NOTES ON DUTERRAU'S "RECONCILIATION" PICTURE, Pl. XXII.

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In an appendix to my paper on the lughrana, etc., read before the Society on July 10, I discussed the evidence afforded by the Duterrau engravings (1). I came to the conclusion that all the engravings ought to be reversed, because, by the mistake of the engraver, they were transferred on the copper plate as originally drawn. Naturally the prints became reversed, and the man making the spear appeared to hold the tero-watta in his left and not in his right. Just when the final proof of my paper had been received Mr. Beattie kindly informed me that he had seen the original oil painting, of what I termed No. 1 engraving (Pl. XIII.), at the house of the Misses Cleburn, and that this oil painting fully confirmed my conjecture. I had just time to add a hasty postscript to my paper, stating that my views were correct, but I think it will be useful to make a few more remarks.

From the inscription on it we know that the engraving was made in 1835. Inasmuch as the oil painting is somewhat more explicit, I feel inclined to think that it is of a later date. It is very probable that Duterrau made at first several sketches before he finally made his selection. One of these sketches he etched and published in 1835, and subsequently he painted the picture under discussion. All we can, therefore, say is, that in all probability it was painted after 1835, perhaps towards the end of the thirties, or early in the forties.

Notwithstanding its great shortcomings, the picture is of considerable value as a historical document. It measures about 6 x 4 feet, and on the back is written: "The Reconciliation: Sketch of a national picture measuring 14 x 9 feet." This "national" picture has actually been painted, but its whereabouts are now unknown. Perhaps these notes may help to discover it. The designation of this picture as a "national" picture is a curious illustra-

(1) See Antea pag. 93.

DUTERRAU'S RECONCILIATION PICTURE.

tion of the sentiments prevailing in 1835. Everybody presumed that henceforth black and white, Europeans and Tasmanian aborigines, would live as brothers and sisters in one united "nation." To-day we can only smile at the simplicity that thought it possible that one nation could arise from the union of Aryans and one of the lowest races of non-Aryan origin that has ever been known. We may be thankful, in the interest of those that inhabit present Tasmania, that these views, however lofty they may appear to the philanthropic idealist, were never realised. It is regrettable that the intensely interesting Tasmanian race took such a sad and untimely end, but in the interest of the purity of the white race it is perhaps better so.

A comparison of Pl. XIII. (the original engraving) and Pl. XXII. (the sketch in oil) shows marked differences, though on the whole they represent the same arrangement of persons. Both pictures prove that they are compositions, made in the artist's studio, from sketches he made after life, either in Robinson's house, or in his own in Hobart (2). The engraving contains 11 figures. viz., three women and seven men (not including Robinson), and three dogs, while the oil sketch contains 15 figures, viz., five women and nine men (not including Robinson), three dogs, and a kangaroo. The additional figures appear in the background only. The main group of nine figures (including Robinson), viz., three women and five men, is, however, exactly the same in both. Robinson half turned to the right, grasps the Tasmanian's right with his right hand, while the left hand is slightly raised in a teaching attitude. The features of the aborigines are unquestionably considerably idealised. The man, whose hand Robinson is grasping, shows an almost noble profile, and the three females are by no means bad-looking. It is therefore pretty certain that the features are not realistic. The same probably applies to the colour of skin, which in the oil sketch appears to be rather a pleasing dark grey. I do not think that I need to explain the meaning of the picture, which speaks for itself, except that in the "sketch" the man on the extreme right appears in a more natural position, his left hand holding the shell necklace, while in the engraving he holds a portion of a spear. It is noteworthy, however, that apparently the females are convinced, and ready to accept the new doctrine. The men, with one exception only, are either indifferent or directly hostile, attempting to restrain the females. It would be interesting to know whether this

(2) This renders it very probable that the "National" picture deviates as much from the "Sketch" as the latter does from the 1835 engraving.

conception of the reconciliation arose in the artist's mind only, or whether the females did play the role attributed to them in the oil sketch.

We will now examine those features of the painting that are of interest with regard to the aborigines.

It is pretty certain that the loin cloth, consisting of a kangaroo skin (with the fur inside) is a concession to the public taste of 1835. We know for certain that the aborigines did not cover their sexual organs.

Ornaments are worn by both sexes: these consist of shell necklaces, and a human lower jawbone, suspended by a string, and worn round the neck. It seems remarkable that only the men wear the jawbone, while the women wear only pearl necklaces. This may be accidental only, the more so because in the engraving not one of the figures wears a neck ornament. These are apparently subsequent additions to the figures of the oil sketch and this would somewhat reduce their ethnological value, because it would show that the artist painted them, not as he had seen them, but as he thought that they would make a pleasing effect.

Only three men wear the customary head-dress, i.e., the ringlets produced by rubbing a mixture of red ochre and fat into the hair. It is noteworthy that these three men show the nearest approach to correct features of the aborigines, in particular the flat nose.

All the other men wear short curly hair. The question may well arise, did the aborigines, when brought to Hobart, lose the habit of smearing the hair with ochre, probably because they had none, or did they, in their free state, only occasionally resort to this practice, while generally the hair was left in its natural state? It is pretty certain that once the hair was well rubbed with the mixture of red ochre and fat, which hardened in time, it could not be removed unless the head was shaved. Now such a head-dress must afford a good shelter to vermin, and it is perhaps probable that, if worried too much by it, the aborigine had his head shaved, and not until it had reached a certain length it was again treated with the ochre mixture. The men wearing the natural hair would therefore represent individuals whose hair is growing, but had not reached the sufficient length for the ornamental head-dress. If this view were correct, the remarkable sentence, "He shaves his hair with a flint," would perhaps be not so wrong after all, because the men did shave their hair occa-

sionally. Unfortunately, we are unable to decide this question for ever. We are equally unable to say whether the operation of rubbing ochre and fat into the hair was a sort of distinction, or a sort of rite, to be performed on certain occasions only. The evidence of the picture only proves that the custom of rubbing a mixture of red ochre and fat into the hair existed, but that apparently the majority of men wore the hair in its natural state.

All the women, except one, have the hair closely cropped; in fact, it may be questioned if even this female is not supposed to have the hair very short; in fact, in the engraving she does not differ from the other women in that respect. The picture therefore fully confirms the statement that the women habitually wore the hair closely cropped. Thus we will never know whether the hair of the Tasmanian females would attain a greater length than that of the males or not. (3)

Nothing need to be said about the spears, except that the man who is scraping one, seated to the left, is holding the tero-watta with his right hand.

One word about the dogs. Two breeds can distinctly be discerned, viz., two collies and a greyhound. Did the aborigines distinguish these two breeds, which are so very different, by different names, or was any breed of dog to them a kaceta?

The place of the fire which burns near the man straightening a spear with his teeth, is in the oil sketch occupied by a kangaroo. As it is not known that the aborigines kept pet animals, except dogs, which were rather their assistants in hunting than pets, the tame kangaroo is probably an introduction by the artist to enliven the group.

I am greatly indebted to the Misses Cleburn, who kindly permitted this oil sketch to be photographed by Mr. Beattie, and the reproduction is published here for the first time.

(3) I regret to say that hitherto I entirely overlooked a passage in Appendix I. of Ling Roth's "Aborigines of Tasmania." This appendix is apparently an extract from the "Penny Magazine" of June 21, 1834, dealing with the Duterrau Portraits. It says:—"His wife, Truganina, . . stands beside him, with her head shaved, according to custom, by her husband, with a sharp-edged flint." This fully confirms my interpretation of the mysterious sentence: Tugganna pugheranymee trautta. We may further conclude that the noble savage whose hand Robinson grasps, is meant to represent Wooready, his trusted servant, from Bruni Island.

As the above paper practically concludes my investigations on the Tasmanian Aborigines, it will perhaps be advisable to give a list of the literature which has been published on the subject. The older literature has been completely enumerated by Ling Roth, and it is superfluous to reiterate it here. The following list contains only those papers that have appeared in the Society's journal and those published after 1899, the year of publication of the 2nd edition of Ling Roth's "Aborigines of Tasmania."

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