

THE FLOODS.

FLOOD AT BURRENDONG.

NINE LIVES LOST.

A private letter, dated Burrendong, 22nd June, contains the following painful narrative of suffering and death. The writer's father, who lost his life in endeavouring to save his neighbours, is Frederick Smith.

"There has been an awful flood on the Mudgee and Macquarie rivers. People were washed out of their houses. The water was within six yards of our house and we were hemmed in every way but one. The great flat between us and our neighbour, Baker, was entirely covered. The night before last poor father went over to Baker's to get them to our place, where they would have been safe. But there is a gully near Baker's, and the river and a large lagoon of water met it, and swamped it—the flat. They got to the house, but the water soon reached them there, and it kept rising till it got up to their necks, and they had to go, about two hours before daylight. There were twelve of them, but three were saved, Mr. Baker and his two eldest children. Mrs. Baker and seven children, from 13 years to 9 months, were lost, and poor father. They all perished more from their drowning. Father held some of the children in his arms till they died. The three who were saved swam to a tree, and were there till mother risked her life in a boat and went over to them. She pulled a good mile alone, no one to help her, and brought them down from the tree nearly dead, and brought them home."

The bodies of the nine persons drowned have been recovered. The survivors of the flood are in safety.

We have been informed by a gentleman who was present at the inquest held yesterday, that the bodies of the nine persons who perished in the flood at Burrendong, on the 21st inst., have been recovered. The bodies of the nine persons who perished in the flood at Burrendong, on the 21st inst., have been recovered. The survivors of the flood are in safety.

father and his two surviving children can well be imagined. The bodies were all found near the hut when the water subsided, and will be taken to Wellington for burial. I have already collected £13 for Mrs. Smith, and any further subscriptions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by me.—F. B. BURTON, Kahala, Burrendong.

The following evidence was given at the inquest:—
 Isaac Daniel Baker, having been duly sworn, states: I have seen the bodies now lying here. I recognise them as those of my wife, Mary Ann Baker, aged about 45 years, and my children, Daniel Baker, 13 years, Henry Shadrach Baker, 11 years, Andrew William Baker, 9 years, Charles Frederick Baker, 7 years, John Isaac Baker, 5 years, Thomas Edwin Baker, 3 years, and Mary Ann Elizabeth Baker, eight months. I also recognise the body of Frederick Smith. I am a shepherd in the employ of Messrs. Blunden. I live near the Macquarie River, and near its junction with the Mudgee River. On the day of the 21st I was at home all day, when the sheep came home, my boys, Daniel and Henry Shadrach, having been shepherding them that day. About 5 o'clock p.m. I went to the bank of the Macquarie to see how the river was. I saw it was rising. There was some high ground at the back of the sheep yard, where I had made a gate way to let the sheep out in case of a flood; this was between my hut and the river. We put the sheep up and went to supper with all my family. I told my eldest son Moses we would have to remain up all night and watch the flood. After we had supper my two eldest children that are now alive went to see the flood, and returned and told me that the water was coming very fast down the gully. The water was from the river, and was about two or three hundred yards from the hut. When I went out the deceased, Frederick Smith, was coming towards the hut to render me assistance. He told me the water had risen six feet in the Mudgee River while he was at supper, and asked me what I was going to do. I said, "We shall get the children out." He went into the hut, and I told my wife to get the children ready, as we should have to move out, for the water was coming round fast, but there was still dry ground. In about ten minutes from that time when I went out again, I found that the water had entirely surrounded us. I said to the deceased, Frederick Smith, "The water has surrounded us—what will you do?" He said, "Well, I can't swim—I must remain with you." At that time there was no possibility of escape. We then all went into the hut, and I fastened the door. About twenty minutes after the water began to come into the hut. I then put my wife and children on the loft over the bedroom and I stood on the table. I was not afraid. I was in hopes the water would not rise much higher. At this time Frederick Smith was sitting on one of the beams of the loft. When the water reached the table I got off and sat on another beam. In about three quarters of an hour the water rose to the top of the wall plate, about six feet. I then got a tomahawk and cut a hole in the bark of the roof. The deceased, Frederick Smith, was the first to go out, and I handed the children to him, and the rest followed. When I got out the moon had just risen, and there was no land to be seen. I then cooeyed for the first time; it was then about 9 p.m. We were all cooeying; and in about three-quarters of an hour heard an answer, and thought it was from Mrs. Smith; they live about one-third of a mile from my hut. The water at this time was about ten above the floor of the hut; a short time after this I heard Mrs. Smith call out and ask me if Fred was all right, meaning her deceased husband. I called loudly for help, and told her to go to Mr. Blunden's for help, as we were nearly done. She answered the call, and her husband then shouted and told her to go to Mr. Blunden's for the boat. We thought she understood us. Her husband then said not to cooey any more, as he thought she understood us, and it might bother her. Some time after, the water rising fast, and feeling frightened, I cooeyed again, and she answered. I then was sure she had not gone to Blunden's. I still kept calling. The water had just reached the ridge pole on which we were sitting. Seeing no possibility

poles on which we were sitting. Seeing no possibility of escape, I told the children to pray. We all joined in prayer. We were all composed but one little boy who was crying. The water still continued to rise, and we had to stand on the ridge pole. About half-past 8 a.m., the first of the children died—Frederick, seven years old—the water being then up to my middle. He was not drowned, he died of cold. I was holding him in my arms, but the greater part of his body was under water. Just after this my boy Daniel, aged thirteen years, said "God Almighty bless you all, I cannot stand it any longer." I said, "You can swim, Daniel, do you think you can make to the tree?" My boy Moses (who was saved) said, "Father, he is too far gone." I held Daniel until he was dead, and then let him go to catch another. The next to die were John Isaac, aged five years, and Thomas Edwin, aged three years; those two were in the arms of my son Moses, who said "Father, these two children are dead, what shall I do now?" I said, "Moses, while you have strength, try and save yours-elf." He said, "Can I help you?" I said, "No, my boy, go to the tree while you have strength, so that some one shall live to tell the tale." He said "Father, I believe I shall be the only one saved," and he kissed me and started, and reached the tree safely. The tree was about twenty yards from the hut. I called to Moses, and told him

at daylight, when I heard three cooys together, I then felt that they were in distress. I left my children in the hut (I have five; the eldest fourteen), and started with the boat. I live on the Mudgee river, about half a mile above the junction. I started down the stream, which was very strong, and I had great difficulty in keeping clear of the timber coming down the flood, and the trees on the banks. At one time the boat grounded. I had to jump out up to my knees in water, shove it off, and then jump in as fast as I could. After being in the stream about half an hour, I got into smooth water on the flat, and reached the tree where I found Mr. Baker, his son, and daughter. They were clinging to the tree. They got into the boat and I pulled them to land about a quarter of a mile off. They could render me no assistance in pulling the boat. I recognise all the bodies. One is my husband, the others are the children and wife of Daniel Baker.

his mother was still alive, and I would hold her as long as there was life in her. Some time after this my wife died, and I let her go. I then went to take the baby from my daughter. My father, you cannot hold it better than me, and I cannot hold it much longer." I then kissed her and went into the water, telling her to hold the baby as long as she could, and then to swim to where her brother was. I made the tree, and with the assistance of my son Moses, got on to the limbs. A very short time after I heard a splash, and Moses said "Here is Cecilia." She sung out for help, and I heartened her on to strike out; she did, and came within arms' length; my son Moses leaned over to catch her; he missed her the first time. I could see her, but her head was under water; I said, "My God, Moses go in;" he caught her, and then, and we pulled her up the tree. When I left her on the hut I had no hopes of her, as I did not think she could swim. Just before I left the hut for the tree Andrew William died. About the same time the deceased, F. Smith, who was holding Henry Shadrach, told me the boy was dead. I said, "You have done all you can, you must try to shift for yourself; can you swim?" He said, "No; give me what directions you can, I might have a chance," and I did so. He started to come to the tree, and came but a little way when he sank. About sunrise, Mrs. Smith, wife of the deceased, came in a boat and released my son Moses, my daughter Cecilia, and myself (the only survivors) from the tree, and took us to dry land. During the whole time we were all on the hut, the dogs, cats, and fowls, were continually trying to get on us; we had great trouble in keeping them off.

Mary Ann Smith, having been duly sworn, stated: I am the wife of the deceased Frederick Smith. The last time I saw him alive was about dark on Friday evening last, the 21st June. He took a candle and went to Mr Baker's place. He went to render assistance to Baker and his family. He put a long rope to the boat, and told me to look after it until he came back. About half an hour after he left I went to the boat and had to shift the peg. During that half hour the river rose six feet. The water was then over the boat. About three hours after my husband left I heard a cooy. I thought it was my husband calling, and I know he was all right. I heard them calling at daylight, but did not think they were in danger until daylight, when I heard three cooys together, I then felt that they were in distress. I left my children in