

Death of the Aboriginal "King Tom."

On the 30th ultimo, the mortal remains of His Majesty, King Tom, the oldest aboriginal ever known in the Western district, were consigned to their last resting place in the Camperdown cemetery. Tom was the last of his generation, and with two or three exceptions, the last of his tribe. He has been known by the first settlers for forty years. He was then a man of about 50 years of age, consequently at his death he must have been at least 90 years of age. When the first settlers came to this district Tom was told to learn our language, or, in fact, to understand our habits, good or bad; the only bad one he acquired was smoking. Spirits he would never taste, by this, no doubt, prolonging his life to the age he attained, so unusual for the race, since the residence of the white man. In consequence of his not being able to speak our language, or make himself understood, he was considered to be rather stupid and morose. At all events, he had the good sense to abstain from that worst of all habits—drinking—which has been the bane of all his tribe, male, and female. Tom with all his stupidity was firm and determined, consequently not the slave of fashion, for it was not until a comparatively recent period that he would condescend to wear European clothing, wearing his kangaroo rug as long as he could. Not until after his marriage with his last wife, Queen Fanny, could he be induced, or rather forced to wear our clothing. Fanny being one of the most intelligent, and affectionate of her race, good-looking as well, was thought a good deal of by both the settlers and the blacks, she gained her point and persuaded Tom to change his clothing ; but he would never allow boot or shoe on his feet. It is not known how often Tom was married, but about 20 years ago, Fanny, a widow herself, became his wife. Tom never wandered far from his own country which lay between Terrinallum and Meningoort. Darlington was about the centre of his territory. For the past two or three years he made Meningoort almost exclusively his home, and for the last year he was quite in his dotage, frequently fancying that other hostile tribes were coming to attack and kill him. Rushing from his mia-mia to the house for protection, in the greatest excitement and terror begging that "Massir shoot-em wild black fellow on the hill, kill Tom" For the past three months Tom has been gradually dying of natural decay. Each day, becoming feebler and more bent, until three weeks ago he ceased to be able to leave his mia-mia. He took scarcely any nourishment, perhaps a little water or arrowroot. The men on the station kept him constantly supplied with wood, the only thing besides water he asked for. At nights he became delirious, screaming as he used to do when he complained of the wild blacks, and on the morning of the 30th September he was found dead.