

The words immediately preceding the diary
are

"The excessive and parching heat of a
hot wind kept us close prisoners until after
sunset, when we went out to witness a
corroboree or native dance for which prepara-
-tion among the natives had been going on all
the afternoon. All our party had at different
times, and in other parts of Australia seen"

The 9 pages ~~which~~ which follow
are Lady Franklin's own diary written
on the spot upon the backs of old letters
& written out fully afterwards, with certain
additions and omissions and called
the "Excursion from Melbourne"
dated 16th Dec 1843. & ending on
Christmas Eve.

on Jan 12 1844 they left for England.

W.F.R.

this extraordinary exhibition. I
 I can never forget the impression
 produced the first time I saw this dance.
 I believe horror & undreaded & dread
 predominated; and no ~~being~~ ^{witnessing it} ~~apart~~
 altho I was no longer astonished, I ~~could~~
 hardly get rid of a sense of fear. The
 gestures & countenance of the dancers
 are all that one conceives to be. Sensational
 & the mysterious character of their ability
 is at once ~~so~~ ^{startling & unpleasing}.

The flickering & unsteady light of the fire
 the women's chant of the single musician
 the almost ~~swaying~~ ^{swaying} accompaniment of
 the women ~~which~~ ^{which} when they are ~~near~~ ^{near} ~~great~~
~~efforts~~ ^{efforts} of the dancers ~~and~~ ^{and} the hearty
 Bedford ~~exclamation~~ ^{exclamation} "Hurray!"

is heard on all sides, all contribute
 to make this spectacle ~~so~~ ^{almost a bewildering one}.

On this occasion we were struck by the
 deportment of some of the women. They
 were ~~standing~~ ^{seated} among the rest in the circle always
 formed by them near the chief fire, but
 they were completely covered by their ~~dark~~ ^{dark}
 skin ~~up~~ ^{and their} with their backs to the dancer
 & ~~either~~ ^{either} they remained the whole time, not
 raising their eyes nor indeed uncovering
 their faces. They were the same who
 had been observed ^{partly in the day} by some of our party
 as crouching & sideling along while
 passing some men of their tribe, within

lifting their eyes, nor permitting
their faces to be seen. ^{we learned that}
the explanation of all this after our
return to Elkhorn for the Chief Protector
of Aborigines, a very good authority -
He informed us that these are the mothers
of girls betrothed, & that this concealment
continues during the period of betrothment
until their daughters' marriage.

The remainder of the women took their
usual part in the ceremonial by beating
time on their folded rugs and thus producing
a hollow sound by way of accompaniment
to the chant of the old man who always
occupies a leader of the orchestra - ~~now~~
~~and then joining their~~ ^{to the} ~~the~~ ^{shay}
clatter produced by the men ~~while~~ ⁱⁿ beating
their sticks together) This man ~~first~~
~~selected to~~, is usually the oldest of the
tribe, but on this occasion the most apt
appeared to be unequal to the task of
keeping up the usual song for the required
time & his place was supplied by ^{apparently} one less
inferior ~~to far as we could see~~. More

Our next day journey was at first carried
to our ranges which had been on fire
the day before, & ~~where~~ on which charred
& fallen trees were still smouldering.
A fearful thing is a bush fire if within

(3.)

reach of cultivated & enclosed lands.
But a more truly magnificent sight
hardly be witnessed than a blazing
fire. The first time I beheld one, I was
on a boat on a river, the banks of which were
a mass of forest down to the water's edge.
Here & there a tall pine or fir stood
erect - by its side was another which had
fallen against its neighbor, & thus communicated
the flame to its branches, which was writhing
it all around. The sounds of burning
crackling wood were mingled with the often
recurring crash when some soft enormous
tree had given way, & carried all above
that laid in its way, along with it to the
earth - such sounds & such sights when
especially when beheld in darkness &
for the first time, are not readily
forgotten. I have since seen many
such fires, I have counted nine at once
in different directions from my drawing room window - have watched
the destruction of elements streaking along
the fences, & consuming the labors of
many months - but I have beheld nothing
which would create strange feelings than
the magnificent display of power to which
I alluded above,
as after passing these forest covered
hills we entered upon grassy

plains of vast extent
from which rise ^{abruptly} circular
hills of ~~some~~ ^{considerable} height named by Sir Thomas
Mitchell the Tussocky Mt. of N. S. Wales
the Macanaloid hills. ^{he says} they are formed
of Lava. On entering this country

of Lava. On entering this country
we were met by Mr. Hepburn, whose house
we proposed visiting & resting awhile, the
weather being still excessively hot.

Minor: the person is now fulfilling duties
 of a very different kind with no loss of
 devotion conscientiousness & ability. He
 accompanied his former Commander &
 Sir J. D. to I.S.D. where he assumed the
 Govt of that Colony & after some time
 after, he was placed in a responsible
 post at the ^{Cornwall} Establishment for ^{Cornwall} Boys. It
 was no less remarkable than interesting to
 see the influence ^{he} there obtained for him, by
 his reading him, mingled with that
 unflinching firmness which ^{he} had enabled
 him to perform such important services.
 John Hepburn's name will ever be
 associated with those records of ^{the} fearfully
 perilous adventure called for by the
 attempted solution of the national issue.

question. "Can we find the G. W. Passageway ^{any, while} ~~one of the~~ ^{which} may be in the case of "satisfactory" termination. ~~to account~~ ^{all the men} ~~instating~~ the one last alluded to, held in each hand a flat & slightly curved stick with in being being struck together gives a sharp clattering sound. The old men all the dancers have sticks ^{the flat} which have been mentioned, but their being used depends upon the past gestures - the arms being often extended.

In the earlier days of this colony, people believed that it was easy to "make their fortune" and a few realized their dreams. It was ~~not~~ ^{the} thought worth while to spend time in preparing a decent habitation for so short a time, and in ^{making} arrangements so temporary, the ordinary requirements of civilization were deemed ~~unnecessary~~ ^{unnecessary} & superfluous. ~~and~~ this neglect is still of ~~too~~ ^{any} ~~frequency~~ ^{frequency} occurrence & it is in itself a cause of much mischief. The remedy is not of easy application. The rage for buying large ^{large portions} ~~tracts~~ of land has vanished before practical experience & the settlers who by virtue of their license occupy extensive tracts, feel tolerably secure of being for some years to come safe from having it bought out of their hands, & so may feel some confidence ⁱⁿ of being permitted to reap the fruit of their ^{effort} This will in itself ~~the security they need & remove all excuse~~

Slavishly habits are formed in matters of small
importance & now indifference to objects of real
moment too often follows. The restraints of
civilization once thrown off, the way is paved
for the abandonment of those of religion and
morality. There is indeed much to dread
in the present social condition of the bush
of Australia. The proprietors of stock, & holders
of land, in Colonial phrase, the Squatters, are
for the most part young men of ^{good family} respectable
~~parentage & good~~ ^{and} education, ^{who have left England} ~~and there are many~~
~~who may boast of advantages in such cases~~
~~equal to any before their~~
character & habits of home have been formed. They
at once pass into a condition of rustic freedom
from all external restraint, from the warning voice
of either friend or pastor, from the conventionalities
as well as the humanizing influences of
civilization. We cannot be wonder that so
many the trial has ended in the subjugation
of the individual

All who have written upon Australia dwell
~~with~~ in strong terms upon the effect of its
 atmosphere upon the frame & spirit - but I have
 as yet seen no words which appeared to me adequately
 to convey an conception of the reality. ~~I believe~~
~~the attempt may be considered hopeless, for~~
~~I know that many of those who have put~~
~~forth their opinions, have experienced the~~
~~unbearable character of that atmosphere...~~ There
 is a sense of actual, positive enjoyment in
 breathing, or to borrow the words of a friend
 who has left the Southern Hemisphere "the
 simple fact of existence is felt to be a blessing."
 It is sensibly to inhale life & vigor both
 of mind & body. And I can have no
 doubt from my own actual observation that
 the mind as well as the body does become
 developed beyond if I may so say, its
 natural powers. Many of the ^{mentally} ~~physically~~ ^{usually}
 distressed upon reaching an in Australia
 subject to a process of tension, of which the
 acknowledged effect is not to weaken but
 to fortify the original faculty. It will
 not be denied by any who have resided
 in the Australian colonies, that the native
 colonial born, exhibit a precocity of intellect
 & vigorous habits of remarkable acuteness.
 With respect to those ~~foreigners~~ ^{foreigners} of the soil
 who have been transplanted from Europe, we
 have only to watch them to perceive a
 more or less gradual, but positive change
 in their habits of mind and action.

the reply by which this statement is ^{often} met by
those unimpressed by actual observation
that "such a change in the obvious & natural
effect of joining a small community" is
in my own & the minds of many others,
wholly unsatisfactory; facts dispense it
so far as they can avail. Besides
the ^{solution} of the question. I have quoted, apply
mainly if not solely to cases where
deterioration of character has followed ^{upon}
arrival in the colonies. I can bring
proofs of a very different change, ^{which}
the Lathropians have become energetic, the
careless, heedful and so on. And may
we put aside altogether ^{the} such physical
influences as even especially of God's own
testimony; which each man is of himself
maintained, unchecked by human. I had
almost written Satanic devices &

I say, & many ad ~~many~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~fact~~ ^{fact} ~~that~~ ^{fact} ~~the~~ ^{fact} ~~of~~ ^{fact} ~~God's~~ ^{fact} ~~best gift~~ ^{fact} ~~to Australia~~ ^{fact} ~~is its genial climate~~ ^{fact} ~~its pure & relaxing atmosphere whereby~~ ^{fact} ~~man pursues his avocations with a flame~~ ^{fact} ~~lightened of all burthen, & those who~~ ^{fact} ~~can experimentally judge of the contract,~~ ^{fact} ~~known facts will~~ ^{fact} ~~may be imposed by~~ ^{fact} ~~the reason of such~~ ^{fact} ~~other conditions~~ ^{fact}

I am hardly even a dabbler in Science & have therefore ^{with} the right not the inclination to presume upon theorizing upon the question. I am quite content with the acceptance of certain facts, as was a sweet friend of mine now dead who on my mentioning to her any⁺ soon after her arrival in Paris. Science said. say then my crude notions on the effect of the atmosphere. applied to my only half written assertions - "I have no doubt that what you say is true - for I have felt my temper perfectly intolerable since I landed - I mean used to feel so cross & their own interval according to her own statement (her ^{all who knew her} husband & have told a different story) following intense & injurious of the quantity & richness of the soil of the scenes upon which she had intended.

for J. W.