

## KABBARLI

by

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No more unlikely alliance could possibly be imagined than one between the Aborigines of Australia and an Irish girl early in this century. Certainly no Aboriginal had ever heard of Ireland, and had no reason to look forward to meeting a young Irishwoman. And this particular Irish girl ventured upon the journey to Australia with no thought whatsoever that her life would be bound up with the Aborigines. Yet she came to know them better than they knew themselves - and they came to look upon her as their spokesman to the Australian government and their constant help in times of sickness and want.

Daisy Mae O'Dwyer was born in County Tipperary in 1863 of a respectable though not noble family, and one that was rapidly reaching the end of its resources. These resources were enough to lead Daisy to expect things, but not enough to achieve them. Her mother having died shortly after her birth, she grew up, with three sisters and brothers, in a household ruled by her grandmother. Her father described his occupation as "gentleman" - but this did not provide more than the bare necessities. Daisy received an adequate education - adequate, that is, for a female in rural Ireland in the 1870's. She had some talent for writing, was an expert horsewoman, and soon displayed a most phenomenal independence. She could read - but her reading then and for the rest of her long life was limited to four authors - Dickens, Scott, Thackeray and Lytton.

Dating from this time also was her firm devotion to Queen Victoria and to the Victorian ideals of service to Queen and Empire. This devotion extended to matters of dress, and all her life she continued to dress as a lady of Victorian England.

Upon the death of her father when Daisy was 21, Daisy used the excuse of a doctor's advice to seek a warmer climate to embark upon a voyage to Australia. Actually, she was anxious to visit an old family friend, Bishop Stanton, who now lived in North Queensland. There, at Townsville, she became, in effect, his ward, and an enthusiastic participant in the social life of the little city and its neighboring ranches and cattle stations.

Daisy was always somewhat of a society belle, and liked the attentions paid to her, but she was also vitally interested in the working activities of the cattle ranches. After the sudden death of the man to whom she had become engaged, she became determined to be a part of this life. So she took employment as a governess in the house of a Mrs. Hugh Bates, a widow with five young children. Not long after undertaking this position, in 1885, Daisy Bates met and married an older son of the Bates family. Jack Bates was a rough and ready cattle drover, a man who was acknowledged to be one of the best drovers in Australia, and who often drove large mobs of cattle on journeys of a thousand miles or more from cattle station to market.

This marriage was eminently unsuitable and foredoomed to failure.

One child, a son named Arnold, was born two years later - and thereafter Daisy and Jack seldom met. Even her son Arnold never figured to any great extent in her plans, and after he was seven years old she seldom saw him. But in spite of her lack of love for Jack Bates, she still had considerable respect for his unquestioned abilities as a drover and manager of cattle stations, and Daisy Bates had long since decided that this was the life for her. So she gave him what she described as a large sum of money (but which in view of her lack of resources could not have been significant) with which to buy such a station. He never did so, and it is suspected he lost most of the money.

Since she was not living with her husband and was apparently quite successful in shedding responsibility for her son Arnold, she appeared to be at liberty to continue her habits of visiting around Australia. In the course of these visits she of course saw many Aborigines and became interested in them and their history. Particularly, on a visit to Tasmania she learned of one of the cruelest instances of colonization in History. Here the entire Aborigine population was either killed or exiled to a neighboring small island, where the remainder soon died, primarily of apathy.

The financial panic of 1892, when all the banks in Melbourne and Sidney closed, left Daisy Bates almost entirely without funds and sick with worry. Again, a doctor came to her rescue and prescribed a trip to England. Off she went in the best English tradition, leaving her son in a boarding school. Her husband Jack she disposed of equally summarily by simply telling him she would be back when he had a home and a cattle station for her.

She arrived in London literally penniless, but not without audacity. She simply wrote a check on a non-existent bank account and called upon an old-time family friend to make it good. For some time she visited relatives in Ireland, but she most certainly was not one to be hidden away in some dank back bedroom. Not for her was the role of a poor relation who had to be taken care of. Soon she was back in London, where she met and started to work for W.T. Stead, editor of the Review of Reviews. First as charwoman, then as an assistant editor, she worked for Stead for almost four years. Meanwhile, she continued to visit in country houses, and lived the life of a cultured, well-travelled, well-connected lady who unfortunately had to earn her own living. She received numerous proposals of marriage (a living and legal husband appears not to have been mentioned), and was about to enter into a rather remarkably cold-blooded liaison with an equally impetuous man, when word reached her that her bank in Australia was about to refund part of her deposit. In the same mail came a letter from husband Jack saying that he was in West Australia with son Arnold preparing to look for a property for them.

So, back to Australia she went. Much in the public eye in England in 1899 was the Aborigine situation, so she made rather nebulous connections with several newspapers to investigate and write about these affairs. At the time she saw this as an interesting hobby, while her real ambition was to own and run a cattle station with Jack Bates as manager and incidentally as husband. When Daisy and Jack Bates met in Perth she had little but contempt for him, for he by no means measured up to the standards of an English gentleman. Her son she described as



dirty, unmothered, neglected, incongruous and foul. It doubtless never crossed her mind that she had some responsibility for this pitiable condition.

After a short time, the large property she desired was purchased, but there was no money to stock it with cattle, no house on it, and no prospects. She continued to own it for several years, although the Bates family never lived there. But the search for this property, as well as visits she made to other properties and in general throughout West Australia, brought her again into contact with the Aborigines. She met the Aborigine on his own ground, and became familiar, slowly, with his culture. She wrote articles for the English papers and various English and Australian magazines. She soon became convinced that the Aborigine was a dying breed, and that her mission in life was to ease his passing.

For the next fifty years she worked continuously at this task. Strangely, at the time she formed this objective it was estimated that there were about 50,000 Aborigines in the whole of Australia. Today, it is believed that there are more than twice that many. It is, therefore, not the Aborigine that is passing, but a way of life and a culture which had existed for thousands of years with no change whatsoever, and which in one generation has become almost totally extinct.

How and when the Aborigine arrived in Australia is the subject of much conjecture. He probably came at least twenty-thousand years ago, and possibly much more. The most commonly accepted theory has him crossing on a land bridge which is assumed once to have connected Australia and the mainland of Asia. But there are no mammals in

Australia even vaguely resembling those of any other part of the world - and none of those found in Australia are found elsewhere. But regardless of how or when he arrived, the Aborigine has lived in Australia ever since with no discernible change in manners, morals, customs or habits.

The Aborigine himself has a very definite conception of his own origin, which is tied to the origin of the land itself and the salient geographic features. All of these matters of origin are believed to have taken place in the "Dream Time", or "Dreaming". Back in this undated prehistoric time it is believed that there were certain kinds of animals such as snakes and lizards and kangaroos and emus who wandered about the country. They became associated with certain features of the land such as particular rocks or hills or waterholes, many of which were not only associated with that particular animal, but were also believed to have been formed by that animal. These animals are also regarded as family ancestors, so an Aborigine speaks to himself as belonging to the kangaroo totem, or the emu totem.

Not only animals but such things as a tree or a rock or rain are also thought of as the ancestral totem. It is this totem that is the basic loyalty of a group. People of the rain totem, for instance, are found all over Australia, with no contact between them, and no group aware of another. Yet if they should meet they make their totem known to each other and are immediately welcomed into the family circle.

Each person also belongs to a certain "skin" group - which is another relationship more closely similar to what we think of as a family group. It is, however, somewhat dependent on age groupings.

Membership in a totem group is not a matter of relationship as we think of the term, but appears to be determined at the time of birth by such things as whether it was raining at that moment, or whether a kangaroo or an emu was nearby. There is also the tribal relationship, which is not related to either the totem or the skin group, but is more a geographical matter - the people of a certain area belong to a certain tribe, or at least did originally. The totemic relationship is of overriding importance, in that it makes certain activities or certain foods or certain associations either favored or forbidden. But the skin group determines blood lines. Skin group is actually determined before birth, and is a function of the family, or skin, of the parents. Under this system the eligibility of certain marriage partners is determined long before birth, and operates in much the same way - and for the same purposes - as our prohibition against the marriage of cousins.

This skin-group relationship extends not only to the other members of the same tribe, but also across the entire Aborigine world. Thus a man of the Bungadi skin of the Alawa tribe who lives in Arnhem land in far northern Australia near Darwin is automatically related (though not by blood lines) to members of the same skin who are members of the Pintupi tribe who live in central Australia near Alice Springs. Should he visit in that area he would become a member of that group, would be accepted by them, and would be subject to the same rules, taboos and relationships as the other Pintupi people. This means that his place in the tribal pecking order is all set for him. By merely making his presence known he is provided with a ready-made set of relatives - uncles, brothers and mother-in-law.

This, of course, is immensely complicated, particularly to people who are accustomed to having all relationships determined by blood-lines. Blood lines do, of course, enter into this Aboriginal relationship, but they are over-laid by these other relationships which to the Aborigines are vastly more important.

In the Aborigine world the male is of unquestioned superiority. Females appear to have no rights, no privileges and no value. To the Aborigine the male is more important simply because the future of the tribe is up to him. He carries the seed of future generations. This reflects a curious lack of knowledge of the principles of reproduction. They are well aware of the importance of the male in this cycle - but entirely ignore the function of the female. While one suspects that they are not entirely without knowledge on this score, they profess to believe that the woman has an unimportant part, and use this belief to keep the women in their place. Actually, they seem to believe that a woman bears a child as the result of rubbing her stomach with a certain kind of stone while sitting in a particular revered spot. The fact that shortly thereafter she lies with her husband seems to be ignored.

Related to the importance of the male is the insistence, among all Aborigines regardless of tribe or location, that the important religious ceremonies are carried out entirely by the males, and are not to be seen by any female. In fact, the intricately carved and decorated stones and boards used in the ceremonies are carefully hidden away after each use, and it is certain death for any female or uninitiated male, intentionally or even accidentally to see them. Initiation is a long process, starting at about the age of twelve and lasting as long as

two years. During this period the young man is forbidden to talk to anyone for long periods, and usually during the whole two year period can not at any time talk to any female, including his mother or sisters. His only contact is with other boys being initiated at the same time and with certain selected elders of the tribe. Initiation is climaxed by a long ceremony for the group of boys being initiated - lasting all night or perhaps longer - at which the final event is the circumcision of the boys. This is a rather painful procedure, and a bloody one, carried out while the boy is lying, face up, across the backs of three men who are on hands and knees. Formerly this was done with a sharp stone, but now is more usually done with a razor blade. Upon his recovery, the boy becomes an initiated and accepted member of the tribe, entitled to know its secrets and the hiding places of its churinga stones and other artifacts.

It is very tempting for a European who knows where babies come from, can read maps, wears clothes, knows how to grow crops, can produce refrigeration to store his meat and who has all the supposed benefits of civilization to become somewhat patronizing toward these Aborigines, who have none of these things. Yet one must acknowledge their unexcelled ability to live within the limitations of their environment. They are hunters and gatherers, living off the land each day, with no thought whatsoever of the requirement of eating again tomorrow. When food is available, they eat, and when it isn't they don't. Why wear clothes when the climate is warm enough not to need them? Why build a house? You don't need it for protection from the elements. If an Aborigine

is cold at night, he simply rubs himself with another coat of ashes from the fire, moves more closely to his neighbor, and possibly encourages one or more dogs to nestle into the pile.

The interior of Australia is a land where a white man, with his history of cultivation and civilization, would have a hard time existing without the comforts he brings with him. First and foremost is the lack of water. In most of the vast expanse of the interior annual rainfall is less than ten inches, and in large parts is much less than that. To a person familiar with the green countryside of Europe or America, this is desert. An occasional small tree, sparse clumps of dried grass, some bushes dot the landscape, but for the most part it has a dried and yellow look. Many of the original settlers and explorers died from lack of water or feed for their animals. Yet in those same areas the Aborigine has lived for hundreds of generations. He has never gotten fat, and there have been times when he may have temporarily been thirsty, but in general he has lived in perfect harmony with this harsh environment.

His ability to do so is related very directly to his religious beliefs and the artifacts used in his ceremonies. Most of these churinga stones and boards are concerned with geographical features, such as the location of water-holes or particular places usually frequented by kangaroos or goannas or emus. They might relate the location of passes through the mountains, which of course are used by the wild animals and which also usually have a pool of water in or near them. Then, too, the Aborigine knows the likely spots where water might be found. The story is told of a group of white men

who were camped at what they thought was an entirely dry and waterless spot, relying entirely on the water they had carried with them. They were dumbfounded to have a band of Aborigines camp nearby and after a few minutes of poking in the ground with their digging sticks bring forth a spring of clear water! Probably the location of this water was known to them through some drawing on one of their ceremonial beards.

There are only two requirements for an Aborigine - a small amount of water and some sort of living creatures to hunt. Also, of course, there are always certain nuts or the fruits of certain trees, or the honey collected by some bees to add to the diet. These people, then, live entirely on the land. They add nothing to it, they take from it only the bare essentials needed for that day's existence.

This means, of course, a nomadic existence, moving as frequently as might be indicated by the abundance or scarcity of animals. So, of course, the fewer possessions that need transporting the more easily (for the women) this moving is accomplished. No house, no tent, no furniture, no bag of clothes, no cooking utensils, no farming tools - just spears, digging sticks and the woomera, and perhaps some boomerangs. Every tool serves several purposes, but the woomera is perhaps more versatile than most. It is a mixing bowl, a device used to help throw a spear more accurately, and a weapon to be used as a club. The other commonly used tool is the human tooth, used to sharpen the stone or wooden points of his spears. The spears a man has are his most valuable possessions and are guarded carefully. The weapons, therefore, are the only articles carried by the man of the family when they are on the move - everything else the wife or the children carry.

The women also are responsible for providing all the food for the family other than the meat. The man, as hunter, provides the meat, and after he has done so he relaxs. Frequently the meat is eaten raw or only partially cooked, while the berries or seeds of various plants gathered by the women are pounded into flour and baked into a sort of bread by the women. The men take great pride in providing the meat, which is of course the staple of the diet, but if that supply should fail for any reason, the family would still eat because of the gathering of seeds and roots and berries by the women.

In spite of his otherwise very simple life, the Aborigine did know about fire. He was able to light a fire at will, and did not rely upon keeping a fire going once he had started it. His method of starting a fire was exactly that recommended in the Boy Scout Manual - he rubbed two sticks together by twirling one between his palms while the end of it was kept in contact with the other.

Fires have been supposed to be also a method of communication, and it has been believed by some that the Aborigine used smoke signals to communicate over long distances. This, however, appears not to have been the case. When one, or a group, of Aborigines were traveling in the territory belonging to another tribe they customarily lit fires every few miles to indicate to the people through whose land they were travelling what direction they were keeping. In this way they could not be accused of attempting to sneak up on their hosts, and the hosts, by keeping track of the smoke, would know when to expect visitors.



All across central Australia the early explorers, the men who strung the telegraph wire across the middle of the country from Darwin in the far north to Adelaide in the south, relied upon supplies from the cities - and in scores they died from starvation or lack of water. In those same parts of the country the black Aborigine was finding all his wants. True, he could not read or write, numbers were unknown to him, he had no literature as we think of it. Yet he was not stupid. An example of his intelligence is the method commonly used, even today, of sending letters, as we would call them.

When a member of a certain tribe plans a trip to some other location this soon becomes common knowledge. Friends come to him and ask him to give a particular message to someone else. They might be told - "Tell my friend that I have another son, that my wife's uncle died, that hunting has been poor in the hills near the water-hole of the gray kangaroo, that I will come to visit after the next full moon," and so on for what would perhaps take us four pages to write in a letter. As the prospective correspondent gives this long message to the carrier of the news, he also hands him a small stick with a series of notches in it. Each part of the message is related to a specific notch. Perhaps dozens of these message sticks are collected by the traveller. Upon reaching his destination he finds the various recipients, gives each one the proper message stick and proceeds to relate the correct meaning of each notch. This is not reading or writing, but it unquestionably signifies intelligence of a fairly high order.

The kind of existence led by the Aborigines in Australia before the coming of the white man certainly depends entirely upon a large and uninhabited country. Population density, particularly in a land as arid as the interior of Australia, can be only extremely small. No figures, of course, can be given, or even surmised, yet it is probably unlikely that the maximum Aborigine population ever exceeded 200,000 in the entire continent, and the addition of only a very small number of white men made the nomadic hunting and gathering existence of the Aborigine entirely impossible.

These, then, are the people Daisy Bates chose to ease through the agony of the death of their race. She decided that she would record the languages and customs of this race while it was yet possible to do so. This continued thereafter to be her basic purpose, and she accomplished it with singular success. Meanwhile, at every opportunity she wrote articles for English and Australian newspapers and magazines - sometimes adding to the world's knowledge of her subject, and frequently contributing only to its confusion.

Early in her career, for instance, she made the flat accusation that the Aborigines were cannibals and that the women of the tribe frequently killed and ate their own babies. This statement was apparently based on the testimony of one Aborigine woman, who stated that she had done so, and pointed to several other women nearby and said that they also had done so. No other investigator, then or later, was able to verify this custom, and Daisy was often roundly criticized for this supposed slander. Yet she stuck to it, in spite of the fact that she was never subsequently able to find corroborating evidence.

In point of fact, her accusation of cannibalism does not square with the well-known family customs of the Aborigines, for they are particularly solicitous of their children. True, this treatment is more apt to be accorded the male children than the females, but even the females are seen to have their uses - such as carrying the family possessions when the tribe is on the move, cooking the food and providing much of it other than the meat.

When it became obvious that the cattle station venture was not to be part of the future, Daisy Bates secured a commission from the government of Western Australia to collect all available material on the subject of Aboriginal languages and customs. With astonishing speed she put together an 800 page record. Her success encouraged her to put forward the rather unusual scheme of studying the Aborigines by actually living among them.

Over many objections she was given permission to move to an Aborigine reserve. Many old Aborigines - the last of their different groups - lived in this reserve, and from them she would be able to take down vast stores of information before it became too late. Thereupon she moved to her first campeite in the bush. A squad of policemen escorted her to Maamba, set up her tent, constructed a windbreak and promptly left. There she was, alone in an Aboriginal reserve, hundreds of miles from civilization, surrounded by blacks. But she knew their character. She did nothing. Impelled by curiosity, not by antagonism, they came closer. When they were close enough, she spoke to them in their own language, and invited them to join her in a cup of tea.

Everything she possessed, or needed, was contained in the fourteen-foot diameter tent. She lived not in, but adjacent to, the native village, and neither she nor the black people ever ventured into the others domain without permission. Slowly she became their friend. They trusted her, told her their stories, answered her questions. While her major mission among them was to record what she could learn of their language and their culture, she was not averse to using this knowledge for other purposes also, and used the material they gave her, as well as their personal histories, for innumerable magazine articles and stories for the newspapers she continued to represent. She lived in this tent for some months, finally leaving when she felt she had collected whatever information the Aborigines there could give her. But while she lived there at Maamba, in a tent, doing her own cooking over an open fire, using an old packing crate for a table, she became an authority on Aborigine customs and culture and language, eventually learning some 160 languages and dialects.

It was here at Maamba that she acquired her native name, by which she became known to many thousands of Aborigines wherever she went thereafter. Because she not only asked them many questions and became in many ways a part of their life, she was known as their Grandmother. Whatever a grandmother would do for them, she did. Thus her Aborigine name of "Kabbarli" - grandmother.

But whatever the Aborigines may have felt about Kabbarli, the government of Western Australia appeared to have nothing but trouble with Daisy Bates. She not only wrote articles for the newspapers, she also wrote letters to the editor, suggesting improvements in every facet of governmental relations with the Aborigines. She sought governmental positions, she demanded to be appointed to official commissions, she questioned all official decisions and policies. In short, she became a nuisance to them.

So, in October, 1919, at the age of 56, she again implemented her decision to assist the Aborigine in his passing from the Australian scene. By now the railway across the southern part of the continent had been built, running for much of its length across the dreaded Nullarbor Plain. This desolate and dry country had been a major stumbling block to Australian exploration and development, and in spite of the railroad continues to be as much a barrier as a mountain range.

Her quarters this time were more sumptuous. She had two tents instead of one. These tents were pitched not far from an Aboriginal settlement, near a spur of the railroad. Her water came from the supply brought in by the railroad for the use of the locomotives, and she carried it up to her tent. This was her only source of water, in a land where it frequently did not rain for years on end. For furniture she had a very simple bed, a packing case for a table, a deck chair, a mirror, a tin trunk, a metal tank sunk in the ground to store her books, and a coolgardie safe, in which she could store

perishables such as butter. She also had a revolver, which she kept always close to her bed. This revolver was not for protection against the Aborigines, but against the snakes and the ever-present dingoes.

This was Ooldea. A more desolate place, bereft of any possible charm, lacking even the most rudimentary creature comforts, could not be imagined. Here is a railroad line that runs for hundreds of miles in a perfectly straight line through a treeless, waterless, sandy, stony desert. Ooldea was a supply point on this line. A small station, a supply warehouse, a water tank, a pile of wood for the railroad - nothing more. Two miles from this center of civilization, Daisy Bates lived for a longer time than she stayed in any other place. Every day she dressed as she would have dressed in London in 1900, with her white blouse, long skirt, high button shoes, and white gloves. In this costume she walked down to the railroad water tank and brought back her supply of water and the meager supplies she could get from the company store.

But Kabbarli was here for a purpose. First, she wanted to help the Aboriginal race - and that cannot be done, she reasoned, without helping the individual Aborigine. She believed that when they gave her information about themselves and their people and their customs which she wanted, she was obligated to give them something in return. This compensation took the form of sweetened porridge, which she apparently ladled out by the kettle-full. But she did

more than that. When they were sick, she nursed them. When a whole family came down with the measles or some other equally serious ailment, she brought them food, wiped their fevered brows, gave them water. All of this she did from her own resources, skimpy as they were and supplemented only occasionally by the income she derived from selling stories to newspapers and magazines and by gifts from friends.

All of the time she carried on a running feud with the government - whether this was the state government or the government of Australia. Probably not a week passed that the people in Adelaide or Perth did not hear from her. She was encouraging the Aborigines to look to the government for help - but it was government policy to help them fend for themselves, to become self-sufficient in the manner of the white settler. Possibly it was officially forgotten that for many thousands of years the Aborigine had been entirely self-sufficient and had gotten along perfectly well, and that it was only when the white settler came that the manner of living which the Aborigine had worked out became impossible.

People who have never known any life other than hunting and gathering, who have no permanent home, who have no need for any kind of possessions, whose language does not even include any words that are the equivalent of numbers, who have no need to count, who have never had any medium of exchange because they had nothing to exchange, find it difficult to adjust overnight to a civilization such as that brought from England to Australia in the nineteenth century.

For these people, the easiest way to achieve the necessities of life was to ask for them from the people on the trains that stopped at Ooldea. In other words, they became beggars, and the government of Australia, being composed of Australians to whom begging was simply an outrage, was determined to put a stop to it. So Daisy Bates, in taking up the cudgels for the Aborigines, also became an official outcast. Yet the government had to tread carefully, for Daisy Bates was an acknowledged authority, was a popular folk hero, had immense influence, and could not easily be put off.

She was greeted warmly, in person, whenever she appeared at a seat of government, was given much recognition, but had no influence whatsoever, could secure no government appointments and any request which bore her name was practically automatically refused. Daisy Bates put much store by appearances - as witness her costume even in the desert - and it was therefore a particularly encouraging event when, in recognition of her accomplishments in assimilating the language and customs of the Aborigines and for what she had done for them, she was, in 1934, included on the New Years Honours List and awarded the Order of Commander of the British Empire. In one stroke all was justified, her enemies confounded and her labors rewarded.

But it was not to be. On the strength of her new-found honors and influence Daisy attempted to pressure the government into backing her to the extent of a grant of 1,000 pounds per year to put her voluminous materials in order and to publish material on the languages, customs and history (as told by them) of the Aborigines. The government was polite and embarrassed, but firm.



No grant was forthcoming. She was still living in her tents in Ooldea, and her priceless material was stored in her tin trunks. She wrote to prime ministers, to department heads, to anyone whose name appeared in print and who might help.

So, despairing of any assistance from the government, she accepted an offer from the Adelaide Advertiser. It was a bitter pill for her to swallow, but it resulted in the publication of her one and only full-length book - The Passing of the Aborigine. It was first published in 1936 while the author was still living in her tent in Ooldea - and soon became a best seller in Europe.

Finally, at the age of 73, after 16 years in the desert, she left her tent in Ooldea and moved to Adelaide. Still wearing her turn-of-the-century London clothes, she walked from her club to the offices of the Advertiser, paying no attention to the traffic lights or the horns of motorists. Although not by any means affluent, she did have a little money in the bank, and the prospect of more from the sale of her articles and her book.

She positively radiated energy. She walked in all weather, rejoicing in the rain to which she had become completely unaccustomed and which she enjoyed to the fullest. Her costume, which many people might have thought out of place, she regarded as a source of distinction. As she said, she had "hitched her sartorial wagon to Queen Alexandra", and could see no reason to unhitch it. Besides, this helped to draw attention, and her compensation lay in recognition.

She continued her running battle with the government, asking

400 pounds per year for two years to put her notes in order. Also, she wanted an office and a secretary. The government had other ideas, asking her to accept the help of a collaborator. After much haggling and many bitter letters, she finally accepted the office and the secretary, but no stipend was offered, and she refused the collaborator. Finally, though, she was persuaded to accept the princely sum of two pounds per week, to keep her from starving.

So, in 1936, at an age when most people might be looking for a comfortable nook in a well-heated building, Daisy Bates returned to her tent life. But this was only a rather short stay, for within two years the royalties from the Australian edition of her book began to come in, so she moved back to the Queen Adelaide Club in Adelaide.

At last, in 1940 her work of compiling the voluminous notes was completed. Honors now began to come her way in increasing volume. She was recognized, and lionized. She was invited to Canberra to witness the donation of her life work, the many folios of notes, the endless boxes of documents, to the archives of the national library. Glory again was hers - fleetingly - but she was alone to receive it. Husband Jack was now presumed to be dead, son Arnold was not present, nor were any grandchildren - and most particularly no Aborigines were at the ceremony. Only Daisy, in her shirtwaist dress with the long skirts, white gloves and high-button shoes.

This was the undoubted high point of her life, and she savored the moment, standing to regal attention as her work was enshrined for posterity.

After this climax, Daisy Bates became just another old woman. She spent occasional short interludes in the hospital or in a nursing home or staying with friends who knew and understood her. On one occasion she even flounced out of a hospital, got on a bus and rode 400 miles to stay at a small country hotel. Once more, in yet another attempt to pressure the government, she even returned to her tent life in the desert. But her stay this last time was short - at the age of 82 tent life loses its appeal as a permanent way of life. Even her friends the Aborigines no longer recognized Kabbarli.

So Daisy Bates ended her life in a convalescent home. She emerged for an occasional garden party at Government House, to be pointed out as the local celebrity.

She died in 1951 at the age of 88, and was buried in a large cemetery in Adelaide. Even in this she was thwarted, for she had picked the site of her grave at Ooldea beside eight Aborigines whom she had buried there. At her funeral one grandson represented her white family - and not a single Aborigine represented the black family she had known and loved so long.

It was a remarkable alliance between Daisy Bates and the last of the Aborigines. It was made possible in large measure by the fact that neither expected it - and neither expected anything from it. Her basic assumption, of course, turned out to be wrong, but that in no way detracts from her accomplishments. But while the race lives on, contrary to her expectations, its habits and customs as recorded by Daisy Bates have disappeared, made impossible by a civilization that cannot leave space for the kind of life they knew.