

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

ARRIVAL OF THE GULNARE.

The Gulnare arrived on Sunday morning, having 'made a good run round from Sydney. We give below an interesting letter from our own correspondent at Port Darwin, which we are sure will be read with interest: -

Fort Point, Port Darwin,
December 31, 1869.

Upwards of three months have now elapsed since the departure of the Gulnare for Adelaide, but there are as yet no signs of the long and anxiously expected steamer which the Surveyor-General promised would leave Adelaide within 20 days after his arrival. When the schooner left on the 28th September, every one but those who had applied to remain here on the permanent staff, was confident of being back in Adelaide by Christmas, or, at the very latest, New Year's Day, so sanguine were they that everything would be done to hasten the return of the party. That we are still without a vessel is most unaccountable, and fear is beginning to pervade some that the schooner has met with an accident and that neither she nor any tidings of her have yet reached Adelaide; but all earnestly hope that such a misfortune has not occurred. The loss of nearly 40 officers and men would indeed be a sad ending to the expedition. It is no improvement of matters here that our rations are running short. The last of the preserved meat has, I believe, been served out, and next week, unless a fresh supply arrives, some of the bullocks will have to be killed. The flour is full of weevil, which have destroyed its most nourishing qualities, and it is now hardly fit for food. A short time ago the men complained to Dr. Peel that they could not eat the food served out to them. The greater part of the meat (Booyoollee roast mutton), was stinking, and the flour too rotten to make bread with. Instead of giving orders for the issue of such good and wholesome food as was in the store, and which the men had a claim to by the terms of their agreement, he instructed the storekeeper to sell certain articles, such as cheese, biscuits, sardines, salmon, &c.,

and not satisfied with receiving the money they cost, prices were fixed upon the different articles which must have left a profit sufficient to satisfy any private storekeeper. The supply of spirits is quite exhausted, and for some time past wine has been served out, but it is expected to last only a few days longer. On the whole, the year 1869 closes to those here with anything but a lively prospect, and all hands experience a feeling of depression, which nothing but the sight of vessel from Adelaide can relieve.

The management of the party since the departure of Mr. Goyder calls for a word or two, but it is not my intention to chronicle all the small beer of the camp, touching upon the conduct of Dr. Peel, though it would not be a hard task to fill your columns with instances in which he has shown a lamentable lack of those qualities which men look for in a leader. Instead of retaining for himself the respect and willing obedience which were accorded to Mr. Goyder by every officer and man in the expedition, he has by his unwise actions earned the dislike of all hands. So strong is the feeling against him that a petition to the House of Assembly has been numerously signed by the men, asking that an enquiry may be made into his conduct, and enumerating several grave charges. In case of his present position not being confirmed, no action may be taken in the matter; still the allusion to it here will give some idea of the state of things since the departure of the Surveyor-General. Dr. Peel, in defending himself, will no doubt attempt to throw all the blame upon those under him, but he must not forget that before Mr. Goyder left he publicly attested that they were the finest lot of men that could possibly be brought together, and praised them in the most flattering terms for the manner in which they had conducted themselves and got through the work. The public, besides, will be slow to believe that the party which worked with such cordiality and good will under Mr. Goyder could have become suddenly disaffected from any other cause than improper treatment and bad management.

Leaving, however, such an unpleasant subject, I will hasten to jot down a few of the principal items of interest which have occurred since September. The men have been chiefly employed on the road leading to the table land, which will require, however, to have another good month's labor expended upon it before it approaches anything like completion. Six commodious huts and a large and substantial stockyard have been erected, and a log mess-tent, intended for the permanent staff, is in course of erection. A well has been sunk upwards of 70 feet near the camp, and good water obtained. A dingey has also been built upon the remains of the one purchased from the Moonta, and which was stove in several months ago. The boats have occasionally been engaged in fetching coral for lime, water from Peel's well, fishing, &c. One man has been constantly employed catching birds, for the Botanic Gardens I presume, but up to the present the success attending his labors has been far from equivalent to the expense incurred. The dispatch of a party to the Adelaide River in search of the stock left by the last expedition has, however, been attended with more valuable results. The party, consisting of Messrs. J. Deane (leader), H. D. Packard, C. N. Greene, J. M. Lambell, J. F. Roberts, D. T. Beetson, and G. Hughes, started from here on Monday, the 11th October, with five pack horses, and returned on the following Friday with three fine mares, one grey gelding, and a young stallion (since dead), which they had found on a large plain near Malacca Creek, and about ten miles south of the Narrows. In consequence of their having seen numerous cattle tracks when out they were dispatched on the following Monday, and by the 30th October they returned again with eight head of cattle, four bullocks, two bulls, and one bull and one cow calf. The mob when found numbered eleven; but one bull broke away, and no time was left to look for it, on account of rations running short; and one bullock and a cow died on the road back. The party visited the Narrows during their second trip, and saw there a great many pig and goat tracks, and it

great many pig and goat tracks, and it was thought that an attempt would be made to recover some of these animals; but Dr. Peel considered that the season was too far advanced to permit a party making the trip again in safety.

Christmas Day passed off as pleasantly as could be expected under the circumstances in which we are placed. The day previous a party was sent out to a jungle creek and swamp some ten miles distant, where a large number of geese were known to be settled, and returned the same evening with 60 geese and several ducks, which had fallen to five guns. These, with an extra ration of fruit, were served out to the different messes, and together with *half* a bottle of ale per man, in addition to the usual ration of wine, formed a very good makeshift for a Christmas dinner. It is, perhaps, worthy of remark here, that although the rations were known to be running short, and the men were grumbling, and with good cause, at the meat which was being served out, the officer in charge refused more than one application from the officers, who had nothing else to do but keep guard, to be allowed to go out and shoot geese for the camp, when it was well known from the stockmen that there were thousands at the place mentioned above. The anniversary of the colony was not proclaimed a holiday; but the men refused to work, urging that they were entitled to it, as they had worked on Good Friday and the Queen's Birthday.

Donald McAulay and M. Moyses, well-sinkers, met with a severe accident just after the schooner left; but they are now recovered. A lot of loose powder, which they had poured out for the purpose of driving mosquitoes away from the well they were sinking, suddenly exploded, and burnt them badly about the face and arms. Shortly after this event a man named W. Hayball fell from the roof of one of the new huts which he was thatching, and injured himself in the back. He is recovering slowly.

The natives have been with us and left again. On the evening of December 11, old Mira and his brother Gimouri came down the road to the camp; but they were stopped half way by the doctor,

were stopped half way by the doctor, who ordered them back, and refused to take a present of live ducks which Mira offered him. The old chief did not seem to relish this change from the hospitable treatment that he had hitherto met with; but went away quietly. The next day, Sunday, he was found camped at Peel's Well, with about a dozen of his tribe. A great many men visited them, and a brisk barter was carried on. The doctor, on hearing of this, issued an order prohibiting barter, and men leaving the camp without leave. On the following Sunday about 20 more natives joined old Mira, and there was then a repetition of the greetings and the barterings of the previous week. The next morning the natives came up to the stockyard, which is on the top of the table land, just in sight of the camp, without any weapons; and old Mira walked down the road towards the camp. One of the officers stupidly pelted him with stones; but he stood his ground until one of the guard went up to him and asked him in the native dialect to keep outside the camp, and he walked back. When he joined his companions they sat down on the stockyard fence and commenced talking to the guards in the most friendly manner. Orders were, however, given to the officer of the guard to fire over their heads and send them away; but he very wisely refrained from doing so, and in a short time they left and went back to their camp. Almost immediately afterwards several carbine and revolver shots were heard in that direction. The guard rushed down and found the camp completely deserted by the natives, but more than half the things the poor creatures had received in barter were lying about, and there was every evidence of the place having been left in haste and confusion. We have not seen anything of the natives since. Whether they were fired upon or not it is difficult to say, but the shots were distinctly heard in the camp, and the firm belief is that they were fired at the natives. The sooner this system of dealing with the natives is put an end to the

better, for it is one of the first principles of their savage nature to

principles of their savage nature to retaliate an injury, and more especially one inflicted without cause or reason. It may be said, and it has been repeatedly in this camp, that if any were shot, it would serve them right for Bennett's murder; but nothing can justify the punishment of the innocent for the guilty. Mira and his tribe were at Port Darwin the day after Mr. Bennett died, and the old chief wept like a child when taken in to see Guy, and was shown the spear ends taken from Mr. Bennett's wounds. He asserts that the murder was committed by a man named Mepinge, belonging the Wodunger tribe, living about the head of the Adelaide, and his description of the man corresponds with that given by Guy. He offered, if a party was sent up the river in boats, to lead them to where the murderer was to be found. When asked why the Tarkker blacks (those belonging to Port Darwin) kept away from us so long, he said that shortly after Bennett's death some of the party enticed them by offers of food and then shot them. This confirms a rumor current in the camp. Some of Mira's people also spoke of a white man of tall stature with a flowing grey beard, who they say is living with a tribe to the eastward of the Adelaide. They had a quarrel with the tribe some time back, and one of the lads, who was down here the other day, bears in his shoulder a spear wound, said to have been inflicted by him. This is possibly the same white man of whom Captain Cadell heard so much.

The wet weather has set in, though we have not yet had much rain. There were several showers during October and November, and about 6½ inches have fallen this month.

Fort Point, January 29, 1870.

The Gulnare arrived here about mid-day, January 6, after a fine passage of 25 days, and her appearance was hailed with welcome, after the doubts and fears which had existed as to her safety. The news of Dr. Milner's appointment gave general satisfaction, and there is no doubt that a better man could not have been appointed. The Kohinoor on the evening of the 21st in a leaky state, having been bumping during the greater part of the day upon a sand bank just outside the

day upon a sand bank just outside the Heads. Gangs of men were sent on board to work the pumps, and on the evening of the 23rd, the sheep and a good deal of the deck lumber having been landed, she was towed on to the hard flat just in front of the camp for repairs. She laid in perfect safety within half a stone's throw of the tents, and at low water it was found that she had not sustained any serious injury; the oakum only having been started out of a few of the seams near the sternpost. Two or three tides sufficed to effect the repairs and unload her, and she is now taking in ballast from drays, and will probably haul off into deep water to-night.

The women who came up in the Kohinoor were placed with their husbands in the new huts, and appear to be very comfortable. Mr. and Mrs. Packard are living in one of the iron houses. The troopers are located in the large hut which was being built for a mess tent, and have fine roomy quarters. Two of them—Boord and Smith—return by the Kohinoor, having been suspended for alleged misconduct.

There is nothing to note respecting the proceedings of the party since the beginning of the year. During the first part of the month most of the labor was expended upon the road, and since the arrival of the vessels the greater number of the hands have been engaged in discharging cargo, &c. I notice by one of the Adelaide papers that a jetty is supposed to have been built here, alongside of which a vessel could lie and take in a cargo of horses in a few hours, but it is entirely a mistake. A stone jetty was commenced before Mr. Goyder left, but it has not been touched since.

The weather shows signs of clearing up, though we may expect some heavy showers yet. Nearly 26 inches of rain have, I believe, fallen this month.

Mr. Schultze and his son have been unremitting in their labors, and they send back a magnificent collection of plants, birds, insects, &c. At the request of Dr. Milner, Mr. Schultze has consented to remain here some time longer.

A row took place on board the Kohinoor to-day, and one of the seamen named Kemp was brought before Messrs. J. S. Milner, S.M., and G. G. McLachlan,

J. S. Milner, S.M., and G. G. McLachlan, J.P., charged with assaulting Police-trooper Stratton while in the execution of his duty, and also with assaulting Captain Bicknell. For the former offence he was fined £10 or three months' imprisonment, and for the latter £5 or one month's imprisonment. He will be sent to Adelaide by the Gulnare.

The sailing of the Gulnare is fixed for daylight to-morrow morning, and the Kohinoor will be ready for sea about Tuesday next. Both vessels will return by way of Torres Straits. The Gulnare takes the following officers:—H. Harvey, D. D. Daly, W. Mills, C. N. Greene, C. Giles, A. L. Mackay, C. W. Sprigg, D. L. Batson, G. S. Aldridge, T. Bee, W. M. Hardy, R. C. Burton, and seven men. The Kohinoor will take Dr. Peel, Messrs. J. M. Lambell, S. King, jun., J. F. Roberts, W. W. Hoare, J. S. Brooking, 54 men of the survey staff, and two troopers.