

The way we civilise : black and white, the native police

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BLACK AND WHITE;
THE NATIVE POLICE:
A SERIES OF ARTICLES AND LETTERS REPRINTED
FROM THE
"QUEENSLANDER."

BRISBANE: PRINTED BY G. AND J. BLACK (LATE W. THORNE), EDWARD STREET.
1880.

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THE WAY WE CIVILISE.

—:o:—
WE republish in another column a letter originally printed in the *Cooktown Courier*. The writer lays bare a painful sore in our system of colonisation of which few of us are not conscious, but which we are apt in sheer disgust to ignore altogether. He uses strong language, but not stronger than that which is forced from every man who retains the ordinary feelings of humanity when brought in contact with the sickening and brutal war of races that is carried on in our outside settlements, especially those in the North. And there are special reasons why this subject should be again brought under public notice, so that we may at last adopt a line of conduct in dealing with the wretched aborigines of the colony which may reflect less disgrace on the community, and be more successful in saving our outside settlers from molestation.

It is necessary, in order to make the majority of the community understand the urgent necessity for reform, to dispense with apologetic paraphrases. This, in plain language, is how we deal with the aborigines: On occupying new territory the aboriginal inhabitants are treated in exactly the same way as the wild beasts or birds the settlers may find there. Their lives and their property, the nets, canoes, and weapons which represent as much labor to them as the stock and buildings of the white settler, are held by the Europeans as being at their absolute disposal. Their goods are taken, their children forcibly stolen, their women carried away, entirely at the caprice of the white men. The least show of resistance is answered by a rifle bullet; in fact, the first introduction between blacks and whites is often marked by the unprovoked murder of some of the former—in order to make a commencement of the work of “civilising” them. Little difference is made between the treatment of blacks at first disposed to be friendly and those who from the very outset assume a hostile attitude. As a rule the blacks have been friendly at first, and the longer they have endured provocation without retaliating the worse they have fared, for the more ferocious savages have inspired some fear, and have therefore been comparatively unmolested. In regard to these cowardly outrages, the majority of settlers have been apparently influenced by the same sort of feeling as that which guides men in their treatment of the brute creation. Many, perhaps the majority, have stood aside in silent disgust whilst these things were being done, actuated by the same motives that keep humane men from shooting or molesting animals which neither annoy nor are of service to them; and a few have always protested in the name of humanity against such treatment of human beings, however degraded. But the protests of the minority have been disregarded by the people of the settled districts; the majority of outsiders who take no part in the outrages have been either apathetic or inclined to shield their companions, and the white brutes who fancied the amusement, have murdered, ravished, and robbed the blacks without let or hindrance. Not only have they been unchecked, but the Government of the colony has been always at hand to save them from the consequences of their crime. When the blacks, stung to retaliation by outrages committed on their tribe, or hearing the fate of their neighbors, have taken the initiative and shed white blood, or speared white men’s stock, the native police have been sent to “disperse” them. What disperse means is well enough known. The word has

been adopted into bush slang as a convenient euphuism for wholesale massacre. Of this force we have already said that it is impossible to write about it with patience. It is enough to say of it that this body, organised and paid by us, is sent to do work which its officers are forbidden to report in detail, and that a true record of its proceedings would shame us before our fellow-countrymen in every part of the British Empire. When the police have entered on the scene, the race conflict goes on apace. It is a fitful war of extermination waged upon the blacks, something after the fashion in which other settlers wage war upon noxious wild beasts, the process differing only in so far as the victims, being human, are capable of a wider variety of suffering than brutes. The savages, hunted from the places where they had been accustomed to find food, driven into barren ranges, shot like wild dogs at sight, retaliate when and how they can. They spear the white man's cattle and horses, and if by chance they succeed in overpowering an unhappy European they exhaust their savage ingenuity in wreaking their vengeance upon him, even mutilating the senseless body out of which they have pounded the last breath of life. Murder and counter murder, outrage repaid by violence, theft by robbery, so the dreary tale continues, till at last the blacks, starved, cowed, and broken-hearted, their numbers thinned, their courage overcome, submit to their fate, and disease and liquor finish the work which we pay our native police to begin.

This is the ordinary course of events, but occasionally a variation occurs, and the process of quieting the blacks is unusually prolonged. This is particularly the case in the North, where the blacks are more determined, better armed, and have more mountain and scrub retreats than in other parts of the colony. In the Cape York Peninsula the race conflict has hardly diminished in intensity since the whites began it by robbing and shooting the blacks on the occasion of the first rush to the Palmer. The struggle has been obstinate and fierce, and although an unusually large and costly body of police has been for years engaged in exterminating the aborigines, and few whites miss a chance of shooting any they may encounter, the strength of the tribes has not been broken. No doubt their numbers have been greatly thinned, but they have not been cowed. Consequently there is no part of Queensland in which more European lives have been lost, or where the bush is so thoroughly unsafe for the single traveller. It is difficult to estimate the extent of the loss that has been directly incurred, and still more difficult to calculate the indirect injury suffered by the district. Prospecting for minerals could only be carried on by well armed and equipped parties—and this in itself has been a serious drawback to the European miners. But the heaviest loss is being experienced now that the mining excitement has subsided. For, as the writer to the Cooktown paper says, there is plenty of good soil inviting settlement; but how many men dare fix their home in the bush when they know that neither their property nor their lives will be safe from the attacks of desperate savages, whose natural cunning has been intensified by their long struggle for life with the whites. Evidently settlement must be delayed until the work of extermination is complete—a consummation of which there is no present prospect—or until some more rational and humane method of dealing with the blacks is adopted. It is surely advisable, even at this the eleventh hour, to try the more creditable alternative, and to see whether we cannot efface some portion at least

of the stain which attaches to us. We shall recur to this subject, and indicate what in our opinion that alternative ought to be.—*Queenslander*, May 1, 1880.

WHITE AND BLACK.

REVERTING to the subject of the treatment of native blacks by outside settlers and the Native Police, we propose now to indicate the manner in which a reform could be effected. Before doing so, however, we must notice the letter of a correspondent who, under the signature of "Never Never," writes to justify the conduct of the whites. The letter is valuable, because the writer, putting his thoughts on paper, in a frank spirit, proves the accuracy of the description we gave of the attitude assumed by the whites towards the blacks. We compared the spirit in which they acted to that which animates men in dealing with the brute creation. Our correspondent, quite unconsciously, illustrates our meaning when he says of the natives, "And being a useless race, what does it matter what they suffer any more than the distinguished philanthropist who writes in this behalf cares for the wounded half-dead pigeon he tortures at his shooting matches." It never seems to strike him, any more than it apparently strikes hundreds of men accustomed to deal with blacks, that the fact that they are men and women and not pigeons should influence their conduct. And this extraordinary obtuseness of the moral sense is fostered by the employment of a force like the Native Police, which is used to hunt down these human beings as if they were dingoes. The bushman who shoots a blackfellow to try the range of his rifle—as was done by members of the early exploring parties who searched Trinity Bay for a road to the Hodgkinson—has little remorse for doing that which the Government maintains and pays a force to do. No wonder our correspondent complains of our "vilification" of the outside settlers when we apply the term murder to such an act as is described above. We recognise the wonderful effect of custom on the moral sense, and we no more expect a bushman, accustomed to "dispersals," to understand the feeling with which the deed is regarded by most civilised men than we look for an expression of pity from a terrier engaged in torturing a wounded rat. Such men have lost the great lesson of civilisation which teaches us that there is some other law than that of brute force, and that the weakness of any race of our fellow-men does not justify us in dealing with them as the mere caprice of the moment dictates.

However, these generalisations are only useful in so far as they serve to point out to the great bulk of the Queensland colonists the real nature of the system which they, through their Legislature, sanction and uphold. They have not descended to the moral level exemplified in the letter from which we quote, and we have little fear that we shall fail in enlisting their sympathies when we convince them of the reality of the evils which we desire to check. We cannot of course argue first principles over again, and we shall assume that murder, rape, and robbery are crimes whether the victims be black or white. And, that being understood, we must explain further that we entertain no such preposterous idea as that the settlement of the colony is an evil deed which ought to be undone. Nor do we wish to be understood as objecting to the slaying of blacks in defence of the lives or property of settlers. We acknowledge that in many cases the occupation of a tract of country by the whites cannot be effected except at the cost of

a struggle with the aborigines, and wherever that is the case the shooting of blacks is inevitable. But we maintain that the struggle might be prevented in most cases, and might be diminished in all, if entered upon in a more rational and humane fashion. We assert that the unchecked license indulged in by some of the white settlers, and the systematic barbarities practised by the Native Police intensify the resistance of the blacks into a struggle of absolute despair, and that in the conflict the white man sinks to such a level that he only outshines the black savage by the greater ferocity he displays. And this conduct is as foolish as it is criminal, for the blacks speedily discover the superiority of the whites, and would, if permitted, in most cases be willing enough to submit to their occupation of the country, and careful to avoid meddling with them. But they are goaded to such a state of desperation by the promiscuous massacres perpetrated by the police, and the outrages of some of the settlers, that despair lends them the courage to continue the hopeless war, and they go on spearing cattle and clubbing solitary travellers because they find that they have nothing to hope for by abstaining from such practices. The reform to be effected would be the abandonment of the irrational method we now pursue. For the Native Police we would substitute a force composed mainly of white men, assisted by black trackers. The change is necessary, because one great cause of the atrocities committed by the force is due to the fact that the trained savages who compose it are let loose to gratify their thirst for blood and cruelty in the presence generally of only one white man, who having no European witnesses of his conduct hounds on his men, and often joins in the perpetration of their most revolting cruelties. The tone of our correspondent's letter gives an inkling of how an ordinary white man's conscience may be seared and his nature hardened by familiarity with the scenes of bloodshed in the bush. But it can give no idea of the awful depth of brutality to which even an educated European can descend when engaged in a business which keeps him mainly employed in superintending massacres perpetrated by armed savages on mobs of nearly helpless men and women, away from any control or witness, and free to obey the dictates of the worst passions of human nature. The white police, consisting, of course, of good bushmen, should be employed in country where the blacks and whites are, or are likely to be, in conflict. Their duty should be to repress any outrage by the blacks, and for that purpose they should have the same license that is accorded to any hostile force in time of war; these efforts being directed in the first place to the capture and punishment of offending individuals among the blacks, and, if that prove impossible, the punishment of the guilty tribe. But the officers in command should be compelled to report their operations, and they should rigorously abstain from touching or molesting blacks who are quiet and do not meddle with the whites; and they should be further required to protect the blacks from unnecessary molestation by the whites, and be armed, if necessary, with special powers for the purpose.

Such a force might be more expensive than the present one, but it would cost the country indirectly less, for it would speedily pacify whole districts in which constant and heavy losses are being endured by the settlers. We must leave the explanation of minuter details to another occasion, but we have said enough to indicate the broad nature of the reform we advocate. That its expense will be no bar to

its adoption we feel convinced, if the bulk of the colonists come to realise the nature of the system they now adopt in all its naked horrors. Our correspondent remarks, "Our policy towards the blacks is bad, but it is only the game played all over the world." We deny his statement; but, even if it were so, it would still leave us in a unique position. No other settlers have to deal with a race of savages so thoroughly helpless in face of the white man's weapons as our blacks. The Dutch Boer may deal cruelly with the Kaffirs who surround him, but at least he defies the assegaes of a valiant race of barbarians who can wage war with him on something like equal terms. He may be cruel, but at least he is not a coward. There is an irresistible tendency in human nature to regard with a deeper contempt the criminal who takes a cowardly advantage of his victim, than the one who risks his own skin in open conflict. Few readers of Charles Dickens' "Oliver Twist" have not felt that the most contemptible figure in the group of thieves to which they are introduced is the wretched sneak on the "kinchin lay," who confines himself to robbing little children too feeble to resist and too simple to seek for assistance. If we are told that the cruelties practised on our blacks are merely incidents of the struggle carried on with the natives in all parts of the world, we yet plead for a reform. We are at least adding a fresh element of disgrace to the universal horror; for if all the world is practising violent wrong doing, in its dealing with inferior races, we alone have descended to the "kinchin lay" of extermination. —*Queenslander*, May 8, 1880.

WE make no apology for returning to the subject of the manner in which the people of this colony deal with its aboriginal inhabitants. We are determined that the public shall understand what they are doing, and that if no attempt is made at a reform the refusal shall come from people who thoroughly comprehend their responsibility. As far as we are able we shall tear away the veil with which those who know what our system is have hitherto kept it covered, and remove the ignorance in which a considerable portion of the public have been content to remain.

In order to let every side of the question be thoroughly ventilated, we have thrown open our columns to correspondence on the subject, and we have put forward a basis for a reform of the police system. For this purpose we have proposed that the police employed to regulate the natives shall consist of white men, accustomed to the bush, assisted by black trackers. Their duties should be to fight the blacks while in a state of open war against the white settlers who occupy the country; to protect them from molestation by the whites when quiet, and to bring to justice the perpetrators of the many fiendish outrages committed by Europeans on helpless and unoffending blacks; and to punish with discriminating rigor injuries committed by the blacks on the settlers. So far we have not entered into details of how the work should be done; we wish first to establish the practicability of organising such a white force. A correspondent who, under the signature of "Never Never," has undertaken to justify the treatment of black human beings as if they were "pigeons," has declared that our plan is not feasible. He alleges—(1) That good bushmen would be unwilling to join such a force, one that has lately been manned by blackfellows; (2) that the idea of using white police for the purpose is "wildly

absurd," and that in the generality of districts they could not follow the blacks; (3) that the expense of the force would be enormous, that it would be equal to the nucleus of a standing army, and that it would be ruined by long spells of idleness. There are some subsidiary objections which need not be noticed. The objection that a system compelling officers to report their operations, instead of forbidding them to do so as at present, would lead to disorganisation of the force, was probably a mere slip of the pen. We only propose to apply the regulation in force in every other police, quasi-military, or military body employed in the British dominions, with the sole exception of the Queensland native police.

Taking the objections *seriatim*, the first one can be speedily answered. The best bushmen in the colony would gladly join such a force as we project, simply because it would be desirable to offer good wages for reliable men—a very few of the right sort would do a great deal of the required work—and the employment would be honorable, and not degrading as at present. The objection that bushmen would not join a force that has been manned by black boys does not apply, because the change we project would practically create a new force. Besides, if it were not so, did our correspondent ever yet hear of a bushman refusing to undertake any kind of bush work simply because it had been previously performed by an aboriginal black boy? The second objection, that the idea of employing a white force is "wildly absurd," is a rather sweeping statement. Mr. William Miles is a very old bushman, and has been one of far wider experience probably than our correspondent, even so far back as 1868. He did not consider such a project, when mooted by Dr. Challinor, "wildly absurd," but approved of it; and the Hon. W. H. Walsh, acquainted with the value both of mangrove scrub and mountains as shelters for wild blacks, emphatically declared that white men were far more effective in punishing blacks than the Native Police. ("Hansard," vol. VI. pp. 949—963.) We are content to place assertion against assertion, adding to it that even by the very lax regulations of the Native Police force the white officers are supposed to accompany their troopers, and that as a matter of fact the country in which the former cannot travel is not penetrated by the latter. The third objection, that the cost of such a force would be enormous, that it would equal the nucleus of a standing army, and that it would be demoralised by too long spells of idleness, is compounded of statements mutually destructive. If the nucleus of a standing army were employed, their numbers would be so greatly in excess of what would be required for the work to be done that they might be demoralised by idleness. But what sane man would suggest the employment of so many? A considerable number would be required in a newly-occupied district, where blacks and whites were in a state of open war, but this would only be for a short time. A very brief experience of the futility of resistance, and the knowledge that while every act of hostility against the whites would be speedily and sternly checked, they would be carefully protected from injury and molestation while peaceable, would speedily make the blacks ready to submit. If only on the assumption that the blacks have as much intelligence as a dog this view must be correct, and as far as we know in every place where such a system has been attempted it has been thoroughly successful. Once this condition was established, a very small force would only be needed to preserve the peace.

But we have no need to depend on theory in this matter ; we have the experience of South Australia to rely on. Our neighbours in that colony have kept their hands clean, while ours are foully bestained with blood. They have their reward. In their territory very few white settlers lose their lives or property by attacks from the native blacks ; our loss is enormously more heavy than theirs. Yes, but—we shall be told—the South Australians go to great and unnecessary expense in dealing with the aboriginals. That they are unnecessarily punctilious, and go further than we recommend, we are prepared to admit. They employ a white, not a black force, and they transport aboriginal offenders long distances to gaol. But, on turning to the statistics of the two colonies, the one for 1878, the other for 1878-9, the most nearly corresponding periods that we can select, we find that in Queensland the total cost of every description of police was £87,313, and in South Australia only £66,201. And this in spite of the South Australians having a larger white population to regulate, and a larger extent of sparsely occupied bush than ourselves. Evidently, the plan of employing white protectors to deal with the aborigines is not merely more effectual in securing the safety of the settlers, but very much cheaper than our plan. We have shown that the application of the plainest principles of common sense ought to dictate an alteration of our present system ; we now adduce the evidence of experience to show how ineffective and costly it is in comparison with a more rational plan. We speak nothing now of humanity. We address this argument mainly to those whose sense of right and wrong has been perverted by familiarity with our diabolical customs.

In conclusion, we shall quote the testimony of the Hon. W. H. Walsh from the "Hansard," to which reference has already been made. It is valuable as that of a thoroughly practical bushman and squatter who has occupied country teeming with the fiercest blacks, and who has had to do it without any police protection at all. What he said then of the southern coast districts will apply now to the country of the north and west. He told the House that he had agitated for the inauguration of the black police system in Queensland, and agitated unceasingly till he got them in his own neighbourhood. And this was his experience as he told Parliament :—"He asserted solemnly that the number of casualties that occurred, and the number of deaths that took place from collisions with the blacks after the native police arrived in the Wide Bay and Burnett districts, exceeded three times what they had been before."—*Queenslander*, May 29, 1880.

WE are glad to find that correspondents from different districts are taking part in the discussion we have invited on the relations between the blacks and whites in the colony. At first, of course, we had the class of writers referred to in the letter signed "Pioneer," which appears in this issue ; men who dispose of the whole question by rebuking our presumption for writing on a subject with which they are so thoroughly familiar, and of which we know so little ! This plan has been successful on previous occasions when the subject was under discussion, and it has been naturally enough adopted this time. But we were not to be so readily silenced ; the discussion is passing into its second stage. Men well qualified by their experience to judge their value are now criticising our proposals. We did not, of course, suppose that they would be accepted without cavil, even by those who

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think and who are not satisfied with the present relations between the races. We are as glad, therefore, to welcome calm and rational criticism, such as was contained in the letter signed "North Gregory," as the cordial approval of our present correspondent, "Pioneer." Both writers, we may state, are bushmen intimately acquainted with the outside country, and who have had much experience among wild blacks.

Our correspondent "North Gregory" complains that we make our accusations of cruelty against white settlers and the black police in too sweeping a fashion. The complaint is not a just one. We began by drawing a clear distinction between the small section of settlers who do act with barbarity, the majority who do nothing, and the other minority who actively protest. Our contention is that the second class is equally guilty with the first one. Those who passively tolerate cruelty and murder, committed almost in their presence, condone and share the crime. And we do not exempt the much-quoted townsman "sitting in his arm chair."

Every resident of Brisbane who, becoming aware of what is going on, neglects to do what he can in his capacity as citizen and voter to wipe out the stain which rests on the whole colony, shares the disgrace of it. And this is particularly the case in regard to the Native Police. The officer of that force who does not permit brutality in the execution of his duty must be a man of very exceptional firmness of character. He is sent out in charge of savages, naturally prone to cruelty, who have been trained to disregard the few checks their native customs place upon indiscriminate murder, who have had no moral code of any kind substituted for it, and who are so armed and equipped as to give them absolute mastery over the lives and persons of their victims. His duty is to use these savages to keep the wild blacks quiet by shooting them when they are troublesome to the settlers, or when the latter fear they may become troublesome. This is the simple account of his business. He is not permitted to describe what he does, he knows that he has very doubtful legal sanction for any of his actions, but at the same time he is assured that if he keeps the blacks quiet no questions will be asked, and the authorities will remain obstinately deaf to all reports of his proceedings. He may be ever so anxious to protect the blacks from unprovoked aggression, but he is absolutely powerless to restrain any white brute who chooses to madden a tribe by cruel and unprovoked injury. The officer's duty is simply to shoot the savages down, when in their madness they seem likely to become dangerous, and to save the white aggressor from the consequences of his own acts. When we write in an indignant strain of actions like these, we never forget that the *police* themselves are only very partly to blame; the deeds are done by the Government and Parliament of Queensland, who set them about their business. When Judge Jefferies held his "bloody assize" in the west of England the blame of the foul deed was not allowed to rest on the hangman who suspended the victims, but on the King and his officers who ordered the legal massacre to be carried out.

Our correspondent further misunderstands us when he supposes that we are seeking to make the blacks moral. Our aim is a much simpler one. We desire to make peace between the races, and stop the sickening conflict going on. Any attempt to ameliorate the moral and mental condition of the savages themselves is quite another question. Let us give them a fair chance of life before we talk of civilising them. And we venture to say that he misunderstands the blacks themselves when

he speaks of the manner in which they regard forcible and violent assaults on their women. It is necessary to be explicit on this point or the real bearing of some of the incidents we have narrated will be lost. It is true that the aboriginal women have no sense of chastity according to our meaning of the word, and it is equally true that the aboriginal men will offer their women, not exactly to chance strangers, but to visitors whom they are anxious to please. Hiring out women for purposes of prostitution is one of the civilised customs the blacks learn from white Christians. But this custom of regarding women as the property of men, to be given or lent to a friend or an honored guest, is one that has been at some time or other prevalent amongst almost every people in the world, and people who were mentally and morally far above our wretched savages. It was not unknown to the ancient Greeks, and it was common in many of the semi-civilised countries of Asia; but at no time did this custom prevent the forcible abduction of a woman being regarded as the most exasperating insult one man or one tribe could offer to another. And it is so with the blacks. If anyone will take the trouble to enquire concerning the cause of most of their bitterest tribal quarrels, he will find they generally arise from the forcible abduction of women. It is a point of honor with a black man to seize a woman belonging to his enemies, but it is equally a point of honor with the latter to revenge the insult, if possible, with the blood of the offender. The custom, therefore, that prevails among the black police of taking gins from the tribes by force—or threats of force—accompanied, as the action often is, by every aggravation and insult possible, rankles deeply in the minds of the aborigines. They are subjected to the direst indignity which they as individuals or a tribe can suffer, and are spurred on to revenge themselves on some unprotected white—in their eyes a member of the tribe that injured them. Individuals among the settlers occasionally do the same thing, and create much bad blood. The intercourse which takes place between the races after the blacks are “in” on the stations is quite a different matter. It is simply prostitution—a particularly loathsome form of the vice, but having no bearing on the question of which we are treating.

In conclusion, we desire to point out that a force such as we have described in previous articles could regulate evils like these. In newly occupied districts, when the first stage had passed, and the blacks, recognising the impossibility of resisting the white man's weapons, were inclined to submit to the presence of settlers, it would be necessary to watch vigilantly that no unnecessary provocation were given them. Having had, as would probably be the case, unmistakable proof of the power of the police to punish them, it would be necessary in the next place to induce them to rely on the police for protection against injury. We are assuming that the body to be substituted for the present one will be legalised by special enactment. The same law could contain a short and simple code, authorising a certain scale of punishments for white men molesting the blacks. It would be evidently absurd to bring all these offences under the common law, and anything short of homicide might be punished by such fines and short terms of imprisonment as a bench of magistrates could inflict. But in all cases the fine or a part of it should be paid to the injured individual or tribe, in the form of blankets, tomahawks, flour, or some article they could appreciate. Our correspondent, “North Gregory,” is quite right in

saying that it is only by inspiring fear and respect we can influence adult blacks. That is the basis of the system we wish to apply to them, and the ground on which we hope to see them brought under control—equally to the advantage of the pioneers and of the blacks themselves—by a police capable of punishing offenders among them, but equally able to protect the innocent and peaceful.—*Queenslander*, June 19, 1880.

THE correspondence on the aboriginal question serves to illustrate pretty fully the differing opinions on the subject held by settlers in various parts of the colony. Writers opposed to our views generally take the same line in commenting on the facts we have brought forward; they declare that the statements are either not true or grossly exaggerated. To this we can give but one answer—their truth may be investigated by a process which the government can adopt if it pleases. We have received just as many confirmations as denials of our statements, and may fairly claim to have made out a strong *prima facie* case for a thorough enquiry.

But, if we find differences in the views of our correspondents, there is also a remarkable unanimity on some essential points. Hardly a writer ventures to assert that our treatment of the blacks is a matter that does not need apology. One of our correspondents, "North Gregory," who may be taken as an exponent of those who seem to be arrayed against us, we claim as on our side in every essential point. He says that the plan of making the Native Police a secret service has led to abuses; we have insisted on the same view throughout our argument. He declares that it would be better to throw aside all pretence of dealing with aborigines according to English law, and "then we may set about devising some better scheme for subduing them." This is just our contention—the very summary of the reform we desire to effect. The Native Police are, he points out, sent into the bush with impracticable instructions; threatened with the hangman if they do what their superiors expect but do not tell them to do, and certain of ignominious dismissal from the service if they fail in obeying their understood instructions. This, we have repeated again and again, is the very plague-spot of our system—the core from which all its abominations proceed. And these being our points of agreement, wherein do we differ? Simply in the amount of credibility to be attached to particular narratives of cruelty and bloodshed which have appeared in our columns. And yet the same writer who denies these admits that the "savage ferocity" of the black troopers is a necessary quality in any force dealing with the blacks. More than that, he speaks of the "inevitable consequences" of our occupation of the country as something that ought, if possible, to be kept from the knowledge of our townspeople—especially of our women and children. It is just at this point that we find ourselves at variance. We deny that there are any "inevitable" consequences which need be concealed. There is nothing of which any people need be ashamed in taking possession of a country like Australia, occupied only by a few thinly-scattered hordes of savages without even the smallest rudiments of civilisation. That they must suffer is certainly an "inevitable consequence." They must be subdued. It is the law of the whole world that the inferior race must submit to the stronger. We inflict death and pain on the whole animal creation to provide ourselves with the

food we eat. But we hold the man guilty of a shameful crime who in the exercise of his lawful mastery over the brutes inflicts on them unnecessary pain and suffering. And if we, by common consent, punish those who torture an animal, what plea have we to urge for the horrible brutality with which we assert our mastery over creatures lower in the scale of humanity than ourselves, but still men and women able to feel and suffer in the same manner as we do? In the form that our cruelty assumes, in our vices, we acknowledge their humanity, and yet we deny to them the plea for immunity from unnecessary suffering which we admit on behalf of the brutes. That immunity is the first claim we make on behalf of the blacks. We have argued, and our opponents have admitted, that our system of dealing with them leads to abuses of which the degree may be questioned but the existence cannot be denied. We ask for a reform, we are prepared to show that reform is possible, and there are witnesses coming forward in all parts of the colony to maintain the need for it and uphold its practicability. Is our demand an unreasonable one?

We hope that the present session of Parliament will not pass over without some practical effort being made in this direction, and some positive reform initiated. If politicians will not admit the necessity for doing something on what some of our critics are fond of calling sentimental grounds, there is one very practical reason for action: Our whole northern coast invites settlement, and there are scores of rivers and bays where little groups of settlers might establish themselves. But everywhere the dread of the untamed blacks—almost untamable by anything short of extermination under our system—acts as a powerful deterrent. Under a more humane and rational system this constant danger might be removed with comparative ease and speed. And, if neither the sentiment of humanity nor the desire of freeing our settlers from a constant source of danger will influence our legislators, we have yet one more inducement to action to put before them. They have, we hope and believe, some regard for the good name of the colony, some desire to see it stand well in the estimation of their countrymen in the mother country. The statements we have made—the truth of which none know better than those who most loudly denounce them—have gone before the great tribunal of public opinion in the British empire. They may rest assured that those who like ourselves are determined to remove this foul blot on the humanity of our race will not let the matter rest. Any enquiry made, except through the stereotyped official forms adopted by our police authorities to conceal the character of a branch of the service, can only result in the discovery that our allegations merely hint at the truth, which is much fouler than we have dared to depict it. This appeal to Cæsar will be pushed home, if justice and redress are denied by the Parliament of Queensland. We assure those well-meaning men who, having no personal knowledge on the subject, prefer to listen to the comforting assurances of the supporters of our system that we have drawn no exaggerated picture—that we have stated very real and shameful facts. It will be better, far better, for the neutral majority of the colonists to look into the matter for themselves, and voluntarily inaugurate a reform of the abuse, before both enquiry and reform are forced upon us by the indignation of our own people—of a nation that will not knowingly permit such wrongdoing, such base, cowardly, and brutal oppression as we practise on the aborigines of Queensland.—*Queenslander*, July 31, 1880.

CIVILISING THE BLACKS.

IN this column we propose to narrate a few incidents illustrating the relations between whites and blacks in Queensland. We shall take every possible care that nothing appears here but what is true—the plain unexaggerated statement of something that has actually occurred. But it is not always easy to get a true description of these incidents. It is seldom, for instance, that any white spectator is allowed to witness the manner in which the native police transact the business we pay them to do, and they are strictly forbidden by their official superiors either to report their proceedings or to describe in print the simplest occurrence with which they have been officially connected. Moreover, men are naturally reluctant to confess in public deeds which, though sanctioned by our Government and Parliament, and by the public sentiment of a section of our colonists, are yet of a nature which would according to the common law, bring them to the gallows. We do not, therefore, propose to give names of people or localities. It would be unfair to single out individual perpetrators of crime which we, as a community, tolerate and even encourage. Our readers must trust to the care which we may fairly claim to have always exercised in investigating the facts we have laid before them, and believe our assurance that we shall be particularly careful not to add unnecessarily to the disgraceful tale we have to tell. And we regret to add that for the reason we have given there is good cause to believe that the real truth far exceeds anything they will read here. All that these columns will contain may be regarded as mere echoes of the shameful tragedy that has been played since this colony was first founded, and which is continuing actively at the present day, even at the very moment we write.

With these preliminary remarks we shall proceed to tell the story of Toby. This was the name of a black lad, one of a tribe that had its headquarters on a well-known Western station. In that particular tract of country rational humanity had quieted the blacks. The tribe in question, finding how useless it was to contend with the white man's weapons, and not being unnecessarily molested, soon "came in," and their main camp was at the head station. The superintendent, a sensible man, had made an arrangement with one of the blacks, a sort of head man in the tribe. If one of them was guilty of any depredation he warned the head man that it had occurred and demanded the surrender of the offender. He was always produced, even if the tribe had some difficulty in hunting him up, for all knew the value to them of keeping on good terms with the whites. When caught he was duly whipped in presence of the whole assemblage of blacks and whites, the head man of the former agreeing as a sort of assessor with the superintendent as to the amount of punishment. The system answered admirably, and although there were sometimes hundreds of blacks on the run they neither disturbed the cattle camps nor touched the shepherds' huts. But the station passed into other hands, and a new superintendent, who had none of these "d——d Exeter Hall notions," took charge. It happened that Kanakas were introduced on the station about the time, and the blacks at first hardly knew what to make of them, but afterwards became quite friendly with them. One evening Toby, who was a bright young lad, and very useful in working the cattle, but who also possessed a full share of the mischievousness common to growing lads, black and white, took into his head to go with two other black lads to the hut of a Kanaka shepherd, about a mile from the head station. What happened there is not very clear. The Kanaka came into the head station declaring that they asked him for rations, and were going to kill him; but as he arrived with his boots on, and not at all blown, it is not likely that three active young blacks would have let him escape so easily if they had really meant mischief. It is probable that he was timid, and the boys had asked him for sugar, and that he became frightened, and they thought it a great bit of fun. On examination, it appeared that his ration of sugar was gone—or at least so much of it as a Kanaka would be likely to have left near the end of the week. Undoubtedly Toby had offended, and the former superintendent would have given him a crack with his whip when next he saw him. Toby evidently expected something of the kind, and, as was his custom when he had been in mischief, absented himself for a week or two. On his return the blacks told Mr. ——— that he was in the camp, probably expecting that he would go down and give him his fair deserts. The superintendent, however, telling the storekeeper to accompany him, went to the camp, and, seeing Toby there, spoke to him mildly, half jokingly, and warned him not to do such a thing again. Then, as if he had dismissed the subject, he told him to get the horses, for he would be wanted to go down to the cattle run. Toby cheerfully obeyed, and the three started in the direction indicated, poor Toby, in his joy

at being so easily forgiven, chatting merrily. When out some distance, Mr. ——— quietly remarked, "I am going to shoot you, Toby." The black turned round smiling, thinking this was some joke, and saw Mr. ——— coolly pulling out his revolver. The wretched boy, in an agony of sudden fear, crouched on his saddle, putting out his hands and shrieking, "Baal shoot—baal shoot!" when his master sent a bullet crashing through his brain. The two whites then returned leading the riderless horse. This fact was much discussed in the neighborhood of ——— Downs, as it was well known. Some people approved of the action, as being the best way of "putting the fear of God in the blacks," and preventing them from at any future time doing mischief; but the majority, though quite admitting the right of Mr. ——— to deal as he liked with a "nigger," were of opinion that it was rather a dirty transaction. The Kanaka who was the aggrieved party was genuinely horror struck when he heard of the affair—but then he was only a South Sea Island savage.

On ——— Downs station there was a tribe of blacks who were quiet and quite harmless. But, in a large tract of desert country to the north of it, there was another tribe hostile to them, and to the whites. These "myalls" occasionally made a raid on ——— Downs, and plundered huts, &c., but the station blacks, who feared and disliked them, were always ready to warn the whites of their coming. After one of their raids, the superintendent sent for the native police. Sub-inspector ——— arrived with his troopers, and started out for the scene of the depredation. A young gentleman who was on the station acquiring "colonial experience" thought he would like to add to it by accompanying the police on an expedition which appeared to him, naturally enough, as a legitimate act of war. The party started, and they got on the tracks of the "myalls"—tracks which the troopers could follow as easily as an ordinary white man can follow a beaten road. The track led out into the desert, an uncomfortable region of sand and spinifex, where water was doubtful, and little food could be got for the police horses. Still, if the blacks who had made the raid were to be punished, it would be necessary to follow them there. The track led through a spur of a low precipitous range of hills, containing rock-surrounded pockets, from which escape would be difficult to any human beings penned up in them. Near one of these places the party espied a small troop of blacks, and to the astonishment of the new chum, who recognised them as belonging to the station tribe, and quite innocent of any outrage, the officer gave the word to the troopers to run them in to the pocket. They succeeded in penning up a small group of defenceless creatures who were shouting appeals for mercy to the sub-inspector by name. The new chum, who had in his astonishment followed the example of the others and dismounted, cried out to the sub-inspector, "Why, Mr. ———, these are our blacks." The answer he got was an angry "Stoop down, d——n you," for he was in the range of the sub-inspector, who was anxious to try the quality of a new sporting rifle he had purchased, and was taking deliberate aim at a wretched creature who was making frantic attempts to escape by clambering up the naked rock. The inspector's rifle was a good one, and his target was soon writhing in his death agony on the sand. The troopers "got" two more of the little group; the rest escaped. Then they returned home. They had done the work for which the State paid them—they had shot some blacks. To be sure they had not gone near the real offender, and they had exasperated a friendly tribe, but that is a matter with which we, their employers, do not concern ourselves.

On ——— Downs Station the blacks were "troublesome." How they became so does not concern this particular narrative, but they had taken some sheep. The native police were not available, but the partners who owned and managed the station got a trusted man and a neighbor who was willing to help them, and they started out to look for the offenders. They were fortunate enough to come across a mob of blacks away from the scrub, just before evening. The affair was quite a successful one. The blacks were paralysed with fear; some took to trees, some lay down to await their fate, others attempted to fly. Men on good stock-horses, quick to turn and pursue a quarry, armed with revolvers, can "get" a good many under these circumstances. They rode down the flying ones, and then returned quietly to practise shooting on the blacks perched in the trees. Altogether they managed to dispose of twenty-two, and then they camped at a neighboring waterhole, had their supper, and slept as men sleep who have done a good day's work. In the morning they saddled up to go home, but one of the number, a prudent one, remarked, "We ought to see that we have made an end of those ———." Accordingly he went carefully over the scene. Most of the blacks were stone dead; some were groaning in their last agonies; a few who had not been mortally wounded seemed to be reviving. Blacks have a wonderful capacity for enduring severe wounds and recovering from

the effects of them. Mr. —, knowing this, carefully finished each one of the groaning wretches who looked as if he might revive. Those that were evidently dying he left alone. And, as revolver cartridges cost money, he economically battered in their temples with one of the blacks' clubs that had been left on the field of battle (?).—*Queenslander*, May 15, 1880.

II.

A WESTERN squatter, taking his wife out to his station, had in his household two blacks, husband and wife. The wife, a young girl, came from New South Wales, and having been brought up from childhood among white people could speak no other language than English, and had in all respects the habits of an English girl of the lower classes. She was an excellent servant, could sew neatly and well, cooked fairly, and was neat and clean in her person and habits. Her "benjeman," Starlight, was also a civilised black, spoke English well and correctly, was a good stockman, and very handy with horses. The pair were hired at fair wages, and made as good use of their money as any of the white employes on the station. After serving the squatter who took them out west for a while, Starlight and his wife signed an agreement with one of his neighbors for, we believe, an advanced rate of wages. Their new employer was unmarried, and a number of young men were about the station. Polly, the black girl, was a source of great amusement to the whole crowd. She had no objection to flirtation, and probably enjoyed the evident jealousy of her "benjeman." For, strange as it must appear to some supporters of our present system of dealing with them, it is nevertheless a fact that the blacks are very much like the rest of us, and have the audacity to cherish similar sentiments. One evening Starlight returned home in the dusk from a hard day's work, and he heard cries coming from an outbuilding belonging to the head station. The cries were those of his wife—or "gin" we shall call her. He forgot that being a black he ought not to be a man, and hastened to the spot. There he saw one of the young overseers engaged in what, if she had been a white girl, would have been called a criminal assault on Polly. Still forgetting himself, he threw himself upon the white overseer and grappled with him. They struggled and fell. Starlight reaching his hand out seized a shear blade lying on the ground, and scored his antagonist's shoulder. It was a flesh wound, but the black, the moment he had inflicted it knew what his fate would be, and let go his grip of the overseer, who cried out, "I am stabbed," to the group of men who, attracted by the noise, hurried to the spot. Starlight slipped away from them in the gathering darkness, and escaped into the thick growing timber. A council of war at the head-station came to the conclusion that a black who had, under any provocation, raised his hand against a white ought not to live. They accordingly offered the half-wild blacks camped at the head station a reward for his capture. This the savages readily agreed to effect, for they knew he was unarmed, and being a stranger to them they had no pity for him. Accordingly they went away next day, and returned triumphantly. They did not bring Starlight, but they had caught him. Finding, however, some difficulty in bringing in their prisoner, they had *hamstrung* him, and he was then lying at the disposal of the whites, if they chose to go to the spot. However, the people of the station were spared the trouble of finishing their work. Sub-inspector — and his troopers arrived that afternoon, and on being informed of the circumstances he very obligingly sent a couple of the "boys" with their rifles, who, being led to the spot by the station blacks, ended Starlight's agony by blowing out his brains. The wounded overseer was well in a week.

It is wonderful what vitality the blacks possess. Mr. X., superintendent of — Downs, was riding with his storekeeper over an almost unused end of the run—poor country, with spinifex growing on it. Suddenly he espied the tracks of a blackfellow. There were some "myalls" in the ranges not far distant, but they had committed no outrage of any kind, and this was probably the track of one. Soon Mr. X.'s quick eyes espied a black in the long spinifex, endeavouring to pass himself off for a blackened stump—a manœuvre often more successful than those who have not seen it practised would believe. "Ha, ha! there he is," he laughed, as he rode towards the object. It was an old grizzled black, bent with growing infirmity, and he had a nulla in his hand. The poor old creature held out his hands deprecatingly, and jabbered in his fear. Mr. X. motioned him to run, which, after a moment's hesitation, he did. The superintendent was a sportsman, and did not care about shooting his game sitting. As the old black ran, he followed, putting his horse into an easy canter, and tried a snap shot with his revolver. The ball evidently pierced the old man's back, as the bright red blood began to flow. He stopped and turned again, begging for life with beseeching gesture. Mr. X., who had reined up his horse, again mo-

tioned the game to run. The old creature tottered on, panting hard, the blood running freely down his body. Mr. X. tried another snap shot, again successfully. The old man staggered—then recovering himself, turned and flung his nulla with such unexpected force that it went singing past the ears of his pursuer. This angered Mr. X., who had not up to that time lost his good humor, and he spurred his horse after the old creature, who was wildly staggering on, and fired his third shot. This brought the game down, and as the two men sat on their horses watching the final convulsions of the old blackfellow lying on the ground before them, Mr. X. remarked to his companion, "Isn't it wonderful what strength they have? fancy that old — running on with two bullets through his loins!"—*Queenslander*, May 22, 1880.

III.

It has been objected that the incidents narrated in this column constitute a Newgate Calendar. This is true to a certain extent. The crimes recorded equal in atrocity those described in the publication mentioned. But the Newgate Calendar is a list of crimes which have been punished, and against which the strong hand of the law is always directed. This column contains a record of crimes which are not punished, and which the administrators of the law in the colony tacitly sanction. It is one thing to publish such incidents for the mere purpose of satisfying a morbid curiosity, and another when the publication is intended to arouse the public conscience in order to put a stop to the continual perpetration of the foulest outrages. The truth of the statements we have made and are making is also questioned. We were prepared for the denial. At the present time we are only able to say that every incident narrated has been accepted on good authority, and is, we believe, as true as any other statement of fact appearing in this journal.

With regard to the story of Toby, which our correspondent "Never Never" declares false from internal evidence, we are authorised by our informant to say that if the law officers of the Crown are willing to take action in the matter he is prepared to supply them with the name of the man who shot Toby, of his companion who saw him do it, and the place and date of the occurrence. If the public really believe that the incidents narrated here are mere fictions or exaggerations, and that there is consequently no necessity for reforming our system of dealing with the blacks, the question can easily be settled. A Royal Commission, armed with power to grant indemnity to witnesses, similar to the one appointed to investigate the Trades Union outrages at Sheffield, and authorized to travel from place to place to collect evidence, would speedily convince the most sceptical that this record is but a faint indication of the shameful truth. If such a commission is appointed we shall be happy to furnish its members with data to commence their investigations. Until then we shall continue to withhold names of persons and places. No ordinary commission can possibly elicit the truth, because eye-witnesses are not likely to give evidence of occurrences which would certainly endanger their necks and those of their acquaintances, more especially as the crimes which they would describe have been treated as venial offences, or condoned by every Government that has held power in the colony.

English people may hear, unmoved, of cruelties perpetrated on men, but revolt at the idea of foul outrage committed on women. It was this feature of the Bulgarian atrocities—these imitations of our native police system attempted by the Turks, which aroused so much indignation in England—that caused the greatest exasperation in civilised Europe. Our readers may suppose that in the massacres perpetrated by the native police—which we employ them to perpetrate—women and children are unmolested. If so, they are greatly mistaken. It is true that the *lives* of women and children are often, perhaps generally, spared; but even this is a rule with a great many exceptions. A few incidents that have occurred within the last three or four years will show how the matter stands.

In the neighborhood of a northern town where the blacks are "bad" a small body of troopers, under the direction of a white officer, were sent to punish them. They returned, bringing down the main street a naked black girl captured by them. Her appearance attracted quite a crowd, and a local storekeeper offered her captors a pound for their prize. The bargain was concluded, and the captured girl handed over. Her purchaser took her home to his wife to be trained up as a servant. But in the evening the troopers came for her, and, carrying her to some ridges behind the main street, kept her through the night for the gratification of their passions. In the morning they turned her loose in the vicinity of her purchaser's house.

A squatter in the North-west was out on his run with his stockman, and he heard in the distance shots. He had heard that the native police were out and at the

work we pay them to do. Riding on their tracks he found, first, a young girl, apparently about 15, lying stretched on the ground, with a bullet wound in her head. Going on he saw another woman also dead, and also with a bullet wound. This was done, not by Circassians or Bashi Bazouks, acting under the orders of a Moslem ruler, but by a force maintained, equipped, and paid for by the church-going Christian people of Brisbane and Queensland.

A man who accompanied a police officer in a northern district was present at a raid upon some blacks. He shared the officers' tent. The troopers were of course round them. They had a prize, a young black girl, little more than a child. This man, an old bushman, but not so seasoned as our own officers are, could not sleep because of the yells, cries, and moans of the unhappy child as each brutal savage, clad in the uniform of our Government, violated her in turn. They did not finish by shooting her, but left her in the morning in a dazed agonised condition for her tribe to find her—and be disposed towards friendship with the whites by the spectacle.

In concluding this particular paper, it is necessary to warn readers against feeling indignant with the native police. We equip this force, and send it out to do the work which is described in these columns. We refuse to have any report of what is done; all we ask is that they shall do what they please and say nothing. We arm ferocious savages and send them out under single white men, who are only blamed if they are dilatory in shooting blacks. For us to blame the force that does the work would be as improper as it would be for a man who fired a gun into a crowd to cast blame for the wounds inflicted by the bullet on the weapon.—*Queenslander*, June 5, 1880.

IV.

THE *Western Champion*, published at Blackall, in its issue of the 26th ultimo, has an article commenting on our proposals for dealing with the aborigines, and the incidents narrated in this column. The editor takes a different view from ourselves, but writes moderately and in a reasonable spirit. He is, however, mistaken in doubting the accuracy of one incident in the first article of this series. He says:—"The story of the young gentleman who was gaining colonial experience on a western station is in the main correct, but the tribe who were punished for their depredations were not station blacks as the new chum believed. Probably his slight acquaintance with the aborigines made it unable for him to distinguish between the wild and tame article." We repeat that the blacks shot on the occasion were station blacks—that is, blacks who camped when not out hunting near a head station, that they could talk broken English and were known to the troopers, and finally that they were well known not to belong to the tribe that committed the hut robberies which led to the police raid, being in fact quite innocent of any injury to the whites. We fancy the "new chum" referred to, an experienced bushman now, will be rather indignant at being told that he did not know blacks of a tribe with which he was perfectly familiar. And, "new chum" as he was, it is probable that he had as many opportunities of knowing and distinguishing blacks, at the time the affair occurred—about two years after his arrival in the district—as the editor of the *Champion* himself.

In another part of the same article the writer says:—"The tragic end of Mr. Welford, who attempted to introduce the civilising plan proposed by the *Queenslander*, was sufficient evidence that such a plan was a mistake, and probably made the whites understand that the only chance of saving their lives and property was to drive the enemy out of the district." To this statement we have received the following reply by a contributor:—

"The *Western Champion* quite misunderstands the circumstances under which poor Welford met his death, which, on the contrary, illustrate the necessity of the reform advocated by the *Queenslander*. I knew Welford personally, and was camped on his country, at the place he afterwards made his main camp, some three or four months before he occupied it with his cattle. He was a man who always got on well with the blacks, treating them justly and firmly; and if his neighbors had acted in the same way, and the black police had been kept away from the lower Barcoo, would have been alive now, or at least would not have died under the nulla nulla strokes of exasperated savages seeking revenge for the slaughter of their friends. He told me himself how on bringing his cattle round by Cooper's Creek to his country—he was compelled to take a very circuitous route from Elizabeth Creek to get water, as the drought of 1868 had not quite broken up—he travelled for a week or two in company with a small tribe of myall blacks. These savages, not having had any experience of the whites, and only knowing the black police by repute, were inclined to be friendly, as they generally are. Mr. Welford, and partner, and stock-

man were, I think, the only three white men with the cattle, but the myalls readily helped them, and were wonderfully quick in finding out how to make themselves useful. He gave them one or two calves too young to travel, and he assured me they never attempted to touch any others. He parted company with this tribe on arriving near the junction of the Thompson and Barcoo, and travelled up the latter river to his country. This was at the time apparently a sort of debatable land between different tribes—and it was certainly frequented by the blacks who hunted further up the river, where they had been hunted down and shot like dogs *for years before Welford's death*. When he told me what I have narrated above, Mr. Welford had sufficiently established himself on his country to be able to leave the cattle in charge of others. He was quite confident that he would be able to manage the blacks safely, but foolishly refused to recognise the danger he incurred by the action of the whites further up the river, and more especially by the extension in his direction of the 'patrols' of the black police. No man knows the exact particulars of his death, which occurred some considerable time afterwards, for he was alone at the time, having sent his only white companion away on an errand. His body was found floating in the waterhole, with the marks of blacks' clubs on his head. But we, who were camped on the country even before he reached it, incurred no loss but some trifling pilferings, checked easily, and, except in one instance, without effusion of blood, and this I am thoroughly convinced was due to the fact that the black police had not reached us, and the camps were under the charge of conscientious men, who would not permit unprovoked molestation of the savages. But further up the river this was not the case. Blacks were shot—well, simply because they were blacks. The police extended their 'patrol,' and I need not tell you what that means. In consequence of all this poor Welford was killed, probably by a tribe that had been 'dispersed,' and were seeking for the first unsuspecting white they could find to revenge the death of their friends. It is the same old story that goes on repeating itself to the present day. The man who shoots blacks to try the range of his rifle, or to gratify the mere pleasure that some men seem to experience in hunting down human beings as a sort of game, escapes punishment. He never falls under the blacks' spears or clubs. But his neighbor, who is an upright and humane man, pays the penalty. He knows the blacks—he knows that in their natural state they have a clear idea of justice, and relies on it in his dealings with them. But his calculations are upset when the tribe in whose country he is living is driven mad by experiencing the sort of 'justice' the native police and some of the white settlers give them. The blacks pay the Europeans a high compliment—they abandon their own habits and adopt ours—and they show what apt scholars they are by braining the first unoffending and friendly white man they can find. Until some equitable system such as that proposed by the *Queenslander* is adopted, outsiders must die as poor Welford died, or take part in the disgusting and murderous hunting down of the wretched feeble savages that is constantly going on. The Barcoo, for some years before Mr. Welford's death, admirably illustrated the working of the different systems. The head of it was occupied in the first instance by gentlemen who did what the *Queenslander* urges—they defended their own property, but let the blacks when harmless rigorously alone. There were few wild blacks killed, and only under conditions that the tribes themselves would admit were just. The whites lost no lives, and little property. In a very short time the myalls understood the conditions of peace, and from that time forward there was absolute safety for the whites. I lived in that part of the district, and have slept alone in a log hut, with a big hole in the logs, within 400 yards of a camp of probably as many blacks, the majority being pure myalls, who were in a state of furious excitement over some tribal quarrel, and was never in a moment's danger of being disturbed. I have ridden alone and unarmed among hundreds of them, miles from any other white man, and far from the road or track, where they could easily have knocked me over—indeed, I have pulled up my horse to talk to individuals, and had scores of them crowding round, all naked, painted, and with their spears and nullas in their hands. Yet I was quite safe, simply because the blacks knew that if they touched me they would be severely punished, but that if they left the whites alone they would be safe. And, what will seem to town readers more strange, I knew well a black 'boy' who bore the scars of his master's bullets, fired at him when he was a myall, as punishment for having taken part in spearing some cattle. That black and his tribe had from the first admitted the justice of the punishment, and the squatter who shot him had no more attached follower in after years—when the tribe was let in—than the young man who bore the mark of his bullet. And although this occurred a good many years ago, and the gentleman in question must have exposed himself hundreds of times to

the chance of a spear thrust or a nulla blow from the 'treacherous' blacks whose propensity for stolen beef he so summarily checked, he is alive and well now, and never had another 'difficulty' with the tribe. Further down the river the system that the *Queenslander* denounces and the *Champion* upholds was adopted. Mr. Welford's death was one of the many sad results of it."—*Queenslander*, June 12, 1880.

V.

THERE is no district in the colony where the war of races is carried on with more persistency than the Cook district, and from nowhere do we receive more narratives of loss of life and property. The cost of the war of extermination that has been carried on in that part of the colony is almost incalculable; numbers of white men have lost their lives, property in the shape of horses and cattle to the value of many thousands of pounds has been destroyed, and the country has spent thousands in the maintenance of an exceptionally large force of black police. It will, therefore, be interesting to learn how all this expenditure of blood and money was forced upon the colony.

When the first diggers arrived on the Palmer the blacks were inclined to be friendly. They were astonished at the irruption of strangers, and curious, as all savages are, concerning the newcomers. But the curiosity was good humored, and they did not even shew a disposition to pilfer from the first comers, who reciprocated the good will of the aborigines. After this other men arrived, and the whites became more numerous. It happened that the blacks had been fishing in one of the waterholes, using as is their custom the leaves of a tree to stupefy the fish. In this manner they had got a great number which were lying thrown out upon the bank. Only some old men, women, and children were left in charge of the fish, the men having gone away hunting. They had not injured the whites, and, having respected their property, feared no injury from men who appeared to be friends. But some white men, coming down to the waterholes, saw the fish, and thinking they would agreeably vary their diet, took some. The old blacks jabbered but made no resistance. Going back to camp the white men exhibited their prize, and others went down to the river and carried off the lot of fish which had been left by its owners, trusting to the honesty of the whites. This made the blacks "sulky," and a few days after a party of whites followed some of the men up a hill. It is not very clear what the whites intended to do, but the blacks, not unnaturally, supposed that men who stole their fish were not friends; they "treacherously" sent a shower of spears, wounding one white man in the heel. This was the commencement of hostilities on the Palmer.

Soon after this a large party landed at what is now Cooktown to open a road from that port to the new diggings. There were white policemen, some black troopers, Government officials, and diggers. They started up country. At the first river they reached they came on a mob of blacks disporting themselves in the water. The savages, scared, took to their heels, but the troopers succeeded in capturing a woman and child. There was no intention of injuring these people, but it did not seem to strike the whites that they had no right to take possession of them. The child was given some bread and jam, and allowed to run away; the woman was retained. Unfortunately the Snider rifle of one of the troopers exploded by accident, and the ball shattered the knee and thigh-bone of the gin. This was about nightfall. The whites endeavored to bind up the wound of the woman, who howled in her agony, the blacks of the tribe answering with coe-ee-s from across the river. In the morning the whites, on resuming their journey, left the dead body of the gin in their camp. There were, we believe, no presents left with her body, no attempt made at explaining to the blacks how she had been killed. A day or two afterwards her tribe "treacherously" attacked the whites at Battle Camp, and were beaten back with great slaughter. After this it was open war on the blacks. Two blacks with their gins were seen ahead of the party, and two black troopers started after them. Shots were heard, and presently the troopers returned with the women. That night the white policemen were set to watch the camp—the black troopers being left to enjoy their prize.

At another river, the Laura, we believe, more blacks were seen, and at once "dispersed." Judging by the scraps of paper found on them, it was the same tribe that had followed the expedition.

One incident of this "dispersal" is thus described by a witness of it:—Two black troopers had got a wild black as prisoner. They marched him between them. He was trembling, and made a movement as if to escape, when one of the troopers knocked him down with his rifle, and the other setting his foot upon the prostrate wretch deliberately blew his brains out.

Thus having marked their track with blood, the expedition reached the Palmer where already hostilities had been begun. They continue to the present day, and there is little sign of abatement in the mutual war of extermination waged between the races — *Queenslander*, June 19, 1880.

VI.

As a rule the northern blacks, even belonging to tribes now most desperately hostile to the whites, were friendly to them when the races first met. A letter from the well-known old colonist, Captain Paseo, published in another column, supplies the all-sufficient reason for the murderous attack by the coast blacks on the party led to Cape York by Kennedy, the explorer, and the death of the leader and most of his men. As it was in those days, so it is now.

It will be remembered that in the last issue of the *Queenslander* we described the commencement of hostilities in the Cook district, and the incident that we are about to narrate will show that under the management of such a police force as we desire to see established peace might have been restored even after the first effusion of blood, and many valuable lives saved. The Normanby was prospected after the Palmer had been opened, and the blacks on that river, if not the same tribe that had been so ruthlessly shot down on the road to that place, were close neighbors, and must have known what had happened. The first prospectors of the Normanby, a party, we believe, of five men, saw a lot of blacks who brandished their spears in a menacing manner. One of the whites raised his rifle, but his companion knocked up the muzzle of the weapon, and told him not to fire. The blacks, who were watching, immediately responded to the friendly demonstration by lowering their spears, and making amicable gestures. A sort of interchange of friendly signals took place, each party inviting the other to come over. Neither blacks nor whites, however, had sufficient confidence to accept the invitation to fraternise, so after a parley they separated with every appearance of goodwill. The prospectors remained some time, and neither their horses nor themselves were molested by the blacks, although by the intermingling of the tracks it was evident that the savages had been among the animals, probably examining with curiosity the strange creatures.

Another instance of the possibility of maintaining friendly relations with the blacks can be found in the first foundation of the township of Cairns. What was done by exploring parties who first searched Trinity Inlet, looking for a track across the mountains, we cannot say, having no trustworthy narrative. The blacks were shot at without provocation, and it is probable some were killed. It was notorious that the property of the savages was taken without hesitation. One or more canoes were appropriated, and as these canoes had been hollowed out of logs, slowly and with great labor by the use of stone implements and fire, they represented to the makers most valuable property. And at least one black child, belonging to a Cairns tribe, was taken away by the whites. And yet, after the first formation of the township, the Government official sent to superintend the establishment of the place, publicly said in Cooktown— after recounting instances of the peaceful disposition of the blacks —“ If the people of Cairns do not have them cutting wood and carrying water about the township within six months it will be their own fault.” Our northern files record the present relations between the races.

The war of extermination that followed the events described in the previous paper was marked by the usual features. We propose to narrate a few incidents, but, following our usual practice, we shall not indicate here the individual officers of police implicated, as it is we colonists who authorise the deeds, not they who commit them, that must be blamed. And it is also necessary to state that, owing to the formation of the country, the superior weapons used by the blacks, and their dexterity and cunning, the hunted savages succeeded in inflicting much damage on the whites. Many men and some women were “dispersed” by them under most painful circumstances, the blacks practising all the cruelties perpetrated by our police. The pitiful fate of these victims of our system have been described at different times, and we have read of the constant and heavy losses of valuable stock. The incidents we are about to describe give the other side.

An officer, with a detachment of troopers, following the usual plan of patrol—*i. e.*, shooting down blacks everywhere and at all times—came on a camp in day time. The young men were all away; none but old men, women, and children remained. The old men were duly “dispersed;” there was the usual stampede and rush of women and children. Some seven women took refuge on a hill. As a rule, the troopers do not care about killing women, but on this occasion they got the order to do so and the seven women were shot down. It was thought desirable to make a clean

sweep, and they began on the children. One child was knocked down by a trooper, who dashed its brains out with a stone. Another little toddler was knocked over, and, as the trooper stood over it with a big stone intending to repeat the operation, his officer shouted to ask whether it was a boy or a girl. "Boy, mamac" (the name black troopers give their officer). "Save him, then," was the answer. The little fellow was saved. Some readers of these lines will remember the boy, and the scar on his forehead from the first knock-down blow.

On another occasion one gentleman went on the tracks of a police officer who had been sent to follow and punish the blacks for one of the many murders of whites that had been committed. He found two women with bullet holes in their heads, but no sign that the men had been caught or touched. The officer returned, reporting that he had followed and severely punished the guilty tribe.

A detachment of police went on patrol outside the diggers' encampment, and came across some blacks. These savages had done nothing; no outrage on whites had been committed at the time within a hundred miles of the place. This was in the daytime, and the blacks were an ordinary travelling party, including men, women, and children. There happened to be another white man with the troopers, and he was astonished to see them immediately open fire and charge the flying blacks. It was as usual a simple massacre, and with the ordinary accompaniments. The women and children were frantic with terror, and one poor little fellow, confused and not knowing what he was doing, was knocked down by a trooper's horse, and horribly trampled to death. Several men were shot, and one young girl captured—and treated as savages treat women who fall into their hands.

Again, a party of whites were with a detachment of police making their way over a new track across the ranges. The blacks in the neighborhood were innocent of any offence against the whites. But as they went along, three blacks showed themselves on a distant point of rock. They did nothing but simply look at the travellers. At the suggestion of the officer the troopers tried their hands at picking off the men, as they would try a long shot at a strange animal. Their rifles were good, and their aim true, and two of the unhappy savages paid the penalty of coming within rifle range of Christians by their death.—*Queenslander*, June 26, 1880.

VII.

THIS series of papers may appropriately end with instances of the manner in which the black troopers themselves—the instruments our Government use for the purpose already described—are treated. These men, whatever we may think of their deeds, deserve from the community some consideration. They are recruited, drilled, clad in our uniform, and sent out to do our work, which they perform faithfully. In punishing them for any misdeeds they commit, it is evident that there can be no necessity for extraordinary proceedings—nor need they be dealt with outside the law. There is neither any difficulty in identifying the offenders, in capturing them, nor in affording them the benefit of a legal trial. They all understand English, and many, if not most of them, quite comprehend what a trial means. We will now give a few recent incidents characterising the treatment they occasionally receive when in their turn they fall victims to our merciless and bloody system.

Discharged troopers may often be seen employed on stations, and it may be said that they are not usually the best of "station boys;" in fact, the complaint is commonly made that an old "police boy" will excite a spirit of mischief among the quiet station blacks, and that they are "schemers," and so forth. This is probable. The service, the Native Police, is not exactly a school of morals, nor is it likely to teach savages any other law than that of the strongest—the rule that a man may do exactly what he pleases to those who are too weak to resist him. Some troopers die in the service—very few indeed from wounds received in actual conflict, for they seldom meet with genuine resistance. The majority of police officers treat their "boys" well; some with great kindness. But there are exceptions. And there is an unwritten rule in the service according to which refractory troopers are disposed of. The practice is well known, although of course, like most of the work done by the Native Police, it is steadily ignored by the authorities. At one time it used to be known as having the trooper "passed out of the district"—the phrase being a euphuism for the fact that he had been privately taken to a secluded spot in the bush and shot. It has been spoken of as "giving him a run for it," alluding to a plan that has been adopted on some occasions of giving the wretch a chance for his life—a start, and the opportunity of dodging the bullets of the firing party. But it was more commonly covered by a report which described the trooper as having died of some disease. One officer has been known to give the disease in a particular case as

"rheumatism," deriving some satisfaction from the jocular remark that the boy suffered from stiffness—which, as he was lying dead in a scrub with a bullet through his head, was quite true.

We will confine our instances to two, selecting recent ones—for the practice is not an old one, and has certainly not been abandoned. The cases occurred in the North.

The first case was that of a "boy" known as "Blondin." This trooper had "deserted"—that is, he had run away from one detachment to go back to the place from which he had been sent. The reason he gave for his action was that a gin belonging to his own tribe was attached to the camp to which he returned. The gin did not belong to him, but he seemed unwilling to leave the neighborhood even of a woman who belonged to the far-distant tribe from which he had been taken. He was arrested, handed over to an officer for punishment, and taken to the edge of a scrub and shot.

The next case was that of "Corney." This trooper had committed some offence of which we do not know the nature. He also was taken to a scrub, and found in a leaden bullet a sufficiently fatal disease to end his days.

The death—"execution" we presume it will be called—of one black trooper was accompanied by such circumstances of peculiar horror that it shows to what a depth white men may descend if compelled to follow the profession of a Native Police officer. The man to be shot was fastened to his gin by a handcuff secured round one ankle of each—the man and the woman. The white man having got both fastened in this manner, at the edge of a scrub, addressed the man in a sort of jocose tone, "You won't desert again, my man." Then he shot him. The wretched woman, nearly dead with fear, was compelled to drag the dead body into the scrub, where, after tormenting her by working on her terrors, the fastening was removed, and she was allowed to go free. This incident was told to two white men by the chief actor in it, and one of those men is our informant.

With this paper we propose to close the present series. It is not because our list is exhausted, unhappily that is of almost unlimited length. As we promised we would do in the beginning, we have only repeated stories which we had good reason to believe were true, and for which we could find authority that would be open to investigation by any properly constituted commission of enquiry. But we have at our disposal a mass of information which we cannot use. That information comes from men so situated that if it could be traced to them they would be exposed to much annoyance, and in some cases the danger of total ruin. Among these are men employed in the police force, who have been brought in unwilling contact with the system we have endeavored to illustrate. These men would be quite ready to give information if a genuine enquiry were instituted. The Government could verify all we have written from the evidence of their own officers if they really wished to do so. But the enquiries must be genuine, not of the merely official sort. As we have already explained, the basis of our system is the unwritten understanding that in dealing with the aboriginals those employed to suppress them may do what they please, provided they keep it quiet. They must not report, or if their official superiors require a report to silence the too pertinacious enquiries of some one who has an inkling of the truth, and is in a position that will not permit of his being ignored, they are expected to use language as the French cynic declared that it is commonly used—"to conceal the truth." The police employé who breaks this rigid but well understood rule imperils his position, and any length of service will not save him. Men cannot easily be found to incur their own ruin by speaking unwelcome truth, in order to expose conduct which the Government and Parliament of the colony expressly sanction. Let them, however, understand that the truth is really desired, and there will be no difficulty in obtaining it. And we have good reason to believe that not a few Native Police officers—men who have discharged their duty without unnecessary cruelty—and who themselves have often grown sick at heart over the work they have been compelled to do, would heartily welcome such an enquiry, for they would feel that it must lead to the establishment of a reformed system in which they could use their knowledge of the bush and of the natives in the performance of work which had nothing dishonorable about it, and nothing which need fear the light of day. Till then such men must lie under the stigma which cannot fail to rest on the whole of a force which we treat so unfairly, and send out to do such abominable work.—*Queenslander*, July 3, 1880.

THE ABORIGINAL COMMISSION.

IN May, 1876, the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, appointed five gentlemen commissioners for the purpose of enquiring into and ameliorating the condition of the aborigines. These gentlemen were Bishop Hale, and Messrs. A. C. Gregory, W. L. G. Drew, C. J. Graham, and W. Landsborough. Their duties, as specified in the commission, were to "enquire into and investigate the condition of the aboriginal inhabitants of our said colony, and to report from time to time to our Governor aforesaid upon the best means to be adopted—by legislative enactment or otherwise—for improving the condition of the said aboriginal inhabitants." They were given full power to summon and examine witnesses. In the letter accompanying the commission from the then Colonial Secretary, the following clause occurs:—"It is considered desirable that the commission should have, for the present at least, continuing powers; and that the attention of the commissioners should be given to the best means of reclaiming and benefiting the aborigines, not only at Mackay, but throughout the colony."

The commission went to work. As a starting point there was in existence at Mackay a large reserve of 10,000 acres, on which Mr. Bridgman had persuaded the blacks of that district to congregate—at least to make it their headquarters—and where he had succeeded in establishing a beneficial influence over them. Working on this foundation, they recommended the establishment of a school on the Mackay Reserve, for which a grant of money was made by Parliament. Mr. Bridgman having induced the blacks to undertake a certain amount of work, substantial school buildings and quarters for the protector were erected at a total cost of £90. Mr. MacGroarty, who was sent in June, 1878, to report on the school by the Department of Public Instruction, found that about twenty-three boys, of an average age of 9 or 10, had reached the standard of attainment of the two lowest classes of the primary schools. When it is remembered that they had to be taught the language in which instruction was conveyed to them, speaking only the usual "nigger English" when first brought to school, this progress may be regarded as very satisfactory. The general plan of the reserve system was adapted to reclaiming the blacks gradually, and without too violent a change from their natural habits. They were induced to work a little, and gradually weaned from their purposeless shiftless tribal life. Produce was raised on the reserve by the labors of the blacks for their own use, and they were also allowed and encouraged to engage in contracts for the neighboring sugar planters. It was desired in the first place to create a taste among them for a more settled and orderly life, so that a foundation might be laid for the inculcation of moral and religious sentiments. But the reserve was not a missionary establishment. With the young a different system was adopted. They were induced to attend school, with the results noticed above.

Other reserves were formed. At Bribie a little group of the blacks of Moreton Bay were established and cared for under the supervision of Mr. Thomas Petrie. Near Bowen and Townsville other centres for instruction in the rudiments of civilisation were established under the supervision of local committees. In these places the experiment promised well, but it was not permitted to have much chance of success. The commission, seeing from the facts that had come under their observation that it was possible to ameliorate to a considerable extent the condition of the coast blacks, made recommendations to the Government involving the expenditure of an increased sum of money. In September, 1878, the Premier moved in committee a grant of £1,600. The motion was rejected without division, and almost without discussion, the ground alleged, by those who spoke against it, for their opposition being that an expiring Parliament should not enter on what was practically a new undertaking. The commission were thus left without funds, and obliged to abandon their work. Finally, in March, 1879, Bishop Hale having written to the Colonial Secretary as chairman of the commission, asking whether there was any official report confirming a statement which appeared in the *Courier* of a wholesale massacre of blacks near Cooktown by Sub-inspector O'Connor, received a brief letter in reply declining to answer any questions. This practically ended the career of the commission. With no funds to do anything, and being unable to get a civil answer to questions which by their constitution they were certainly entitled to ask, their existence was practically ended, and Mr. Drew formally resigned.

The subjoined letter will give the history of the Mackay Reserve—the only one in existence—to the present time:—

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE QUEENSLANDER.]

SIR,—As the improvement of the condition of the blacks is a matter of great interest at present, I feel it to be my duty to acquaint you with the result of my work in this district. I was appointed by the Minister for Lands to act as Protector of Aborigines for the Mackay district. My duties I consider to be the following:—

1. To protect the blacks from ill treatment.
2. To endeavor to make them useful to the inhabitants instead of being a nuisance.
3. In case of offences committed by blacks, to assist the police in getting the right offenders.
4. To try and keep the blacks out of townships, where they obtain grog and learn every vice.
5. If they are employed by whites, to see that they are paid wages.
6. To remove them from places where they are a nuisance and bring them to people willing to employ them—if the blacks are willing.
7. To explain to the blacks our ideas of right and wrong, which are very different from their own.

As you are no doubt aware, the Government some years ago devoted 10,000 acres of land in this district as a reserve for aborigines, with a grant of £500, for the purpose of civilising the blacks. Mr. Bridgman, a gentleman who takes great interest in the blacks, was then Protector of Aborigines in this district, and it is due to his management that the blacks are so well behaved now. He collected the blacks, formed separate camps for the different tribes of blacks, made them do a little cultivation at times, and at other times they worked for planters in the district. He also formed a school for black boys, as an experiment, of which I had management, which having proved a success, Bishop Hale, who was chairman of a commission in Brisbane, sent a married couple to take charge of the school, which was enlarged, and consisted of forty children—boys and girls; and, Mr. Bridgman leaving the district, I was appointed in his place.

The present Government, with a view to retrenchment, suspended the vote. The school was disbanded and the reserve thrown open for selection. The blacks being uncontrolled became a nuisance, hanging round the towns, frightening cattle through the fences, pilfering corn, potatoes, &c. Having made the blacks useful to many of the residents, they requested me to apply to the Government to be reappointed. I did so, and was reappointed by the Minister for Lands. Since then the blacks have not only been well-behaved but very useful to the planters, taking contracts under my supervision, and, though earning but small wages, owing to their natural indolence, still being useful and kept out of mischief. I have about 300 blacks in the district at present, many at work trashing cane (stripping off dead leaves), clearing scrub, cutting firewood, hoeing, &c.; and I ride round from one lot to another to see that they are working, and also to see that they get paid fairly for what they do. I hear any complaints they have to make, as they have confidence in me, and tell me all their troubles. I have very little trouble with them; they are very easy to manage, with few exceptions. I have more trouble to please the whites, who are very unreasonable. One man wants to have blacks to work, and his neighbor will not have them near the place because they frighten his milkers; as they live close to each other, it is a difficult matter to please both parties. The blacks are very sensible and obedient—far more so than I have any right to expect. They can be led, but not driven. They offend often through ignorance, seldom wilfully.

I am sure that though the native police may be necessary in outside places, still in the inside districts they might be done away with. One camp has been removed in this district, and though there was a great outcry at first no harm has come of it.

Hoping my letter may contain information useful to you, I will now end it.—Yours, &c.,

JOCELYN BROOKE.

Rockleigh, Mackay, May 23,
—*Queenslander*, June 5, 1880.

THE ABORIGINES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

BISHOP HALE has placed in our hands some correspondence, recently received by him from South Australia, giving an account of the manner in which the aborigines in the settled districts of that colony are cared for. This includes letters from Mr. R. T. Hamilton, sub-protector of aborigines; Mr. Shaw, superintendent of the Poonindie Native Institution; and the annual reports of the sub-protector for 1878 and 1879.

The letter of Mr. Hamilton bears emphatic testimony to the possibility of preventing the blacks in the settled and pastoral districts from being a nuisance to the white inhabitants. He writes that "they appear to be a quiet, inoffensive, and law-abiding people; the criminal records for the past five years show a marked absence of any serious outrages against the European population, and the offences charged against the aborigines have been confined to one case of murder (that of two other natives) and a few cases of drunkenness and petty larceny." With regard to Poonindie, an institution which has been entirely self-supporting since 1860, he warns his correspondent that there is no sufficient evidence to show that its influence extends beyond the natives attached to it. General orderliness and comparative comfort are due to the effective supervision and general care exercised by the Government throughout the colony. Nevertheless, as far as the natives living on the place is concerned, the institution has kept them from crime, and to a considerable extent from vice, and has very sensibly raised their condition, without cost to the Government.

From the reports and letters we learn that the census enumeration of natives in 1876 showed a total of 3,369 souls. This does not include the tribes in the interior-west of Queensland, which of course have not been reckoned. The total expendi-

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ture by the Government on aborigines was covered by an annual vote amounting in 1878 to £5,254. This was expended partly on grants in money and goods to four mission stations. The fifth, Poonindie, at Port Lincoln, which has a reserve of 15,000 acres attached to it, received nothing. The others which received various sums were Point Pierce, Yorke's Peninsula, with 12,800 acres of land; Point Macleay, Lake Alexandrina, with 4,498 acres; Kopperamanna, Far North, with 64,000 acres; and Hermansburgh, Finke River, N.T., with 576,000 acres. Besides these there are fifty depôts, distributed through the districts, at which rations, clothing, medical comforts, &c., are distributed to the sick and infirm aborigines, and boats, netting, tools, &c., to the men. All this is done within the vote mentioned, assisted by contributions from the religious congregations—apparently chiefly Lutheran—which have engaged in the mission work. Individual instances of progress are reported by the sub-protector which are astonishing to those who know the natives. One aboriginal had obtained a four years' lease of a farm of 160 acres. He is "an industrious intelligent man, has saved money, and now possesses stock and farm implements, keeps a bank account, and has made several improvements on his farm." Similar leases were about to issue to four other natives, "one of whom recently married a European woman."

The general report for each year contains special reports from the mission stations and other agencies. Taking the latest, that for 1879, we find that the superintendent of Kopperamanna reports that in his district the natives during the year had been well off. On the mission station were sixteen buildings, 5000 sheep, 45 head of cattle, 49 horses, and 350 goats. There had been an average attendance at school during the year of about twenty-five children, who seemed particularly fond of arithmetic. The country was not very suitable for agriculture, but the natives were employed in shepherding, fencing, building, &c., and hunting wild dogs, having secured 235 dingo scalps during the year. The missionaries have taken the trouble to learn the aboriginal tongue, which helps them with the natives, who are, of course, under no restraint, coming and going as they please, and therefore only to be kept by moral influence. As an instance of the difficulties in the way of raising the condition of the race, we quote the remark of the superintendent, "They all, with few exceptions, suffer from syphilis."

The Hermansburgh station, on the Finke River, in the Central Territory, is especially interesting to Queenslanders, as it is situated in country similar to our own Western interior. It has been lately established, and there also the missionaries have learned the aboriginal dialect. They have on the station 2530 sheep, 100 goats, 32 head of cattle, and 52 horses. From a special report made on this mission by the station-master at the telegraph station, Alice Springs, we learn that substantial buildings, yards and woolshed, have been erected, and a large paddock fenced in. Attempts were being made at cultivation with promise of success, and the missionaries proposed to lay down next year (1880) 100 acres in grain. The natives come and go, and are shy and retiring. The station-master reports of the missionaries that "they have had, and will still have, a certain amount of uphill work, but in the end will, I think, be successful." The neighboring squatters speak "in most praiseworthy terms" of the mission station. The report ends by an admission on the part of the writer that he has been most favorably impressed by the mission station, "and erroneous opinions previously entertained are entirely removed."

No special remarks need be made on the Point Macleay and Point Pierce institutions, but Poonindie deserves special mention. At this place some of the natives appear to be really rising into civilised beings. One—a half-caste—is mentioned who does nearly all the painting, glazing, and carpentering of the institution, and who made a neat little boat in his spare time out of a few boards he bought in Port Lincoln. The average number resident has been from sixty-four to eighty-four, although a number of others come and go. They work well, and the produce of their labor supports the whole institution very comfortably. They are taught in the school, doctored by a skilful medical man, who visits the place once a week. They must have decidedly a good time of it, as besides cricket and bagatelle, of which they are fond, and out-door sports, there is a weekly dance in the school-room "in which nearly all, young and old, take part; and were it not for the rather heavy boots and bare feet of some, their graceful manner and movement would surprise many of those of our own people who delight in the 'light fantastic toe.'"

We have no space for further extracts from these interesting documents. The South Australian Government, unlike our own, recognises that it owes a duty to the aborigines, and very effectively discharges it, without any very great cost to the Treasury. No Queenslanders will require that we should point the contrast between the

picture of which we have reproduced the outlines and the one that is under his eyes in and around every town and township of this colony. It almost appears as if they were about to succeed in checking the decrease of the race, for in 1879 the births about balanced the deaths. This is, however, improbable; but the South Australians are free from the stain that rests on us, and by their action have proved beyond a shadow of doubt that we are neglecting a duty which we can easily perform, and which would by no means overburden our resources.—*Queenslander*, July 17, 1880,

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

WHITE VERSUS BLACK.

SIR,—In the *Queenslander* of the 1st instant there is published a leading article entitled, "The way we Civilize," the text being furnished by a letter taken from the *Cooktown Courier*. On this letter I intend making no comment, it being simply the old story over again, of white atrocities and the consequence thereof; all this is going over old ground, and has been discussed too often. The Native Police and their doings have long been the colonial "big gooseberry," and the only wonder is that so much of "the silly season" has been allowed to pass without this familiar subject coming to the fore. As regards the article, there are certain points which would seem to indicate that a one-sided view is being taken on a leading colonial question when there is a great deal to be said on *both* sides. Until one reaches the last sentence of the said essay it is hard to judge whether it means to convey the simple traditional expression of condemnation of such doings to be expected from a newspaper occupying the platform the *Queenslander* does, or whether the leading journal intends rushing in "where angels fear to tread" and belling the cat—*i.e.*, the blackfellow. However, the last sentence distinctly conveys the promise that the latter course will be pursued, and we may shortly expect the elaboration of a scheme that will solve the problem that has puzzled the colonists since the settlement of the country. No one would be more delighted to see some such theory brought into play than the present writer, and no one would more despair of its ultimate success. As I said before, I am not writing this in defence of our Black Police system, but I am writing against a sweeping vilification of all white pioneers who find it necessary to preserve their property by the strong hand. Nothing is easier than to sit down at desk or table, and—on paper—work out a civilising code that shall make the savage a docile tractable being, anxious to work and eager to please; and nothing harder than to take one's flocks and herds and go out into the desert and carry the theory into practice. As I intend to speak decidedly and openly on this subject, I may say that I have lived for sixteen years in this colony, and as a rule in outside country always; that I have been at the settlement of North and West, and have had to hold responsible situations where blacks had to be utilised for want of other labor. I think I may say that I have been as successful in getting as much work as possible out of them as other men; and that my experience pretty well comprises the boundaries of Queensland. I say this merely to show that I am not writing on a strange or unknown subject, but one that has been continually under my notice. Furthermore, I am what would be called a "white murderer," for I have had to "disperse" and assist to disperse blacks on several occasions. The blackfellow of Queensland is an embodiment of contradictions: he is a brave man, and an abject coward; an angel for good nature, and a demon for cruelty; the personification of laziness, and yet capable of untiring perseverance; a riddle, and a hopeless one, so far as guessing him is concerned. A blackfellow learns our vices, and unlearns what savage virtues he possesses, with fatal facility. The uncivilised "myali" is bad enough; the half-civilised "Johnny Campbell" is ten times worse. The question then arises, What lives are we to sacrifice—black or white? Are we to protect the black or protect the white? Shirk it as we will, this is the question. So long as we have country to settle, so long as men have to trust their lives to their own right hands, so long shall we come in contact with the natives, and aggressions and reprisals will take place. The article I refer to as yet commits itself to nothing, and, beyond a gird at the policy so long pursued, says

nothing tangible to reply to. The great feature of the case it leaves untouched—namely, that if, as the *Queenslander* says, the Native Police are an exterminating force, it is a pity that the work is not more thoroughly and effectually done. Is there room for both of us here? No. Then the sooner the weaker is wiped out the better, as we may save some valuable lives by the process. If the blackfellow is right in murdering white men for invading and taking possession of his country, then every white man, woman, and child who sits at home at ease in our towns and townships is a murderer, for if they had the courage of their opinions they would not stop on in a colony built up on bloodshed and rapine. Do they do this? do our black protectors—our philanthropists of to-day—go out and enquire into the truth of the many stories that are brought in from the back country, or do they rather sit in the high places, and partake of the corn and oil, leaving it to the sinful to go out and bear the heat and burden of the day? I rather think they do the last. Hide it as you will, our policy towards the black is bad, but it is only the game we played all over the world; and it starts with the original occupation of the country, and any other policy would be equally outrageous that entailed the taking of the land from the blacks. Say that we make reserves, and put the natives on them—have them guarded, and watched, and cared for—is not that just as arbitrary and high handed as shooting them? Would we recognise the justice of a superior race coming here, curtailing our boundaries, picking out our best country for their own use, and instituting a fresh code of religion, law, and morality for our benefit? Would we submit tamely, or prefer a quick and easy death to it? By its very presence and publication here the *Queenslander* recognises the utility, to put it mildly, of dispossessing the blacks, and until it takes its departure to another country, and there preaches its sermon, its voice has a very hypocritical ring about it. We all want to get on here, and we all want to get somebody else to do the work needful; and if there is any dirty work necessary we are the first to cry out against it—when we are in a position to do so. This is the black question, as put forward by the protectors of the poor savage. I know full well that I shall hear of atrocities, of barbarities, and other disgraceful proceedings committed by the whites; but that does not touch the point at issue. The unanswerable fact remains that by overrunning this or any other country we expose the natives to the chances of suffering the rigors of guerilla warfare—always the cruellest and worst—and, knowing that, we come here and take up our quarters with our eyes open; by our very presence in the land justifying the act of every white ruffian in the outside country. We are all savages; look beneath the thin veneer of our civilisation and we are very identical with the blacks; but we have this one thing not in common—we, the invading race, have a principle hard to define, and harder to name; it is innate in us, and it is the restlessness of culture, if I dare call it so. The higher we get in the educated scale, the more we find this faculty; and if we do not show it in one shape we do in another. We work for posterity, we have a history, and we have been surrounded by its tales and legends since infancy. We look upon the heroes of this history as familiar friends, and in all our breasts there is a whisper that we too by some strange chance may be known to posterity. This brings us here to wrest the lands of a weaker race from their feeble grasp, and build up a country that our children shall inherit; and this feeling is unknown to the native of Australia. He has a short history, but it is more a matter of gossip than anything else, and only goes back one generation. He has no thought of the future, because he never knew of anyone being remembered more than a lifetime, therefore he has no interest but to pass through life as easily as possible, and he never seeks to improve land for those who will come after him. This justifies our presence here; this is the only plea we have in justification of it, and having once admitted it we must go the whole length, and say that the sooner we clear the weak useless race away the better. And being a useless race, what does it matter what they suffer any more than the distinguished philanthropist, who writes in his behalf, cares for the wounded half-dead pigeon he tortures at his shooting matches. "I do not see the necessity," was the reply of a distinguished wit to an applicant for an office who remarked that "he must live;" and we virtually and practically say the same to the blacks and with better reason. We are pursuing the same policy in Zululand and Afghanistan, and, I suppose, on a more barbarous scale; the recital of all the atrocities going, of all the shooting and slaying by the Native Police, never alters the fact that, once we are here, we are committed as accessories, and that to prove the fidelity of our opinions we should leave the country. I cannot touch upon anything definitely this time, as the *Queenslander* is not committed as yet to advocating any particular line of policy. I only want to show how we cannot—if we take the position of conquerors—expect anything else but harsh treatment towards

the conquered in outlying places, where men are not under so much constraint; and shall await with some interest the unfolding of their scheme.

In conclusion, I wish it to be *thoroughly understood* that I am not defending the acts of individuals. I, in common with other bushmen, am regretfully compelled to admit that deeds of blood curdling atrocity have been committed by white men, but parallel acts are to be found in the history of the subjugation of any barbarous nation; and my object in writing is to condemn the wholesale slander of the whole white race in the colony for the acts of the few.—Yours, &c.,

Brisbane, May 4.
—*Queenslander*, May 8, 1880.

NEVER NEVER.

SIR,—It may be owing to the "obtuseness of my moral sense" that I fail to fully appreciate the beauties of the scheme propounded in the *Queenslander* of the 8th instant; but I must frankly confess to a feeling of disappointment. I hoped that at any rate some better elaborated idea than the mere substitution of white troopers for black would have been suggested, but, although it is but a ha'porth of bread to an intolerable deal of sack, we will take it thankfully. What will be the result of employing white police instead of black? Let us see. They are "to consist of course of good bushmen;" that looks exceedingly nice upon paper, but where are you going to get your good bushmen? From my experience of them you would find few good bushmen willing to become policemen, and fewer still willing to join a force that has lately been manned by the black boys; but that has nothing to do with the theory of the plan, which is wrong from the start, and evidently broached in entire ignorance of the real facts of the question. To anyone who has had any hand in black repression, the calm statement that white police should be used for the purpose is so wildly absurd that it seems like tilting at a windmill to reply seriously to it. No doubt there are many parts of the outside country where white police could be made use of—assisted by black trackers—with some reasonable show of overhauling the natives they were in pursuit of, but only in some parts; in the generality of districts we must have savages to hunt savages, and that fact is tacitly recognised by every man who knows anything about it, and will be, in spite of a thousand columns of words in the *Queenslander*. But, having captured the offender, what are our white police to do with him? Follow the example of the South Australian Government, and have him taken, at great expense to the country, to the metropolis, confined in comfortable quarters in a gaol, and at the expiration of his twelve months present him with a new suit of clothes and a tomahawk, and send him on his way rejoicing, ready for more crime; or tie him up and flog him, or give him a short and easy shrift with a pistol bullet? Surely the *Queenslander* need not have been so vague in indicating the nature of the punishment to be dealt out. Then, again, another outcome of adopting the system advocated by the *Queenslander* is so plain and palpable that it is strange it should have escaped the notice of the writer. The *Queenslander* says "the officers in command should be compelled to report their operations," &c., &c.; now what would be the result of this? For some fancied or real grievance a man would report his officer for undue severity, or some humane station-holder would do it, if a favorite black boy got punished, the officer would probably be cautioned or reprimanded, and if a wise man, would—the next time he had to go in pursuit of an offending tribe—take good care he never caught them. Cattle slaughtering and shepherd killing would go on with impunity, because the officer in charge of the district would have the fear of the gallows before him if he used decisive measures to stop it. As for the cowardice displayed in shooting blacks as a punishment, it would be as just to call the judge who passes sentence of death a coward, or the members of a firing party at a military execution cowards. No doubt the old tale of individual atrocities will be raked up, but, as I said before, with that I have nothing to do—they can be found anywhere. I maintain that the blacks require shooting, and it is better to get the work done by blacks than by whites; one you cannot degrade lower than he is already; the other you possibly may (following out the line of argument pursued by the *Queenslander*). But the scheme mooted is so vague and ill-defined, and is altogether such a lame and impotent conclusion to the blare of trumpets that heralded it in, that it is hard to criticise. Any one who has had experience of several districts knows that in many places whites are useless at black hunting; if the writer of the article had ever tried following blacks through mangroves, or in a basalt wall, he would know so too. That a better plan could be worked out than that in vogue at present, I admit, but

I do not think any of us see a way as yet; the question is too knotty, and by the time it is solved the blackfellow will be a thing of the past—and a good job too. As for the expense of the force proposed, why it would simply amount to keeping the nucleus of a small standing army; the men would be ruined by long spells of idleness, and when called upon for the work required would be found wanting. The constant saddle work that makes the outside stockman a wiry tireless being, able to outdo any blackfellow on his native heath, would be omitted in the case of our ideal policeman, who would find the chase very fatiguing after the first day or two.

Unless the *Queenslander* is able to evoke some better idea than the mere substitution of white for black troopers, it had better leave the matter to be settled in the natural way—and—the survival of the fittest.—Yours, &c.,

NEVER NEVER.

Queenslander May 15, 1880.

SIR,—In the *Queenslander* of the 8th instant is a letter signed "Never Never" in which the writer endeavors to justify the system upon which our Native Police force is conducted. I should be very sorry to believe that the writer actually believes one-half of what he has written, for if he does he ought to be locked up as a would-be murderer of the most dangerous description. It seems to me to betray a singular "obliquity of moral vision" when a man can casually refer to the wholesale murder of aborigines which is daily going on as a fair subject for doing a paragraph after the "big gooseberry" style during the "silly season." And yet, sir, the most distressing fact is that "Never Never's" letter very fairly embodies the spirit and sentiment of a large number of those who take active part in pioneer settlement. Even presuming the blacks have committed every enormity that is possible, is it not horrible and monstrous that the shedding of human blood should come to be regarded so lightly? Like "Never Never" I, too, have lived among blacks in a newly-settled district, and my experience is that blacks, like whites, have among them both good and bad, and that any wholesale massacre of them such as is daily perpetrated is as unjust as it is horrible in the sight of God and man. Are there ten men in Brisbane who really understand the working of our Native Police? How many among us understand the euphemistic word "*dispersal*?" Can they know that it means this?—A white man, "an officer and a gentleman," at the head of some half-dozen black murderers, watches a camp of blacks all night. The cool dawn of the morning comes, and the slender smoke circles up among the trees by the waterhole as the unsuspecting blacks wake to prepare their morning meal. Suddenly a shrill whistle, then the sharp rattle of Sniders, shriek on shriek, rushing to and fro: then, ammunition gone, the struggle at close quarters, and well-fed lusty savages, drunk with carnage, hewing down men, women, and children before them. How long shall these things be? for that they exist no dweller in outside country can deny. Are they not the theme of discussion by every camp fire in the Western land? And though much must be deducted for exaggeration, "where there is smoke there is fire." Why do the Native Police never take white men with them who might afterwards appear as witnesses against them? Surely this one fact should show that their deeds are evil. Is there a record in the Chief Commissioner's office in which any sub-inspector boldly says that he and his "boys" deliberately shot a certain number of blacks? Why, if all is right, should the truth not be openly stated? Why should we be unable to learn from official records what the public servants are doing? If it is advisable that, as a colony, we should indulge in wholesale murder of the race we are dispossessing, let us have the courage of our opinions and murder openly and deliberately—calling it *murder*, not "*dispersal*." I hope I have said enough to attract attention to the loathsome and horrible system of dealing with our blacks that we as a colony have hitherto sanctioned. I have known gentlewomen in the bush who refused to allow officers of the Native Police to enter their doors, or share the generous hospitality accorded to every deserving wayfarer. Surely, sir, when a pure-minded gentlewoman need shudder to let herself or her children come in contact with a police officer there must be something particularly disgusting in his usual avocation. How is it that our police hardly ever bring to justice white men who offend against blacks? Do those of us who have lived in outside districts know of no outrages committed by whites? No black boys (servants who get no wages) brutally flogged and ill-used? No young women forcibly abducted from the tribe for purposes I dare not mention here? When I think of the nameless deeds of horror that I have heard discussed openly by many a camp fire, I

can scarcely control my indignation and write calmly. How long shall the present state of things exist ; how long shall we, the people of Queensland, have men in our employ carrying out our orders for extermination—"Slay, and spare not"—against our dark-skinned and weaker brethren ? In a future letter, with your permission, sir, I will formulate a scheme which will at anyrate be an improvement on the present system of Native Police.—Yours, &c.,

OUTIS.

—*Queenslander*, May 15, 1880.

SIR,—In last week's issue you allowed me to give my views on the very unfortunate relations that at present exist between the Native Police and the aborigines ; in this issue I shall endeavour, with your permission, to formulate a better system of dealing with the miserable remnant of a fast decaying race ; and, though even in my system there must be much that can be objected to, I maintain that it would be better for all concerned than the present state of things. In dealing with the subject two ends must be carefully kept in view—first, the implanting of as much good as possible in the blacks ; second, the repression of evil and the protection of white settlers. Now amongst us white settlers we have many extremely objectionable people who are ranked under the generic term of "loafers"—men who have nothing to do, or, when they have, don't do it. When white "loafers" get a nuisance to society, we interfere and compel them to work, otherwise we very justly punish them. Why not adopt the same course towards the blacks wherever we find that they have become "loafers?" Settlement pushing out has taken from them their former means of livelihood ; their waterholes are utilised by the whites, and they are now "without visible means of support;" to all intents and purposes they are "rogues and vagabonds." Rogues and vagabonds very often make good workmen when they are forced to work. My experience is that with blacks, as with whites, idleness is at the root of most of the evil committed, *therefore I say make the blacks work.* This is what I wish to insist on first of all, afterwards I will show the way to find them work. They are in as low a state as they can well be—starved, miserable, abject, wandering about with hatred in their hearts, looking on at a foreign race calmly enjoying their former possessions. We have taken their all, let us not make a miserable pretence of soft-heartedness ; let us treat them as "loafers," and set about finding them honest employment where they will have no time to hatch mischief. Now, as to the means of making the blacks work, my idea is this : Every year brings large numbers of South Sea Islanders to Queensland. These islanders are transported from their homes, brought here and bound down by engagement for a period of years. Should they leave their hired service within the period for which they are engaged, the law steps in and protects the employer. Why can the same system with some modification not be adopted with aborigines ? Everyone who has lived among our blacks knows that they are of little use for any sustained work until they are out of their own district, or, as bushmen often remark, "a nigger is no good till you get him off his beat." If employers of labor on the coast could send inland, say to the Diamantina or Herbert, I am confident that they would have little difficulty in recruiting the blacks and getting them to engage for a term of years out of their district. Once get the blacks out of their own district, and it would rest with the employer to make them work ; some harshness would no doubt be necessary (as I am told is also the case with Kanakas), but I firmly believe that firmness combined with kindness, and the low rate of wages that the blacks would be paid, would make the employment of aboriginal labor a payable speculation. In India and Ceylon some of the coolies in their natural state, and when first recruited, seem almost as hopeless as our own blacks, but still strict discipline and justice seldom fail in improving their condition and making them profitable servants. It is shown by the present system of black police that blacks can be voluntarily enlisted and brought to a fairly efficient state of discipline ; could this not be achieved without putting carbines and other murdering tools in their hands ? How would it be to have the same discipline, substituting a spade for a Snider, or a hoe for a Colt ? In Ceylon there are certain regiments or divisions of "pioneers." These are natives officered by whites who speak their language, and keep them in a high state of efficiency. These men (also women and children) receive certain pay and allowances, live in camp, and are kept hard at work upon Government works. The discipline is severe, as severe as that of an army in war time, but it is found to act well. Why can we not give this system a trial ? Even if the colony suffered loss by it, would it not be

better than to class our own flesh and blood with dingoes, the other enemy of the pioneer squatter, to be shot where met with? I believe that it would pay us to import from India or Ceylon some gentleman who has had experience of coolie labor there. Let him model a system, and as far as possible let him be untethered by red tape. Surely those in authority would not mind the absence of red tape in this matter. They have shown clearly by their actions in the past that so far as the blacks are concerned they don't care in the slightest. Their only care is that there should be as little fuss as possible. This very commendable spirit of making little fuss permeates the whole Native Police force downwards. The police never murder a black quite close to a station unless under very exceptional circumstances. They first arrest their prisoner—maybe at the camp by the waterhole near the homestead—and he is duly taken away, guarded by an armed mounted trooper on each side. *He never comes in at the next stage with his captors*; he has always "been shot while attempting to escape." The old, world-old, story—one sin leads on to another; and we cannot expect a man whose orders are to murder (English for "disperse") sticking at an odd lie or two.

With the utilisation of the blacks the occupation of the black troopers would be gone. Their removal would make room for a better state of things. Your correspondent "Never-Never" pooh-poohs the idea of getting good bushmen to enter any police force that would succeed the present one. I fancy that, were the experiment tried, "Never-Never" would be found to be as wrong in this particular as he is misguided in the whole spirit of his letter. Only let the pay be better than that given to stockmen on outside stations, and the Government could have the pick of the best and hardiest bushmen in the colony. If blacks are used as police at all they should never be allowed to carry arms—a savage can never be expected to exercise discretion in meting out justice, should the "short shrift" "Never-Never" speaks of ever be necessary. Let the white police have black servants, to be employed as grooms, trackers, &c., when necessary—much as is now the case in the West, where nearly every stockman keeps his own blackboy. Should the expense of keeping a white police be a strain on our finances I do not think the colony would grudge it. Let us remove the present blood guiltiness that weighs upon us each individually as colonists, and whatever the price the result will be cheap at the money. Is there no member of Parliament who will take this question up—are all so overburdened by the cares of the squatters, or diggers, who comprise their constituencies that they cannot spare the time to consider and devise a remedy for "the poor old nigger"? Can nothing be done for their physical welfare? Must we look calmly on at the work of the Police Department, combined with disease of the most loathsome types, and Mackay rum, and say it is "Kismet"? Would it not be well, putting aside for a time the hope of ever Christianising our blacks, to try in an honest manly way what can be done towards making them less undesirable citizens than they at present are? Sir, as I before said, I have lived in the outside country among the blacks, and, were I there again now as I write, I should sit down among them and explain how, far away "along a big fellow water, that one big fellow master belong a paper" was trying to do his best for them, so that if they would only be good "that one coola (hostile) fellow policeman" would never again come to their camp.

Sir, in the name of a most unfortunate and ill-starred race, I thank you for your powerful interference in their behalf.—Yours, &c.,

OUTIS.

—*Queenslander*, May 22, 1880.

SIR,—Being still troubled by that "obtuseness of my moral nature," would you mind my expressing my sense of surprise at the singular course adopted by the *Queenslander* in starting what I presume I may call an atrocity column. In the first place, if, overcome by a deep sense of its responsibility as the leading journal of the colony, the paper raises its voice against our treatment of the natives, and the issue thereof is an atrocity column, may I ask why its conscience has slumbered so long? Why, through all the past years of black dispersion has it not done what it professes to be about to do now? Why have left it until this the eleventh hour? When a paper presumes to be so well posted up in the subject as to know of all these massacres, and deal them out dressed up in a sentimental suit of catch terms for the edification of sensation-loving readers, and yet has through all its previous existence as a journal remained comparatively silent on the subject, I beg leave to doubt the honesty of its purpose and the sincerity of its own belief in the deeds it is now

chronicling. Surely such a tenderly-sensitive journal could not have gone on all these years believing in the existence of these outrages, and yet—beyond an occasional leader when hard-up for a subject—never crying out against them. It seems to me very like raking up something startling to pull through a dull time till Parliament commences.

In the name of everything sensible, what good end can be gained by manufacturing sensational stories by the column to prove—what? To prove that here, as in all other new countries, men who are ruffians and bullies naturally gather about our frontiers, where law is lax and restraint almost unknown. No one ever doubted it; yet the *Queenslander*, by its present course, is endeavoring to slander the majority of our outside men for the acts of the minority, and on what authority? Take the very first yarn recounted. A white man, presumably educated and acquainted with the laws of this country, goes out intending to shoot a quiet black boy, and takes with him another white man *as a witness*, who might at any time turn Queen's evidence and hang him. If the hero of this story did this he was a lunatic, and was not responsible for his actions; if he didn't, the story is on internal evidence—false. And again, why drag in mock sentiment to bolster up these charges? In the last yarn retailed, capital is made out of the fact that a man despatching some wounded blacks knocked them on the head instead of shooting them. Really it might be from moral obtuseness, but, putting aside the necessity or not of killing these blacks, I cannot see why it was more sinful to knock them on the head than shoot them. A blow from a heavy nulla would be quite as quick and easy a death as a bullet from a pistol; and if pistol cartridges were scarce, as often they are in outside country, it was a very sensible thing to do. I should feel just as much horror if I read that they were shot.

Possibly the *Queenslander* aims at supplying a want in our Brisbane literature. It aspires to fill the place of the Newgate Calendar or *Police Gazette*, and is really making a very creditable attempt. I can see how, under its tuition, our youngsters may grow up to emulate the actors in the *Queenslander* atrocity column, even as the apprentices of old sought to follow in the footsteps of Jack Sheppard and Dick Turpin, after revelling in an account of their lives. If the *Queenslander* were honest in its purpose, one or two well-authenticated specimens would serve the end as well as a hundred. We can enjoy a little devilled kidney, or hot curry, but we don't like a surfeit of such dishes. In publishing these hypothetical narratives, duly embroidered for the occasion, the *Queenslander* violates good taste, and almost common decency. I maintain that half these yarns are fabrications, and that the rest are exaggerated. I never witnessed one such case myself; I never heard but of one in any district I was in, and that rested on poor foundation. I am equally certain that in all parts of this colony men would be found prompt and ready to stop such deeds by force, if necessary. Again, I know and can affirm that black protection is often only another name for immorality, and I would far rather call that man my friend who rigorously, if wrongfully, kept all blacks off his run, and allowed no intercourse with them, than he, who under the excuse of *protecting them* allowed them in for the sake of picking out the best looking gins in the tribe.

Beyond branding a certain portion of the community as worse than murderers, the *Queenslander* has as yet left the main question untouched; therefore, beyond putting in this protest, there is nothing I can remark on, and must await further utterances from the oracle.

—*Queenslander*, May 29, 1880.

NEVER NEVER.

SIR,—Much has been written on the subject of our treatment of the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia, and many schemes, distinguished for the most part by their absurdity and impracticability, have been put forward with a view to saving the race from utter annihilation.

That the race is doomed is admitted by all who have studied the subject, and those who know the nigger best feel most the impossibility of doing much to ameliorate his condition or protract the existence of his race.

This callousness as a rule arises from no lack of sympathy with the blacks, but from a firm conviction that their stage of civilisation is too many hundred or perhaps thousand years behind our own to allow their race to thrive side by side with ours.

I have not the slightest doubt that there are many to be found in the bush who would willingly contribute towards the support of any project which offers a reasonable chance of ameliorating the condition of the expiring race of men whose brothers

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have in numberless instances stood faithfully to them in hardship, danger, and sickness; but as such a project, to ensure a degree of success, requires the devotion of the ives of such men as the Moravian missionaries, together with an outlay of some money and the countenance and assistance of the Government there seems little hopes of anything being done in the matter. In a late letter appearing in your columns "Outis" proposes to make the blacks work.

The idea is a good one, but how are we to get them to work? The plan of bringing them down from Western stations to work on the coast under Ceylon overseers is manifestly absurd. To get any good out of blacks they should be kept as much apart as possible from the whites, with the exception of those who have control over them. They should have large reservations allotted to them, consisting of tracts of good hunting country. A reliable and devoted man, salaried by the Government and thoroughly understanding the nature of blacks, should be associated with missionaries, if they can be got, willing to undertake the care of these creatures, and a system of management might be organised to work pretty well. Numberless objections may, of course, be urged to such a plan, one of which is the difficulty of obtaining a body of men content to sacrifice their time and efforts for the hope that a few of the offspring of their charges may turn out pretty respectable members of society. Another is the expense and the difficulty of getting official support for a scheme of this nature. A third objection is the keeping away of whites from the black flock; a fourth the eradication of vices already acquired from white men and grafted on a soil peculiarly suited to their culture. Although unprepared to combat all these objections and hosts of others which may be offered, I would point out to any who take an interest in the aboriginals, that there are large tracts of country in the Cook district, unfitted for graziers or gold miners, which might with propriety be turned into reservations for blacks. These lands teem with game, and their rivers with fish. The aboriginals on these tracts, moreover, have never come into what is termed friendly contact with white men, which I take it is the worst form of kindness to their race. Above all, these districts abound in a tree known as the cotton tree, which produces some hundreds or thousands of bales of beautiful long-stapled cotton yearly. Now, some time ago when in Java I remarked that this tree was carefully cultivated there, and on enquiry I found that the cotton was much valued for stuffing quilts and many other purposes, and was largely exported to Europe; and I was further much struck with the poor and dwarfed appearance of the trees as compared to the grand specimens abounding in our own colony. Now, if the Dutch can export this cotton with a profit, why cannot we? The gathering of it would be work essentially suited to blacks, and the profits from sales might be devoted to supporting some scheme for their welfare.

White men would be useless to collect this natural production in sufficient quantities. Blacks, on the other hand, would be in their element at such employment, and when wandering from tree to tree through the forest, combining a congenial kind of work with the pleasure of hunting, the aboriginal's soul would not fret, as it invariably does when put to steady labor.

I offer the foregoing suggestions, not because I have any hope of seeing them carried out, but because, just at this particular time, the blood of the slain blackfellow is shrieking out unusually loud in the columns of your paper, and attention may be thereby called to them—Yours, &c.,

A. C. G.

—*Queenslander*, June 5, 1880.

Sir,—Having had some fourteen years experience among Queensland blacks, both on inside and outside country, you will perhaps allow me a word on the "Black versus White" controversy.

I am quite aware that at times terrible outrages have been perpetrated on the blacks both by the police and by brutal "white savages;" and I have tried hard to bring to justice one of the latter who deliberately poisoned a number of blacks; but no white man's (*i.e.*, sworn) evidence of the crime being procurable, the then Attorney-General refused to take any action upon the matter. From this you will see that I am ready and anxious to protect blacks from wanton molestation, but I most strongly deprecate the course you are taking in publishing to the world at large a list of horrible atrocities of which you have heard—and as neither names nor dates are given, it is impossible either to verify or contradict them; but even granting that they may be all true, and granting that there is only one side to each

story, even then I think it a very great mistake to rouse up among the inside settlers a feeling against a police force which, whatever its defects, does protect life and property against the hostile savages of our outside districts, and which, once removed, leaves but two courses open to us—either to abandon our property to the original lords of the soil, or to fight it out to the bitter end in a war of wholesale extermination. In the interests, therefore, of both blacks and whites, I would urge you to be perfectly certain that you have matured an equally practical and a better plan than our present one before you fan into a flame a feeling which is always smouldering among those well-meaning sympathisers with the “poor blacks” who imagine a mob of Northern myalls are as harmless and contemptible as the bands of wretched niggers who loaf round colonial towns and their environs.

I am quite sure, sir, that the efforts of the *Queenslander* are thoroughly honest and well-intentioned in this matter; but bear in mind that ‘tis better to bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of.—Yours, &c.,

—*Queenslander*, June 5, 1880.

BIRRALEE.

SIR,—It is a matter for congratulation that you have entered upon the subject of our treatment to the aboriginal population of the colony with a view to the amelioration of their unhappy position. From what has come within my own knowledge I can believe that the atrocities you have published are true in their general statements. It is probable, however, that the principal actors were influenced by circumstances of which your reporter could have no knowledge, but which would to some extent lessen the enormity of their actions. Still, while admitting the general truth of the charges, the difficulty is to show how such brutality may be prevented. As to the causes which have led up to the present shameful state of things, that is not a matter for our present consideration. We have to deal with what is, not with what might have been under other conditions. We find, on the one hand, the blacks in outside districts spearing cattle, robbing huts and travellers, mercilessly butchering men, women, and children. On the other hand we find white men—not untaught heathens, but Christians, nominally so at anyrate—we find these white Christians, ill-treating black men and women, even shooting them down without compunction, for offences of a comparatively trifling nature, or for avenging gross indignity and insult. We also find a force of black heathen savages, officered by white Christians (?), and maintained by the Government to assist the white settlers in repressing the aggressions of the blacks. These, then, are the facts we have to deal with:—1st. An offending and avenging scattered population of black heathen savages; 2nd. An offending and avenging number of white Christians; 3rd. A still more offending and avenging force of native police. How can we create a better feeling between these opposing forces? Some say, “Let us get rid of the Native Police. Let us have a white force in place of them.” Before assenting to this proposal we must consider—

1. If we have a white force (supposing they could do the necessary work equally well) have we reason to suppose that the treatment of the blacks will be better?
2. Do the cases you have published lead us to hope that whites (Christians though they may style themselves) will deal greater justice?
3. Can we believe the white officers of the Native Police are free from the brutality which so distinguishes their black subordinates?
4. If the outside settlers were willing to bury the hatchet, could we hope that the wild blacks would understand and appreciate their leniency?

To all these questions I unhesitatingly answer, No. If we fairly look into the question we must admit that a war of extermination is waging on all sides, and, do what we may, this will go on until the more venturesome tribes are greatly diminished in number—until, indeed, those of an age to be indignantly affected by the treatment they receive have gone to other hunting-grounds where Christians (?) cease from troubling them. For the outside blacks I fear little can be done, but for those who have become semi-civilised (tamed is a better word) there is still some hope. If they are to be benefited they must be subjected to a certain amount of practical education, and this can only be contrived by restricting them to certain limits, and bringing them under laws which—though harsh perhaps at first—will ultimately help to lift them out of their present degradation. I regret that I cannot now enter more fully into this question, but there is reason to hope that steps will be taken, after the meeting of the House, to accomplish more than has hitherto been done for a race whose extermination is going on so rapidly, and our neglect of whom will ever remain a disgrace to our boasted civilisation.—Yours, &c.,

May 28.
—*Queenslander*, June 12, 1880.

A. N.

SIR,—Permit me a little space in your columns to give an unqualified denial to the broad and sweeping assertion of your anonymous correspondent, "Outis," as to the character of the officers of the Native Police. As one who has served in the force, I claim the right to know more about the officers' duties and proceedings and the estimation in which they are held by the squatters and their families than "Outis" can possibly pretend to. I say, sir, that "Outis'" statement that "gentlemen" have refused to allow officers of the Native Police to enter their doors or share the generous hospitality accorded to every deserving wayfarer, simply because they followed the occupation they did, is a pure invention of the writer. I have seldom met with greater kindness than I have from these same "gentlemen" in the bush.

May I ask, Mr. Editor, how has "Outis" become so minutely acquainted with those dreadful habits (as he states) of the officers when, by his own showing, a "white" man never accompanies the dispersing parties to witness and recount the horrible scenes he so lavishly describes? If "Outis" cannot write in more moderate language about what he feels to be a grievance, the sooner he hands over the pen to another the better. At present he simply insults a number of highly respectable "gentlemen," whose hands he knows full well are so tied as to be unable to reply to his venomous attacks.—Yours, &c.,
VERITAS.
 —*Queenslander*, June 12, 1880.

SIR,—My attention has been called to a letter in the *Courier* of Saturday last, in which an ex-black police officer, writing under the name of "Veritas," questions my veracity. He would have better merited the *nom de plume* which he has chosen had he been careful to quote correctly. In my letter to which he refers he quotes "Outis'" statement that "gentlemen have refused to allow officers of the Native Police to enter their doors or share the generous hospitality accorded to every deserving wayfarer simply because they followed the occupation they did." If "Veritas" will substitute the word "*gentlewomen*" for "gentlemen" his quotation is perfectly correct. I used the word "*gentlewoman*" designedly, as I thought that the hackneyed term of "lady" was not enough to convey the feeling of profound admiration I entertain for the honest womanly feeling that prompted their action. That "Veritas," who, from his own statement, has served in the black police force, should give my assertion an unqualified denial is not to be wondered at; but, sir, I assure you that my former statement is correct, and that I can name two gentlewomen in one district of the colony, well known for their kindness and hospitality, who declined to entertain officers of the black police.

"Veritas" wishes to know how I "became so minutely acquainted with those dreadful habits of the officers, when, by my own showing, a white man never accompanies the dispersing parties to witness and recount the horrible scenes." I have great pleasure in complying with the wish that "Veritas" has so distinctly expressed. In the first place I have been told of what had happened to their relations by the blacks themselves; and in the second place, I have known the black police to be "out" in a district where there was not one white man to every two or three hundred square miles. I have seen their tracks, and on their tracks I have seen the dead bodies of their victims. This may not be sufficient evidence to go into a court of law with, but no sane man could doubt who committed the murders in the case I have mentioned. Here is the picture: A lonely region, far remote from any bush highway—country unoccupied, and rarely or never traversed, save by a stockman in search of missing cattle; one well-defined trail leading down the creek, known to be the track of a sub-inspector and his troopers; signs as of horses galloping; crowds of hawks and crows circling in the air, and nearer still the sickening stench; then the dark object on the ground among the long grass, and the last lingering crow dashes up from his dainty meal on the gashed and sightless eyeballs.

Gazing on a picture such as I have described, will anyone blame me, sir, that, looking up at the warm blue sky overhead and the mirage half enveloping the red hills in the far distance, and looking at my black boy as he gazed with rolling eyes and distended nostrils at what not long before had been his kinsman, I solemnly vowed to do what I could to revolutionise our system of black police?

Sir, I do not wish to attack individuals, but the only feasible method of criminating the system at present in vogue is by giving instances to "point the moral;" or, rather, as texts upon which to preach a new doctrine of salvation for the aborigines.

In the name of our common humanity, sir, I implore you not to desist from the good work that you have so well begun. Let instance after instance of inhumanity

be given until the whole community has a sickening sense of blood-guiltiness in subsidising men (who wear, I suppose, the uniform of her Most Clement and Christian Majesty) to commit wholesale murder. I have been told by more than one black police officer that they loathed their work, and I am sure that those of them who have not been utterly demoralised by their present occupation would gladly hail any change that would be more satisfactory for themselves and likely to result in the amelioration of the race which is being so rapidly exterminated under the present system.—Yours, &c.,
 OTTIS,
 —*Queenslander*, June 12, 1880.

SIR,—I have read the article in your issue of May 1 on the above subject, also the letters of "Humanity" and "R. S." Will you permit an outside resident, and one who has had considerable experience amongst blacks, to give his views on this much-vexed question? What I would wish to show is that your sweeping accusation of unnecessary cruelty by the whites, although it may have been true in a few instances, has by no means been so in general; that the best mode of treatment of the young boys is that now followed—namely, the getting as many as possible to work on the stations; that the best course to pursue with regard to the old blacks is to leave them alone as far as practicable; and that Government interference is only likely to lead to further complications and evil results.

In the first place I allow that the blacks are treated with gross injustice, but the primary and fundamental injustice is the taking of their country. If the whites are to settle and occupy their country, then a certain amount of cruelty and severity is unavoidable, but I maintain that upon the whole they are treated in a most humane manner compatible with the circumstances. You say we treat them like wild animals. Well, to a certain extent their attributes are the same, and must be met in the same manner. For instance, if you take a black or a wild animal, young, each is capable of being domesticated and made useful; but as with the wild animal, so with the blackfellow: if he is brought in when grown up, his master is only safe so long as he inspires fear and respect. When once he ceases to do this, no matter whether he treats them with kindness or harshness, he is no longer safe; in fact, nine-tenths of the outrages I have heard of have originated from blacks who had been treated with special kindness, and allowed too much familiarity, and who, for that very reason, had lost their fear. Where could you find a better example of this than that terrible tragedy on the Nogoia some seventeen years ago—namely, the murder of the Wills family. In that instance the blacks were treated with all the kindness and consideration imaginable. They were allowed in from the first settling of the country, supplied with rations, clothes, and presents of all kinds, and then, when the novelty of the white man's presence, and the natural fear of him had died out, they turned round in the most treacherous and cowardly manner and murdered the whole family. Many instances of the same kind are known to all old Queenslanders, and, as a rule, the victims have been those who have treated the blacks with the greatest kindness. Grown up blacks, at all events, are incapable of appreciating kindness, which they invariably attribute to fear, and the moment they imagine you are frightened their natural desire for killing gains ascendancy, and they embrace the first opportunity of gratifying their innate propensities.

Much stress has been laid upon the ravishing of the gins. Now, I have had considerable experience amongst outside blacks, and I have never heard of a single instance of this crime, and I believe that no inducement for the committal of such a crime exists. One of the established customs amongst the aborigines is to lend their women to any chance visitor from a neighboring tribe, and this same custom has invariably been extended to the whites. To give one instance out of many: Early in 1876 a party of friends of mine made a trip to what is now called the Mulligan River, and were obliged to camp at a waterhole already occupied by a large mob of blacks. These had evidently seen no white men before, and their first proceeding, on finding no harm was intended, was to bring over some dozen young gins for the acceptance of the party, and they appeared to be rather incensed at the refusal of the present, this evidently being considered a breach of etiquette.

No doubt it is a fact, and a fact much to be deplored, that the blacks are rapidly becoming extinct. But the true cause of this is, I believe, generally misunderstood. In the bush, away from towns, I do not believe that the mortality is much greater now than it was twenty years ago, if you except those who from time to time are

shot by the police or others. The true reason is, that after the coming of the whites the women cease to bear children. In their wild state the blacks are subject to a certain set of laws and code of morality (though a strange one) binding on them through the superstitious veneration in which they hold the old men of the tribe. When the white man arrives among them, his moral ascendancy makes them lose all respect for the elders, and consequently all morality is at an end. I am afraid nothing can be devised to replace their old system. It would be almost as useless for whites to try and make animals moral as the Queensland aborigines.

With regard to "Humanity's" trooper's thrilling story of Native Police warfare, I simply do not believe it. There is nothing a half-civilised blackfellow so delights in as the making up of stories of this description, and I have often wondered at the cleverness they show in regulating the amount of sensation according to the supposed credulity of the listener. I can assure you I have had blacks give me the most circumstantial accounts of murders of whites by blacks, with all the minute details, and I have found afterwards there has not been a shadow of foundation for the stories to rest upon. I have had considerable experience of Native Police affairs, and I can safely say that as a rule the officers find the "dispersing" business a most painful and disagreeable duty, and one never to have recourse to unless under great provocation. It seems to me a great shame to persistently run down a force which (as every reasonable, thinking pioneer must admit) has been to a great extent the means of saving life and property in all outside districts. We have heard of instances of great cruelty on the part of one or two officers, but then one black sheep does not make the whole flock black, and as a rule I am sure that the officers are as much averse to anything in the shape of cruelty as "Humanity" himself.

With regard to the boys, those who come in or are brought in from the bush—"stolen," as "Humanity" puts it—lead not only useful but happy lives, and are brought to as high a state of civilisation as they are capable of attaining. As a rule they are kindly treated, well fed and clothed, and can always obtain a holiday. But the holidays are not generally of long duration, for, although fond of change, they soon tire of wild life and begin to long for the comforts to which they have grown accustomed. This, however, is the case only with those who have been brought in young.

And now with regard to the grown-up blacks. As to the success or otherwise of the missionary station spoken of by "R. S." I cannot say anything, but I do know that missionary boys are notoriously the most unmitigated scoundrels, combining polished hypocrisy with their own natural vices. With regard to making reserves for blacks, whatever success may have attended this plan amongst the half-civilised coast blacks, I am quite sure that it never would answer amongst the wild blacks. In the first place force would have to be used to keep them within the prescribed boundaries, which would lead to all the old evils complained of, and confinement to one place is so totally opposed to their nomadic instincts that any restraint of that kind would be intolerably irksome to them. But the great objection to any such scheme is this: I have already pointed out that the main source of evil amongst the blacks is the upsetting of their social laws, and I think all who have seen much of outside blacks will agree with me that under any such white supervision as proposed the relation between the sexes would be more unsatisfactory than ever. And in connection with this matter I allow the whites have been much to blame, and I would be the last to palliate their conduct. But practically this is an evil which no Government measures can reach, and which must exist as long as human nature is what it is. At the same time, as I have already pointed out, this is not the fruitful source of bad blood and ill-feeling between the races which it is represented to be.—Yours,

&c.,
—*Queenslander*, June 12, 1880.

NORTH GREGORY.

SIR,—I have read all that you have published in favour of a more humane treatment of our blacks and of a reform in the Native Police system with that view, and also all that has been said against your proposals; and I wish to assure you that I entirely concur with your views, and hope they may be carried out. I have always thought it monstrous that the actions of the Native Police were not allowed to be properly witnessed and regularly reported, and consider that the reverse should be the rule. The force should protect as well as punish blacks. There ought to be degrees of punishment too, and far more trouble should be taken to find out the real

criminal in each case, whether black or white. All this would require a mixed force such as you advocate. As to the truth of those accounts which you have given of particular outrages on blacks, and which have gone unpunished, I see no reason to doubt them, many acts of equal inhumanity of the kind having to my own knowledge gone unpunished, and I have no doubt the same thing is going on now, and will do so till the people of this country are convinced of their responsibility in the matter; and I only hope you will go on exposing the rottenness of our present system of dealing with the blacks till you have made the facts widely known, and then something like justice will be done—if our boasted civilisation is not a sham to all who cannot buy its fruits. As on all previous occasions when anyone has attempted to draw public attention to the evils complained of, your efforts in favor of humanity on this occasion have so far called forth little but hostile criticism, scorn, and ridicule; or at least friendly advice to leave the question to those who understand it. Emboldened by the uniform success of such tactics previously, writers have again come forward proclaiming themselves the champions of the pioneer settlers, ready to defend them against misrepresentation and slander; denouncing your ideas as wildly absurd, remarkable chiefly for their impracticability, and so on, however seemingly benevolent; at the same time expecting implicit belief in their own statements on account of their (the writers') wide experience, practical common sense, and intimate knowledge of the nature and character of the blacks, &c. We are told that it is only people who are unacquainted with the hard realities of frontier life who ask for these reforms—visionary sentimentalists, dwellers in towns, and so forth; and the charge has generally been a telling one, on account of persons not allowing their names to appear when writing against the abuses in question; and so people take critics such as "Never-Never" at their word, and decide that these matters are properly understood only by such persons as he is described to be (by himself), and that they must be settled in the natural way—"the survival of the fittest"—which, interpreted by "Never-Never," means that every scoundrel who has a mind to should be allowed by society (as indeed he is now in most places) to rob and murder the blacks with as much freedom from punishment as if they were pigeons. Such conduct may be according to wild beast nature, even if men degraded themselves, as some do, to the level of wild beasts, for then they cease to be men, to all intents and purposes. And so, with all due respect to "Never-Never's" profound wisdom, we may be allowed to call his conception of human nature a beggarly one, if he thinks it would be natural for men to let the weak and defenceless fall victims to the worst passions of mankind; this sort of thing is called (rightly so) inhuman, unnatural, and brutal. Besides, if allowed, where is it to stop? Are the Chinese to be the next we are to conclude want shooting, "being useless?" And what about the useless members of society of our own color; are they all to perish whilst society looks on to see "Never-Never's" notion of a natural law work out? The natural result would be the mutual destruction of all—not the survival of the fittest. Let us look at the question fairly; use our reason and experience; grant that we have a plain duty to perform towards every black as well as white person—to protect as well as to punish him—and I fully expect we should find the task an easy one, and easier year by year. And I maintain that the blacks are, in the greater part of the country, *wonderfully easy to manage*, and very useful. As to the Native Police force, I am of opinion that with some slight alteration as to its composition, and a radical one as to its methods, it would be the most suitable for the greater part of the country; it is a cheap and competent force, and only wants to be properly worked. I think those who have had the best opportunities of judging the question should, in justice not only to the blacks but to themselves and "outsiders" generally, give their experiences and express their views. It is usually represented that outsiders get accustomed to seeing blacks brutally ill-treated and become indifferent to it, and that the desire for reform comes from people living in civilised parts. I think this is a mistake, and can only say that, after having worked on stations with blacks for about 20 years in old districts and on the very outside stations, I never saw the necessity for anything at all like the extermination policy; on the other hand, I know that within two years of the first settlement of some Western rivers the blacks have ceased to trouble the whites and have become very useful in many ways; and I am pretty sure that very few people could be found in the West who approve or ever practise such a plan as "Never-Never" advocates. There are a few, I know, and I hold that they should be punished most severely when possible; at all events never encouraged in the way they are. As to our being committed to a course of harsh and cruel treatment of blacks, having unjustly taken their country, I think it is nonsense. I don't admit it was their country, and want proof of it;

but, granting that, it is evident we must accept the situation, and it is for us to do our duty in it. Wishing you success in your efforts—I am yours, &c.,

PIONEER.

—*Queenslander*, June 19, 1880.

SIR,—Allow me one word of comment upon “Never Never’s” letter in your last issue. Callousness, to use a very mild word, seems to have outgrown any finer feelings this writer may have once possessed.

I have known of blacks when being dispersed seek refuge in trees, where, shrieking for mercy, they were shot down by their murderers beneath. “Never Never” would fain as easily dispose of the *Queenslander’s* good taste and honesty of purpose. That blackfellows take a deal of killing sometimes and “die hard” he seems to know, and I trust that he may yet learn that naked truth is not to be dispersed by the pen, however facile, of any unhesitating utilitarian such as he undoubtedly is. Let him not seek to strengthen his position by dragging in the outside men. They are, I am happy to say, the great majority, strangers to his line of thought.—Yours, &c.,

June 2.

HUMANITY.

—*Queenslander*, June 19, 1880.

SIR,—In reply to “Outis’” correction of my communication relative to the “gentlemen’s” reception of officers of the Native Police force, I beg the favor of stating that undoubtedly “gentlewomen” should have been the word used; and if I omitted doing so it is simply a mistake—one, however, that does not affect the question at issue; for I include “gentlemen” as well as “gentlewomen” as those from whom I and others of the force invariably received the greatest kindness, not only when in their own homes, but we were also honored by their visiting us in our barracks.

As regards the mode by which “Outis” obtained his information *in re* the atrocities, I am quite prepared to admit the *reliability* of his informants, namely, the *relatives or friends* of the blacks dispersed. Would the honest womanly feelings of those two “gentlewomen,” think you, have undergone a change towards the Native Police officers had their homes been surrounded by hostile myalls, or would “Outis” consider such wholesale murderers and refuse their assistance had they come to their relief? I have known of two similar occurrences.

In all services there are without doubt black sheep, but I assert emphatically that as a body the Native Police officers are as honorable and, I maintain, as humane as any body of officers in the service of the Crown, and would regard with as great horror as “Outis” himself the atrocities with which he charges them.—Yours, &c.,

VERITAS.

—*Queenslander*, June 19, 1880.

SIR,—I have read with painful interest and deep sympathy your article No. III., “How we civilise the blacks,” and I desire to support the philanthropic view which you justly take of the cause of what are usually termed “atrocities of the aborigines” being really “white aggression.” I need only point to the first white sufferer who fell from black spears, in what is now known as Queensland—my very esteemed and noble friend Kennedy, the last to provoke the enmity of the savage. Then, *why* was he killed? is the natural enquiry. If the Queensland Government have preserved the book which was kept at the Booby Island post office, you may find there the record in the handwriting of Kennedy’s real murderer, though indirectly, about seven years previously—namely, about June, 1841—in which Grayburne, the master of the Brothers, records the fact of while sailing past the York Islands he “shot a blackfellow.” Here we have a picture of a British vessel sailing along the coast while natives are peacefully gathering shellfish for their meal, when this unblushing British tar (no, not tar, but brute) tries the range of his musket, and thinks himself a clever shot. I read this a few days after its entry, and remarked that I pitied the first white man that came within reach of that tribe. The opportunities were rare, but Kennedy came at last. Who, again, carried off two young children from the tribe on poor Wills’ run, and brought them to Sydney never to return? But Wills, unconscious

of the treachery of his predecessor, had to pay the penalty. As a striking contrast to the bloody reputation of the Queensland natives, how is that we learn such amicable and pleasing accounts of the blacks at Port Essington, where from 1838 to 1849 they not only lived on friendly terms with the garrison, but twenty years after it had been abandoned by the whites two gentlemen from Adelaide were able to occupy the peninsula as a run, and have been most kindly received by the aborigines, who show a reverence and respect for the memory of the early whites.

CRAWFORD PASCO, Commander R.N.

Queenscliff, Victoria, June 13.
—*Queenslander*, June 26, 1880.

SIR,—If the editorial *flat*, "This correspondence must now cease," has not gone forth, I would like to enter a protest against the somewhat calumnious articles directed against the pioneers of the colonies in general, and those of Northern Queensland in particular, which appeared in two successive issues of the *Queenslander* under the headings "The Way we Civilise," and "Black and White." To quote Macaulay:—"We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality. We read the scandal, talk about it for a day, and forget it. But once in six or seven years our virtue becomes outrageous. We cannot suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. We must make a stand against vice." We now appear about to suffer one of these "periodical fits," and, casting about for a scapegoat, fix upon the person of the pioneer—the settler of the interior; the key of the inland terra incognita we might call him—to bear the brunt of our virtuous indignation. But we should bear in mind that it is possible to be virtuous and yet unjust at the one time, and this appears to me to be the position the *Queenslander* has assumed. When it seriously states that "on occupying new territory the aboriginal inhabitants are treated in exactly the same way as the wild beasts or birds the settler may find there," its virtuous indignation—if it honestly believes in such wholesale vilification—is highly commendable, while at the same time the injustice of such a sweeping accusation, levelled against a body of men who form one of our most useful and enterprising of colonists, is greatly to be deplored. Let us take a retrospect to a date some 238 years antecedent to the present era. We find, referring to New Zealand, "Tasman did not land on any part of the island, but having had a boat's crew cut off by the natives in what he then called Massacre Bay he was content to sail along the west coast of the North Island." And again, on 8th October, 127 years subsequent to Tasman's visit, we find Captain Cook defending himself from an unprovoked attack from the same people, and glad to make good his retreat from so "unfortunate and inhospitable a place." Here we are furnished with two authentic records of instances in which it is quite plain the white man could not have been the aggressor, for in the first instance they had not even landed on the aboriginal's soil, and in the second had done so in the hope of being able to open up friendly negotiations with the natives; and it was, finally, in pursuance of this laudable project that the gallant commander referred to fell a victim to ferocious barbarism. I have selected these two remote instances, first, because they stand amongst the first instances on record wherein the aboriginals of the southern hemisphere and the European have come into collision. Secondly, because, being a matter of history, they are more likely to gain credence than those instances which have occurred contemporaneous with our own experience, in our own colony; and, to be more explicit, in the districts of Burke and Cook. I could recount many instances where the pioneer, having selected his blocks and formed a comfortable homestead, has allowed the aboriginals—free from any previous intercourse with Europeans—to form a camp near the station. How they had been generously supplied with food that could be ill spared. How the virtues of a "Friday" appeared to be intensified in each sable warrior. How they had been presented with sundry articles of clothing, implements, &c., until the increasing cry for more could not possibly be complied with; and *then*, how the settler returned home after a hard day's ride to find his late companions murdered and mutilated beyond recognition, his homestead and stores in smouldering ruins, and the ground littered with broken spears. This was no unfrequent experience in the early days of settlement, and the same thing will continue to occur while the progress of colonisation is to be carried on in outlying districts inhabited by the blacks. Where this sort of thing is likely to

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occur you do not hesitate to affirm "the shooting of the blacks to be inevitable," yet in the same breath talk of "the awful depth of brutality to which even an educated European can descend" when fulfilling the inevitable. As an instance illustrating the results of forbearance, let us turn to the recent attack on Mr. Jack. Here we have a tribe of blacks, so remote from any European settlement that any question of previous ill-treatment from whites should be at once dismissed as utterly fallacious, yet they no sooner see a small party of Europeans apparently afraid to proceed to extremities than their savage instincts are at once aroused, and the result of European humanity nearly culminates in the loss of valuable life. Now, I have no sympathy with a "bushman who shoots a blackfellow to try the range of his rifle," and here I have no hesitation in declaring that such a monstrosity is not to be found amongst the ranks of the pastoral pioneer; but at the same time I do not hesitate to affirm that had Mr. Jack used his rifle earlier in the day, and with better effect, he would not have suffered the unpleasant experience of having a spear run through his neck, and by instilling into the blacks a wholesome dread of the white man's weapons would have made things much safer for those to come after him. I fear this opinion will be held sufficient to class me amongst "the white brutes who have fancied the amusement, have murdered, ravished, and robbed the blacks without let or hindrance." All the same, the opinion is an honest one, born of experience, and one I am sure that will be readily concurred in by all who have had any dealings with the northern blacks.

From the most infinitesimal creation of animated nature up to the "noblest work of God" we recognise one universal law—species preying upon species, and the weakest going to the wall. This is the one fundamental religion of the northern aboriginals, and one from which no forbearance is likely to convert them. Gratitude is a word not to be found in their vocabulary, and a virtue that it will be found impossible to instil into their nature. They are under no especial tribal dominion, and recognise but the one law of might as right. Their individual privileges are gained and retained by weapon right alone. In warring amongst themselves they never expect or ask for quarter, no matter how great the odds against the weaker party, and never fail to attribute any act of forbearance in an enemy as a certain indication of cowardice, and regard any acts of generosity bestowed upon them as forced tribute, or "blackmail," to their superiority. I could quote many authentic cases, commencing from the earliest period of our intercourse with these blacks, in support of these opinions, but to do so would, I fear, render me liable to the imputation of countenancing extermination on the very poor argument of inferiority, and, like "Never Never," be characterised as one who has "lost the great lesson of civilisation." I merely enumerate their peculiarities as showing the, at present, insuperable difficulties to be encountered when undertaking the reformation of these unfortunates.

As a remedy for the social evil, you suggest that white police should be employed, and that "their duty should be to repress any outrage by the blacks, and for that purpose they should have the same license that is accorded to any hostile force in the time of war;" or, in other words, that the present system of police protection should still be maintained, with this difference only, that instead of being a mixed body of white and black the members should be white only. Now, I dare say none but the ordinary white man would join such a force, in which case is there not a possibility that "his conscience may be seared and his nature hardened by familiarity with the scenes of bloodshed," he would necessarily become familiar with? In which event would not the remedy become even more abhorrent than the evil?

Victoria and New South Wales and other colonies have each had to grapple with this evil, and each has found the panacea to be a matter of time only. A being may be living in the midst of us having a body covered with ulcerous and disgusting sores, yet while he keeps himself decently covered we have no suspicion of—and consequently experience no uneasiness from—his objectionable presence; but no sooner does some well-meaning friend expose the sores to the public view than we raise our voice in horror and wonder how such things could be. We might compare Queensland to the ulcerated, the Press to the friend, and those fortunates—who, following in the wake of the "settler," reaping the rewards of his hardship and enterprise, nightly closing their eyes within the security of four substantial walls—to the horrified public. Now, if I may be allowed a suggestion, I could wish the public to be left to their own discoveries, and when any sickening—but at the time incurable—spectacle was laid bare, the friend of the people and guide of public opinion would, I think, do well to clothe its repulsive nakedness with all speed, rather than add to the horror by an indiscriminate sacrifice of the raw ulcer; and when the time really is ripe for beneficent intervention we have only to turn our eyes to Chand-

rook, in Victoria, and a similar establishment in New Zealand, and we will find a ready solution to that present problem, "What shall we do with our blacks?"—
Yours, &c.,

Millungera, May 29.
—*Queenslander*, June 26, 1880.

CHARLES KNIFE.

SIR,—Your Lower Herbert correspondent of the 15th ultimo evidently writes with a desire to contradict the truth when he states that he has been a resident on the river for many years, and never heard of a black gin having been shot or burnt in the district. I will not trespass on your columns by going into details; but with your permission will inform your correspondent that a few years ago a sub-inspector of Native Police was dismissed from the service for the shooting and burning of a gin named Kassey, on Mr. Cudmore's selection, near the public road, Lower Herbert—not the Herbert River out west. A few days after this outrage occurred the Premier of this colony visited the Lower Herbert, and the matter was brought before that hon. gentleman's notice. I could mention other cases of this kind if you correspondent is not satisfied with the above.—Yours, &c.,

Ingham, Lower Herbert, June 11.
—*Queenslander*, June 26, 1880.

JAMES CASSADY.

SIR,—Certain articles in your paper, "How we Civilise the Blacks," have attracted my attention, and I regret to say that to my knowledge many of the incidents therein recounted are facts, I having heard them from eye-witnesses or the actors; but it is fair to state that most of them happened years ago, though there is reason to fear much the same kind of thing is going on still in the far North and West.

Having lived in Northern Queensland since 1862, and in this neighborhood since '64, my personal experience may be worth something, though this letter may in consequence appear egotistical. I have employed and do employ numbers of the aborigines; for eight years they have done all my sheep-washing, and I always have a few working on the place. At shearing time, with the washpool, I employ about thirty shepherding, &c., &c., and I find they do the work as well as any other men. As a rule I never engage them for more than "two moons," and discharge them whether they like it or not at the end of their time—for a spell. The mind of a "nigger" is so fickle that he can scarcely help bolting if kept long at one employment—caused no doubt by the wandering instinct inherited from their ancestors, who have followed a roving life from time immemorial, and which it would take many generations to eradicate thoroughly.

Until 1868 the Native Police used to visit this station constantly. The result was—shepherds killed, and sheep, cattle, and other property destroyed to the value of £200 a year. At my request, in that year the Native Police promised to visit me as little as possible, and not interfere with my blacks (which promise has been kept by the various gentlemen in command in the district since); with the result that I was able to explain to the niggers that if they kept away from the cattle camps and did not molest the shepherds they might hunt and camp all over the run. The first year of the new régime the damage to property did not exceed £60, and *per contra* they saved £50 in wages, and since that have done on an average £10 worth of damage per annum, against £100 saved in wages through their labor. The blacks since they have become friendly tell me that in the old days of "reprisals," carried out in the usual manner—*i.e.*, shooting the men and destroying their nets, water-bags, and implements—we used to starve numbers of the old men, women, and children to death; for, being hunted into the desert (spinifex country), they had neither means of carrying water nor of catching game (the former article is very scarce), and of course the weaker members of the tribe felt it most.

I do not pretend that a display of force has not been necessary at times, or that the natives are the harmless animals some people would have us believe; but, as I knew the blacks personally, I was able to discover who committed any offence, and in most cases get him or them given up to me, whereby indiscriminate punishment was avoided. The tribe to whom this part of the country actually belongs, being obliged to return home sooner or later, are only too glad to act as police and give up offenders in their own tribe, or track "raiders" belonging to strange tribes. The Native Police should certainly be abolished, and white police with armed black

trackers be substituted (*i.e.*, if the country can afford the expense) ; but, above all, the officers should be middle-aged men, who know something of the manners and customs of the natives ; and the different officers should be kept in the same districts as long as possible, and encouraged to become acquainted with the peculiar habits and languages of the tribes therein residing ; otherwise this force will become just as inefficient as the present one, and will only be able to make useless, because in many cases mistaken, reprisals.

The Native Police officers do their duty, as a rule, to the best of their ability, but under the existing system it is impossible for them to do anything more than they do at present. A young man is appointed to command a detachment of N.P. who knows nothing whatever about the aboriginals, and finding that his men are a lot of unruly turbulent savages, always ready to bolt, and only to be kept to their duty by the excitement of bloodshed, and that the traditions of "the force" are—study nothing of the native character or habits, but if sent for "disperse" the *first* camp you find near the scene of a felony, he naturally follows the usual course. There are certainly, a *few* thoughtful men in "the force" who endeavour to act in a different manner, but their individual efforts are vain under such a system.

Much has been written about reserves, but no one has yet suggested that the said reserves should be pastoral instead of agricultural. If, say, 500 square miles were reserved in each district, and stocked with sheep or cattle, it could be worked by niggers, and would be self-supporting immediately. The superintendent might be a police officer as well. He should encourage the blacks to camp on the reserve as much as possible ; give them work when they wanted it ; learn to know all the blacks in the district personally ; supervise all agreements made between whites and aborigines ; and see that the blacks are protected as well as the whites—particularly in their contracts ; and also be empowered by law to administer corporal punishment in a summary manner, as in all dealings with the lower races flogging appears to be as necessary at times as with children ; in fact, their minds not being developed as in civilised man, they are much the same, in feeling and ideas, as children. It is not surprising that agricultural reserves have been a failure—that they have been so hitherto is, I think, an acknowledged fact—as nature evidently intended man to pass through two stages before he arrived at the agricultural "house dweller." The Navajo Indian of New Mexico is just entering the pastoral stage, the Kaffir of South Africa is just emerging from it ; and all attempts hitherto to force a race of men to jump from hunters to agriculturists have been a failure. The Tasmanian Government placed their aborigines on an island, and they fretted themselves to death, though rations and every necessary were provided. The U.S. Government has for the last hundred years been placing the Indians who "came in" on agricultural reserves, with the result that (except a few Choctaws and Cherokees, who have become useful citizens) in a very few years the tribes have become extinct. Perhaps pastoral reserves should not be a success, but, as we would be following Nature's teaching more closely than in any other way, we should have a better chance of success. Almost anything would be better than the present system, which is a disgrace to civilisation. If we failed we should be no worse off than at present, and should have at least the merit of having done our best. Unless some measures are quickly taken, the Aboriginal Question will solve itself. Ten years ago the tribe I am best acquainted with could muster 130 fighting men ; now it could not muster more than 40 at most, and few children are growing up. Measles in '65 and the vices of civilisation since have caused this rapid decrease.—Yours, &c., C.

Cape River, June 12.

—*Queenslander*, July 10, 1880.

SIR,—So much correspondence has appeared in your paper with reference to the aborigines of Queensland that it is with considerable diffidence I add to the bulk of it ; but from the year 1863 to the present time having been familiar with the settlement of a large portion of Northern Queensland, extending from the Burdekin River to the western waters, I feel that a few remarks from me may not be out of place at this time. Without particularising the various letters and articles which have appeared in your paper—to none of which letters, however, have the names of the writers been attached, so that it is impossible for the uninitiated to judge of the amount of experience they bring to bear upon the question—it will be sufficient to re-

mark that a certain number of these condemn the treatment that the blacks have received from the Native Police; others record horrible stories of atrocities alleged to have been committed by white men against the blacks; others maintain that although from time to time a few white men have been guilty of great barbarities in their dealings with the blacks, still on the whole their conduct has been only such as has been necessitated by the fact of the former occupying the country of the latter, and that consequently neither they nor the Native Police are to blame in the matter, but that the operations of the police have on the whole been conducted with as little severity and irregularity as was compatible with a due performance of their duty in protecting the flocks, herds, and lives of settlers and miners in their various districts. It appears to me that, with reference to the atrocities related as having been committed by white men, many old stories of bygone days have been raked up, some from mere hearsay, and have nothing to do with what is going on at the present time. And if by any chance the interest taken in the colonies should be sufficient to cause these things to be copied in the home papers, the readers of such stories could not fail to entertain ideas very much to the prejudice of Queenslanders. It seems to me that we have to do with things as they are at the present time, and not with what has passed and is beyond remedy. The matter appears to have started with the question—Are the Native Police as at present organised suited for the proper performance of their work, or is some alteration necessary? But, because we may have had amongst us men who have been guilty of cruelty towards the blacks in bygone days, I fail to see how the raking up of such atrocities, which no possible surveillance could have checked, can assist in answering the question. At the present time, with the exception of the goldfields above the 19th parallel of latitude, and about the Gulf of Carpentaria, the blacks are not molesting either settlers or their stock to any serious extent. The Native Police have in consequence been withdrawn from many stations they formerly occupied, and where their presence was so needed a few years ago; bush townships have sprung up in the centres of districts where blacks were troublesome, around which they now congregate, instead of running about spearing cattle; so that if atrocities are committed by the whites it is only in certain limited districts, that they would pass unnoticed. A good deal has been said about the indiscriminate punishment of a tribe of blacks, but those who find fault in this way evidently do not realise how difficult it is to find out the real culprits amongst a tribe of myall blacks, who after committing depredations generally take refuge in mountainous or scrubby country. It is true that sometimes they may be rounded up, but far oftener has it happened that they have broken before the police could surround them, and moreover the bailing up of a mob of blacks has not always been found the simple and safe operation which some people seem to imagine. I have known personally or by reputation many police officers, and, although there may be black sheep in every flock, I do not believe that as a class they can be justly accused of having exercised unnecessary severity in punishing the blacks. Nine out of ten of those who like myself have suffered continually from their depredations in former years will bear me out in saying that, generally, any attempt to fix the blame on any particular members of a tribe, when all had more or less a hand in the depredation, would have been simply unsuccessful. The assertion that the Native Police shoot men, gins, and children promiscuously, probably is made in ignorance, as it is well known that on no account will native troopers intentionally fire on any but the men. With regard to the proposal that a force of white police could effectively take the place of the black troopers, I believe no body of white men could in practice be got to work with sufficient efficiency to be of practical use; and the following up of a retreating tribe of blacks under a blazing summer sun—often through waterless country—would be a strain which only men well inured to the work by constant practice could go through—and even then a considerable portion of black trackers would be required. What is really necessary is that care should be taken in the selection of officers for the Native Police, and that, instead of men who have sometimes been appointed to the command of detachments without any ascertained qualification for the appointment, those only shall be placed in command in whose temper, judgment, and ability reliance can be placed. In conclusion, I say that any attempt to ameliorate the condition of the blacks—beyond supplying blankets, which is very insufficiently done—appears to me quite hopeless. We cannot prevent their coming in contact with a white population, by whom they become demoralised, and whose worst points they imitate. Unlike most races in the world they appear never to have advanced in civilisation one jot; as soon as they come in contact with Europeans they lose the good qualities they may possess as savages, and pick up the worst in those with whom they come in contact. Experience always teaches that a race which cannot

progress in civilisation must go backwards and die out ; and any proposition therefore for raising the condition of the blacks, or making them of permanent use appears to me simply utopian.

Hughenden, June 30.

R. GRAY.

—*Queenslander*, July 10, 1880.

SIR,—Some weeks since I sent you a letter on the above subject. Living so far inland, I am not yet aware if my letter has been published or not. Assuming, however, that it has, I will ask you to allow me space for a few further remarks. Since sending the letter referred to I have read a good deal in the *Queenslander* on the same question, which has set me wondering how it is that in the colonies, where the art of—well—say “romancing” is cultivated to such an extent as to give rise to the necessity of a new proverb—“Believe nothing that you hear, and only half what you see”—how it is that town people continue to place such child-like faith in bush stories? At the present moment I believe there is an expensive party being fitted out in Sydney to go to look for half-caste children, toothless roan ponies, and other curious things in the west of Queensland, while the very country in which these wonders are said to exist has been occupied by cattle nearly three years, during which time it has been constantly ridden over by stockmen and patrolled by the Native Police. And in newspapers nearer home I have read of blacks being found in the same locality in a state of semi-civilisation, living in good houses, &c. Stories of this sort have always followed the taking up of new country, and always will do so as surely as the day follows night. Yet they are still published from time to time by too-confiding editors, who get them on what they consider no doubt reliable authority. The “new country” theme has always been a favorite one with the bush “blower,” presenting as it does such an extent and variety of play for his fancy without risk of contradiction. But the subject which has the greatest fascination of all for the romancer is the Native Police. In the first place the public is always partial to tales of massacres and bloody murders. Then the Native Police officer is a man who can always be attacked with impunity, as he is not allowed to defend himself, and, if he were, there is a “certain section of the community” who will hear nothing but evil of a Native Police officer. But what more than anything else has contributed to make this such a popular theme for the storytellers is the law which makes the Native Police a secret service. Why, it raises it at once to the level of the old secret societies which have furnished plots for half the sensational novels of Europe! I shall refer to this law further on. What I wish to point out now is that the public (barring the section alluded to above) will require some further evidence before they give implicit credence to the tales you have published. So far your chief authority appears to be a certain “colonial experience” on — Downs station. The only insight you have given us into his character is that he was allowed to go out as a friend with a Native Police officer, and that on his return he turned round and accused that officer of being guilty of almost inhuman cruelty and murder. Now if your “colonial experience” was a man of ordinary intelligence he must have been aware that he was only allowed to accompany this secret-service expedition on the assumption that he was a gentleman and would not divulge the secrets which might come to his knowledge. Was the sense of public duty so abnormally strong in this young gentleman as to cause him to violate the most sacred laws of honor and comradeship? Or was he influenced by some less worthy motive? If the latter, why then such a man may have exaggerated or fabricated the whole story.

And now with regard to this law of keeping the Native Police doings secret. The plain history of it, I take to be this: We, rightly or wrongly, have seized and occupied the blackfellows' country. We have invited our fellow-countrymen, with their wives and their children, to come over and share in the spoil; but we have tried to keep hidden from their eyes the inevitable consequences of our lawless act. And it would have been well, no doubt, could we have kept these things from the knowledge of our town people, and especially of our women and children. But the very course which was taken to ensure this end has had the very contrary effect. It has had the effect of enveloping in mystery all our dealings with the aborigines, and the gross exaggerations which were the natural outcome of this have so inflamed the imaginations of these people that they think we—and they through us—are responsible for atrocities more revolting than those we heard of during the Turco-Russian war. Seeing, then, that this system has so entirely failed in its object, let us do away with it, and let it be openly known to our people the price they have to pay for

sharing the plunder we have taken from the aborigines. Let us at once do away with all pretence of treating the outside blacks according to European law, for it is not practicable to do so. And then we may set about devising some better scheme for subduing them if we can. I do not think that substituting white police for black would mend matters. White men of the class you propose would never submit to the stern discipline so absolutely necessary in a force of the kind while on the war path. I believe it would be impossible to devise a more efficient system than that of black troopers with white officers. The "fiendish ferocity" which you attribute to the former is the very quality we want, and which is so valuable when under the direction and control of an efficient officer. But then the officers must be men of high standing and character to be entrusted with such important duties. You say the employment is at present degrading. I cannot see why it would be less so with white troopers. Could we not make the post less degrading than we do? We send an officer into outside country with no authority to treat the blacks otherwise than according to English laws, when we know that they are utterly impracticable, and we tell him he has to keep the blacks quiet. Is not this telling a man to make bricks without straw with a vengeance? If our officer is careful not to commit himself, and keeps within the law, the blacks soon begin to kill cattle, and then men—and he is "inefficient." If, on the other hand, he essays to keep the blacks in order in the only way we know it practicable for him to do so, at every step he places himself in the power of any unscrupulous white man, and runs perhaps a narrow escape of the gallows, while he is howled at by a "certain section of the community" and branded with such epithets as "degraded," "inhuman," &c. Is it to be wondered at that some Native Police officers have failed to preserve their self-respect under this treatment? Let us then tell our officers plainly what they may do and what they may not do. "Outis" shows us how the Native Police prisoner "never comes in at the next stage." What in the name of goodness does "Outis" expect? Why, if the law had to be put in force with every black criminal in the same manner as with a white man the colony would be bankrupt in a year. Does "Outis" really think it to be the duty of the Native Police officer to take every prisoner down to, say, Rockhampton? And does he not know that it would be impossible to get legal evidence against one wild blackfellow in ten thousand?

With regard to what you say in the last *Queenslander* I have seen (May 29) about the South Australian system, it is no wonder that it does not cost so much as ours, for, practically, they have no police in the bush. And if you lived over the border, Mr. Editor, you would not say so much about their keeping their hands clean. No, sir, the South Australians have to pay the same penalty that we have, and the only difference in the dealing with the blacks across the border is that the station holders do their own police work. They arm themselves and their boys, and are notoriously more severe than our own Native Police. And it is only natural that they should be so, as, having no police protection, they are more at the mercy of the blacks. And the South Australians certainly carry hypocrisy to a slightly more absurd extent than we do by occasionally making a pretence of justice, and carrying a blackfellow a long way to goal, as if hundreds were not shot without trial for each one that is so treated.

"Outis" gives us a touching picture of himself sitting with a mob of blacks round a back waterhole on the Diamantina while he explains to them the goodness and piety of the "big fellow master belong a paper." But should you, Mr. Editor, ever find yourself in collision with the same blacks I am afraid you would find your reputation for goodness and kindness of heart would be of very little service to you, unless backed by the knowledge that you were a firm man and a straight shot. And in spite of "Outis'" outside experience, and the intimate knowledge he displays of the blacks' language, I think he is far from having arrived at a true estimate of their character when he argues that because his system has been successful with the Ceylon coolies therefore it would be successful with our aborigines; for I suppose it would be hard to find two races presenting greater contrasts in all their characteristics and habits. And here, by the way, let me ask, why does "Outis"—whose tone is so business-like and straightforward on his own scheme—why does he think it necessary the moment he touches on the present system to rush into the "penny dreadful" style? And what would "Outis'" scheme amount to if carried out in the manner he advocates? Slavery pure and simple, and on a scale the most gigantic perhaps the world has ever witnessed. We are to coax what blacks we can into making agreements for a term of years to work in another part of the colony, and all those who will not work willingly are to be forced to work. But why go further into the details of a scheme so wildly impracticable that it is hard to believe the projector can have been really sincere in putting it forward?

In conclusion, let me remark that "Outis" is unfair when he instances the conduct of the pure-minded but eccentric lady who would not let a gentleman within her doors because he was a Native Police officer, as a type of the feeling of the more refined residents of the bush. "Outis" must know well that go where you will in the bush, amongst high or low, as a rule there is no guest more welcome or more honored than the Native Police officer.

June 16.

NORTH GREGORY.

—*Queenslander*, July 17, 1880.

WE have received a great number of letters from all parts of the country treating this subject from very different points of view. While anxious, on the one hand, to suppress nothing bearing on the point, and to allow the fullest discussion on the subject, we are compelled to have some regard to the amount of space occupied. A publication of the letters in full would occupy pages required for other matter, and we therefore propose to give the gist of each letter, as fairly as possible, in the briefest compass.

A correspondent, writing over the signature "Piebald," objects entirely to the kind of force we propose for the regulation of the natives. He objects that in the North the whole police force of the country would have to be employed looking after black to the neglect of white offenders, and asserts that they could not possibly get evidence of what was done by them. Having had fifteen years' experience of Native Police officers, he declares them to be "upright gentlemen," and "the most of them would have scorned to have done the deeds you attributed to them." He thinks we should leave the matter "to work its own end, as it surely will do."

Mr. Isaac Watson, writing from Normanton, asserts that the aborigines in the Gulf country are generally inclined to be peaceful, and complain that the police are always "rounding them up and shooting them for the purpose of kidnapping gins and little boys and making them travel to some stations, or else to the township of Normanton, where they are made to work and slave against their will. If any attempt is made to escape they are either shot in the bush by the Native Police or else brought in and punished accordingly." He suggests that the Imperial Act passed to prevent kidnapping in the Pacific might be used to prevent and punish these practices.

A correspondent, writing over the signature "Never Never Country," from the West, states that he was a sergeant of police in 1867-8-9, '70, and '71. He was in charge of stations on the Paroo, Bulloo, and Warrego rivers, and asserts that it was a "common thing" for Native Police officers in the first-named year to shoot and burn wild blacks. He was ordered to arrest an officer for shooting a civilised black; but he asserts that the case was hushed up, the officer dismissed from the force and promoted to a better billet. He also refers to *Queenslander* of 1869 and 1870, wherein it is related that Sub-inspector Gilmour, on an exploring trip, expended 500 ball cartridges in three or four months.

A correspondent, writing over the signature "Calpo," from the West, asserts that the incidents narrated in the *Queenslander* are without foundation, or grossly exaggerated. Having had eighteen years' experience of the Native Police system, he declares that, although instances of undue punishment have occurred, "as a rule, the Native Police officer is not the bloodthirsty scoundrel you represent him to be." Dispersing he declares to be a revolting duty to most officers. He believes that by making the force mainly a white one atrocities will not be prevented, and that the protection supposed to be afforded by one white man informing against the other is a fallacy. It did not, he asserts, stop the indiscriminate shooting of men, women, and children after the Wills murder by parties of whites. Nor did it stop similar conduct by parties of diggers, accompanied by Government officials, at Battle Creek. The very class of men we propose would, he declares, be the most severe; and he states that he has seen things done by parties of station hands going out after a murder by the blacks that no police officer would allow. The idea of such officers shooting blacks "for sport" is simply ridiculous. Finally, he asserts that in the outside districts of South Australia there are two wild blacks shot for one in Queensland, and "scenes have been enacted *sub rosa* in the out-lying districts of that colony before which the most severe dispersals by our Native Police pale to insignificance."

A correspondent, writing over the signature "J.W.," from Winton, doubts the cruelties attributed to the Native Police. He says "they have a duty to perform, and as a rule they do it well, and as humanely as possible. It is only where the

blacks commit a murder, or become very threatening, that the Native Police are called upon to disperse them." Still he is of opinion that "every true and loyal Englishman will help and do his best to palliate if not clear us of the disgraceful way we have for years allowed our aborigines to be treated in this a British colony. I for one will raise my voice against the wanton slavery and brutality now going on in this—but for the black spot—fair land of Queensland." He goes on to assert his belief that blacks can be civilised to some extent, supporting his contention by instances of black men employed on stations. On this basis he founds a scheme for ameliorating their condition. The native police barracks should be turned into depôts, with reserves attached, and the police should be set to muster and bring the blacks into these reserves and manage them afterwards. The writer believes that, although compelled at first to come in, the blacks would assemble voluntarily for protection and care afterwards; and suggests that it would be advantageous to move tribes from one district to another. To these depôts station-holders requiring aboriginal servants should come, and the blacks should only be allowed to engage on proper agreements for fair wages. Fees might be charged employers for these agreements which, with a percentage on the blacks' wages, would maintain the aged and decrepit at the depôts. It is the writer's belief that employers in the bush would be glad to hire blacks in great numbers under these conditions.

A correspondent, writing from Maytown over the signature "Guiah Wallow," challenges the denials of the *Queenslander* correspondent from the Lower Herbert, who said that incidents narrated in these columns of treatment of blacks were not true. He asserts that on the Lower Herbert in 1872 a gin was shot and "partly cremated." She was the gin of a black trooper who had been arrested and contrived to make his escape, but his gin, who was following, was shot. A few gins and their children were burned in a camp further up the river. A black named Charlie was killed by a native trooper "off duty," near Tre-Bonne Creek. Another, named Tommy, was charged with wounding a black known as Sambo, "tried at Cardwell, discharged, and handed over to the sub-inspector of police to be returned to his home and friends. Tommy's friends heard of his acquittal and waited for him near the river in the vicinity of Macnade until apparently some of them suggested revenge. Then followed the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Conn. At the time that Tommy ought to have turned up the finding of the body of a black man in Hinchinbrook Channel was reported. Tommy never was seen again." He concludes by giving the history of "Sam, who brought his employer from the Gulf country, blind with blight, to Townsville, and saved another life—first, from the stroke of a nulla; second, from drowning in the Herbert. Sam was also a defaulter under trooper regulations. He was discharged between Townsville and Waterview; there were rifles also discharged. Sam has not answered at any muster roll since."—*Queenslander*, July 24, 1880.

SIR,—This subject is becoming hackneyed, though if you are justified in persisting in the publication of letters on any subject it is no doubt on this. In yours of June 12, "North Gregory" states that through his kindness to the blacks and allowing them about the station Mr. Wills, sen., lost his own life and that of his party at Cullinlaringo. I had it, twelve months afterwards, from the late Mr. T. Wills (who happened to be at a neighboring station the day of the murder) that though the blacks had not been hunted off the run—they (the Wills party) had only been camped three months forming the station—*none* had been *allowed in* and very little intercourse had taken place between the two races; the immediate cause of the massacre having been a *mistake* made by a neighbour who, losing some sheep thought they were stolen. After making a raid on the supposed thieves in the usual manner he found out his error. The blacks, following their usual custom, not being able to catch the raiders, fell upon the first party of whites they found unprepared, thereby showing the utter folly of ever being without arms at hand when in a new country surrounded by impulsive savages. Mr. Wills had lots of arms loaded, but *stowed away in the store tent*. "North Gregory" is quite correct in his statement regarding the "morality" of the natives; it is seldom that this cause (intercourse with their women) leads to bad feeling (unless these women are *stolen*). I am inclined to think the practice has the reverse effect to what is generally supposed. The ways of these people "are peculiar," and only long study and observation will give a person an insight even into their manner of thought and customs.

"North Gregory" doesn't believe these stories of northern warfare! Well, I am only glad he does not *know* them to be *true*; at least, if not all matters of fact, that

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deeds *similar* to them, and quite as atrocious, have been and probably are enacted daily. That we can occupy "new country" without coming into collision with the natives is scarcely to be expected until "the lion lies down with the lamb." That a few white men will be killed, and a great many blacks "dispersed," is a certainty; but we must devise some more humane system than the present, which is simply extermination; and if niggers must be shot, why, let them be shot by responsible persons who will probably reduce the bloodshed to a minimum, and be careful that the guilty parties are "dispersed," not innocent camps of natives; which, besides being barbarous, leads to much loss of life on the part of inoffensive whites.—Yours, &c.,

Natal Downs, July 3.

C.

—*Queenslander*, July 24, 1880.

SIR,—Having read many articles in your paper for and against the aborigines, the bitter complaints against the officers of police (some of which are but too painfully true), I confess all my sympathies are towards the natives, who are the weaker, and as yet quite unprotected. But in condemning the actions of the Native Police force many forget that some such force was at one time a necessity, and even now in the outlying districts some protection in some manner is still requisite. It is a most intricate and difficult question to legislate upon, and it will be a lasting disgrace upon the Government if, when Parliament meets, careful and humane means are not taken to preserve and better the condition of those of the blacks who remain. It will be a work of time and patience to devise schemes for their welfare; no general law or code of laws can be of general benefit, for what would work well in one district would fail in another. I think in the first place the Government should immediately issue circulars to officers of detachments of police to use all their power towards the preservation of law, order, and humanity until Parliament shall have had time to enquire into the conflicting surroundings, and legislate in the interests of this fine but unfortunate race. But Government measures will but only partially benefit them, unless a warmer and more active interest be taken by those who are brought in contact with them like myself. I plead for the blacks; all my sympathies are with them. I have spent over a quarter of a century amongst them, have employed them and studied their character, and have come to the conclusion that no general plan or scheme for their advancement will be practicable. It will require careful investigation and much anxious thought to decide upon proper plans. In the meantime, it is to you, my neighbors, and to me, when the opportunities present themselves, to devote some time and trouble to their moral and intellectual culture, both by precept and example; try it some of you, my bush friends, you will find it morally healthful and invigorating. Your interest in the cause will expand and grow, and you will find that in attempting to assist the needy you have brought down a blessing upon yourselves. Much, very much, may be done in many ways, by ladies residing in the bush, to save those little black ones from vice and ruin. Strive then for the reward, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—Yours, &c.,

June, 1880.

MITCHELL.

—*Queenslander*, August 7, 1880.

SIR,—I have read the article in your issue of June 12 on the above subject, signed "North Gregory." As a resident in the northern districts of this colony since 1848, and a pioneer squatter nearly all that time, I have had considerable experience amongst blacks, the wildest of them. I may also say I know a little of the way in which Native Police affairs are conducted—so much that I think myself justified in expressing contra ideas to those of "North Gregory" in many particulars. His argument to the effect that Native Police officers find the dispersing business a most painful and disagreeable duty, and one never to have recourse to unless under great provocation, is simply absurd imagery. I maintain that the aborigines are shot down indiscriminately for the most simple offences, and in many instances for no cause. If dispersing is to the officers a disagreeable duty, why do they shoot down their own troopers occasionally? I could mention the names of many good boys that have been in my employ who afterwards joined the police, to be shot down and left where they fell for the crows and dingoes to feed upon. In one case I called an inquiry, and during the inquiry was told by the P.M. at Townsville that I should not interfere

with a police officer in the discharge of his duty. I ask is this English law, the law we boast of? It is surprising that so many should take up their pens to encourage such bloody and cowardly deeds; but I am disposed to think the defenders are men one and all in the Native Police service to-day. From what has come within my own knowledge I am satisfied that the articles you have published referring to the atrocities committed are correct.

I will now mention a few outrages that have occurred in this district as a sample :— A few years ago I was travelling with a friend from the South Cook to Cardwell. We camped a night with two men that were employed repairing a washpool, sheep yards, &c., near Glendhu station. They informed us that a quiet mob of blacks had been camping for a week or two on the public roadside, about half a mile from said washpool, that they had often been in the camp, and were always treated kindly by the blacks; on one occasion they turned out of their camp in order to give one of these men shelter during a heavy shower of rain. A couple of evenings before we arrived the Native Police came round, and in the dusk of the evening took observations of the camp, then went to the head station, returned again during the night, and at daydawn next morning opened fire upon the blacks, killing six or seven men. After hearing this tale we went to see what truth there was in the statement, and I solemnly declare I saw the dead bodies of three men not more than 200 yards from the public road; they were lying in a heap, and a few bushes thrown on top of them. At a later date, on the same road, there was a Government road party at work; they allowed the blacks to visit them and camp close by, but for some reasons best known to themselves they got afraid and sent for the police. A watch was kept for their arrival, and when close at hand, the blacks, twelve or thirteen in number, were invited into the hut, there surrounded, and dispersed in the usual way.

I will now pass over some fifty miles of blood-stained country, the blood barely dry, in order to bring another uncalled-for cowardly murder before public notice. In 1876 a Native Police officer went to patrol the Waterview run. He wended his way round to a quiet blacks' camp not far from the head station; the boys that occupied the camp were by name Tommy, Charley, and Billy, with their wives, all well known to the writer. They had arrived that day from Gairloch, on which plantation they had been employed. Fearing no injury from men they knew, and who appeared to be friends, officer, troopers, and blacks camped together. There was another white man there also, who I know will not deny the fact. The evening passed away with a corroboree; all went well during the night. The morning came, all partook of breakfast, then the horses were saddled. The next order was to "disperse" the three boys. The troopers stood amazed and refused. Orders were again given to fire. This time they obeyed, and Tommy and Charley fell dead on the ground; Billy carried his bullets (three) some little distance and there succumbed. Two of the gins were taken by the police to the Herbert River, where one of them, "Kitty," can be seen to-day at the telegraph office. She can relate this dreadful tale in the English language, and could have done so the day it occurred, so you will observe they were not myalls. There were two boys carried away at the same time, one of whom was made a present of to a drover to go to the Palmer country. As I have entered on this subject I will mention another case of barbarity. A few months ago a detachment of police were in Cardwell; the officer in charge returned to barracks overland, and sent the troopers by boat *vid* Dungeness. When they arrived at that port, a resident there in the Government employ sent them out after the blacks to abuse and murder any unfortunate aboriginal they might fall across. Like beagles let loose, they ran down the coast for miles, until at last they found a camp in which there was a poor old man, by appearance over 60 years of age, unable to get out of their way. He lay down with his face on the ground, and a trooper named Bromby stepped up to him and put a bullet through his head. I knew the old man well; I knew him to be as harmless as a child; I have seen him weeping over his daughter's grave. She was murdered by an ex-trooper named Simon, and was buried here on my selection. Five years ago he gave me his son, and ever after he made my place a kind of home. As a resident in the immediate neighborhood of where the above outrages were perpetrated, I conscientiously believe that one and all of the victims were wantonly murdered, and on each occasion by the orders of a different officer or individual. Under such a state of things as I have shown to be prevalent, I ask the enlightened public is it possible for a friendly feeling to exist between the two races? Our legislators go to a great amount of trouble in making laws and regulations for the protection of Polynesians; why not give the first owners of this continent the same consideration? They are equally good men in many ways. I have never found them ungrateful to any person who treated

them firmly and kindly ; it is treating them kindly to-day and cruelly to-morrow that gives cause for the remarks made by "North Gregory ;" or coming in contact with strange blacks that are only waiting an opportunity to avenge some wrong they have received at the hands of the police ; precaution should therefore be taken when amongst strange blacks. I was residing on the Dawson, not far from Banana, when Mr. Wills and his men got murdered. If the blacks had known him to be the kind-hearted man he was, or if he had taken the proper precaution until they knew him, I have no reason to doubt but that gentleman would have got on well with them, and would be alive probably to-day.

In conclusion, I am satisfied that a force of white police such as you have described through the columns of the *Queenslander*, officered by men like Sub-inspector Lamond, would regulate the evils now existing.

Lower Herbert, July 23.

J. C.

[The writer of the above letter, in a private note which accompanied it, gave us authority, if we pleased, to append his name in full. but, all things considered, we think it better to publish his initials merely.—ED. Q.]—*Queenslander*, Aug. 7, 1880.

SIR,—I have read with great interest the leaders and correspondence which have appeared in your columns on this subject. It is particularly edifying to note the sudden awakening of virtuous colonists to the necessity of doing something for the amelioration of the indigenous races of Queensland—a fact, by the way, which must have been patent to everyone possessing a grain of common sense. In debating a question of such vital importance—a question in which the people whose future welfare is at stake have no voice ; appealing to our better feelings through nature's laws, which have instilled beneficent qualities in the white man, and, to a lesser degree, in the black—personal recriminations and accusations are very much to be deplored, and I am of opinion such unseemly bickerings should be stringently suppressed. Vilification is not argument, and I must express my astonishment that an influential journal, *the paper par excellence* of Queensland, should have set the example in ransacking our vocabulary of opprobrious epithets for the purpose of insulting some fifteen or twenty gentlemen to whose watchful and energetic care the safety of outlying districts has been entrusted by the Government. No possible benefit could accrue from such a course. Every educated man and woman in Queensland is perfectly aware that without the Native Police security in the bush would be a myth, and that the abolition of the force would mark the commencement of an era of rapine and murder hardly ever equalled, and certainly never surpassed, in the history of mankind. To what end does "Outis" treat us to his rhapsody anent pure-minded gentlewomen ? What has such a statement to do with the question ? If this writer is sincere, why did not he raise his voice before on behalf of this much-oppressed race ? I can tell "Outis" an anecdote which, I think, puts his virtuous declamation in a different light:—Years ago a Native Police officer, patrolling in the South Kennedy district, called at a station where he received treatment so rude, so utterly at variance with the usages of bush hospitality, that on returning to his barracks he openly declared his intention of never again calling at that station. Three weeks after this the blacks commenced killing the cattle on this very station, and for some time every endeavor was made to make peace with them, and to come to an understanding that in return for peaceful conduct on their part they would receive nothing but kindness and protection, and would be allowed to come in. The blacks, as they invariably do, mistook leniency for fear, and the result was a requisition for police protection. On the arrival of a Native Police officer he was received with open arms and made much of ; in his own words, "I became the white-headed boy." My own experience proves very conclusively that most of this sympathy for the blacks is ruled entirely by the pocket instead of coming from the heart. Again, Mr. Cassady gives you the story of the gin Cassy, shot on the Lower Herbert, but this man belongs to a very different class of writer from "Outis," who merely states plain facts truthfully. I was at Bellenden Plains when the gin was shot, and can assure your readers that Mr. Cassady is entirely wrong in leading them to believe that Sub-inspector Shairpe shot Cassy wilfully. Mr. Cassady deliberately charges this murder to an officer, when he must be perfectly cognisant of the true facts of the case. Mr. Shairpe was escorting a deserter named Alex, who he arrested at Gairloch, back to Waterview, accompanied by a trooper (Simon) and the gin Cassy. When passing a point of scrub on Cudmore's selection Alex, who was walking alongside the trooper's horse, made a bolt for the scrub, followed by Cassy. He was repeatedly called upon to stand

and was just on the point of entering the scrub when Mr. Shairpe fired at him from the top of the bank. The bullet intended for Alex hit Cassy. I do not justify the officer's action, but at the same time I, for one, will not tax him with murder for what was purely an accident. Alex escaped at the time, and lived long enough to give us weeks of hard work years after. So much for Cassady's story. But let me ask whether a man who would shelter *the* ringleader in the double murder of Mr. and Mrs. Conn, as he did, does not carry his sympathy rather too far? I can remember Mr. Cassady sending for Native Police to disperse the blacks at Fairview in 1873, and also his forwarding a letter to Mr. Sheridan, in Cardwell, in 1874, asking for blankets and tomahawks, he having in the interval constituted himself black protector, for his own interests, and to the detriment of his neighbors' property. In return for his kindness the blacks murdered one of the boys near Mr. Hawkins's, on Palm Creek. But what need to multiply instances? No one realises the necessity of speedy and radical change more than Native Police officers, as under the present system they are powerless to put a stop to the private patrols carried out on stations, or to the kidnapping of gins and boys by bullock-drivers, *et hoc genus omne*. But station-owners complain, and justly so, that when they send for police so much time elapses that the blacks escape. Can the officer be blamed for this? Imagine a district 200 miles in diameter—that is, six hundred miles round—and put an officer, six troopers, and a wretched lot of old screws at a point in this circle, telling him that you hold him responsible for the peace and security of the district; and you have the system of Native Police patrolling as at present in operation. Can anything be more ridiculously ineffectual? Hence the numerous murders and outrages committed by black and white alike. But with all the will to do good, and to mitigate existing abuses, police officers have to combat such a diversity of opinions that they invariably find themselves reduced to merely patrolling their district, dispersing blacks when really necessary, and keeping them from infesting the roads. *What* can we do to ameliorate the condition of our aborigines? Not one of your many contributors has as yet attempted to solve this, the real point at issue. Many will say, "Let the blacks in everywhere." But can we do this with any hope of improving them? and can wild blacks be safely trusted near stations or outlying townships? The answer comes from past experience, and is emphatically in the negative. Who that has seen the squalid wretches about towns will say that they are as well off as when they lived in their savage state, or that their condition has been bettered by ever so little? We have a reserve at Mackay, and Mr. Bridgeman gives us an occasional report of its glorious success. But we also know that these same blacks have repeatedly made raids on the neighboring stations, fleeing back to the reserve to escape the well-merited punishment which would otherwise have been inflicted by the police at Nebo. The question of amelioration, after all, lies in a nut-shell. It resolves itself into £ s. d. Now, is the Government prepared to place £100,000 on the Estimates for this purpose? I think not. And yet without an outlay far exceeding this sum we cannot hope to improve their position; and even then the results can only be of the most transient nature. The Victorian Government placed their aborigines under the protection of guardians from July 1, 1851, to June 18, 1860, the aggregate sum expended under that system being £14,181. The results obtained were, however, very unsatisfactory. On the 18th June, 1860, a Board was appointed for the Protection of the Aborigines, and a sum exceeding £100,000 had already been expended on them in 1878. Taking the mean of a whole number of estimates we find that when the whites first settled in Victoria there were about 4500 natives. Mr. Brough Smyth, from whose fine work I cull these facts, draws attention to the fact that, prior to the advent of the first settlers, a small-pox epidemic had greatly reduced their numbers. The total number of natives under the Board in 1876—that is, thirty-eight years after settlement—was 500. Thus we arrive at very startling facts. If the natives of a fine colony can by the sheer moral power of civilisation brought to bear upon them as an ameliorating agent be reduced in thirty-eight years by 4000, at an expenditure of £114,500, what can we expect to effect in a like period with a native population of fully 20,000, one-half of which may be said to have hardly come into contact with our different systems? What, let me ask, would the advocates of amelioration give these savages in return for their dearly loved freedom? Where and what are the sweets that they intend should replace their inborn love of the chase? How do they propose to overcome the nomadic instincts, to which may be traced their very presence on this continent? Imagine even a small tribe of blacks forced to live for a short period on one spot! Would not a fearful epidemic be the result? But no; a few enthusiastic humanitarians, philanthropists, call them what you will, actually desire to alter every condition under which these savages have for

ages existed, and to change their very instincts by the mere force of a master will, as typified in the white man, expecting in their shortsightedness to transform what always has been the lowest grade of humanity into a useful and creditable element in the commonwealth. Could any scheme be more Quixotic? We find by actual tabulated facts that the closer we bring the opposing races together the faster the blacks die out; that the white man's kindness—mistaken kindness—is far more fatal to our blacks than his rifle; that the aborigines are utterly unsuited for protracted labor, and that they pine and die under confinement within defined limits. And still we wish to force all these fatal observances upon them under the so-called guise of humanity! Nothing that we can do will alter the inscrutable and withal immutable laws which direct our progress on this globe. By these laws the native races of Australia were doomed on the advent of the white man, and the only thing left for us to do is to assist in carrying them out with as little cruelty as possible, and to endeavor to extend the period of their action over as great a span of time as we possibly can. But any attempt on our part at coercive amelioration can only tend to expedite the final result, instead of lengthening their days in the land. It is not at all improbable that a mixed race would spring into existence could we conquer the tendency to infanticide which obtains in the tribes. As a rule half-bloods have a finer physique than the mother race, but four-fifths of these children are put to death and generally eaten. Were it possible to improve our blacks by the establishment of reserves—and an experiment might be tried at some suitable spot on our coast, where a dugong fishery or two would offer them employment, assimilating in some degree with their natural instincts—it would be our bounden duty to supply money and material for such establishments; but it becomes imperative to discover, first, whether such reserves will be of any use, and, secondly, whether the rate of mortality increases or diminishes under such a system. As to the many assertions made concerning native troopers being beyond control when excited, &c., I can only say that they are utterly untrue, and I speak with the authority not only of my own long experience but also with that of many Native Police officers. Troopers are quite as amenable to order as white men, and in fact more so, and any trooper shooting a gin or child, even by accident, would be scouted by the whole detachment. Had the veil of mystery which the Government in its wisdom has thought fit to cast over the actions of this force been lifted years ago, the public would have seen with its own eyes that most of the heart-sickening atrocities with which the Native Police has been credited have little foundation in fact. I do not assert that atrocities have not been committed, but I do assert that these have been the exceptions, certainly never the rule. Innocent blacks have been shot with the guilty, but is this to be wondered at when we consider the difficulty of identifying the actual criminals? Take the case of Sub-inspector Tompson on the Lower Burdekin as far back as 1869 or '70. Here the blacks were killing cattle wholesale. After continual patrolling he at last succeeded in penning the tribes on Mount Dryander and keeping them there for three days. He then sent some gins to them with an offer of peace, if they would promise to leave the cattle alone. This was the second embassy this gentleman had sent, the answer to the first having been, "We'll kill cattle when we want them; you shoot us when you can catch us." But on this occasion he showed them that they were entirely at his mercy, and, although he carefully abstained from allowing a single blackfellow to be shot, a bullet striking the rock close to any that showed themselves proved how utterly helpless they were against the police carbines. They promised to keep the peace, and he then sent them word to go and camp at some particular spot until they heard from him. Mr. Tompson tried several stations in succession, but without being able to gain admittance for his black proteges. At last, however, Mr. Bude allowed them to come in, and six months afterwards they were no longer wild blacks. This is what we must endeavour to do with all the districts which are sufficiently settled; but I cannot agree with the *Queenslander's* idea of substituting white men for the native troopers. And this chiefly for two reasons: We must rule the blacks by fear, teaching them the uselessness of waging war on the settlers, and to do this the native troopers are far superior to white men, as they will follow and secure malefactors where a white man could not possibly penetrate. It is useless arguing that, because an officer accompanies his boys through scrubs and over ranges, every white man can do the same. Only constant training will enable a man to do so. How many white men can undergo the hardships and privations which a Native Police officer has to put up with? The native troopers also can communicate with the blacks, which a white man is unable to do. But the great difficulty of such a change is its cost. A native trooper costs the Government about £45 per annum

for pay and food. A white trooper would not serve under £122 per annum, besides 3s. per diem sustenance allowance, and 2s. per night, night allowance, when on actual duty. The duties of such a force would be far more arduous than those of the ordinary police, and yet the above rate of pay is that at present in vogue. Then of course the horses and accoutrements have to be considered. The present Native Police of 200 men costs the Government about £10,000 per annum, and we have to consider whether for treble this sum an equal number of white troopers would do the duty as well. If not, the expenditure would be unjustifiable. What I am assured would tend more to the pacification of our blacks is—the reduction in size of the Native Police districts; the increase of detachments; constant regular patrols and communication with the blacks, so as to learn to know at least the leading men of each tribe, who would be made responsible for the good conduct of their mob; and the appointment of officers of unexceptionable character and ability, instead of young inexperienced new chums, mere boys, who have no recommendation except an unusual amount of bounce and the influence of an M.L.A. at their back. These officers should be vested with the power necessary to put a stop to the wholesale interference at present practised by the public, who take gins and children from the tribes at will, and unchecked. The enactment of a law such as the *Queenslander* advocates would be very necessary and of the utmost importance. No white man should be permitted to cohabit with a gin, as is at present the case, unless he marries her. It is an everyday occurrence in the North to meet travellers and teams accompanied by a gin; even these men, in most cases, endeavoring to hide their degradation by dressing their sable Hebes in men's clothes and *and passing them off as boys*. Such men have done more to foster the enmity between the races than any amount of patrolling. I have sketched here what I consider would be an improvement on the present system, being far cheaper than the substitution of white men; but one item should not be omitted in any scheme which may be eventually adopted: The force must be separated from the ordinary police, with which it has nothing in common. The custom in vogue at present of making constables act as camp keepers is open to serious objection, and I strongly recommend that cadets be substituted, who would thus gain experience in all that appertains to the blacks. There would never under such a system be any dearth of good officers. I would also encourage every attempt to collect information and materials from which a standard work of reference could be compiled. We know very little about the blacks, and that little is exceedingly fragmentary and based mostly on carelessly collected facts. The blacks will have disappeared from this continent before another century has come and gone. Their habits and customs are constantly changing or falling into disuse, since they came into contact with the whites; it therefore behoves us to obtain properly authenticated facts relating to everything connected with their past history. No one can be more fortunately situated for such work than Native Police officers, and the Queensland Government would confer a lasting boon on the present and future generations of this country if they would sanction and foster any research tending to the fulfilment of so valuable an object. Our national Museum would soon be enriched by a vast and valuable collection, as varied as unique, illustrating the successive stages through which the aborigines have passed since our advent, enabling the student to arrive at definite conclusions, by comparison and classification. I have for eight years devoted all my spare time to such subjects, but was *forbidden to publish any information* which could give the public even the slightest glimpse into the doings of the Native Police. Why such a course should be adopted is inexplicable, and certainly does not reflect credit on those who were its initiators. I may refer your readers, *en passant*, to a graphically described patrol which appears in Mr. Brough Smyth's work on the aborigines of Victoria, vol. ii., pp. 336—339. Here we find that as far back as 1844-45 the blacks in the Port Macquarie district had to be terrorised into submission by a free use of the musket, the officer commanding, Mr. D—, chief constable, actually cutting off the tips of the ears as trophies, and bringing them in stowed carefully in his waistcoat pockets! There is unfortunately too much evidence in proof of the violence of black and white, and there cannot be any necessity for such ridiculous assertions as those made by Captain Pascoe. The aborigines of our north-east coast knew nothing of firearms, even in 1873, when they attacked Sub-inspector Johnstone at Trinity Bay. They repeatedly endeavored to make the slain stand upright, not understanding the cause of death. To them the invisible means of such bloodshed must have been bewildering, and had they had any remembrance of the deeds described by Captain Pascoe they would certainly not have fought, when left entirely unmolested. Kennedy, like Mr. Jack, fell a victim to his own misplaced leniency. When in cases like the above, the blacks become aggressive, gentlemen entrusted with Government expedi-

tions have no right to hesitate in meting out such punishment as will most effectually deter such bloodthirsty savages from repeating their aggressions. The lives of such men, and of the party under their control, are of more value to the nation than those of a hundred blacks. Any leader failing to secure immunity from danger to his men is simply unfit for his post. As it turned out, we owe to a native who accompanied the hapless Kennedy the rescue of his expeditionary papers, when by the well-timed use of their rifles both he and his boy might have been saved, in spite of fever.

I will forward you a list of murders committed in this district by blacks, as contra account to your column of "How we Civilise." I trust that you will succeed in bringing about the much-to-be-desired reform you advocate, and ameliorate both white and black, the former into unquestioned possession of the vast area of the colony, the latter off the face of the earth which they do not even serve to ornament. Having done this you will be in a position to exclaim with Hugh Miller:—"Thus the experience of more than a hundred years demonstrates that when a tribe of men falls beneath a certain level its destiny is extinction, not restoration."

WILLIAM E. ARMIT.

Normanton, July 26.
—*Queenslander*, Sept. 4, 1880.

SIR,—For some time past you have been drawing attention in your columns to a dreadful state of things as existing in our midst; I refer to the treatment of the blacks by the Native Police force. Week after week articles appear giving descriptions of outrages perpetrated by the police, and so far as the public can see there is no attempt made to deny their correctness. Some letters certainly have been written with an apparent idea of excusing the police, saying either that these outrages are necessary or that the accounts are exaggerated; but it seems only too evident that the horrible details given in the *Queenslander* are correct. In the issue of the 7th instant is a matter-of-fact letter signed "J. C.," giving specific details of outrages committed by different Native Police officers on unoffending blacks. Now, what the public wish to know is: Are these accounts of dispersals (murders) correct or not? In any other country than Queensland the head of any department, when his officials had the hand of scorn pointed at them in the way the Native Police has, would quickly take steps for an investigation to prove the truth or falseness of the charges made. So far we are not aware of any steps being taken by the head of the Police Department for an enquiry; and what are we to consider—that he connives at these dispersals, and dares not have an investigation? or that he is simply incapable of carrying out the duties entrusted to him? If neither be the case, why does he allow the present state of things to continue? The force looks to him for protection from unjust charges, and if the charges are correct why does he not put a stop to such a fearful state of things? If he is incapable, the sooner a capable man is appointed in his place the better, as till this matter is satisfactorily settled the people of Queensland will stand on a very unpleasant footing as regards their moral character.—Yours, &c.,

Clermont, August 14.
—*Queenslander*, Sept. 11, 1880.

A. X.

SIR,—I am glad to notice that the question of our dealing with the aboriginals is receiving ventilation through your columns, and that all its phases are being fairly represented. Having lived since my arrival in this colony, and for years on the New South Wales and Victoria borders, where the blacks were most numerous, and their misdoings most frequent, I have had good opportunities of forming an opinion as to their natures and inclinations. My object in writing is not to propose any scheme by which the "native difficulty" may be settled, but to urgently recommend the appointment of a commission to report upon the most feasible mode of bringing the aboriginals to a sense of their relationship with the white occupants of the soil. In recommending a commission, I would say let it consist of men who are acquainted with bush life, who have had the experience of frequent contact with the blacks in their wild state, and, above all, men who have a reasonable blending of humanity and decision in their characters—human instincts to prevent any measures of extremity not absolutely necessary, and decision to control any morbid sympathy with

those who are termed "the original occupants of the soil," "the natural inhabitants," &c. For something over two years I have lived in a district where the misdeeds of the blacks have been more frequent than in any other part of Queensland, and have known in many instances a swift and terrible retribution to have followed upon the offending parties. I have never known the innocent to suffer, in the Cook district, for the guilty; for the Native Police officers know their work too well not to be able to run down those upon whose heads punishment should certainly fall. But with all this, and notwithstanding the high social character of almost every Native Police officer I have met, my own observation has convinced me that the organisation of the Native Police force is wrong in its very foundation. The blacks are dispersed after doing a wrong, but they are taught no lesson; and I have known blacks spear cattle on the M'Ivor River, receive summary chastisement, have some of the finest members of the tribe "wiped out," and return to the self-same place to spear more cattle within a fortnight. The survival of the fittest is not generally accepted practically, nor should it, I think, be enforced as far as the blacks of this colony are concerned. "Maori," an able writer, in a private letter, says:—"As far as the treatment of the blacks is concerned, I do honestly believe it has been inhuman—and a mistake. Surely the genius of the Anglo-Saxon race, that has solved so many more knotty problems than this with superior races—more truculent, more intelligent, and more powerful—could have hit on some expedient more in accordance with civilisation (I will not say even Christianity) that the barbarous method of extermination—'wiping out' as you call it. . . . In fact, I think it a gross shame to shoot the innocent and guilty indiscriminately, as has often been done. There has been lust, rapine, treachery, bad faith, cruelty, and downright savagery just as often on our side as on the side of the blacks, and we have had the advantage of superior numbers, wealth, intelligence, arms, and organisation." These are the words of no drawing-room moralist, nor are they the expressions of a man unused to the dangers and trials of pioneering and bush work, but of one who knows what the dark-skinned inhabitants of Queensland and other countries are from pretty dearly bought experience. In the Cook district the blacks have but one spot where they can find comparative peace and means of living in their natural condition, and that is on Cape Bedford, near Cooktown, and between that place and Cape Flattery. Their roving habits, however, take them on to the Endeavor and M'Ivor rivers, and there they despoil the herds of the settlers, and are followed back to the coast by the police, and pay a penalty for their crimes in the shape of death. There are many Native Police officers whose natures revolt in a measure from their work. It is no secret in the outlying Northern districts that the blacks are shot down, though the officers are said to work with ropes round their necks. This seems singularly paradoxical, for the Government serve out thousands of rounds of ball cartridge every year to the troopers. I am no advocate for the "poor blacks" in any sense other than that by a reformed method of dealing with them we shall ameliorate their condition, and remove what is certainly a blot on the fair name of Queensland.—Yours, &c.,

Townsville, August 20.

SPENCER BROWNE.

—*Queenslander*, Sept. 11, 1880.



