

CHAPTER VII.

The last of the Sovereigns of the Sydney Tribe "King Bungaree"—His son.

My acquaintance with His Majesty was very short. As was his usual habit, he visited the ship "Thames" in which I arrived in the Colony. His sable Majesty, in his native barge, a bark canoe, presented himself to make the usual inquiries as to the name of the captain, and to inspect the steward's pantry, receiving tribute of various articles of food and raiment; and although he was adorned with a cocked hat and brass plate, I could not help contrasting, to his disadvantage, His Majesty's appearance with that of the North-American chieftains with whom I had been in the habit of mixing; however, years of drunkenness and some starvation no doubt had had their effect in emaciating his frame—the blessings which civilization has bestowed upon the unfortunate aboriginal population.

The following spirited sketch is copied from the *S. M. Herald*, being an extract from Dickens' *All the Year Round*, evidently the production of an Australian:—

There are few old Australian colonists to whom the name of Bungaree is not familiar, but I conceive it right that the whole world should know something of this departed monarch, and of his habits and peculiarities. Honored as I was by his favour, politely greeted as I always was whenever I met His Majesty in the streets of Sydney, flattered as I was when he invited me occasionally to accompany him in his boat to "go kedge fess," I consider myself as well qualified to become his biographer, as was Mr. Boswell to write the life of Doctor Johnson, or Lord John Russell that of Thomas Moore.

King Bungaree and myself were contemporaries; but there was a vast difference between our ages. When I first knew him he was an old man, over sixty, and I a boy of twelve. It would be false to say that I cannot account for the great liking the king always had for me, for the truth is I was in the habit of lending him small sums of money, bread and meat, and not unfrequently a glass of rum. Many a time have I slyly visited the larder and the decanters on the sideboard, to minister to the wants of the monarch. I used the word "lend," because the king never said "give." It was invariably "len' it half a dump" (7½d.), "len' it glass o' grog," "len' it loaf o' bread," "len' it ole shirt." It is needless, perhaps, to state that, although in some respects the memory of King Bungaree was as extraordinary as that of the late King George the Third, he was utterly oblivious of the extent of his obligations, so far as repayment was concerned.

In person, King Bungaree was about 5 feet 8 inches high, not very stout and not very thin, except as to his legs, which were mere spindles. His countenance was benignant to the last degree, and there was a kind and humorous sparkle in his eye (especially when it was lighted up by liquor) which was, to say the least of it, very cheerful to behold.

King Bungaree's dress consisted of the cocked hat and full-dress coat of a general officer or colonel, an old shirt, and—that was all. I never saw him in pantaloons, or shoes, or stockings. Once, I remember, he wore a worsted sock on his left foot, but that was in consequence of having wounded himself by treading on a broken bottle.

As the king was a person of irregular habits, he generally slept, as well as fished, in his clothes, and his tailor's bill would not have been enormous, even if he had had a tailor; but, as he "borrowed" his uniform, as well as his money, bread, and rum, his finances were in no way embarrassed. Every new Governor, from Governor Macquarie down to Governor Gipps (during whose administration Bungaree died), supplied