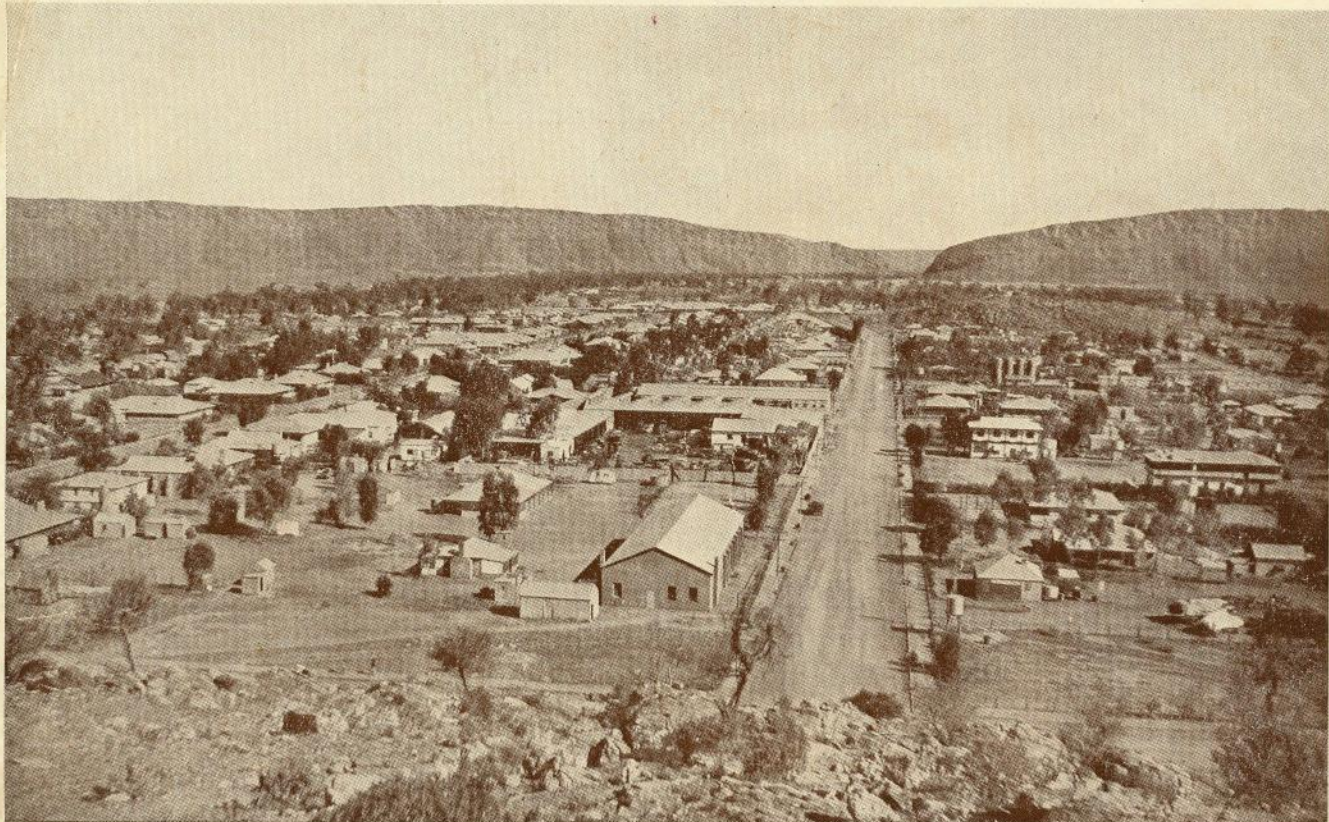


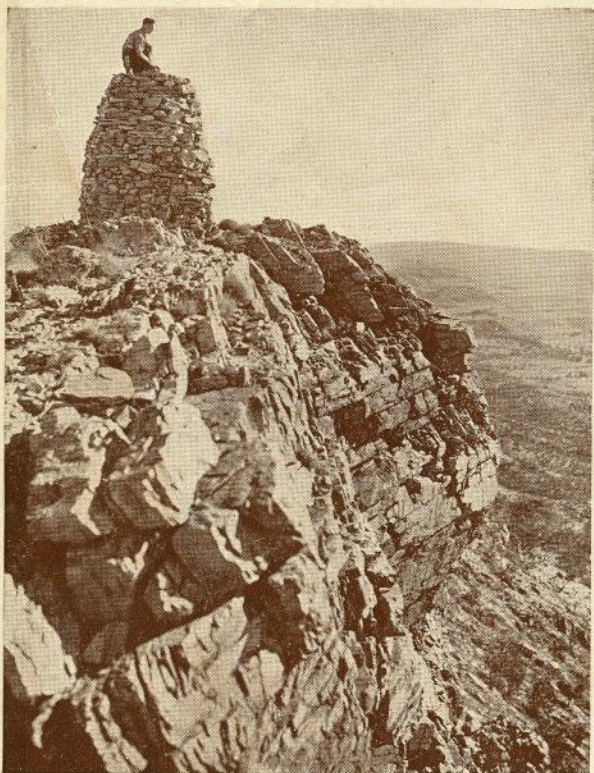
BULLDUST TO BITUMEN



FEATURING AUSTRALIA'S CENTRAL HIGHWAY

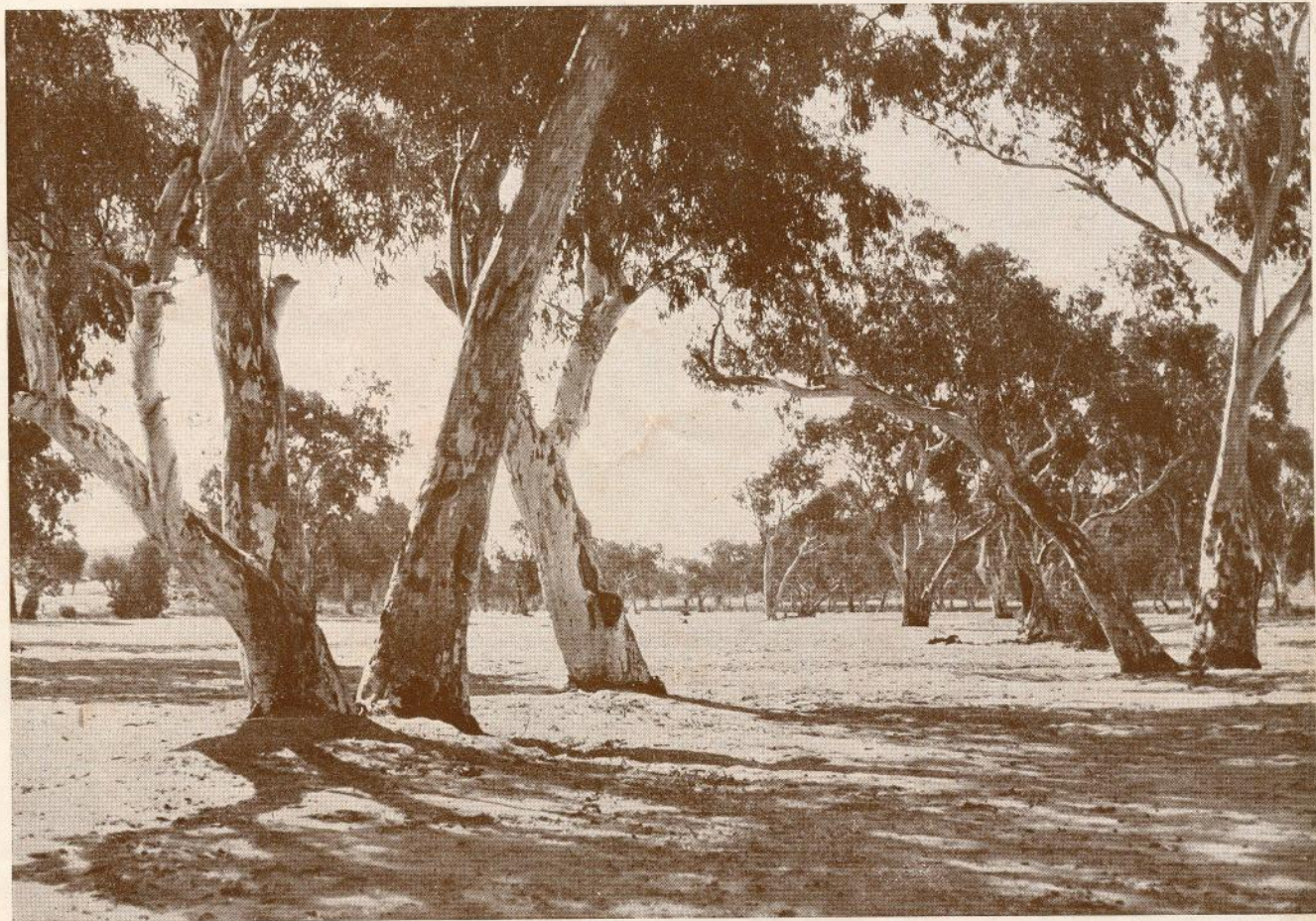


MOUNT GILLEN



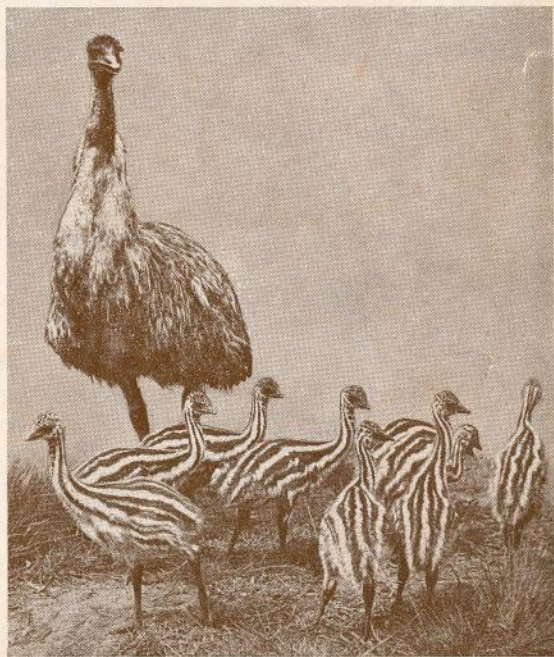
"—THE LIVING HEART OF A GREAT CONTINENT." Thousands of young Australians are now able to speak in familiar terms of "the Alice." They have come, they have seen, they have gone on, carrying with them vivid memories of sun-raddled plains and valleys that remind the traveller of the colourful pageantry of the Colorado Canyon. Red quartzite hills, changing in colour through the hours of the day from the rosy tints of morning to the deep blues and rich purples of evening, rise sheer above the plains, and the whole scene is dominated by the sharp outlines of Mount Gillen, 3,100 feet above sea level.

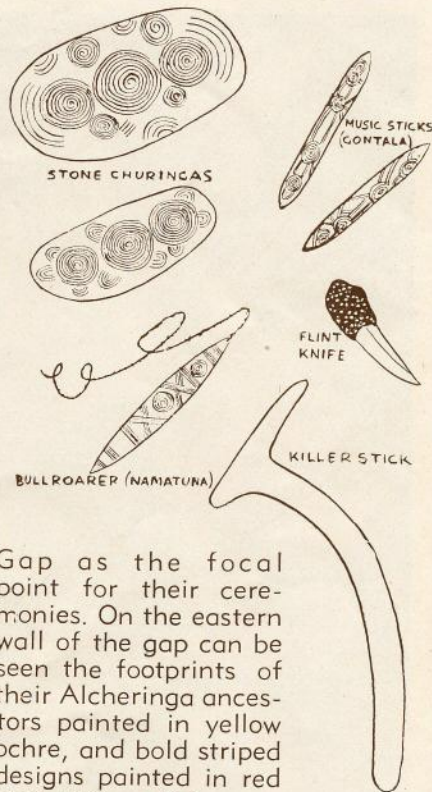
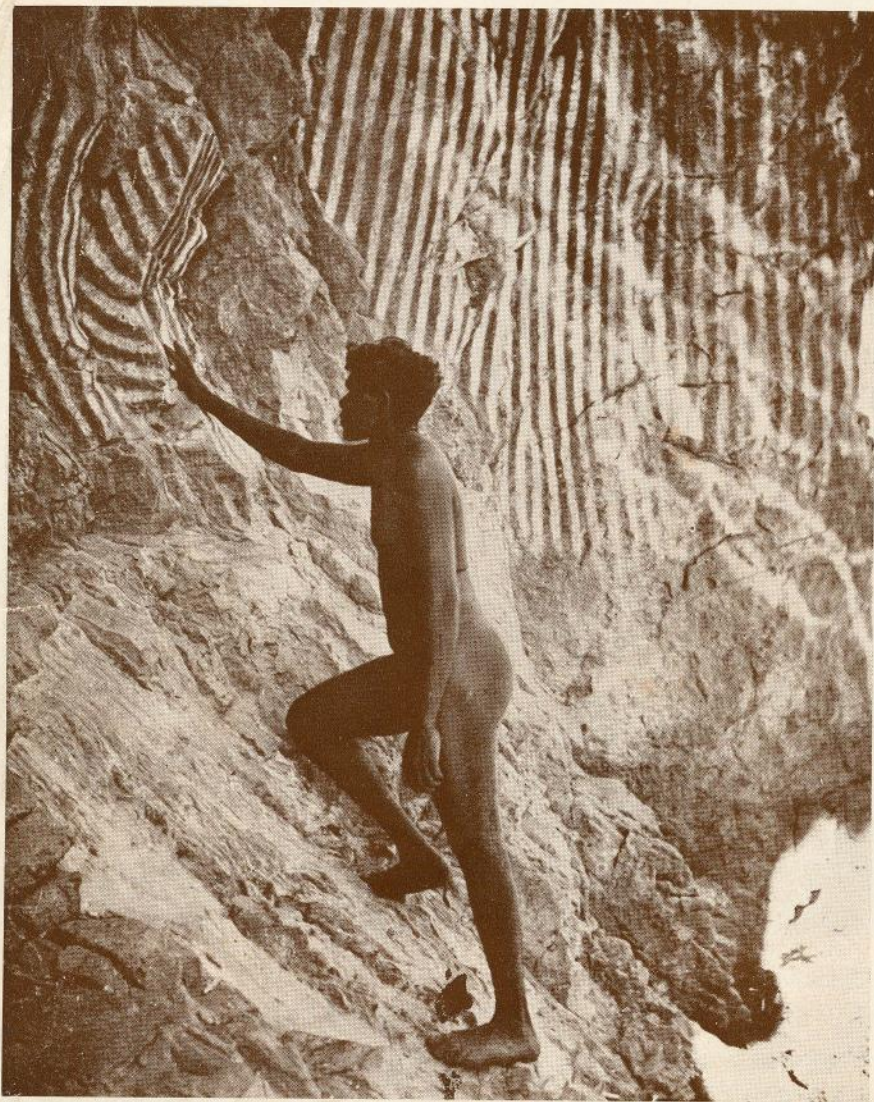
The township makes an instant appeal. Who can ever forget the scent of orange blossom on the September air; the wide red streets; white and green bungalows, cool and hospitable; blue jacaranda; hedges of oleanders, red, white and pink; Anzac Hill and Billy-goat Hill; blue-shirted stockmen picking their way daintily down the street in their high-heeled, sharp-toed boots; the spacious hospital, splendid school and three churches?



"A RIVER WITHOUT BRIDGES." Alice Springs is built upon the western bank of the Todd River, and the magnificent gum trees growing in the bed of the river provide a beautiful background to the town. For 362 days of the year the River Todd is a fraud and does not deserve its place on the map. However, for two or three days of the year, it and other creeks that cross the plains, are foaming torrents that burst their way through gaps in the ranges only to lose their strength in the sands and die of thirst in Simpson's Desert. By the Todd River, where natives once held their corroborees, couples now walk in the moonlight, and from secret haunts there, the emus sally forth by day to snatch up unconsidered trifles in neighbouring camps.

EMU AND CHICKS





Gap as the focal point for their ceremonies. On the eastern wall of the gap can be seen the footprints of their Alcheringa ancestors painted in yellow ochre, and bold striped designs painted in red and white which were related to their totemic ceremonies. High up on the western wall lies a cave in which some of the sacred stones of the tribe were stored and where part of the ceremony for the increase of the number of grubs was performed.

SACRED STORE HOUSE OF THE BLACKS.

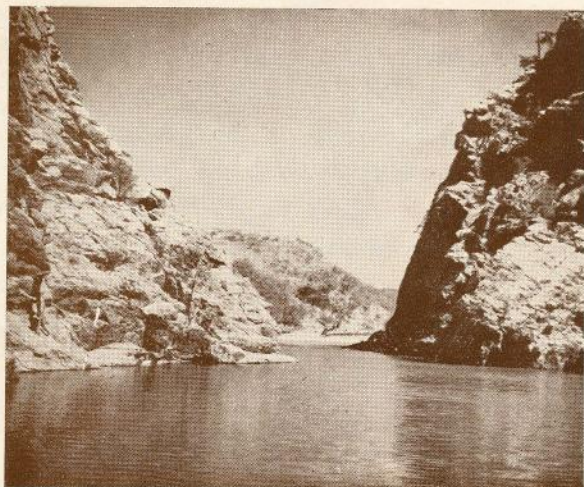
About seven miles east of Alice Springs lies Emily Gap, a gap cut through the hard quartzites of the Heavitree Range by an antecedent stream. These streams existed, according to the geologists, before the ranges stood out as

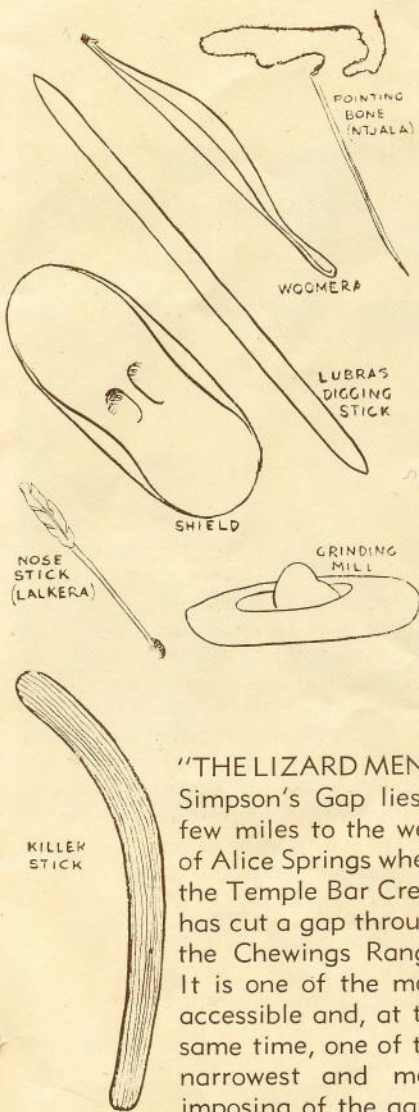
such, when the country had a gentle slope southwards. As erosion proceeded, streams cut their way through hard and soft material alike—the soft rock being eroded by smaller lateral streams, leaving the hard formations, in this case the quartzite, standing up as ranges. In by-gone days the natives of the Witchetty Grub tribe used Emily



NATIVE WITH SPEAR

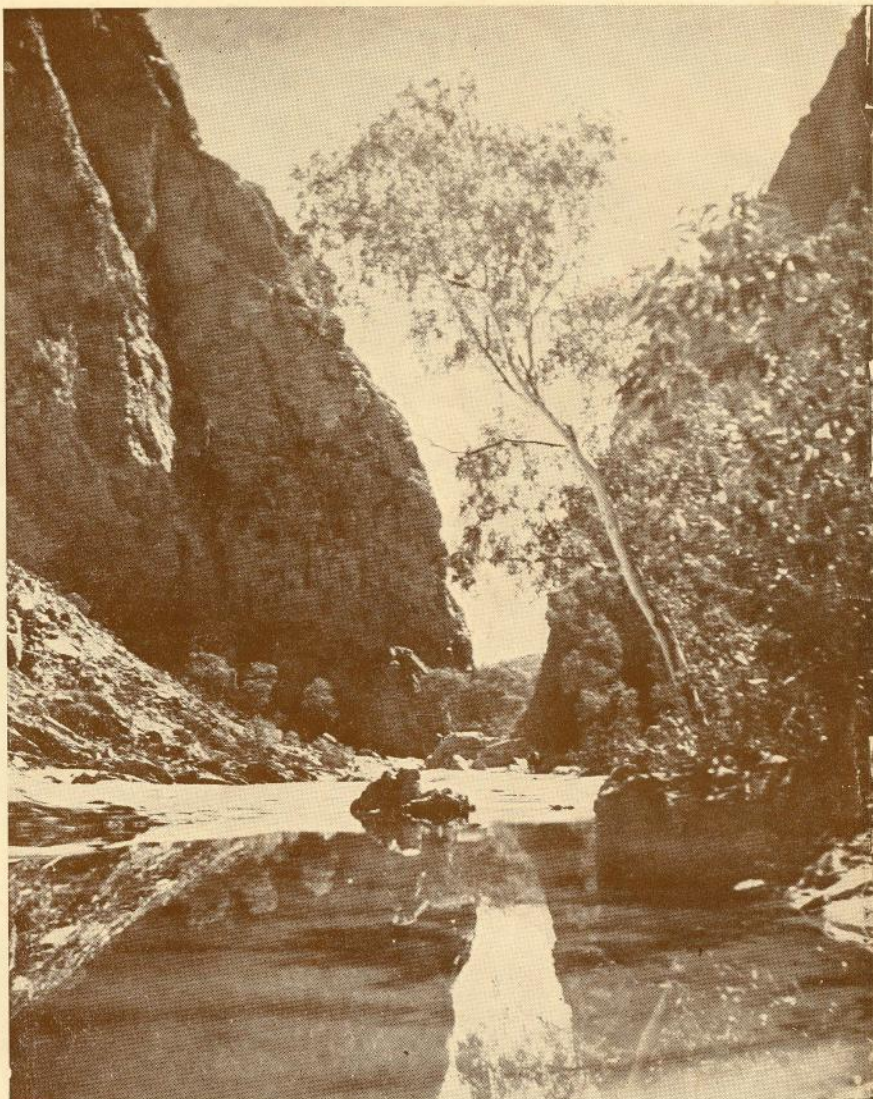
EMILY GAP





"THE LIZARD MEN." Simpson's Gap lies a few miles to the west of Alice Springs where the Temple Bar Creek has cut a gap through the Chewings Range. It is one of the most accessible and, at the same time, one of the narrowest and most imposing of the gaps.

This was an important centre, in the early days, of the lizard totem. In Alcheringa times the Oruncha, or debbil debbil men, lived near Temple Bar Gap and, one day, they killed and ate a lot of Lizard men and women, only two men surviving the slaughter. These two men, swearing vengeance, armed themselves and stationed themselves at the side of the gap, the positions they took up being marked ever since by special rocks. When the Oruncha appeared these two men rushed down upon them and killed them all. The dead were left in great heaps at the entrance to the gap and the spot is marked, to the present day, by a great mass of fallen rocks. It is from herds feeding in this interesting district that the town derives its milk supply.



CRUISING: 40 M.P.H.



NATIVE WITHOUT SPEAR



A HOME AWAY FROM HOME



BEFORE BITUMEN

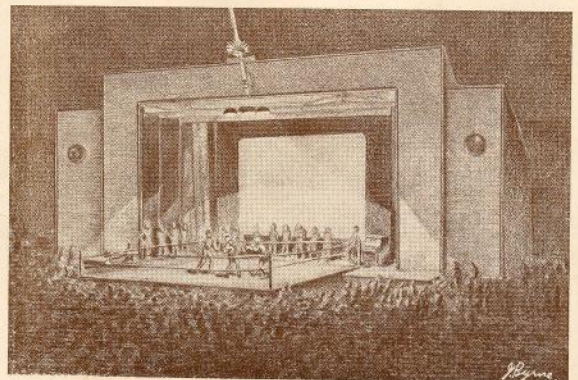


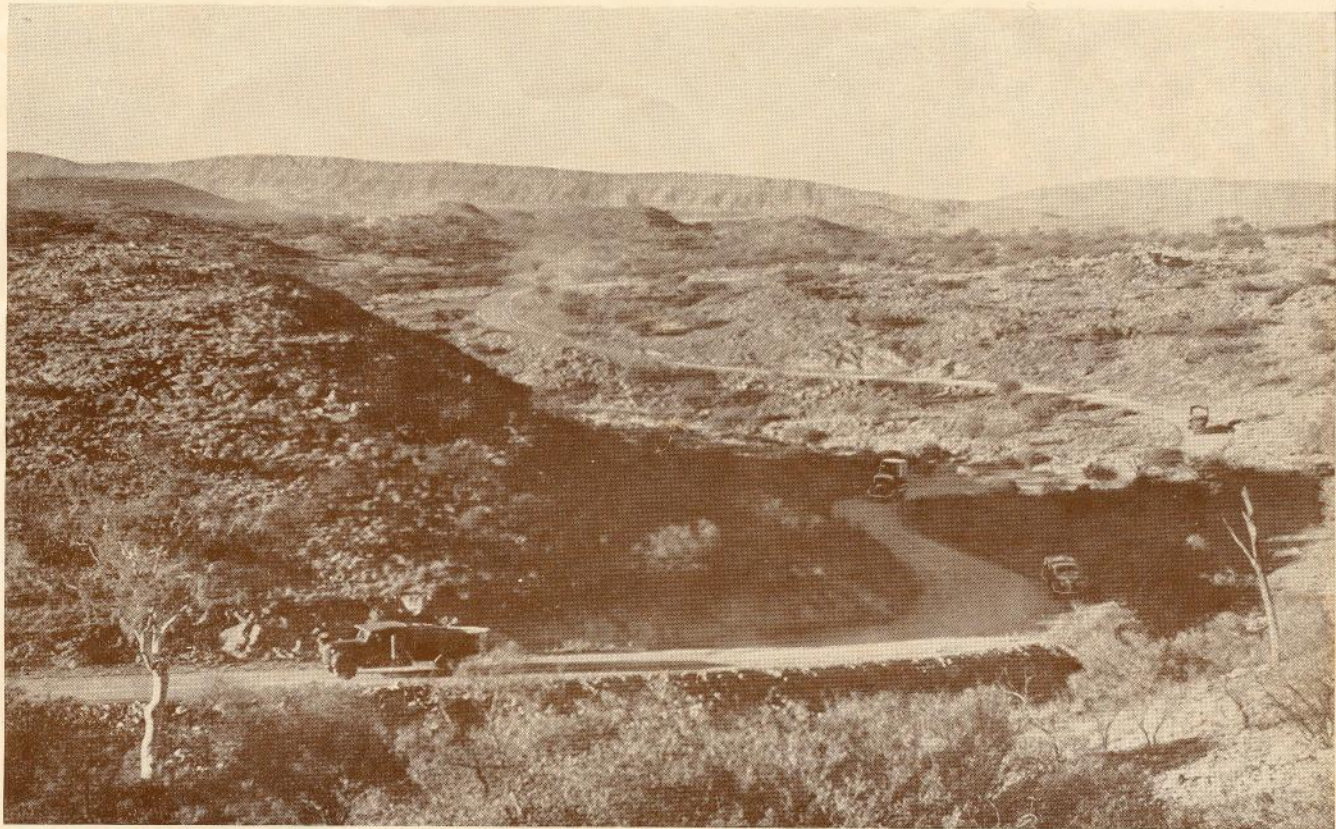
"A HOME AWAY FROM HOME." When service personnel first arrived in the Inland they were without recreational facilities, and the Methodist Inland Mission, which had been privileged to serve the most remote pioneers in times of peace, built Griffiths House to serve these troops whom war had brought into the area. Involving a capital cost of over £5,000, and solely financed by Australian Methodists, Griffiths House has been a home away from home for thousands of men and women of the services. Returning from long dusty trips tired transport drivers relax in the cool, spacious rooms, read, write, play indoor games or have a quiet game of billiards. In the music room they gather around the piano to sing away their blues. In comfortable

surroundings they write their letters home. Each year, 100,000 sheets of paper and envelopes are used and, in its seven day a week service, half a million cups of coffee have been served. Here the Arts Club, which seeks to provide a cultural stimulus in the town, meets, and committees of all kinds, from Courts Martial to Comforts Fund, gather. No charge is ever made for these facilities. When peace comes again Griffiths House will be demobilised too and it will provide, with its atmosphere of education and progress, a cultural centre for the youth of the Northern Territory.



CAMP THEATRE





CAMEL CONVOY



Australian Transport Column) the road was a nightmare to the convoy drivers who rushed the materials of war through, making wide detours across the spinifex, or through the scrub, in vain endeavours to escape the blinding, choking bulldust; repairing vehicles with scarcely any tools; eating beside their trucks and sleeping under them. Those days have gone, fortunately, for now the bitumen road runs wide and smooth for hundreds of miles from south to north, making a great artery for war or peace.

At the Alice the great north road, which follows so closely in the footsteps of the great explorer McDouall Stuart that it has rightly been called Stuart Highway, begins. Day after day it bears convoys carrying men and materials to the north. Winding through the hills, heading directly north across the plains, taking dry creek beds and gullies in its stride, it is one of Australia's greatest war-time achievements. In the old days of the D.O.M.F. (Darwin Overland Maintenance Force) and the C.A.T.C. (Central

WHITHER?





"CENTRAL AUSTRALIA'S STRATEGIC MINERAL." To the north-east of Alice Springs lies a range of mountains mainly consisting of gneisses and schists. Here, in the Harts Range, gold and mica have been mined for many years and garnets, beryls, tourmaline and other semi-precious stones have been found in great abundance. Here is found, in great crystalline "books," that valuable insulating material called muscovite or white mica. As one travels north the western extension of the range, the Strangways Range, can be seen. Here, while

DESERT VICTORY

prospecting for gold, the presence of valuable deposits of phlogopite, or black mica, was discovered. At low temperatures this mica is not as good as muscovite but, as it will stand temperatures up to 950 degrees centigrade, it is in great demand for the manufacture of spark plugs for aeroplanes.

Passing through several low ranges the traveller is seen at Ti-Tree Well, famous tea-point for convoys and home of Mr. and Mrs. Hese. Careful industry and water have made a lovely garden in the wilderness here, and few will ever forget the refreshing and welcome coolness of Mrs. Hese's underground dining-room.





"LONELY OUTPOST OF THE SEVENTIES." Between Ti-Tree Well and Barrow Creek lies, to the west of the road, a little group of low, rounded hills. One of these is Central Mt. Stuart, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the centre of Australia, where, on 22nd April, 1860, the explorer McDouall Stuart raised the British flag and, ironically enough, declared it to be a sign to the natives that "the dawn of liberty, civilisation and Christianity was about to break upon them."

An hour's drive further on lie the low, flat-topped hills and red sandy plains of Barrow Creek. It was here that the natives, in 1872, carried out what appeared to be an organised attack upon the telegraph station which had just been opened there in that year. The station was designed as a small fortress, or block-house, but the staff was caught unawares and two members of it were speared to death, one of the men just having enough strength to struggle to the Morse key and tap out a last message to his wife. These brave pioneers lie buried in a little walled-in cemetery beside the road, and every year, the bean tree overhead sheds

BARROW CREEK HILLS



its bright scarlet seeds, like tears of blood, on their graves. One day, as a convoy slowly passed, a truck stopped and a soldier walked quietly over to the graves and stood awhile silently beside them. It was the grandson of one of the murdered men.

MOUNT HERMANNsburg & FINKE RIVER



Water Colour by Rex. Battarbee



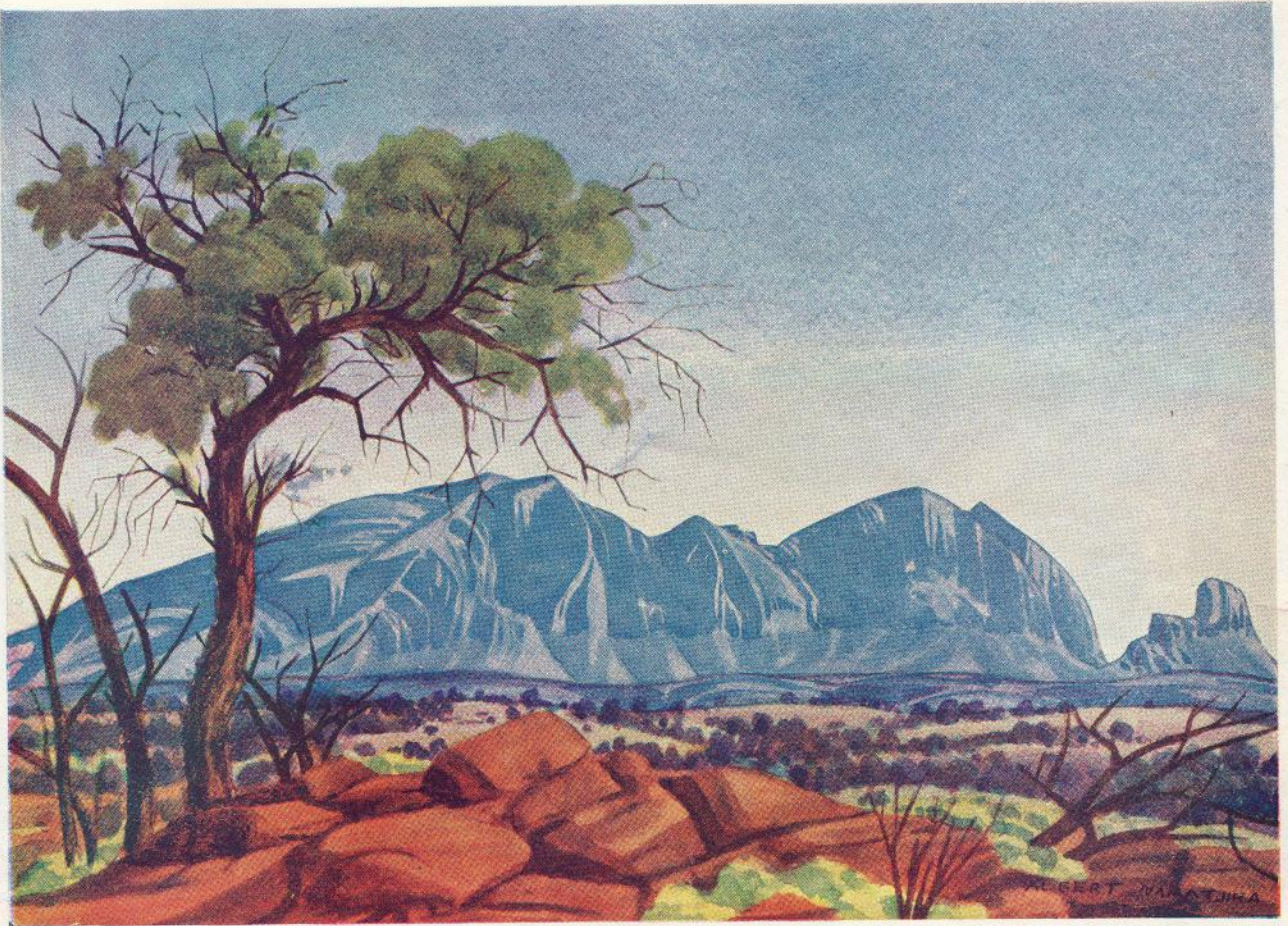
REX BATTARBEE

" THE CENTRE—AN ARTIST'S PARADISE." The Inland was discovered by artists as a remarkably fine field for work about the time that the railway line was extended to Alice Springs. Miss Jessie Traill, Rex Battarbee and J. A. Gardner were the first to visit Alice Springs, and they were captivated by the richness of colour and the variety of the landscape. Miss Traill set down her impressions by pen as well as by brush. "The colour of the landscape in this part," she wrote, "is extraordinarily delicate—pinks, yellows, opals, greys, and blue-greens, given by sand, rock or trees, dead grass, the bush or spinfex. Oh! the cloudless days of shimmering light, the pale pink dawns and golden sunsets! There is variety every few miles—sand, scrub, rocky hills, stony plains, flat-topped mountains and dried up claypans indicating its diversity."

Rex Battarbee, in particular, has devoted much time to the study and painting of the district, and his work has not only given much pleasure by its luminosity, colour and power, but has given rise to a most promising school of painters at Hermannsburg Mission. Albert Namatjira, the full-blooded



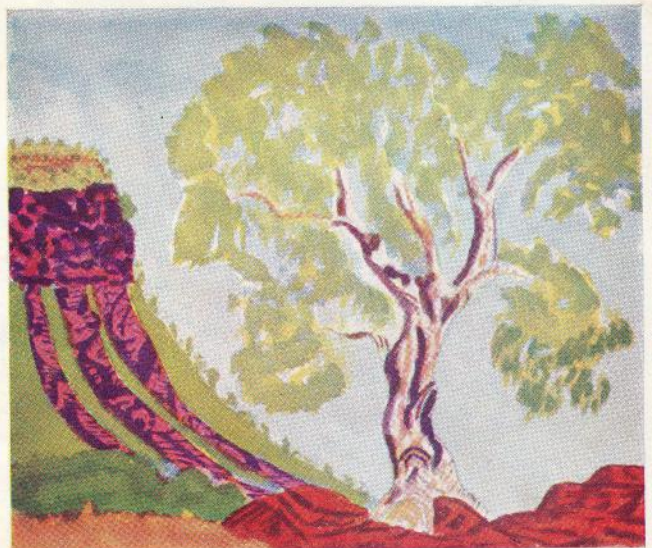
ARTISTS



Water Colour by Albert Namatjira

Arunta aborigine, who is now coming into prominence as a fine water-colourist in his own right, derived his inspiration from Rex Battarbee, and one of his pictures now holds an honoured place in the Adelaide Art Gallery. Other painters of much promise are Edwin Pareroultja and Gustav Mulbanka. Practically untaught, these latter natives are developing their own technique and are finding expression in works of primitive simplicity and power. It is interesting to note that the two main pictures illustrated here are painted from about the same spot, the one looking north in Mt. Sonder in the McDonnell Range, and the other south to Mt. Hermannsburg in the James Range.

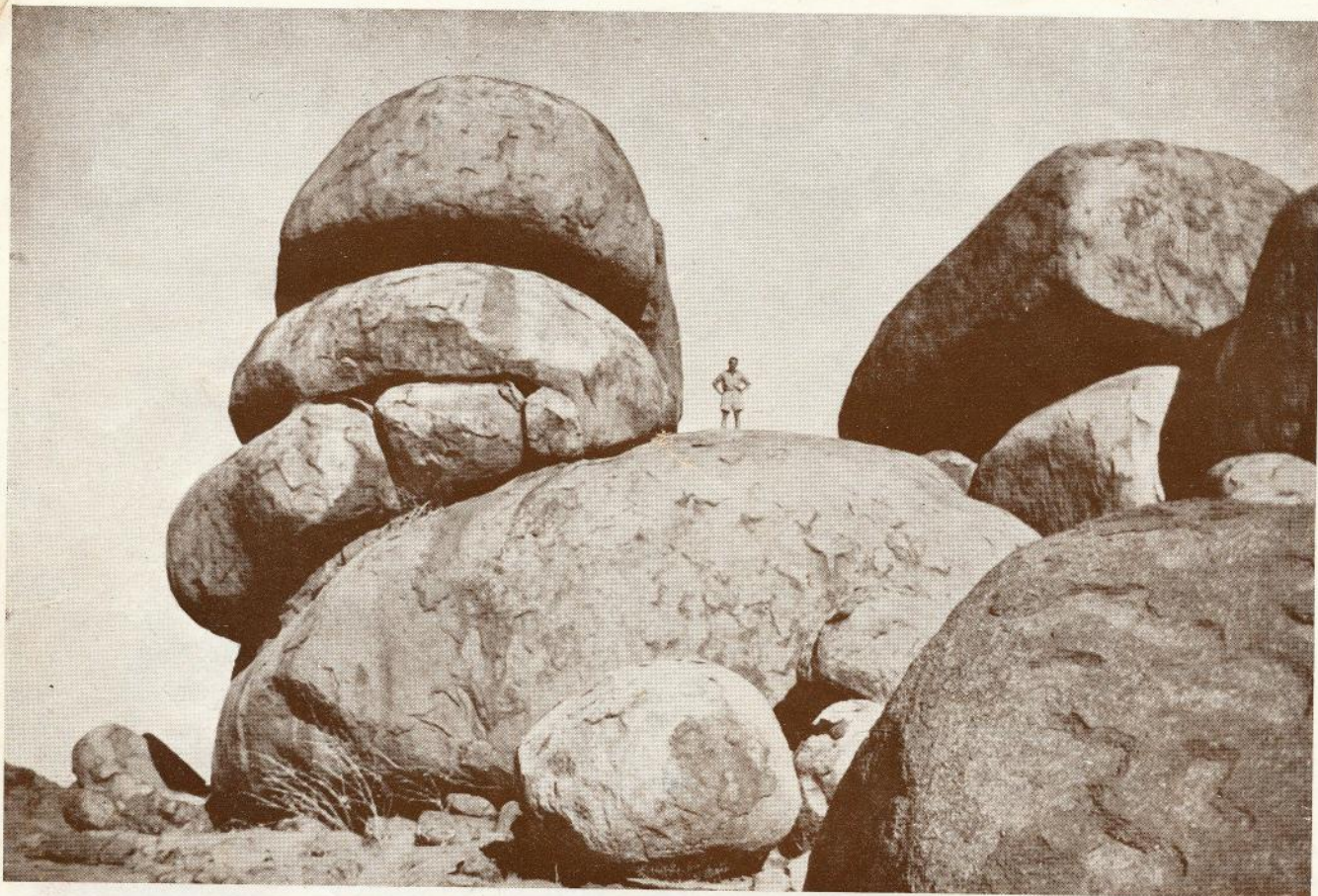
STUDENT'S WORK



Water Colour by Edwin Pareroultja

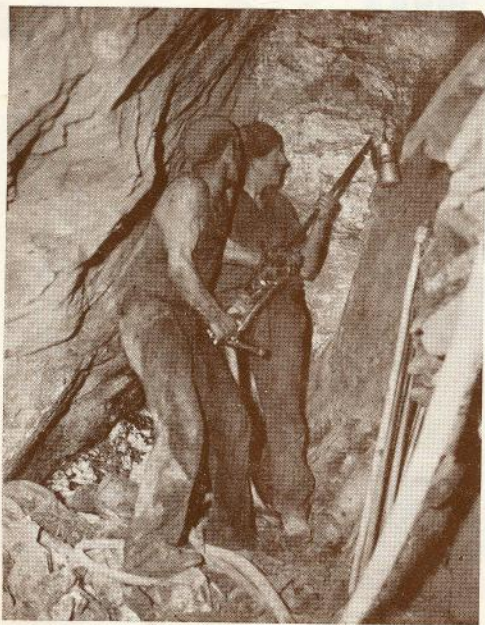


DEVIL'S MARBLES



There always seems to be a spot of green around the Wauchope Hotel and the traveller often feels tempted to stop and spend a few moments there—"Convoy drivers, eyes front." To the east lie the famous wolfram mines of Hatches Creek, Central Australia's black gold.

WOLFRAM MINING



Travelling north one is soon crossing Dixon's Creek which winds across the floor of a valley where strange forms meet the eye, the Devil's Marbles. Here granite rocks, incredibly old and curiously and fantastically carved by the elements, lie heaped about and scattered around in great profusion. Here many a traveller has welcomed the shadow of a rock in a weary land and found it a good place in which to boil a billy.

DONKEY CONVOY





TENNANT CREEK GOLD COMPARED WITH ORDINARY GOLD

Tennant Creek, named by McDouall Stuart after John Tennant, of Port Lincoln, is one of the old telegraph stations. The town consists of a knot of houses clustering around the new, broad bitumen road that heads north through the low ridges of ironstone which form the McDouall Range. On the sky line can be seen the poppet legs of a number of mines, some still in operation, others waiting for the end of the war to begin operations again. Rich

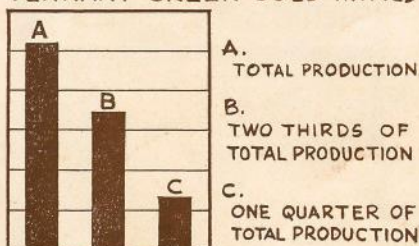
gold finds have been made here, and there was quite a sizeable rush to the town in 1933 and, in 1935, the area was gazetted as a gold field. It seems strange that the town should be built about six miles from the creek which gives it its name and from which, until recently, all the water for the town had to be carted. The story goes that, in the old days, the man who went up to establish the pub at Tennant Creek, got bogged in the sand six miles from the creek and so he started up in

business there, and the town moved down and grew up around the beer instead of around the water.

HAPPY IN THE SERVICE



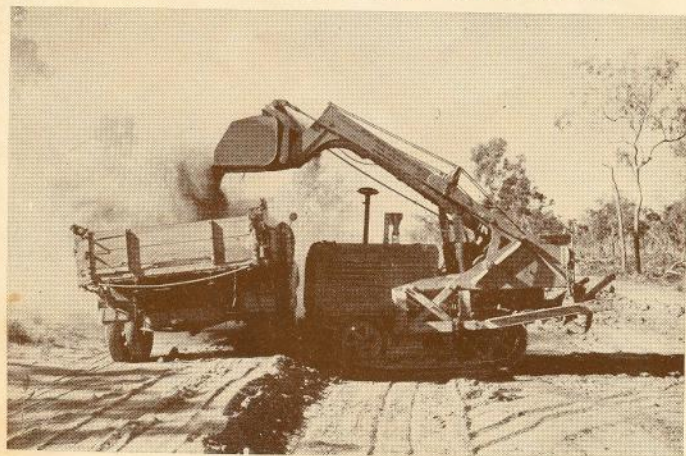
GOLD PRODUCTION FROM TENNANT CREEK GOLD MINES





"BULL-DOZERS BEAT BULL-DUST." War disturbed the immemorial calm of the Inland. Graders, bull-dozers, spreaders and water-wagons, accompanied by armies of men, lumbered, rattled and clanked out across the undulating plains. Boring plants bit into the earth for water; dynamite shattered and split rocks that were aeons old; whining trucks carried and deposited colossal quantities of gravel and stones and bull-dozers broke down all barriers; over it all, the bulldust hung in a red haze unwilling to settle down until the road was down, a broad stretch of black bitumen. Under a blistering sky the men worked with sun temperatures ranging at times from 140 to 160 degrees until, in an incredibly short time, the road was through. The road is so perfect now that convoy drivers have to guard against falling asleep at the wheel, through sheer monotony, and have to be

BEATING THE BULLDUST



continually warned by ubiquitous road signs to break down the speed, "Steady! 20 m.p.h. Rubber grows in trees—temporarily Tojo's" and "Steady up! Why hurry to Banka for bully?"





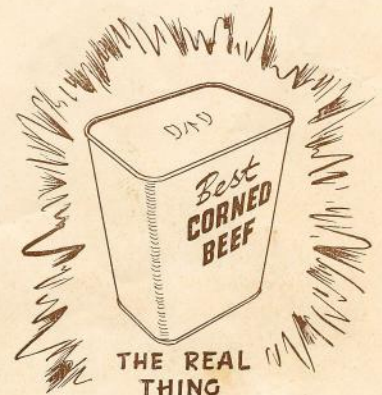
Few cattle or sheep are visible to the traveller on the road, but, out behind the leagues of mulga and lancewood, the wealth of the Northern Territory grazes on the vast station holdings, many of which cover a million acres or more, the largest being about the size of Tasmania. Never since the hardy pioneers drove the first mobs in from Queensland has the cattle industry been so important to the nation as it is today. Soldiers must be fed. In a country where there are no boundary fences lonely cattlemen carry on the constant round of mustering, droving and branding. The work is dangerous for the cattle are wild and,

CATTLEMAN'S OFFICE



frightened by strange sounds at night, they may rush, without warning, in a mad stampede, and woe betide the unfortunate stockman whose horse should stumble at the head of such a mob.

The bullocks are driven to market, or the bully beef tin, in mobs of 1,500 or more. Plodding sullenly across the dry red plains at 10 miles a day moving feet stir up choking clouds of dust—bulldust—like the fine powder on the old roads. The name "bulldust" is derived from the cattle yards where ringing cattle stamp the dry earth to a dust as fine as face powder which rises, in the still hot air, to fall suffocatingly on man and scrub.





"THE NORTHERN TERRITORY IS TERMITE TERRITORY." The teeming millions of Asia are as nothing compared to Australia's termite population. The white ant rules the north and has brought many ambitious schemes to nought. As one travels north one passes the termite colonies to right and left of the road. At first the mounds are only 2 to 3 ft. high and are rather shapeless and of a dull red-brick colour. Further on one comes upon cities of them where the

CHURCHILL'S HEAD

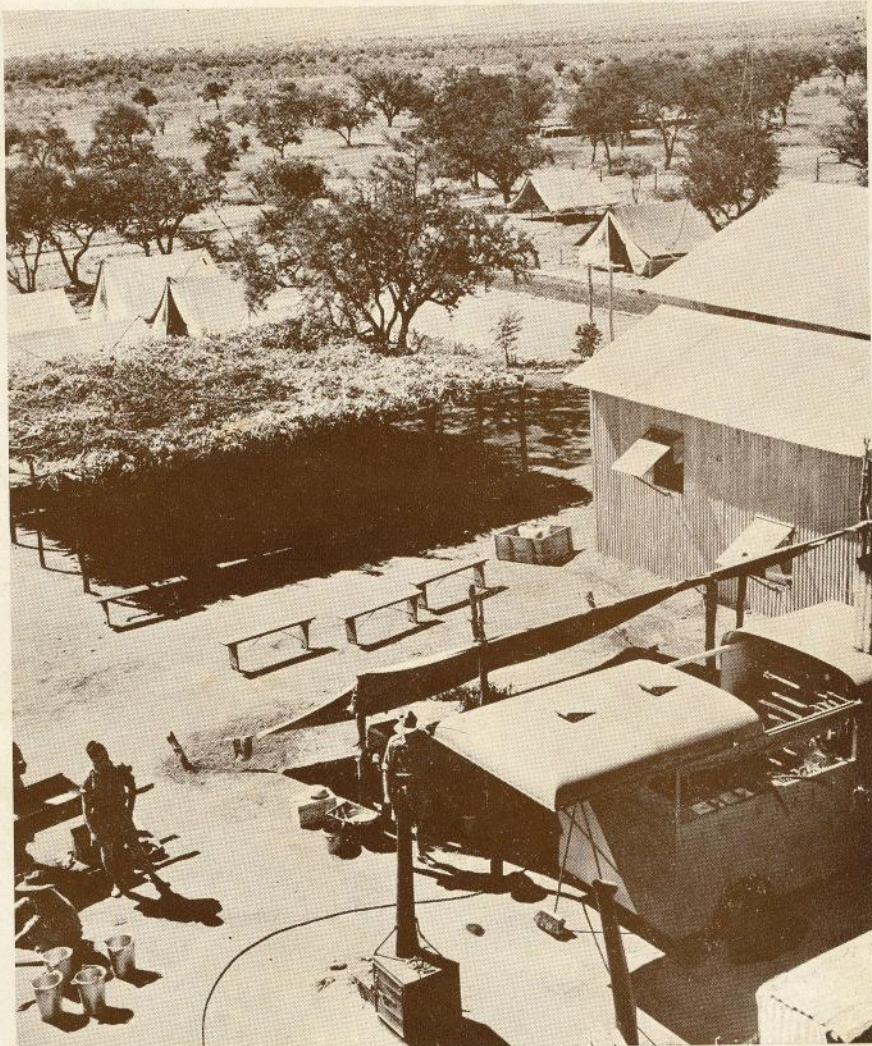
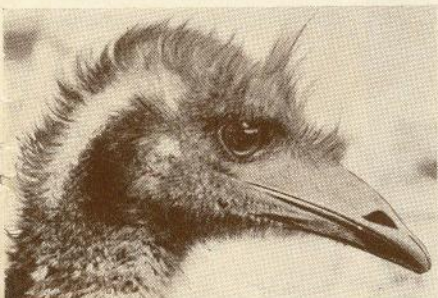


building regulations permit of more graceful and rather taller structures 6 ft. high with sharp spires like those of some English Cathedral, or large rounded mounds like huge blobs of red dough. In the cane grass plains of the Far North one comes into the territory of a white ant that builds vast cathedrals 12' to 15 ft. high, and one sees the strange magnetic ant hills with this interesting characteristic that the long axis always points north and south. Ant hills everywhere, but there is only one "Churchill's Head." Everyone travelling north to Banka is on the watch for that rugged profile carved by time in a gap in the Whittington Range. Soldiers, inspired by the thought of that indomitable spirit, no doubt added that aggressive cigar.

"JOURNEY'S END."

The staging camp is now home to the convoy driver. At the end of a long day's work it holds promise of food, drink and rest, somewhere to write a letter, a shower, a picture show if he is lucky—and so to bed. Vegetable gardens, in some places, make a welcome addition to the diet, a hospital receives those who otherwise would fall by the wayside, and workshops are there to deal with any major troubles that may have developed on the run. Here at journey's end

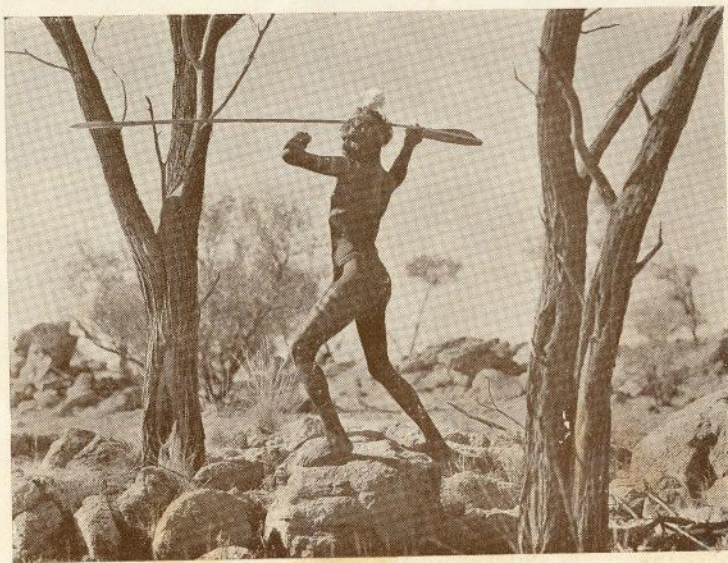
EMU PORTRAIT



we are in the country immortalised by Mrs. Aeneas Gunn in her book "We of the Never Never."

Perhaps few convoy drivers have seen the tree upon which some 40 years ago the Maluka cut the words "Nice Girl, Jeannie Gun," but many a traveller has stopped for a moment at the carefully tended grave of Maluka and thought of that saga of frontier fellowship brought to an end by that untimely death.

NATIVE HUNTER



STROLLING THROUGH
THE BULLDUST

STANDLY CHASM



The impressive nature of the famous Standly Chasm is increased by the richness of colour in the walls of the chasm itself. Here, where the back of the McDonnell Range appears at one time to have been broken, the luminous red of the quartzite rock changes to lustrous purple as day declines and shadows fall.



GREASE PAINT

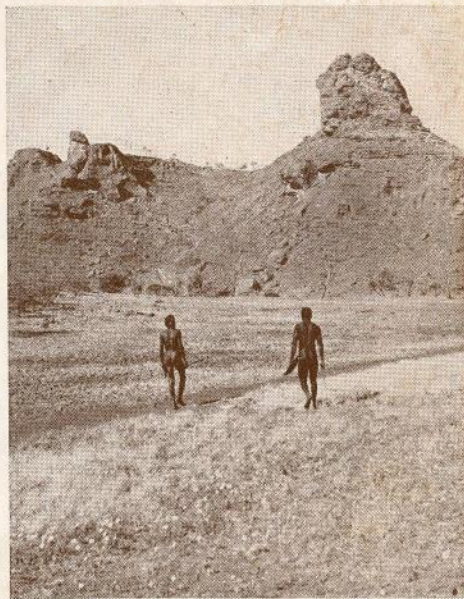


A DOOR OF HOPE. With the advent of whites into the territory the native tribes began to decline. Tribal hunting grounds were turned into cattle runs, disease began to spread among the natives, and the half-caste problem began to arise.

Sixty-seven years ago, however, the Hermannsburg Mission was established on what is now called Missionary Plains and, through the vicissitudes that those years brought, it has continued its noble work for the dispossessed native.

It has succeeded in making the transition to more civilised modes of living and thinking easier for the aborigine, the declining birth rate has been checked, natives have been taught various arts and crafts, the sick have been nursed, the hungry fed and the children taught. And now, as a new venture, selected natives are being set up on small stations stocked with a number of sheep and cattle, and are being set on the road to independence. In short, at Hermannsburg, loving hands have opened a door of hope to the aborigines.

STONE-AGE WARRIORS





TOMORROW IN THE NEVER-NEVER LAND. Although for many centuries the northern parts of Australia were open to settlement, no peoples have ever taken advantage of it except our own aborigines. Two hundred and fifty years ago William Dampier, the great navigator, described the country as "the most miserablest country on the face of the earth" and it is significant that Captain Bligh, while making his great journey in an open boat to Timor, would not land on the Australian coast. From these considerations and the failure of early attempts at settlement, it is clear that there is no smooth and easy path to prosperity. That does not mean that there is no future for the Territory. When the war is over Darwin must be developed as a point of contact with the myriad peoples of the north, and both Alice Springs and Darwin can be made very attractive tourist centres. Transport problems must receive serious attention if the rich river valleys of the north are to be developed and the rich mineral resources of the country opened up. As the greatest potential of the country lies in its pastures, encouragement should be given to experienced cattle and sheep men who are prepared to make their homes in the north and live on their properties. More wells must be sunk, irrigation schemes fostered, skilled labour encouraged, practical training provided for the half-caste, and machinery provided for at least some measure of local government. In whatever direction one turns there lie possibilities, but only such as will become realities by careful planning and hard work.

This publication has been prepared for the Methodist Inland Mission by the Deputy Director (Rev. R. J. Noble) with drawings by Joe Byrne, commentary by Rev. C. O. Leigh Cook, M.A., and the courtesy of the Australian National Publicity Association, Army Magazine, S.A. Government, and all who assisted in production is gratefully acknowledged.



ARTISTS' PARADISE?