Name: *Triumph in the Tropics, 1959*

**Section name:** Part One, Chapter VIII, Dispersion and Extension

**Pages:** 64–74

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CHAPTER VIII
DISPERSION AND EXTENSION

Exploration and Occupation

J. D. Rogers\(^{(34)}\) to whom many writers are indebted for much of their material concerning Australia, describes the period we now intend to discuss as the “second epoch.”

“It was,” he wrote, ‘an epoch of dispersion and extension ... new seed plots were planted as far as far could be from Sydney; and those which were already planted spread as far as they could spread, and in some cases grew into one another. The first process may be described as a process of dispersion, or the deliberate opening up of new centres; the second process an almost unconscious extension from a single centre. Dispersion was invariably preceded by little maritime discoveries and involved mighty political issues. Extension was invariably preceded by great discoveries by land and was solely due to the simplest economic causes...’

By sideheads to his main narrative, which make up an admirable pen picture, Rogers continues:

“There were four motives for dispersion: (1) to segregate bad convicts; (2) to forestall the French; (3) to carry out theories of colonisation; and (4) to add links of Empire... Extension was due—not to wars and treaties like Canadian and Indian extension, nor like Australian dispersion, to theories of colonisation or to international competition—but solely to commerce. Sydney was commercial queen of the Southern Hemisphere, and the commerce of Sydney meant WOOL. Wool was the only export which grew increasingly, unremittingly in every Australian colony. ... In the English market to which all this wool went, its rivals were... outpaced. After 1825 Spain and Germany waned while Australia waxed, and at the close of the epoch Australia produced four times the wool that Spain plus Germany produced, and half the wool that the whole world produced to the English market... It was pre-eminently the age of wool; and Australians were driven to seek for their flocks 'fresh fields and pasturing new.' The first two movements were separate disconnected movements to the south and north.”

The southward movement, though of great importance, only interests us indirectly, but must be mentioned in passing.

Hume and Hovell, pushing west and south-west in 1823-24 from the Yass Plains and the known areas of Murrumbidgee and Manero Plains, discovered the Tumut tributary; crossed the Murray (at what is now Albury) and its affluents: the Mitta Mitta, the Ovens and the Goulburn; crossed the western extension of the Great Dividing Range, and reached the site of present-day Geelong, on Pt. Phillip.

The Murrumbidgee from the Tumut to Manero Plains was taken up at once; an abortive colony was set up in error at Westernport (and soon abandoned) and Victoria was not further developed for a decade—and then only from Tasmania. Almost at the moment that Oxley was contemplating the site of Brisbane, the future capital of what was to be Queensland, Hume and Hovell were on the outskirts of what was to be Melbourne, the future capital of Victoria. Both Queensland and Victoria were still parts of “New South Wales.”

Cunningham in Queensland

The exploration northerly brings to prominence, as previously mentioned, one of the greatest names in the history of Queensland—that of Allan Cunningham.\(^{(35)}\) Born at Wimbledon in England of a Scottish family, on 13th July 1791, he went to school at Putney; spent some time in a conveyancer's office in Lincoln's Inn; and then decided to apply himself to botany as a life work. It happened that at Kew he became associated with Robert Brown (formerly botanist of the “Investigator”) and was keenly interested in that great man's work on Australian plants. In 1814 he was appointed Botanical Collector to the Royal Gardens and left England for Brazil with James Bowie on 29th October 1814. From that time until late in 1816 he was engaged in collecting plants there and then received orders from Sir Joseph Banks to proceed to New South Wales. He arrived in the “Surrey” on 20th December 1816, and soon afterwards was living in a cottage at Parramatta. Ida Lee says of his career as botanist and explorer:

“It would be difficult to say in which field of enterprise he won most renown. The collections of new plants and seeds that he sent and brought home from the most distant shores of Australasia were hardly surpassed by those made by Robert Brown; and, with regard to Cunningham's explorations, we find that historians to-day place him in the very front rank of discoverers of the Southern Continent... It was not until after he had journeyed with Oxley's party into the interior of New South Wales in 1817... that the desire to study anything beyond the flora of the country entered his mind... The days, then, which followed Cunningham's coming to the Colony were glorious days, appealing to men of spirit and courage to blaze a road through country where no civilized man had yet been; and to learn whether it possessed the features of grass and water, absolutely necessary, if civilization was to be drawn from the small settlements near the coast into the heart of the continent. How nobly Cunningham responded to the call is well known—perhaps by none better than by those who live in the townships along the route that he toiled so earnestly to discover...”

One very endearing note emerges among many others from Ida Lee's references where she says:

“In after years, many people on perceiving a single specimen of

\(^{(34)}\) J. D. Rogers; op. cit. pp. 78 to 91.

\(^{(35)}\) These particulars are drawn largely from Ida Lee's "Early Explorers in Australia" Methuen & Co. 1925.
some strange plant, flourishing alone in the native earth in an isolated spot, have wondered why and how it came there. One day when conversing with Dr. Lang he (Cunningham) said: I always carry into the interior a small bagful of peachstones (in his journals he enumerates various fruit stones and seeds) and whenever I find a piece of good soil in the wilderness I cause it to be dug up and drop in a few, in the hope of providing a meal for some famished European... or some hungry blackfellow. In Sydney and around Parramatta he was equally eager to distribute seeds of English flowers—usually specimens of the commoner kinds—to those earlier generations of Australians, who thus learned to love the primrose, the wallflower and the violet, as had their forefathers in forming the minds of the children, many of whom were destined to make their homes in that very wilderness, and to plant their gardens there. How much the flowers meant, too, to those British people who had left their native land!

About 1822, he began exploration independently. His several voyages with Phillip Parker King to the north and north-west coasts of Queensland and of Australia, generally, gave him a very wide acquaintance with the botany of the mainland, and he also visited Tasmania and New Zealand. (So far as they affect Queensland see pages 83 et seq.)

It will be remembered that Cunningham had already discovered Pandora’s Pass over the ridge which separates the Conadilly from the Macquarie River in New South Wales. Rogers points out that in 1827, he ascended the Hunter River, which served a number of settlers already; crossed the great range by a pass found by Surveyor Dangar (1824) to the sources of the Conadilly; and then, proceeded north to what is now the south Queensland border, where he discovered the Gwydir, the Dumaresq (named for Governor Darling’s wife’s family), and then the Condamine, opening the land at its headwaters: the “Darling Downs.” Squatters promptly followed him to the Conadilly and the Peel Rivers—all that area becoming known as the Liverpool Plains area; with a longer lag, they reached the sources of the Gwydir, MacIntyre and Dumaresq rivers—which came to be known as the New England district—and, last of all, to the Darling Downs—a name which was applied to all the area north of the MacIntyre and the Dumaresq. That last-named area, which is essentially in Queensland, was, at the time, quite remote, and it was essential to its development that a route to the sea should be discovered to make it economically practicable.

From the point of view of Queensland, this is a story in itself, just as it is the crown of Cunningham’s laborious journeys.

Travelling over the eastern skirts of the Liverpool Plains he pursued a northerly route up past the present township of Warialla (N.S.W.). He then veered easterly, crossing the Dumaresq River (his “MacIntyre Brook”) a little south-east of Beebo and the MacIntyre Brook (not named by him) some distance east of Inglewood in Queensland. (35)

Cunningham’s first view of the Darling Downs was, he tells us, from a gap in the forest ridge which he had entered on 4 June 1827, when “quitting the more open forest ground... with great bodily exertion to man and horse we penetrated about four miles through thickets ten feet high and upon making forest ground on its eastern skirts we traced a narrow valley (falling easterly) in search of water.” Next day, E.N.E. two miles, they crossed Brushy Vale (1,504 feet above sea level) and its rocky creek, and, from the pitch of a ridge above it (1,717 feet) obtained “a most agreeable view” of open country.

“We had not advanced half a mile before we came upon a patch of open plain skirted by a low ridge on its western side and forest ground at the opposite point. With great satisfaction, we perceived... that these extensive tracts were not wanting in water.”

On 6 June 1827 (precisely thirty-two years before the Letters Patent of 6 June 1859 that provided for the establishment of Queensland as a separate colony) Cunningham made his camp at 28° 0' 37" S., 151° 41' 30" E., at 1,402 feet above sea level.

“After quitting our resting place immediately after noon on 6th June, proceeding up the river half a mile, we crossed to the other side by a ford... From this stream which was named Condamine’s River... we entered upon the extensive downs pursuing our way to the E.N.E. along their southern margin.”

Hamilton (36) suggests he had proceeded from Inglewood up near Gore and over Thane’s Creek to reach the Condamine River near South Toolburra, and that he followed up the south side of Glenn-gallan Creek and climbed Mt. Dumaresq; thence making his way round Mt. Sturt up the Swanfels Valley (his “Logan Vale”), and that he camped near the present Swanfels State School. “It is an odd coincidence,” says Krause of Kalbar, (37) “that while Cunningham was recording these discoveries in his journal, his friend Commandant Logan was only about fifteen air miles away across the range that opposed so forbidding a barrier between the Downs and the coast at Moreton Bay, exploring the Fassifern district.” (38)
to the meridian of 152°. On the north they are bounded by a rise of
Darling Downs in honour of His Excellency, are situated in or about
central lower portion throughout its whole length and falls westerly
lightly wooded ridges, skirted on their opposite margin by a level
forest of box and white gum. A chain of deep ponds passes along the
central lower portion throughout its whole length and falls westerly
into the Condamine River.” (This is Glengallan Creek, but 1827 was
a drought year, and it had ceased running.)

Cunningham also noted (from “Table Mountain—Mt. Dumaresq—at the foot of which his tents stood) a vast expanse of open land N.W. to W. to S. “within the scope of twenty miles showing every pleasing feature of hill and dale, woodland and plain.” To the north he named Pecl’s Plains (Clifton Plains) and to the south, Canning Downs. Later on, from a high ridge he noticed:

“a very deeply excavated part of the main range . . . to the pitch of
which there appeared a tolerably easy rise along the back of a forest
ridge from the head of Millar’s Valley (now Maryvale). So remarkable
a hollow in the principal range I determined not to leave un-
examined, since . . . it might prove to be a very practicable pass from
the eastern country (i.e. the Moreton Bay area) to the Darling Downs.”

On 13 June 1827 Cunningham stayed at his farthest northern
camp (28° 10’ 45” S.; 152° 7’ 45” E.; 1,877 feet above sea level),
but sent two of his men to examine this hollow. They reported that:

“on ascending the south head they observed a rather easier passage
over the range where a road could be constructed, the acclivity from
Millar’s Valley being by no means abrupt and the fall easterly from
the range to the forest ground at its foot appeared exceedingly
moderate.”

North-east of them lay an extensive tract of grazing land with no
obvious obstacle between them and the Brisbane River area. What
they had seen, however, was not, as is commonly thought, the gap
afterwards penetrated by Cunningham and called by his name, but
that now known as Spicer’s Gap.

“On his homeward journey,” Hamilton (36) says, “Cunningham
crossed the Condamine not far from the old homestead of the Chauvel
family (39) South Canning Downs, and then camped some days at the
Undercliffe Falls (N.S.W.). He again crossed (what was to be the
border) back into Queensland a little south of Wilson’s Downfall, but
was blocked there by very difficult granite country and a deep ravine—
evidently at the head of Quart Pot Creek and not far from the
Pyramids National Park. Forced north-westerly, he circled round, then
travelled south-westerly, crossing Tenterfield Creek, the Mole River
and the McIntryre (his ‘Burrell’s Creek’) . . . and so back to the
Hunter River in New South Wales. His route thus marks a rough
figure 8, the top loop circling Warwick.”

(He was thirty-seven years old on 13th July, about a fortnight before
he reached Sydney at the end of this vital exploratory journey.)

Meanwhile, the penal settlement at Brisbane, seventy miles away
to the east of the range, peopled by doubly-convicted convicts,
progressed slowly amid its misery. Lt. Millar had been succeeded
by Captain Bishop, who, in his turn, was succeeded by Captain
Patrick Logan (1825-1830), a man who, as indicated previously,
was an explorer of vigour, courage and enterprise, but who was also
a martinet in his official life. He worked on the rule that his soldiers
should fear him more than they feared any enemy, and that the
convicts, who had offended the sovereign law, should be constantly
aware of the sharp edge of its severity.

To a man of his incisive character, the incompetence, indolence
and ignorant inefficiency of the troops and the felons, both, were
galling in the extreme. He escaped the frustration of his surround-
ings by the creative thrill of exploration, and his return to the drab
settlement tended always to revive his resentment, which expressed
itself in ruthless flogging even for minor offences—in the name of
justice and discipline.

It was in his day that many a convict fled to the bush, inviting the
even chance of death, or a life of savagery among savages, rather
than live longer under the threat of the lash.

Logan was murdered by convicts or aboriginals or both on 17
October 1830 while on a solitary trip towards Mt. Irwin, between
Ipswich and Esk, and his battered body was discovered several days
later by a search party sent out by his second-in-command and
successor, Captain Clunie. By command of the Governor, Logan
was accorded a public funeral in Sydney. Allan Cunningham spoke
of him with admiration and lamented his loss; and an official state-
ment published “by His Excellency’s command” contained inter alia
the following:

“His life was devoted to the public service. Professionally, he
possessed those qualities which distinguish the best officers, and, in
the conduct of an extensive public establishment, his services were
highly important to the Colony.”

Oxley and Lockyer

In 1823, Oxley had proceeded forty-two miles up the Brisbane
River, with Finnegan as guide; in 1824 he had (again with Fin-
negan) explored it a further fourteen miles; in 1825 Pilot Gray
(whose report is lost) is said (40) to have reached a point sixty-nine
miles beyond Brisbane following his buoying of the channel of
Moreton Bay and the entrance to the Brisbane River; and in Septem-
ber 1825 Edmund Lockyer (accompanied by Finnegan) ascended
and explored the river for 150 miles (up to a point one mile below
Cressbrook Creek). He discovered the stream that bears his name;

(36) “Exploration by Major Edmund Lockyer of the Brisbane River in 1825,” a
paper read before the Historical Society of Queensland, 28th April 1910, by
Nicholas Lockyer, C.B.E., I.S.O.
and also the Stanley River; he went several miles up the Bremer Creek or river (which by an obvious printer’s error appears in the printed account as “Bumer’s Creek”); and he was the first discoverer of coal (about three miles below the site of the present-day Ipswich Waterworks reservoir) in Queensland. Lockyer, (41) though he printed account as “Burner’s Creek”); and he was the first discoverer and also the Stanley River; he went several miles up the Bremer Creek or river (which by an obvious printer’s error appears in the printed account as “Bumer’s Creek”); and he was the first discoverer of coal (about three miles below the site of the present-day Ipswich Waterworks reservoir) in Queensland. Lockyer, (41) though he surrendered reluctantly to the pressure of Oxley’s prestige regarding

the Brisbane River being an outlet from the vast morass in the interior into which the Macquarie was supposed to flow, said in the Sydney “Gazette” of 20 October 1825, on his return:

“At this time the river, where the boats were, had risen six to eight feet from the late rains and, as this place, not fourteen miles above (the boats), had not the least appearance of a rise, it convinced me that the Brisbane River has its chief source of supply from the Brisbane Mountains”; and: “As I have no doubt that the river has its rise in these mountains, I have named them the Brisbane Mountains.”

Oxley had insisted that the Brisbane River where it wound round the Pine ridge of hills flowed “directly from the West.” Lockyer’s report showed it nearly 100 miles beyond that point, still coming from the north-west by north. Oxley was also exasperated by Lockyer’s somewhat indiscreet suggestion that Finnegan (who had gradually adopted inflated ideas of his accidental discovery with his companion castaways of the Brisbane River itself in June-July 1823) had been insufficiently recognised. Oxley ignored or belittled Lockyer’s chart and led Cunningham to say: “I have left the river just where my late friend, Mr. Oxley, did, rather than add to it the trace of its channel by Major Lockyer.” One after another, historians, without other inquiry, have repeated the aspersions of inaccuracy and so on cast on Lockyer by Oxley, but Lockyer was right on both counts, as Cunningham was to learn by his 1828 and 1829 visits to the Moreton Bay side of the range and the Brisbane River, and Oxley was wrong.

In passing, it may first be mentioned, moreover, that Lockyer was responsible for the first sea-going vessel entering the Brisbane River. Arriving at “Amity Point,” the master of the cutter (Captain Pen-son) rounded Peel Island, beat up to Green Island, and ultimately reached the entrance to the river, where Pilot Gray had reported no vessel could go over the bar. Lockyer went on by small boat, but “on going over the bar found thirteen feet, it being then high water.

(41) Major Lockyer, who had had twenty years’ service in India and Ceylon, arrived in Sydney in May 1825, in command of a detachment of the 57th Regiment. On 31st August 1825, he was instructed by Governor Sir Thos. Brisbane to proceed by the cutter “Mermaid” (84 tons) to explore the Brisbane River “so far as you can do so with prudence”; “the animals, birds, minerals, and natural productions; the nature, disposition, complexion, etc. of the natives, etc.”—and to do it in six weeks! He left on 1st September and returned on 16th October, 1825. This distinguished officer, who had so early antagonised the petty powers that be—as it is easy to do in an island of petty powers—was later entrusted within six weeks! He left on 1st September and returned on 16th October, 1825. This distinguished officer, who had so early antagonised the petty powers that be—as it is easy to do in an island of petty powers—was later entrusted with the important task of exploring King George’s Sound (Albany) in Western Australia (1826-7) to “forestall the French.” and carried out his assignment with his usual efficiency.

I wrote back, on arrival at Edenglassie” (i.e. Brisbane), “to the Master and requested that he should attempt to come in, which he did, and sailed up to the settlement, where he landed the stores and took on board a cargo of fine timber. He sailed out again and has since been in and out with full cargo, drawing ten feet, without touching. For sixty miles from (Amity Point) any vessel drawing ten feet might proceed up this fine river . . . the thick mangroves at the entrance and its low shores completely mask it, and it is not observable a mile distant.”

The “Mermaid,” therefore, was the first vessel to enter the Brisbane River and to ship out a cargo directly. (It was a cargo of fine pine logs cut opposite the settlement, at what is now the densely populated suburb of Kangaroo Point, South Brisbane!)

Cunningham’s Gap

Following his discovery of the Darling Downs (1827) when, as will be recalled, Captain Logan was exploring the Moreton Bay side of the dividing range only fifteen air miles away, Cunningham was commissioned to find a pass between the two areas, and he thought, from his earlier observations, that he could readily do so. He embarked in June 1826 in the ship “Lucy Ann” for Moreton Bay and after various calls arrived there on 1 July. In July and August 1828, Cunningham and Logan attempted to reach the Gap by following the Logan River back to the hills, and by “Mt. Lindsay” (Mt. Barney), but without success. Logan had previously discovered “Limestone Hills” (Ipswich) and had set up kilns there for his building operations in Brisbane. (A few convicts with a guard of soldiers burnt 300 to 400 bushels of it weekly, and it was sent to Brisbane by boat.) He had also discovered the river subsequently named after him and was keen to ascertain the exact mountain that Cook had called Mt. Warning in May 1770. He had supposed it to be one of the peaks of the Macpherson Range. He wished also to check the recent discoveries of Captain Rous of H.M.S. “Rainbow” (a son of Lord Stradbroke), whose name, family and ship are recorded by Rous Channel, Stradbroke Island, Rainbow Reach, and, in fact, Ipswich. Rous had discovered the Richmond River and confirmed others, e.g. the Tweed (found by Oxley).

After Logan’s return to the settlement Cunningham tried again, making his second start from “Limestone Hills” (Ipswich), reducing his party to a “flying squad”—slow flying!—of a driver, two bul-locks and two servants, besides himself. (Ipswich is eighteen miles S.W. by W. from Brisbane as the crow flies, but was most easily reached at that time by water—forty-eight miles.)

Cunningham left Limestone Hills (42) on 18 August 1828 directly.

(42) At the northerly exit from Ipswich a cairn commemorates Cunningham “who camped under these fig trees in 1828.” The fig trees are still there (1958).
for the gap, making his way up the course of the Bremer River. The stony ground quickly made the feet of the bullocks tender and his first tentative forays failed to find a practicable passage way. From his camp on 24th he sent one of his men, who had been with him in 1827 on the Darling Downs, to trace a series of forest ridges, and "to my utmost gratification, he returned at dusk, having traced the ridge about two and a half miles to the foot of the Dividing Range, whence he ascended into the pass and, from a grassy head immediately above it, beheld the extensive country lying west of the Main Range. He recognised both Darling and Canning Downs, patches of Peel's Plains and several remarkable points of the forest hills on that side... Resting my oxen on 25th, I determined to occupy the whole of the day in examining this very important passage, as it would lead from the coast lands through a foritable main range of mountains to a vast extent of pastoral country on the western side of the mountains."

He was at the foot of the pass, bounded by "stupendous heads," the southerly one of which he named Mt. Mitchell, the northerly Mt. Cordeaux. Climbing a steep slope and following a wall of bare rock, he suddenly found himself in a defile through which, in less than half a mile of almost level surface, he reached the opposite flank of the main range, from which the waters ran west towards Millar's Valley (Maryvale).

In his journal he jubilantly wrote:

"This pass, or door of entrance from the sea coast to a beautiful pastoral country of undefined extent was, this day, 25th August 1828, visited by Allan Cunningham and a convict servant, and the practicability of a high road constructed through it at some future date, most fully ascertained." (43)

After an absence of twelve days, Cunningham reached Limestone Hills again and wrote of it: "It is highly probable that upon the site of these limestone hills a town one day will be raised."

This prediction was amply justified, for Ipswich (named for Ipswich in Suffolk in honour of Rous, who came from that area) was soon to be the head of navigation from Brisbane; the taking-off spot for the Downs; and, at a later date, a competitor with Brisbane (as were also Cleveland, Toorbul and Gladstone) for selection as capital of the Colony.

For the moment, however, there appeared no anxious on the part of the government to open up the Downs, and to connect that vast area to the sea by a road that would have increased its immediate value a hundredfold.

The object of the authorities was simply the establishment and the undisturbed maintenance of a penal settlement at Moreton Bay for doubly-convicted convicts; they preferred and expected its absolute isolation—approach to it was strictly prohibited by a fifty-

(43) A monument in the pass (Cunningham's Gap) commemorates this vital discovery.
Aboriginal Man
(From the Picturesque Atlas of Australia)

Aboriginal Woman
(From the Picturesque Atlas of Australia)

"Trespass" post, marking limit of aboriginal approach to Brisbane at night.

By courtesy of (Mrs.) Ann Finlay, granddaughter of T. B. Stephens who built "Coomboquepa" here. The site is now occupied by Somerville House, Vulture St., Sth. Brisbane. The people shown include members of his family.

PLATE XVI.
mile limiting line and the need for formal permission—and for some years nothing was done to improve the natural facilities nor to reduce the great difficulty of the route.

Cunningham was still to make one more journey in Queensland. In May 1829 he returned and, in a tour of six weeks, he traced the principal stream of the Brisbane River as far as 26° 25' S. until its channel assumed the character of a chain of very shallow stagnant pools; finally he reached Lister's Peak, his northernmost point.

In this trip Cunningham crossed over the Little Liverpool Range near Grandchester, Laidley Creek near Laidley, the Lockyer near Gatton, and thence up almost to Murphy's Creek. He remarked the "four mounts to the S.W." and, crossing over, climbed the "conical one," Mt. Davidson (his "Hay's Peak"). "The singular flat-topped hill, without a tree on its summit but clothed with grass as yellow as ripened wheat, bearing N.W. two miles," he named "Mt. Twiss" (our Table Top, so prominent from Picnic Point at Toowoomba). On his way back to the Lockyer, he traversed a patch of ground which "had a snow-white salt-like appearance—coated with an alkaline salt" (this was the "Helidon spa" area).

He followed the Lockyer down to its junction with the Brisbane, and then proceeded up that stream, passing near Esk and Cressbrook and up past Colinton to "Lister's Peak."

"In this excursion," he said, "I made such observations as fully established two facts, viz.: That the Brisbane River, at one period supposed to be an outlet of the Macquarie, etc., originates on the eastern side of the Dividing Range, its chief sources being in elevated lands lying almost on the coast line between the parallels of 26° and 27°; and that the main ranges which separate the coast waters from those that flow inland, continue to the north in one unbroken chain as far as the eye could discover . . . and present no opening or hollow part in their elevated ridge through which to admit of a road being made to the interior beyond them. My pass, therefore, through these lofty mountains—the mean elevation of which above the shores of Moreton Bay cannot be less than 4,000 feet—seems thus the only opening to the interior country, from the coast, between the parallels of 26° and 29° South."

The former disposed once for all of Oxley's theory; the latter was incorrect—there are other routes, but, from Cunningham's point of observation, as Coote pointed out, the peculiar overlapping of the spurs of the range that project easterly sometimes for many miles, masks any break from the plains below between the parallels he mentions (26° to 29° S.).

Cunningham returned to England by the "Forth," arriving on 10 July 1831 in sight of the English coast, which he had left seventeen

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(45) By Oxley.
years before. His brother Richard accepted the position of Colonial Botanist in 1833, but was murdered by aboriginals on 30 April 1835, whom he encountered while lost in the bush, when a member of Sir Thomas Mitchell’s exploring party that year. Allan Cunningham returned on hearing this news (arriving in Sydney on 12 February 1837), and assumed his brother’s post. He soon found the work he was called on to do in what he contemptuously called “the Government Cabbage Garden” quite unacceptable and returned to private life and botanical collecting. He too, however, showed signs of the avitaminosis that so devastated the physical resistance of many of our early explorers’ lives from Oxley to Sturt, and on 27 June 1839 died at Sydney, two weeks short of his forty-eighth birthday.

He was, indeed, the foster father of Queensland, for his discovery of the Gap was to be to Queensland what the breaching of the Blue Mountains had been to New South Wales; what Sturt’s tracing of the Murray was to South Australia; and what the discovery of gold was to be to Victoria.