

Captain of Dido & mate  
(William Russell & - Flaherty  
1855

PI / 11 (9)

Mrs Salmon  
"Northam"  
Bellering  
Tasmania



Narrative written from Memory /  
Northam. + 1855  
Belleve

P. 1/11 (9)

Must have been ~~1856~~ 3-6-1998

One day in December 1857 - or '58, my Mother & Dr. Story, driving, myself riding, left Kelvedon for the Grange, we dined at Med Hanks & early in the afternoon, proceeded on our way, when nearing the northern end of "Ket Marsh" & a little in advance, saw a man mounted on Thomas Watson's horse (he was the Chief District constable) I turned back & said that is Dido (William Druce) coming down the hill, shall I go for the Police? Dr. Story replied, when Dido reached us he with many apologies for being compelled to detain us, requested us to go up the hill, (since named Didos Hill) & join his party, which we did, found there assembled the C.D.C. & or 5 men standing about with their hands tied behind them & guarded by Didos mate, Flaharty, both were heavily armed, Mother walked up to T Watson & asked why he kept his hands behind him he said because I can't help it, & seemed much exasperated, Mother & I sat on a log, I holding my horse, & Dr. talked to Dido, who said he was not at all well, Dr. gave him some medicine, presently



A man came along from Swansea, carrying some bottles  
of grog, evidently he brought this by arrangement. Dido  
drank frequently & liberally of the spirits & "Flaherty"  
sparingly, other men came along, from time to time  
& were all "bailed up", & as numbers increased the  
bushrangers seemed to become uneasy, & my mother  
appealed to Dido to let us go (he had been cook at the  
Grange, & we did not stand much in awe of him)  
she was anxious to reach the Grange & wanted her  
tea he said his life was at stake & he must  
detain us till sun set, Dido was by this time much  
"under the influence," presently he announced we  
must leave the road & go into the bush, then he began  
to eulogize the cottons & drank their health to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of  
the generation & called on his mate to join him, which he  
did, then dashed the bottle to the ground & smashed it,  
Dido caught him by the throat in an instant & said, "don't  
you ever come to that again while you are with me, the mate  
submissively replied, "No, I never will." Dido soon after  
mounted the horse again & rode up & down, asserting  
that he was a gallant cavalier taking many troubles,  
meanwhile, & becoming more & more helpless, then  
he rounded us all up, & was preparing to march us  
all off into the bush, when a cart came in sight from  
Swansea way, a man & two women in it, the man was John  
Ferguson (a shoemaker who lived on the Grange) Dido  
rode off to meet them taking two or three more falls  
but nothing daunted, he scrambled on the horse  
again & again & in process of time arrived with  
his last "catch" into camp, there confusion was beginning  
to reign & Flaherty who was evidently feeling very  
apprehensive was but little regarded by the party generally

Mother who was then alone in the vehicle, & the horse  
having his head turned towards home, was getting impatient  
& Mother could not, or would not, compel him to stand still  
then Dido came up & clinging to the wheel, which as it  
revolved pulled him to the ground, several times, implored  
Mother "to take care of him" which she promised to do  
Flaherty then brought his party along, & came to see what  
he could do for his helpless mate, he seemed in a state  
of trepidation & remarked "Dare than once" I am sure  
we will be taken John Laugson, (whose hands had not  
been tied, had contrived to untie some or all of the  
Captives) then came along to the center of interest,  
where Dido lay helpless still, trying to clutch the  
wheels, watching his changes, he stepped behind Flaherty  
& promised his arms, with others helping secured him  
then the P.D. came along carrying a gun, & with the butt  
end, struck Dido some severe blows on the head, Mother  
do Story kneeling beside Dido & with other help was beginning  
to secure him. Another Swinsea man, Carpenter, came  
up with a gun, & pushing the barrels between Dido's side &  
arm till the muzzle almost touched Dido's forehead  
he fired, happily a bystander jerked his arm up, & so  
Duschieff was done (tho afterwards Dido said that for some  
little time he thought he was wounded) Party feeling  
the cowardly attacks on Dido as he lay helpless on the  
ground, & no doubt the language was not too choice  
perhaps even rather lurid, then Dido Story  
turned to me & exhorted me to leave at once  
which nothing loath, I did as I rode up  
Proversdale lane I saw John Meredith, standing at  
his shearing shed door, I pulled up, & he came out  
to the road, & was very pleased & much relieved,



to hear bushrangers were captured, as rumor said  
that Dido had threatened him with dire vengeance  
would cut off his ears, or nail him to a tree by  
his ears & it was surmised that Dido hoped  
to capture him that very night, perhaps meant  
to waylay him on his way home from the  
shearing shed) he asked if he should send  
a cart to convey the captives to Swansea.  
I said no need as John Furgeson was there  
with his cart &c &c, when I reached the

Grange, I had a long tale to tell of the afternoon  
happenings it was then fresh in my mind.  
Later my Mother & Dr. Story arrived, & gave their  
version a little also was told of that evening we were  
all thankful that the capture had been effected without  
bloodshed tho' we deprecated <sup>that</sup> all had been so marred by  
the violence of some to a helpless man, if I remember  
rightly Dido & his mate were sentenced to ~~10~~ years the last  
I remember hearing of Dido was that he was married  
had one child, & had gone to one of the other colonies  
had settled down to home life & making a  
comfortable living he was a <sup>very</sup> strong determined  
man (had a temper) but so far as I know  
he as a bushranger "never shed blood  
or was guilty of personal violence  
to any one"