

西方学校原版阅读教材



澳大利亚学生 文学读本

AUSTRALIAN
LITERATURE READERS



Authorized by the Ministry
of Victorian Education

澳大利亚维多利亚教育部 / 编

CLASS ENGLISH READERS FOR CHINESE LEARNERS

天津出版传媒集团
天津人民出版社

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图书在版编目（CIP）数据

澳大利亚学生文学读本：英文 / 澳大利亚维多利亚教育部编. — 天津：天津人民出版社，2013.3

ISBN 978-7-201-07995-0

I. ①澳… II. ①澳… III. ①英语课—中小学—
课外读物 IV. ①G634.413

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字（2013）第025720号

天津出版传媒集团

天津人民出版社出版、发行

出版人：刘晓津

（天津市西康路35号 邮政编码：300051）

网址：<http://www.tjrmcbs.com.cn>

电子信箱：tjrmcbs@126.com

北京领先印刷有限公司印刷

2013年3月第1版 2013年3月第1次印刷

880×1230毫米 32开本 46.5印张 字数：1000千字

定价：108.00元（全套六册）



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LESSON 1
PIONEERS

We are the old-world people,
Ours were the hearts to dare;
But our youth is spent, and our backs are bent,
And the snow is on our hair.

Back in the early fifties,
Dim through the mists of years,
By the bush-grown strand of a wild, strange land
We entered—the Pioneers.



Our axes rang in the woodlands
Where the gaudy bush-birds flew,
And we turned the loam of our new-found home
Where the eucalyptus grew.

Housed in the rough log shanty,
Camped in the leaking tent,
From sea to view of the mountains blue,
Where the eager fossickers went,

We wrought with a will unceasing,
We moulded, and fashioned, and planned,
And we fought with the black, and we blazed the track,
That ye might inherit the land.

Here are your shops and churches,
Your cities of stucco and smoke;
And the swift trains fly where the wild cat's cry
O'er the sad bush silence broke.

Take now the fruit of our labour,
Nourish and guard it with care,
For our youth is spent, and our backs are bent,
And the snow is on our hair.

— FRANK HUDSON

Author.—FRANK HUDSON was a little-known Australian writer.

General Notes.—A pioneer was originally a foot soldier; in military use it denotes one of an engineering corps sent forward to remove obstructions, form roads, etc. What does it mean here? What was happening in Australia in the early fifties? What are fossickers? Were there many fights with the blacks? What is stucco? What is the fruit of the labour of the early pioneers? How can we nourish and guard it? Find out the names of the pioneers of your district.

LESSON 2

AN ADVENTURE WITH THE BLACKS

When Jim Crow made friends with us, we used to allow a few of the friendly natives to stay about, as they always informed us of the movements of the mob. In this way we obtained an idea of the best time to journey out for food supplies.

Hearing that the coast was clear to get away, we decided to go for some goods that had been sent as far as Charlotte Plains, on the Loddon River, a journey of about 150 miles—not an easy under taking. Leaving the rest of the party to protect the homestead, my father and I started off. I was only nine years old at the time, but had been brought up to fear nothing.

With six bullocks and a light dray we made good progress, as it was summer-time. Nothing of any importance happened till we had returned, with the supplies on board, as far as the Four Post Station(Glenorchy) about thirty miles from home. Before our arrival, the blacks had stolen about two hundred sheep, taking them in the direction we were to travel the next day.

As there was such a big tribe, the shepherds were afraid

to follow, and allowed them to take the sheep away without a fight. Word had been sent to the homestead asking for a party to follow them, but no one arrived while we were there. We decided to push on and risk what might happen.

We had travelled fourteen or fifteen miles when we saw the smoke of the blacks' camp about a quarter of a mile off. We were now in a forest of box timber, and the reader can imagine the wildness of the scene—no settlements, no help from anywhere should we need it, nothing but a wild bush track, with the blue sky above, and the screeching of parrots to break the stillness as they flew from tree to tree, and hundreds of native fires not far off to warn us of the danger ahead. We did not stop, nor did we even speak, thinking that, if we went on very quietly, the blacks might not notice us, as they had such a feast of mutton to take up their attention.

Alas! our hopes were vain; for, to our dismay, we heard bloodthirsty yells from hundreds of voices across the river, and knew that we had been seen. We waved to the blacks, trying to make them understand that we did not want them; and you may imagine we tried to make our meaning very clear, seeing that our lives were hanging in the balance.

They consulted together, and you will understand that those seconds were not happy ones for the man and boy who stood awaiting their decision. After long years, I can

see again the whole scene before me, and feel the dread which crept around my heart as I watched those natives swim across the river with their spears and waddies in their hands.

We decided to go on quietly, pretending not to notice their movements, until they had formed a circle round us and we were hemmed in on all sides. I implored my father not to shoot, as I knew only too well that, had he done so, they would have speared us to death.

Having made up his mind on what seemed to be the best course to follow, he laid the gun on the top of the dray; and the blacks, who were in the act of throwing their spears, at once put them down and walked up to us. Here we were, surrounded by a circle of about two hundred savage faces, and unable to move for fear our action might be misunderstood. The bullocks in the dray were so frightened that the chains and yokes rattled on them.

One blackfellow pulled off a bag of sugar, and the mob began to eat it. Another, with wild, glaring eyes and fiendish expression, walked up to my father and seized him by a sleeve of his coat, at the same time digging his great fingers almost into the flesh, and raising his waddy as though to strike him on the head.

I was terrified; but as if by magic the king, Jim Crow, whom I have mentioned before, called out, "Melligig white

man; melligig white man," which meant that the white man had been very good. At his words, the blackfellow let go his hold, and we both shook hands with Jim Crow. We made him understand that, if they only let us alone, we would kill a bullock at the station for them.

We had a pound or two of tobacco with us, which the shepherds of the Four Post Station had given us to take to a friend of theirs at North Brighton. This we gave to Jim Crow, who put the remainder of the sugar on the dray, and told us to go on. We showed as friendly and as bold a face as possible, and did as we were told.

The tribe sat down and began to eat the sugar, while we departed as quietly as possible; but as soon as we were out of sight we raced for our lives. Once out on the plain, we could see the blacks doing their best to catch up to us. We were about fourteen miles from the home station, and never shall I forget that race for life.

When the bullocks showed signs of slackening their speed, we urged the poor brutes on as best we could. A run for life along a good metalled road of to-day would be no laughing matter, but what it was then, through the wild bush, only one who has experienced it can know.

We raced for seven miles, and crossed the Yarriambiack Creek, now called Longerenong, and had a straight run to the station. Our speed was too much for the tribe, although

a dozen or so of the younger ones held on till we came in sight of home.

We arrived at North Brighton without further adventures, and found all well, no blacks having been seen at the station during our absence. Every one was delighted and thankful to see us back, and to get the food supplies, especially the tea and sugar, which were thought great luxuries.

Author.—The passage is taken from the diary of Mr. SAMUEL CARTER, whose father was an early settler in the Wimmera, which was then (in the early forties) a part of the Port Phillip district of New South Wales. The events described took place near Longerenong (see atlas).

General Notes.—Jim Crow was the king of the tribe. "North Brighton" was the name of Mr. Carter's selection near Longerenong. Were the blacks fairly treated by early settlers in general? Recall instances of their kindness to lost explorers.