

**THEY THAT SIT IN DARKNESS**  
A STORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN NEVER-NEVER  
BY JOHN MACKIE  
AUTHOR OF "THE BULLDOGS" AND "SINNERS TWAIN"  
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Continued from first page.

frog" bell. Judging from its wavering, mellow pitch, it must have been about three miles distant.

"That's lucky," said Jack. "Somebody traveling can't be with bullocks or we'd have passed them. Must be horses. You see, it's 18 miles from the last water. They've only been able to make half the distance and we're still on. The same sad thing in the morning—lucky for us if they have been in the wagon, for then we can dig a decent grave. They will be here shortly after daybreak, you'll see."

"Now, Jack, turn in," I insisted. "You'll go to rest, you know."

Jack knew me to be obstinate as a mule when I took it into my head and so did what he was told. The attack of fever had passed, and, being intermittent, it would leave me fairly well for one day at least. Jack lay down in his blanket and in a few minutes was evidently in the land of dreams.

The tropical day had begun. I lit a fire and was about to go down to the creek to fill the billy when a horseman galloped up.

"Good morning, mates!" he said cheerily, with an unmistakable Scotch accent. Then, observing the dead blacks lying on the ground, he pulled up with a queer look on his face and gave a low, prolonged whistle. I pointed to the body of the murdered man, whose shape showed under the blanket with that rigid angularity which there is no mistaking.

"Preserve us!" he exclaimed, jumping off his horse and shaking me by the hand. "I've taken the situation at a gander. I might sorry for you, mate, but I see you've made your breakfast yet. If you go back to your camp and get it now—you mightn't care about eating it here—we'll have everything ready in half an hour's time."

"I'll send Savile along to give you a hand," remarked the squatner and went over to his own camp.

We chose a dry, sandy spot for the grave, and Jack, taking the shovel in his hands, worked steadily. Then Savile came, a great strapping quiet looking individual, with a round, good natured face. He took the shovel forcibly from Jack, who was too much astonished at this summary mode of procedure to express dissent. "You sit down, mate, he cried to me; "you're not looking too spic'y." I had been groping aimlessly around. To Jack he said: "Well, if you will work, you can get a sheet of bark. I've got some rope"—this for the bush coffin.

In less than an hour's time everything was ready. Then we placed the supposed John Farquharson on the sheet of bark ready to be rolled round his poor body when we lowered it into the grave, and now we saw Mackenzie of Tarragon coming among the trees accompanied by his daughter, a girl who I supposed would be about 19 years of age, and with her a fair, fresh, pleasant woman who was evidently some few years older.

For a year or two I had not seen many women. In fact, they were few and far between in that gulf country, and such women as there were—well, the less said about some of them the better. It was little wonder that Norah Mackenzie—I had heard her name mentioned—should have filled me with a peculiar interest. She was slightly built and won a well fitting riding habit that suited her neat figure to perfection. On her head was a gray, broad brimmed felt hat, caught up at one side and held by a small old fashioned Celtic silver brooch. Underneath her large dark eyes looked out from a delicately molded face that reminded me of some old Italian or Spanish picture. Her complexion was of a warm olive tint, and, with her dark eyes, heavily fringed eyelids, and the light brown color of her hair, she represented a type of Australian womanhood that for subtle attractive power will hold its own with any in the world. It was the Saxon type modified by the healthful, outdoor life of a subtropical climate. Her face was of patrician birth, a past to compare with a gyp's, but apart from its natural self possession there was something so alien from conventionality in her manner that the comparison was suggested. I saw Jack look at her steadily, then abruptly turn away his head. I could not see his face. Then the other man came up and one of the black boys.

The little boy, a slave, stood by the grave. The squatner, taking his daughter by the hand, lifted a corner of the blanket and looked upon the peaceful white face. Then the girl placed a wreath of wild flowers, which she had carried in her hand, upon her breast, and it seemed to me as if tears stood in her eyes. When for the first time I saw the face of Norah Mackenzie, it struck me that there was not much would escape her observation, but was I mistaken. She only looked for a moment upon that cold mask of clay, and then involuntarily, as it were, turning round, gazed in a strange, puzzled fashion at Jack. The likeness had struck her and evidently made her think.

"Have you a book of Common Prayer?" the squatner asked. "I'll read the burial service, being the oldest, if you don't mind," adding in an undertone. "I'm not an Episcopalian, but that doesn't matter."

And here something occurred which shows how at times into the most sacred and solemn offices a touch of the ludicrous will creep. I glanced at Jack, and Jack returned the compliment. I suppose both of us must have presented such a shame-faced and guilty appearance that when I looked up and caught Miss Mackenzie's eyes, while Jack remained out something about "Being afraid he had forgotten to fetch his prayer book along with him," there was an amused expression in them for a second, indicating a quick appreciation of the situation. In another instant, however, it had died away, and the squatner himself came to the rescue.

"Oh well, if you haven't one handy, don't mind," he remarked. "I put mine in my pocket in case of accidents."

And now in the shade of that great bloodwood tree the solemn words of the funeral service resounded—the most beautiful and solemn words of any service in the world.

"Perhaps sir," I said, "you're a J. P. in Queensland if not in the northern territory; so, if you wouldn't mind assisting me and witnessing the inventory of the dead man's property, we would

be greatly obliged to you. My name is Parker, and my mate's is Tyn dall. Perhaps you'd better take down our names."

He had taken from a light gray kha-kee coat a notebook and pencil to facilitate matters. "As you wish," he replied. "My name's Mackenzie. Tarragon is the name of my station on the Burdekin."

Then we lifted the blanket from off the corpse. Perhaps I never saw a more peaceful look upon the face of any one who had died by violence than I saw on the face of this man. Whatever may have been his restless passions once upon a time they had now forsaken the clay. I had seen the same look on Jack's face when he was asleep. He had been as the squatner said, looking sadly on his love, his wife, his children. Then we examined his possessions.

In the small pouch attached to his belt we found a plain silver watch, in his trousers pocket some silver, and two £5 notes in an old purse. The squatner unrolled a small parcel wrapped in oil-cloth and looked at a packet of letters, he read the addresses on one or two of the envelopes and seemed surprised; then he examined the correspondence. His face was a study now; the deepest concern and astonishment were depicted there.

"I heard Jack ejaculate hoarsely 'Well!' but his face was averted. Then the squatner, in his quiet but somewhat formal way, said:

"This man, I learn from these letters, is the son of one whom once I considered my friend. His mother and my sister were at school together. His name is John Farquharson. Perhaps, under the circumstances, I may as well tell you

denly what a strange spice of mockery there was in this burial after all. If I were not dreaming the night before—and I was half inclined to think I had been, or that it was some trick of the brain arising from the fever—I had seen Jack take from this man what simply obliterated his identity and left him with that which gave him a false one. He was being buried under the name of a man who at that moment was assisting at his burial. For I could not but suppose that my mate Jack was the same John Farquharson to whom the letters which the squatner had taken from the corpse had been addressed, and who for some reason or other wished to be forgotten by the world. He had seized upon the present opportunity of accomplishing his purpose, he considered as follows: "The name will be considered as that of Jack Tyn dall, was, of course, a false one. Still I could not be angry with Jack. 'Speak of a man as you find him' is not only a charitable but a just maxim. I had never met with a more straightforward or a more unselfish man."

The elder of the two women was now crying silently. One could not but observe them. The younger of the two had placed her arms round the other's waist and held one of her hands as if to comfort her, although her own eyes were undoubtedly dimmed. It was evident she was averse to betraying her feelings.

"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust"—And in a few minutes all was over.

The women went back to their camp, and the squatner, with his own hands, cut four strong posts and placed them at the corners of the new little grave. He also cut out on the bark of the tree the name "John Farquharson" and the date "July, 1883." "I'll get an iron plate made in Sydney and have it sent up to be placed over the grave," he said.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

The Best in the World.

We believe that Chamberlin's Stough Remedy is the best in the world. A few weeks ago we suffered with a severe cold and a troublesome cough, and having read their advertisements in our own and other papers we purchased a bottle to see if it would affect us. It cured us before the bottle was more than half used. It is the best medicine out for colds and coughs.—The Herald, Andersonville, Ind. For sale by the Delta Drug Store.

In almost every neighborhood there is some one whose life has been saved by Chamberlin's Colic, Cholera, Diarrhoea Remedy, or who has been cured of chronic diarrhoea by the use of that medicine. Such persons make a point of telling of it whenever opportunity offers, hoping that they may be the means of saving other lives. For sale by the Delta Drug Store.

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"Good morning," he said gravely, jumping off his horse. "Gordon, my man, told me of the sad affair that occurred last night. If you'll allow me to assist you, we may be able to get you very soon a man to assist you. I'll send over a copy of my news. Ah, here comes Gordon with the necessary articles, and as the mail is ready I don't think we'll have much difficulty in digging a grave. Have you found anything on the body that will lead to its identification? Perhaps a few notes with his description might be of use when reporting the matter to the police. I believe the police have come to the Macarthur river, which can't be more than 120 miles from here at the furthest." He spoke in a quiet, unobtrusive, businesslike way.

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