Ernest Henry.

The discoverer, and principal prospector, of the Cloncurry Mineral District of North-West Queensland.

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(Read at a Meeting of the Society on 29th September, 1920).

It has been well said that some men are born great; some have greatness thrust upon them, whilst a few achieve greatness. Ernest Henry emphatically belonged to the latter class. Of all the men I have known, I regard the late Ernest Henry as more nearly resembling the typical Englishman of the Elizabethian period. Had he been born in 1537, instead of 1837, I am sure, I have been afloat with Drake, engaged in the laudable, and sometimes lucrative pursuit—humourously described by Drake as "singeing the King of Spain's beard," but really laying the foundations of England's maritime supremacy.

Ernest Henry was born on 1st May, 1837, at Harrington, a watering place in Cumberland, on the shores of Solway Firth. At that time, his father, James Henry, had recently retired from the 72nd Highlanders (now the Seaforths), in which celebrated regiment he held a commission as Captain. The family resided on an island in Derwent Water, near Keswick, in Cumberland. Some six or seven years later, Captain Henry bought Blackdown, in Sussex, the home of the Yaldwyn family for at least 300 years. William Yaldwyn, formerly Police Magistrate in Brisbane, was a scion of the Sussex Yaldwyns, born at Blackdown, in November, 1835, and died in Sydney on 27th July, 1919.

Of Ernest Henry's boyhood I have no particulars, but in 1853, in his sixteenth year, he entered the service of the Australian Royal Mail S.S. Company as a cadet, and shipped on the "Victoria." In her he made his first voyage to Australia, and visited Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

On his return from that voyage he found war had been declared against Russia, and he applied for a commission
in the Army. This was promised through the influence of the Duke of Richmond, upon his passing the examination of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, which he succeeded in doing, and he was gazetted an Ensign in his father's old regiment, the 72nd Highlanders.

Ensign Henry joined his regiment at Fermoy, in Ireland, May, 1855 (at the age of 18), and sometime afterwards went with it to the Crimea. On December 3rd, 1855, he wrote to his father from Malta, and on the 11th and 28th April he wrote to his parents from the Crimea.

He, like many others, suffered much during the winter of 1855-6, and he was invalided home shortly before the peace.

After the excitement of the war, barrack life was insupportable to his restless spirit. He threw up his commission, therefore, and came out to Australia in the sailing ship, "Red Jacket," which sailed from Liverpool on the 21st November, 1857, and reached Melbourne 68 days later.

On 7th February, 1858, he wrote from Melbourne:—
"The 'Red Jacket' made a smart trip, only 68 days from Liverpool to Melbourne."

On the voyage he became friendly with a fellow passenger, a Mr. Cannon, and they arranged to keep together on a journey up country, first to Ballarat, and afterwards as circumstances might direct. He called on Dean Macartney, and heard a good deal about Moreton Bay, as Queensland was then called, from the Dean's son, Mr. J. Arthur Macartney.

On 24th February, he left Melbourne, and proceeded by sea to Geelong. From thence he walked to Ballarat, and by way of Albury, to Sydney, arriving on 10th May.

On 5th June, 1858, he wrote his father from Sydney, as follows:—"Fortune favours me. The day after I last wrote to you I called on George and William Macleay, to whom I had letters of introduction. I told them my plans, etc. The former has a brother who owns a sheep station on the Murrumbidgee, 400 miles from Sydney. I asked him to write his brother to see if he would take me to learn the business. The reply was favourable, and I shall start on Tuesday next, the 8th June. I have been in lodgings the last three weeks. Cannon has gone to Moreton Bay. I am very glad to have the opportunity of gaining experience and making myself useful at last. I now hope before very long to be able to do something for myself. I go by rail as far as Campbelltown (the only railway in N.S.W. at that time), 30 miles from Sydney, and then take the coach, which leaves at 8 p.m."
for Goulburn, 100 miles from Campbelltown. I can go by coach nearly all the way. Now you must know that the coaches here (if they deserve the name) are open. For about 200 miles it will be nothing but a kind of dog-cart, carrying six persons, dreadful roads, reckless drivers, and a great part night driving. It may be accompanied by rain, not unlikely this time of the year. 400 miles of that kind of travelling, in my opinion, is rather too much of a good thing, and I think, very likely, I shall walk part of the way. I should not have gone by the mail at all, only Mr. Macleay persuaded me to. People who can help it never think of walking here. The common saying is:—‘If a man has to travel a mile, he will go two out of his way to catch his horse.’

On October 17th, 1858, he wrote his mother from Melbourne, having left Mr. Macleay’s station on the completion of the shearing. At Melbourne he procured the saddles he had brought from England, and left again on the 28th October, overland, on his way to Moreton Bay, with horses. On 8th November, he had reached the Murrumbidgee, and Deniliquin on the 10th, arriving at Callandoon on 3rd February, 1859. He wrote his mother from Callandoon, a station on the Macintyre River.

He stayed at Callandoon about a month to help with the shearing, and formed a friendship for Mr. Macdonald, the manager, with whom he had an idea of entering into partnership if they could arrange to purchase a suitable run.

He reckoned that on the journey from Melbourne to Callandoon he rode 1,470 miles. He concluded a letter from Callandoon, as follows:—‘I dare say you will be surprised at my taking so long a journey overland. Everyone thought me mad to attempt it by myself, but I certainly enjoyed it very much. Felt rather lonely now and then, but I had several books to keep me alive. At several places where I stopped a day or two, I took part in whatever was going on, cattle mustering, etc., etc. I picked up a good deal of information, and had the advantage of seeing the country.’

On 29th March, 1859, he was at Drayton, and on 2nd May, 1859, he wrote from Brisbane:—‘I met at Brisbane, a short time ago, a Mr. Perry, whom I made acquaintance with on the Murrumbidgee. He informed me that he, with some other gentlemen, were making up an expedition to explore the Burdekin River and its tributaries, with the view of taking up the land and stocking it with sheep should it prove as valuable as reported to be by both Dr. Leichhardt and Gregory.'
He offered at the same time to secure a place on the subscription list for my name if I felt inclined to join, which, on hearing the particulars, I did. The number of subscribers is limited to 25 at £50 each. They are most of them squatters, both from this part of the Colony and from Victoria. There are six going on the expedition, I being one of them, besides two blacks. Mr. George Elphinstone Dalrymple is the leader of the expedition. He is a most gentlemanly and a very competent person. The Governor-General approves of the expedition. We are to take a surveyor with us who will survey and lay-off in not less than eight blocks of five miles square each for every subscriber, the best of the land. All I can lose by going is the time (it will occupy about four or five months). I shall get my £50 back again on our return, as every member of the expedition is to receive that sum for his trouble. Should the country really prove valuable, the subscribers intend tendering to the Government for the land surveyed, and stocking it with sheep. I enclose you some extracts from Dr. Leichhardt's lectures and journal, relating to the country in question, by which you will see it is well watered and available for pasture purposes. The Burdekin has never been explored to its mouth. We intend doing so. I look forward to the trip, independent of its possible advantages, with all the delight and relish I have for adventures of the kind. Part of the country we explore has never yet been trod by a white man. The £1,250 subscribed will supply us with a first-rate outfit. We take no less than 20 pack-horses for our stores, etc., etc. We start about the middle of this month (May, 1859). I am just now on my way with Mr. Dalrymple to the Darling Downs to purchase some horses, etc., for the expedition. I shall be very glad when I am fairly embarked. I am always much better in body and mind when I have plenty to do. I believe in the old saying, "Idleness is the root of all evil." I shall be very busy helping Dalrymple until we start."

On the 29th May, 1859, he was at Canning Downs with Mr. Dalrymple, purchasing horses, and seeking for Mr. Stone, the surveyor, who was to accompany the expedition. The party left Canning Downs on 7th June, 1859, with horses, the rations and general equipment having been sent to Rockhampton by sea. When starting from Canning Downs, the party comprised Dalrymple, Houghton, Henry, and two black boys. At Felton they were joined by Hood, and later by Stone, the surveyor, and Sellheim, whom Henry describes as an Austrian Baron, and a very pleasant fellow. The full party consisted
of six white men, all gentlemen, and two black boys.

On the 11th July, 1859, they were camped near Rockhampton, 450 miles from Canning Downs.

On 21st July, 1859, Henry, with Houghton and one black boy, left Rockhampton with all spare horses for Mr. Radforth’s station, Princhester, about 50 miles, whilst Dalrymple and the rest of the party brought the stores and general equipment by dray.

The full party left Princhester on 16th August, and made Marlborough, Henning and Stewart’s station, 12 miles beyond, and the most northern white settlement at that time.

It would occupy too much time to follow Henry’s description of this expedition in detail, so that I am compelled greatly to curtail his account, although it is worthy of a separate place in the records of the Society.

On the 20th August they reached the foot of Connors’ Range, situated westerly from the present town of Mackay. Crossed Connors’ Range on 22nd, when they considered themselves in the wilds, well away from the beaten tracks. They now sought to strike westerly to hit the Isaac River, a tributary of the Fitzroy, follow the Isaac to its head, then strike the head of the Suttor River and follow it northerly to its junction with the Burdekin, in the vicinity of a conspicuous mountain named by Leichhardt on 28th March, 1845, Mt. McConnel. Like many similar projects, it turned out to be much more difficult than they had expected, but, eventually, difficulties were overcome, and the Burdekin was reached on the 10th October, 1859, in the vicinity of Mt. McConnel, about 14½ years after Leichhardt.

It turned out that Dalrymple’s tracks had been followed by another party in search of country, and in order not to be forestalled in the lodging of applications, Dalrymple decided to send Henry with Hood, and one black boy, back to Rockhampton, in order to lodge applications for the country they had discovered and roughly surveyed. They took seven horses with them. They left the main party on the Burdekin on 1st November, and arrived at Rockhampton on the 24th, after a successful and rather eventful trip, which Henry subsequently described in great detail in a letter to his father, dated 10th February, 1860, written from Callandoon.

On 9th May, 1860, Henry was in Sydney with Mr. Dalrymple to attend a meeting of the subscribers, relative to the Burdekin country. In a letter to his father of same date, he said:—“Dalrymple and I are living together;
I am very fond of him, he is such a true-hearted fellow. I wish you knew him."

The result of that private expedition (financed by 25 subscribers at £50 each), was the immediate opening up and settling of an immense area of fine pastoral country, extending from 70 miles north of Rockhampton for 400 miles along the coast, by 150 to 200 miles inland, including the towns of Mackay, Bowen, Townsville, Cardwell and Charters Towers, and the Cape, Ravenswood, and Charters Towers goldfields. As one of the subscribers, and certainly one of the most active members of the expedition, Ernest Henry, then only 23 years of age, deserves his full share of credit for the splendid results achieved at so small a cost.

On 14th June, 1860, writing to his father from Sydney, he said:—"I send you a likeness of four of our expedition; the one on the right, as you look at the picture (sitting down) is Dalrymple; on the left, Stone (the surveyor); standing behind the latter is Sellheim; the fourth, I have no doubt you will recognise. They are all first-rate likenesses."

Having acquired—in a remarkably brief period—the necessary experience of colonial and pastoral life, his father advanced a sufficient sum to enable him to take up a good area of country on the Upper Dawson, to stock with a mixed herd of cattle and sheep. This was in September, 1860, less than three years after he sailed from England. For £1,000 he secured eight blocks (about 200 square miles), and by December he had purchased 500 well-bred heifers, and 7,000 breeding ewes, with which to stock "Baroondah," as his run was called. With the assistance of Mr. Perry, an experienced squatter, he formed the station, helping with his own hands to erect buildings, fences, stockyards, etc. At the same time, or very shortly afterwards, he applied for and secured the lease of seven blocks of excellent country at Mt. McConnel, on the Burdekin, which he had explored with Mr. G. E. Dalrymple, and with whom he contemplated a partnership in that venture. This, however, did not materialise, as Dalrymple subsequently joined two young Scotsmen (Walter and Charles Scott), in a station at the very head of the Burdekin, in the hinterland of Cardwell, which they called "The Valley of Lagoons." Previous to this, however, in January, 1861, Mr. Dalrymple was appointed Government Resident, Crown Lands Commissioner, and Police Magistrate of the newly-opened province, with headquarters at Bowen, Port Denison.
In September, 1861, Henry started from Baroondah with a small herd of cattle to enable him to stock his Mount McConnel country on the Burdekin. The droving of the cattle over that long journey of 500 or 600 miles, through unoccupied country (or country only occupied by blacks), and the labour involved in forming Mt. McConnel station, occupied him, with the help of his brother Arthur, who arrived in January, 1862, until the end of that year. In February, 1863, his youngest brother, Alfred, joined him.

Whilst he was forming his Mt. McConnel station, he tried, with the assistance of his friend, Sellheim (who was managing Strathmore* station on the Bowen River, one of the southern tributaries of the Burdekin), to find a more direct road to the port at Bowen. The difficulty lay chiefly in Leichhardt's Range, which lies right athwart the direct route, also a big loop in the Burdekin River, which either necessitated a double crossing of the river or a great detour. After seven days of most arduous work on two days' rations, they were compelled to return to Strathmore, to do which they had to cross the Bowen River, a very wide stream when in flood and full of trees, through which the flood waters rush with great velocity.

When they reached the river on foot, for they had been compelled to abandon their horses, they found it in flood, running so high and strong that Sellheim, who was not a good swimmer, would not venture in. It was nearly sundown, and the station about three miles on the other side. They had not then eaten anything for three days, so it was decided that Henry should swim across, walk to the station, and return the first thing in the morning with food for Sellheim. Henry, although weak for the want of food, and tired from previous strenuous exertions, accomplished the task, and returned the following morning with food for his friend; also a rope, and one of the native police, with whose assistance, and by fastening the rope from tree to tree, they at last succeeded in getting Sellheim safely across the river.

The author of this paper is in a position to state from personal experience of the Bowen River in flood, that Henry's action in swimming the swollen river alone, and in his tired and weakened condition, was one of the most hazardous feats that has come within his personal

*The owners of Strathmore were J. C. Tucker, W. D. Stewart, George H. Wayte, and P. V. Sellheim.
knowledge. It should be borne in mind, also, that all the Burdekin waters are liable to be invaded by crocodiles when swollen by flood. This fact, though not at any time a very probable source of danger, is not conducive to that calmness of mind so necessary to a swimmer battling for his life amongst the rushing waters of a river, so wide, and so full of timber, as the Bowen.

A few weeks later, during the heavy wet season of March, 1863, Henry saved a young fellow from drowning in one of the swollen creeks. Henry plunged in with all his clothes on, and, with great difficulty, and no little risk, got him safely to the bank in a very exhausted condition.

A few days later, in a letter to his mother, he mentioned that a Mr. Hunt was desirous of inspecting Baroondah with a view to purchase. His brother, Alfred, and Mr. Hunt left Rockhampton on 15th March, 1863, intending to stay at Gracemere, Archer's station, that night, and Henry was to rejoin them in the evening. It chanced, however, that Mr. Dalrymple arrived by the steamer from Brisbane, and Henry characteristically adds:—"I sat talking with him till the sun rose." He then rode out to Gracemere for breakfast, after which he, his brother, and Mr. Hunt rode on a further distance of 25 miles to Westwood. On the second day after they reached a creek, running very strong and high. They found a squatter of Henry's acquaintance crossing his loading in a kind of double canoe, and Henry adds:—"We spent the afternoon assisting him, which was much to my liking, as I was in the water nearly all the time, carrying ropes across, etc."

In June, 1863, being in Brisbane, he went down to the Bay to see some people off by the "Flying Cloud," a fast clipper ship. It was blowing a gale of wind, and Captain Keen, with a crew, and Henry as passenger, started for Brisbane in a small boat. She shot along very quickly for about a mile, when a sudden squall completely upset her. Henry's first impulse was to pull off his coat, but finding the boat did not sink (she was a life-boat), he, with all hands clung to her until they were rescued by boats from the various vessels lying in the Bay. Henry, always ready to make fun of any untoward event, and seeing there was no immediate danger of drowning, surprised the Captain by pulling a coin out of his pocket, and offering to toss him for a new hat on the upturned boat, since they had both lost theirs in the water. The Captain was not
"on," at the moment being too preoccupied, but he told the tale all round Brisbane the next day.*

On the 22nd May, 1863, he wrote his father from Sydney:—"I have just completed the sale of Baroondah, and I find myself, after paying all liabilities, with £5,000 cash, and Mt. McConnel, with stock, etc., worth at least £9,500 or £10,000. I intend buying some ewes to lamb this year, which I shall shear near Rockhampton, and then send them on to Mt. McConnel. Robert Gray (a first cousin on his mother's side) is here, having sold out of the Army. He is married to Miss Sowerby, a sister of Lady Manning (wife of Sir William Manning, the Chief Judge in Equity in N.S.W.), and thinks of squatting in Queensland. We have some idea of going into partnership in some new country, which I intend taking up in the neighbourhood of Mt. McConnel."

Between 30th November, 1863, and 24th March, 1864, Henry wrote several letters to his parents, giving most interesting particulars of an exploring trip, westerly from Mt. McConnel, with Mr. Devlin, a friend of his, in the course of which they ascended the Cape River and crossed the dividing range between the Burdekin and Flinders Rivers, a comparatively level plateau, comprising much waterless and desert country, in which the poisonous desert or Darling pea, "Gastrolobium Grandiflora" flourishes.

In crossing the desert they were two days without water, but on the 3rd of December, 1863 they were rewarded for all their trouble by coming on the finest country Henry had seen in Australia: beautiful plains, thick with the richest grasses, herbage and saltbush. This proved to be the most easterly extension of the great plains which extend to within a few miles of the Gulf of Carpentaria, along the course of the Flinders River. Then followed a vivid description of the return journey to Mt. McConnel, and the rushing out of cattle and stores in order to secure the new country by actual occupation, in which he was spurred on by the fact that another party, led by Mr. Roger Sheaffe (who, some years subsequently was associated with Henry in mining properties at

* In May, 1866, a party was proceeding from Burketown to Sweer's Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, including Henry and the writer. Whilst at anchor in the Albert River—waiting for the tide to turn,—Henry divested himself of his clothes, and, against the advice of those who knew how infested the river was with alligators, he plunged in and coolly swam about as if there was not a saurian within a hundred miles. The proceeding was most foolhardy, but it was characteristic of the man, who did not appear to know what fear was.
Cloncurry), was endeavouring to forestall them. Henry, however, was not the man to be beaten. In spite of the heavy wet season, flooded creeks and the boggy ground they encountered, he reached the country he had selected and successfully occupied it with his stock. Only those who, like the writer, have seen the country, and experienced its almost-impassable nature in the wet season, can have any conception of the difficulties to be overcome, requiring the most intrepid perseverance and determination. At that time, however, Henry was between 26 and 27, in the heyday of his vigour, endowed with sufficient energy and determination to equip half-a-dozen ordinary men. Henry was the first to put stock on any part of the Flinders River.

With the acquisition of Hughenden, Henry nominally owned three good stations, including Mt. McConnel and Conway, and it would appear, and no doubt Henry himself thought so, that he, with his brothers Arthur and Alfred, were on the high road to fortune. Unfortunately, his eagerness led him into debt, which dogged his footsteps, and rendered this period (April, 1864, to the discovery of copper at Cloncurry in May, 1867), the most unhappy of his life. Had he been content with any one of the stations he had taken up and stocked either Baroondah, on the Dawson; Mt. McConnel and Conway, on the Burdekin; or Hughenden, on the Flinders: he might have led a happy and steadily-successful life, but his superabundant energy and eagerness to conquer and acquire fresh fields and pastures new, led him into a labyrinth of difficulties and financial troubles from which he found no escape. He could contend with and overcome the difficulties and dangers of the unexplored bush, but he was no match for wily and astute financiers, who, once having got him into their toils, never let go until he was sucked as dry as the proverbial orange.

His letters home recounted the efforts he made to sell one or other of the stations so as to stave off his most pressing creditors. He arranged to sell Conway, but his buyer refused to take delivery on the ground that Henry's agent in Sydney had misrepresented the country. The purchase money and bills (£8,000) was deposited in a Rockhampton bank. Henry's lawyers advised an action, but the correspondence is silent as to the result. Afterwards, he sold Hughenden for £6,000, but this also fell through. Eventually, he sold Hughenden for £4,000 cash to his cousins, Robert and Charles Gray. That was in October, 1865, and the station remained in their hands,
or at all events in the possession of Robert Gray, for something like 50 years.

By November of 1865, he had consigned Mt. McConnel and Conway to his creditors, thus relieving him of his Australian debt, and, in a business sense, closing eight years of the most strenuous and painstaking exertions in apparent failure. I say apparent advisedly, for, like a piece of well-forged and tempered steel, he had been prepared by the Providence that shapes our ends "rough hew them how we will," for the real work of his life, which occupied his exhaustless energies from 1867 until 1913, a period of 46 years, namely the discovery and development of the Cloncurry mineral district of 10,000 square miles. He found it an unoccupied waste in May, 1867, without a railway nearer than Brisbane.

Henry, like Antaeus the fabled wrestler, rose the stronger from every fall. No sooner was he beaten in his pastoral business than he set out in search of new country in the Gulf hinterland, which he might dispose of to others better able to stock it.

With this object in view, he set out from Hughenden on the 23rd March, 1866, taking with him two black boys and one white lad, 14 years of age; also a number of horses which he hoped to dispose of. After following the track down the Flinders for about 100 miles, he turned off to the left about 20 miles to Roger Sheaffe's station, "Minna-Mere," on Neslia Creek. They left Sheaffe's on 7th April, steering W.S.W. and westerly, with a view to strike some rivers described by McKinley, when in search of the Burke and Wills party. Henry laboured under the disadvantage of not knowing the exact latitude and longitude of his starting point from Sheaffe's, and the absence of maps that could be depended on.

On the 9th April, he crossed McIntyre's track, who had been sent out by the ladies of Melbourne, to ascertain if possible the fate of Burke and Wills. He had camels as well as horses, so that there was no mistaking his tracks. In passing, I may remark that McIntyre died of Gulf fever very shortly afterwards, and was buried on Dalgonally, his brother Donald's station. I have seen his grave, and knew the man in life.

On the 10th April, he came in sight of a range of mountains bearing south-westerly, the first high ground he had seen on this trip. On the 14th, he struck the Fullerton River, which he followed downwards for two days. Being satisfied with the quality of the country out of which he hoped to make something, he decided to leave the Fullerton, or Marchant, as McKinlay called it,
and strike north-westerly for Burketown, the new township on the Albert River; Gulf of Carpentaria.

On the 23rd he struck the Leichhardt River, and overtook two men driving fat wethers to Burketown from a station higher up the river. The same day he reached Floraville station, and found the general manager, Mr. John Graham Macdonald (whom Henry had known for some time) at home. At Floraville, he was on the main road from Burketown to the east coast, which, at that time, went by Carpentaria Downs.

On the 26th April, 1866, he arrived at Burketown, and went to the only hotel, where he found six or seven men, all of whom he knew, amongst them Landsborough, the explorer, who had been appointed Government Resident, Police Magistrate, Collector of Customs, etc. Henry found that there had been a great deal of sickness, and some 25 persons had died within a very short time, and he thought there had never been more than 60 residents. Everyone who had been there any time looked pale and thin.

I will now quote from Henry's diary:

27th April, 1866:—"When I was in the township yesterday, Landsborough persuaded me to join him in a trip down the river, and then to one of the islands in the Gulf. His object in going was to fix on a site for a pilot station, and also to take afterwards some of the sick people down. It was the middle of the night when we started in the pilot boat, so we only went a few miles, and camped on the right bank. Our party consisted of Landsborough, Phillips (the surveyor), Borthwick, one of Macdonald's men, Spillings, the coxswain, Bob, a half-caste native of Canada, and a native of the west coast of Africa. After dark, on the 28th, came in sight of a camp-fire, and found J. G. Macdonald, who had come round from the Leichhardt by boat. We camped with him and his party.

Macdonald accepted Landsborough's invitation to accompany him to Sweer's Island, which was reached about noon of the 30th April. The 1st and 2nd May were devoted to exploring the island, but on the morning of the 3rd, whilst all hands (except Bob, the Canadian, who acted as cook), were having a dip in the sea, a number of blacks approached the camp. At a warning-cry from Bob, the bathers, in very scanty clothing, quickly came to camp, where some beef and damper was distributed to the visitors. Landsborough then dismissed them, but Henry, who, at the time, was some 80 yards away, found himself suddenly beset by the natives, who, armed with spears, assumed a very threatening attitude to him. He had his revolver with him, but would not use it out of deference
to Landsborough, who always deprecated the use of firearms, except in cases of extremity. On observing Henry's predicament, Landsborough, Macdonald, and other men of the party quickly charged up to Henry's assistance, whereupon the blacks fled.

The 4th and 5th May were devoted to exploring Bentinck and Fowler Islands, and on the 7th, Henry left the island with Macdonald for Burketown. They reached the mouth of the Albert at sundown and camped there. Henry, who had laid down in the bottom of the boat and fell asleep, got very cold and damp, which brought on an attack of fever and ague, from which he did not recover until his return to Hughenden in July.

On the 8th, he was very ill, but the boat reached the town in the evening, and he went to his camp on the opposite side of the river. There he found Mr. Campbell, of Sorghum Downs, a station on the Flinders, and his wife, who had just come down from their newly-formed station. Mrs. Campbell was confined the night she arrived. This was the first white child born at Carpentaria.

As authentic information concerning the malignant sickness then raging at Burketown (commonly termed "Gulf Fever"), is of value, I give in extenso Henry's diary, as conveyed in a letter to his mother, dated July, 1866.

7th May, 1866:—"Started again with J. G. Macdonald in his boat from Sweer's Island before daylight for Burketown, leaving Landsborough with his party and the re-inforcements of sick people on the Island. At first we had very little wind, but in a few hours it freshened, and we went along well, but ran out of our course a good deal owing to the incorrectness of our steersman's compass. So we did not reach the mouth of the river (Albert) till after sunset. As we were coming along, I laid down in the bottom of the boat for an hour or two and fell asleep. I got very cold and damp, which gave me a touch of fever and ague, and by the time we got to the sand-spit at the mouth of the river, where we were to camp, I was very bad. The sea had only just left the sand, so it was quite wet. I rolled myself up in my blankets without going ashore, or having supper, and slept in the boat. During the night the boat, as the tide left her, heeled over, and some of the water in the bottom, got into my blankets.

"8th:—I was awfully bad when I got up in the morning, suffering chiefly from fearful shooting pains down the right side of my head. We luckily had a fair wind up the river. I laid on and under blankets at the bottom of the boat. The pains in my head came so
quick and sharp sometimes as to take away my breath, and for the life of me, I could not help crying out. I clinched my teeth, and did all I could, but had no power to help it. We reached camp (1¼ miles from township), early in the evening, and I went ashore then.

"I suffered terribly all night. The pains in my head never ceased, and my thirst was awful. I don’t suppose a quarter-of-an-hour passed but what I drank a mouthful or two of water. Very bad all next day. In the afternoon Macdonald sent me, amongst other things, a bottle of Perry Davis’ painkiller, which I made the boys rub into my head. It took the pain away for a time, but at night it came on again as bad as ever, thirst the same as before, and if I did sleep at all, it was delirious. I was reduced in no time to skin and bone, and so weak that I could hardly stand. The day after I landed at the camp, I made the blackboys make a kind of hovel, open on one side, made of boughs (what we call a ‘gunyah’). They all pulled a quantity of dead grass on which my bed was made, so I was comfortable in that respect. For several succeeding nights I had to rouse one of the boys about every hour to rub my head with the pain-killer, but it only gave temporary relief; thirst continued the same, and awake or asleep, I was in a half delirium all night, whispering at a tremendous rate. One night (I forget which) Mrs. Campbell recommended a mustard blister. I kept one on for 40 minutes. It gave me some relief, and next night I put on another and a stronger one on the same place, just where the pain was. It was on 20 minutes, and when it was taken off—Oh! the relief I felt, the pain was entirely gone, but I was so weak I could not stand by myself. I found after this, that by rubbing the place (which was quite raw) for about quarter-of-an-hour with the pain-killer, it kept the pain away all night. But my thirst continued still the same, and I was troubled with delirious dreams all night. I now had the same fever (I think), that so many people have died of here, it may have been on me before, but I thought of nothing but the pain in my head. If I went out in the sun sometimes only for a few minutes, the day would become to me quite dark, and I would fall down. Macdonald was very kind to me; he used to come from the township nearly every day to see me. It was May 19th before I was able to start back overland, ten days since I landed at the camp.

"I rode 20 miles the first day, but would have camped long before if we could have got water; my bones ached, and thirst was very great. The last few miles had to hold on to Macdonald’s arm (who had overtaken
us), and rode by my side till we came to water. He then went on to his station (Floraville) 20 miles distant.

20th May:—"Went 14 miles and camped for dinner, and six miles further reached Floraville. I stood this day's journey much better than the last. I had one tumble when I was off my horse, but I felt altogether much better. I don't think I would ever have got right at the township. I remained at Floraville until the 27th May."

The change from the low country about Burketown to the somewhat higher and better-drained ground at Floraville, together with more comfortable quarters and better food, proved very beneficial, but he suffered a good deal with the ordinary fever and ague on his way to Hughenden, some 500 miles from Burketown.

Henry reached Sorghum Downs (Campbell's) on 31st May; next day at Palmer's Camp (Canobie); on 3rd June, at Lara, which at that time was managed by a friend of his, Mr. R. Morisset, a brother-in-law of P. F. Sellheim. He remained at Lara until the 8th June. Made Sheaffe's station, Minna-Mere, on Neslia Creek, on the 10th, and rested there until the 15th June. Roger Sheaffe was a son of Major Sheaffe, of the British Army, who settled in New South Wales with his wife and family, at an early period.

In 1869, Henry visited Mrs. Sheaffe and her daughters at their place near Wollongong, about 40 miles south of Sydney. He was greatly pleased with them and their home. Sheaffe and Henry had much in common. They were about the same age, both sons of Army officers, both strong, virile men, full of energy and enterprise. They were associated for some years in pastoral and mining pursuits. Sheaffe resided in Sandgate for several years, and was Mayor of the town in 1892.

On the 18th June, Henry was at Burleigh, a station on the Flinders, where he remained until the 27th. On the 28th, he reached Marathon, and remained there the next day, and on Sunday, 1st July, 1866, he reached his old station, Hughenden.

Considering his debilitated condition when he left Burketown on 19th May, he stood the 500 mile ride to Hughenden remarkably well. In all he was 44 days on the journey, 23 of which he rested, so that he rode on an average of 24 miles a day during the 21 days of actual travelling.

From 1st July, 1866, he and Roger Sheaffe were occupied in looking for new country suitable for pastoral purposes, with a view to disposing of same to those who had the necessary capital to stock it. Henry's journal
of that period is a continuous record of excursions in every direction from Hughenden, Burleigh, Minnamere and Fairlight (Betts' station) as centres. In the course of his explorations, he reached the Cloncurry River, 250 miles from Hughenden, the upper portion of which was not stocked at that time (15th October, 1866). On that occasion he got as far as a remarkable isolated rocky peak, which he called Fort Constantine, prompted probably by some resemblance to one of the forts of Sebastopol, in the Crimea, some 18 miles below the site of the present town of Cloncurry. He then returned to Sheaffe's station for rations, but on 12th November he was back again on the Cloncurry, which he examined upwards for some 18 or 20 miles, when he discovered rich iron deposits which he took to be copper. He determined to take about 10cwt. to Copperfield (now Clermont), on the Peak Downs, in order to ascertain its value. Having loaded his dray, he and his black boys returned to Hughenden, which he reached on 23rd December, 1866. On the 31st, he left Hughenden with pack-horses, carrying the iron-ore, for the Peak Downs, via Christison's station, "Lammermoor," Tower Hill, Bowen Downs, and the Belyando River, and arrived at Copperfield on 11th February, 1867. He remained there until 29th March, and on 13th April, he was back again at Hughenden. On the 20th, he again started for Cloncurry district, some 250 miles, and on 14th May, he arrived in the neighbourhood of Fort Constantine. On the 18th, he found a copper lode between two barren hills, and on the 20th, he found a large outcrop of copper ore, which subsequently came to be known as "The Great Australian Copper Mine." He remained on the river until July 12th, almost daily finding further outcrops of copper in various places and on either side of the river, all of which he carefully measured and noted in his journal. Being now satisfied that he had made a valuable discovery, he commenced the return journey to Hughenden, which he accomplished on 20th July, 1867, only eight days from Fort Constantine.

On the 22nd, after only one day's rest, he left Hughenden for the Peak Downs, carrying his copper specimens on pack horses. He arrived at Copperfield on 3rd August, remained three days, and left for Rockhampton, where he arrived on 13th. Left same afternoon per s.s. Clarence for Sydney, arriving on the 19th August, 1867, only 38 days from the time he left the Cloncurry, a truly remarkable feat at that time, but Henry was a veritable "Harry Hotspur" in those days.
On 24th September, 1867, being then in his 31st year, he left Sydney for England by the mail steamer, Geelong, his business being to endeavour to form a company to take over and work the Great Australian Copper Mine. In that he was not successful. So it was decided that in conjunction with certain partners he should work the mine. With that object in view, Mr. Roger Sheaffe and Mr. I. S. Sleep were despatched from Sydney on 30th September, 1867, with two labourers and a light waggon equipment to make a start and hold the leases, which comprised 2,500 acres. They arrived at the Great Australian Mine on 13th November, and commenced work with two miners opening up the lodes.

Henry, on his arrival in England, engaged a number of Cornish miners, under Captain Osborne, as manager. This party, about 30 all told, arrived at Normanton in April, and at the mine on 7th May, 1868, when work at the Great Australian was commenced in earnest.

In October, 1868, Henry left England in company with his brother Arthur, who appears to have either accompanied him or followed him to England. He went by way of Panama on the s.s. Neva, and left Panama on the s.s. Matura, and arrived in Sydney on 28th November, 1868.

He mentions in a letter to his father of 5th December, 1868, that four tons of immensely rich red oxide ore was shipped for London by the Lochiel. It cost £2 per ton from Carpentaria to Sydney, and only 5/- per ton from Sydney to London as ballast. He also mentioned that their land at Cloncurry was then being surveyed by a Government Surveyor (Maurice O’Connell).

Henry and his partners continued to work the Great Australian Mine until 1879, when it was sold. Subsequently he discovered the Argylla group of copper mines, some 50 miles west of the town of Cloncurry, situated in exceedingly broken and confused country. The Argylla mines were sold to Coates and Co., the great cotton spinners, of Paisley.

On February 13th, 1882, he happened, while prospecting, to camp at the Argylla Mine. Argylla has a good-sized outcrop, with strongly-defined markings of green carbonate. Mr. Henry had four blacks with him—his only companions—three of the Calcadoon tribe of the Cloncurry district, and one from a hill tribe, further north, a Waggaboonga. Previous to this, Henry had often asked the latter if there were any copper deposits in his country, to which he invariably replied, "No," and seemed to discourage any idea of going there. But,
on first sight of the bright display of colour on the Argylla outcrop, he exclaimed, "My word, all the same like it that longa my country!" "Which way?" Mr. Henry asked, and the man pointed in the direction.

Next day, without giving any explanation of his intentions, Mr. Henry saddled up, and, accompanied by the blacks, travelled in the direction indicated for two days, then, turning suddenly to the Waggaboonga, said, "Where copper now?" "Straight on," the man replied, and was told to take the lead. After reaching the Waggaboonga country they followed down a creek for some days, which proved to be a tributary of the Leichhardt River. The country was fearfully rough. So close and precipitous, indeed, were some of the gorges that the party had sometimes to leave the watercourse and climb the rugged spurs running at right angles. This they occasionally did for miles, in order to head the impassable ravines, descending to the creek only a short distance below the point of ascent. It should be mentioned that the rainy season was in full swing, rendering progress the more difficult. The blacks travelled on foot, which Henry had often to do, owing to the rough nature of the country. Wild blacks were met with on the borders of the Waggaboonga country. On one occasion they camped all night around him in great numbers, but, probably, owing to the favourable representation of those accompanying him, they showed no hostility.

On the evening of February 25th, when about to camp, the Waggaboonga said, "Copper close up now," pointing over the creek to the westward. On the following morning, the nigger gave Henry to understand that it was impossible to ride, asserting over and over again that the copper was "close up." So Mr. Henry set out on foot with his four sable companions to compass the ten miles—as it proved to be—between that point and what is now known as Mount Oxide, traversing country, which, although very broken, could have been negotiated on a horse.

Late in the afternoon (26th February, 1882), they came to the now-famous "Mount," which is a hill hidden among hills with narrow valleys between. There, on the summit, they found a well-defined outcrop, rising in height to about fifty feet, with great vivid splashes of green and blue carbonate. Being under the impression that they would be back in camp that night, they only took sufficient food for one meal, which they ate before reaching their goal. Weary and footsore from the rough country travelled over, Mr. Henry decided to spend the night there, and they camped in a cave in solid red oxide of iron, on
the walls of which were many native drawings of animals, birds, men, etc., etc., done in pipe-clay. Spears and other warlike weapons were also there. That night our party witnessed from beneath the shelter of the cave, which has since been converted into a magazine, a terrific thunderstorm. Next day they started back to camp, finding all the creeks so flooded that Mr. Henry had to hold his rifle and revolver above his head as he waded through them, and they had to swim the main creek before reaching camp, where they appeased their hunger.

When Henry started from Argylla with his black boys and the Waggaboonga guide in search of the copper outcrop reported by the latter, he followed his almost-invariable practice of keeping a record of the bearings by compass, and the estimated distances of the various courses they pursued on the journey. This is a very tedious and troublesome business, but it ensures sufficient accuracy to obviate any risk of not being able to find the required locality at some future time. Henry, from long practice on his frequent journeys in search of new pastoral country, had become quite expert in this system of traverse surveying by dead reckoning. I have a copy of his journal on this trip, and have prepared a traverse table of the various courses and estimated distances, from which I find that the copper outcrop shown to him by the Waggaboonga boy, and which he since called "Mount Oxide," bears from Argylla Mine, N. 23 deg. W., 94 miles, as the crow flies. The result places the mine somewhat more to the north than by the railway survey made by the Government, but Henry's rough survey was sufficient to ensure that the locality could be verified and refound when required. As a second string to his bow, he kept a record of his courses on the return journey to Cloncurry, as far as the crossing of the William or Corella River, 27 miles from Cloncurry.

All this is very characteristic of Henry, who was a very exact and pains-taking man in all that he did. His letters to his parents, even at an early age, reveal the exactness of his mind in all details. His words are always well-chosen, and convey the exact meaning he intended, leaving no room for doubt or a double meaning.

About twenty years after the discovery of the outcrop, Mr. Henry took up his first lease on Mount Oxide, which had remained undiscovered by anyone else, and was still virgin country, absolutely untouched, and nothing was done to it in any way until two or three years later. In 1904-5, Mr. Henry, accompanied by his son, A. Douglas Henry, started from Cloncurry for Mount Oxide, via
Kamilaroi Station, on the Leichhardt River, for the first time with wheels. They got by that route within three miles of their destination without much difficulty, though with a certain amount of pick and shovel work. From thence they had to make a road in earnest. When thus employed, a wire, which was a week old, was brought them by hand from a firm in Burketown, stating that teams would arrive in ten days from the date of despatch, for the purpose of loading up with copper-ore.

The Henrys, therefore, had to leave their road work, ride to Mount Oxide, and then and there they two put in the first stroke of work ever done on that mine. They commenced breaking down from the outcrop, with crowbars, blocks of partially detached ore, weighing from a ton upwards, which they napped into sufficiently small pieces, bagged, packed a certain amount on horses which they drove three miles to where they ceased roadmaking, unloaded, and returned for more. To supply these first waggons occupied some days, but in all, over thirty tons were accounted for in this manner.

From then on, Mr. Henry continued to develop his mine with more hands, and never at any time was the work abandoned.

Ultimately, a road was made from the base of the Mount to the shafts on the top down which the ore was dragged on sledges to where waggons could load. Subsequently, a tunnel was driven in from the first valley over three hundred feet which, when the ore body was struck, was connected with the main shaft sunk on the outcrop over two hundred feet above. Rails were then laid in the tunnel, and the ore run out on trucks to a stage from which waggons and camels are supplied.

I gave Henry the levels for that tunnel on 18th April, 1909. He left the district after the sale of Mt. Oxide in June, 1913, and died at Epping, near Sydney, on 26th March, 1919, in his 82nd year.

He married in August, 1870, Marian Elizabeth, second daughter of William Thompson, manager of the Bank of New South Wales, at Warwick. She returned to Warwick in 1875, and lived there till her death in 1888. She had two children, Douglas and Ernestine.

Alfred Henry died in Sydney on 22nd February, 1917, at the age of 73, and Arthur Henry is still living at Epping, in his 83rd year.

I have known Queensland for 58 years, but I know none who can be compared to Ernest Henry as a pioneer of civilization, or whose labours have resulted in greater advantage to the people as a whole.
At the conclusion of Mr. George Phillips' paper Mr. A. Kennedy said:—

I first met the late Ernest Henry in 1877. He had just then blazed the track from Cloncurry to Boulia. This was the beginning of a warm friendship that lasted till his death. Mr. Henry's object was to open a store in Boulia, as, at that time, all the country in that neighbourhood was being taken up and stocked with cattle, and the prospect of a store being a paying proposition, was very good. At that time, all station supplies had to be carted from Normanton by team, and the long and uncertain land carriage prevented the venture from being a success, and the store was closed. In the meantime, a public house had been opened, and with the many droving plants that were then on the road, Boulia became a very lively place. Horse racing, gambling and drinking went on night and day, but this probably applied to all western towns as the country was taken up.

Prior to the date of my meeting Ernest Henry, the "Great Australian Copper Mine," of which he was the discoverer, had been sold, but owing to the long haulage to Normanton by team, it was only the very richest ore that could be sent away, and then there was very little left over working expenses. A slump in copper values took place, the mine had to be closed down, but for a time a store that he had opened in Cloncurry did fairly well.

Gold had been discovered at a place called the Top Camp. This kept a fairly large population for a time, but the few rich patches were soon worked out, and the population gradually left the district. This was before the present town of Cloncurry was built. As all westernQueenslanders are aware, there is a large extent of mineralized country to the north, south and west of Cloncurry. Mr. Henry was satisfied that rich minerals would be found. He put a plant together, and started prospecting, and during one of his trips, he advised me of some very good pastoral country that he had passed over. Knowing him to be well up in pastoral matters, we investigated the country, and finding it all that he reported it to be, we took it up, I agreeing to stock it, and he having a half-interest in the country. This is now the well-known station named "Calton Hills," the property of Sir Robert Philp and Son. This property was acquired in 1881. Mr. Henry still continued prospecting, and discovered many mines on the Leichhardt. He discovered a large slab of pure copper, 8 cwt., I think. This slab has travelled all over the world, and the last I saw
of it was in London, at the White City Exhibition, in 1909. Amongst his best discoveries was the Mt. Oxide and the Argylla, both very fine properties, and now the property of the Mt. Elliott Company. Later on, in conjunction we took up the Duchess Mine, and in all probability this is the richest copper mine in the Cloncurry district, if not in Australia. This property was sold to the Hampden Company for £15,000, which, at the time, looked an extra good price, but turned out a good speculation for the Company. In 1884, Dr. Robertson visited the Cloncurry district in search of copper propositions. The Great Australian Mine was then the property of Henry, Sheaffe and Colly. There were also some outside freehold properties belonging to the above Company. All the above were purchased by Dr. Robertson, for, I think, £27,000, and floated into a Glasgow Company, and a managing staff sent out with all the necessary machinery, and all looked well for the prosperity of the company and district for a time. However, complications arose, and in a year or two the mine was again shut down, and little or nothing has been done on the property since.

Very few of the residents, even of the Cloncurry district, can realize the many hardships the pioneers had to face in those bygone days, and amongst other drawbacks was the large number of hostile blacks in all that mountainous country. For many years the late Ernest Henry led a charmed life, but on one occasion he had a very narrow escape. He had just found the Argylla mine, and, assisted by a few friendly blacks, was making a road to the mine. I happened to be passing the mine, and noticed a large number of blacks camped near where Mr. Henry had his camp, and was advised by a gin that they had come in to kill Mr. Henry. But knowing that he was such a favourite with the blacks, I took but little notice of the warning. However, when Henry was returning to the camp that night, they succeeded in spearing him in the back. Although badly wounded, he managed to get to his tent where he expected to find his firearms, but, to his dismay, he found that the blacks had removed them, so he was at their mercy. Fortunately for him, the friendly blacks were in the majority, and the would-be murderers were dispersed. It was many months before he was able to leave his bed.

For a good many years before he finally left the Cloncurry district, he gave all his time and wonderful ability in developing the Mt. Oxide Mine, and it is more than pleasing to know that he was able to sell at a price that practically enabled him to spend the declining years
of his life in comfort, and I do not hesitate to say that there is not a man alive in Queensland to-day who has done more to advance the mining and pastoral interests in Western Queensland than our departed friend. The mining industry in the Cloncurry district, of which he is the father, is at the present time employing over two thousand men, and as the mines are going down well, it is likely to be a prosperous industry for many years, and as this vast extent of mineral-bearing country is practically unexplored, there are no doubt, many valuable mines still to be discovered. So far, no really rich gold mines have been found, but over a wide stretch of this vast mineral belt, good prospects can be found in many of the mountain water-ways, and I feel satisfied this valuable mineral will be found in payable quantities in many parts of that wide belt of mineral country.

With regard to the life of the late Ernest Henry prior to the first time I met him, a few notes may interest:—

He came to Queensland in 1859 with a good deal of capital, and purchased a station on the Dawson (Baroondah). This property he held for some years, sold out at a profit, purchased stock, and took up Mt. McConnel, but I forget whether he sold or abandoned this property, but about this time, 1864, there was a rush for country on the Flinders, so he purchased stock, and, as far as I can recollect, was the first man I think to take stock down what is now known as Jardine Valley. This was named after the Jardine Brothers, who made such a wonderful trip with stock to Cape York. This was in 1864, the year of extra heavy rain, and the teams got bogged at the spot where Hughenden station now stands. He held this property for some time, and finally sold out to his cousin, Robert Grey, and later on took up Burleigh, on Cambridge Creek, and stocked with cattle, but as there was a big slump in all Australian properties, very reluctantly he had to forfeit the country and move the stock. This was the fate of many fine men at that time; in fact, nearly all the Flinders stations were abandoned about this time, as there was little or no value attached to stock. However, he was still undaunted, and made a start for Burketown, most of the country on his way there being unoccupied, and landed in Burketown (April, 1866), about the time of the plague—I forget the year—but most of the Burketown residents at that time succumbed, and what were left were shipped to Sweer’s Island. Mr. Henry contracted the plague, or “Yellow Jack,” as it was called, but pulled through, and on travelling back towards the Flinders, struck a more southerly course, and struck what is known
as the Black Mountain, near which is the town of Cloncurry at the present day. At that time Mr. Henry knew but little about minerals, and thinking the rich iron ore was a valuable mineral, he carried a quantity to Peak Downs, where the copper mines were in full swing, and although the iron ore was practically valueless, he was advised that copper was often found in the neighbourhood of iron ore, so he returned to Cloncurry and found the Great Australian Mine, and the history of same is well known in all mining centres.