

Extract from letter by James Drummond to
Sir William Jackson Hooker.

Letter published in the "Inquirer" 15th February 1843.
Date of letter unknown.

About 30 miles to the south of the Vasse, near the left bank of a small brook, we fell in with a most extraordinary and ingenious contrivance of the natives for catching kangaroos. This trap, or rather collection of traps, occupies a space of about 50 feet in diameter, and consists of 5 half-circles formed of hedges of dead brushwood, with a smooth open space in the middle 20 feet by 14; these hedges come so near that there is just room for a pit 18 inches wide at the top, which is the ground level; they are 4 feet long, and 5 deep, gradually becoming narrower to the bottom: over these pits slender leafy branches are stuck in from both sides horizontally, and carefully covered over with dead leaves and earth; the earth removed in making them, although mostly concealed by the dead branches which form the hedges, is so placed that it gives support to two cross bars at the two ends of the pit, raised about 9 inches or a foot high, which causes the kangaroo, in going in or out to the open space in the middle, to which he is conducted by the hedges of dead brushwood, to jump and come down with all his weight on the slight covering which conceals the pit. When the kangaroo is caught, the branches spring up again, and the animal is completely in the dark from the narrowness of the bottom, he can make but little effort to escape. The annexed sketch* gives a tolerably correct idea of this work of the natives. The crossed lines are hedges of dead wood; there are traps in 4 of the principal passages which I have represented open with their cross sticks, and there are traps in all the half circles much in the same way which I have represented them in one which I have filled up. I am unable to say what may be the object of attraction, unless it may be the clear open space in the middle, into which they would be likely to go to play and amuse themselves. Our man Scot, in going up the brook looking for birds, fell into No. 1, and we found a kangaroo in No. 3. There is a beaten kangaroo path along the banks of the brook, but there is no appearance of any part of the brook retaining water in the dry season, in the vicinity of the trap.

* Sketch not published
in the "Inquirer"