territory thus described by the author.

“The cultivated productions for the growth of which the country and climate seem best adapted are, cotton, sugar, indigo, and rice.

“A species of cotton plant grows wild in the greatest abundance, and if a colony was established, and the proper cotton plant introduced, the following advantages would be obtained :—

“Great Britain would possess in Northern Australia a colony standing in the same relation to her manufactories for cotton, that her colonies in the south do to her wool market.

“This colony would also form a sort of entrepot, to which the manufactured cotton would again be exported for the purpose of sale in the islands of the Indian Archipelago or its vicinity, and other parts, where we have at present no trade, and where printed cottons now are, and from the nature of these countries must constantly be, in great demand.

“Thus a fresh supply of cotton for our markets would be obtained, which, coming from an English colony, would give employment to British vessels alone, and the industry of our manufacturers would be called into operation by an entirely new market for cotton goods being thrown open to them, in which the demand for these articles is far greater than the supply could be for many years.

“The natural productions that are at present found in North-west Australia, and might be available for exportation, consist chiefly of timber, gum, lichens, and mimosa bark ; all of which are abundant, and might be collected with a trifling degree of labour.

“There are many varieties of useful timber. Among others, pine, fit for the purposes either of building or making spars for vessels, is abundant and good, and could be readily and cheaply exported, if they were cut in the vicinity of the streams, and floated down to the sea in the rainy season, whereby all land carriage would be avoided.

“I sent to England specimens of five different gums, in order that they might be examined. These consist of an elastic gum, closely resembling Indian rubber,—gum *tragacynth*,—another gum yielded by a sort of caparis, and which I believe to be hitherto unknown,—and two kinds of gum resin.

“The mosses are of various kinds, many of which would afford useful dyes ; and these, together with the gums, would probably be found valuable articles of export ; for the collecting of them is a species of labour in which the native tribes would more willingly engage than any other I am acquainted with.

“Immediately off North-west Cape is good whaling ground. The schooner employed on the expedition fell in with two vessels,—the ‘Favourite,’ Capt. White, and the ‘Diana,’ Capt. Hamott, whalers belonging to Messrs Bennett and Co., of London, and then fishing between North-west Cape and the position usually assigned to the Tryal Rocks. Both these vessels had been very successful.”

Mr Grey having scrutinised this portion of Australia very closely,