

THE MURDERS IN THE BAY. —RECOVERY OF THE MISSING MEN.

{From the Moreton Bay Free Press}

In the early part of last week, a party blackfellows, among whom was the notorious Billy London, and another named Kootab, brought intelligence to town of the whereabouts of the boat belonging to the murdered men, and by which the mystery hanging over the fate of Collins', companions has been unveiled. Mr. T. Petrie, who perfectly understands the language of the aborigines, procured from them the subjoined statement, which was published by our contemporary on Wednesday last:—

The three white men were at Umpiebong with the blacks, and the blacks and the whites quarrelled. The whites fired amongst the blacks but did not wound any. The disturbance began through their having been unsuccessful in fishing, and rations were short.

Collins blamed the blacks for eating the rations and catching no fish; and he told the blacks he had 'a paper' to take to Dr. Ballow. This raised their blood; and Collins and the other two whites, instead of trying to appease the storm they were raising, took the blankets and dillies and stowed them in the boat. The whites also took two gins, some piccainnies, and two blackfellows. They then left for St. Helena; and a little before sundown, the blacks asked Collins to go and shoot birds with them. Collins went as requested, fired at a bird, and as soon as the gun was discharged, the two blackfellows set on him and killed him. These two blacks then came back to the part of the island where the two other whites were, and for a little time acted as if nothing had occurred. Shortly afterwards they set on the other two, and killed them also. They then dragged the bodies to low water mark and there left them. They then took the boat over to Bribie, and from thence to Kalounda, and from thence to Marootchy Dooroo river. The blacks are both named Billy; one used to work for Mr. Sneyd, and the other was up the river with Mr. Baker getting timber."

The blackfellows who supplied this information also stated they had brought the boat back as far as Kalounda, but were fearful of bringing it further, lest they should be looked upon as the murderers. They expressed their willingness to go down to the bay after the boat either with the Customs' crew or any other, and gave Mr. Petrie to understand that the effects of the deceased men would also be found with the boat itself— enumerating among other things a gun, two pistols, harpoons, sails, tent, oil tins, and blankets.

They averred that the two murderers were gone with their tribe to the Bunya mountains, but that they would soon return to the coast. Such was the narrative gleaned by Mr. Petrie from Billy London and his mates, and on Wednesday morning, a fisherman familiarly known as Sam Rogers, started off overland with four blacks— the two already named, and two others— determined to recover the boat. At first the informants adhered to their story about the boat being at Kalounda— next the declared it to be "gammon" — and finally, asseverated that Rogers would find at the Pine River.

We shall now proceed to give the story of the search in much the same way as it was related to us. On arriving at Cabbage Tree Creek. Rogers' guides pointed out to him a tomahawk, which the declared to have been the property of the murdered men, and which was afterwards identified by the father-in-law of Collins as having been in his possession. At Sandgate, the party were supplied with provisions by Mr. London, and they then continued their journey to the Pine River, on the

southern bank of which Rogers remained until the blacks crossed over, and came back with the boat, bringing all the chattels of the murdered party in her.

This was late on Wednesday night. Rogers then left the Pine for Sandgate, where he met with Lieutenant Williams, of the Native Police, who, at the custodian's request, took an inventory of the goods, and forwarded it to Brisbane. Mr. Wright furnished the party with a fresh supply of rations, and until they then took their departure for St. Helena, where the fearful tragedy was enacted. On the way thither, they touched at Cabbage Tree Creek, where the blackfellows took from their 'plant' two knives and a double-barrelled pistol, also formed part of the outfit of Collins' boat. At St. Helena Rogers met with a man named Edwards, who is employed in the dugong fishing, and who had been in the island for five weeks. From him he learnt that five oil cans belonging to Collins' party had been left on the island, and that there were tracks of three white men and a black on a mud flat at the north east end of the island. In relating the circumstances attendant upon the murders to Rogers, the blacks made very much the same statements that they did to Mr. Petrie, but were somewhat more circumstantial. Billy, the slayer of Collins, attacked the latter from behind while walking on the beach with him, and afterwards cut him on the arm. Billy and two companions then set upon Morgan and the Hollander and despatched them and dragged all three of the bodies to the water, and threw them in. Finding that nothing of further importance was to be gained at St. Helena, Rogers came on to Brisbane, and reported his arrival to the authorities, who, as is very often the case in such matters, did not feel called upon to interfere. The consequence was that Rogers saw the boat claimed and taken possession of by the owner, and the chattels of the party identified and claimed by Buckley, Collins father-in-law— he himself being left without any recompense.

We should imagine that the man has a claim upon the owner of the boat, Mr. Harvey, and we have no doubt but that that gentleman will accede to any reasonable proposal made to him. The nets of the party still remain at St. Helena, and are said to be worth a considerable sum.

Such is the narration of the blackfellows, and such the circumstances attendant upon the recovery of the boat. Various will be the opinions as to whether the aboriginal informants are worthy of credibility or not as far as regards the details of the horrible deed, and it certainly appears strange that they should be so well acquainted with all particulars even to the hiding places of the articles found at Cabbage Tree Creek. The last murder committed by the blacks in the bay was allowed to pass without any attempt at punishment and we suppose the 'the dear creatures' will still be patted on the head by their protectors. We don't mean to imply that efforts should be made to arraign the guilty at the bar of justice, or we consider such a course to be mere farce— the engagement of which only terminates when the blackfellow leaves Cockatoo, will prepare for his next appearance in a tragedy! There are other modes of punishment equally just, and more abiding in their influences.