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Carl Lumholtz

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Among Cannibals

In 1880 the Norwegian ethnologist, zoologist and explorer Carl Lumholtz embarked on an expedition to Australia, with the purpose of observing the life and customs of the Australian Aborigines. This book focuses on his experiences while living for a year with a community in Queensland that had never previously come into contact with white people. 'Not only are many of the Australian Aborigines cannibals,' says Lumholtz, 'but most of the tribes have not yet emerged from the Stone Age in the history of their development'. He goes on brilliantly to document a complex and fascinating society. Containing detailed maps to illustrate the explorer's travels and many images, the book also includes informative appendices outlining Australian history, geology, flora and fauna. First published in 1889, Lumholtz's classic account of the events and practices he witnessed retains the power to shock, educate and entertain the modern reader.

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*An Account of Four Years' Travels in Australia
and of Camp Life with the Aborigines of
Queensland*

CARL LUMHOLTZ



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AMONG CANNIBALS

AN ACCOUNT OF

FOUR YEARS' TRAVELS IN AUSTRALIA
AND OF CAMP LIFE WITH THE ABORIGINES OF
QUEENSLAND

BY

CARL LUMHOLTZ, M.A.

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF SCIENCES OF NORWAY

WITH MAPS, COLOURED PLATES, AND 122 ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1889

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*Ἄνδροφάγοι δὲ ἀγριώτατα πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἔχουσιν ἤθηα, οὔτε
δίκην νομίζοντες οὔτε νόμῳ οὐδενὶ χρεόμενοι· νομάδες δὲ εἴσιν.*

HERODOTUS, IV. 106.

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TO

Paul B. Du Chaillu,

THE CELEBRATED EXPLORER OF AFRICA

AND

THE GREAT FRIEND OF SCANDINAVIA'S PAST AND PRESENT

AS EVINCED BY

'THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN' AND 'THE VIKING AGE'

THIS ENGLISH EDITION IS MOST RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

IN the year 1880 I undertook an expedition to Australia, partly at the expense of the University of Christiania, with the object of making collections for the zoological and zootomical museums of the University, and of instituting researches into the customs and anthropology of the little-known native tribes which inhabit that continent.

At the commencement of my travels, which occupied four years, I spent some time in the south-eastern colonies, South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales; and succeeded in establishing connections with the museums in the cities of Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney, and I may add that everywhere I met with the most cordial reception. I am particularly indebted to the distinguished botanist Baron Ferd. von Mueller, of Melbourne; to Fred. M'Coy, Professor of Zoology and Mineralogy in Melbourne University; and to Dr. E. P. Ramsay, Director of the Museum in Sydney.

More than ten months from November 1880 to August 1881 were spent by me at the fine station of Gracemere in Central Queensland, belonging to Messrs. Archer and Co. Both here and elsewhere I was indebted to various members of the Archer family for kindnesses, which in many ways aided me in my work. I was placed under similar obliga-

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tions to Walter J. Scott, Esq., the proprietor of the Valley of Lagoons station in Northern Queensland. To all these gentlemen I desire to express my sincere gratitude.

In August 1881 I entered upon my first journey of discovery, in the course of which I penetrated about 800 miles into Western Queensland, but the results in nowise corresponded to the hardships I had to endure.

I thereupon selected Northern Queensland as the field of my chief exploration, and here I spent fourteen months in constant travel and study. From August 1882 to July 1883 I made my headquarters in the valley of the short but comparatively broad and deep Herbert river, which empties itself into the Pacific Ocean at about 18° S. lat., and there I lived alone among a race of people whose culture—if indeed they can be said to have any culture whatever—must be characterised as the lowest to be found among the whole genus *homo sapiens*. Not only are many of the Australian aborigines cannibals, but most of the tribes have not yet emerged from the Stone Age in the history of their development. Others have studied the ethnographic peculiarities of this race; but my predecessors have mainly directed their attention to the tribes of the southern part of Australia, which in many respects have attained a higher intellectual development than their northern kinsmen.

From my base on the Herbert river I made expeditions in various directions, extending in some instances to nearly 100 miles. The greater part of the volume now offered to the public is devoted to descriptions of my life in the camps of the northern savages in different districts. It has been my purpose to present a faithful picture, based on my own observations, of the life, manners, and customs of the Australian aborigines from their birth and infancy to their

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old age and death ; and thus to rescue, for the science of ethnography, facts concerning tribes that have never before come into contact with white men, and that within a generation or two will have disappeared from the face of the earth.

While making these anthropological studies I also succeeded in securing a collection of zoological specimens, some of which are new to science, and all of which may be seen in the museums of the Christiania University. The collection consists mainly of vertebrates, including a considerable number of mammals, which have been described by Professor R. Collett in *Zoologischer Jahrbücher*, Jena, 1887. I brought home about 700 specimens of birds, a large number of reptiles and batrachians, numerous fishes, also some insects and lower animals. Among other things I discovered four new mammals, which have been described and named by Professor R. Collett in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*, 1884. The four new mammals are: *Dendrolagus lumholtzii* (the tree-kangaroo); and three opossums, *Pseudochirus archeri*, *Pseudochirus herbertensis*, and *Pseudochirus lemuroides*.

In conclusion, I desire to express my obligations to the friends who have helped me in carrying on my work, and in writing this record of it—to Professor Robert Collett and Professor Ossian Sars, of Christiania University, who first encouraged me to undertake the journey, and who never have failed to render me valuable aid and advice ; to Dr. H. Reusch and Mr. A. M. Hansen, for their co-operation in drawing up a portion of the appendix to this volume ; to Professor R. B. Anderson (late United States Minister to Denmark), for his aid in the preparation of the English edition ; to Mr. M. R. Oldfield Thomas, for having revised the scientific names in the proofs for me during my absence

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in America; and to Mr. John Murray jun., for his assistance in the correction and supervision of the whole work while passing through the press.

Most of the illustrations are by Norwegian and French artists from original photographs, sketches, and specimens brought back by me from Australia.

It should be observed that the area marked red on the map as indicating the district explored by me should be extended so as to include Cashmere, Glendhu, the Valley of Lagoons, and all the intervening country.

As a foreigner, I would ask for the kind indulgence of my readers and critics towards any literary shortcomings in this English edition of my work.

CARL LUMHOLTZ.

LONDON, *August* 1889.

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