

# POT-POURRI AGAIN

## *Early Days in Australia*

*The Sixth of a Series of Articles by L. N. BRIGGS, Manager of Taree Station.*

(Copyright)

Hello, young folks. How are you? How often we are asked that little question, aren't we? How do you feel and what do you say when someone says to you: "How are you?" It makes me feel very good when someone says "How are you?" to me. When they just say "Good-day, mate," it means that they are just someone who knows me, but when they ask, "How are you?" it means that they are really interested in me; and, because there are so many people who do not care how I am, I am so pleased when someone asks me how I am that I say: "Very well, thank you," even if I have a bad headache at the time.

Now, where were we when I left you last month? I think we were still in Ceylon. Well, we must hurry out of Ceylon because a malaria mosquito has dipped his nasty little nose into my blood and left germs which have made me very sick. A doctor has told me that I must leave Ceylon if I wish to become well again.

I didn't like leaving the people of Ceylon after I had learned their language and customs. They had come to regard my wife and I as their own people, because we spoke their language and knew their customs so well. When you mix with people who are strange to you, it is a good thing to learn to speak and to act as they do—unless, of course, they speak and act very badly.

I had heard a lot about your wonderful country and your wonderfully good-hearted people. Furthermore, the doctor told me that it would not be a good idea for me to go straight from Ceylon to a cold country like America.

My wife and I finally decided that we would come to Australia which is her own country. We said farewell to our good friends in Ceylon and, after sailing for three weeks in a big ship, we arrived in Sydney Harbour at sunrise one beautiful April morning.

Then we went to a farm in the country where good Australian food and some hard work on the farm soon put me in good shape again.

At that time I was a real New Australian. I didn't speak quite the same as the Old Australians spoke and I was not used to some of the Australian ways of doing things. People often laughed at my mistakes, but they were so kind with it that I didn't mind much.

When we had been here only a few weeks, we went to a funeral in the country. Not many people had cars in those days. There were many sulkies and saddle horses in the funeral procession.

We were riding in a Ford "T" model car just behind a lady who was riding a young horse. The horse didn't like going so slowly, and he reared and tried to get rid of his rider. I got out of the car and grabbed the reins of the bridle and asked the lady to dismount and take my seat in the car. My friends were rather terrified when they saw me prepare to mount the young half-broken horse. They thought of me as a raw "pommy". No one knew that I was the little Red Indian who had learned to ride bare-back over logs and fences away in the forests of America. I spoke to the horse in horse language and he settled down and behaved very well for me.

I always think of this as the day upon which I became an Australian, because on that day I became accepted as an equal among the community of expert Australian horsemen.

If you want to make friends among the people around you, it helps a lot if you have learned to do one or two things very well. If you are really good at some sport, if you can sing better than most people, or if you can do some kind of work better than your workmates, people will be interested in you and you must make friends. Learn as much as you can, boys and girls; it takes the shyness out of you and makes you really enjoy life.

When I had been in Australia about three years and had learned to be a good Australian, I met a man who had known me in Ceylon. He told me about the dark people of this country and of a Station at a place called Carowra Tank which is away out west between Ivanhoe and Cobar in New South Wales. A young couple was needed at this Aboriginal Station to help look after the needs of the dark people who lived there.



Some old hunters at Carowra! Jack Biggs (ex-police tracker), Frank Boney and Jimmy Buttons.