**Life and Times of an Australian Collector
- Catherine Langloh Parker -**

1. **K(atie) Langloh Parker**, an Australian of English extraction, was born Catherine Eliza Somerville Field on May 1, 1856, at Luilyl, the home of her maternal grandfather, the Reverend W. R. Newland, on Encounter Bay near Adelaide in South Australia.
2. In 1835, Catherineâ€™s uncle William George Field was serving as a lieutenant in a fleet flagship of the British navy, H.M.S *Howe*, when he was offered a position as first mate on the brig *Rapid*, commissioned by the South Australian Company to take a certain Colonel Light and a party of surveyors to the proposed new colony. Fieldâ€™s father had also been a naval officer, on active service off the French coast and in the Mediterranean during the Napoleanic wars. There were family stories about his war experiences, about illustrious connections of the Field family, and about the family home at Adderbury in Oxfordshire, England, an architecturally distinguished building. Throughout her lifetime in her native Australia, Catherine was quite proud of these ancestral legends.
3. As did many a navy man and others in his time, Lieutenant Field suffered from tuberculosis, and this was probably the reason for his accepting appointment as first mate in the *Rapid*, since the Australian climate had a reputation, in some part justly, of offering hope for recovery from the disease. Lieutenant Fieldâ€™s younger brother Henry, then only 18 years of age, was also tubercular, and had been advised to take a sea voyage, a frequently prescribed treatment for tuberculosis in that age. So he followed his older brother William to South Australia, where he arrived on the ship *John Renwick* on 10 February, 1837. The two brothers decided to settle there, and became friendly with the Chisholm family of New South Wales, which happened to own a â€˜stationâ€™ (it would be called a â€˜ranchâ€™ in American English) called Kippilaw at Goulburn. While William discharged his duties for the South Australia Company, Henry joined a partry of settlers that set out from Sydney in search of good land for grazing sheep.
4. This party travelled south to Victoria, squatting once they had found a promising vacant area, and Henry greatly enjoyed this experience, which proved to be a kind of apprenticeship for his later career. Returning from this excursion to the vicinity of Adelaide in South Australia, Henry Field entered into a partnership with his brother William, who had meanwhile finished his contract with the South Australian Companyâ€™s surveying party, acquired some cattle, and started a station at a place called Yankalilla. So the two brothers became cattlemen together. Finding the outdoor life very much to his liking, Henry made up his mind to live permanently in the Australian colonies, but he still made one final trip back home to England, feeling he had left England so young he wished to be quite sure of his decision. This was in 1845, when he was twenty-six years of age. But he returned quickly to the company of his brother William and sister-in-law in Australia and a way of life he had learned to love, where he soon felt the time had come to establish a home of his own.
5. From Yankalilla Henry used to ride some twelve miles over an intervening range of mountains to a whale fishery at Encounter Bay to provide the whalers with meat; sometimes he stayed overnight with the whalersâ€™ head man, and there he was told many a tale about the whalersâ€™ exploits. On his rides to Encounter Bay he also made the acquaintance of a man named Watts Newland, eldest son of the Reverend W. R. Newland, who was to become his brother-in-law and lifelong friend.
6. The story of the planned emigration to Australia of the Reverend Newland, with his wife Martha and eight children, Marthaâ€™s family, several friends, and various artisans, all from the village of Hanley in Staffordshire, is a another interesting example of voluntary colonization of Australian by English men and women, who were by no means all banished criminals forced to leave the British Isles will-nilly. But there are really only two things about the Newland family that are particularly relevant to the career of their grand-daughter, Catherine Field, as a collector of native Australian tales. Martha Newland had come from a family of serious-minded, educated people who, like Newland himself, where evangelicals. She was an intellectual who read the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, and who severely felt the move to an isolated primitive colony where so much effort had to be spent on the physical necessities of life. But she would not relax her standards in educating her own children, who were never excused from lessons in favour of farming or domestic duties. Her children grew up with a respect for education similar to her own, and in turn taught their children just as assiduously.
7. The other quality they seemed to have passed on was a certain doggedness, a determination to overcome the difficulties of colonial life. Their father, in his religious fervor, would not accept financial payments for his strenuous ministry, but made the family self-supporting through their own agricultural efforts. Consequently the Newland children all had to work on the family farm. The girls helped in the dairy and in the house house, and the boys in farm work, from an early age.
8. Henry Field, introduced to the family by Watts, thus found a group of educated people living in their home in a verdant garden setting they had created overlooking the beautiful Encounter Bay. The two elder daughters, Martha, twenty-one, and Sophia, nineteen, must have attracted the young man, who would have been a welcome addition to their limited circle of acquaintances. Henry Field and Sophia Newland were married at her fatherâ€™s home on 22 May, 1849.
9. The birth of the Fieldsâ€™ first child, Jane Sophia, in 1850, was a happy occasion at a time when they were saddened by the obvious decline in William Fieldâ€™s health, and his death a few months later.
10. Henry Field took up land in the Encounter Bay area during the 1850s, but found it too confined for pasturing of his sheep. He had remained in contact with the Chisholm family, who had been seeking outlets for their surplus stock, and a shipping notice indicates that he took passage for Melbourne in the barque *Dreadnought* in May, 1853, in the company of Mr and Mrs Chisholm.
11. The beginning of steamboat navigation on the Murray River and its tributaries in the early 1850s meant the unlocking of vast tracts of unknown country in the Australian interior. Field would have been well aware of its potential from his overlanding experiences, for sheep and cattle were mostly driven along the courses of the rivers. Once the rivers were navigated regularly they provided much easier and cheaper transport for station supplies, for the coming of women and children to inland areas, and for the wool to be brought down for shipment overseas. Plans would have been growing throughout this period for the joint squatting venture which eventually involved Henry Field and the Chisholm brothers.
12. Four more children were born to Henry and Sophia Field during the 1850s; William George on Christmas Day 1851, Stuart in 1853, and Catherine Eliza Somerville Field (Katie) on May Day 1856. Another daughter, Henrietta Mary, was born on 6 March 1858. All four of these children were born at Luilyl, their grandfatherâ€™s home on Encounter Bay, where Sophia went for each of her confinements.
13. The date when Henry Field and the Chisholms decided to take up the sheep runs which were to become Marra Station, in New South Wales, can only be surmised. The Department of Lands in Sydney points out that records for so early a period are very limited, but they do have records dated 1865 showing several holdings of Henry Field, and Andrew and Edward Chisholm, sons of James Chisholm. This would indicate that the three men had made formal application for the first of their sheep runs early in 1857, and no doubt the preliminary settlement would have begun as soon as possible after that. The long slow droving of sheep up to the new pastures would have occurred, and shelters and dwellings would have been put up quite quickly once they settled in the area. Field would not have been likely to bring his young family on their great inland journey until preliminary settlement had been made, so it seems unlikely that the family moved outback prior to 1859.
14. Like most sheep country, the wide plains of the Darling River region where the Marra station lies do not look very hospitable. The trees seem sparse and stunted, and the undergrowth of saltbush and other low herbage has the tough, defensive appearance of much Australian vegetation, adapted as it is to adverse conditions, with small prickly leaves and woody stems. The ground between is of dried red or grey clay, with a deeply-cracked surface where floods have dried. In contrast, there is an almost opulent belt of trees bordering the river. This border varies up to a kilometre or sometimes more in breadth, with huge, beautiful redgums leaning over the river, and it emphasises the poverty of the country further out. Arrival in it, after trudging over the wide, windswept plains, seems like discovery of an Elysian glade where some kinder and more civilized life might be lived. The shade, the air of protection and feeling of restfulness bestowed by the trees give an uplift to the spirit of enormous benefit to those facing life in what must have seemed dauntingly harsh conditions to the first settlers. Homesteads still nestle among these trees, benefiting from their protection, while gardens watered from the nearby river alleviate much of the bleakness of life in such a hot arid country.
15. At Marra, a house of timber cut from the property was built, perhaps even before the family arrived. It was of the usual design, roughly roofed with bark and lined with calico, and with the kitchen and storeroom separate from the main dwelling. It was a simple matter to add to the homestead as necessary. These first settlers naturally had no idea of the extent of the Darling River in flood time, when it reaches as much as forty-eight miles in width. The banks of the river are quite high, and it would appear to be safe enough to build on high ground a hundred metres or so from the river bank. Being pioneers, they had to find out the consequences for themselves. But in any case, the simple necessity of water for everyday life would over-ride fears of possible flooding. They relied on the river for water for household use and for stock, and it had to be raised from the river, up the steep banks, and transported to wherever it was needed with tremendous effort in those days before traction engines and windmills provided mechanical pumping.
16. 1859 was an eventful year for settlers on the Darling River. In January the steamer *Albury*, with Governor MacDonnell aboard as Captain Cadellâ€™s guest, steamed up the river to Mount Murchison station with a load of flour and took back a cargo of the stationâ€™s wool. Almost immediately Captain Randell in the *Gemini* followed, the intrepid pioneer river boatman boldly pushing on in his crazy little steamer until he reached the Barwon, 900 river miles above Mount Murchison.
17. The first appearance of the steamers caused great excitement to people living near the river. The *Observer* of 9 April 1859 wrote that the few white people living so far out â€œrubbed their eyes... as the steamer went puffing along the margin of their runs.â€ In some instances they were as alarmed as the Aborigines, particularly when Randell, taking advantage of moonlight, steamed on at night. The *Observer* continued, â€œThe white men at Mr Spenceâ€™s station were quite as much terrified by the noise of the steamerâ€™s approach at night as the blacks, for they mistook it for the war-cry of the natives, and prepared to give a warm reception to their invisible assailants. They extinguished their fires and lights, loaded their firearms, and remained so quietly in their defensive attitude that the steamer had almost passed the station without hearing the voice of any human being on shore.â€
18. The advent of steamerboats brought the promise of more regular, more varied, and cheaper supplies, and improved transport for station wool. The steamers also provided an easier means of travel in the case of necessity, particularly for women and children.
19. The first shipping notices relating to anyone from Marra seem to be those of 1859, when the *S(outh) A(ustralian) Weekly Chronicle* of 23 March and 23 July recorded â€˜Mr Newlandâ€™ as a passenger arriving at Goolwa on the steamer *Moolgewanke* from the Darling junction, and returning on the steamer *Sturt*. This was William, Sophyâ€™s younger brother. He appears at different times in the passenger lists for the next few years, and so he must have worked at Marra during that time. When he was married in January, 1862, he was referred to as being â€˜from the Upper Darling,â€™ and he and his wife and sister-in-law left for Marra in March on the last steamer for the season. The river was usually low in the winter, and the boats had to tie up until there was sufficient water flowing for them to operate again.
20. Sophyâ€™s youngest brother, Simpson, went up to Marra later. When Henry Field retired from Marra in the 1870s, Simpson took over his interest. Simpson wrote of his experiences there both in his Memoirs and in *Paving the Way*. The two elder Field boys, William George, known as George, and Stuart, remained at Marra for some time, working for Simpson. Over the years Sophy took various trips down south, taking some of the children with her to stay with their relations at Encounter Bay. She invariably returned to her parentsâ€™ home to be confined, and her daughter Rosa Emily was born there in October, 1860.
21. There were many Aborigines living all along the banks of the Darling, and for the most part they seemed to have lived in harmony with the white settlers. Simpson Newland tells bow Aboriginal stockmen and shepherds were employed on Marra, and how Aboriginal women helped with the domestic work.
22. Occasional attacks on white settlers were still reported. In 1862, a settler on the Warrego would have been murdered if two River Murray blacks had not raised the alarm.
23. At Marra, relations with the Aborigines were good. Simpson Newlandâ€™s own attitude is clear enough; it was a mixture of friendliness and curiosity. He devotes many pages of his *Memoirs* to observations of their ways, and to explicit descriptions of their work and treatment on the station. As always, the children were great favourites with the Aborigines, and learnt much from them about native birds and animals. They taught the children how to track animals and set snares for birds; to steal eggs from the nests, and gather berries and different sorts of nuts; to make utensils from bark and plaited grasses.
24. One Aboriginal girl, Miola, acted as nursemaid to the youngest children at Marra station. She was described by Simpson Newland as â€˜striking in appearance and manner.â€™ Miola always stayed with the children while they were being taught by Sophy in the wooden schoolroom in the shade of the trees, and she too learnt to read and write.
25. Probably it was Miola, whom they loved, who took the three little girls down to the river to bathe one fateful hot January day in 1862. The records of what actually happened are very scanty apart from a report in the Adelaide *Advertiser* of 10 February, 1862. They went gaily down to the water, where Miola and twelve-year-old Jane, the eldest girl, soon became absorbed in their own activities. But in a few moments the scene changed from play and laughter to tragedy. The two youngest girls had ventured too far out into the river, and were struggling and crying for help. The older girls instantly went to the rescue of the little ones, Miola bringing Katie ashore while Jane was trying to save four-year-old Henrietta. Miola, having hastily tried to console Katie, then rushed off in search of their father, who was working farther up the river.
26. The Darling River blacks had a superstition that anyone drowned in the river was dragged down by wild blacks who lived beneath the surface, so that when this young Aboriginal girl, in a frenzy of terror, cried out to Henry Field a tale about â€˜wild blacks,â€™ he did not understand her appeal for help. He immediately made for the homestead, fearing a raid by â€˜wild blacks,â€™ and so lost urgent time in the rescue of his daughers. When he finally reached the river, he found Henrietta lying drowned in the water, and no sign of his eldest daughter, Jane, the one who had beein trying to save Henrietta when Miola ran for help. They brought the body of little Henrietta ashore, and searched desperately for poor Jane, but in vain; her body was not found until next day. Thus Katie, aged six, was the only one saved, and it left a sad gap in the family. The baby, known as Rosina, was, at two years of age, the only other remaining daughter.
27. Life at Marra continued through the 1860s, with the river at times so low that riverboat crews had to dig channels for the steamers to get through, or the boats were tied up downstream waiting for a rise in the level while the squatters ran short of supplies and their wool remained uselessly stored in the shearing sheds. 1863 was a particularly dry year, and so one reads in the *Observer* of 21 February that â€œDrays are still very scarce and cannot be hired at any price. 25 pounds per ton is offered for cartage about 400 miles loading up and down.â€ It was even reported from Wentworth, in the *Observer* of 14 March, that â€œAn American wagon, drawn by two horses, forded the stream this morning at the junction of the Murray and the Darling,â€ a vivid testamony to how very low the water-level had fallen. At other times, however, the river would flood and steamers had no difficulty making their way upstream.
28. Apart from personal discomfort, things looked rosy for the squatters. Simpson Newland wrote that after the great flood of 1864 a series of deluges continued in the 1860s. In 1870 there was a long-continuing flood that lasted more than two years.
29. With the river running high, navigation became more regular and frequent. The shrill note of the steamerâ€™s whistle invariably brought much excitement and anticipation. Feed became plentiful, flocks soon fattened, and mobs of sheep headed for the southern markets. This would have been a prosperous time for squatters in the area. A newspaper notice at this time mentioned Mr Henry Field droving his flock of sheep through Wentworth for the Adelaide market in August, and sailing in November from Goolwa on his return trip. Sophy visited her parents at Encounter Bay in October 1862, travelling with her brother William and his bride. The Reverend Newlandâ€™s jubilee, celebrating fifty years in the ministry, had been held with much ceremony and festivity at the beginning of October 1862, and Sophy would have met many old friends who had gathered at Encounter Bay for the occasion. This was the last time she was to see her father, for he died in 1864, in a roadway accident involving the mail cart on which he was a passenger between Willunga and Port Elliot. Sophy went down to Encounter Bay shortly after his death for the birth of her seventh child, Henry Newland Field, on 4 June, 1864, and returned six weeks later, accompanied by two children and a servant.
30. The years of childhood passed slowly for Katie and her siblings at Marra Station, but with plenty to occupy the children. As well as learning their lessons, children helped with the house-work, looked after the fowls, helped with the dairy work as their mother had done before them, made candles in their moulds, and learnt to sew. The endless task of making and mending clothes was a duty no girls escaped, while the boys spent time out of doors learning the work of men on the land.
31. The schoolroom discipline was an accepted part of life and changed little from one generation to another. Much of it consisted of religious instruction, and all children learnt the Psalms, sang hymns, and had lessons in Scripture in addition to their daily prayers. Colonial children learnt arithmetic, spelling, reading, writing, and dictation in much the same way as children in England did at that time. There was a firm belief in memory-training, and most children had to learn pieces of verse each night and recite them next day. The Field children might have learnt from the same books used by their mother, because books were highly prized and hard to come by, but the Encounter Bay grandmother might also have obtained educational books from England for her increasing number of grandchildren. After primary education at home on Marra Station, the education of the Field children continued at school: the two eldest Field boys eventually attended St Peterâ€™s College in Adelaide, and presumably the younger boys followed them when the family went to live in Adelaide.
32. Most of the teaching of the children fell to their mother, but their father, who had had a classical education in England, spent some time teaching them something of ancient Greek life, legends, and culture. The element of Greek mythology in this background certainly helped Katie, in later life, to appreciate Aboriginal legends. Henry also captured the imagination of his children with tales of his uncle Johnâ€™s magnificent home in England, or of his uncle Admiral Lord George Stuart and the eminent people who had visited his home in London. There were many stories about the sea, of Henryâ€™s father on active service against the French in the Napoleonic wars, landing secret documents on the coast of France, sailing aboard the 110-gun frigate *San Josef* in the Mediterranean, witnessing the fall of Genoa, then being posted to the Baltic Station. There was even a story of how Henryâ€™s own mother once got carried off to sea. She was visiting his father on board his ship when the signal came that no one was to be allowed to land, and so she went off into naval action too, right along with the rest of the crew. Thus Henry inspired his daughter Katie, who loved the romantic panache of his tales. In later life she was said to speak often of her father and his family, but seldom of her mother.
33. In 1872 the whole pattern of the Field familyâ€™s life changed, when they moved to Kensington, a suburb of Adelaide. The decision to do so sprang possibly from the fact that Sophy was expecting her eighth child, and at forty-two she might no longer have wished to contend with outback life. Perhaps Henry and Sophy both felt that it was time to live closer to civilisation, especially since the children were growing older and needed proper higher schooling. Marra had proved a profitable station, the family could well afford a move to the city, and Henryâ€™s signature of a six-year lease on a house known as The Lodge, in High Street, Kensington, may indicate that he intended to retire from Marra.
34. The Lodge was a substantial house with stables and other out-buildings and a considerable garden, on a block bordered by Bishopâ€™s Placeâ€”where Bishop Short once had livedâ€”Regent Street, and Shipsterâ€™s Road. But Sophy was to live there for only a pitifully short time. On 11 April, 1872, she gave birth to a son, Edward Chisholm Field, who was the first of her children not born in her parentâ€™s home. Her mother had died, and so perhaps Sophy did not receive the same care as she had in the past. In any case, she developed puerperal (childbed) fever, died on 28 April, and was buried in the nearby graveyard of St Matthewsâ€™s Church, Kensington.
35. Katieâ€™s sixteenth birthday occurred only three days after the death of her mother, which cast such a shadow over The Lodge that Henry Field decided to move to Glenelg. Simpson Newland took over the lease of The Lodge, later known as Windsor House, and his first child, Henry Simpson Newland, later to become a prominent surgeon, was born there on 24 November 1873.
36. Probably it was at about this time that Katie and her younger sister Rosina, then twelve years old, attended the school run by Miss Senner at Palm Place, later to become part of St Peterâ€™s College. The two older boys were working at Marra under their uncle, while Henry, as a widower in his fifties, now had to look after his two daughters, an eight-year-old boy, and an infant. Domestic help was cheap in those days, but he must have found his motherless children of all ages and genders something of a problem, and it is no wonder that after a few years he married again.
37. His second wife was Mary Servante, the daughter of Commander Frederick Servante R(oyal) N(avy), who had retired to Bruges in Belgium before resettling in South Australia in 1861. He and his two daughters created a beautiful home, Fernhill, at Dashwoodâ€™s Gully about twenty-four from Adelaide. When Frederick Servante died, his two unwed middle-aged daughters lived on there until Mary married Henry Field in his fifty-seventh year of life. Her sister continued to live at Fernhill.
38. In 1879, Henry Field bought Sandringham Station in Queensland in partnership with his son George, and spent a good deal of his time there until he retired to Fernhill. He lived to be ninety, outliving both his second wife and her sister, so that Fernhill passed to the Fields when he died in 1909.
39. But before her father married Mary Servante, Katie herself was married. There is no record of how or where Katie Field met Langloh Parker. He may have been a business acquaintance of Henry Field, or they may have met at Marra. Katie appears to have revisited the station, after her family had left it, with her uncle Simpson Newland and his wife.
40. The novelist Rolf Boldrewood (Thomas Alexander Browne) painted a pen-picture of Langloh Parker in his story *A Colonial Reformer*, which was serialised in the *Australian Town and Country Journal* in 1876-77 before it was published in book form. He gave Langloh Parker the name of â€˜Lal Parklandsâ€™ and wrote that â€œMr Parklands was Australian-born, but not on that account to be credited with any deficiency of energy; on the contrary, he possessed so much vigour of body and mind that if he had degenerated in any way (as is a received theory with certain writers), his progenitors must have been perfect steam-engines. He was well known to have explored a very large proportion of the Australian continent, to have formed, managed, bought or sold at least a score of cattle and sheep stations. His transactions comprised incidentally thousands of cattle and tens of thousands of sheep. He had recently returned from another colony, where he had acquired an immense area of newly-discovered country...Lal Parklands was popular. A good-looking, pleasant fellow, he went in for everythingâ€”billiards, loo, racquets, dinners, theatres and balls, with the same zest, energy and enjoyment which he threw into all his business operations.â€ This portrait of the buoyant, dashing Lal Parklands, with his cool and frequent speculations on station properties and his inimitable charm and humour, was obvious to readers of the 1870s even without the giveaway name.
41. Rolf Boldrewood poked gentle fun at Langloh Parker and also at James Tyson, the great millionaire cattle king of that time. His amusing story tells how a new chum, Ernest Neuchamp, comes out to the colonies resolved to make good. He goes on the land, stubbornly determined to do things his own way and improve on slipshod colonial methods. This of course leads to some hilarious situations, but Ernest is never made a buffoon, and is actually quite a likeable character. His fundamental shrewdness and firm principles appeal to a chance acquaintance, Abstinens Levison (James Tyson), whose advice later proves valuable and who helps the young hero make good. Ernest buys a property from Parklands, and the episode when they meet at â€˜Bilwilliaâ€™ (Bourke) to inspect the property is very amusing. By chance they meet an old friend of Parklands, no doubt another pen portrait of a real-life personage, and the three men, together with a stockman and a black boy in charge of the spare horses, decide to travel the distance of about 90 miles in comfort, in Parklandsâ€™s express wagon. When Parklandsâ€™ friend enquires about the condition of his vehicle; he replies â€œSlap-up! ...Thereâ€™s no brake, but that wonâ€™t matter, as two of the horses have been in harness before, somewhere. Weâ€™ll do the hundred miles to Rainbar in two days comfortably.â€ The account of this hair-raising drive would have been appreciated by readers in that era, who so greatly esteemed the skilful management of horses.
42. The book ends with Neuchampâ€™s marriage to the beautiful daughter of the wealthy Sydney station agent, with the cheerful assistance of Parklands as best man: â€˜Mr Parklands effected a sensation by dropping the bridal-ring, but as he displayed much quickness of eye and manual dexterity in regaining it, the incident had rather a beneficial effect than otherwise. Everything was happily concluded, even to the kissing of the bridesmaidsâ€”Mr Parklands, with his usual energy and daring, having insisted on carrying out personally that pleasing portion of the programme...â€
43. It is little wonder that the eighteen-year-old Katie Field fell in love with such an ebullient admirer. They were married at St Peterâ€™s Church, Glenelg, on 12 January 1875, when Langloh was almost thirty-six. Although there was such a difference in their ages, they both had high spirits and verve, and, as was to appear later, bush-bred courage and staunchness.
44. Life with Langloh must have been a revelation to Katie. He whirled her from one place to another, to meet new friends and relatives in Melbourne and Sydney and to cause quite a sensation as the youthful bride of such a well known bachelor. In a brief autobiographical passage, she wrote years later that â€œThe life of this unsophisticated schoolgirl really began when she walked down the aisle of the fishing village church on the arm of her husband, to the music of the Hallelujah Chorus instead of the usual wedding march, a substitution because her young governess could play one and not the other.â€
45. The next few years of her life were spent in different Australian colonial capitals, with their varied social round of dinners, dances, theatres and race-meetings, amongst which loomed largest the Melbourne Cup and its attendant festivities, where squatters from all over Australia foregathered, more often than not backing the wrong horse.
46. As Katie later wrote, â€œWhen the Melbourne Cup was over, there were visits to the country homes in the Western District of Victoriaâ€”the Australia Felix of Sir Thomas Mitchellâ€”or yachting and fishing in various waters where fishing was good, and exciting moments in the fishermenâ€™s ring after the â€˜yellowtailâ€™ near the Heads of Port Phillip.
47. â€œIn fact, the usual round of social time-killing within reach of a capital city as obtains more or less everywhere...there was no lack of gaiety in the days when squatting went well up north, and it was reported that the squatters played â€˜for sheep points and a bullock on the rub.â€™
48. â€œThe gaiety was added to by the officers of the English Navy, for the men-of-war on the Australian station usually anchored in the sunlit blue harbours at festive seasons...â€
49. Langloh had many family connections, and he was a popular figure well known in cattlemenâ€™s circles. His zest for life and feats as a horseman contributed to his popularity. The whirl of social activity into which he introduced Katie is well described in *A Colonial Reformer* and other fiction of the period.
50. His family connections tied him closely to the cattle-raising industry. In 1820, before he was born, several members of the Parker family, including a daughter Mary and a son James, emigrated to Tasmania. Mary was married to Frederick Langloh, who took up land near Hamilton and named it Langloh Park. James and his son Jabez took up an adjoining property. Jabez Parker married Elizabeth Morris, and Langloh Parker was born to them in 1840; they named him after Frederick Langloh, who had died in 1827. While young Langloh was growing up on the island, Elizabethâ€™s brother Augustus Morris was establishing himself on the mainland. In his early twenties he bought property at the northern end of Lake Colac, but sold it to Benjamin Boyd in 1842 and stayed on as manager. He explored much of the Riverina and proved the value of saltbush as sheep fodder. In the 1840s he managed Yangar and Paika and other stations for W.C.D Wentworth, took up Callandoon Station in Queensland and ran it solely with Aboriginal stockmen, and bought Yangar and Paika from Wentworth.
51. The goldrushes caused a sudden demand for meat, and Morrisâ€™ properties, which were within reasonable distance of the diggings, boomed in value. From 1851 to 1856 he represented Balranald in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, and he continued to prosper until the droughts of the 1860s forced him into bankruptcy and he had to sell Yangar and Paika. But he recovered from this setback and for the rest of his life he was a prominent cattleman, always interested in technological advances and other innovations, and persistent in his efforts to establish a frozen meat trade with Britain.
52. In the 1850s he brought his four young Parker nephews Frederick, Langloh, James, and Alfred to the mainland to gain experience in the cattle business. Family connections were strong in those days, and he helped the four young Parkers to a start in life, although the youngest, Alfred, was drowned while crossing Yangar Creek with a mob of horses in 1860. With Augustus Morris behind them, Frederick and Langloh became particularly well known. In Cuthbert Fetherstonhaughâ€™s reminiscences *After Many Days*, published in 1917, he wrote: â€œ...Then there were Fred Parker of Quiamong, an uncommonly good whip, and good-looking also; his brother Langlo [sic] was an early Riverina man further west at Lake Yanga, and many a good story I have heard of the Parkers and old Tyson...and dear old Fred Wolseley of Cobran and Thule...â€
53. Frederick took up Quiamong Station, near Deniliquin in New South Wales, and ran it until his death in 1892. It became one of the best known sheep stations in the area. Langloh, energetic and eager for further experience, went further afield and had a more varied career. In the 1870s he took up a Queensland property in partnership with Frederick Yorke Wolseley and Sylvester Brown, the brother of Rolf Boldrewood. Wolseley, a brother of Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley, was later to develop the mechanical shearing equipment invented by James Higham. Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh wrote in the *Pastoralists Review* of 15 October, 1908, â€œIf Vessey [Sylvester Browne] had but jotted down his reminiscences, his many adventures, his pioneering experiences with dear old Fred Wolseley and quaint humorous Langloh Parker, what a good Australian book we should have had!â€ In an obituary on Browne, published in the *Pastoralistsâ€™ Review* of 16 September, 1915, he wrote, â€œI always associate my old friend "Vessie" Browne with three other old friends, to wit, Vin Dowling, Fred Wolseley and Langloh Parker...all four were old time pioneer squatters who did their share in opening up Queensland.â€
54. Simpson Newland thought less kindly of Langloh Parker. On 26 April, 1879, he mentioned Parker in a letter to his wife, in which he referred to the purchase of a property by Katieâ€™s father and her eldest brother George, in partnership with a Mr Acres who had been their neighbour at Marra. He said, â€œIt appears they...have bought, subject to approval, a run on the Herbert, or Mulligan, [River] with 2,000 head of cattle for 11,500 pounds sterling from L. Parker, Wolseley and Browne, and George and Fred are on their way there now. Parker is said to be in great difficulties, but according to Stuart [Field] the expensive living goes on just the same, nothing denied in any way. Evidently he is still the â€˜admirable Crichtonâ€™ with the Fields...â€ The Queensland property was Sandringham Station, on which Katieâ€™s father Henry spent a good deal of time in his later years.
55. Obviously Rolf Boldrewood knew about Langlohâ€™s activities through the latterâ€™s connection with Boldrewoodâ€™s brother Sylvester, but how much of Boldrewoodâ€™s account of his many station deals is fact, and how much fiction, it is now impossible to say. Nevertheless, Langloh certainly had an interest in a Barcoo station known as Retreat, where he went into partnership with a Colonel Ward, and Simpson Newlandâ€™s letter bears out Boldrewoodâ€™s portrait of Langloh as a charming, devil-may-care, and extravagant personality. The characters of Newland and Langloh Parker were so different that they could hardly have been very compatible.
56. In 1879, Langloh took over Bangate Station, near Angledool, close to the Queensland border. Like so many cattlemen of that era, he lived on credit. Some, with careful management and the luck of good seasons, were able to reduce their debts and even eventually acquire full ownership of their stations, and some even became wealthy. Langloh Parker had the advantage of a lifetimeâ€™s practical experience of sheep raising behind him, he was acknowledged to be an excellent judge of sheep, but even so, at that time it was hard to know how unreliable and variable the rainfall could be in such remote country. Parker appears to have financed the station by a mortgage of 80,000 pounds advanced by James Tyson, which earned interest of eight per cent, payable half-yearly. Later, a second mortgage was taken out with the firm of Dalgety and Company, and in 1890, when Tyson foreclosed for a debt of 92,000 pounds, Dalgety appears to have taken over Bangate, which Parker continued to manage. At about the time he purchased Bangate he appears to have transferred a smaller run, Grawin South, adjoining the Bangate station, to his solicitors to hold in trust for his wife Katie. The Parkers seem to have lived there for a while after they left Bangate in 1901, and Katie retained an interest in it after Langlohâ€™s death (he died of stomach-cancer, in 1903).
57. James Tyson, Langloh Parkerâ€™s principal financial backer, was a legendary figure in the colonial days, being one of Australiaâ€™s most notable self-made millionaires. He was born in the 1820s of hard-working, Scottish parents in the Campbelltown area of New South Wales. Through his enterprise and his singleminded determination to build up an empire of stations throughout the eastern colonies, he became immensely wealthy. The foundations of his fortune were laid at the Bendigo diggings, for there was a ready market for meat in the goldfields, and Tyson and his brothers did very well supplying it. Tyson remained a bachelor and never changed his modest life style, despite his great wealth. He insisted that his one interest in life was cattle-raising, which was the reason for his success. He was also helped by the flexibility afforded by his wide-flung stations. They enabled him to survive, and even profit, by droughts which drove many other squatters, such as Langloh Parker, to ruin. Parker and Tyson appear to have had a friendly relationship, to judge from what little information has survived about it. In later life, Katie used to claim she was the only woman known to have been given a present by Tyson, who once gave her a travelling rug.
58. At the time Langloh Parker acquired Bangate it was a huge station. Although it is still large, it was by 1982 reduced to only a quarter of its original size. Fortunately there exists an official report made, presumably, by a station inspector or assessor for Dalgetyâ€™s, in the year 1887, and this gives some valuable statistics. Bangate at that time comprised about 215,408 acres, made up of 108,068 acres leasehold, 103,340 acres resumed, and 4,000 acres freehold. Part of the property had a frontage of 23 miles on the Narran river, which became a double frontage for about 5 1/2 miles where the river curves back. This provided an invaluable source of water, though insufficient for sheep in such a vast area. Five tanks had been constructed by 1887, but more were needed for watering the stock.
59. In the dry season the river sank to a string of water holes, and as sheep could only go, at the most, six or seven miles back from the river to feed, they had to return to the river for water every day. Hence the land near the river quickly became stripped of pasturage. In the inspectorâ€™s report, he gave his opinion that at least six or seven large tanks of not less than 10,000 cubic yards were needed, but in actual fact a bore [artesian well], still called â€˜Tysonâ€™s bore,â€™ was sunk in 1892. The official depth when sunk was 726 metres, later deepened to 829 metres. This produced at the outset an amazing flow of 3.6 million litres per twenty-four hours, which by 1912 had however dropped to 1.2 million litres. Water still gushes out in great volume, and today flows over the property through 33 miles of piping constructed for watering the stock. As a consequence, pastures nearby are rich, and kangaroos and emus abound. A second bore was also put down later in another section of the property. The station at the time of this report was carrying 96,000 sheep and 4,600 head of beef cattle. Throughout Langloh Parkerâ€™s period the numbers of sheep ranged from about 80,000 upwards, reaching a maximum of nearly 138,000 sheep in 1888, plus a number of beef cattle on areas unsuitable for sheep.
60. The station inspector remarked in his report that the station management â€œseems not only energetically but economically carried out, only seventeen hands, including house servants, being employed,â€ and he added that he thought more boundary riders should be hired.
61. According to the same report, the country in which Bangate is situated consisted â€œof a series of plains, surrounded by narrow belts of gidea, box, and a little pine.â€ The homestead was a â€œsuccession of small slab and pine buildings, and is by no manner of means an expensive structure but sufficient for requirements.â€
62. This seems to have been usual in the more remote stations of that period. Most homesteads were built of local timber, with roofs of wooden shingles before galvanized iron became readily available, and wool sheds and other work buildings were casually erected and purely utilitarian. Bangateâ€™s wool shed was situated about eight miles from the homestead and â€œbuilt of iron and bark for 40 shearers, and though a very cheap arrangement will meet requirements for some years with a little patching up. At the shed there is a good shearersâ€™ hut, also overseerâ€™s cottage with kitchen and store, this being where most of the work is done.â€ The drafting yards and fencing were also described, the report concluding that â€œMy idea of the whole, including the homestead, is that they have been put up for use with economy, but not for appearance or stability.â€ From this account Langloh Parker appears a much more sober, practical person than he does from most other references to him that have survived.
63. The station inspectorâ€™s report also commends Parker for his judgement, first in his choice of the 40,000 acres of Bangate leasehold which he says is â€œthe best and heaviest carrying piece of country I have ever seen in New South Wales,â€ and he continues, â€œMr Parker has acted most wisely in securing this portion of the run as his leasehold.â€ The inspector was also â€œagreeably surprised to find the sheep equal to the average of N.S.W. flocks. They show good breeding, fine frames and will cut heavy fleeces.â€
64. Parker used all his skills to pull through droughts and save his stock as all good cattlemen should. He was confident, as he declared to Dalgety and Company in 1886, that once through the drought the station would soon prove sufficiently profitable to pay off the debts he had incurred. In his opinion the country was fundamentally good, and the station would prove its worth, given a chance. The inspector wrote that â€œwhen riding over the run I could see that large sums of money must have been spent in cutting scrub during the last drought, but instead of the scrub having been killed it is again growing splendidly and thicker than before, affording splendid feed (in prospective) for another bad season.â€
65. Langloh Parker had the misfortune to encounter one of the longest and worst droughts experienced in eastern Australia, and he failed like many other fellow cattlemen. They were undercapitalized, and hopelessly in debt to the cattle companies through whom they had to do all their business. The effects of such disasters as the rabbit plague and droughts resulted in enormous losses on a station the size of Bangate, but the area was so remote and uncertain that the individual squatter was tempted to take the risk. The annual rainfall is almost 400 mm, but this is not consistent; some years as much as 800 mm is recorded, and others a mere 100 mm, and of course, sometimes bad years succeed one another. The rains normally come in the summer months when great heat is experienced. The climate is warm, if not hot, for most of the year.
66. The country is mostly flat, covered with red soil and with occasional stony ridges. The Narran river is a tributary of the Darling, and resembles all the northern rivers, with high banks, subject to flooding after the rains, and drying up to mere water-holes in dry conditions. The banks are lined with river red gums, and the country in parts has a park-like appearance, with high trees scattered on the grassy plains, and patches of gidea scrub and small trees in between.
67. Bangate is 300 miles from the sea, and nearly 500 from Sydney, and in the late 1870s and 1880s a more remote area could scarcely be found. Though the Barwon had been navigated to its confluence with the Namoi and even beyond, and even Walgett had occasionally been visited by river steamers, this was neither a regular nor certain means of communication or transport, as the height of the rivers could not be relied on. Bourke, 90 miles from Bangate, was not connected to Sydney by rail until 1885. In the late 1890s the rail from Sydney on another branch was extended to Narrabri, and a twice-weekly coach provided a service to Walgett and possibly beyond. Previous to this there was no regular means of transport, and those living in the area were almost totally isolated.
68. Although it was thus very far inland, and suffered such extreme heat and severe conditions when the rains did not come, the country was excellent for sheep-raising, and magnificently rich in good seasons. Wildlife was plentiful along the many tributaries of the rivers, and the Aborigines living in the area were well fed. The rivers not only add much to the appearance of the countryside, they are its life-blood.
69. With no sort of training whatever for such work, Katie Parker was unavoidably only an â€˜amateurâ€™ collector of oral narrative tradition from the Euahlayi-speaking natives whom she came to know as mistress of Bangate Station. Arriving there in 1879, she passed some five years of busy life as a station masterâ€™s wife before she even began to collect the nativesâ€™ narrative traditions. The first clues to her interest in their legends occur as pages of pencilled notes that she made of Aboriginal vocabularies, and her continuing interest in explicating particular words in the Noongahburrahsâ€™ lexicon is clearly apparent in the way she ultimately adopted to retell their legends in English. Not only in her tellings of their tales themselves, but also indeed in everything she wrote about the Aborigines living at Bangate there is a genuine warmth and affection which was highly unusual for a woman of her period. She was not a prophet, foreshadowing societyâ€™s later change in attitude towards the Aborigines, whom the nineteenth-century European settlers of Australia generally regarded with outspoken contempt; she no differently than they had been brought up in a community rigidly structured on the basis of class, religion, race, and sex; but she interpreted contemporary attitudes liberally and intelligently. Some of her comments now seem benevolent but patronising, and her references to â€˜the blacks,â€™ and â€˜the darkies,â€™ and â€˜my black-but-comeliesâ€™ are offensive to later taste, but that is how people spoke of Aborigines in those days. Many called them â€˜the blacksâ€™ or â€˜the blackfellows.â€™ The term â€˜darkies,â€™ adopted from America, was meant to be kinder, although the *Bulletin*, chauvinistic and racist to a degree, spoke bluntly of â€˜the niggers.â€™
70. An early missionary, John B. Gribble, adopted the phrase â€˜black but comely,â€™ from the biblical Song of Solomon, for his book *Black but Comely, or Glimpses of Aboriginal Life in Australia*, (published in England in 1884), and Katie too adopted it, humorous- ly but affectionately, when referring to the Aboriginal girls who worked for her at Bangate Station. The employment of Aborigines to help with domestic work was an obvious solution for a common problem of white settlers in that period. That Katie formed a particular attachment to her own Aboriginal acquaintances may perhaps be explained in part by the fact that she had no children; certainly she quite frankly regarded the Aborigines who were under her management at Bangate as her â€˜children.â€™
71. As Katie became familiar with the dialect of the Noongahburrahs, the Narran River Aborigines, she realised how much they had to offer her and responded with enthusiasm. She later wrote, â€œI was much in touch with the natives the whole time I was on the station, and during the eleven years which I practically devoted to the study of their folklore [1884-1895], I had as many about me as I could, in various capacities, the result of which was often scraps of folklore revealed incidentally. All their natural world is divided into totemic families. Humans claim relationship with trees, plants, animals, insects, &c. Even small children know who and what are their relations. Small black ants are a terrible plague in Bush houses. One day I said to a little black girl beside me, â€˜I wish I could kill all these black ants.â€™ â€˜Oh, Innerah!â€™ said a plaintive little voice, â€˜they is my â€™lations!â€™...I shall never forget my rambles through the Bush with a retinue of natives. I learnt that every distinctive bit of natureâ€”say a heap of white stones, the red mistletoe, the gnarled dark excrescences on the trees, and so onâ€”each had its legend. How interesting the hearing of them made my Bush life, and how it increased my sympathy for the natives and widened my Bush horizons, for in those days the coming of a Chinamanâ€™s melon-cart was an event, and a visitor, a sensation. In flood time you might be weeks without a mail or any communication with the outer world...â€
72. Of the Aborigines round her, she wrote, â€œThe station tribe was the Noongahburrah, a branch of Euahlayi, a very fine tribe both as to physique and intelligence. Their food conditions were good; plenty of fish in their creek, plenty of gameâ€”kangaroo, bustards, emu, duck, &c., &c.â€”and in good seasons, quantities of grain from luxuriant grasses on their creek banks and fertile plains. Then, too, abundant eggs of swans, emu, duck, water hens, and so on; native fruits and edible herbage.â€
73. Although by the time she began to collect their legends she had to some degree learnt their language, she still found considerable difficulties (because, of course, there was at that time no established grammar or dictionary of any of the Australian Aboriginal languages, nor was she herself in any sense a trained linguist who might herself have known how to use, or herself create, any such thing). She wrote, â€œYou had to learn something at least of the various dialects of the neighbouring tribes also, for it was astonishing to find within comparatively short distances a diversity of language, sometimes the same word in a different tribe had a totally different meaning...â€
74. It may seem strange that the Aborigines spoke of their legends, and particularly of their sacred rites, to a woman, but throughout years of daily contact with them a mutual trust and affection had developed between them and their â€˜Innerahâ€™ (defined in the glossary to the *Legendary Tales* simply as â€˜boss womanâ€™).
75. Katie collected Aboriginal legends from the group in her locality at a time when the world outside Australia was becoming conscious that such material was everywhere in danger of being lost forever; but while the two little books of them which she published while she and Langloh were still living on Bangate Station were successful enough commercially for a few years, they did not meet with much intellectual enthusiasm in Australia, where both Katie herself and her collection remained rather obscure. Thus, in the eighty-six years between the first appearance of *Australian Legendary Tales* in 1896 and Marcie Muirâ€™s publication in 1982 of Katieâ€™s Diary of her life on Bangate station (which Katie called â€œMy Bush Bookâ€, the only biographical note ever to be published on Katie Langloh Parker appeared in the *Lone Hand* in December, 1912, under the rubric â€˜Representative Womenâ€™ by â€˜Ann Cornstalk.â€™ Indeed, few persons anywhere appreciated Katieâ€™s collection as something other than a quaint but essentially meaningless instance of rustic *belles lettres*. One reason for this was certainly the publisherâ€™s selling of the book just as Reimer had earlier advertised the first edition of the Grimmsâ€™ collection in Germany, namely as intended for children, and again specifically as a book to be given to children as an edifying gift at Christmas time.
76. Predictably therefore, when Katieâ€™s books of Aboriginal legends were first published, the Australian press received them politely, but with a great lack of understanding. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 28 November, 1896 wrote ingratiatingly, â€œThis pretty and thoroughly Australian Christmas book...will be received with pleasure by Australian children for the sake of the stories it tells them about their own bush birds and animals. They will find here tales that will make them acquainted with what the Aboriginal inhabitants of this continent thought of these things, besides teaching them that their own country has stories to tell quite as interesting as the fairy tales and folklore legends of older lands.â€ It plainly never entered the mind of the reviewer for the Sydney Morning Herald that any adult might find such a book worth knowing for any mature purpose.
77. But a more discerning notice did appear in the *Australian Anthropological Journal* for April, 1897. It commented that the collection would have a permanent place in Australian literature relating to the Aborigines, and continued: â€œThe lady who is the collector of these legends has done an excellent work in obtaining from the elders of the tribes what they could furnish, when their confidence was secured by one who knew their language, and could thus understand what they said, and whose literary attainments could then render it into such English as would commend it to all studying the folklore of primitive peoples. It is all the better... that the materials as printed have not been altered by additions of her own imagination, but have been translated as strictly as possible in a true and unaltered manner from the versions given in the Aboriginal speeches by the elders of the tribe.â€ The article further commended Katieâ€™s method of presenting the exact equivalent of Aboriginal pronounciation in English vowels and consonants, instead of using any fanciful method, and concluded â€œ...we shall hope for further contributions from her collections, or for any ethnological matters she may intend to make known, for from her knowledge of the tribal languages and her opportunities she may secure many facts about an interesting people who are fast dis- appearing, and have given their confidence to few as fully as they have to Mrs Parker, who has so well repaid their trust and made them so favourably known.â€ Still, in his own way, this reviewer was as ignorant of the facts about Katieâ€™s colllection as was the writer for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, as Katie own later letter, quoted below, discloses.
78. The *Bulletin* of 9 January 1896 published a characteristically dismissive review by A. G. Stephens, who wrote that the tales had â€œethnologically little significanceâ€ and that â€œthe Noongahburrahs are evidently as happy in thoughtlessness as all their kindred.... The undoubted value of the collection is chiefly that of a literary curiosityâ€”the prattlings of our Australiaâ€™s children, which even in their worthlessness must have charm for a parent.â€
79. Stephensâ€™ captiousness had the valuable effect of eliciting a long letter from Katie, the original of which belongs now to the Mitchell Library, describing exactly how and why she went about gathering the legends. Part of the letter is as follows:

I have been explaining to my blacks that some of the critical powers that be give me credit for their imagination, that any ideas in the legends having beauty or poetry in them are said to be mine, which of course is not true; the legends have lost, not gained, for I could not render the chromatic effect of the various intonations of their voices while telling me their legends. There is of course an immense diversity in these story tellers. The oldest, least influenced by the whites, are much the best, so absorbed and so earnest in the relation. A dark skin is certainly a mask to most people, and so those who have it are little known. I lived years here before I realized these people myself, and even now I often get surprises. Certainly I have been fortunate enough in my experience of Blacks to have had to do with those free from mission taint.

I can safely say that every idea in the legends in my books is the idea of a real Blackâ€”I am very careful to get them as truly as I can. First I get an old, old Black to tell it in his own language (he probably has little English). I get a younger one to tell it back to him in his language; he corrects what is wrong, then I get the other one to tell it to me in English. I write it down, read it, and tell it back again to the old fellow with the help of the medium, for though I have a fair grasp of their language, I would not, in a thing like this, trust to my knowledge entirely. Then, when allusion to a rite or anything of that sort comes in, for the interest of readers I get them to give me full particulars, and add it, for otherwise, unless there were something unusual about this rite, they would not, every time, describe it; and I would, too, explain existing relationships to the elements which might be alluded to, and of some things, not knowing of quite the English equivalent, I have to go as near as I can to be understood. I did not quite know at first whether these explanations were justifiable or not, nor could I get advice, but at length I decided that they were absolutely necessary for those not knowing the Blacks, and as I made the storyteller tell them as they went along, they are really as much blackfellow as the rest.

The Blacks to whom I told that I was credited with their pretty ideas, very scornfully said, â€œHow you know? You nebber know sposinâ€™ me nebber tell you. That peller womba (mad or deaf) altogether.â€ And then comes a spitting of contempt; and certainly it is hard that having taken their country, not so bloodlessly either as people would have us believe, we should not arrogate to ourselves their own poetical thoughts. But you will be cursing Blackfellows, thinking I am a crank...

1. Thus, for all her two decades amongst the Noongahburrahs, it is clear that Katie was not proficient enough in their language (or dialects) to make anything like the verbatim record of their actual narrative performances such as our later, twentieth-century science of oral traditions would demand. She clearly *did* mix into the tales much that was not actually part of them, and no doubt also omitted much that was; and we can get no idea at all from Mrs. Parkerâ€™s conflations of what actual poetry in the exact sense of that word (meaning â€˜technique of compositionâ€™) might have been present in her aged informantsâ€™ story-telling custom. We thus have to value her reports, regardless of their obvious short-comings, not because they are either perfect or necessarily even very good, but simply because there are none others from so early a time in European contact with the native populations of Australia from anyone elseâ€”and because by the time a better science of folk-tale collecting *did* reach Australia, the Australian Aboriginal traditions themselves were so far gone as to make collecting of any kind far less rewarding than it was in Katie Parkerâ€™s time, no matter how much more technically accomplished it might have become.
2. How little Katie Parker understood of the importance of text in the original language is manifest in an appendage to *Australian Legendary Tales* subjoined to the book at the behest of its publisher with the title â€œNative text of Dinewan the Emu, and Goomblegubbon the Bustard.â€ It begins with the note:

Editor and Publisher have gratefully accepted a suggestion made by Dr E.B. Tylor [a prominent folklorist of that era] that the philologist would be grateful for a specimen of these tales in there native form.

1. Then follows a couple of pages of actual text in the Euahlayi language, the only such text Katie is known ever to have written down. But her own note at the end of the text betrays the collectorâ€™s complete ignorance of why such text might be wanted by a scholar of oral traditions:

Mrs Parker writes: â€˜The old black woman who first told me the tale is away, but I got another old woman of the pre-white era to tell it again to me yesterday; it is almost the same, minus one of the descriptive touches immaterial to the story as such, in fact, to all intents and purposes, the same.â€™

1. What the one-and-only actual Euahlayi text that Katie ever either collected or published really is, therefore, is not at all a text from which her English version of the story derives, but another â€˜variantâ€™ or multiform of it altogetherâ€”a multiform from which we actually have no English translation whatever, either hers or anyone elseâ€™s. That *all* of Katieâ€™s â€œtranslationsâ€ are in reality nothing of the sort, but rather only her textually irrelevant personal reports of â€œthe gist of the storiesâ€ is made abundantly clear by this one little piece of her first book.
2. When Langloh Parker died at the end of July, 1903, at the age of sixty-two, Katie Parker was still only forty-seven, still quite young enough to make a new life, and eighteen months later she sailed for England. She had never been abroad, and she found much to interest her in her paternal homeland. From England she went on to visit also France, Germany, Belgium, and Holland. An article which she wrote at that time for the Australian *Pastoralistsâ€™ Review* entitled â€œEnglish Impressions of an Australian Bush-womanâ€ amusingly shows how she perceived England with the eyes of observer from the outback: â€œSpeeding along by a wretched train service to London, you see such firms as Crosse and Blackwell made visible by their manufactories, and that particular name visions up a boundary riderâ€™s hut in Western New South Wales with a bottle of their pickles on the table... Some of these names have passed into bush language, as, for example, you need hardly explain...what â€˜Briant and Mayâ€™ signifies spoken by a man on strike.â€ [This was a reference to the burning, or threatened burning, of ranch properties by men in the great shearersâ€™ strikes of the 1890s.] She mentioned also that â€œThe comfortable look of the stock grazing kneedeep in grass, never having known a drought, delights your pastoral eye.â€ Then, later, â€œI must just say how much the movable hurdles forming yards in the turnip fields for sheep to depasture in struck my squatting eye.â€
3. But beside these rather vocational remarks, showing how much Katie Parker still thought of herself as a rancher despite herâ€™s and Langlohâ€™s failure, she wrote with obvious authority when comparing food in England with what she had been accustomed to at home: â€œWhile on food I must not forget game. As a bushwoman I must use my pen in praise of our own game. I was fortunate in staying in country houses while shoots were going on. I ate their game on the premises, so to speak. I have had it sent to me in London: I have eaten it in all ways, and I am still prepared to swear by our own black duck and teal, our white-fleshed brush turkey, and not even be above drawing a lance in defence of our despised old bustard of the plain, to say nothing of our snipe and quail. But I must add I never seem to get any of these birds in the Australian towns in the same perfection that we used to on a far inland station in a good season.â€
4. While Katie was in London, she would no doubt have visited Constables, the book publishing firm who were to publish twelve chapters from her diary â€œMy Bush Bookâ€ under the title *The Euahlayi Tribe; a Study of Aboriginal Life in Australia*, which, although it has 1905 on its title page, did not actually appear until early in 1906, after Katie had left England and returned to Australia. That volume is about the customs, beliefs, and rituals of the Aboriginal tribe known to Katie Parker on the Narran River, and it contains no further narrative material beyond that which she had already published earlier in her two books of legends in 1896 and 1898.
5. On 16 December, 1905, the *Adelaide Observer* reported: â€œAmong the matrimonial announcements this week is that of the wedding at St Margaretâ€™s, Westminster, on November 7th of Mr Percy Randolph Stow of Adelaide, and Mrs Langloh Parker, widow of the late Langloh Parker of N.S.W., who was formerly connected with the squatting interest there. The Hon. B. R. Wise gave the bride away, and the best man was Mr Frederick Dutton. Mrs Stow has a considerable reputation in the world of letters, her knowledge of the manners and customs of the Australian blacks, added to facility for conveying ideas and drawing word pictures give her a standing among ethnologists of the not too scientific order who find entertainment and instruction in stories of strange peoples...The engagement was known to only a small number of Australian friends of the bride and bridegroom, and very few persons were present at the quiet ceremony. Mr and Mrs Stow will leave for Adelaide in December.â€™
6. From what Katie said in later life it would appear she met Percy Stow on the voyage to London. He was two years Katieâ€™s junior, a bachelor, and a man of scholarship and culture. On the northward voyage he left the ship in Egypt and travelled there and in Turkey before going on to London. By a curious coincidence, his grandfather Thomas Quinton Stow had been the pioneer Congregational minister to South Australia while Katieâ€™s grandfather W. R. Newland had been the second. Thomas Stow had also opened a â€˜classical academyâ€™ in early Adelaide for the higher education of some of the children. His four sons apparently benefited from this education and they all rose to positions of some importance in the Australian colonial world. Two studied law, and one became editor of the *South Australian Advertiser*. Percival, the eldest of four sons and two daughters, was a successful solicitor in Adelaide, a kindly and well-liked man of a quiet disposition, and perhaps best remembered for his claim to have been descended from Pocahontas, the Red Indian princess. He would produce for his friends the enormous family tree which substantiated this claim. The Reverend T. Q. Stow had married a lady whose mother, born Elizabeth Randolph, was descended from an old Virginian family. A contemporary of Percivalâ€™s, Sir Edward Morgan, recalls that â€œPercy Stow was tall and spare in figure, and his profile, with his big nose was an inheritance from his ancestress, Pocahontas, of which he was quite proud.â€
7. Her marriage to Percy Stow marked the end of Katieâ€™s experience of the Australian outback and its Aborigines. She lived a tranquil, very comfortable, and by all accounts very happy bourgeois life in Adelaide as Mrs Stow until her death in 1940. During that time she published two more books, but both were explicitly intended by her to be childrenâ€™s books rather than any kind of contribution to adult learning about the Aborigines. In both those two little books for the amusement of juveniles she modified (â€˜simplifiedâ€™) certain tales from her two earlier, serious books, and added only a few trivial bits from her original collection at Bangate that had been too unsubstantial to include in either *Australian Legendary Tales* or *More Australian Legendary Tales*. The two books for children were:
	* *The Walkabouts of Wur-run-nah*, Adelaide, 1918.
	* *Woggheeguy: Australian Aboriginal Legends*, Adelaide, 1930.
8. So there are from Katie Langloh Parker just two small volumes of Aboriginal legends with serious import:
	* *Australian Legendary Tales*, London and Melbourne, 1896.
	* *More Australian Legendary Tales*, London and Melbourne, 1898.
9. Besides the tales themselves as published in those two volumes, the Preface to the first volume is most useful for understanding the nature of Katie Parkerâ€™s collection:

   **A Neighbour** of mine exclaimed, when I mentioned that I proposed making a small collection of the folk-lore legends of the tribe of blacks I knew so well living on this station, â€œBut have the blacks any legends?â€â€”thus showing that people may live in a country, and yet know little of the aboriginal inhabitants; and though there are probably many who do know these particular legends, yet I think that this is the first attempt that has been made to collect the tales of any particular tribe, and publish them alone. At all events, I know that no attempt has been made previously, as far as the folk-lore of the Noongahburrahs is concerned. Therefore, on the authority of Professor Max Mueller, that folk-lore of any country is worth collecting, I am emboldened to offer my small attempt at a collection to the public. There are probably many who, knowing these legends, would not think them worth recording; but, on the other hand, I hope there are many who think, as I do, that we should try, while there is yet time, to gather all the information possible of a race fast dying out, and the origin of which is so obscure. I cannot affect to think that these little legends will do much to remove that obscurity, but undoubtedly a scientific and patient study of the folk-lore throughout Australia would greatly assist thereto. I, alas, am but an amateur, moved to my work by interest in the subject, and in the blacks, of whom I have had some experience.

   The time is coming when it will be impossible to make even such a collection as this, for the old blacks are quickly dying out, and the young ones will probably think it beneath the dignity of their so-called civilisation even to remember such old-womenâ€™s stories. Those who have themselves attempted the study of an unknown folk-lore will be able to appreciate the difficulties a student has to surmount before he can even induce those to talk who have the knowledge he desires. In this, as in so much else, those who are ready to be garrulous know little.

   I have confined this little book to the legends of the Narran tribe, known among themselves as Noongahburrahs. It is astonishing to find, within comparatively short distances, a diversity of language and custom. You may even find the same word in different tribes bearing a totally different meaning. Many words, too, have been introduced which the blacks think are English, and the English think are native. Such, for example, as â€˜piccaninny,â€™ and, as far as these outside blacks are concerned, â€˜boomerangâ€™ is regarded as English, their local word being *burren*; yet nine out of ten people whom you meet think both are local native words.

   Though I have written my little book in the interests of folk-lore, I hope it will gain the attention of, and have some interest for, childrenâ€”of Australian children, because they will find stories of old friends among the Bush birds; and of English children, because I hope that they will be glad to make new friends, and so establish a free trade between the Australian and English nurseries-wingless, and laughing birds, in exchange for fairy god-mothers, and princes in disguise.

   I must also acknowledge my great indebtedness to the blacks, who, when once they understood what I wanted to know, were most ready to repeat to me the legendsâ€”repeating with the utmost patience, time after time, not only the legends, but the names, that I might manage to spell them so as to be understood when repeated. In particular I should like to mention my indebtedness to Peter Hippi, king of the Noongahburrahs; and to Hippitha, Matah, Barahgurrie, and Beemunny.

   I have dedicated my booklet to Peter Hippi, in grateful recognition of his long and faithful service to myself and my husband, which has extended, with few intervals, over a period of twenty years. He, too, is probably the last king of the Noongahburrahs, who are fast dying out, and soon their weapons, bartered by them for tobacco or whisky, alone will prove that they ever existed. It seemed to me a pity that some attempt should not be made to collect the folk-lore of the quickly disappearing tribe â€”a folk-lore embodying, probably, the thoughts, fancies, and beliefs of the genuine aboriginal race, and which, as such, deserves to be, indeed, as Max Mueller says, â€œmight be and ought to be, collected in every part of the world.â€

   The legends were told to me by the blacks themselves, some of whom remember the coming of Mitchellan, as they call Major Mitchell, the explorer of these back creeks. The old blacks laugh now when they tell you how frightened their mothers were of the first wheel tracks they saw. They would not let the children tread on them, but carefully lifted them over, lest their feet should break out in sores, as they were supposed to do if they trod on a snakeâ€™s track. But with all their fear, little did they realise that the coming of Mitchellan was the beginning of their end, or that fifty years afterwards, from the remnant of their once numerous tribe, would be collected the legends they told in those days to their piccaninnies round their camp-fires, and those legends used to make a Christmas booklet for the children of their white supplanters.

   I can only hope that the white children will be as ready to listen to these stories as were, and indeed are, the little piccaninnies, and thus the sale of this booklet be such as to enable me to add frocks and tobacco when I give their Christmas dinner, as is my yearly custom, to the remnant of the Noongahburrahs.

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| **Bangate, Narran River,New South Wales24 June, 1895**  | **K. Langloh Parker** |