



The monument to the Burke & Wills Expedition in the Bendigo Cemetery

Memoirs of the Late Leaders of the Exploring Expedition

The Age Wed 13 Nov 1861 Page 5

The interest felt in these colonies, and especially in Victoria, in all that relates to our gallant but ill-fated explorers, cannot be otherwise than great and general. We are fortunate in being enabled to furnish the public with a brief memoir, which has been carefully compiled from the most reliable sources, of the previous career of the lamented leaders of this, soon to be, world famous expedition.

- Let us raise a monument to the memory of those who have fallen in the cause of this glorious achievement, in the cause of their adopted country. Let it not be dwarfed column or sculptured bust, but a tall tower on some bold headland, a noble column on the mountain's brow, that shall stand a landmark for all ages, and be seen a long day's journey afar, and which generations yet unborn shall point to from the corn-field and vineyard when they tell the tale of our bold explorers, of their triumph, and of their devotion.

This monument commemorates Australian explorers, Burke and Wills and their party who first crossed the Australian continent from south to north in 1861.

The monument was erected mainly through the efforts of Thomas Pope Besnard, a childhood friend of Burke's and sexton of the local Back Creek Cemetery. He pushed to raise the money for a monument through public subscription - everyone was asked to pay a shilling - no person could pay more and therefore nobody could claim to have given more than anybody else.

Besnard selected a site for the monument in the cemetery which was on a grass knoll well clear of any other graves. It was to be landscaped and have path and garden beds that provided dignified access. Stawell inspected and approved the

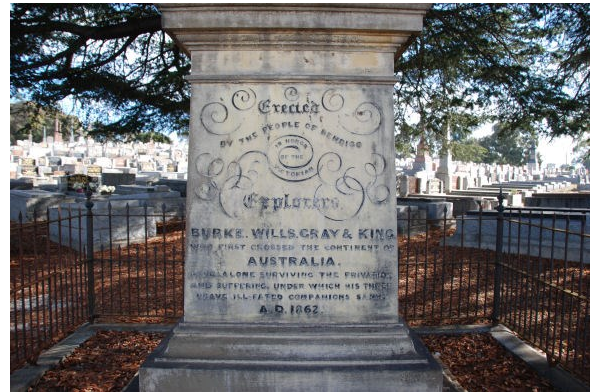
site. The address he gave, along with the diaries of members of the expedition, the Sandhurst Almanac, the Bendigo Advertiser, the Bendigo Independent Evening News, photographs of the deceased, photographs of Public Buildings in Bendigo, a Sydney half sovereign and all the silver coins of the Realm were wrapped in a Union Jack and placed in a niche in the foundation stone.

It was another 15 months before the column was erected on the foundation stone and Besnard openly criticised the Memorial Committee for their lack of action. The Bendigo Advertiser was disappointed at the location of the monument preferring a more central location and in 1893 an attempt was made to have the monument moved to Rosalind Park.

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Front Inscription on monument.

Erected by the people of Bendigo
in honour of the Victorian
Explorers
BURKE, WILLS, GRAY AND KING
who first crossed the continent of
Australia.
King alone surviving the privation
and suffering under which his three
brave ill-fated companions sank.
A.D. 1862



Charles Gray: An inscription to him on the 4th side.

CHARLES GRAY
Died also on his return at
Polygonum Swamp
17th April 1861.



Deaths on the Victorian Exploring Expedition

1. **Charles Gray**, Wednesday, 17 April 1861 at Polygonum Swamp.
2. **Charles Stone**, Monday, 22 April 1861 at Koorliatto Waterhole, Bulloo River.

3. **William Purcell**, Tuesday, 23 April 1861 at Koorliatto Waterhole, Bulloo River.
4. **Dr Ludwig Becker**, Monday, 29 April 1861 at Koorliatto Waterhole, Bulloo River.
5. **William Patten**, Wednesday, 5 June 1861 near Desolation Camp, Rat Point.
6. **William John Wills**, the official date of death adopted by the Exploration Committee was Wednesday, 28 June 1861, but Wills probably died around Friday, 30 June or Saturday, 1 July 1861 at Breerily Waterhole, Cooper Creek.
7. **Robert O'Hara Burke**, the official date of death adopted by the Exploration Committee was Wednesday, 28 June 1861, but Burke probably died on Saturday, 1 July 1861 at Burke's Waterhole, Cooper Creek.

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EXPLORATION BLUNDERS.

Bendigo Advertiser Thu 7 Nov 1861 Page 2

SANDHURST. THURSDAY, NOV 7, 1861.

It is with no wish to detract from the glory of the gallant exploit of Burke and Wills that we now offer a few remarks upon the expedition which their death has so unfortunately closed.

Their bravery and devotion will be household words as long as Australia is an inhabited country. With a perseverance unsurpassed by even the noble Eyre, they forced their way to their goal that, too, with a thorough knowledge that for all they endured in their advance they would have to suffer fourfold hardships in retracing their weary steps.

With no friendly voice to welcome, no kindly hand to relieve, they reached the north coast already weary, exhausted, and almost provisionless, and the place where succour ought to have awaited the successful travellers, was but the milestone to mark the commencement of their greatest sufferings.

They indulged in but a brief rest, and then, actuated, no doubt, mainly by a desire to relieve the depot party as speedily as possible from their anxious suspense, they chose rather to retrace their old route than to make for Queensland by the well mapped tracks of Gregory and Leichhardt. Painfully they fagged along, and arrived at what they must have almost considered home, only, alas to find that the depot party had abandoned their post on the very day that they had reached it, in the last stage of exhaustion.

Few can conceive their revulsion of feeling, and their sickness of blasted hope, who have not been similarly placed. How much is there not to be found in poor

Wills quiet remark that Brahe "had put us in this fix." All criticism on their future proceedings would be unfair. The sound mind is seldom to be found but in the sound body, and the clearest and most vigorous judgement would be obscured by the sufferings of mind and body which they had endured.

Sadly they struggled, slowly they sank, and manfully they died: peace be with their lonely graves. Their names are enrolled high in that glorious list, already, alas too long, whence shine forth the deeds of Park and Clapperton, of Cook and Laterouse, of Leichardt and Kennedy, of Franklin, Crozier, and Bellot.

The feat of first crossing the continent of Australia has been accomplished by them. We maintain, nevertheless, that it has been consummated with an unnecessary sacrifice. Facts have already given sad proof that there was no necessity for the loss of one single life, excepting poor Gray's, and even that might have been spared.

Seeing that private parties, scantily provided, run over the ground traversed by Wright, with ample equipment, without experiencing any such disastrous results as befell him, we may reasonably infer that his loss of men, was caused either by improper constitutions being admitted, or by his men being called upon to go through needless exertions.

Why the depot party, living quietly alongside of a creek, where fresh fish, birds, and plants were all procurable, and where rats were so numerous as to be a nuisance, should become affected by scurvy we really cannot imagine. Any one will be ready to point out many reasons why they should not.

Again, why that depot party, when it did abandon its post, should appropriate nearly three fourths of the remaining stores, to perform the same journey which their harder worked comrades had to undertake, in an exhausted state, with one third of their provisions, we are at a loss to understand. Still less can we conceive why, on joining Wright, and becoming satisfied of their own safety, they did not take back their superfluous stores, and add them to the meagre supply which they had left for their leader and his companions.

Undoubtedly the Committee, at the outset, perpetrated a great mistake in not providing for the reception of a successful party on the north coast. That, however, is entirely beyond the present subject of inquiry.

The Expedition arrived at Swan Hill with a superfluity of stores, which might have lasted the whole sixteen men composing it for eighteen months. The fatal mistakes commenced at Menindie. The party left that place with only about twenty weeks provisions. Instead of a fatigue party accompanying them to Cooper's Creek, leaving a really useful cache and then returning, the original advance party, was

subdivided without gaining any advantage.

The same stores which Brahe consumed while inert on Cooper's Creek would have been sufficient to carry him across with Burke, thereby adding to the safety of his party. The lamentable consequences of relying on the chance of another party equipping themselves and following their steps within a certain time, only confirms the precept of trusting only in your own eyes in all such cases.

No doubt the original stock of provisions Burke took with him from Menindie was too small, still that may be set on one side, for if properly supported, it would not have been attended with serious results.

The first grand mistake, then, was the want of an accompanying fatigue party.

The second was the mismanagement which permitted the auxiliary parties to become affected with scurvy and, consequently, disabled.

The third and fatal blunder lies at the door of Messrs Brahe and Wright, but more particularly Wright's. Brahe's desertion of the depot was involved in his allowing his men to become attacked by scurvy, while he had abundant means of preventing it. His greedy appropriation of the major part of the provisions is even less defensible, but, after his rejoining Wright, that officer became responsible for his proceedings, and for the repair of his mistakes.

That they should have revisited the depot, not only without replenishing it, but absolutely without satisfying themselves that it had not been disturbed, appears the very climax of thoughtless mismanagement. There is no need of occupying space with figures and dates to prove that the deplorable end of the brave Burke and Wills is to be traced immediately to these blunders.

We write from a careful examination of all the papers yet published, and we believe that the conviction of all who will similarly study these documents, will lead them to agree with us in saying that Messrs Wright and Brahe stand morally indicted with having, through neglect of duty, caused the death of their superior officers, Messrs Burke and Wills.

*A contrary view about whether the remains of
Burke & Wills should be returned to Melbourne.*

Bendigo Advertiser Sat 14 Dec 1861 Page 2
THE BONES OF THE EXPLORERS.

We cannot but think that the Government has been to precipitate in committing the people to a resolution, declaring that the remains of our gallant explorers should be brought down to Melbourne. As a part of the scheme by which it is sought to do

honour to the memory of Burke and his comrades, we hold this to be altogether unnecessary to the occasion. We believe that the whole community are agreed that every possible token of recognition should be given to the services of the brave men who died for the glory of Victoria; and it is a pity that there should be any mistake committed in the realisation of so good an object.

To bring down the bones of Burke and Wills, or of any of their companions, would, however, be a blunder worthy of the Exploration Committee. There is no necessity for any such act to do honour to the memory of the explorers. They had better rest where they lie. They need no grander burying-place - no ground more sacred. The desert, which they conquered, is their most fitting tomb. To disturb their bones would be a useless sacrilege - a public funeral, a vain mockery. There is a consecration already in that bare patch of wild earth, which will be known for ever hereafter as the place where Burke died, which it is not in our power to better by any ceremony.

What honour are we prepared to do the remains of the dead, let it be done over the spot where they lie - the scene of their labors' end and their relief - the terminus of the Victorian Explorattion. Could Burke have foreseen his fate, there can be little doubt that such would have been his own wish. To "vex the unhappy dust they would not save" is the appropriate part of the Exploration Committee. It ought to be sufficient that they have destroyed the explorers, without desiring to disturb their bones. To cap all their catalogue of blunders, it was only needed that they should endeavour to couple with the names of Burke and Wills, every small name which happened to have been included in the Expedition.

It is only by a narrow chance that we have escaped including Gray among the heroes of the Exploration, and giving to his remains the same honour as that which we would render to Burke himself. We cannot trust the committee any further in this matter, and as the best means of avoiding their unhappy services, as well as the most rational and appropriate mode of doing honour to the remains of our explorers, it is better that they should be left to lie where they are, leaving to posterity some mark by which it may recognise the fate and honour the memories of the dead. What is now a desert may then be the centre of a populous and cultivated country.

The tombs of Burke and Wills may then be in the midst of fruitful pastures and of smiling cornfields, and they will acquire a peculiar interest from being exactly on the spot where our heroes perished. And it is surely more fitting that these memorials should stand among the people and the scenes created mainly by the labors of the dead, than they should have a place in some Melbourne cemetery. If the people of Melbourne are desirous of paying their tribute to the memory of Burke and Wills, they can do so quite as gracefully through the erection of a monument in some public place, which it is not necessary should be a tombstone.

In this manner, by leaving the remains of the explorers to rest where they are, in the place where they died and were buried, and by contenting ourselves with a public memorial in such shape as would do honour both to the men we celebrate and to ourselves, we would best discharge the duty we owe to those who have done so much and perished so sadly.

[This is not the first time that the Argus has made capital out of our suggestions. - ED. B.A.]

Robert O'Hara BURKE

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Was born at St. Clerans, in the county of Galway, Ireland, and was in his fortieth year at the time of his death. Mr Burke was, we believe, the third of four brothers. One brother fell in the service of his country in the Crimea, and another is said to have been among those who perished in the late war in China; but of this we have no precise information. The remaining brother will now, if alive, hold a considerable rank in the British army, and we have reason to believe contributed much to the equipment of a special cavalry regiment for the Crimean service.

The subject of this memoir was partly educated at home, and afterwards for the higher studies in Belgium. Subsequently he entered the Radetzky regiment of Hungarian Hussars in the Austrian service. Here he displayed great assiduity in military studies, came to be soon regarded as a most efficient cavalry officer, and at an early period obtained a captaincy. The eventful poliquietude, 1848, led to Mr Burke's relinquishing the Austrian service. Afterwards we hear of him as holding a command in the Irish mounted constabulary, where he was for some time stationed at Dublin. On resigning this office to emigrate, he received several very flattering testimonials, demonstrating that at that time, as continually since, he had the ability to secure the respect and esteem of his companions and fellow officers. Mr Burke arrived at Hobart Town in 1853, but appears to have soon proceeded to Melbourne, where he at once obtained an appointment as acting inspector of police, under Mr Mitchell. In this capacity he remained till the close of 1853, when he was transferred to a command at Carlsruhe. In 1854, he was advanced to the Beechworth district, to relieve Mr Price, the police magistrate, and with a step in promotion to the post of district inspector.

During the progress of the Crimean war, Mr Burke obtained leave of absence to enable him to visit England, where he hoped, with the interest he possessed, to have been enabled to share the glory and the peril of the grand struggle then existing between Russia and the Allied Powers. In this hope he was disappointed by the termination of the war, upon which he returned to this colony, and reassumed his command in our mounted police force. In 1858, Mr Burke was

removed to Castlemaine, at his own request; and on this occasion the inhabitants of Beechworth memorialised the authorities against this alteration, not being aware that it had taken place at Mr Burke's desire. At the earliest opportunity after the long discussed project of Australian exploration began to assume a probability of execution, our hero anxiously pressed his claim to be entrusted with the command of the exploring party. His many excellences of character and disposition, especially favourable to such an enterprise, were acknowledged by the committee, and Mr Burke obtained the appointment.

Sir William Stawell, who had the highest opinion of Burke's determination, thoroughly conscientious regard of duty, and many fitting acquirements, is understood to have strongly supported his application for this command. It is well known to many of Mr Burke's intimate friends that he, from the earliest period when the possibility of his accompanying such an expedition rose to his imagination, diligently prepared himself for it. Notwithstanding the time required for attention to his official duties, he at once commenced an active examination of the records of previous explorers, so as to become thoroughly acquainted with the personal experiences of Australian pioneers of discovery, and also to be well informed as to the actual knowledge of the interior and remote coasts already on record. Not only this did Burke zealously undertake, but also entered upon a course of regular training, taking severe pedestrian exercise, and accustoming himself to fatigue and privation of every possible kind that an attempt to traverse the vast untrodden wilds of Australia was likely to bring to his experience.

The high sense entertained by the inhabitants of Castlemaine as to the merits of Mr Burke was marked by their giving him a handsome public entertainment previously to his departure. The people of Beechworth also presented the bold explorer with a revolving pistol of high finish and costly manufacture, as a parting token of esteem.

This brief history is necessarily incomplete, the sources of information at our command being few and unabundant. We are unable to determine with precision whether our famous explorer's first Christian name is Robert or Richard, the opinions of his most intimate friends being strangely at variance on the point, and the evidence obtained from inquiry being about evenly balanced. Mr Burke was universally esteemed in private life, and has been known to habitually exhibit great kindness of heart where it was needed, and much consideration for those under him.

He was an excellent linguist, having a full knowledge of the most useful continental languages, and was possessed of very superior general ability, together with fine gentlemanly feeling and the utmost integrity of purpose. As a striking characteristic of the man, and of the determination he evinced to accomplish the object with which he was entrusted, we insert, without comment, the following

letter, the last private communication, as we understand, addressed by Mr Burke to a most intimate friend in this city, whose name, for obvious reasons, we withhold.

The determination of the man is most strikingly exemplified, and the views he entertained of the serious impediments to his progress may be gathered from the opinions expressed with respect to them: -

"On the Darling, 4th October.

"My Dear S - - - - I received your letters, and was glad to hear of the safe arrival of our friend B - - - - .

"We have been resting here for a few days, and awaiting the arrival of the baggage, which has now come up. Tomorrow we proceed on, and I shall not delay anywhere until I reach Cooper's Creek, - being an Irishman, I must add, unless I can't help it.

"I leave the hired wagons and my own, too behind. The accursed impediments, the ruin of many expeditions, I am determined shall not ruin me.

"We shall all march on foot for the next three or four hundred miles, at all events, and the camels and horses will have to carry our weight in provisions.

"We have already done so for the last forty miles. You should have seen old B - - - 's face upon my announcing that all the officers would have to act as working men, and that we shall only carry 30 lb weight of baggage for each man.

"Loading four camels and then marching twenty miles is no joke. The first two days of it nearly cooked poor B - - -, and I think he will not be able to stand it much longer.

"I am still confident of success, and willing to accept the inevitable alternative of success or dis- grace, although failure is possible.

"This self-imposed task (as you justly call it) is no sinecure, and I think it will take the sting out of me for some time if I see it out.

"Good bye, my dear S - - -. Ever yours very sincerely,
'R. O'HARA BURKE.'

Robert O'Hara Burke
Leader
of the Victorian Expedition.
Left Melbourne 24th Aug 1860
reached Carpentaria 12th Feb 1861,
died on his return at Coopers Creek,
30th June 1861.



Mr William John WILLS

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The melancholy end of William John Wills has sorrowed the heart or clouded the brow of every individual among the host of acquaintances whose esteem and regard he had won for himself since his arrival in this colony. All that could be reasonably honed for from the exercise of the most reliable energy, perseverance, spirited enterprise, and enthusiastic devotion to science, which were combined in the lamented subject of this brief memoir, has now perished.

William John Wills, the second in command of the unfortunate Exploring Expedition, whose triumphs and calamities we have already recorded, had but reached his seven-and-twentieth year.

He arrived in this colony in January, 1853, by the Janet Mitchell. His father was a physician at Totness, in Devonshire, and the hero of this memoir was designed to pursue the study of the same profession. With this object, in view, young Wills followed with ardor, as a pupil of his father, the attainment of the various branches of knowledge required in this profession, and for four years exhibited the most unremitting application to such studies. In chemistry and the experience of the medical schools he became specially distinguished for proficiency.

This unceasing thirst for information on all topics being so restlessly exhibited might have excited fears that the student's health would have given way. Young Wills had received an excellent academical education at the grammar school of Ashburton, a public school of note, as being endowed with scholarships by the famous William Gifford, and also by Dr Ireland, Dean of Westminster. Professor Babbage, the mathematician, and inventor of the calculating machine, is among the celebrities who have reflected honour on this town as their birthplace.

A first cousin of Mr Wills appears to have shared his courage and enterprise, and devotion to science, for Lieut. Le Vescompte, the gentleman referred to, accompanied Sir John Franklin on the fatal expedition to the Arctic regions, and his honourable death is, with that of his gallant leader, now a matter of history. It may not be uninteresting to mention as an illustration of Mr Wills' fondness for the general acquisition of knowledge that the captain of the ship in which he sailed to this colony states that his active minded passenger devoted himself upon the voyage to the acquirement of a thorough knowledge of the science of navigation.

On Mr Wills reaching this colony, to which he had turned his steps mainly from perceiving the broad field for enterprise and discovery which it presented, he obtained an early engagement on the Royal Bank Station at Deniliquin, though by no means necessitated to such a step. His father followed to this country in the

same year, and succeeded in discovering his son (and such discoveries were sometimes difficult at that period) by the instrumentality of the late Dr Maund, who had been a fellow-passenger with young Mr Wills in the Janet Mitchell. Dr Wills settled at Ballarat, where his son William assisted him for a short time in his profession.

Subsequently the subject of this memoir obtained employment in the service of the Government as an officer in the Survey Department, under Mr Byerley, and there displayed his characteristic assiduity and proficiency. Having acquired a knowledge of and interest in astronomical and other sciences, to which the Observatory is devoted, he obtained, through the recommendation of Mr Ligar, the Surveyor General, a situation as assistant in that establishment. Here he could cultivate his favourite studies, especially that of astronomy, in which, he had been trained and encouraged by his father.

Here he remained for two years, when the opportunity presented itself of offering to join the Exploring Expedition. This undertaking he was prepared to expect would have occupied him for three years, and it was entered upon at a considerable pecuniary sacrifice. It has been stated also, and, we believe, very correctly, that Mr Wills expended a considerable sum on new instruments and peculiar requirements for the work before him. So long ago as 1855 he frequently spoke, as many of his friends can recollect, of a longing desire to explore the interior of Australia. He also expressed at this time a belief that he should be among the first whoever should succeed in crossing to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

In 1856 there was a proposal brought before the public by a Dr Catherwood to explore the interior of this country. This project, however, was abandoned; but young Wills, who happened to be then on the River Wannon, immediately on chancing to hear of it, walked to Ballarat, a distance of ninety miles, in his anxiety to join the proposed expedition.

The varied and extensive attainments of Mr Wills, his many excellent qualifications, of special value to anybody engaging in the arduous and perilous duties of an explorer, rendered his co-operation with the gallant Burke most gratifying to all who were warmly anxious for the success of the expedition. Nobly, though mournfully for ourselves, has he terminated an irreproachable career of usefulness; and if any feeling can arise to mitigate our regret for his loss, we must seek it in the satisfaction with which we record his character of high honour, devotion to duty, sterling attainments and unselfish patriotism.

The following is an extract from a letter addressed by Mr Wills to his sister in England, immediately after his return from the excursion which eventuated in the loss of the three camels: -

"Cooper's Creek, December 11, 1860.

"My Dear Bessy,- This will probably be the last opportunity I shall have to write you before I return, and I will take the opportunity, to do so. You must excuse this being written in pencil; it is troublesome writing in ink, it dries up so confoundedly fast. I enclose you some seeds from the Australian desert. Tell mama she must excuse me writing her.

She must read this, and fancy it's hers also. I have not even time to write my father. The journey has hitherto been but as a picnic party, but I fear we shall have some heavier work soon; I have had a slight specimen of it lately. I went out for a few days to explore the country to the north-east, accompanied by one man and two camels. I had left the man in charge of the camels while I went to make some observations; when I returned I found the man had allowed the camels to stray. I tracked them for some distance, but I found that they had gone homeward. There was nothing for it but to walk back. So we started at 7 am next day.

After walking about ten miles, we fortunately found some water, and we continued on until 11 a.m. We then rested, as it's trying to travel with the heat at 130 in the sun and 112 in the shade. So we started again at 4 pm, and continued until 11 pm. Started again at 4 am and walked until 11 am rested until 3 pm walked again until 11 p.m. Started at 4 a.m. and got into the camp a little before 9 am; thus walking, more than 80 miles in less than fifty hours, including stoppages. It's astonishing how a walk like this gives one a relish for a drink of water. For water such as you would not even taste, one smack's their lips as if it were a glass of sherry or champagne. We had but half a pint between us for the last twelve miles. We have no idea of being out for three years as I supposed. I calculate on being in Melbourne in August at furthest."

On the 15th of December, the following is added: -

Dear Bessy, - I have just returned from fishing up the camels' saddles. I have been more fortunate this time, and have not lost my camels. I start tomorrow for Eyre's Creek, on our way to the Gulf of Carpentaria." The two camels mentioned were those which found their way to South Australia.

WILLIAM JOHN WILLS
Second in Command
Died also near Coopers Creek.
29th June 1861



The Rescue Expeditions

In all, six expeditions were sent to search for Burke and Wills, two commissioned by the Exploration Committee, three by the Royal Society of Victoria and one by the Government of South Australia. Two went by sea in order to search the Gulf of Carpentaria for the missing expedition while the others began their search from different directions.

The Victorian Relief Expedition left Melbourne on 26 June 1861 under the leadership of Alfred William Howitt. At the Loddon River Howitt met Brahe, who was returning from Cooper Creek. As Brahe did not have knowledge of Burke's whereabouts, Howitt decided a much larger expedition would be required to find the missing party. Leaving three of his men at the river, Howitt returned to Melbourne with Brahe to update the Exploration Committee. On 30 June the expanded expedition left to follow Burke's trail.

I think the man **Alfred William Howitt** must have been truly great explorer in the way he was able to travel this great trek, twice and return the bodies to Melbourne for a grand burial. Over his life in Victoria, he wrote many books as a naturalist and his understanding of the way of life of Aborigines.

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Bendigo Advertiser Mon 4 Nov 1861 Page 2

THE FATE OF MR BURKE

THE last mission of the Victorian Exploring Contingent is over, and a very sad one it has been.

Mr Burke and Mr Wills have fulfilled their earthly labors, and now lie buried on the banks of Cooper's Creek. Gray, one of the associates, perished somewhere between that creek and the shores of Carpentaria.

There is but one survivor, another associate of the name of King, out of the little band that has achieved the great work of crossing this vast island continent from its southern to its northern shores. That this work has been performed, we believe there can be no doubt whatever.

King positively asserts it, it would appear, and his assertion only requires confirmation from the papers of his lamented officers, which have all, we understand, very fortunately been preserved, and are by this time in the hands of the Exploration Committee.

The laurels which an insurmountable obstacle prevented Captain Sturt from obtaining, after two bold but vain attempts to gain them, and which another formidable impediment snatched from Mr Stuart when they were almost within his grasp - those laurels hang over two solitary graves in the distant wilderness.

Melancholy, indeed, has been the termination of Mr Burke's toils and trials in the far interior, but to him belong the credit and the fame of the most brilliant achievement as yet on record in the annals of Australian exploration. To him Victoria is indebted for the honour of having been the first colony to penetrate the central regions of New Holland, and to salute the waters of Torres' Straits. She will, of course, do all she can in acknowledgement of his services - award him a fitting monument, and what further tribute it may become a nation, under such circumstances to accord a brave and fallen officer.

A terrible fatality seems to have overhung the Expedition from its commencement. The sacrifice of life at Bulla may have been unavoidable, but is not the less to be deplored. The death of Gray was a sad contingency, which might, however, have been expected. The fall of Burke and Wills, as it is the most important, is the most unhappy event of all. That catastrophe is rendered particularly shocking by the fact of their having returned to the point where it seems they expected to find succor (*meaning to get assistance or aid to*) to enable them to reach the still distant settlements, and by a fatally unfortunate mischance, only a few hours after the party who could have afforded them the necessary assistance had departed from that very point.

From what we have as yet been able to ascertain, it seems that Mr Burke was annoyed on finding the Depot Camp removed. He therefore determined on striking for the nearest South Australian stations, by way of Mount Serle, in order to reach a settled district before his contingents could do so. It does certainly seem to have been highly inadvisable on the part of Mr Burke not to have moved in the direction of the Darling. Still it is impossible, without knowing the exact circumstances and influences of the moment, even to guess at the reasons or inducements an explorer may have at any period of his journey for choosing one course in preference to another. We know little or nothing of his after movements, and it would be premature for that reason, and uncharitable for every reason, to impugn his judgement.

Whether he had reason or not to expect it, it must have been a sad disappointment to find the depot camp deserted. It was impossible for him to know that both Brahe and Wright had been driven to the resolution of retiring to the Darling by the visitation of the decimating disease which was preying on the members of both their parties. We cannot here enter into a discussion of the propriety or impropriety of these movements. Mr Brahe, as we understand the matter, had outstayed the period he had been ordered by Mr Burke to remain at Cooper's Creek. Two out of the three men under his command were seriously, and the third dangerously ill. He was suffering continued and increasing annoyance from the Blacks, who,

to the number of between two and three hundred, prowled constantly about the depot, sometimes threatening the party, and frequently robbing them of such articles as were often necessarily left unguarded about the camp.

Under these circumstances, and imagining, moreover, that he was carrying out the wishes of Mr Burke in moving his party to the Darling at that time, he resolved upon a retreat. Such, we believe, is Mr Brahe's own version of the affair. Certain it is, that of his party of three, M'Donogh, an associate, and Betan, one of the Sepoys, were suffering severely from attacks of scurvy, and the illness of Patten, the blacksmith, who shortly afterwards died, had already assumed an alarming phase.

These men, it is clear, stood in great and immediate need of medicines and medical assistance. A longer stay would, in all probability, have sealed their fate. The course Mr Brahe adopted seems to have been a very natural and reasonable one. He knew nothing at the time of the movements of the party, under Mr Wright, whose arrival he had for some time been expecting, and he had too much reason to fear that Mr Burke would not return to Cooper's Creek.

Although Mr Brahe may prove justification for the removal of his party from a position of much danger, it was natural that Mr Burke should expect to find some relief afforded him at or near the depot by some portion, at least, of the contingent left by him on the Darling. Wright's party, as our readers are aware, were found by Brahe encamped at Bulla some sixty or seventy miles on his way to Menindie from the depot on Cooper's Creek.

The disastrous occurrences at Wright's stockade which must be fresh in the memory of the public, had already rendered it necessary in the judgement of that officer to retreat to the settlements. Mr Ludwig Becker, the artist, was at the time at the point of death, Stone and Purcell were dead, and the whole of the rest of his party, with the exception of himself, Dr Beckler, and Mr. Hodgkin son, were seriously invalidated.

Before leaving Bulla, however, Wright and Brahe visited, together, the depot at Cooper's Creek. In the interim, Burke, Wills, and King had been there, yet, strange to say, no traces were found of them. There were the remains of three fires, such as the natives usually make, and it was inferred that they had been made by some of those people. One can imagine that the ground in the vicinity of the camp would be covered with tracks of the animals - both horses and camels - which had only lately been removed from there, and that in consequence Mr Brahe failed to detect the fresh tracks of Mr Burke's two camels.

King states that on the night they remained at the depot each of them made a separate fire, a very unusual proceeding on the part of white men, and one which was extremely likely to have prevented any one examining the place from supposing them to have been made by any others than the Blacks.

It seems remarkable that they should have found the buried provisions and the despatches left by Mr Brahe untouched, as was reported by Mr Wright. The only apparent explanation of this is, that Mr Burke did not find them until his return from his unsuccessful attempt to get into South Australia. This, however, is mere matter of conjecture, and the facts of the case can only be ascertained from Mr Burke's papers, to the publication of which every one, of course, must be looking forward with feelings of the deepest interest.

We cannot conclude this article without an expression of our opinion as to the bushmanlike and able manner in which Mr. Howitt has fulfilled the responsible duties with which he was entrusted. It is useless to wish that he had found matters different from what he did at Cooper's Creek. The irrevocable fiat had gone forth, and the two gallant officers, Burke and Wills, the first and second in command of the Victorian Exploring Expedition, were found dead.

Mr Howitt's party did all they could. They buried them with all the decency and respect of which their circumstances would admit, and wrapping the remains of the brave leader in the folds of the Union Jack, they committed him to his mother earth, and left him alone with his glory."

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The Age Thu 14 Nov 1861 Page 5

BURKE AND WILLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE AGE.

Sir, - As the Exploration Committee are making arrangements for removing the remains of Messrs Burke and Wills from Cooper's Creek, to Melbourne, I wish to draw attention to the fact that, at a short distance from Cooper's Creek, the remains of their lowly, but very necessary companion, Gray, lie, for aught we know unburied, and to all appearances uncared for.

According to Wills' diary, Gray died on April 17th, (the remainder of the party reached Cooper's Creek in four days after); whether they buried him or not, he does not state. Surely his remains are worthy of a Christian burial in consecrated ground, apart from the pomp, and splendour that awaits the interment of his leaders? Instructions ought to be given to Mr Howitt to seek for his remains, that the respect due to a brave but unfortunate man should be shown by the people of this colony (no matter whether he was a subordinate or leader), who sacrifices his life in the cause of his country.

Trusting you will find a place for this in your valuable paper,

- I remain, Sir, respectfully yours,

ONE WHO RESPECTS THE BRAVE.

Chewton, 9th November, 1861.

Finding the bodies of the Expedition.

Burke and Wills died on or about 30 June 1861.

Howitt was sent back to Cooper Creek to recover their bodies and the explorers were given a state funeral in Melbourne on Wednesday, 21 January 1863.

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The Age 4 Nov 1861 Page 5

Late on Saturday evening the intelligence of the melancholy fate of the Victorian Exploration Expedition, was received in town. The gallant Burke, and his no less brave companion Wills, together with their comrades, nobly performed the task allotted them. To them is due the honour of having been the first to cross the great Australian continent from sea to sea, and to make us acquainted with the mysteries of the interior; but alas! they have not lived to reap the reward of their labours or to enjoy the honours they so richly deserved.

Of the little band of four who left Cooper's Creek upon their perilous enterprise, one - King - alone remains; Gray died upon the return trip, and Burke and Wills after their arrival at Cooper's Creek, when it might have been considered that they were tolerably safe, and that their difficulties were ended. The Gulf of Carpentaria was safely reached on the 11th of February, 1861, and the return journey immediately commenced.

The depot at Cooper's Creek was reached on the 21st of April, the very day that Brahe and his party left it. Indeed they had gone but a few hours. Fatigue and hunger had, however, now done their work upon Burke, Wills, and King. They were unable to travel more than four or five miles per day, and pursuit of Brahe's party was hopeless. They therefore resolved to recruit their exhausted strength with the provisions left at Cooper's Creek, and to endeavour to strike the settled districts of South Australia. Fatal mistake; they went and left all help and succour behind them!

They neglected to leave any marks on the trees or on the surface, showing that they had revisited the cache left by Brahe, and had taken away the provisions, and on Brahe's return with Mr Wright, although seeing that some persons had been there, they never imagined that it was Burke and his party, but thought it was the natives, and therefore did not dig down to examine the cache. Had they done so, they would have found the provisions gone, and Mr Burke's letter stating where he was to be found, which at that time was but a few miles distant. Burke and Wills failed in their attempts to gain the advanced out-stations in South Australia, their provisions became exhausted, and they both died of fatigue and exhaustion apparently about the same time.

King, whose strength kept up, joined the Cooper's Creek natives, who behaved kindly to him, and through their assistance his life was preserved, and he was found and rescued by the relief party under Mr Howitt, on the 15th September, in lat 27 deg 44 min and long 140 deg 40 min.

Mr Brahe, who returned to town on Saturday night, brought down Mr Burke's and Mr Wills's diary, together with Mr Howitt's and also King's narratives. The two latter are published in another portion of this paper; the former, consisting principally of rough field notes, will require considerable preparation before it is ready for the press.

The track taken by Mr Burke after leaving Cooper's Creek on his way to Capentaria was as follows:-

He first followed Eyre's Creek to Sturt's furthest; at this point he took a direct easterly course to the 140th parallel of longitude, and then turned due north, going along the same parallel for a considerable time; afterwards diverging to the eastward, and subsequently to the westward again, until he struck the Albert river, which he followed down to the tidal flow. The country from the tropic to the Gulf is described as being richly grassed and plentifully watered, so that the great desert of the interior appears really to have no existence.

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COFFINING OF BURKE AND WILLS

Bendigo Advertiser Fri 2 Jan 1863 Page 3

The melancholy ceremony of coffining the remains, of the lamented explorers, Messrs Burke and Wills, took place on Wednesday at the Royal Society's Hall, Latrobe Street.

There were about fifty gentlemen present, and among them we perceived the following members of the Exploration Committee:

Dr Eades, Dr Iffla, Mr S Elliott, Mr Jno Watson, Dr Gilbee, Dr Wilkie, and Dr Macadam. Among the visitors were the hon H Stewart MLC, Captain Scott, Dr Milton, Mr A Kyte, Mr Cr Wragge, Mr Farquharson, Mr Summers (the sculptor), Mr S Miller CE, Mr Hugh Glass, Professor Halford, and other gentlemen including Mr Howitt, Dr Murray, and party.

The melancholy ceremony was to have taken place at eight o'clock, but Dr Macadam did not make his appearance for more than an hour later, and as he had the key of the box, nothing could be done until his arrival.

In the interval numerous complaints were made, and the members of the committee present at length became impatient, and after trying several keys without succeeding in opening the case containing the remains, a locksmith was sent for, the intention being to have the lock picked.

Meanwhile, however, Dr Macadam arrived, and Dr Wilkie at once moved that Dr Eades should take the chair Mr Watson seconded the motion, which was unanimously carried. Dr Eades said that they had met together for the purpose of performing an extremely painful duty, and they had been delayed a considerable time in consequence of the absence of Dr Macadam.

He had been requested by that gentleman to apologise for his absence until so late an hour, but the fact was that Dr Macadam's feelings had been so much overcome that he could not arrive sooner. In regard to the painful duty they were about to perform, the committee proposed, and he fully agreed with them, that the best way would be to open the case in silence, and to take out the bones and deposit them in the shells prepared to receive them, and then to leave the hall at once, and lock the doors.

They thought this was the best course of procedure in respect to the dead, and this course they would pursue. He would ask Dr Wilkie to open the case. Mr Howitt here requested permission to say a few words, to prevent any misconception on the part of those present. He might state that the whole of the

remains were in the case just as he had found them on his arrival at Cooper's Creek.

Dr Wilkie then opened the case, and the two canvas package's containing the remains were revealed, covered by the Union Jack. The packages were not very large, and were very light. Our readers will better appreciate their bulk when we inform them that the weight of an average human skeleton should be only about 11 lbs.

The remains of Burke were the first opened, and Dr Murray cut the bags and revealed the bones, wrapped in a piece of black alpaca. The nurse of Burke, who was present, now came forward, and it was remarkably effecting to see the care with which she had provided for the melancholy occasion.

A clean sheet was spread by her over the iron shell, and a small frilled pillow was then placed for the accommodation of the skull. These articles, we are informed, were part of the Burke family linen. Mrs Dogherty had laid in the coffin the remains of poor Burke's parents, and she now performed in a similar manner the last sad offices to the departed hero. Having deposited the pillow, she awaited in solemn silence the remainder of the ceremony.

The skull was now placed by Drs Murray and Gilbee, and after it the collar bones, shoulder blades, vertebrae, and the remainder of the skeleton was laid out in the shell in conformity with their proper positions. These bones were remarkably perfect, a few of the smaller ones only being missing. Having been properly laid out, poor Mrs Dogherty again pressed forward, and folding over the left side of the sheet, devoutly kissed the skull, sobbing bitterly the while.

The scene was a most affecting one, and the funereal aspect of the hall lent much towards the effect. Not one present but was deeply moved by the affection of the kind old lady. Having carefully folded up the remains in the sheet she had provided, Mrs Dogherty retired, and the lid of the shell being put on, the coffin was removed.

The bag containing the remains of poor Wills was now opened, and the contrast between this and the proceeding ceremony was remarkable and affecting. No pitying female hand waited to perform the last sad offices towards the remains of him to whom Australasia and the world are alike indebted for one of the most interesting and touching narratives of travel ever penned, and all that remained of the head which dictated it was the lower jaw.

The remains of Wills were otherwise somewhat imperfect; several of the other bones were gone. The vertebrae and skeleton were kept together by the remains of the shirt in which the poor fellow died, and in this, condition it was coffined. Among these bones was a small portion of sandy colored beard,

sufficient in itself to prove the identity of the remains to any who might be sceptical. The bones were, however laid out as in the case of Burke, with due respect to anatomical order.

This being done, the sheet was called for, but this the undertaker had neglected to supply and a strip of glazed calico was torn from a roll, and used for the purposes of a winding sheet. The shell was then closed, and the melancholy ceremony concluded.

Dr Eades then declared the painful duty they had met to perform ended, and said that an alteration had been made in the date of the opening of the Hall to the public. The committee thought that it would be unseemly to open the Hall during the time the new year's festivities were going on, and therefore, the lying in state would not commence until Monday, the 5th instant. He said it was matter for regret that the remains were not more complete, but it was at the same time satisfactory that they had been brought down as perfect as they have been after the lapse of so long a time.

At the conclusion of such a scene as that it might not be out of place to remind them of the peculiar time, and that they should now say goodbye to each other for the year 1862 at any rate. The ceremony then concluded, and the Hall was closed until the 5th January 1863, when it will be opened to the public at 10 am, the remains lying in state. - Age.

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THE PUBLIC FUNERAL OF BURKE AND WILLS

The Age Sat 24 Jan 1863 Page 6

The Havilah s.s., conveying Howitt and his party, with the remains of the unfortunate explorers Burke and Wills, arrived in Hobson's Bay early on the morning of the 28th ult. Immediately on the vessel being moored, the case containing the remains was conveyed on shore, and mounted shoulder high, covered with the Union Jack, by four members of Howitt's party. In this manner it was conveyed along the whole length of the jetty to the hearse, which was at the gates, and thence conveyed to the Hall of the Royal Society. The melancholy ceremony of coffining the remains took place on the 30th, in the presence of about fifty gentlemen.

The lying-in-state commenced on the 6th instant. The raised catafalque was in the middle of the floor, surrounded by a carved railing, consisting of the dais and the bier, covered with black cloth, and trimmed with crimson velvet. On top of this,

and side by side, lay the coffins, richly mounted, and above them again the metallic shells, made in the shape of the body, and containing the remains of the explorers. The whole was surmounted by a tasteful canopy supported by four fern trees, ornamented with silver gilding.

On the panel of the bier (*a movable frame on which a coffin or a corpse is placed*) over which Burke's coffin was placed was his coat of arms, or that of the family from which he is supposed to have sprung - namely, the Burkes of Galway. The coffin lids bore the inscriptions that Burke died at the age of 40 years, and Wills at 27. The lying in state attracted a large number of spectators daily. The funeral took place on the 21st. An hour before noon the greater number of the shops were closed, and few remained open after twelve o'clock.

His Excellency the Governor, Lady Barkly, and Lady Bowen paid a visit to the lying in state at eleven o'clock. They remained about twenty minutes, and then took their departure. Between that and half-past twelve o'clock, the outside of the Royal Society's enclosure began to assume a somewhat busy appearance, in consequence of the various public bodies who were to join in the procession having arrived to take up position.

A gun, fired from the Volunteer battery, was the signal for the procession to start, which it did with as much order as could be expected, considering the crowded state of the Street. The marshal, assisted by the Police Force, kept the course clear, and the procession moved slowly on towards Nicholson Street, amidst the firing of the minute guns.

On reaching the Parliament Yard, the members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly joined it, and fell into their allotted places. The procession then being completed, proceeded down Bourke Street:- The Castlemaine Light Dragoons. The Band of the Castlemaine Rifle Volunteer Regiment, playing "The Dead March in Saul." The Castlemaine Volunteer Rifles, under the command of Captain Ryland. A firing party of police, consisting of forty men and officers. Clergymen on foot. A mourning coach, conveying the Very Rev the Dean of Melbourne. Undertaker, state lid, and mutes.

The funeral Car, with remains, drawn by six horses, each horse being led by an attendant. The pallbearers, four abreast, those for Burke being Sir William Stawell, Mr O'Shanassy, King the survivor, Captain Standish, Mr Kyte, Mr Ireland, and Sir Francis Murphy; and for Wills: Mr Thomas Wills, Dr Mueller, Captain Norman, the Hon G Verdon, Mr Howitt, the hon Richard Heales, and the Mayor of Melbourne. The chief mourners. Members of the Exploration Committee. Howitt and his party. The men of the Victoria steam sloop of war. A mourning coach drawn by four horses, and conveying Mrs Dougherty, Burke's nurse. The Corporation of Melbourne, The Governor's carriage, conveying his Excellency and

his aide-de-camp. The Vice-Chancellor of the Melbourne University, and Mr Justice Chapman.

Sir James Palmer, President of the Legislative Council. Other members of Parliament, principally of the Legislative Assembly, on foot, and some in cabs. Officers of the Police, and of the Army and Navy, including those of the colonial sloop of war Victoria. A party of Melbourne Volunteer Cavalry. Members of Municipal Councils on foot. The M.U. Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Ancient Order of Foresters, the Ancient and Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, the Ancient Order of Rechabites, and citizens in carriages and on foot.

It was half-past three o'clock when the first minute gun was fired from the battery near the Cemetery, that being the signal that the procession was approaching. It was a quarter to four o'clock before it arrived at the gates, bringing with it, of course, the crowds of persons who accompanied it from the city. The military and artillery lined the entrance with arms reversed, and minute guns continued to be fired; the Castlemaine Light Dragoons, who headed the procession from town, wheeled out of the line, and the funeral car was drawn up at the entrance to the gates.

The next step was to remove the coffins from the funeral car and convey them to the grave. The site that was chosen for the last resting place of the remains of the explorers, is a triangular piece of ground on the south side of the cemetery, near Sir Charles Hotham's monument, and within the Church of England burying ground. The Dean of Melbourne read the burial service, and the party of police who had been drawn up for the purpose, fired three volleys over the grave.

The crowd which surrounded the Cemetery then dispersed, and the various bodies, military and civil, forming the procession, returned home to their several destinations. It is the intention of the Exploration Committee to erect a monument over the grave. In the evening there was a large meeting in St George's Hall, when addresses were presented to Mr Howitt and his party, to Captain Norman, of the Victoria, and to Mr Kyte, the liberal donor to the Exploration. Dr Macadam, amid some strong expressions of the feelings of the audience, endeavoured to exculpate the Exploration Committee. Judge Chapman could not even obtain a hearing.

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John KING

Bendigo Advertiser Thu 18 Jan 1872 Page 2

The Funeral of John King. - The remains of King, the survivor of the Burke and Wills party, which crossed the continent, were conveyed to their final resting place yesterday. The Herald says:- The funeral of the late Mr John King, sole survivor of the ill-fated exploring expedition of 1862, took place yesterday afternoon, and was followed by a large number of mourners. The coffin, which was covered with black cloth, was massively mounted, and upon the engraved plate was the following simple inscription:- "John King, died 15th January, 1872, aged thirty one years."

The place of interment was the Melbourne General Cemetery. The funeral service was read by the Rev Mr Bickford.

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Bendigo Advertiser Wed 17 Jan 1872 Page 2

THE BENDIGO ADVERTISER.

SANDHURST, WEDNESDAY, JAN 17, 1872.

THE END OF A SAD TALE

With the death of John King the last chapter in the history of that most unfortunate expedition of exploration, conducted by Robert O'Hara Burke, is brought to a conclusion. As far as that expedition was a success, the praise is due to Mr Burke for his dashing bravery, which fitted him rather for subordinate than for leading duties. His qualities were such that as a military officer he would have led his command up to the cannon's mouth with eager impetuosity and undaunted courage; but he lacked the calmness and consideration which are essential in the general. His run across the continent was a brilliant exploit, the success of which was marred by his want of coolness and thoughtfulness, and he paid the penalty of his precipitance, miserably, with his life.

As far, however, as his expedition was a failure, the blame is attributable rather to those who placed him in a position unsuitable to his abilities, than to himself. He did his best and succeeded in effecting what he understood he had been sent out to accomplish. Nevertheless it must for ever be regretted that, he was so hotly impulsive, and obstinately wayward. Had he listened to the advice of his soberer and more experienced colleague, Mr Wills, there can be no doubt his little party would have reached his headquarters on the Darling in safety. But unfortunately, in receiving his instructions, he had been told that he could, with little difficulty, reach some of the South Australian stock stations from Cooper's Creek.

In acting on this hint, he turned his back on the easy means of escape which was open to him. This was his own resolution, formed in opposition to the wishes and opinions of his two companions. Had he yielded to them, the probabilities are that all three would have been still alive. It was his forced and lonely imprisonment, without hope of deliverance, in an inhospitable and desert region that preyed on

King's mind, and fatally ruined his constitution. There was one gallant young fellow in that expedition, who, if he has not been very harshly dealt by, has, at all events received but scant public justice. King himself, before the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the causes of the deaths of Burke and Wills, exonerated Mr W Brahe from the blame which had been cast upon him by the public and the press.

It is true that, in his journey from Cooper's Creek to the Darling, King told Mr Howitt that he attributed the loss of those gentlemen to Brahe's desertion of the depot. But it must be remembered that at that time King was in a very weak state, both of body and mind. He had long been brooding in solitude over the terrible scenes in which his leaders had perished, and could only see that the immediate cause of these disasters, and of his own imminent danger of death or of exclusion from the world for life, had been the departure of the depot party under Brahe from Cooper's Creek.

He was not then aware of the nature of the instructions which had been given by Mr Burke to Brahe, which the latter had not only fulfilled, but actually exceeded, by remaining at his post for a much longer time than he had been ordered to do. Certain it is, at any rate, that King on recovering his health and composure and after having calmly reviewed, all the circumstances of the case, altered his views altogether with regard to the conduct of Brahe, and deliberately and unhesitatingly stated to the Commissioners his firm belief that Brahe done his duty, and remained at the depot as long as it was in his power to do so. Let it be always remembered, in justice to this much abused young man, that he had duties to discharge towards the men and animals under his command.

Mr Burke had told him that if he did not return in three months to the depot, he might rely upon it that he had either perished or had made for the settled districts of Queensland, and at the expiration of that period he was to withdraw his party to the Darling. But Brahe, hoping against hope, lingered on from day to day for another month.

By that time, scurvy had broken out among his men and one of them, Patten, the blacksmith, had received a kick from a horse which he believed would be attended with fatal consequences unless he soon obtained medical assistance, and therefore earnestly besought Brahe to commence his retreat towards the Darling.

Importuned in this manner, aware that his horses and camels were starving in consequence of the grassless condition of the country in his immediate neighbourhood, and fully believing that Mr Burke had adopted the course, he had mentioned to him as probable of making for Queensland, he reluctantly made arrangements for his departure, taking the precaution, however, of leaving a considerable supply of food and some clothing in a cache at the depot. Strangely

and singularly enough, the very day of his departure from the depot was that of the arrival of Burke at the same spot. It was late in the day before Brahe's little cavalcade moved off in the direction of Bulloo.

A camel had been missing, and the day was so far advanced before it was found, that Brahe was within an ace of postponing his departure until the next morning. But this, it would seem, was not to be. A start was effected in the afternoon, and in the evening Burke with Wills and King rode up to the abandoned depot. That night the two parties were encamped only fourteen miles apart. By some extraordinary fatality, Mr Burke determined on shaping his course for Mount Hopeless - ominous name - and the fearful consequences are well known.

On the occasion of the death of the last of those three hapless men, who, with succour so near at hand, rode off to destruction, it seems only fair to say a word in defence of him, at whose door their sufferings and the death of two of them have been unjustly and frequently laid. We would call attention to the fact that the course pursued by Mr Brahe has a notable precedent in that adopted by Mr Brown, the second in command of the expedition into the interior under Capt Sturt. The chief, on departing with the since celebrated Robert Macdougall Stuart and a small party on his last journey into the Stony Desert, left Mr Brown in charge of the encampment at the Depot Glen in the Grey Ranges, with instructions to fall back at his discretion towards the Darling.

This Mr Brown found it necessary to do, and Sturt and Stuart, to their great dismay, on their return from their miserable trip, worn out with fatigue and disappointment, found the depot deserted. But Captain Sturt, a leader totally different in every respect, except in his indomitable courage, from Mr Burke, followed up the retreating party, re-joined them in safety, and thanked Mr Brown for the judicious step he had taken. Doubtless if Mr Burke had followed Brahe, and overtaken him as he undoubtedly would have done, he would, in the same manner, have acknowledged the propriety and prudence of his conduct. If King in his last hours spoke of Brahe, we do not believe he can have alluded to him in terms of censure or reproach.



Compiled by Pat & Ian Belmont
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for the Bendigo Cemetery Obituaries & Notes