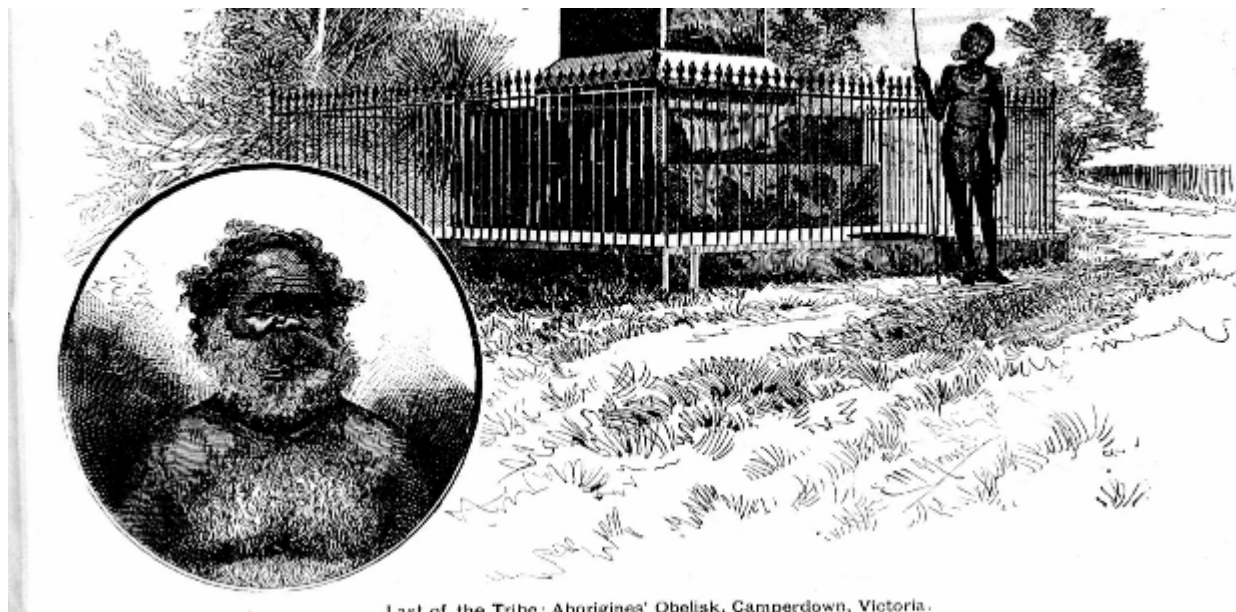


Last of the Tribe.

ABORIGINES' OBELISK.

Mr. James Dawson, of Rennyhill, Camperdown (Victoria) has written to us as follows:—As Mr. Guilfoyle has directed your attention to my efforts in raising by public subscription an obelisk in memory of the extinct tribes of aborigines of the Camperdown district (Vic.), and has requested me to send to you a photograph and description, accompanied with particulars, I gladly avail myself of your very generous offer of publication in the **TOWN AND COUNTRY JOURNAL**. “Dawson’s Australian Aborigines” shows that I have taken a deep interest in the ill-used native tribes. Many years ago, at my request, I was





Last of the Tribe: Aborigines' Obelisk, Camperdown, Victoria.

appointed a honorary local guardian, that I might have power to protect the poor remnant of the local tribes, and up to the period of my leaving for Scotland, in 1882, I looked to their comfort and protection. On my return, two years ago, I found the last of them dead and buried. On visiting the Camperdown Cemetery, a boggy, scrubby spot was pointed out to me—outside the area assigned to white people—as the burying-ground of the aborigines, and a hole among the scrub, wherein the hind legs of a horse got bogged, as the grave of “Wombetch Puyuun,” alias “Camperdown George.” In the presence of some local friends, “all of the olden time,” I expressed myself very strongly, and it was determined, if possible, to raise an obelisk in memory of the extinct tribes. In promotion of this movement, I undertook to lay the matter before the public, and I wrote circulars to the leading occupiers of estates, at

one time the hunting grounds of the tribes sought to be represented, soliciting subscriptions. Fully depending on sympathy and liberal support from so many wealthy persons, I at once drew a sketch of an obelisk I saw in Oban Cemetery, Scotland, and submitted it to Mr. Nash, sculptor, Geelong, who undertook the work and erected it, greatly to his credit and the satisfaction of the subscribers and myself. The obelisk stands in the central ornamental plot of the cemetery—kindly granted by the trustees—and is 20ft in height. The column or shaft is of gray granite, and on the front at the top are engraved the figures 1840, the date of the beginning of the extinction (extirpation would be a more appropriate term) of the local aborigines. Below are the boomerang, the liangle or club, the message stick or letter. At the bottom are the figures 1883, the date of the

total extinction of the local tribes by the death of Wombeetch Puyuun. On the polished face of the base are in gilded letters the words:—

In Memory of
the
Aborigines
of this district.

Here lies the body of the chief,
WOMBEETCH PUYUUN,
and last of the local tribes.

Underneath are two courses of granite and two of bluestone, and the whole is surrounded with a substantial kerbing and iron railing. In order that facts might be consistent with the inscrip-

that facts might be consistent with the description, I made a formal application to the Attorney-General, and received permission to have the body of Wombeetch Puyun removed and deposited at the foot of the obelisk, and this I did with my own hands. The cost of the obelisk exceeded £185. In response to my applications for contributions to the memorial, gratifying and sympa-

thetic replies accompanied with subscriptions were sent to me by many landowners, "all of the olden time." From eight others owning vast estates valued in the aggregate at upward of £850,000 sterling, I had refusals such as—(verbatim)—1. "I decline to assist in erecting a monument to a race of men we have robbed of their country." 2. "Your proposal does not meet with my sympathy." 3. "I have always looked on the blacks as a nuisance, and hope the trustees will forbid its erection." 4. "Have a strong dislike to hand over any portion of my hard-earned increment for another to spend." 5. "I cannot see the use of it." 6. "My wife wants her drawing-room papered." 7. "May subscribe a little out of respect for you." 8. "Fail to see the use. The obelisk will point for all time to come to our treatment of this unfortunate race—

the possessors of the soil we took from them, and we gave in return the vices belonging to our boasted civilisation. I decline to assist." From owners of fourteen fine estates in this district,

OWNERS OF FOURTEEN THE ESTATES IN THE DISTRICT,
estimated at a value of £2,200,000 sterling, in
answer to my applications I did not receive one
penny, and in many instances I got no replies
from men holding the position of gentlemen,
although they were twice written to by me in a
friendly spirit.

The body of Mr. Richard Croft, solicitor, was dis-
covered in the lagoon, Forbes, on Friday. The
unfortunate gentleman left the town at about 11
o'clock p.m. on Tuesday, to proceed to his residence
on Camp Hill. No suspicion arose in consequence
of his non-arrival there, as he often remained in town
for the night. As he was absent on Wednesday
night inquiries were made, followed by a search with
the stated result. The deceased gentleman had been
a resident of the town nearly twenty-five years.