

**HUMOROUS**  
**TALES**  
**AND**  
**SKETCHES**  
**OF**  
**COLONIAL**  
**LIFE.**

BY THE LATE  
**CHAS. H. BARLEE.**







*Humorous*  
*Tales & Sketches*  
OF  
*Colonial Life.*

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By the late CHAS. M. BARLEE,

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COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY F. R. BARLEE.

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1890-1891

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC—

THE intention of the author of these *Tales* and *Sketches* in submitting them to your notice, is at once simple and straightforward. He has written them for sale, and he invites you to buy them. He is not vain enough to presume that they are matchless masterpieces of literary ability, or faultless gems of humour; he only guarantees that they are faithful to life—honest chiaroscuro-graphs of a lengthened colonial experience.

Convinced that he has done his duty by writing the work, the author leaves it to the general public to do theirs by purchasing it; and so enable him to turn that honest penny, which he plainly confesses was rather the object of his ambition than a niche in the Pantheon of immortal scribblers.

C.H.B.







## THE NEW CHUM.

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### CHAPTER I.

“Every gentleman should take to 'unting ; 'tis the sport of kings—the image of war without its guilt, and only five and twenty per cent. of its danger.”—*Jorrocks.*

BEING a native of this colony and a hearty lover of the field sports which it affords, I propose to give you some of my experiences, mindful of the Governor's advice to young Australians, “don't blow !” But, Lord ! don't some of the new chums blow about the hunting and shooting they have had in the old country. To listen to them one would fancy that nobody else could either ride or shoot. I'd like to see one of their crack riders sit a regular buck-jumper, or forge ahead of our bush-riders in some country that I know of—where there are patches of grass-tree scrub so laid out by nature that the grass-tree stumps are like the squares on a chess-board—there's no taking a straight line through them ; or across thickly-timbered forest land, where to get through a belt of she-oaks at full gallop you must give your horse his head and let him take his own course, unless you want to get your legs jammed against them ; or over a patch of melon holes ; or down a stony ridge where a heavy hand would bring horse and rider to grief in no time : but there, I said I wouldn't blow. I don't say this to disparage hunting or shooting in England, or elsewhere, but I must stick up for my country. I have met some very fine fellows, and thorough sportsmen who hailed from the mother country, and many is the good burst I have had with them when they have come up our way. Of all kinds of



hunting, I say, give me a good day's kangaroo hunting. What can be more exhilarating than a burst of twenty minutes across respectable country, at the tail of a brace of good dogs, after a regular flyer; to have your game well in sight, to cram at every obstacle in your way, now lifting your horse over a fallen log, now throwing yourself on his neck to avoid some overhanging bough, then hustling over a gully and up a steep bank, and finishing with a neck and neck race with a friend, to see who shall be first in at the death, and so be entitled to the honours of the run, and to strap the tail of the kangaroo on his saddle bows. Talking of new chums, I took a great liking to a young fellow who came out some ten years ago, and was consigned to us to learn colonial experience, a term which used to be defined as being able to swear a hole through a tin pot, but in his case meant a knowledge of cattle and horse breeding. What I liked him especially for, and who would not, was his imperturbable good nature, which nothing could disturb, and his inordinate love of sporting. It was a perfect passion with him when he was not actually eating or sleeping he must be pursuing some kind of sport. I verily believe that if he had broken a limb, and been incapacitated from going out with a dog or gun, he would have contrived to drag himself to the nearest water-hole, where he would have been found fishing for sticklebacks, if no better sport offered. His name was Jem Curtis, and his age about twenty-five: a heavy easy-going fellow, whose career might not have had anything in it especially worth recording but for his extraordinary propensity for getting into scrapes. He was always coming to grief in one shape or another; this was partly due to his good nature, which was continually being imposed upon, and partly to a careless *laissez aller* disposition, which led him to disregard all the usual precautions in reference to matters of detail about which your real sportsman is so particular. This peculiarity was so marked, that, in any adventure in which he took part, it was fully expected that he would do something in the way of blundering, which would afford opportunity for the chaffing which he took so good-temperedly; and a series of mishaps in which he figured as the hero, at last earned for him the nickname of "the Inevitable." I well remember the first day I went out with him, which was about three days after his arrival at the station. He was mad for a kangaroo hunt, and we had made



our arrangements to start a little before daybreak, so as to reach a piece of likely feeding ground, about three miles off. The horses were got in over-night, and the dogs tied up, in case they should be

“Like as the full-fed hound, or gorged hawk,  
Unapt for tender smell or speedy flight.”

Jem was mounted on a good strong grass-fed roan, which had been bred on the station. I and one of the stockmen made up the party. We effected a good start, and were half-way to the scene of action before the crow—the earliest bird up in this country, and the one who *ought* to get the worm, whatever any one may say to the contrary—had broken the silence of the morning, and the shrill and mocking yells of the laughing jackass, betokening that the day was breaking, were resounding on all sides, when we approached a patch of burnt feed where I fully expected to find. The next moment the dogs were off on scent, and Jem, catching sight, for the first time in his life, of a mob of kangaroos bounding along on their native pastures, gave a joyous view halloo, crammed his hat on his head, and tore away alongside of me in full chase, the happiest man in Australia at that moment. A short burst, and the first kangaroo bit the dust; our horses were fresh, the dogs fit to jump out of their skins, and the run was over in less than half a mile. Jem, who was well up at the death, soon had the tail strapped before him, and after stopping for half an hour, to have a smoke and give the dogs a breathing, on we went to try fresh fields and pastures new. The sun being visible by this time, and feeding time partly over, we did not find for nearly an hour, when a couple of does crossed our path immediately in front of us, and the dogs were laid on at once. We had only two with us, my favourite dog Presto, a powerful, broken-haired kangaroo dog, half stag-hound half greyhound; and a smooth, fine-bred slut, Diana, the fastest animal on four legs I ever owned. This time they divided, Presto taking after one doe and Diana laying on to the other; Jem followed the slut, while Bob the stockman and I stuck to the old dog, who ran his quarry down in about one and a half miles. Diana meantime, escorted by the new chum, was making quick work with hers, when the doe, finding herself hard pressed, threw her joey out of her pouch, as these animals will do at the last moment when there is no other hope of



escape. This proceeding struck Jem with astonishment, and he was fired with the hope of catching the young one alive. So throwing himself off his horse, which he fastened to a sapling, and abandoning the hunt so far as the doe was concerned, he set off racing after the joey, which he cleverly captured after an exciting spurt of about three quarters of a mile, just as he was nearly spent. Slowly returning to the spot where he had left his horse, he sat down to recover his breath, and to consider what was next to be done. He had now not only a tail to carry home as a trophy, but a real live kangaroo weighing about ten pounds, which he was determined to bring up as a pet. Having a large pocket-handkerchief with him, he soon put the joey in it, and by tying the four corners together, made a bundle of it, with which he approached his steed. Now it is well known that even bush horses, unless broken to carry game, many of them at least, can't bear the smell of kangaroo or wallaby, and Jem's roan was a horse whose education had been grossly neglected in this respect. No coaxing nor persuasion would prevail on him to allow Jem to mount with the kangaroo in his hand. Determined not to be beaten, Jem now adopted a different plan. Hanging the bundle on the bough of a she-oak some few yards away, he backed the roan under the tree, then taking the reins in his left hand, he swung himself into the saddle, and at the same time took the bundle off the branch in his right. This clever dodge would have been thoroughly successful but for Jem's ill fortune, which was sure to assert itself at some period of the day. Just as Joey felt the motion of being lowered to the saddle, he gave vent to a cry which kangaroo hunters know well—something like a long-drawn sigh, only much louder. This at once set the roan bucking, and "the Inevitable," although at the time he had not earned the title, not having had sufficient practice in this novel kind of exercise, and having but one hand to use, came to grief. The horse bucked until both girths parted under his belly. Away went Jem, kangaroo, saddle and all, some six feet in the air, and away went the roan at a hand-gallop in a bee line to the station.

We, that is, I and the stockman, had been at home some hours, and Diana had returned with a cut in her neck, when Jem hove in sight, with the saddle on his head and the Joey in the bosom of his shirt; the horse during the whole distance,



about five miles, having kept just a few yards in advance, but resisting all efforts to catch him.

Despite all the hard work which this mishap had brought about, and the effect of the spill in the shape of sore bones, there was a pleasant, good-humoured, self satisfied expression about the countenance of the new chum which showed that the day to him, all things considered, had been one of triumph and unmingled pleasure.

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## CHAPTER II.

AFTER getting such a taste of the sport as the day's hunt recorded in the last chapter afforded, Jem's thoughts for the next few days ran upon nothing but kangaroo hunting, and he was always ready for any work on that part of the run where there was a chance of a spurt after a flyer. The game was then getting rather wild within a few miles of the station, and, though tolerably plentiful, there was no certainty of finding after sunrise, except in the immediate vicinity of thick cover, where the dogs had no chance. It was only at daybreak that a good run could be relied upon in the open, and thus Jem had not many more trophies in the shape of tails to display; but, one day, on his return from a distant part of the run, he came to me in a state of great excitement,—“Charley,” said he “I've seen the most enormous brute of a kangaroo that ever hopped on two legs; he must be at least eight feet high. He was as big as a jackass; he hopped along so slowly that I could almost have caught him myself.”

“And if you had you would have had the best claim to be classed as a big jackass,” said I. “Know, then, my young and Christian friend, that the monster you described is the ‘Old Man’ of the Australian bush, whose hug is like that of a polar bear, whose hind legs are fortified with sharp claws, and who, when at bay, fears neither dogs nor hunter. Arm yourself as against a formidable foe if you intend to tackle a boomer of such proportions, and take care that he does not kill or maim the dogs.”

Jem begged me earnestly to accompany him the next morning, at daybreak; he was sure he could find him—  
“Wouldn't I come?”



I was sorry to disoblige the young fellow, but I had other work for the following day which I could not put off, and, to soften my refusal, I said that the honour of the hunt would be all his own, and that I should anxiously await his return. I believe that Jem hardly slept a wink that night, so full was he of the adventure before him. I lent him an old stock horse, whose experiences were of such a varied nature that nothing astonished him, and nothing could frighten him. As for bucking or bolting he was far too sober to indulge in such pranks, and you might carry anything on his back, from a hurdy-gurdy to a cross-cut saw. On one or two points only was he obstinate: he would persist in rounding up every beast he came across when homeward bound, and no persuasion could induce him to pass a public-house. If his rider would only dismount, and go through the form of taking a drink, he would canter on without whip or spur, but pass the house without pausing for refreshment he would not, and I am bound to say that it was very seldom he was asked to do so. At least an hour before dawn Jem, thus mounted, started for the haunts of the boomer. It is well known that the male kangaroos, like those of other gregarious animals—elephants, to wit—as old age approaches seclude themselves from their fellows, and are generally to be found in some retired spot, not roaming from place to place like the younger and wilder bucks. Some say that the young bucks drive them out of the herd; but I am inclined to think that their retirement from society is rather due to a moody, ill-tempered disposition, which develops with the approach of age. Some "old men" are so surly that they will take the initiative, and attack man or dog the moment their privacy is invaded, and without waiting for any overt action on the part of the hunter.

The dogs Jem took with him were Presto and a young slut, Flora, who had scarcely as yet made her debüt in the sporting world, but from whom, on account of her pedigree, I expected great things.

All that followed I learned at night from Jem, on his return, at about half-past nine o'clock, after an absence of about fifteen hours. It was considerably after sunrise when he reached the scene of action. After scouring a number of small flats and likely looking spots near to where he had caught a glimpse of the "old man" on the previous day,



without seeing the ghost of a kangaroo, he was getting rather disheartened, the more so that the dogs had gone ahead on an apparently fresh scent, and he had no idea of the direction they had taken, when he heard a sound which made his heart bound, and caused him to turn his horse's head in an opposite direction, and to gallop off like mad. It was Presto's deep voice—the unmistakable bark of a dog who has the game at bay, which made Jem's pulses to flutter with excitement, for he knew that no ordinary kangaroo would keep the old dog at arm's length. Next moment further confirmation came, and a yell of pain from the pup shewed that the enemy had been brought to close quarters. About three hundred yards' gallop brought my hero to the edge of a water-hole, about twenty feet wide, in the centre of which, with his head and neck clear above the water, stood the boomer, holding Flora in his fore paws, and endeavouring to drown her, Presto barking at him from the bank. This was the exciting state of affairs when Jem came to the rescue and threw himself out of the saddle, armed with a whalebone hunting-crop. Now was the chance he had been longing for ; now the supreme moment of happiness, in which he was single-handed to kill and carry off the great prize he had so long been anxious to obtain. The only mode of getting at the "old man," so as to strike a blow at him, was by means of a log—the trunk of a tree which had fallen across the water-hole, and upon this slippery bridge Jem approached the foe. When about half-way across he was exactly opposite the boomer, and getting a firm grip of the hunting-whip at the thong end, so as to bring the hammer head on to the boomer's skull, he made a desperate blow, which, if it had taken effect, would undoubtedly have ended the fray. But, alas ! the log was slippery ; the reach forward to strike gave an undue impetus, and head first went Jem almost into the arms of the boomer, and into seven feet of muddy water.

"Now, gentle youth, now hold thy own ;  
No lady's arms are round thee thrown."

Fortunately the sudden shock caused by the precipitation of such a heavy body, almost on the top of the kangaroo, sufficiently discomposed the old gentlemen as to render him unable to take prompt advantage of this blunder on the part of his assailant, or Jem's career would have been cut



short, and it would have been a case of "Found drowned" the next day. It was providential, indeed, that he got out of the hole at all; for, in the first place, the water was over his head, and, in the next place, he wore an English velveteen shooting jacket, containing such an infinity of pockets outside and inside, that, if it had been a case of swimming, he would have a hundredweight of muddy water to carry with him. How he got out he hardly knew himself, but he did scramble to the bank, aided by a projecting bough from the fallen tree; and Flora, released from the hug of the boomer, also got out, leaving the enemy in possession of the field. First round decidedly in favour of the kangaroo.

There was now literally no means of attacking the enemy. Jem had no fire-arms, and would have scouted the thought of taking such a cowardly advantage of his opponent. The only plan was to cause a diversion by setting Presto at him, in the hope of getting the boomer into a more come-at-able spot. The "old man," however, stood his ground, retaining the advantage which the deeper water afforded him, and would not budge an inch. He had a wild, fighting expression in his eye, and his powerful arms, terminating in a bunch of sharp fives, were stretched out ready to grapple each daring assailant. "Hark at him, Presto! Go in old boy;" and Presto, responding to the call, swims bravely out to the combat. Then follows a fierce scrimmage for about five minutes; the waterhole is a scene of wild excitement—splashing and foaming from end to end. Cheered by Jem's shouts of encouragement, the dog tackles the boomer, seizes him by the throat, is forced under water, recovers himself, makes another desperate dash at his foe! Now one head comes up spluttering and angry from the encounter; then for a moment the other triumphs, and Presto, scratched and bleeding about the head and neck, swims slowly to the bank, and lies on the reeds to recover his breath, the boomer still erect and dauntless in the old spot. A few minutes rest, and Presto swims out boldly a second time to the battle. Another five minutes of close fighting, and he is again driven off by the powerful and desperate animal at bay. Four several times did the gallant dog respond to the call upon his pluck, and four several times did he swim back to the reeds, and lie panting and blowing till sufficiently recovered for another



round. Meantime, the kangaroo was getting groggy on his pins. The mark of Presto's teeth were in his neck; he was flushed when he came to the scratch from exhaustion, but game to the backbone. In the words of Sam Slick, "He had no idea the enemy was so well organized." One last and desperate struggle, and the fight was over. Once more the water bubbled and splashed over the two combatants, Flora swimming round the waterhole, and occasionally snapping at the boomer, Jem on the bank, with frantic shouts urging his champion to increased efforts! Over and over they turn—sometimes the dog is visible, at other times only the kangaroo, but at last the latter disappears entirely, and

"Unwounded from the dreadful close;  
But breathless all—*Presto arose.*"

Unwounded so far as any serious cut was concerned, as the kangaroo while in the water could not bring into play the hind feet, with which these animals are capable of killing a dog at one blow, but pretty well spent with half-an-hour's close fighting, and terribly scratched about the face.

What was to be done next? The body of the "old man" was at the bottom of the hole, and it was Jem's task to recover it. This he attempted to do by means of a hooked stick from the bank, and failed; then, having stripped he plunged in, and groped about with his hands and the stick, shortened to a convenient length, until he managed, at length, to get hold of a hind leg. By dint of tugging and straining, he got the whole body landed; and, having dressed himself, sat down to consider by what means he could hoist it into the saddle and bear it home in triumph. On other occasions he had been contented to carry home the tail as a trophy; but such a glorious prize as this must be borne home intact. By no exertion that he was capable of could he manage to lift the dead kangaroo on to the horse's back—not even after he had taken out the entrails, which weighed some 40 lbs. But necessity is the mother of invention. A little higher up along the same chain of waterholes was one of less depth, and perfectly dry. Into the bed of this hole he led the old stock horse, then dragged the kangaroo to the bank immediately overhanging it, and then, after one or two failures, succeeded in getting it across the saddle—the gigantic hind-quarters nearly reaching the ground on one side, and the



fore-quarters (which in the case of an "old man" are very large in proportion) extending nearly as low down on the other side. Thus, by slow marches, picking his way through the bush, leading his horse, and followed by the dogs, did the new chum return from the hunt, physically sick, sore, tired, and disordered with the day's adventure; but, mentally, jubilant and exultant in the possession of what was certainly one of the largest boomers I ever saw. We found the tail without the skin to weigh 17 lbs., and, allowing the entrails to weigh 40 lbs., the boomer would have topped the scale at 248 lbs. As for the skin, Jem spent some hours the next morning in preparing and pegging it out on a large gum-tree. It measured exactly seven feet ten inches, and was to him a trophy which no money would have purchased. After this hunt Jem had always an answer ready. When chaffed on the subject of his hunting escapades, he would modestly refer to the boomer he killed on the Downfall Flat, and if anyone ventured to express a doubt as to the size of the kangaroo, there was the skin to prove it.

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### CHAPTER III.

BESIDES kangaroo hunting, there was not much in the way of sport in the immediate neighbourhood of the station, with the exception of an occasional burst after an emu; but these birds, which become confused and stupid if you come suddenly upon them and shout and halloo at them, are usually very wary, and only to be found on the open plains, where they are not easily approached, their organs of sight being as keen as their hearing is defective. We only killed one during the twelve months Jem Curtis was with us, the legs and flappers of which were carefully preserved by that indefatigable sportsman among his other hunting trophies. But to a man in whose breast the love of field sports is strongly implanted, the Australian bush offers ample attraction. There were a good many wild fowl to be found in a chain of waterholes about a mile from the station; and while bushmen will scarcely care to cook kangaroo or wallaby, they never object to such a dainty dish as black duck or teal. The cattle frequenting the waterholes rendered these birds very shy, and when Jem



returned with a brace or more, he was considered to have been fairly successful. But more frequently he came back empty-handed, until he adopted the plan of taking a namesake, Jimmy, one of the station blacks, with him, when the result would be very different. Few people who have not had actual experience of the blacks of this country, have any idea of their quickness of vision and wonderful powers of observation. Accustomed to rely for their daily food upon their keen sight in discovering, and their noiseless dexterity in approaching the game, they are the most skilled hunters. Jem's plan of procedure was this. When any cover existed which enabled him to get within good range of a piece of water, he would stalk the ducks himself, taking care always to send Jimmy on beforehand to ascertain where they were, which the black could always do without disturbing the birds. Sometimes Jimmy would come back from the preliminary inspection of a waterhole, not having a vestige of cover within a hundred yards of it, with the intimation conveyed in a whisper, "one duck sit down there, *murry wild*." This he would ascertain by the circles which he could see in the water proceeding from the bank. Then Jim would hand him the gun, and watch with admiration the artful manner in which the black would get within shot. First of all Jimmy would pull up by the roots some young and bushy plant about two feet high, which he would hold before him, dragging himself and the gun along after it snake fashion, sometimes remaining motionless and rigid for five or ten minutes at a time—until he got within about 15 yards of the bank. Then he would slowly and carefully bring the gun to his shoulder and, still prostrate on the ground, would patiently wait, perhaps for a full quarter of an hour, until the duck swam out into the open, when an unerring shot would settle his business.

Jem obtained a great many lessons in woodcraft from this black, who became quite attached to him, and many an hour the pair spent on moonlight evenings in 'possum shooting, in a gum flat hard by, sometimes bringing home fifteen or sixteen 'possoms, which were fairly divided between the sportsmen; the skins to the white man—to go to the making of a rug, possibly to be sent home to England and used as a carriage rug by some fair lady; the carcasses to the black, to be roasted then and there, and eaten by himself and friends.



On these occasions the two Jems would, invariably, be accompanied by Nero, an old superannuated black kangaroo dog, who enjoyed the sport to the full as much as either of them, and who was the best 'possum dog I ever saw. He would never be more than five or ten minutes in finding, and, when he had once treed an opossum, nothing would induce him to leave the tree until his continuous barking had attracted some one to the spot. I have known him remain at the foot of a sapling, on the top of which was a 'possum, full in sight, and keep him there until the morning, when one of the hands would go and pelt the animal with sticks and stones until it took to the ground and was killed by the dogs.

Another amusement indulged in by the hero of these memoirs was trapping wild dogs, which were very numerous in all parts of the run. Jem Curtis, with the aid of his man Friday, managed to construct a trap out of a hollow log with a slab to act as a falling door, on the principle of the old-fashioned mousetrap, the opposite end being enclosed by strong open wire-work—the dingo being by far too cunning to go into a log for the daintiest bit of meat unless he can see daylight, and an apparent mode of exit before him. Then would Jem, about an hour before dark, mount an old stock-horse and, having provided himself with a piece of raw meat and about ten yards of stout cord, ride to a spot, at least a mile from the trap in the direction of some thick cover; when, turning his horse's head homewards, he would drop the bait to the ground and trail it after him as far as the trap, so as to leave a strong scent, which the dingoes who prowl about after midnight would cross and follow up. Betimes, in the morning, we used frequently to hear the trapper proclaiming his success, when all hands would adjourn to the spot and the wild dog would be let loose and worried by the station dogs.

At other times Jem would station himself at sundown at one of the lagoons, and patiently and uncomplainingly watch for hours for the chance of a single shot at the curlews which frequented them. By night or by day he was always on sporting thoughts intent. Roaming through the Australian bush, gun in hand and with a brace of good dogs at his heels, he led a healthy, if not very profitable life, carrying about with him no care beyond the day's pursuits, his bosom as little swayed by the passion of love, ambition, or hatred, as



that of a child three years old. But this state of things was not destined to last.

One evening, as he was returning on foot from an unsuccessful day's shooting, when about four miles from home, he was roused from a reverie in which he was indulging by a sound which at once engaged his eager attention. It was a c-o-o-e-e—not the harsh guttural cooee of the aboriginal, or the hoarse yell of the Australian bushman, but a sweet melodious sound—which fell clear and distinct upon his ears, soft as the music of an Æolian harp. Spellbound Jem stood and listened, then striding in the direction from which the voice proceeded, and answering the cry, as he walked, he came—just as he had crossed the brow of a hill before him—face to face with a young lady of some seventeen years, dressed in a well-fitting brown holland riding-habit, leading a well-bred bay pony which had gone dead lame.

But what Jim said when he beheld this lovely and unexpected apparition, and what she said in reply, must be reserved for another chapter.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

THE young lady whom Jem Curtis encountered so unexpectedly was the daughter of a neighbouring squatter, whose station was about twenty miles from us, Miss Georgiana Grant, or, as her admirers, and she had not a few, were wont to call her, the pretty G. G. Rather below the middle height, but perfectly proportioned, her dainty little figure shewed off to advantage in her close-fitting riding habit, while her chestnut hair, worn after the fashion of Australian girls *au naturel*, a roguish pair of eyes, a saucy little mouth, and a nose slightly retrousé completed a very attractive picture, at least so thought Jem, who took them all in at a glance, and there and then fell desperately in love with their owner.

As usual in such cases, he was sheepish and awkward, while the young lady was as cool and self-possessed as if she had just stepped out of her father's drawing-room.

"Well, you see," she said in reply to Jem's enquiry as to the cause of the accident to her pony, "Zyp stupidly put her foot



into a hole, and I came down a cropper, and when I mounted her again, I found she could hardly put one foot before the other. My brother Tom was with me, but he has gone on ahead, and he's half-way home by this time. What *am* I to do?"

Jem protested that there was only one thing she could do under the circumstances, and that was to come to our station for the night; and as that appeared to be the only thing to be done, the pair proceeded, Jem leading the pony, in that direction.

"But you might have been lost," said our hero, "and it will be dark in about an hour."

"No fear," said Miss Georgie, giving him a glance from the tail of her eye, which made him feel guilty of having committed a impertinence, "what, with all these cattle tracks running right straight down to your place? If I had I should have been a silly. It is evident that you have not been long in the bush."

Jem confessed that he had only been a few months in the country.

"Oh, then you are the gentleman living at Mr. Constable's to get colonial experience. What fun! We had a new chum at our place last year, and one day I took him out for a walk and lost him in a little bit of scrub, not more than a mile-and-a-half from the station. He didn't find his way home till ten o'clock at night, and then I don't believe he would have come back only that pa sent a man after him, and he answered his cooee; and would you believe it, the stupid fellow had been going round in a circle the whole time, and wasn't more than a hundred yards from where I left him."

The young lady then proceeded very gravely to inform her companion that although new chums might, and commonly did, lose their heads on such occasions, the natives of Australia were never at a loss to find their way to a station.

"All you have to do," she said, "is to go downhill. If you follow down the smallest gully it will lead you to a larger one; if you follow the larger one it will take you to a creek, the creek will take you to a river, and you can't go up or down any river within a hundred miles of this but you will come on to a station every now and then."



Jem felt he was gaining colonial experience very pleasantly, and, his shyness wearing off a little, he ventured to remark "that although the downward track might be the correct thing in the antipodes, in the old country young men who were continually going downhill were not thought much of."

The ice being now broken, they chatted away very pleasantly, with that absence of reserve which is natural to young people, and before they came in sight of the station buildings an intimacy had been established between them which, under less favourable circumstances, it would have taken months to bring about.

They had arranged all the details of Miss Georgie's return. She was to ride Jem's favourite horse, after he had tried him with a side-saddle, and a horse-cloth in lieu of a habit; and a stockman was to be sent in immediately to apprise Mr. Grant of his daughter's safety. Of course Jem was to escort her.

This programme was carried out the next day, the young lady being handed over, in the interim, to the wife of one of the stockmen (the only woman on the station), who made her as comfortable as circumstances would admit of. Before she left us, which was directly after breakfast, our fair visitor had made a conquest of all hearts by her gaiety and joyous spirits. As for poor Jem, he was thoroughly subjugated, and Miss Georgie appeared to be fully aware of her power over him, and to take it as a matter of course. The little flirt took a mischievous pleasure in treating him in all respects as a new chum, and in quizzing him on the subject of his hunting exploits. Just before starting she informed us that a grand gathering was to take place at Yarrawa (Mr. Grant's station), when the annual kangaroo drive was to come off, this institution being an absolute necessity, in consequence of the damage to the run caused by the increasing number of marsupials. She made us both promise to attend.

As this species of battue may be novel to many of my readers, I will skip over the intervening period, in order to describe it in this chapter.

Advantage is taken of the natural facilities which a run affords to force a number of kangaroo in a direction from which there is no outlet. In this case the drive terminated in



a promontory or neck of land which formed an elbow of the river. At the extreme end a stockyard had been constructed, the sides of which were eight feet high, capped with strong saplings hooped at either end, and from this yard back for about three-quarters of a mile a wing fence had been run up forming a letter V, narrowing towards the yard. The hunting party comprised, besides the station hands, twenty-five young men well mounted and all alive to the fun, from surrounding stations, armed with stockwhips with new silk lashes, giving a report, to those who know how to use them, almost like a pistol, and about thirty blacks on foot with spears, boomerangs, and waddies. The drive, which was under the personal superintendance of Mr. Grant, commenced five miles back from the yard, so as to take in a large area of scrub which formed the great cover for the game in the neighbourhood. All the huntsmen have to do is to range themselves in a semicircle, and to crack their whips, shout and halloa, while they beat the cover so as to send all game before them, taking care, by adroit horsemanship, to prevent the game from breaking and regaining the cover. No sport can well be more exciting. At first the game appears scarce. The kangaroo, having wind of the huntsmen, are off at top speed, and it is only now and then that a glimpse of the brown coats of the flyers as they top the bushes is obtained; but as the circle contracts and the mob of game are forced towards the wing fence, the fun becomes fast and furious. Drove of kangaroo and wallaby show where a few minutes before not a head was visible. The space between the horsemen becomes diminished, and the chances of breaking are reduced. Even the horses get excited, and turn and wheel with a willing alacrity they display at no other time, while as for the blacks, they are like demons let loose—they shout, they yell, and swear in the aboriginal language in tones which, with the repeated crack of the stockwhip, send the affrighted kangaroo on faster and faster to their doom. Is there any sport in the old country so intensely sensational? Now and then a rare sight is seen which alone repays the visitor for the long journey he has taken to be present at a kangaroo drive. One of the smaller kangaroo, yet a full-grown doe, such as bushmen call "a flyer," who, moved by maternal instinct, has probably thrown



her Joey from her pouch when pressed by the huntsmen, suddenly checks her speed, and, not daring to face the advancing party of pursuers, wheels round and clears the wing fence with a bound which is the *ne plus ultra* of spring and agility, and in another minute appears but a speck in the distance. At least fifteen out of twenty of the mob are, however, forced, under good management, to the yard, and as the horsemen close up they form a dense moving mass, and the whiphongs fall on their backs as they crowd into the trap from which they are never fated to escape.

Then up go the slip rails, and the work of destruction commences. Rifles are brought out, and the battue takes place. The drive at Yarrawa, on this occasion, resulted in the yarding of one hundred and thirty-two kangaroos and seventeen wallabies—one hundred and forty-nine head all told.

To Jem Curtis this was a day of great enjoyment. Hunting on a scale so grand he had never dreamt of, and his pleasure was greatly enhanced by the presence of his fair companion of the previous day, whose attentions as hostess were, however, so equally divided among a number of beaux, that the poor fellow's heart was racked by a thousand conflicting emotions. It was, however, somewhat consoled by her scant notice of his endeavours to attract her attention by the promise she made, after a few minutes' unmerciful quizzing, to give him a lesson the next morning in cracking a stockwhip, Jem's repeated attempts having only resulted in a hopeless entanglement of the lash round his horse's legs or his own shoulders.

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## CHAPTER V.

JEM was easily persuaded to spend a week at Mr. Grant's station. As Miss Georgie remarked in suggesting the invitation, "he would be such a nice companion for Tom, who wanted him to stay so much."

It is doubtful whether Tom, a lad of sixteen, would have expressed himself very earnestly upon the subject, seeing that the new visitor was an entire stranger to him, but no doubt he had received a hint from the young lady who, it could easily be seen, ruled the household at Yarrawa with a firm hand. The great inducement held out was a steeplechase,



which had been arranged to come off at the station during the ensuing week. It had been a sudden inspiration, and the idea had been eagerly taken up by the young men who had come over to take part in the kangaroo hunt, all of whom it may be said, without exception, were well mounted, as well as bold and daring riders.

One of these gentlemen, Archibald M'Lean, who had recently taken up some country about fifty miles north of Mr. Grant's station, had been especially eager for the steeplechase, and upon him had devolved all the preliminary arrangements. All the horses were, of course, to be ridden by gentlemen riders, and the course was marked out so as to take in some stiff fences dividing the land into paddocks in the immediate vicinity of the station buildings, and to finish with a spanking jump over a freshwater creek—a good sixteen feet in the clear—with a straight run to the stand immediately in front of the drawing-room windows.

Miss Georgie, with the assistance of her aunt and two young friends who were staying with her, Fanny and Eliza Burton, were busily engaged in making out of such materials as their limited resources furnished, the necessary colours for the riders; and the event was looked forward to with the greatest expectation.

“Of course you will ride, Mr. Curtis,” said Georgie, when she observed that Jem, instead of taking an active part in the arrangements, seemed rather moody and *distract*, as if he had nothing whatever to do with the affair. “We are going to give the prizes ourselves, but as there are only three ladies, and there are six entries for the race, we are making two sets of each colour, blue, green, and orange, so that each lady will have two cavaliers who will, of course, do their best to show her favours in front.”

Jem protested that he would not ride at all, unless she would allow him to carry her colours. Indeed, he didn't see how he was to ride at all, as his horse was unused to timber, and he would be certain to come to grief.

“Well, if you are very good, I'll see what can be done for you,” said she, “but you must promise to do exactly what I tell you.”

The countenance of the new chum brightened immensely at these gracious words, and he was full of protestations.



The poor fellow had conceived an unreasonable dislike to M'Lean, the chief mover in the affair, not from any personal cause of offence, but in consequence of the intimate relations which appeared to exist between that gentleman and his fair hostess. They were continually in consultation, and the "Yes, Archie," and "No, Archie," which fell from Miss Georgie's lips from time to time, had lit the flame of jealousy in his breast. He felt convinced that his rival would wear her colours, and he went to bed that night with a firm resolve that he, Jem Curtis, would either break his neck or wrest the prize from that favoured individual. But how was this to be done? Mr. Grant had offered him the pick of the station horses, but how could he hope to select a good timber jumper? Stiff ironbark four-rail fences, four and a half feet high, are not easily negotiated, except by trained horses. Nevertheless, he was fully determined to be one of the competitors.

The next morning he was surprised to receive a very early visit from Tom Grant who, with a face full of mystery, begged him to get up and take a stroll before breakfast. When they had got about half a mile from the station, said Tom,

"Can you sit a buckjumper? Because Georgie thinks that if you have a strong seat, and will take the trouble to get on terms with her, you might ride 'The Mountain Maid.' I must tell you she is a notorious buckjumper, and there is no one about the place, except Bob Simmons, who breaks in all our colts, who cares much to have anything to do with her. But there's no mistake about her jumping powers. My word, you should have seen her one day when we ran her into the yard, clapped a saddle on her, and put Tommy, one of our black boys, up. She just put her head between her legs, gave one buck, and the next moment Tommy was taking a bee line in the air towards the bull paddock, and before he came down again the mare had cleared the top rail of the yard, a good 6 feet 6 inches, and was off like a bird. I've had seven purls off her myself. But she is not vicious, and she might go well enough in a crowd, if you could only get her fairly 'started'."

This was not a very encouraging description of the horse which was to win Jem, not the steeplechase only, but the favour of the prettiest girl on that side of the main range; but Jem determined there and then that he would ride. He



had plenty of pluck and a strong, if not a very elegant seat ; and if his hand was a trifle heavy, it did not appear that the "Mountain Maid" required very light handling.

"We'll go and talk to Bob about her," said Tom Grant. "He can ride her like a book, and I believe you'll pull off the race as easy as kiss my hand, if you don't come to grief the first hundred yards. You keep her head straight, see that she don't bolt, and that's about all you'll have to do."

Retracing their steps they went in search of Bob, whom they found presently in a yard at the back of the house. He was evidently expecting a visit from them, and singularly enough the very animal they had been talking about was standing in the corner of the yard with a halter on, looking very much as if she had just been subjected to a severe grooming. Had the new chum been in a position to view this incident in a dispassionate frame of mind, he might have drawn very favourable conclusions in reference to the interest taken in him by a certain capricious young lady, but Jem had too modest an opinion of himself to connect the present state of preparation with Miss Grant. His attention was at once taken up with the "Mountain Maid."

She was a handsome grey, and one of that peculiar colour called fleabitten grey, well ribbed up, with a good forehead, and that peculiarity which makes a good horse, and above all, a good hunter, a long rein—the stretch from the nostril to the wither along the bridle rein being longer than the distance from the wither to the tail—four clean sound legs, hard and muscular as those of a stag, and a bright and intelligent eye ; altogether a mare that you would say at a glance, would prove game to the backbone.

"Now," said Bob, after he had taken a long and scrutinizing look at our hero, which was apparently satisfactory, "I'll just let you see what this mare can do, and then we'll try whether she takes to you or not. She's got her fancies I can tell you, but if she once gives in there's no more trouble with her. But she won't let every tomfool ride her, you can take your colonial oath of that. Wo-ho lass?"

So saying he approached the mare, and put a saddle and bridle on her. Then mounting her, he cantered her about with a slack rein, leaping the slip panel into the next yard backwards and forwards, the "Mountain Maid" going



through all sorts of evolutions with the docility and good temper of a perfect lady's horse.

"Sit back and stick your knees in," he said, as the impatient Jem put his foot into the stirrups when Bob dismounted; "it's pretty safe falling anyways."

But there *was* a little trouble about it, for, just as he threw his leg over the saddle, the mare gave a snort and commenced to buck. Jem did what he could to keep her head up, but to no purpose. She bucked and plunged with a vigour and skill acquired by long practice; she crouched till her belly fairly touched the ground, and threw up her hind legs until she appeared to be standing on her head. Then one, two, three violent plunges in rapid succession, the girths snapped under her like packthread, and away went Jem into mid-air, alighting about ten feet off into the centre of the yard, to rise considerably shaken and bespattered with dirt, but in the best of tempers, and quite ready to try again.

"It ain't no manner of use, my lad. She's got the knack of it, and she'd spill you every time as nice as ninepins. We'll try a different tack. She's like a woman; she's got to find her master, and then she'll do anything she's bid."

"Now, youngster, I've got my orders, which are that you're to ride the steeplechase on this here mare, and if you'll do as I bid ye there ain't no manner of doubt about it. You've got the grit, and that's about the main thing I reckon with horses. They know precious well when they have to give in and when they have not."

Bob was a wiry old chap of some fifty years, who had been for the best part of his life employed by the owners of the Yarrowa station, first as an odd hand, then as stockman, and then as roughrider and horse-breaker. In the course of his career he had developed such an aptitude for the management of horses, and such a knowledge of their habits and peculiarities, that his word had become law in all matters equine. He was an excellent horseman, and, although like many others of his class, he was possessed by a fatal inability to pass a public house or a grog shanty without stopping, or to refuse any opportunity that presented itself for a spree, he had not lost his nerve, and would cram his horse at anything in the shape of a jump which came in his way, especially when riding in company with anyone hostile in his eyes to the



interests of the owners, who took occasion to say a disparaging word of the cattle or any of the belongings of his employers. It was said that on several occasions, when he could not have walked ten yards to save his life, he had been lifted on to the saddle and had ridden fifteen or twenty miles home in perfect safety. Bob was heart and soul devoted to Miss Georgie, whom he had taught to ride, and whose pony received at his hands as much attention as ever fell to the lot of a favoured quadruped. Her bit and stirrup-irons were Bob's peculiar care, and were polished till they looked like burnished silver. In short, no young lady ever possessed a more devoted follower, and Miss Georgie's word was literally law to Bob Simmons.

It was evident that she had sent for him and given him some very decided instructions on the subject of the steeplechase, and that Bob had made his preparations to carry out his orders successfully.

"Just you wait a bit," he replied, "and we'll try her on a different tack." With that he went to the stables, and presently re-appeared with his arms full. First he replaced the broken girths with a pair made of strong hide split into strands, which are excellent in their way if they are only kept oiled and soft; otherwise they are apt to create a sore, especially in hot weather. Then, the saddle being securely strapped on, over it he placed a strong surcingle, which was fastened with three straps. Next he buckled on a pair of side reins, which crossed the mare's withers, and fitted into strong tongues in the saddle bow. This was to prevent her from getting her head down. He then took the further precaution of fastening the stirrup leathers by pieces of stout twine to the girths, to give Jem a secure footing, and to enable him to resist the plunges of the animal and their tendency to send him over her head. Lastly, to give the rider every chance of retaining his seat at all hazards, he produced an old 'possum rug, which he made into a roll, and strapped in front of the saddle.

"Now Master Curtis, I don't think as we'll mount her yet; we may as well chose a soft spot in case of accidents. You put on these spurs, and send them into her every time she tries to throw you. But we'll go down as far as the creek, where there's a patch of spongy ground. Take this whip, and



don't be afraid of using it. It's you or her for it ; and Miss Georgie 'll never forgive me if you don't come out right. She won't have a pleasant word to say to me for a month at least."

Arrived at the appointed spot, Jem again mounted, and the Mountain Maid again made desperate efforts to unseat him. But she could no longer get her head between her legs, and every time she crouched for a fresh spring a vigorous application of whip and spur sent her bounding forward ; while Jem, with the roll of 'possum rug before him, and the firm grip his feet got of the stirrup-irons, sat back in his saddle triumphant.

The mare did not, however, give in without a struggle ; and it was not until half-an-hour or more had been spent in the fight for mastery, and she had been forced to gallop, trot, and walk at the will of her rider, and had undergone severe punishment, that she gave in, and, with drooping flanks, carried the new chum back submissively to the starting point.

"What you've got to do," said Bob, "is to stick to her. Come over to me every morning at daybreak and give her her gallop. Come over whenever you can, and handle her and rub her down. Let her know your voice, my lad ; that's the secret with horses. You've got to gain their confidence, and they'll never fail you. You get on good terms with the mare, and she'll carry you in great style. The race is sure to be put off until next week, and there's plenty of time."

How Jem Curtis carried out the old man's instructions and how the steeplechase went off will appear in the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER VI.

NOTHING is more calculated to steady a man and to dissipate useless repinings or moody fancies than a fixed resolve in a certain direction. Now that Jem Curtis had fully made up his mind to take part in the steeplechase, and saw before him a prospect of success, he was a different man. His despondency gave way to hope, and his cheerfulness of heart came back to him. Acting on Bob Simmons's advice, he was early and late in his attendance on the Mountain Maid, with whom he very



soon got on excellent terms. But once did they part company, when one morning he mounted her barebacked. The absence of her accustomed trappings probably suggested to her an opportunity of playing off her old pranks, and with one clean buck she landed her rider cleverly on the grass. But this was the third day after his first introduction to her, and since then he had exercised her with great regularity, and she had proved herself to be an unmistakeably good timber jumper, and though somewhat self-willed and hard-mouthed, perfectly free from vice.

It was understood that the entries for the race were not to be declared until the day before it came off, and Bob had especially enjoined secrecy on the subject of the mare. Thus no one except the parties immediately interested were aware that Jem had obtained a mount which would render him a dangerous competitor.

The race, as was expected, had been put off for a week, and in the meantime the days passed very pleasantly in excursions on horseback, in laying out the course, and in other preparations during the day, and in music and dancing and flirting after tea, in which latter amusement the three girls were no mean proficient. Jem's easy good nature, and a certain boyish air which was natural to him, made the young ladies treat him to an amount of good-humoured chaff and banter which women rarely address to anyone for whom they have not an instinctive liking. Jem never objected to any commission, however troublesome, imposed upon him by his fair companions; and the charm which the society of three sprightly, unaffected, and amiable girls threw over him made him happier than he had been for a long time. It was well-known to the two Miss Burtons in what direction his aspirations tended, and that this tall strapping fellow was "spooney on Georgie" was a subject of no end of merriment. If Jem had been ten times more bashful than he was, he would have been compelled to let the state of his feelings appear, so artfully did these young ladies draw him out.

Georgie was well aware of the conquest she had made, although she pretended to ignore it; but one morning a slight accident occurred which brought these two young people nearer to each other than they had yet been, and revealed to Georgie Grant the fact that she took a more tender interest



in our hero than she was herself aware of. They were returning on horseback, Jem and the three girls, from a short ride, the object of which had been to inspect an artificial jump in course of construction at the bend of the course. A double trench had been cut for about ten yards, and the dirt from each trench thrown up into a bank in the centre. Heavy sapling rails resting on short forks increased the height of the leap to about four feet, which was the width of the ditch on either side. The whole offered a pretty jump, but in Jem's opinion it was not high enough. He declared he could clear it on the horse he was riding.

"You will find it quite high enough, Mr. Curtis," said Fanny Burton, to whom the leap appeared a very formidable obstacle; "I did not know your horse was such a high-flyer."

"Are you going to ride Nebuchadnezzar in the steeplechase?" said Georgie, who had given this nickname to Jem's horse the moment she set eyes on him, "Because I am afraid he will never face such a jump as that? I bet you a pair of gloves he'll baulk at it."

"Of course, Jem, if you win you can claim any forfeit you like. We'll see fair play, won't we Lizzy?" said Miss Burton. "Now, girls, ride back a little, Mr. James Curtis, mounted on his celebrated hunter Nebuchadnezzar, is about to take his far-famed flying leap into the middle of next week. If he fails to clear the jump he will be adjudged to pay to Miss Georgiana Grant, of Yarrowa, 1 doz. pair of gloves, the best Josephines, 6½ size. On the other hand, should he succeed in covering himself with glory instead of mud, and clearing the leap on his gallant steed, he will be entitled, as he doesn't wear gloves, a fact which I may be permitted to add is sufficiently patent to the most casual observer, to receive from the said Georgiana Grant—a kiss, or one dozen kisses, if he choose to take them."

"Oh! Fanny, how can you talk such nonsense."

"And," resumed the incorrigible Fanny, "we wish him well over it."

The next minute Jem turned his horse's head, walked him about a hundred yards back along the course, then, wheeling round, shook him together, and crammed him at the jump. The game old horse responded to the call, and coming with a rush made his spring, struck the rail heavily with his



forelegs, and rolled over his rider on the opposite side, then, recovering himself, scrambled to his feet and stood quivering on the bank, but without damage to life or limb. But his rider lay motionless on the bank, stunned by the shock.

The next moment Georgie was on her knees beside him, in an agony of fear and suspense. Women are apt, in such cases, to rush to extremes, and she thought he was killed.

"Speak to me, Jem, dear Jem," she whispered, as she lifted his head on to her lap and began untying his cravat, while her two young companions were galloping off to the station to get assistance.

Jem had only been momentarily stunned, and was no more hurt than his horse. So, hearing a low sweet voice addressing him in such endearing terms, he was quite content to lie still for awhile.

"Say it again," said he.

"Say what?"

"Dear Jem; and you might as well pay me—you know what Fanny said."

And Georgie, being a true-hearted unaffected girl, and believing her lover to be severely, if not dangerously hurt, bent down her blushing face and imprinted a kiss on his forehead. Then did Jem raise himself from the ground and, taking her in his arms, exact the full payment of the forfeit, and for one short moment Georgie laid her fair head on his shoulder, and thus tacitly admitted that she was won.

Then quickly recovering herself, she sprang to her feet and began to upbraid him in no measured terms:—"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, pretending to be half killed, and then taking advantage of me in that way. I'll never speak to you again."

So saying, she mounted her pony and galloped off to the station, closely followed by Jem, who, if his bones were a little sore, had the lightest heart of anyone that day at Yarrowa.

"Where have you been, child, and what has happened?" said her aunt, whom they met with the rest of the party hurrying towards them.

"Oh, it's nothing worth mentioning," said Georgie, with heightened colour. "Mr. Curtis has been 'playing possum,' that's all," and away she rushed to her room, leaving Curtis to the condolence and tender enquiries of the other ladies, who



petted him to such an extent that he would willingly have had a similar fall every day of his life.

It is now time to make the reader acquainted with the other *dramatis personæ*, which we can best do by publishing a list of the entries read out at the breakfast-table on the following morning by Miss Grant. They were as follows:—

- Mr. A. M'Lean's b g Marquis (Owner), blue cap and sleeves.
- Mr. A. Ormiston's c g Chevalier (Owner), green cap and sleeves.
- Mr. T. Burton's bl m Proserpine (Owner), green cap and sleeves.
- Mr. R. Walker's g g Moonlight (Owner), orange cap and black sleeves.
- Mr. T. Grant's br g Rory O'More (Owner), orange cap and black sleeves.
- Mr. H. Grant's g m Mountain Maid (Curtis), blue cap and sleeves.

The whole of that day was spent in final preparations for the race. Flags were put up to mark the course; gum boughs were interlaced between the rails of the fences, so as to allow as little daylight to appear as possible; sundry objectionable stumps were removed, and everything was done to make the course clear for horse and rider. A number of visitors from adjoining stations arrived overnight, secure of a hearty welcome and accommodation in the travellers' room. The sun rose on the morning of the eventful day in a clear, unclouded sky, and shone on the expectant faces of about one hundred persons stationed at various points along the course where a good view of the jumps could be obtained. All Australians, especially where cattle stations abound, are essentially horsey and what prettier sight can be shown than that of half a dozen well mounted men displaying their horsemanship in negotiating some twenty spanking leaps in first-rate style! The excitement was great, and friendly bets were made by the score on the issue of the race, Mr. M'Lean's bay horse being favourite, Moonlight and Chevalier in about equal estimation for second place. Tom Grant on his clever little horse Rory O'More, who was known to be a good fencer, it was thought would make a good third. Proserpine was not thought much of; she was adjudged too heavy for the work. As for the Mountain Maid, her character as a buckjumper was well-known in the district, and she was nowhere in the betting.

"Chance if that young fellow don't break his neck," said an old fellow—one of the new arrivals, as Jem cantered up to the starting point on the grey mare, who had been turned out by Bob Simmons in tip-top style, her coat shining like a mirror.



"If he can only sit her," rejoined another, "I'll back the Maid against the lot of them.

"Ah, that's just it!"

The Grand Stand was a hastily erected platform inside the garden fence, immediately opposite the house. The course, which was two miles in length, comprised fourteen jumps, and finished at the starting point. Mr. Grant acted as starter and judge.

Bob Simmons' advice to Jem was this, "Now, Mr. Curtis, if you can only hold her so as she don't bolt, and keep her head between the flags, there ain't no fear of ye till you come to the creek, and what you've got to do then is to keep her well in hand and let Mr. McLean or Mr. Walker, or may be Mr. Ormiston's chestnut, for there won't be none of the others up, give you a lead over it, for the Maid don't take kindly to water, and that's the truth. She has plenty of foot to bring you in three or four lengths ahead on this side, for there's over six hundred yards to the winning post, I measured it this morning. But don't you take the lead over the brock. Now mark you," repeated the old man, "there's only two points I'm afraid of. The mare ain't vicious, but she's got a hard mouth and an obstinate temper, as you ought to know by this time. She'll bolt with you at the bend of the course, if she can, and take you right across the bush to McMahon's, if you don't mind, and she'll do her level best to shirk the water jump. But you've got a strong pair of arms my lad, and I ain't much alarmed for ye. Keep her head straight, and don't forget that Miss Georgie'll be straining her eyes to see how the Yarrawa mare carries her colours."

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## CHAPTER VII.

EVERYTHING being ready, and it being now twelve o'clock and the spectators becoming impatient, after some little trouble owing to the fresh condition of the horses, a good start was effected by the dropping of a handkerchief, and away went the six competitors in close order.

The first four leaps were over stiff ironbark fences. Rory O'More led the way over the first flight, closely followed by Marquis, Chevalier, and the Mountain Maid. Proserpine



struck the top rail heavily and came down, but recovered herself and took the next three fences in good style. Moonlight refused the first fence, but negotiated it on a second trial. At the fourth fence, Marquis, cleverly ridden by McLean, showed in front, with the Mountain Maid hard held at his quarter, Chevalier and Moonlight well up. In this order they continued taking their leaps without a baulk half-way round the course, where a formidable obstacle presented itself in the shape of a log fence nearly five feet high and about as wide at the base. The Mountain Maid rushed at this and took it in a magnificent flying leap, a clear three lengths ahead of the field, and it was all Jem could do to prevent her bolting at the turn. As it was he took a circuit of a hundred yards or more before he got her head round again. This threw him back fourth in the race, the Marquis, closely waited upon by Chevalier and Moonlight, having put a couple of sapling fences behind him. Rory O'Moore had refused the timber jump, and the black mare was some distance astern.

The grey's stride soon brought her into close quarters with the leading horses again, and as they neared the artificial leap where Jem's fall had taken place the day before, they still kept the same order with about a length between each horse. Here Miss Fanny Burton's colours came to grief, Chevalier going through a second acrobatic feat at the double jump, and bolting without his rider. Jem being on the outside of the course now came up with a rush, the mare pulling hard, and giving Moonlight the go by, landed the next moment a good seven feet on the far side of the cutting, close on to the heels of Marquis. The Yarrawa colours were now both in front, and if Jem had paid close attention to the advice of his trainer he would undoubtedly have pulled off the race. But he lost his head altogether in the intoxication of success, and instead of keeping the mare in hand for the water jump and then making play, he was racing for place with his rival. Neck and neck they approached the creek, when the Mountain Maid, suddenly catching a glimpse of the water, swerved to the right, and in spite of all her rider's efforts cleared a low paling fence, crossed the garden at the back of the stand, leapt two sets of slip panels, and galloped up to the stable door, where she stopped of her own accord, leaving Jem Curtis in the position of John Gilpin at the end of his far-famed race,



“Nor stopped till where he first got up  
He did again get down.”

Marquis winning a well ridden race by four lengths, Moonlight second, and the rest nowhere.

Thus ended the Yarrawa steeplechase, not altogether to the discomfiture of our hero, who had ridden a hitherto notoriously unmanageable horse, with great pluck and judgment.

Jem was, nevertheless, very sore when chaffed for coming in at the back of the stand where the ladies could not see him, but Archibald M'Lean, who was a fine manly fellow, and as we have seen, a splendid horseman, spoke in such high terms of his riding, that it was impossible to cherish any unkindly feeling towards the winner, and when Georgie, who was unusually soft and gracious in her manner, whispered to him that evening that her friend Archie was positively engaged to Fanny Burton, there was not a particle of alloy in Jem's cup of happiness.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

THE second day after the steeplechase, the party at Yarrawa broke up, and the gentlemen forming an escort to Miss Grant's young lady visitors, who had a journey of some forty miles before them.

Jem Curtis felt that he must also say his adieux, but before doing so, he determined to have it out with Georgie, and see if he could wring a promise from that capricious young lady.

He thought, however, he was bound in honor to speak to Mr. Grant on the subject nearest his heart.

To this task he set himself in rather a despondent mood: for, although his prospects were fairly good, and he would shortly be in possession of money enough to purchase a share in a station, or stock any new country he might take up, he felt that the wealthy squatter would consider him but a poor match for his only daughter. But Jem was buoyed up with a hope that Georgie would be on his side, and he had found out already that opposition to that young lady's wishes from any quarter had very little chance of success.



So that afternoon he took the first opportunity that presented itself of talking to his host alone.

Mr. Grant's first words encouraged him. "Well, Jem," said he, "so you are going to leave us, too. Well, it can't be helped. Come over whenever you can spare a day or two, we shall always be glad to see you. And, by-the-bye, you will give me great pleasure if you will accept as a memento of your visit, the grey mare you rode so pluckily yesterday. You have managed to get on such excellent terms with her that it would be a sin to part you."

"Oh, Mr. Grant——"

"You need not thank me for her; for, to tell the truth, the offer does not really come from me. My daughter suggested it, and insisted that you should ride the Mountain Maid in place of the horse you brought with you."

"Oh, Mr. Grant, I am exceedingly obliged to you; but your kind present, which I willingly accept, makes it more difficult for me to speak. The fact is, I have fallen in love with Miss Georgie, and—and——"

"Whew! So that's how the land lies? And pray, what does the young lady herself say? Have your feats of horsemanship gained her favour? Do you speak to me with her sanction?"

"No, indeed, sir. I may have unconsciously betrayed my admiration for her; but I could not take advantage of your kindness to ask her downright. I am not at all sure, if I did, that she'd have anything to say to me."

"Well, Jem, don't be dismayed. 'Faint heart never won fair lady.' I like you for the manly and straightforward way you have spoken to me, and if you had asked me for anything else, I should have been disposed to grant your request off-hand. But Georgie is my only child. She is my pet and my darling, and the man who takes her from me must have my full confidence. I must be thoroughly assured that he is fitted by temper, disposition, and integrity in thought and action, to make her happy. He must also be in a position to provide for her and for any family she may have. Now, let me hear what you have to say for yourself."

Jem thereupon launched into an account of himself and his prospects; of his love for Georgie, and his determination to achieve a fortune for her, giving to his words such a



rose-colored tinge that Mr. Grant could not help smiling at his earnest hopefulness, and recalling the days gone by, when he, too, with much more slender prospects, had pleaded the same tale.

"Mr. Curtis," said he, "I have no wish to play the part of the stern parent of the melodrama. That my daughter should marry a man engaged like myself in pastoral pursuits, apart from the frivolity of town life, has always been my wish. Her tastes are healthy and natural, and when she leaves my home I hope it will be to settle in a similar home of her own, where she will be, as she is here, the centre of a circle of devoted friends and protectors. But I will never part with her until I can place her hand in that of a man whose character I have sufficiently studied, to be sure that, humanly speaking, her happiness is secured.

"So you see I do not reject you as a suitor for her. I repeat that I like what I have seen of you, but I require a longer probation than your short visit has afforded me. Winning a steeplechase and winning my Georgie are two very different things. I can give you no stronger proof of the good opinion I have formed of you than by saying that I place no veto upon your visits. I believe that the pure love for a good girl is the best spur to a young man's exertions. I have the greatest confidence in Georgie; so much so, that if you can win her heart I shall almost think you worthy of her. Treat me always with the candour you have shown to-day and you will not find me unreasonable, if, in a year or two's time, things should shape towards the fulfilment of your wishes."

Jem was, of course, profuse in his acknowledgments, and left his host, hardly knowing whether he was standing on his head or his heels. To tone down the exuberance of his spirits he took out the Mountain Maid for a spurt, and for about an hour exercised her in jumping a number of low fences in the neighbourhood of the home paddock.

Then he sought Georgie. But the young lady, who had probably (who can tell) had an inkling of his object, took studious pains to thwart him. In vain did he try, now on one pretext, and now on another, to get a moment's private conversation with her. She was resolved that there should be no *lête-à-lête* that day at least. Perhaps she enjoyed the



power she knew she possessed of tyrannising over such a devoted lover.

However, the next morning at breakfast, Georgie announced her intention of walking over to see Mrs. McMahon, one of whose children was sick. McMahon was a splitter and fencer employed at Yarrawa, who lived in a slab hut on the run about a mile from the station.

Jem was not inattentive. Here was the opportunity he had been looking for.

So the young lady had not got more than a couple of hundred yards on her way before he overtook her.

"My goodness, Mr. Curtis, what brings you here? on foot, too. You are the very last person I expected to see."

Now, the little flirt knew very well that Jem would follow her, and had purposely taken a walk in that direction to give him an opportunity of talking to her.

"I thought, perhaps," said Jem, "you wouldn't mind my walking with you, especially as I may not see you again for a long time."

"Why, you don't mean to say you are going away!"

"I must leave to-morrow morning, Miss Grant, and I have been trying all the day to get a chance of speaking to you."

"Dear me! how mysterious. Well, you had better make haste about it, for when we get to Mrs. McMahon's you won't have a chance to get a word in edgeways, unless you understand all about children's ailments and rheumatism, and all sorts of domestic troubles, for her tongue goes like the clapper of a bell from the moment she sees me until I leave."

"Perhaps there are other people who stand quite as much in need of a little kindness from you."

"I am always happy to do what I can for any fellow sufferer," said Georgie, with the most innocent air imaginable.

"Who is it?"

"Oh, Georgie, you know well enough who it is. Don't you care for me a little bit?"

And this was all that poor blundering Jem Curtis could say, albeit he had been for hours rehearsing an eloquent and passionate declaration, which he felt must convince his lady-love of the fervour and sincerity of his devotion. But in these cases the self-possession is all on the side of the woman.



"Indeed, Mr. Curtis, we shall be very sorry to lose you. My aunt is very fond of you, and the way you rode the Mountain Maid——"

"Mr. Grant has made me a present of the mare," said Jem.

"Oh, I'm so glad! that was so nice of Papa. Of course you accepted her?"

"That was not all he said. We were talking about you, and he said I might hope——"

"What! you have been talking about me to Papa, without asking my permission. Oh, Mr. Curtis, I will never speak to you again."

"But, Georgie——"

"Don't Georgie me, sir! Oh, how could you? If you had cared for me as you pretended to do you would have spoken to me and not to Papa. What has Papa got to do with it?"

"Then, of course, I can't accept the mare, and I shall leave Yarrawa this afternoon. Good-bye, Miss Grant."

"But you must have the Mountain Maid, I insist upon it."

"I thought you were not going to speak to me again."

"Then you had no business to think anything of the sort. Will you, or will you not accept Papa's present?"

"I will ride the Mountain Maid with the lightest heart in the world if I take her as a present from you, but not otherwise. Oh, Georgie, if I don't gain your love I don't care what happens to me."

"Well, I never. You need not speak so loud. Do you expect a young lady to bawl out to a gentleman in a 24-acre paddock, 'Love me, love my horse.' I'm ashamed of you, Mr. Curtis."

And that was the nearest approach to a serious answer which Jem could obtain from the little tyrant. She teased him and chaffed him to her heart's content during their walk of two miles, and finally they parted in anger—feigned on her part, but more or less real on his, Jem not being sharp enough to perceive the tender interest in him which underlay the saucy rejoinder of the belle of Yarrawa.

Still sore at heart, and angry with her for her mockery of his pretensions, but more than ever in love, Jem took a formal parting of his friends overnight, and swore by all his gods that he would leave Yarrawa at daybreak, returning on



his own horse as he came, and giving up at once and forever the Mountain Maid and all the delicious hopes which his acquaintance with her had given rise to.

The next morning at daybreak he went to the stables booted and spurred, determined to carry out his resolve.

There he met Bob Simmons; and in the stall, where he should have found his own horse, which had been run in the day before in readiness for the journey, stood ready saddled and bridled—the Mountain Maid.

“Where is my horse?” said Jem.

“What, that bay stock horse of yours, Mr. Curtis? Why, he’s pretty well on thirty-five miles from here by this time. He’s gone with a mob of cattle down town.

“Miss Georgie gave me particular orders about the mare. She said you was death on the Mountain Maid, and wouldn’t ride no other, which stands to reason; and I was to be sure and have her ready for you this morning. And there she is, a picture; she’s had an hour’s grooming, and you needn’t be ashamed of her.”

Now, Jem had sworn in his wrath that he would only ride the grey mare upon certain conditions, and with him an oath was not to be lightly put aside; yet even upon his unsophisticated mind it dawned that these conditions were likely to be fulfilled. Hesitating, and with his heart torn by conflicting emotions—half pique, half tenderness—he sauntered back to the house, and had hardly put his foot on the verandah when he was accosted by a silvery voice, which said—

“Oh, Mr. Curtis, won’t you take a cup of coffee before you start?”

And there was Georgie with a pair of blushing cheeks, in a bewitching morning costume, waiting to say good-bye.

“Oh, Jem!” she whispered, as he took her in his arms and kissed her sweet lips. “Do you forgive me?”

“My darling, you know I love you with all my heart and soul.”

“And you’ll promise not to forget me. And you will ride over at least once a week to see me.”

It would be idle to repeat Jem’s protestations of eternal fidelity. Five minutes later, and Georgie got a glimpse of her lover on the Mountain Maid taking a flying leap over the slip-rails which enclosed the station buildings.



## CHAPTER IX.

JEM CURTIS returned to the station in such exuberant spirits that there was literally no holding him. But a reaction soon took place, and he began to find, as was very natural, that the old life was dull and monotonous, after the pleasant days he had spent at Yarrawa, in the society of lively, amiable girls, and the vista of happiness which had opened to him in Mr. Grant's conditional acceptance of his suit. He now considered himself Georgie's affianced lover, and his brain was ever at work devising schemes by aid of which he should place himself in such a position as to ask for her hand.

He made me the recipient of all his griefs, his hopes, and expectations, and we had many and long consultations on the subject.

Jem would shortly be in possession of the sum of £3,000, which was a fund in trust for him, to be expended at the discretion of a sole trustee, a Mr. Markham, a wealthy solicitor, when and how that gentleman should consider the outlay would be to his interest. He, Jem Curtis, had little doubt of being able to persuade Mr. Markham to consent to the purchase of a share in some station property of sufficient importance to justify his marriage. The question then was to find an eligible investment, and to establish himself in a settled district, in a home not too far distant from Yarrawa, which Mr. Grant would not consider an unfitting residence for his daughter.

By communicating with an influential firm in Sydney, agents for station property, he had received several overtures from squatters willing to treat with him, and one fine morning he started on the Mountain Maid to inspect a station about fifty miles distant, the proprietor of which had expressed his willingness to take a working partner to enable him to visit the old country.

The day was remarkably fine, and as Jem rode out of the yard a little before sunrise with a light heart and full of hope all nature was alive with her sweet melody. The hum of insects, the chirping of birds, the laughing notes of the cookaburra, the chattering of the wattlebird, and the melodious whistle of the Australian magpie, with other cheering sounds dear to the heart of the bushman, ushered in the summer's day, and made him feel what a joyous thing



to the healthy and wholehearted existence in the country in a fine climate, where all the surroundings which infuse life and vigor into the frame, and joy and thankfulness into the heart, are due to nature, and not to art.

As the Mountain Maid, fresh as a lark, bounded beneath him, and cleared mile after mile in her springy stride, and here and there a kangaroo crossed his path, then stopped and stood upright to look at the intruder, Jem thanked his stars that his lot had been cast in the freedom of Australian pastures rather than in some city or town, with all the restraints which accompany the more artificial mode of existence. Then he thought of his last parting with Georgie, and the promise she had given him, and he pictured his new home beautified by her presence, enlivened by her mirthful sallies, and endeared to him because it held the most precious treasure which earth had for him, its glad and proud owner.

Occupied with these happy thoughts he proceeded on his journey to ———, the station he purposed to inspect, intending to stop at a sheep-station about half way, which he hoped to reach at noon.

Here an unexpected adventure awaited him.

Upon riding up to the hut, instead of finding the hut-keeper at home, he found it empty. Dismounting and hobbling the mare, he took a circuit of the place, and cooeeyed several times. But there was no response. A fire was smouldering in the fireplace, and there were other tokens of recent occupation, but the station was to all appearance deserted. In vain did he search for damper, tea, and sugar, or anything to dine on; he found nothing but an empty cupboard.

However, this was no great hardship; his main object was to give the Mountain Maid a couple of hours' spell, and, as she was feeding to her heart's content in a patch of burnt grass close by, he lit his pipe, and, throwing himself on a bunk in a portion of the hut which had been boarded off for the purpose of a bedroom, he laid down for an hour or two.

The pipe made him drowsy, and his eyes closed involuntarily. How long he slept he did not know; but he was aroused by hearing voices in the adjoining room.

Two men were conversing in eager tones; a few thin boards only separated the rooms, and Jem could hear every word; he could not avoid it.



Presently a name was mentioned which aroused his keenest attention.

Said one of the men, who had a very gruff voice :

"I tell ye, they're all gone, except the old man and the girl, and there won't be a soul about the place. I owe old Grant a grudge this many a long day, and I mean to pay him out, and as for Miss Georgie, my word, wouldn't she be shocked if I asked her to give me a kiss ; but she mayn't, perhaps, be so dainty when I do ask her."

It was all that Jem could do at this point of the conversation to restrain himself from jumping up and collar-ing the ruffian who spoke ; but a moment's reflection shewed that if he would do anything to protect the inmates of Yarrowa, he must find out all he could of the intentions and plans of the wretches who, it was evident, had planned an attack on the station, taking advantage of a day when the hands were all absent, and the young men, who had been there to witness the steeplechase, had returned to their homes. So he strained his ear to catch every word.

"Yes Tom," said the other speaker in a thin, squeaky tone—Jem could not see either of their faces, but he said to himself that he would be able to swear to them by their voices wherever he might meet them.—"I think it is right ; but if it's done at all, it must be done to-night. Old Bob Simmons is gone down with a mob of horses, and the men doing that fencing left last night. So, if there don't happen to be any travellers to-night, there'll be only old Grant."

"The old boy has got a lot of cash somewhere on the place, I know for a fact, and I'll have it out of him, if I set him on the fire till he roasts, d—n him."

"You don't seem to have a pleasant recollection of your friend Mr. Grant," squeaked his companion.

"Didn't I get five years all along of him, the hoary old ruffian. Maybe he'll find his mistake to-night. If I don't make a bonfire for him my name's not Tom."

"Well, well, Tom, I shan't interfere with your amiable intentions, and while you are putting the old gent through his facings, He ! he ! he ! I shall try and make the young lady open the family chest and give me the family plate. We shall thus be both pleasantly and profitably employed. He ! he !"



Jem felt an almost irresistible inclination to take three steps and throttle the last speaker, and thrash him within an inch of his life, but prudence said no—let them mature their plot, or they may carry it out when you know nothing about it.

Finally, the speakers, who spoke out without any restraint, being without an inkling of suspicion that any one could overhear them, and having resolved to do the job, as they called it, that evening, agreed to meet at a certain waterhole outside the Yarrawa home paddocks at 10 o'clock, where they were to be joined by a third whom they spoke of as Bill the German.

They then left the hut, mounted a couple of horses which they had hitched up to the front, and started without being aware of Jem's presence, and without getting a glimpse of the Mountain Maid, who had fortunately headed towards the water out of immediate sight from the hut, or the saddle or bridle which Jem had carelessly thrown down at the foot of a bush where he had hobbled her.

When Jem emerged from his hiding place the two ruffians were about a hundred and fifty yards off, and all he could distinguish was that one was a large stout man, riding a grey horse, and the other one thin and slight, mounted on a brown or bay horse.

But he felt that he could swear to their voices under whatever circumstances he might hear them again.

The ruffians were already on their way to Yarrawa: it was three o'clock in the afternoon, and a good thirty miles lay between the spot where he was standing and the station which contained the dearest object to him in the wide world.

Prompt action was necessary; there was no time to lose. What plan should he devise to outwit the hawks which in a few hours time would pounce upon the defenceless dovecot?

#### CHAPTER X.

Or like the tender dove,  
 Conceal'd in downy nest  
 From murd'rous hawk's impetuous chase,  
 With fluttering throbbing breast.

His first thought was to return to the station and to get me and one of the stockmen to start with him at once to the rescue. But that would involve a ride of forty miles, when



he could reach Yarrawa in a direct line in thirty. If he started at once he could ensure his arrival in time to take measures with Mr. Grant to give the ruffians a warm reception. And he felt reluctant to allow any one to help him in a matter in which he was so deeply interested. Georgie should find that he who had vowed to devote his life to her was ready and able to defend her against all odds. To no one else should she be indebted. He felt that he would have the strength of ten men in such a cause, and it needed only a recollection of the conversation to which he had just listened to make him decide on his course of action.

He was armed with a revolver and a serviceable hunting crop, but even if he had been without these weapons he would not have hesitated, and would have grudged the loss of time which any detour from the straight course to the home of his *fiancée*, thus rudely imperilled, must have involved.

So, saddling the Mountain Maid, and taking the shortest cut across the bush, he set out, no longer the light hearted, merry youth of the previous hour, but a stern determined man, prepared to encounter any danger and to overcome any obstacle which might intervene in the carrying out of his fixed resolve.

He knew that the mare would carry him twice the distance if necessary. Nevertheless he rode cautiously lest by any untoward accident he should fail in reaching his destination.

The ruffians had fixed upon ten o'clock for the rendezvous, intending probably to defer their attack upon the station until the inmates had retired to rest. By making a slight circuit Jem felt sure of being able to approach the house without attracting notice in plenty of time to make the needful arrangements.

It was seven o'clock when he came in sight of the fence of the first paddock, and, striking off to the right, and avoiding the road which led to the house, he reached the back of the station buildings, and, letting down the slip panels, led the mare up to the stables, unsaddled her, and quartered her for the night, without a soul being aware of his presence. A light gleamed from the window in the drawing-room, and, approaching the house he got a glimpse of Mr. Grant and his daughter seated at the table, engaged in a game of chess.



Outside all was calm and still. Not a breath of air stirred the leaves on the trees—the moon shed her silvery light on the lawn in front of the house, here lighting up a patch, there throwing a deep and sombre shadow, and evolving from the trees and shrubs weird, fantastic shapes, of huge and unnatural proportions.

But Jem Curtis was in no mood to pause and admire the soft beauty of the landscape. He thought how soon the peaceful scene revealed to him by the drawing-room lamp might be invaded, and he thanked his stars that he was there sound in wind and limb, to do battle with his strong arm on behalf of his beloved.

As he drew nearer he was saluted by a couple of dogs, who lay on the verandah, and the sound of their voices brought Mr. Grant to the door.

"What! Jem Curtis!" said he, "alone, and on foot. What's up? Come in and we'll get you some supper. We're all alone, except the women servants, for a wonder, Georgie and I, and we shall be very glad of your company. But what makes you choose such a late hour for your visit?"

Drawing the old man on one side before entering the house, Jem, careful not to alarm Miss Grant, hastily explained the nature of his errand. Then, in order not to excite any suspicion, he entered the room, and Georgie's hand was clasped in his.

"Have you lost your way, Mr. Curtis?" she said, "or have you dropped from the clouds, that you come so suddenly upon us. Why, you did'nt even give me a chance of saying 'Not at home.'"

"Which you would not have the heart to say, would you, Georgie?"

"Wouldn't I though, and then you'd have had to go to the traveller's room, and I'd have dressed myself up like Bridget, and brought you in some dinner. I wonder if you would have known me?"

Georgie's playful badinage was cut short by her father, who sent her to prepare some supper for their visitor.

When she had left the room, and Jem had almost forgotten in the intoxication of her presence the grave position of things, Mr. Grant, after thanking him in the warmest terms for the promptness he had shewn, laid down his plan of operations.



"From what you say we need not expect the rascals much before eleven o'clock. They will wait until they think we are in bed and asleep, and they will come to the front of the house, as they know that they can easily force an entrance through the drawing-room windows. We will extinguish the lights and leave the window open. This will not excite their suspicion, as in the summer we often leave doors as well as windows open, and we can station ourselves one on either side of the window, and shoot them as they come up."

"Now mark me," continued Mr. Grant, "I know the man you speak of as 'Tom,' and a more truculent, blood-thirsty rascal does not exist. I was the means of getting him a well-merited punishment some years ago, for a more than ordinary piece of rascality, and I believe he is actuated more by a spirit of revenge than the hope of plunder. Who his companions may be I do not know, though I fancy I have heard of Bill the German as having been connected with a case of horse stealing not long ago. There must be no hesitation. These ruffians mean to take our lives, and we must shoot them as we would dogs. In the meantime we have a couple of hours before us, and you may as well go and fortify the inner man. I dare say Georgie will have found you something to eat. Whatever happens we shall neither of us forget your share in the performance of to-night."

Jem, in spite of his anxiety, made a capital supper, his long fast and ride having given him an unusually keen appetite, and at ten o'clock Georgie retired, Mr. Grant observing that he and his young friend would sit up for half an hour to smoke a pipe and have a chat. He then produced a couple of double barrelled guns, which he had loaded, and, having extinguished the light, they took their stations at the opposite corners of the window.

"Now Jem," said Mr. Grant, "I will fire first. Don't shoot under any circumstances until I have fired. The moon is getting low; we shall not have long to wait."

Half an hour passed in solemn silence, and no sound broke the stillness of the night.

Presently Jem's quick ears caught the sound of a step on the gravel path leading to the front door.

"Keep still, and let me take the first shot," said Mr. Grant, whose attention had also been attracted. The steps



approached, and the forms of three men might have been discerned but for the deep shadow which concealed them. Their voices could however be heard; they were holding a whispered consultation.

"It's all right Nat," spoke one, and Jem at once recognized the gruff tones of the biggest of the two men he had heard some hours before; "the old bloke has turned in, and we shan't have much trouble with him."

Then the squeaky voice, which had so aroused Jem Curtis's ire at the sheep station, replied in a tone which bespoke a degree of cool malignity more dangerous than even the brutal passions of his comrade, "Yes, and I have no doubt Miss Georgiana is sleeping sweetly in her boudoir. I regret to think that I shall be compelled to disturb her slumbers, and to ask her to hand me over the bunch of keys which she keeps under her pillow. I am afraid she'll think me very rude, but it can't be helped."

"Look here," said the third man, "it's no use palavering; let's do the job at once. By Christopher, the window is wide open. What's to stop us going right in?"

The three ruffians, then emerging from the shadow which had hitherto concealed them, advanced to the verandah, and came full in view. A shot from Mr. Grant caused one of them to jump some six feet in the air and fall a lifeless corpse. Jem fired immediately after and wounded his man, who staggered, but, recovering himself, took to his heels and got away in the darkness. The third assailant might also have escaped if he had fled in silence. But his squeaky voice betrayed him, and as he ran down the path Jem Curtis, boiling with rage, was at his heels, and in less than a hundred yards had collared him, and dragged him by the neck back to the verandah. Two minutes later, and easily overpowered by so muscular an assailant, he was lying on the verandah, bound hand and foot, by the side of his fallen comrade.

But Tom, the ruffian with the gruff voice, Mr. Grant's deadly foe, was nowhere to be seen.

Meantime, Georgie, alarmed by the firing, had hastily dressed herself, and stood at her door listening and quaking with terror at the danger to which her father and lover were exposed, till Mr. Grant's voice re-assured her.



"Don't be frightened my pet, there has been no harm done. You can come down, if you like, and thank Mr. Curtis, to whom we both owe our lives, and then go back to bed like a good girl, and you shall hear all about it in the morning."

When the young lady peeped into the room she was met by Jem, who could hardly restrain himself from taking her into his arms, so thankful was he to see her safe and unharmed.

"What is it, Jem; do tell me what am I to thank you for? Is anybody hurt?"

"Only a rascally bushranger, who would have robbed you, perhaps, if I hadn't happened to overhear his plans. It is all over now, and there is really no cause for alarm."

"And that is what you come for, is it, Jem? Oh, dear, how good you are. I could almost——. Kiss me Jem, dear Jem."

And Jem took her in his arms, and kissed her with a sense of ownership which he had never before experienced.

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## CHAPTER XI.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back,  
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;  
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance  
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance.

BROWNING.

A miracle, here's our own hands against our own hearts—come, I will have thee, but, by this light I take thee for pity.

I would not deny you, but by this good day I yield upon great persuasion; and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE following day the hands returned to the station, and great was the indignation expressed at the daring attempt which had been made to take advantage of their absence. Jem was the hero of the occasion, and they all vied with each other in their efforts to do him honor. Bob Simmons, in particular, was never tired of singing his praises.

"I knowed he had the right grit in him," said he, "when I first clapped my eyes on him. A young fellow who can back a skittish mare like the Mountain Maid, and ride her like he do, is bound to be all there when he's wanted."



There was a considerable gathering of neighbours at the inquest, which followed in due course, such an event not having occurred for years in that peaceful district.

The ruffian who had been captured by Curtis was duly committed for trial at the ensuing assizes, and a warrant issued for the apprehension of Tom, the ringleader and the instigator of the attack.

Jem felt instinctively that so long as this ruffian was at large, peril was in store for his friends, and he mentally swore that he would never rest until he had handed him over to justice.

Meantime the days passed very pleasantly. Georgie was unusually gracious, and Jem could not but notice that her father held him in affectionate regard, and looked as if he already contemplated a paternal relation to him. He would not hear of Jem's leaving Yarrawa.

"Time enough to talk about leaving us when we're tired of you. What say you, Georgie?"

"I think Mr. Curtis is acquiring a great deal of colonial experience, but I have no doubt he finds it very dull here," remarked that conscientious young lady.

"Besides, we are going to muster some large mobs of cattle, and to brand some hundreds of calves, and your assistance will be very valuable just now," said Mr. Grant.

Jem protested that he could not be more pleasantly employed, and that he was just obtaining that particular kind of colonial experience which he thought would be of the greatest use to him.

And so it came about that he took up his quarters permanently at Yarrawa, and took an active part in the management of the station, making himself so indispensable to Mr. Grant that the latter left almost everything to him, having thorough confidence in his judgement, and finding an ample return in the willing and cheerful service he rendered.

No happier mortal existed in Australia than Jem Curtis at this time. Occupied in pursuits entirely to his taste, always well mounted, and passing the greater portion of his time in the open air, indulging to the full his love of sport in the excellent hunting and shooting which the neighbourhood afforded, and enjoying without restraint the society of the girl he loved, he had little to wish for.



Mr. Grant had given his consent to his union with Georgie in six months' time, on the understanding that they were to continue to make Yarrowa their home.

"Why should I part with my girl at all?" said the old gentleman, "I shall have two children instead of one, and Georgie will continue to live the life I have always marked out for her, and amid the scenes which have been dear to her from her childhood."

And so it was arranged; and pleasantly and happily the days passed, without a cloud to obscure the horizon, until the period of his probation had nearly expired, when an event occurred which had well nigh ended fatally, and closed rudely and for ever his too prosperous career.

Jem had ridden over to see me, partly to unfold his budget of happiness in my sympathising ear, and partly to ask me to be best man at the wedding, which had been arranged to come off on a certain day, not far distant. He had come over to our place over night, and had made an early start, intending to look up a gigantic old man kangaroo, which he had twice sighted near a swamp about half-way between the two stations, but on both occasions he had been without dogs. Now he had a couple of good dogs with him, and hoped to take home a trophy of his day's sport in the shape of a tail some 20 lbs. weight.

He was mounted on his favourite grey mare, and was picking his way through a patch of sheoaks, which lay in his road, singing snatches of songs in the exuberance of his spirits as he rode, when suddenly, almost in his ear, were shouted in a hoarse, brutal voice, the threatening words—

"Bail up!" and looking round hastily he caught a glimpse of the evil visage of the ringleader in the attack upon Mr. Grant's homestead some months before. He could not be mistaken, the sinister countenance had the same brutal vindictive expression; he knew that he was in the presence of Mr. Grant's mortal foe.

The Bushranger, while he uttered this imperious summons was standing close to, and partly sheltered by a large tree, covering Jem with a double-barreled gun, his finger on the trigger, ready to fire at the least aggressive movement. There was no means of defence; Jem was for the moment entirely at the mercy of an unscrupulous outlaw, who would have thought very little of the deed if he had shot him down there and then.



Curtis was not deficient in pluck ; but where is the man who would voluntarily disregard an invitation to bail up, backed by such advantages of circumstance. He pulled up accordingly, and, hoping at least to gain time by a parley, replied—

“ Well, what do you want ? ” He considered the man could not know him personally, having never seen him. Indeed, but for the voice, and the momentary and imperfect glimpse which he had caught of the bushranger as he approached Mr. Grant’s drawing-room window on that eventful night, he would not have been able to identify the man himself. But the voice, although but a couple of words had been uttered, at once brought to his mind the conversation of which he had been an unseen auditor at the deserted hut.

“ I want the mare, jump off her this moment, or by the living Jingo I’ll scatter your brains for you in less than a second.”

And Jem dismounted. In doing so he was not actuated by bodily fear, but by a mixture of motives, the strongest of which was not to lose sight of this man whom he had sworn to pursue until he had been the means of putting an effectual stop to his lawless and bloodthirsty career. He would have thought little of the risk to himself if he had started the mare at a gallop, and taken his chance of a bullet. But to leave the deadly foe of his intended’s father free, armed, and within a few miles of the station, was what he could not make up his mind to do ; so, not knowing exactly what part he was going to play in the next scene, he obeyed the bushranger’s order and dismounted.

“ Now hang her up on the bough of that sheoak, and look sharp about it, or you’ll never cross another animal in your life,” said Tom, with a string of horrible imprecations which made Jem’s blood boil in his veins.

This command he obeyed with a readiness which had the effect of pacifying the bushranger, and will be explained by what followed.

Jem Curtis relied upon the Mountain Maid to take the next step ; and he was not disappointed. No one at the station but himself and Bob Simmons had ever managed to sit her, and Jem, after he had got on good terms with the mare, had fostered this instinctive distrust of strangers which she



possessed, until she would allow no new comer to ride her. The sound of his voice gave her confidence, but the snort she gave, and the tremor which shook her frame when anyone not familiar to her approached and tried to mount her, showed that her confidence was not readily given.

"The brute will never be able to sit her," thought Jem, "and she'll come to my whistle in a moment." So he did as he was directed; and, still covered by the bushranger's gun, obeyed a further order, and retreated a few yards to allow the man to take possession of the mare.

Seizing the bridle with a rude grasp, and uttering a blasphemous imprecation, directed to the heart and entrails of the Mountain Maid, which had the effect of causing in that well-bred animal a sudden feeling of intense aversion, the bushranger put his foot in the stirrup and, swinging his gun over the saddle, threw his whole weight on to the mare. But he never got into his seat. If ever the Mountain Maid showed her bucking powers she showed them now. In less time than it takes to relate it she had sent her captor flying over her head and was dancing away with her heels in the air, to turn round at a distance of about a hundred yards, as if to admire her handiwork.

As the man fell his gun flew out of his hand. And now Jem, with the readiness of a true sportsman, seized his opportunity, and bounding like a kangaroo to the spot, closed with his adversary in deadly combat before the latter could regain his weapon.

Then ensued a rough-and-tumble fight, which was literally for dear life. One fighting to kill, and so get rid of his antagonist; the other to defend himself, and, if possible, to disable and secure a deadly and dangerous foe. Jem was overmatched from the first, but his suppleness and agility served him in good stead. Twice did the superior strength of his enemy force him on his back, but each time, ere the latter could use the sheath knife which he had drawn from his belt, he had writhed himself clear, and in his turn been the assailant. At last, however, the strength and weight of the bushranger prevailed. Jem was thrown heavily, and the next moment he felt a sharp stinging sensation in his left shoulder, and lost consciousness. Had his senses remained for another second or two, he would have been conscious of the sound of some dull, heavy thuds, which fell



one after the other on the head of the man he had been fighting with. These proceeded from the contact of a piece of thick dead wood, picked up hastily by Bob Simmons for want of a better weapon, with that portion of the bushranger's frame.

By the merest accident, to use a common phrase, but no doubt by providential design, the old man had been riding across the country in that direction, accompanied by a black boy, in search of some stray cattle, and the sharp eyes of the boy had spied the struggle just in time to effect a diversion.

By the time Bob Simmons had finished pounding the bushranger, the latter was past any resistance, and in five minutes more his hands were fastened together securely by a couple of strong saddle straps, and Bob turned his attention to the other combatant. Opening Jem's shirt he found a nasty flesh wound, from which the blood flowed copiously. This he staunched as well as he could, and, fetching some water and bathing Jem's face, he soon had the satisfaction of seeing his eyes open, and his consciousness return.

Then the black boy was told to gallop to the station at his best pace, and bring back the buggy for the wounded man. It was fortunate that the messenger was a native, or it might not have been so easy to find the place. But a smart young native can take a bee line though the bush to any given place to which he has once been, as readily as a bird can find its way back to its nest.

In about an hour and three quarters, Mr. Grant came with the trap, and the party proceeded slowly, on account of the roughness of the ground, back to Yarrawa, where Georgie, with a white face and scared look, was waiting for them.

Jem's wound proved to be less serious than it appeared to be; and, thanks to his youth, a strong constitution, the vigorous health which station life gives, and the careful nursing he met with, he was not long in recovering his health and strength, though for weeks after he rose from his bed he was unable to ride or to take any active exercise.

But the sympathy and goodwill he met with on all sides, and, above all, the consciousness that he had removed from the path of the family he was about to enter, an unscrupulous and deadly foe, more than compensated him for the bout of illness which was the penalty of his boldness.



Little remains to be told: the wedding day arrived in due course, and never was the head station so crowded. All the residents in the country side came to the gathering. A bullock was roasted whole, after the good old English fashion, races and sports were got up, and the festivities were kept up for several days.

Meantime, Jem and his bride were off to Sydney on their wedding tour, and at one of the beautiful and romantic spots with which the harbor abounds, were enjoying that halcyon time of which poets rave—

“The world forgetting  
By the world forgot.”

And there I leave them for the present.

Tom, the bushranger, who was known to the police under several aliases, and who was “wanted” for one or two other affairs, received the just punishment of his crimes in a sentence of fourteen years with hard labour.







## CATCHING A FLATHEAD.

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I ENJOY a day's fishing as much as anyone when the fish bite, which on most occasions they obstinately refuse to do; and even when they don't, a few hours in an open boat, with a nice breeze blowing, does me a world of good. But I am only an amateur, and know very little of the gentle art; and so, when I indulge in this recreation, I generally contrive to get some experienced sportsman to accompany me.

I did not know Growler personally, but his fame as a fisherman had reached me. I was continually hearing stories of his skill and prowess. It was he who started the Nimrod Club, and published those admirable hints on the subject of deep sea fishing, which appeared some time ago in the *Daily Thunderer*. He knows every reef and good fishing ground in our beautiful harbour, and at what turn of the tide they should be fished. He is also great on the subject of bait suitable for different kinds of fish, and different seasons of the year.

"If you want to ensure a good day's sport," said a friend to me, "get old Growler to go with you; he'll put you on to a good ground, and you will be sure of a haul." Acting on this hint, I obtained an introduction, and succeeded in prevailing upon that distinguished individual to form one of the party, on the understanding that there were only to be three of us, two to pull the boat and one to steer.

"If you go in for sport you can't have a boat load of fellows," said the great man. So I merely asked Jones, my neighbour, to make up the trio. Jones is a man of rather a studious turn, and no fisherman, but a very pleasant companion.



Growler has not attained the undisputed right to the title of a crack fisherman without some corresponding advantages. No one who asks him to join a fishing party ever expects him to contribute anything beyond his experience. The value of this commodity was soon apparent to Jones and myself in the minute instructions he gave us on the subject of bait and other necessaries. He was good enough to tell us the sort of boat we were to get and where to hire it, and the exact hour at which we were to start to save the tide. He also added in an affectionate manner some confidential remarks on the subject of luncheon, and especially with regard to the nature and extent of the drinkables.

It was eight o'clock in the morning to a minute when Jones and I arrived at the Circular Quay, in a cab laden with the stores which we had procured under orders from the chief of the expedition. These consisted of a cold round of beef, a chicken pie, materials for a salad, two loaves of bread, a tart, and some cheese, half-a-dozen pale ale, two bottles \*\*\* brandy, two Royal Blend whisky, and one dozen bottles soda water, besides cigars.

I mention the bill of fare in detail as a hint to other sportsmen who may be glad to know the scale of provisions which, in the opinion of such an eminent authority, should be provided by three persons for a day's fishing. Unfortunately Jones drinks nothing but tonic water, but this peculiarity was overlooked or unheeded by our chief, when the things were ordered.

We had not been more than three-quarters of an hour at the wharf, and had got the stores safely on board the "Marianne," together with a basket, which was carefully placed by itself, in which was an assortment of bait on a similar scale, to wit:—2 quarts of prawns, 1 crayfish, 1 large squid, 24 yellow tail, 6 mullet, 6 mackerel, 2 lbs. stiff paste, and 3 red herrings, when Growler appeared, with a small bag containing his tackle, and with an air of easy familiarity took his seat in the stern of the boat.

"I'll steer," said he.

This appeared so reasonable, that Jones and I at once took the oars, leaving it to the man who knew every inch of the bay to guide us to the fishing ground.



Our start had been arranged with much forethought to suit the tide, which was running in as hard as it could. It struck me that it would have been better if it had been arranged to suit us, as it would have been far pleasanter to drift with the tide than to undergo the two hours' severe exertion with the oars which followed; but I dared not express my thoughts in language. It did also occur to me that Growler's steering was of a very eccentric nature, and that, as we had both wind and tide to contend against, it would have been wiser to keep in shore as much as possible, instead of taking a serpentine course in the very centre of the stream; but I said nothing, and watched Jones anxiously, as the perspiration streamed down his face.

Our leader having purposely, or accidentally, run us aground near Bradley's Head, we took the opportunity of recruiting exhausted nature, in which process our commander exhibited so much interest, that it was fully half-an-hour before we started again.

During the remainder of the voyage we were entertained by inspiring accounts of the various capital days which Growler had enjoyed at the different feeding grounds we passed. At one place he had, single-handed, caught seven dozen bream and a dozen flathead, none of which weighed less than five pounds. At another he had hauled in a schnapper, which topped the scale at twenty-two pounds, besides whiting and mackerel by the score. We got quite excited at the prospect before us, and pulled away for another hour.

"Now, boys," said Growler, "we've got to get the lighthouse in a line with that rock. Easy now, and, when I give you the word, over with the kellick, and I'll promise you a first-rate day's sport."

After a good deal of manœuvring, we contrived to get the "Marianne" in the required position, and Jones, who was stationed in the bow, by great exertion managed to lift and cast into the sea an enormous piece of sandstone, which served as an anchor, and then sank down exhausted with the effort.

The first step taken by Growler was to uncork a bottle of brandy and take a regular norwester by way of luck. He then ordered the basket of bait to be set in the centre of the boat, and prepared to commence operations. First he



unwound from an oblong-shaped piece of wood about the size of an ordinary knifeboard, what appeared to be a clothes line on a small scale, about 50 yards long, and having at the end of it a lump of lead as big as a hen's egg, to which was attached a hook strong enough to hold a shark. To this he fastened a bait sufficient to last any ordinary fish for a week. That, he informed us confidentially, was for flathead. Then standing up in the boat he whirled the formidable object round and round his head at the imminent risking of braining me, and suddenly letting go, skilfully deposited it in the water about 40 yards off; the end he securely fastened to the boat. Next he produced a second and smaller line, attached to which was an elaborate assortment of hooks, which he baited with four different kinds of bait, and prepared to discharge in like manner. In this he would undoubtedly have been equally successful if he had taken the precaution of laying aside the long Ulster coat which he wore, for one of the four hooks caught in the folds of this garment, and had to be cut out with a penknife; this took about twenty minutes. Then he rose again, and at the next throw the line settled on the surface of the water in one large complicated tangle. But not a muscle of his face moved, and drawing in the line and refreshing himself with a nip, he set to work calmly to disentangle it. For five and thirty minutes by my watch he was engaged in this laborious occupation, during which time Jones and I caught two small, but apparently very hungry red bream.

The sarcastic smile which appeared on Growler's face as these diminutive specimens of the finny tribe were taken from their natural element, was refreshing to witness. It seemed to say "Wait a bit, and I'll show you the sort of fish to catch."

His second attempt was not a failure, though it appeared to me as the line touched the water that the four hooks had somehow got mixed up into one lump, but this was not observed by Growler, who was now fully prepared for business. There was not a trace of levity in the calm and determined eye which he kept riveted on his lines, now feeling one and now the other, ready to take advantage of any unguarded movement on the part of the fish.



An hour passed in solemn silence without any result. At least fifteen times did this accomplished fisherman haul in and examine his bait, coiling his line in the bottom of the boat with a dexterity and precision only acquired by long practice, and still no fish rewarded his efforts.

We felt concerned for him. As for myself and friend, we were but muffs and were prepared to stand any amount of chaffing if we came home with empty baskets; but Growler's reputation was at stake, and it would never do for Jones and me to have a monopoly of the sport.

He was getting morose, too. The generous liquor which he imbibed so freely appeared to sour instead of sweeten his temper, and he began to justify his name. Now he growled at Jones, because that guileless individual, ignorant of piscine tastes, had purchased the shrimps already cooked instead of raw; then he swore that the yellowtail were at least a week old, and that it was no use trying to catch anything with such stuff. The fish appeared to enjoy it, nevertheless, for every time he pulled in his line there was at least half a pound gone. Then he tried herring paste, for which he had not a single applicant for the space of an hour and a half—during which period I caught three whiting and two bream, fishing with a fine silk twist and a contemptible little hook attached to it by means of a piece of gut—a line which Growler would have disdained to handle.

As for Jones, he had brought a novel with him in which he was deeply interested. He made a point, however, of pulling up his line at the end of every chapter; and if he only captured three little bream up to chapter 17, he had no one but himself to blame. Like Tom Hood's fisherman,

“ He never spoke a word all day,  
Although his voice was fine  
He found the most convenient way,  
Was just to drop a line.”

Suddenly our attention was arrested by a gratifying metamorphosis in the appearance of Growler. He was no longer the moody savage looking individual of the previous five minutes. His countenance had suddenly become animated, and his eye was lit up by a positive glare of triumph; kneeling down in the stern of the boat, he was hauling in hand-over-hand his big flathead line. There was evidently something



on it, which Growler was slowly and gradually bringing to the surface. Jones and I looked on in breathless admiration.

The monster fish was within a few feet of the surface; we were all three leaning over the side until the boat was in imminent danger of capsizing, Jones and I ready to assist in the capture or to witness the death flurry, when up it came suddenly to us, and securely hooked, *a slimy rotten branch of a tree.*

For the next five minutes I was busily engaged in restoring Jones to animation. He had fallen on his back across the thwarts in a fit of uncontrollable laughter, which threatened to choke him.

By untying his cravat, opening his shirt front, raising his head, and patting him on the back, I at last succeeded, but every time he cast his eye upon the leader of the expedition, who sat in the stern, with a pensive subdued smile in his face, in a fit of abstraction he went off again.

By way of producing a diversion, I proposed luncheon, and by dint of urging, pleading, and perspiring, I got my two companions into a more sensible frame of mind, and we had a tolerably pleasant meal.

Growler recovered himself to a certain extent, and even went so far as to predict good sport as soon as the tide turned. He even got quite jolly under the cheering influence of the luncheon, the pale ale and the brandy blending with the whisky, that is to say as jolly as his nature would allow him to be, and volunteered a fishing song, which he had himself composed. He then set to work to repair his lines, and to make up for lost time.

The tide turned, as tides have the knack of doing at regular intervals, but Growler's luck never turned or wavered.

About this time I noticed that he did not rise to his feet to make the magnificent casts with which he commenced his sport; the fact dawned upon me that he could no longer keep his balance in that position. His behaviour in other respects too began to be eccentric. Happening to look round I saw him reclining against the side with his head touching the water. I thought he was watching the bait at the bottom but I changed my mind when I noticed his hat floating away with the stream some thirty yards ahead of the boat.



I roused him up by suggesting that a little brandy and soda wouldn't be a bad thing. His reply was "Brarry shoda wishky shoda all shametmee." He then took the composing draught which I prepared for him, laid down placid and bareheaded on the boards, and was soon in a deep slumber.

By this untoward accident I was forced into a responsibility which I never anticipated. The command of the expedition devolved upon me; henceforth I was captain by promotion *vice* Growler, drunk and incapable. I immediately appointed Jones my first lieutenant.

Our first step was to haul in and wind up our own lines, which did not take very long. *Our* brains had not been confused by the rays of the sun, and we had no tangles to unravel. Jones was rewarded for his patience in not having looked at his hook for five whole chapters by finding it securely fastened to an extraordinary-looking fish with wings like a butterfly, which barked like a dog, and which we subsequently ascertained to be a flying gurnet.

In a fit of generous enthusiasm he immediately made up his mind to send it to the Sydney Museum, but on my informing him that there was an objection to open that institution on Sundays, he declared his intention to have it embalmed and forwarded to his aunt in Devonshire as a curious specimen of Australian natural history. Jones had expectations from his aunt, and hoped by means of a sprat to catch a mackerel.

Stepping over Growler's prostrate form, we took a line each and hauled away. There was no difficulty with the big line; it was too thick to get entangled, and had been of no possible use except to convey large joints of mullet into a spot within convenient reach of shoals of hungry bream at intervals of a quarter of an hour. But it was not such an easy matter to dispose of the other, which seemed to have a peculiar facility to get knotted and looped from one end to the other. Imitating the example of the illustrious fisherman lying beside me, I pulled away quickly and coiled it in as regular circles as I could, and bringing the hook out of the water with a jerk I landed, to my great surprize—yes, actually landed—a veritable flathead; not a very large one, he may have weighed 1 lb., but sufficiently large to save Growler's



reputation and to keep up the character of the fishing-ground as being a first-rate place for flathead.

The next thing we hauled up was the kellick, after which we pulled, still against the tide, but with less exertion than before owing to the absence of a bad steerer and the presence of 200 lb. of deadweight in the bottom of the boat as ballast back to the Circular Quay.

The last thing we hauled up was the insensible body of our Commander-in-Chief.

He had not been particularly appreciative of the attentions we had shown him, nor were we indebted to him for anything out of the way in the shape of sport; but we determined to be generous, and to reward evil with good.

We therefore called a hansom and lifted him into it. We next stuffed all the fish we had caught, as well as the bait left, which he had complained of as being so stale, into the pockets of his Ulster coat. We used the flathead line to bind him hard and fast, hand and foot, until he was bodily as well as mentally in as complete state of entanglement as any fishing line could be under the most adverse circumstances. Then wrapping the flathead in the smaller line, which was so thoroughly and irretrievably tangled that it resembled a piece of seaweed, we hung it round his neck, gave the driver his address, put a couple of empty bottles in the cab, and sent him home adorned with the trophies of the day's sport.

I have not seen Growler since, but I hear he often talks of the capital day's fishing he gave us.

"We did not take many," he says, when he refers to the occasion, "one fine flathead and a number of small fish, but the fellows who were out with me were not used to fishing, and the bait was stale. But I have taken some splendid fish on that ground."







## REMINISCENCES OF CALIFORNIA.

No. I.

### HOW I SOLD THE YANKEE.

WHEN Gold was discovered in California, in the year 18—, it is almost needless to say that there was a pretty considerable rush to San Francisco. All the world—without their wives, who were so numerous that the term “grass widows” was then first introduced into the American vocabulary—rushed to that port pell-mell; and the rush comprised the tallest collection of smart men that ever emigrated in any one year from the United States. Sharp was no term for some of them. I don’t, however, believe in extremes, and I will stop at the comparative degree and call them sharpers. Yet I flatter myself that, in the very first commercial transaction with a Yankee of this class—effected, too, before I had actually landed—I got entirely to windward of the “stranger.” It is so long ago that I actually forget the name of the vessel that took me to the golden shore; but whatever she was named, she touched at Valparaiso, and one afternoon, while prowling about in the sunny spots of that Vale of Paradise, I passed some cottages, and paused to admire the front fence, which was a natural barricade of prickly flowering cactus, when a well-bred pointer slut, evidently the mother of young pups, rushed out and barked at me. Being rather a connoisseur in dogs, and being in a lazy humour, with nothing to do and lots of time on my hands, I stopped to examine her points, and thought I would get one of the breed if possible. My knowledge of Spanish at that time—and it has disappeared entirely since—was very much like that of the French governess, who knew the language very well, but couldn’t speak it. However, in a gibberish composed partly of Italian, which I could at one time read in a very disjointed way, some newly acquired Spanish phrases, helped out by



a little Latin and a great many signs, I managed to convey an expression of my wish to an old, yellow, withered-looking dame, who appeared to be the presiding goddess of the place; and for half-a-dollar I became possessor of a month-old pup of English breed, but South American extraction, and for an additional real, a young hopeful member of the family, *about* ten or thereabouts, carried it down to the wharf for me. Behold me, then, with a new plaything wherewith to beguile the monotony of the voyage, which had been awfully tedious so far. In compliment to his ancestors, who must have been dogs of descent, I christened my new purchase "Sancho," and he soon became a prime favourite with the passengers, not because of any especially noticeable good qualities, but from the absence of any other object on which they could bestow their affections.

Sancho met with a misfortune on his way from his native place to San Francisco, which further endeared him to every feeling heart. By some miscalculation of distance, or in consequence of a sudden lurch to port, or some other cause over which a young pointer could have no control, he fell one day from the poop to the main deck—an accident which caused a sort of paralysis of his hind-quarters, and prevented him from going on all-fours. He was not so disabled but that he could shift his quarters on a pinch; but this had to be done by a shambling sort of motion, in which his hind-legs took no part. The fore part of the craft was in good sea-going order, but—to employ a nautical term—there was no motion "abaft the binnacle." His general health, however, seemed in no way impaired—in fact, his appetite was rather sharpened than not by the disaster. This was proved incontestibly one day, when the sailors, having caught a rat alive, brought it to Sancho out of curiosity, just to see what notice he would take of it. A long course of biscuit and salt junk had produced a strong craving for animal food in the breast of the invalid, and in one moment the rat was swallowed whole, the effort being succeeded by an immediate enlargement amidships. I noted the occurrence in my diary, adding the remark that rats are very digestible.

This feat raised Sancho immensely in the estimation of the sailors, who petted him thenceforth to such an extent, that by the time we arrived at our destination he was fat and



sleek, his eye was bright, and he presented the appearance of a dog of high culture and breeding. He never showed off to more advantage than he did when we cast anchor and were boarded by a party of Yankees, who had hurried to take the earliest opportunity of trading with the new comers. Seated in his usual post, on the poop deck, with his hind-legs well under him, and his countenance beaming with animation, he formed a prominent feature in the foreground, and at once attracted the attention of a smart down-easter, who was standing up in the stern sheets of the boat.

"Sell the dawg, stranger?"

"Yes," said I.

"Is he any good?"

"He's the best dog for a rat I ever saw in my life," I said, conscientiously.

"What'll yer take for him?"

"Ten dollars," said I, modestly.

The next moment the Yankee spun up a ten dollar gold piece, which I caught in one hand, while with the other I carefully and tenderly lowered Sancho into the boat. I watched the party, when they left, for some distance, and, as long as I could see them, Sancho was still sitting, in his usual imposing position, game to the last; but the Yankee had to carry him ashore—you bet.

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No. II.

A RAT! A RAT!

"A rat, a rat!

Dead for a ducat!"

WHEN the town of San Francisco was suddenly inundated with a large population, comprising gold-seekers from almost every part of the world, there was, as a matter of course, a great scarcity of provisions on the spot. The country produce was unequal to the occasion, and ship's stores formed the main source of supply. Cargo after cargo was shipped from China, and it is supposed that California was indebted chiefly to that country for the enormous numbers of rats with which the new Eldorado was suddenly infested. The streets swarmed with them. Seated in rows on the door-sills of almost every house



they looked down upon the passengers as they walked along in the most unconcerned way; they rushed the stores, which were, for the most part, hastily-erected one-story buildings, and had their will of the eatables therein; they scampered along the galvanised-iron roofs in such numbers that it appeared as if they were holding races in honour of their arrival in a land where edibles of all kinds, unguarded by closely fastened doors and locks, were in such profusion. Dead bodies of rats, lying in all stages of putrefaction, met you at every step. There were rats of all sizes and colours—red, white, and grey; the white rats, with pink eyes and long moustaches, were in great force—these were evidently celestial rats, although terrestrial plagues. There were scarcely any cats and very few dogs among the new arrivals by sea, so that these omnivorous creatures had it all their own way. Like the rats which eat up Bishop Hatto's grain—

"They were in at the window and in at the door,  
Not by the dozen, nor yet by the score,"

but by hundreds; there was no getting rid of them; they literally took the place by force.

It was much the same in all the little mining townships which sprang up one after the other, as the gold-fields became developed. They all received their provisions from the same source, and were all plentifully supplied with red, white, and grey rats. At that time there were no vegetables to be had for love or money, except onions, imported from China, which were at such a premium that a fair sized onion was always worth a dollar, and I have seen one staked on a card at a monte table, and accepted unhesitatingly as a full equivalent for that coin. However, to return to our rats. I was living at the time in a tolerably busy mining settlement, not a hundred miles from Stockton, and was one of a party of six. We had made ourselves tolerably comfortable by putting up a weatherboard building about 20 x 20 feet, which had rather an imposing appearance among the tents and log-huts on all sides of us. The internal arrangements were very simple. Half of it served as a sleeping-room, and the other half as a dining and sitting-room. Here we used to meet every evening and play at cribbage, among other things, to while away the time—our dining-table, of the rudest possible construction, serving also as card table. About four feet



above our heads as we sat was a tie-beam connecting the wall-plate on either side, and on this beam, when not engaged in predatory excursions, usually sat about eight to twelve rats, more or less (there were always three or four white ones among them), looking down upon us. One would almost fancy they were interested in our play. Meantime, other members of the troop of a more lively turn would be scampering about the room seeking what they might devour. We took very mild measures to resist this intrusion. One of our party, having a mechanical turn, constructed a trap with a falling door. This, for convenience of access, was generally set under the centre of the table. When we heard the click of the falling door, a bag was in readiness, the trap inverted, and the lid suddenly opened, when the rat would fall into the bag; then a good bang against the wall would settle the business. This happened so frequently that a rubber of cribbage would frequently be interrupted by the catching of at least half-a-dozen rats, and the killing them in manner described, throwing the carcase away, and setting the trap again. At last it came to be regularly understood that this was to be done by each in turn; and whenever a fresh rat had to be executed, it was "Now, Jem," or "Now, Tom, it's your turn;" and Jem and Tom as the case might be, would rise, lay down his cards, and go through his task in a matter-of-fact way, as one of the ordinary household duties of a Californian digger.

On one occasion a neighbour and a countryman of ours, a Londoner, with whom we were on very friendly terms, came to us in great distress, stating that he had lost all his gold, which he had buried for safety in the ground a few yards from his tent. Not having disturbed the plant for over a month, he had dug up the spot in order to make sure of its safety, and—lo and behold! it was gone! We all condoled with him, and were disposed to accept the fact as he related it, the conclusion being that some thief had stolen it—some rascally Mexican, who had possibly noted his close observation of that particular spot. When I say all of us, I should say, with one exception. One of my mates, a very shrewd fellow, never cared to accept anything without proof of some sort, and he evidently had a theory on the subject of the alleged theft. At his suggestion, we proceeded in a body to the spot. The



gold had been enclosed in a buckskin bag, the usual receptacle for a digger's gold at that time, and there was certainly no sign of either bag or gold in or near the spot; but a little patient examination of the ground showed a shallow tunnel running from the hole. This we slowly followed, turning the soil over for about six inches with the greatest care, through all its turnings, and it turned frequently without any apparent object, until the tunnel must have measured altogether not less than six or seven yards in length, when we came first upon one speck of gold, and then another, and finally upon the buckskin bag, with about four-fifths of the original quantity in it. By collecting the soil all along the tunnel from its commencement, and panning out a number of dishes, every particle of gold was recovered, to the infinite satisfaction, as well as amazement, of the Cockney, who was profuse in his thanks, and went on his way rejoicing. A rat had been the thief, and the buckskin bag the attraction. Whether the robber belonged to the tribe who took up their head-quarters in our shanty, or to some other ground-burrowing species indigenous to the soil, I am unable to say. At any rate, he attacked the enemy in his most vulnerable point. At that time gold was to be had almost everywhere, and it was only an odd man here and there who could say—

“He who takes my purse takes trash.”

In this case the hidden treasure represented fifty ounces.

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No. III.

JUDGE LYNCH.

“He found a rope and took it up,  
And with it walked away;  
It happened that to t'other end  
A horse was hitched, they say.

“They found a tree and tied a rope  
Unto a swinging limb;  
It happened that the other end  
Was somehow hitched to him.”

In the early days of gold-digging in California, and especially in the small settlements which sprang up so rapidly, as prospectors pushed further into the interior, there would have



been literally no restraint upon the evil passions of rude and lawless men, but for the vigilance committees which the more respectable classes formed among themselves for the protection of life and property, and the punishment of offenders. Most of my readers will have read of the prompt action taken by the Vigilance Committee in San Francisco during the first year of the gold discovery, and the execution by them of three members of a gang of house-breakers, whom they took out of the hands of the authorities, *vi et armis*, and hung at the window of a large room in the principal square of the city. Some decisive action had become absolutely necessary to check the perpetual pilfering which took place day and night. At that time goods of all sorts, hastily landed, were displayed for sale in front of the various stores, and often left there all night covered with tarpaulins, while the buildings destined to house them were undergoing completion, so that the thieves were tempted by the unusual facilities offered to them to plunder on an unusually large scale.

Up country, where bad characters soon became known individually and marked, property was much safer; but many a dark deed, committed under the influence of drink, avarice, or hate, met with prompt and terrible retribution at the hands of a few stern determined men, who performed their judicial and executive functions not in a hasty indecorous manner and in a spirit of revenge, but with the strictest impartiality, as a duty which had to be done in the interests of the community, of which they were leading members. The knowledge that Judge Lynch was on the spot, and swift to take cognizance of any act of unusual rascality, acted in most cases as a wholesome deterrent to crime, when the criminal would have risked the tardier action of the law proper, and possibly escaped.

Stealing the hard-earned gold of a miner, and horse-lifting, were capital crimes in those days, and punishable by death. Manslaughter was rather applauded than not, so long as there had been a fight. Then, if one of the combatants had "gone under," the survivor, no matter what provocation he had given, stood in higher estimation than ever. Almost every man carried a revolver in his belt, and shooting scenes were anything but uncommon. It was a very hard matter, however, to get a Californian jury to condemn any man



(especially an American) for taking another's life, if it could be shewn that he had been agrieved, provided the shooting was done openly. If the man who was shot didn't draw his revolver and exchange shots it was his own fault, and there the matter ended, unless the friends of the deceased got up a private vendetta on their own account.

But woe to the sneak who was caught in the act of making off with his partner's gold, or his horse, or committing any glaring act of treachery or swindling—he might just as well have been a murderer taken red-handed.

The process of trial was very simple. So soon as it was known that a crime had been committed in the neighbourhood, of which notice must be taken, the "boys" would be called together—whether a vigilance committee had been formed or not—a chairman and jury hastily chosen, and the offender placed before them—generally in some public place, and in the open air. Evidence would then be taken, carefully and patiently, in the hearing of the twelve jurymen and the crowd assembled round them. The accused would be allowed to say what he liked in his defence, and the verdict would be pronounced by the jury and echoed by the rest. If guilty, the sentence would be carried into effect there and then, before the assemblage dispersed.

I had not been long in California before I had two opportunities of witnessing Judge Lynch's mode of operation. I was living in a mining township, some hundred and fifty miles from San Francisco. The town consisted of one large street, containing restaurants, stores, and gambling saloons, kept by Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Mexicans, and Chinese, built to a large extent of canvas stretched over frames, each building having but one storey. As an instance of the strange gathering of tongues in that out-of-the-way place, I may mention that in one of the eating houses in this street, I once, while at dinner, heard a Yankee make use of four different languages in asking for potatoes. This was the query—"Dis done, Signor, hand me them cartoufels?" French, Spanish, English, and German.

Two men kept a general store in this street; one of whom, a German Jew, had planned a bolt with all the available cash in the place, and had actually bolted with it, leaving his partner a very small stock-in-trade and a very large collection of



liabilities. From information received, as the police say, the Vigilance Committee succeeded in apprehending him when some miles on his way to San Francisco, and bringing him back to the township. A trial took place in the usual informal way, and the guilt was brought home so clearly to the offender, that nothing remained but to pass sentence. The chairman of the meeting then got up and said, "Well, boys, there don't seem to be any manner of doubt about the prisoner's guilt, and it appears to me that an example has got to be made in this case, or no one's property will be safe. I think we'd better give him five dozen lashes and an hour to clear out of these diggings—what do you say!" A chorus of "hear, hear," settled the prisoner's fate, and ten minutes afterwards his back was stripped, and his wrists tied to the upper rail of a corral, or stock-yard, close at hand. A whip was procured, and sixty smart cuts smartly administered by twelve members of the Vigilance Committee, each man giving five vigorous cuts for his share, none the less vigorous for the repeated cry of the prisoner—"S'help me, shentlemen! Oh! ah! oh!"

The defaulter was then cautioned not to show his face in that part of the country, and to be off in an hour's time; and long before the hour had expired, he was again treading the townward track, minus the stolen dollars, and plus—a very sore back.

The other case was much more tragic in its details. The condemned man was a "Greaser," or Mexican, and his sentence was death. I was travelling across the country at the time, and I well remember the scene. I had just passed a small camp, comprising some two or three hundred residents, and was pushing on to the next stopping place, when I overtook a procession, numbering about a hundred men on foot, headed by a small party, two of whom led a mule, on the back of which sat (with his hands tied behind him) the criminal. Short was the shrift of the unhappy wretch. A few yards further on the procession stopped, for the leader had found what he had been looking for. Nature had supplied the means of execution in the projecting limb of an oak tree, under which a halt was made. Speedily a rope was produced and attached to it; a cap was drawn over the criminal's face, and the noose adjusted. The mule was then urged forward,



and the body of the Mexican dangled in the air, a strange and horrible sight, and rendered still more so by the contrast which the natural, still and peaceful little glen in which the tragedy was enacted, about half-a-mile outside the camp, presented.

I got into conversation with one of the Americans who were among the spectators, and returned with him to his place for the night. He told me that the countrymen of the man whose execution I had just witnessed, had offered 100 ounces of gold to have him shot instead of hung, but their request had been refused. It appeared that the white diggers had long been suffering from the depredations of an organised gang of horse-stealers and plunderers in general, and that the deceased had been the ringleader.

As I lay smoking a pipe that night in the tent of my newly-formed acquaintance, I noticed, and called his attention to, a number of bright lights dotted over the ground, of peculiar appearance, and to the continuous firing of pistol-shots from the same quarter, on the brow of a hill facing us. "That," he informed me, "was the Mexican camp, and the lights were candles, lit for a special occasion—being, together with the pistol shots, a part of the funeral obsequies of the Greaser."

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No. IV.

A BULL AND BEAR FIGHT.

"DID you ever witness such a brutal exhibition in your life?"

"I never saw anything half so disgusting."

We had been to see a fight between a bull and a bear.

For some days past the walls of the buildings in the little mining township in which we were living had been covered with flaming placards which announced that a grand combat would take place on a certain day between the celebrated grizzly bear General Scott and the famous Spanish bull Santa Anna. Entrance, 2 dollars.

Attracted by the novelty of the announcement, and in the hope of seeing, in addition to the feats of the bull and the bear, some feats of horsemanship by Mexicans or Spaniards, which are really worth seeing, we took our way to the place of entertainment, which was a hastily-constructed circus built of



planks, with three tiers of seats encircling a vacant space about twenty feet in diameter.

The seats were pretty well all taken when we arrived, a great many Mexicans with their wives being present, with the usual sprinkling of Americans, English, Irish, Scotch, Germans, Russians, Frenchmen, Poles, &c., which went to make up a mining community in those days. As soon as the place was filled, the unfortunate bull was brought on to the scene and cries of "shame" resounded on all sides when it was seen that he was tethered by a rope fastened to one of his forelegs, so as to prevent him charging his antagonist at full speed. The greed of gain, and the fear that the bear should by chance get the worst of the encounter, had induced the cowardly proprietor to adopt this devilish plan of securing an easy victory for General Scott. Let us hope his illustrious namesake obtained his laurels in the Mexican war by more honourable and manly tactics. The use of his name on the present occasion certainly did not add to its lustre.

The cage or kennel containing the General, *alias* the Grizzly, was now wheeled forward into the arena, and his bearship, by dint of a good deal of prodding with a long pole *a tergo*, compelled to come out into the open.

He was not by any means a formidable-looking animal; nothing, in point of size, to be compared with a grizzly I once saw hanging up at a butcher's shop in San Francisco, said to weigh 1,480 lbs, but no doubt an ugly customer. The brute looked as if he would like to go back to his cage and lie down; but after having been repeatedly stirred up with the aforesaid long pole, he was forced into close proximity with his opponent.

Poor Santa Anna made one frantic effort to toss him, but, being checked by his fetters, was unable to defend himself, and was therefore at the mercy of the grizzly, who, taking him by the neck in a close hug, fastened on to his throat, and literally chawed him to death. The spectacle was sickening. However, there we were, wedged in among the crowd, and there we had to remain. Presently a murmur began to circulate among the spectators, who seemed to think they had not had two dollars worth of amusement, and in a few minutes a purse was made up among them for the purchase of a fresh bull, who, they insisted, should be turned into the circus perfectly free.



Two Mexican rancheros were at once despatched to a corral hard by, which contained some four or five bullocks awaiting the butcher's knife. These beasts had been two days without food, and were wild enough, especially the one selected by the Mexicans,—a slight-built black bullock, who would have made poor beef, but was apparently in good fighting trim.

We were destined to see a little good horsemanship after all in the bringing of this animal from the corral to the circus. It was done in this way. One of the Mexicans riding into the yard threw his lasso over the beast's horns and then rode out of the yard, the second horseman following the bullock and urging him in the direction the first rider had taken toward the circus. The bullock, being dragged by one and goaded by the other, soon became maddened, and charged the foremost horseman, whereupon the other with marvellous dexterity lassoed him by the hind leg while at full speed. Then suddenly wheeling round he galloped off a few yards at right angles to the course taken by the bullock until the lasso at its full stretch threw the beast on its side. A moment after and the bullock was on its legs again and in hot pursuit of the horseman before him whose lasso was still about his horns. Each time that he approached too closely he would be thrown again, and in this ignominious way he arrived at the scene of action in exactly the temper suited to the occasion. By a similar clever system of manœuvring with lassos pulling in opposite directions, their horses being trained to plant their feet firmly on the ground so as to resist the strain of the rope which is always firmly attached to the high pommel of the Mexican saddle, the two rancheros contrived to bring the now thoroughly infuriated bullock to the door of the circus, to thrust him in, and to close the door behind him.

Ill-fared it then with General Scott, the Californian champion. His first antagonist Santa Anna, was as a baby in arms compared with the new comer, whose prowess might have been compared to the disinherited knight in *Ivanhoe*, since in next to no time he made all his opponents roll in the dust. With a snort of defiance he went straight at the General, and having knocked him into a cocked hat, turned round and charged the door, which being made of thin boards, gave way at once. Then ensued great fun. There were numbers of



persons in groups outside the enclosure, and the way "the Disinherited" scattered them right and left was splendid. A panic took place inside the circus at the same time, which was followed by a regular stampede. Nobody knew where the bull was or what had become of the bear. It was an early edition of Bull's Run. Lots of fellows got knocked over in the scramble, others got excited and fired off their revolvers, while the majority, having got all they could for their money, calmly retired to the nearest store to liquor up. Meantime the black bullock was taking a bee line to the woods, and it is to be hoped got clear away.

That was the first and last "b'ar" fight with which I had anything to do with.

I once gave great offence to a Yankee, by remarking that I had never heard of General Scott. I have now given my readers all the information I possess on the subject.

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No. V.

THE BATTLE THAT DIDN'T COME OFF.

"ORDER ARMS!" The troops did this very well, my boy, the muskets coming down at intervals of three minutes, bringing each man's cap with them, and pointing so regularly toward all points of the compass, that no foe could possibly approach from any direction without running on a bayonet. "Present Arms!" If Present Arms means to stick your bayonet into the next man's side, my boy, the troops did it very well.

Company 3, Regiment 5, Mackerel Brigade, started for an advance on Richmond yesterday, and by a forced march got within three miles of it. Another march brought them within five miles of the place; and the last despatch stated that they had but ten miles to go before reaching the rebel capital.

--Kerr Papers.

I HAVE smelt powder often enough, having been a keen sportsman all my life, and taken part in many a *battue* of game, and have been frequently in positions of great peril, as must happen to anyone who has knocked about the world as much as I have; I have also been engaged at various times, in what the Yankees call a muss and we call a row, where every man has had to look out for himself, but I never played a part in a pitched battle between armed and angry men, bent upon taking each others lives.



On one occasion, however, I came about as near being in the thick of a free fight, where the combatants were from five hundred to a thousand on either side, as ever fell to the lot of a non-combatant, and this is how it happened:—

The story is not without its ludicrous side, though it portended the most serious and fatal results. Perhaps, however, I am rather disposed to look at even grave matters in a jocular spirit.

The fight, which was imminent, but didn't come off after all, would have been a national affair on a small scale between the French and Americans, the forces being composed of miners at Moquelumne Hill, a mining settlement in California, about a hundred miles, more or less, inland from the town of Stockton—the bone of contention, the richest claim, perhaps, ever discovered in any country from the date of the first diggings up to the present time.

The original discoverers were a couple of Frenchmen, who had traced a lead of alluvial gold from a rich gully to the crest of a low hill where, in the granite bed-rock within a few feet of the surface, overlaid by a crust of lava, they came upon a gigantic nest of nuggets. Here was no fine gold requiring careful washing to free it from the soil, but large solid lumps of the precious metal, from the size of an egg downwards, sticking in the surface of the granite like plums in a pudding, and as close.

It was said that the lucky prospectors, who stole away in the night with their easily earned treasure, loaded two pack horses with the precious metal, and there was enough left in the claim, now in possession of their friends, to allow full credence to the rumour. Anyhow, the most intense excitement ensued, and in less than twenty-four hours the ground was the centre of attraction. Crowds of lawless rowdy men, refugees from all countries, stood round the claim watching the Frenchmen as they worked; and it was not long before envy, hatred, and jealousy flamed in the breasts of many of the onlookers.

The Americans, owning the country, and having a large majority in numbers, were the dominant race, and there can be little doubt that there was a party of the rowdiest among them who, from the first glimpse of the gold, had made up



their minds to dispossess the "parleyvous" *vi et armis*, and to jump their claim.

The excitement, which kept on increasing, and a sort of jealous murmuring which went on by the loafers in question, created a feeling of hostility, until the owners of the claim seemed to have a presentiment that they would have to fight for their rights, for every Frenchman as he worked had his double-barrel alongside of him. Every son of France carried a double-barreled gun, and might be seen each Sunday morning, with a gamebag at his back, peppering away at the turtle doves, hares, and other small game to be found in abundance all round the diggings. Now they loaded these weapons for a very different purpose.

At that time almost every man, Americans and Spaniards especially, carried a revolver and bowie knife in his belt. Anything in the shape of a row between numbers was therefore likely to be rather lively in its results.

At last the fable of the wolf and the lamb was played out, and a party of rowdies, upon some pretext or other, did jump the claim, and thereupon war was declared.

The Frenchmen, a great many of whom were officers who had seen good service, and almost all men with a military training, collected from the adjacent camps, and soon formed a large force for offensive or defensive service. They had an instinctive dislike to the blunt and overbearing manner and tone of the American rough, and it needed but an open act of aggression to fan that dislike into stern resolve to resist all attempts at oppression. So, in less than twenty-four hours every Frenchman had joined the general muster, and formed a camp about a mile outside the township.

Meantime the Americans were not idle. Scouts were sent in all directions to bring in volunteers. These flocked in from the places at the different bends in the river which bordered the town, and the gullies and flats inland, in quick time, and soon a formidable and very ragged army was at head-quarters in eager fighting order.

A commander-in-chief was chosen by unanimous consent in the person of Colonel ———, who had taken a prominent part in the Mexican War, and kept a store in time of peace; and I must say, a finer looking, more soldierly man, I never saw. Sub-officers were chosen by him, and preparations were



made to give battle to the daring foreigners, who had been presumptuous enough to take up arms against the native-born American, the rightful owner of the soil.

Among other preparations the township was put under martial law, lest the French, knowing their inferiority in point of numbers, should rush back in the dead of night and endeavour to carry the place by a *coup-de-main*.

This was the state of things when I arrived from another diggings about fifty miles off. I had been summoned to join an old mate and great chum—poor fellow, he met with an untimely fate at the White Hills, in Bendigo, some years after. He was being hauled by windlass from a deep shaft, and was within three feet of the surface when the rope broke, and he fell to the bottom, fracturing his skull against a boulder.

A cheery, genial companion he was. He had been a sheep-farmer in South America, and could speak Spanish like a native. I could speak French indifferently, and together we could make ourselves understood anywhere except in a German camp, where we could only converse with the diggers by signs.

I did, however, manage to master a few common-place phrases in German, which I got the knack of pronouncing so naturally that I was often mistaken for a "native to the manor born," and on one occasion, on account of this proficiency, I nearly had a fight with a stranger. He accosted me very civilly with

"Wie geht's."

"Wie geht's landsmann," said I courteously in return, and with the true German accent.

Some other polite interchanges followed,

Then said he

"Was trinkin sie?"

"Yah!" said I indolently, and with the true patois, and we had a drink.

After which he began a long and unintelligible yarn, to which I could only reply by nodding my head as amiably as I could, instead of giving an intelligent reply to his question; and as he would not believe that I didn't understand him he came very near punching my head.

I was thus in the way of getting a rather forcible illustration of the old adage—

"A little learning is a dangerous thing."



But I am digressing. As soon as I arrived in the township, and the sentinel who accosted me perceived that, in addition to a mule which I drove before me laden with my bag and baggage, I carried a double-barreled gun across my shoulder, he, informing me of the state of affairs, suggested that I should wait upon the commander-in-chief, and thereupon join the Shot-gun Battalion.

I temporized with this valiant officer by pleading my desire first to find out my friend and to deposit my baggage before entering the ranks as a volunteer, after which I promised to return with my gun and my mule, prepared for infantry or cavalry service, as circumstances might render desirable.

After some considerable trouble I found my friend. And where do you think I found him? Seated in the midst of a circle of admiring friends, under a sort of canopy of boughs in front of his tent, in the immediate vicinity of a case of claret. This jovial comrade and his equally jolly friends—all at that moment especially jolly—had formed themselves into a Peace Society, and were amusing themselves while quaffing bumpers of St. Julien Medoc, by criticising and cutting jokes on the military equipments of the Yankees, of whom they made great fun.

They had no particular sympathies either way, though, if anything, they leaned towards the Frenchmen who provided such excellent wine, and had declined all overtures to take part in the struggle.

I had no reason either to join the shot-gun or any other battalion and it was a mere spirit of adventure—a restless desire to gain some new experience—which made me refuse to become a participator in their inglorious ease,

“For I had heard of battles,  
And I longed ——”

not to get shot, certainly, but, at all risks, to take part in anything lively that was going on.

So, some hours later, when we had done full justice to the claret, I retraced my steps to head-quarters, and offered myself as a volunteer able and willing to pepper away, till further orders, at any enemy who might rashly attempt to pierce the ranks of the Shot-gun Battalion. The well-known line, “*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*,” did not occur to me on the occasion.



I had not the slightest desire to die, and I did not care a button for the country, or the parties who owned it. Of the two I would sooner have joined the Frenchmen, if they had asked me first. But they didn't, and I followed the course which fate had marked out for me. I had been since I left home a spectator, as well as an actor in many curious scenes, and I thought I would like for once to be in a real battle, just to see how I should feel. So there I was, a full private in the Moquelumne Irregulars, attached to the awkward squad, which rejoiced in the martial appellation of Shotgun Battalion No. 1, as distinguished from the more honourable corps of rifle brigades. The Americans never use smooth bores; they look upon shot guns as mere childish weapons, as indeed they are compared to the long Western rifle, which is good for three hundred yards at the least.

But the men of the shot-gun regiment would be valuable food for powder, and it was suggested by way of inspiring the requisite martial ardour amongst us, by one of my comrades, that we should of course be sent on ahead until we could use our guns with effect, to a distance of—say thirty yards, from the enemy's front ranks, while the rifle companies being in a safe position, two hundred and seventy yards behind us, would be able to do equal execution without the loss of a man.

The very first thing that wretch of a commander-in-chief did was to appoint me to the post of sentinel, to guard a portion of an imaginary line, which was supposed to represent the boundary of the township. I was to let nobody pass either in or out who was not prepared with the watchword—"Blood, Our Pride."

Old Californians, who shared in the glories of that memorable day on the heights of Moquelumne, will remember those warlike words.

Now, I had had a long day's march, and had no idea of walking up and down a solitary and monotonous beat of one hundred yards for the greater part of the night; but I was not the man to commence my military career by an act of open rebellion. So I started in the direction of my post, singing softly to myself, in case I should forget them, and to remind me of my duty, the magic words, which acted as a lullaby, and nearly sent me to sleep—"Blood, Blood, Our Pride, Our Pride."



Night came on apace, and drowsiness with it. My blood was getting chilled, and my pride sank to a very low ebb. I walked backwards and forwards for about an hour, and thought of Socrates, who, when the poison was handed to him, was advised to walk up and down until he felt drowsy. I felt exactly the same symptoms without the poison (for surely good claret can never be called poison), and at last they became so strong, that the sense of duty was fairly overcome by the sense of heaviness, and I lay down with the intention of sleeping through the first half of my watch, in the hope that the French would have the consideration not to come until the other half had commenced.

But just as I was making myself as snug as I could under the circumstances, and without any blankets, and was about to lie down in a sheltered spot,

“Like a warrior taking his rest,  
With his martial cloak around him,”

I heard a sort of shambling, shuffling noise, as of some one scrambling up the side of the hill from the gully which formed the extreme end of my beat, accompanied by smothered imprecations directed against the path.

In a moment I was awake, and on the alert.

“Who goes there?” said I, in stentorian tones.

“Billie Barlow,” sang out a drunken voice, as the intruder walked boldly towards me, making rather more lee than headway at each step—“It’s nobody else but Billy Barlow.”

“Advance, Billy, and give the countersign,” I replied, in a stern tone.

“Countersign be d—d,” quoth Billy Barlow, as he reeled past me.

I saw it was a hopeless case, and, in order to compromise matters, and to temper duty with mercy, I roared out,

“If you dont say ‘Blood, Our Pride,’ I shall fire.”

There was no response except the sound of a heavy fall, but this was caused, not by my gun, but by the invaders’ unsteadiness of gait, for a minute after, far up the heights, I heard a voice hiccoughing with gleeful tone this refrain:—

“O-Oh! blood is our pride, our pri-i-i-de,  
Oh, blood is our pride,  
Cried, Mr. William Barlow.”



I then laid down again in my narrow bed and smoothed down my lonely pillow. It struck me as I was composing myself to slumber for the second time, that I might get into difficulties when the next sentinal came to relieve me, which should have been at the end of four hours.

But I need not have been alarmed, he never came. The only relief which did come was in the way of a long and refreshing sleep which lasted till the sun was high up in the heavens, when I returned to camp and reported to the Captain in command of the Shot-gun Battalion that, thanks to my watchful care, not a solitary Frenchman had entered the town from a northerly direction during the night. The Company were then ordered to breakfast to the nearest restaurant, where we made a hearty meal at the expense of the proprietor who, when he found what appetites we had, expressed a fervent hope that peace would soon be restored.

I found out afterwards, and I may mention here, that Billy Barlow was a well-known character in the township. He was drunk as a rule and sober as an exception. He was however, a general favourite on account of a certain quaint humour which never deserted him. As an instance, if an American or stranger accosted him with the invariable question—What State are you from? Billy would reply naively, "State of Intoxication," which was generally a correct statement. He lived by doing odd jobs in the town and was pretty well known as a character out of which some fun could be got. What his real name was I do not know. He has obtained the soubriquet he bore from a habit he had of humming the words of the old ballad upon every conceivable occasion, and adapting them to each incident in which he was at all concerned or interested.

On one occasion the body of a man was discovered floating in the river, caught by some snag in the centre of the stream. A crowd was soon collected on the bank, and the men were speculating as to the chances of bringing it to shore, there being no boat available, and making inquiries for a good swimmer, when Billy hove in sight.

"Here's the man we want" cried one of them. Now Billy could swim like a duck and, in his character of general factotum, he was frequently pounced upon to do jobs which no one else cared to undertake; he never by any



chance refused, no matter what the job might be, so long as he was paid for it.

"Say Billy Barlow, here's a dollar for you. Do you see that object out yonder, it looks mighty like the body of a man. Can you swim out and bring it in?"

Without another word, Billy with his usual imperturbable good nature, stripped and plunged in, improvising as he did so a verse of his favourite melody—

"What's that in the water, why don't you know?"

It's just a dead body, cried Billie Barlow."

This was the individual who openly defied the discipline of the American Army during my long watch. He was certainly no enemy to the townspeople, who could have better spared a better man.

I will now proceed to give some account of the remarkable strategy which was displayed during the next two days by our officers. But in case I should do them but scant justice, I think I had better reserve my observations for another chapter.

#### No. VI.

Villiam Brown, of Regiment 5, Mackerel Brigade, asked his colonel last week for leave to go to New York on recruiting service, and got it. He came back to-day, and says the colonel to him:—

"Where's your recruits?"

Villiam smiled sweetly, and remarked that he didn't see it.

"Why, you went to New York on recruiting service, didn't you?" exclaimed the colonel.

"Yes," says Villiam, "I went to recruit my health."

The colonel immediately administered the Oath to him. The Oath, my boy, tastes well with lemon in it.

*Kerr Papers.*

THE next day reinforcements came in from all quarters. Every little mining camp furnished its contingent of riflemen, sometimes not more than a dozen or twenty; but scarcely half-an-hour passed without some fresh arrival. Each body of recruits came marching into the township with a flag flying in the midst, bearing the stars and stripes, and a drum beating, or in place of it a tin prospecting dish, and any musical instrument which happened to be handy. And as they neared head-quarters and were recognised, our fellows would fire off a few revolvers and cry out, "Here come the



Stony Gulch boys," or whatever the name of the diggings might be from which they hailed. Then the new comers would be drafted into the different regiments. Most of these were Americans, and but few additions were made to the Shot-gun Battalion.

Of course, there was no pretence to uniform of any kind; every man came in his ordinary mining garb, except that in the belt with which he girded up his loins to the battle he carried his revolver, if he had one, or, if not, his bowie knife.

A more motley-looking set of warriors never mustered. They resembled Falstaff's regiment—they were "exceeding poor and bare," got up for the occasion in every variety of costume.

Meantime, while the attention of our commander-in-chief was principally taken up by the reports of scouts, whom he had sent out to reconnoitre the enemy, that of the captains of the different regiments was mainly directed to the important task of keeping their men together. As there was no immediate prospect of a fight, there prevailed a strong and frequent desire on the part of the new recruits to lounge away the time, and "liquor up" at frequent intervals at the nearest store. To prevent this they marched us up and down, so that we must have walked some miles round and round the camp. When we came to a halt ammunition was served out, until we were so heavy laden, that if the bullets had been made of gold instead of lead our fortunes would have been made on the spot.

Still, there was no blood flowing, but an immense deal of "Our Pride" was displayed on all sides. If I heard the words "Constitution of the United States" repeated once, I heard them repeated at least a thousand times, in inflated tones, in the course of that day. As a Britisher I was made the recipient of a great number of tall yarns, anent the Mexican War, till I began to fear that the poor Frenchmen would be exterminated to a man before the day was over, by such fire-eaters.

"I say, Cap," said a private in a regiment, which had somehow in the discussion of affairs got amalgamated in a friendly way with the Shot-gun Battalion, to his superior officer, "I'll be dog-goned if I'm gwine to fool away my time here much longer. If the Frenchmen don't come up to the scratch mighty quick I shall *vamos the ranche*."



"Thunder," cried the Captain, "they're sure to be somewhere around. Give us a chaw of tobaccoer."

Suddenly there was a commotion in the ranks, and the word was passed that the enemy were mustered in great force, and had taken up their position on the summit of a hill which overlooked the town, about half-a-mile off.

"The Shot-gun Battalion will advance to the front. Shoulder arms! For'ard!" and on we went again.

This time it was a false alarm. In crossing a gully in the direction of the hill referred to, some of our fellows had seen a solitary Frenchman working quietly at his claim, and had taken him for one of the advance guard of the French army. This man, seeing a hostile force approaching, jumped up and began gesticulating wildly and patting his breast, as much as to say fire away, upon which our fellows gave him a cheer.

"Well done, old hoss!" said our captain, but no one thought of firing.

About an hour afterwards some scouts came running in, and reported that the French had actually taken up a position on the hill in question. And sure enough, there they were, apparently about four or five hundred strong, in close and compact order.

So at last the two armies faced each other. We were on the top of one hill, and the foe on the other. What was the next step to be taken? Were we to cross the intervening flat and storm the enemy's stronghold, or invite the enemy to leave their position and meet us halfway?

Every eye was turned to the Commander-in-chief.

That sagacious individual had already decided upon his plan of operations. The American forces, with their allies, were ordered to take up the best positions they could find behind the large boulders of lava, some of them six feet high, which surmounted the hill we were on. Then about two dozen sharpshooters were detached to harrass the enemy on either flank. These men, adopting the style of warfare practised against the Indians, selected each man his line, and were creeping from tree to tree in the direction of the Frenchmen. They were almost within shot, and in a few minutes more the battle would have commenced; when, several suggestions having been made that the Frenchmen



should be allowed to capitulate without bloodshed, if possible, it was resolved to send a flag of truce, and offer them certain conditions.

Accordingly, an interpreter having been found, he was despatched to the enemy's camp, and their commander was informed that if his troops would consent to pile their arms they should be allowed to return to their claims.

These terms were accepted, and thus the war was averted at the eleventh hour.

Then ensued a general firing off of rifles, shot-guns, revolvers, and blunderbuses in the air, making noise enough to awaken a sleeper a mile off. Then everybody shook hands with everybody else, and took a drink on the strength of it, and the wine-shops and saloons did a roaring trade for the rest of that day, and nearly the whole of the night. Meantime, the disputed claim had been thoroughly gutted by scores of rowdies. The opening was in the form of a tunnel, running from the surface into the hill horizontally, and there was about room for about half-a-dozen men to stand in it. During the whole time of the row there were at least a dozen men in it jammed together, pegging away with their knives into the rock, and picking out the nuggets. When a man had got his hands full he would jump out, and another would take his place. One fellow told me that he got 150 dollars worth of gold, and he was not in the hole over five minutes.

That was the richest claim I ever saw, and the only battle I ever engaged in.

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## THE GRIZZLY B'AR.

### No. VII.

THE grizzly bear of California is about as formidable an animal as any hunter could well encounter in the course of a day's hunting. Besides his thick, shaggy hide, which is almost bullet-proof, and the three fingers of fat which underlies it, he has a peculiar conical-shaped head, which it is useless to fire at with the object of dealing a mortal wound. I have been told by hunters that to kill a grizzly you should aim



under the animal's eye, and this requires a practised, as well as a cool and deliberate marksman.

The grizzly is not a very savage beast, and will not as a rule molest a man, if the latter keep at a respectful distance from him. But, if suddenly disturbed in his lair, he is apt to get riled, and then he will pursue the intruder, and a single tap from one of his ponderous paws will lay the strongest man low.

On one occasion I met a large grizzly face to face on the road, as I was travelling on foot by moonlight, on my way to the Mariposa country, where these bears are very numerous. He was standing across the road when I caught the first glimpse of him, and he turned round and looked at me, as much as to say, "What are you doing in my country?" I was armed with a double-barreled gun, which would have been of but little use to me if I had had to defend myself, but fortunately I had a large dog with me—a sort of half-bred staghound, which I had picked up in San Francisco; and Captain took all the trouble off my hands. He did not tackle the grizzly, but stuck so close to him, barking at him and teasing him, that he entirely diverted attention from me, and when the pair disappeared in the bush, Captain still at the bear's heels, but taking good care of himself, I went on my way rejoicing.

On another occasion I was stopping at a roadside inn, in a different part of the country. The inn was simply a wooden framework covered with calico, stretched as taut as could be, one of those hastily-constructed stopping places which were common enough in those days, and could be put up in next to no time.

I was smoking a pipe after supper, and chatting with the landlord, when he suddenly called my attention to a large dark object, about a hundred yards from the door.

"What are you looking at?" said I.

"That's an old she b'ar," he replied. "I thought she'd be round somehow. She allus comes when I've killed a bullock."

"But are you not afraid that she'll push her way in through your calico walls one of these nights?"

"Oh! no, there ain't no fear. She's only come after the offal."



By-and-bye I went to bed in a little room, divided from the others by a calico partition, and soon fell into a deep slumber, which was, however, shortly after disturbed by some unusual sounds—a heavy footfall on the ground within a few feet of my head, and a loud stertorous breathing. It was “the old she b’ar” snuffing round the inn, probably to see if she could find any little scraps as a sort of *bonnebouche* after the offal on which she had supped.

I was considerably relieved when the animal, having made the tour of the building, slowly retired the way she came.

Meantime my friend, the landlord, was snoring away peacefully and unconcernedly in the adjoining apartment, having probably satisfied himself by previous visits, of a similar character, that “there ain’t no fear.”

This reminds me of a very good answer given to a lady passenger on board the vessel I came out in, by the first mate, on the occasion of an unusually stiff breeze, which made the ship roll considerably.

“Oh! Mr. Berry, do you think there is any fear?”

“Yes, marm, there’s plenty of fear—but *no danger.*”

In this case there was palpably some little danger, but no fear whatever.

I could relate a good many anecdotes in proof of the utter fearlessness of the grizzly bear, and his terrible strength, but I will confine myself to one which I heard from the principal actor in the scene.

Be it known that the grizzly cannot climb. If he could mount a tree, like his cousin, the brown bear, it would be dangerous to live in some parts of California. But he will chase an enemy to a tree, and will sit at the foot of it for hours, like a cat catching a mouse. He can also cover the ground at a great rate despite his unwieldy appearance.

Travellers when pursued by a grizzly have to run for it, and look out for a tree which presents facilities for climbing. But they are quite mistaken in thinking that they have thus got rid of their pursuer, for Bruin will frequently remain at his post all through the night.

The man I refer to was a digger, and was tramping it along the road with his swag, consisting chiefly of a pair of blue blankets, on his back, when he came suddenly in sight of



a large bear and, being greatly alarmed, he wheeled round suddenly and took to his heels. His flight probably induced Bruin to follow him, but after a pretty tight race he managed to reach an oak tree with low branches, and to get into a fork about twelve feet from the ground, clear of his pursuer.

And there he sat in a state of considerable alarm astride of an oak branch, while the bear sat on the ground beneath him, looking at him with anything but a friendly eye, and so remained for a couple of hours. The digger never took his eyes off the bear, and the bear looked up at the digger with a fixed gaze, which seemed to say, "I'm quite prepared to wait till you come down."

This state of things lasted until the shades of evening closed over the scene. Soon it got quite dark, and it became clear to the occupant of the tree that he would have to pass the night in its friendly shelter.

He could just distinguish the dark outline of the bear at the foot of the tree, and being assured by this time that the enemy had neither the ability or intention of climbing up after him, his only fear was that drowsiness would overpower him, and that he would fall from his perch.

So he set to work to rig up with his blankets a sort of hammock, by fastening the ends to four different limbs of the tree. The straps which had kept the blankets in the form of a roll, and the cord with which he suspended the pack on his neck and shoulders, helped him to make a strong job of it, and with a portion of the cord he bound himself securely in the hammock, so that if by chance he should fall asleep he would not at any rate fall out of bed.

Then he tried to keep awake, but the more he tried the sleepier he became, until at last he went off like a top, and, being tired with a long day's march, slept through the night without any further alarm.

When he did awake the day was just dawning, the early birds were twittering all around him, and the hum of insect life had just commenced.

What immediately aroused him was a slight shaking of the boughs, to which his hammock was attached. This made him start up. For a moment or two he did not realize his position. Then suddenly came the recollection of his adventure over night, and as the shaking continued he looked



down, expecting to see the bear making an attempt to scale his position.

Instead of this, what do you think he saw?—half a dozen deer nibbling away at the acorns on the lower branches of the tree, all unconscious of his presence, and the bear nowhere.

He was soon on the road again with his pack, having got off with nothing worse than a scare.

I have known several instances of men on foot being chased and treed by bears. Hunters frequently take advantage of this inability to climb to shoot a grizzly from the safe vantage of a large tree. If there are no convenient branches they will rig up a slab against the trunk, at the requisite height, and take their places on it, armed with their deadly long rifles. Previous to this they take a piece of freshly-killed venison, and, having trailed it along the ground for a considerable distance in the most likely direction, they deposit it in a clear spot, within shot of their ambuscade. Then the bear, prowling about at nightfall in search of food, comes across the trail, and follows it up to the bait, to fall an easy victim to the hunters, who are perhaps not thirty paces off, and pretty sure of their aim at that distance.

I tried my hand once at this little game, and sat for three long hours one clear, frosty night, on an elevated perch, in sight of a very tempting bait, within easy shot; but although my companion informed me several times in a stage whisper that the "b'ar" would be round soon after the moon was up, Bruin did'nt make his appearance, and the performance was like the play of Hamlet, with the part of Hamlet left out.

The "b'ar" apparently did'nt see it, neither did I.

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## No. VIII.

### DAN.

WHEN I made his acquaintance I was one of a party of miners working on the Moquelumne River. This stream, which winds its devious course through the hills, had deposited a good deal of fine gold in the banks at their different angles, and at each point there was a small collection of gold-seekers. At our camp, we numbered about two hundred, the largest



portion being Americans, with a due admixture of Mexicans, French, Germans, English, Irish, and Scotch—many of them hailing last from Australia. Only the most primitive mining appliances were then in use. Each man marked off his 40 feet of ground, from the edge of the river to high water mark; and, with a yoke and pair of buckets, trudged backwards and forwards from his claim to his cradle, washing from 100 to 150 buckets a day, and getting from ten to fifteen dollars for his day's labour. It was curious to note how evenly the precious metal was distributed. What you got to-day you would get to-morrow, within a pennyweight or so, to the same number of buckets of wash-dirt. Some of the claims at the neck of the point, however, gave a far higher average, and Dan's was one of the best of them. He was a grizzly-looking, weather-beaten old fellow, apparently about 50 years old, with a face the colour of brick-dust, and a morose, surly look about him, which did not encourage advances. He seemed to have positively no acquaintances; the gruffest monosyllable was all you could get out of him. Even the enquiring Yankee, who has no rival in the art of pumping, failed to find out what Dan was doing: whether he was making a pile, or merely earning his rations. Everyone in turn was baffled by the man's impenetrable reserve. He was called Dan, and he seemed to be an Englishman, but, beyond that, we knew nothing. I worked near him for a couple of months, passing and re-passing him twenty times a day, but could never succeed in getting into conversation with him, which was the more singular as I found men of his class generally disposed to be communicative and social, and by no mean reticent as to their antecedents, which of course were just what they chose to assert, without any fear of contradiction.

Dan was the solitary exception. While the rest of us lived in hastily constructed boarding houses, ten or twelve in each house, sleeping in bunks one over the other as on board ship, and making ourselves merry after our day's work with a glass of grog and a game of cribbage or euchre, the misanthropical Dan lived by himself in a small calico tent, 100 yards from his nearest neighbour; and there he might be seen sitting before the fire in front of the tent smoking his pipe, *solus cum solo*. Hour after hour would pass, and there he would sit communing with his own thoughts, or as one of the



diggers observed, "eating his heart out," as effectually shut out from all human intercourse, as if he had been camped in the centre of an Australian forest.

The man became a perfect mystery to me. I used to wonder what he was thinking about at such times, and to weave all sorts of romances to account for his moody and morose habits. Had some terrible affliction befallen him—was he suffering from some "rooted sorrow" which neither time nor change of scene could "pluck from the memory"? Had he been the victim of some foul wrong in a far off land in years gone by, and was he during all these lonely vigils nursing his grievance and planning a scheme of deep vengeance? Did the shadow of some great crime hang like a pall over him and envelop him in continual gloom? or had he some great purpose to achieve, some gigantic fraud to expose, for which money was wanting? was he brooding over his plan of retribution while he hoarded up his gold? He was doing well—how well I did not know at the time, but I found out afterwards that he had a bag containing 5 lbs. of fine gold buried in the ground immediately under the fire at which he cooked his meals.

However, at last, whether it was on account of my youth (I was then about two and twenty), or that he had taken a liking to me for some other reason, or because

His heart was hot and restless,  
And his mind was full of care;  
And the burden laid upon him  
Was more than he could bear.

I cannot say, but he relaxed his taciturnity in my favor, and we got to be on more or less chatty terms. The ice once broken, he talked freely enough—though to me only, and only when we were by ourselves; and finding me an attentive listener, he used to amuse himself—if such a term could be applied to a man who seemed to be beyond the power of amusement—by giving me some of his Australian experiences. He would tell me tales which almost made my hair stand on end—of bushrangers and cattle-stealers, of encounters with the blacks, and robbery and murder—till it seemed as if he were reading an edition of the "Newgate Calendar" adapted to the Colonies. I thought at first he made up these yarns like the chapter of a serial



‘*To be continued,*’ seeing the effect they had upon me ; but as the theme was invariably the same—bloodshed in some form or other—and the scenes he described were always those which he had himself witnessed, or in which he had taken part, I began to think there was a method in his story-telling, especially as he would frequently wind up one of his narratives by stating a hypothetical case in which a man had been killed under circumstances of peculiar provocation, and then asking me if I thought the deed was justifiable.

One day, being in an unusually communicative mood, he related the following episode in his life :—

He had been a shepherd on an out-station in New South Wales, where the blacks were very troublesome. This station had been attacked and the proprietor speared, so that he died next day. The event had created great excitement, and every effort had been made to secure the murderer, but all to no purpose. The victim of this outrage had been Dan’s best friend, and he mourned his loss. He said little—Dan was never given to exuberant speech—but the death of his benefactor preyed upon him, and awoke in his breast a deep thirst for revenge. The station passed into other hands, and most of the men left, but Dan stayed on. Patiently and perseveringly he gathered, bit by bit, information which pointed to the identity of the murderer, and at last he succeeded, by means of a blackfellow belonging to a friendly tribe, in finding out all he wanted to learn. The whole plot was laid bare—the motive which prompted the attack, how it was planned and carried out, and *who struck the fatal blow*.

Having ascertained this and knowing the murderer—a black called Jimmy—by sight, he waited.

Several months passed ; no strange blacks came near the station ; Dan was beginning to despair, when one fine morning a party of blacks came up, among whom was Jimmy, smiling and shewing his white teeth, and without the least suspicion that “he was wanted,” as the police call it.

This was the opportunity for which Dan had been waiting. He expected that as soon as the affair was blown over, the black would return to his usual haunts, and so it proved. Assuming a friendly air Dan accosted his enemy, and after a few remarks, proposed an excursion into the bush to cut some sheets of bark. Jimmy suspecting nothing, accompanied him,



Dan taking his gun. Then having got his victim into a lonely part of the bush, out of sight and hearing of the station, he dropped a couple of paces astern, and, without a word of warning, shot the blackfellow through the head, after which he put the body into the hollow of a fallen gum-tree, and heaping over it all the dead wood he could collect, made an enormous funeral pile, to which he set fire, and so removed all traces of the deed.

Was this the crime that had preyed upon Dan's mind ever since he had been on the diggings till he dared not open his mouth lest his tongue should betray his secret? Did he pass the long hours in that lonely calico tent on the Moquelumne River in bringing the scene before him again with all its ghastly details? Was he, when seated by his solitary camp fire, apart from his fellow-workers, moody and abstracted, silently arguing the case with his conscience—whether he had been justified in his determination to avenge his master's death—in repaying treachery with treachery?

Such was my theory, but very likely I was mistaken, and the mere shooting of a blackfellow may have seemed to him, under the circumstances, a not only justifiable, but a highly laudable act. For aught I knew he might have murdered his mother, strangled his sister, or garotted his grandmother, for as De Quincey observes:—"If once a man indulges himself in murder very soon he comes to think little of robbing, and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination. Many a man has dated his ruin from some murder or other that perhaps he thought little of at the time."

That was one of the many singular acquaintances I made in the course of my adventures as a gold digger.







## THE BEST DOG IN THE COLONY.

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WHEN I first made Boxer's acquaintance, I was living with my family in a retired street in Brisbane, to which we had removed as a temporary change from the monotonous quiet of our country residence, which was five miles out of town, and at that time, almost in the bush. The house we had taken suited us all to pieces in certain respects. There was plenty of room in it, and we were within easy reach of a number of friends, whose visits had hitherto been "like angels' visits, few and far between." Loneliness was certainly not the distinguishing feature of our new residence; but it had its drawbacks. Its attractions were too universal. I have known bush horses who refused to pass a public-house without calling. Our house appeared to possess the same fascination to passers-by. They all called upon some pretext or other, and the front door knocker was seldom idle. The desire to make our acquaintance was flattering, but unpleasant, especially during the first week, when there was a regular stampede in the direction of the house. Now it would be a friend or relation; then a neighbour making a first call; then a stranger asking whether some other stranger lived there; then a man with a suspicious-looking pedlar's box; then a tradesman soliciting custom; then a beggar asking for alms; and so on. The cry was, "Still they come!" and we began to feel that the house did not belong to us; or, if so, that we only held it as "tenants in common" with every idle person who chose to make temporary use of our verandah. Altogether, there was a sense of insecurity about the new dwelling which made us half regret the change, and, as these annoyances



occurred continually during my absence, when my wife was alone, except for the presence of a servant-girl, I suggested, in order to quiet her apprehensions, that we should look out for a watch-dog.

"These tramps," said I, encouragingly, "will think twice before they come into the gate, if there is a large dog about the place."

The question having been put and carried, *nem. diss.*, I inserted an advertisement in the daily paper:—

**W**ANTED, A WATCH-DOG. Apply, with the Dog, to H. WALKER, 99 Blank-street, Brisbane.

which appeared in due course. We had not long to wait. They began to come in at about 8 o'clock; each man had a dog for sale, and each dog was the "best dog in the colony." Such a collection of ill-favoured mongrels was surely never before seen at any gentleman's door. I am rather fond of dogs; but a dog, to find any favour in my sight, must have sufficient breeding in him, at least, to define the class to which he aspires to belong. If he calls himself a greyhound, for instance, he must not present himself before me with the head of a bulldog and the tail of a turnspit; nor could I bring myself to admire a terrier with a nose like a pointer. Give me a well-bred animal, of whatever breed he may be. *Par sang ne peut mentir.* The specimens of canine excellence, in whose favour their owners were now so voluble, could not be said to be of any particular breed. They might have been called, with equal justice, Newfoundlands, kangaroo dogs, cattle dogs, or poodles, since they possessed some of the characteristics of each species. They were ugly enough, in all conscience; but they had no other recommendation that I could discover, and I was beginning to despair of making a satisfactory purchase, when Boxer appeared upon the scene, last but not least of the watch-dogs invited by my advertisement—a low, but powerful mastiff, wearing a strong collar and chain, which his owner modestly offered to me along with Boxer for the small sum of ten shillings. Now the price of the other "best dogs in the colony" had averaged from thirty shillings to five pounds, *minus* collar and chain. Why, then, was Boxer ticketed at a figure so manifestly below his real value, he being by far the handsomest and best bred dog in the crowd? I looked in his face for a solution of the difficulty.



and he returned my earnest gaze with a look so "child-like and bland," that all suspicions of vice or treachery were at once disarmed, and I became his owner. I made one remark to the vendor, to the effect that the dog did not appear very fierce, at all events. "Just you wait a bit," said he. I had to use the same words on a subsequent occasion, when Boxer and I parted company. But I anticipate. Turning round, I found the man had disappeared. Five minutes afterwards Boxer was chained to a kennel in the back yard, where he made himself thoroughly at home, and discussed with great enjoyment a plate of broken victuals which I procured for him. My wife and I then had another good look at him, and congratulated ourselves on having secured such a treasure, and on such remarkably easy terms. "I shan't feel so nervous now," she said. "Depend upon it," said I, for want of something better to say, "Boxer is all there." When you are in doubt about anything, it is always as well to express yourself in guarded terms.

I was not very far wrong; for, about an hour after I had made this pertinent remark, a scream from the back yard, and a low growl (Boxer never barked), announced that something was up. The next moment a woman, who had been washing clothes in the vicinity of the kennel, rushed in a frantic state towards the front gate, while Boxer held a good mouthful of red petticoat between his teeth.

Looking upon this little occurrence simply as a somewhat over-zealous display of devotion to the interests of the family, on the part of a new *employé* immediately upon taking office, and as a signal confirmation of the opinion I had just expressed, I did not, as no harm was done, take any serious notice of it; but when, the very same afternoon, one of my boys was bitten on the knee, and prevented from going to school, the matter became serious, and I had to interfere. The result was—a sound thrashing administered with a hunting-whip, which Boxer took very submissively.

For the next fortnight no casualties occurred, and Boxer was a success—in so far that, instead of being inundated with callers, we rarely received a visit from any person who was not absolutely obliged to call. This was partly due to a placard, "Beware of the Dog!" which I considered it expedient to put up in a conspicuous place; and partly to the



character of our new guardian, as described by the postman, whose scarlet coat—contrasting vividly with a pallid face—was objected to by Boxer, and considerably defaced; and the garrulity of an old woman, whose temerity in walking past the kennel, without saying “By your leave,” very nearly cost her her life. In short, in the brief space of three weeks, Boxer had become the terror of the neighbourhood. Yet, by this time, we had become very fond of him. From the moment he had clearly understood who were the regular inmates of the house which was placed in his charge, to them he gave the most honest and loyal service. No provocation on our part ever brought so much as a frown into his countenance. He would let the children ride on him, pull his ears, and bully him in every conceivable way without showing his teeth, or getting in the smallest degree out of temper; and would even extend his courtesy to some of our most intimate friends. But, let a stranger approach him, or invade any portion of the territory of which he was constituted guardian, and, lo! his whole nature appeared to be changed—he was like a tiger thirsting for blood. His principle of conduct was clearly laid down, and he acted up to it fully—unswerving fidelity and submission to his friends, uncompromising hostility to his enemies, among whom he included all strangers. Boxer was no respecter of persons; he would pin any person—gentle or simple, well-dressed or in rags—who had not been specially introduced to him as a friend of the family.

This description will serve to show that he was not exactly the sort of a dog to let loose in a thickly-populated street; but on one occasion my wife persuaded me to let “poor Boxer” off the chain, just to stretch his legs with a scamper round the yard; and I shall never forget the feeling of relief which I experienced when he was again secured. I took care, first of all, to shut both gates, in case of accidents; but Boxer, finding himself at liberty after such a long confinement, was not to be restricted by the narrow limits of a town allotment, and, after careering wildly round the premises several times at top speed, made a rush at the front gate, and succeeded in scrambling over it by sheer impetuosity. Then he tore up and down the road like “a raging lion, seeking whom he might devour.”



Fortunately, there was no enemy in sight; but a little, miserable-looking, yellow, curly-haired mongrel, belonging to some one over the way, ran out and commenced yelping. The next moment he was between Boxer's jaws, undergoing rather severe exercise; but, happily for him, he managed by a lucky movement to crawl through a small hole in the paling fence, into which his assailant was unable to follow, and escaped with his life. Boxer then very soon found himself chained up in his old place, with a very slim prospect of another outing.

By this time we had all, from one cause or other, got pretty well tired of town life, and were singing "Home Sweet Home" from morning till night. A resolution to pack up and be off was carried by acclamation. Our own house was empty and waiting for us, and we longed to be back again, to have the swing of the garden and paddock, and to enjoy the fresh country air perfumed with nature's *extrait de mille fleurs* instead of being contaminated by the smoke and unwholesome vapours of town dwellings. So we cleared out one fine morning, and were soon *en route*, bag and baggage. I drove my wife and children over, and returned on horseback to send the last load of furniture, and to effect the removal of Boxer, who I felt was too great a responsibility to be entrusted to anyone else. Now came the difficulty. I dared not let him loose in the hope that he would follow me peaceably, like any other dog, and I had no idea of walking five miles with one end of a dog-chain in my hand, and a powerful brute tugging at the other end. So I fastened him to the axle tree of the dray, and cautioned the driver not to approach too near the wheels in case of accidents. I was to follow, so as to overtake the dray just before it reached its destination. All went well for the first three miles, when going down a hill the load shifted, and the driver forgetting my caution, placed himself within reach of Boxer, who at once pinned him by that portion of his frame which was most prominent, as he was endeavouring to adjust the load. That was the position of things when I rode up and released the unfortunate victim. Boxer, on my approach, was profuse in his endearments, and seemed to think he had cleverly embraced another opportunity of showing his devotion to the family.



After we had become comfortably settled at home, and were enjoying to the full the unrestricted space and the liberty which country life affords, it did seem hard that poor Boxer should be kept a close prisoner day after day, without any prospect of exercise beyond what could be afforded by three feet of chain; yet there seemed no help for it. He had behaved himself pretty well, on the whole, during the first week after our return; and if some member of my family had not rashly loosed him one Sunday afternoon, when a sow belonging to one of our neighbours happened to stray into the paddock, I should not have had to pay twenty-five shillings, the value of that animal which Boxer, in spite of the weightiest remonstrances administered with a thick stick, killed in the space of ten minutes. At last a bright idea struck me. I would have him muzzled. Then he would at least be able to take a constitutional once or twice a day, without endangering life to man or beast, and the difficulty would be got over. An act was passed some years ago, in America, which provided that every dog should wear a muzzle; but as it contained no clause defining the manner in which the muzzle should be worn, it became a dead letter. Boxer's muzzle was, however, so adjusted that it was impossible for him to open his mouth even to eat, and the pleasure we felt in witnessing the gallops he took round the paddock, at the rate of a mile in two minutes, the moment he was let loose with this preventive instrument securely attached, was greatly enlivened by the certainty that no fatal consequences were likely to accrue. He was then tied up and unmuzzled, and at night he was again muzzled and let loose. At about seven o'clock the next morning I was awoken by a row in the back yard, and, running out hastily, I found Bridget (our servant), armed with a broom, rushing to the rescue of the milk-boy, who was lying prone on his back, a few yards from the fence, with Boxer standing over him, tremendous in his wrath, though powerless to bite. The muzzle was only a partial success. Space would fail me were I to recount the number of enemies Boxer succeeded in making among the residents in that quiet neighbourhood. There was no resisting his advances; no conciliatory words had the least effect upon him. The moment a stranger came in sight he would go straight at him, and pin him, or, if muzzled, would knock



him over and frighten him out of his seven senses. I felt that Boxer was becoming too great a responsibility, and resolved to get rid of him. An opportunity occurred quite unexpectedly. I started very early one day to pay a visit to a friend who had a farm on the sea-coast, about twenty miles distant from my house; and as my way lay through the bush, and the country abounded with game, I took Boxer along with the kangaroo dogs, in the hope of affording him an opportunity of giving full play to his savage instincts in a battle with an old man kangaroo. I did not succeed in doing this; for although we started more than one lot, and killed, Boxer was too slow and unwieldy to be in at the death. By the time we reached my friend's house he was, however, pretty well spent, and in a very docile frame of mind. I took the precaution, nevertheless, to tie him up in a shady place, where I could keep my eye upon him. After dinner, and when we had discussed several other matters, Boxer became the subject of conversation, and was greatly admired. A good watch-dog at a lonely station in the bush, where the blacks are always more or less troublesome, is thought a good deal of, and the little episodes in his career which I related for the amusement of my host and his wife, so far from exciting any feelings of aversion, made them regard him with unusual favour. In short, I could see that they looked upon him with a longing eye, and the result was that I exchanged Boxer for a pair of liver-coloured setter pups, which they gladly offered me for him. Before I left I took great pains to introduce him to each member of the family, which included two little girls of tender age, and to make him thoroughly understand that his allegiance was thenceforth transferred to them. Was it because Boxer was nearly dead-beat with an unexpected gallop of twenty miles, for which he was in anything but good training, or was it that mild and affectionate expression, which was natural to him when in the presence of friends, which prompted the remark from my friend S —, "He does not look very fierce," and provoked my rejoinder, "Just you wait a bit." There was evidently some misunderstanding about the instructions I gave at parting. S — was positive that I told him not to keep Boxer on the chain, while I had a most distinct recollection of urging very strongly the great danger of letting him loose. Be that as it



may, he was not tied up from the hour I left, and the day after he pinned by the calf of the leg a man who called to see about some fencing. The victim being a good-natured fellow, pocketed the affront, and went away limping; but that was not the case with a cross-grained German, who, a week later, was bitten in the foot so badly by Boxer, that they had to keep him for a fortnight before he was able to leave the place. I was mistaken in thinking I had got rid of Boxer so easily, for one evening, on my return from town, I found him chained up to his kennel delighted to see his old friends again, and overwhelming us all with his caresses. It was impossible to be angry with him, and as for shooting him, I could not bring myself to entertain the idea. Yet to keep him was to incur the ill-will of my neighbours, who were not likely, as long as Boxer was to the fore, to see any force in the motto, "love me, love my dog." Again an opportunity occurred to transfer the risk, and I was not slow to take advantage of it. It was by an advertisement that I became the possessor of Boxer, and it was an advertisement which parted us: "Wanted a savage watch-dog. Apply to the Hon. ——— B., &c., &c." I waited immediately upon the advertiser, and told him I had the best dog in the Colony to dispose of. I offered to produce any number of references—halt and maimed—as to the character for ferocity and ability to bite, and upon the strength of my representations Mr. B. purchased him for £1, and I delivered him to his new owner the same afternoon, together with the strong chain and collar which had accompanied him from the first. It was very singular that the moment Mr. B. cast his eyes upon him he made the same remark which Boxer's bland and gentle expression of countenance had evoked from each purchaser.

"He does not seem very fierce," said he.

"Just you wait a bit," said I.

Now, Mr. B. was a Member of Parliament and a rich man, and as he lived in a secluded and aristocratic quarter which offered peculiar attractions to burglars, he wanted a savage dog—one that could bite as well as bark. Boxer seemed to have fallen on his feet at last. About a week after this last transfer, I met Mr. B. and asked him how he liked his new purchase, and whether he was still of opinion that Boxer was not fierce enough.



"Oh! he'll do very well," said he.

It appeared that during this short interval Boxer had severely bitten a greengrocer, whom he probably mistook for a burglar, and had torn the coat off one of B.'s servants who had not been properly introduced to him; and for these and other similar exploits he was in great favour.

From time to time I continued to receive encouraging accounts of Boxer's prowess, and learned that B. was very proud of him, and looked upon him, without any qualification, as the "best dog in the colony."

During the two following months I was absent from Brisbane, and heard no more of him. But shortly after my return, happening to meet Mr. B.'s groom, I took the opportunity of asking after Boxer.

"Oh! haven't you heard, sir? Mr. B. had him shot."

"Shot! Poor Boxer. How was it?" said I. "What did he do? Did he bite a Member of Parliament, or pin the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, or fly at the Governor!"

"No, sir; *he pinned Mr. B. himself.*"

Having had such peculiar opportunities of testing poor Boxer's staunch loyalty to his friends, and his affectionate and amiable character in private life, I was completely taken aback at this open imputation of treachery, which I resented as being quite at variance with my experience; and in questioning my informant I elicited the following particulars of poor Boxer's untimely fate:—

He had given great satisfaction from the day he took up his quarters in Mr. B.'s establishment. He had pinned every man, woman, or child, who had come within reach of his chain, except those whom he had been taught to look upon as friends of the family.

He had performed his duty, according to his lights, fearlessly, and in a thoroughly independent spirit, paying no court to rank or position. No bribes had seduced him, no threats had coerced him. A child who had gained his confidence, could have led him by a silken thread—the stranger who tried either coaxing or intimidation quailed at his furious glance. The Hon. B. was not unappreciative of these good qualities. He felt that, under Boxer's vigilant care, his *Lares* and *Penates* were safe from the midnight spoiler, and he placed full trust in him; he admired him;



may, he swore by him; and on one occasion, when he entertained at dinner a select party of friends, he boasted of his achievements, and repeated his conviction that Boxer was, beyond doubt, the "best dog in the colony." So glowing were his encomiums that his friends were anxious to inspect such a prodigy, and, leaving their wine, the party sallied forth across the lawn, to the quarters assigned to the hero of this story. Alas, poor Boxer! His owner, whose property he would have died to defend, and who was now approaching him with the most friendly intentions, was a lawyer; and, though actuated by the most generous impulses, had never thought it worth while to make the dog's personal acquaintance. One kindly word from him, at the outset, would have prevented the double catastrophe! He had seen and admired Boxer at a safe distance, but he had adhered to the legal maxim—

Qui facit per alium facit per se,

and all offices of kindness, in the way of feeding, caressing and familiar intercourse, had been left to the groom. Was it then to be wondered at that Boxer, at 9 in the evening—at an hour when it behoves a good watch-dog to be on the alert—seeing a party dressed in black (how was he to distinguish a Member of Parliament in evening costume?) approach him, and put forth a hand to pat him, should there and then, not with *malice prepense*, but incontinently and without hesitation, and all unconscious of his error, make one bound and seize the retreating figure *a tergo*. The next morning he was ordered out for instant execution. I draw a veil over the closing scene.

Alas, poor Boxer!!!







## ADVENTURES WITH THE BLACKS.

### CHAPTER I.

SOME years ago, long before the gold discovery, when I was a lad of 18, I was living at an out-station on the Murray River, then almost a *terra incognita*, ostensibly learning the mysteries of sheep-farming, but devoting, I fear, the greater portion of my time to the enjoyment of the best hunting and shooting that ever fell to my lot. The plains which flanked the river on either side abounded in game. Kangaroo and emu were very abundant; wild turkeys and a species of green goose of excellent flavour were to be had at any time with a little careful stalking, and the variety of wildfowl, including black swans, pelicans, spoonbills, ibis, and every description of duck, from the coarse-flavoured Muscovy to the tender and succulent teal, were so numerous on the river and the lagoons on either side that we got tired of them. We were literally troubled by an *embarras de richesses* with respect to game, and I enjoyed myself hugely in this respect.

But there was one great drawback, and that was the hostility and treachery of the aboriginals, who were continually committing some depredation or other. All the stations in that part of the country, ours included, were sheep-stations, and the blacks, having acquired the taste of mutton and damper, found the various depôts where these luxuries were to be had such temptations that they were eternally plotting a raid upon some defenceless station, and by dint of patient and persevering watching they very often succeeded in taking the solitary man in charge unawares, and making a clean sweep of the property.

Usually, when a sheep-owner took up a tract of country, he put a couple of flocks—say 700 or 800 each—on it, so that



the whole defensive force of his station would consist of two shepherds—one for each flock—and a hutkeeper, whose duty it was to clean out the yards and to cook for the trio. As the sheep would go out to pasture at daybreak and not return until sundown, this man would be alone the whole day, and then, when the shepherds were out of sight, the blacks, intent on robbery, not by violence, but by stratagem, would hover about the place seeking for an opportunity of pouncing upon the unfortunate hutkeeper in an unguarded moment when he had gone out without his regular weapon of defence—his double-barrelled gun.

Every man living on the Murray River at that time carried at all hours a double-barrelled gun, and three dozen rounds of cartridges in a pouch strapped round his waist; and so numerous were the attacks on stations by the blacks at the time I write of, that it was an understood signal at every station that two shots fired in quick succession meant an attack, and served as an appeal for succour. The whole available force on a station, whether it comprised three men or half-a-dozen, would at once rush in the direction of the firing to repel the attack.

The position of hutkeeper, it will be seen from this, was not an enviable one. New-comers soon got funky and retired, and the hutkeeper's position was generally filled by cool old hands who had very little regard either for their own lives or for those of the darkies who molested them.

Nevertheless, the cunning of the savages triumphed in many cases over the vigilance of these men, and several tragic dramas were played out in the wilds of the Murray, even during the short time I was there.

It was probably because I was an addition to the usual number of white men at a sheep-station, and, being a sportsman, always carried a gun, besides being followed by four or five large kangaroo dogs, that our station so long escaped spoliage; but our turn was to come, as will yet be seen.

Meanwhile, huts were robbed almost every week to the right and left of us, the stations generally being five or six miles distant from each other.

Our nearest neighbours were taken in very craftily. The hut keeper in charge, although always on the *qui vive* when any male blacks came to the hut, relaxed his vigilance when



his visitors were only black gins, and foolishly used to employ them in bringing him firewood and water, and in other similar menial offices.

One day he had commissioned two of these sable beauties to get him a couple of bundles of kindling—his hut was on the bank of the river, and the nearest belt of timber was about half a mile off. He had just been cleaning out the sheep-pens, and his double-barrel, loaded and capped, was leaning against the hurdles. When the two gins returned, each with a bundle of wood on her head, they asked him where they should put them down, and managed to engage his attention so that when they deposited their loads they were between the hutkeeper and that dreaded weapon, his gun. The next moment he found himself in the close embrace of the two women, and in vain did he try to, "hold his own"—"no ladies arms were round him thrown." His own were pinned to his side by the close hug of the two gins, who thereupon imitating the cry of some native bird, which was a preconcerted signal with a party of piccaninnies (as the young men are called up to a certain age), soon brought an overpowering force to assist in the capture.

The poor hutkeeper was in a very few minutes waddied to death by these savages and, as a matter of course, the hut was immediately rifled of its contents. They carried off all the flour, sugar and blankets—everything of value, including the gun, which they tried to split in two so as to make two single barrels of it, and had left with their plunder before the shepherds returned to find the dead body of their cook the sole occupant of the hut.

There was a police-station, with an inspector and three mounted troopers, located in a central position a few miles off, but by the time they were informed of the outrage the depredators had crossed the river, and were cooking dampers and making themselves otherwise comfortable with the plunder on the opposite bank, and pursuit was hopeless.

This happened about four miles from us.

How many times the same mob of blacks reconnoitred our camp I can hardly tell. Sometimes three or four of them would saunter up to me negligently, and one of them would approach me with his waddie held behind his neck with both hands in a careless fashion, apparently in an indolent mood, all



the while discoursing in the most amiable way about kangaroo hunting or duck shooting in order to engross my attention and to get within arm's length of me, and then let go one hand and give me a fell blow with his waddie, while I would converse with him with my gun pointed towards him and my finger on the trigger. This was only when the dogs were not close to me, which they generally were.

For cunning, masked by an apparent simplicity and *bonhomie*, I will back the Murray River blacks against the most treacherous savages under the sun. But they very rarely openly attack even a single individual armed with a double-barrelled gun; and two men similarly accoutred, and cool and determined, might have gone through any number of them unmolested, so great was their dread of the white man's fire weapon.

The band of marauders of whom we were principally afraid was headed by a blackfellow who called himself Peter. This man had been for a number of years in the service of a squatter, and had to a certain extent overcome the feeling of awe which the natives experience at the superior skill and knowledge of the whitefellow; but the blacks who belonged to the tribe living immediately around us were very friendly, and I may thank one of those blacks—who used to accompany me in my hunting excursions, and whom I christened "Kangaroo Jack"—for my life on more than one occasion.

About this time the gentleman at whose station I was staying, finding the run which he had at first taken up too small for his increasing flocks, determined to form a station on the opposite side of the river, which at that time was entirely in the occupation of the aboriginals. We were the first to cross and settle on the opposite side. To do this with some little regard for our own safety, we joined with a neighbouring sheep-farmer in the enterprise. We built our huts within a hundred yards of each other, one taking the country to the right and the other to the left. There were thus always two men well armed to assist each other at the huts, the shepherds being in less danger from the fact that no black could take them unawares.

Now this new occupation involved a good deal more danger than the first, inasmuch as we—I use the first person plural, as I accompanied the party across the river—had not



only to guard ourselves against the treachery of the tribe I have referred to, but against the open hostility of some blacks on the far side of the river, called the Tatiara blacks, who lived inland. The river blacks were so afraid of these fierce warriors, that whenever a raid from them took place, our fellows, abandoning their *Lares* and *Penates*, at once took to the water and got out of danger—the Tatiara blacks being unable to swim—and returned when the danger was over to find their homes laid waste and all their spears and nets carried off.

Fortunately we managed to get on excellent terms with the tribe who lived in the vicinity of the spot where we pitched our camp, and throughout the whole term of my residence there I cannot recall a single act of treachery on their part. They used to bring us splendid Murray cod and barter them for flour and tobacco in the most friendly way; and I used to amuse myself and ingratiate myself with them by shooting carrion crows and hawks by the dozen for them, and they ate them with the greatest relish. But these fellows, in whom the absence of vice was probably due to the abundance of food which the river afforded more than to any inherent love of virtue, were continually warning us against the Tatiara blacks. Their fears magnified the prowess of these periodical invaders of their territory, and they never lost an opportunity of enjoining caution on our part against a sudden attack.

Once a small party of the dreaded tribe—some half-a-dozen blackfellows—paid us a visit, and the alarm displayed by our fellows was perfectly ludicrous. They declared that the visit was intended to ascertain our strength, and that the enemy would be upon us very soon. We ridiculed these warnings, but we should have done better to heed them, as the sequel will show. But I must reserve that for another chapter.

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## CHAPTER II.

THE only communication between our new location and the outer world was through the police station before mentioned, about four miles from us on the opposite side of the river, which at that point, where there was a ferry boat, was about 300 hundred yards wide. In front of our huts it was more



than three times that width. The force at the police station consisted of an inspector and three mounted troopers. Once during each week they paid us a visit, just to see that we were alive and well. They seldom came oftener, on account of the trouble of getting their horses ferried across to and fro. We were thus in a most isolated position, and had to depend upon our resources and to exercise all our vigilance to keep the footing we had made in the black man's territory. Once every three months, or thereabouts, a dray came up from the head station with rations and stores; and its arrival was to us as important an event and looked forward to with as much anxiety as that of a mail steamer is in the metropolis of a small colony.

The non-arrival of the usual quarterly supply at the expected time on one occasion nearly cost one of our shepherds his life. The dray was about three weeks overdue, and we were getting short of flour and other necessaries. At last we got so short that we had to eat our mutton not only without bread but without salt, though we found afterwards that a plentiful supply of the latter commodity was easily obtainable by a simple process of evaporation from the salt water lagoons on the plains near the river. So we decided to send one of the men across the river to meet, and, if possible, hurry on the dray.

Now, by this time, we had got on such friendly terms with the tribe of blacks living round about us, that I used frequently to get one of them to paddle me about the river in his canoe to the different islands with which it is studded, for purposes of duck-shooting and fishing, and many a day's good sport did I have in that way, blazing away into flocks of water-fowl, which had probably never before heard the sound of a gun. It may not be out of place to give a short description of the Murray River Blackfellow's canoe. It is made of a single sheet of gum bark. A large tree is selected, generally one which slopes a good deal, and which presents a smooth surface with very few knots, sufficiently large to cut out the canoe in one sheet. The shape having been marked out, the outer edge is cut through with a tomahawk, and by inserting thin pointed pieces of wood between the bark and the trunk, the sap being well up, the bark comes off in one piece. The blackfellows then place it carefully in some shady



place, so that the sun may not crack it, and as it curls up they place short sticks across it till it takes the required shape. Any holes or cracks in the bark are caulked with clay, and the boat is complete, and ready for launching. In the bow there is generally a large patch of clay, which serves as a fireplace. A blackfellow rarely travels without a fire stick, at least he did not before lucifer matches were invented; the process of making a fire by drilling one piece of grasstree through another not being such a very easy one, even under favourable circumstances, and a very hard job indeed in wet weather, when the materials are in the least degree damp. A supply of wax matches to a blackfellow must be to him the most wonderful invention, and the greatest blessing. However, to return to my story.

The man we despatched to look after the dray was a big, strapping, good-natured fellow, Gilbert by name, or Gibby, as he was generally called, a Highlander. He could speak English well, but whenever he got excited he would burst out into Gaelic, which I should say from the specimens he used to give us at odd times, must be one of the finest languages to swear in possible. Our other shepherd was also a Highlander, and as a good deal of their conversation was carried on in their mother tongue, I was considerably more impressed by it than edified.

Gilbert, instead of following the river down and crossing at the ferry, determined to take a short cut, and very foolishly accosted the first blackfellow he met, who turned out to be a stranger, and by signs indicated his desire to be taken across. Accordingly he got into a canoe, rather a large one of the sort I have described, in the bow of which was seated a lad of about ten or twelve years of age, and was followed by the blackfellow, who, standing up in the centre of the boat, and taking a vigorous sweep with his paddle, first on one side and then on the other, soon put about fifty yards between himself and passenger and the shore. Then he paused and asked Gibby what he was going to give him. Upon this Gilbert produced some bread and meat which he had taken for his journey, and offered the blackfellow a portion of his fare. But this did not satisfy the blackfellow, who presently, touching the plaid worn by the Highlander, made him clearly to understand that he wanted that too. Upon this demand



being refused, he stooped down and began coolly to bale water into the canoe with the palm of his hand, with what object there could be no manner of doubt. Two minutes more and the frail vessel would have sunk, and as the river blackfellows are just as much at their ease in the water as on land, the only sufferer would have been poor Gibby, who with his plaid and his heavy boots would have gone to the bottom like a stone, as he could not swim a stroke.

In any case he was in danger, and entirely at the mercy of the black, the canoe, as will be understood by the description I have given of it, being of slight texture, and so narrow that it was as much as Gilbert could do standing up with one foot on either side to keep his balance. The situation was critical, but Gibby was equal to the occasion.

Seeing the blackfellow's evident intention to drown him first and rob him afterwards, he did, perhaps, the only thing, which could have saved his life. Suddenly, and without a word, he gave his treacherous guide a tremendous blow with his fist between the eyes, which knocked him clean out of the canoe, and sent Gilbert on all fours, and nearly on top of the piccaninny in the bow. Quickly recovering himself he drew out his *skean dhu*, and putting it to the throat of the boy pointed to the shore and signed to him to paddle his own canoe in that direction. The other black in the meantime was gesticulating violently to his son, probably urging him to capsize the boat, which a very little would have done, and take to the water; but the lad, who had never heard Gaelic oaths before, was so intimidated by the horrible imprecations uttered at him by the infuriated Gilbert, that, disregarding paternal injunctions, and with a dagger at his throat, he paddled back to the shore, and Gilbert once more set his foot on *terra firma*, having had the narrowest escape from a watery grave which he was ever likely to have, if he lived a hundred years.

He then proceeded on his way to the ferry, and we did not see him again for three days.

His absence from the station, of course, left me, while the shepherds were out with their flocks, alone at the hut, and I am now about to relate my little adventure with the blacks.

The Tatiara blacks, it appears, were well informed of all that went on at our camp, and had found out what Gilbert



was gone for, and that he would be away for a day or two. They resolved to attack the garrison thus weakened that very day.

Now the inspector of police, with whom I was on very friendly terms, and who was well acquainted with the habits and customs of the blackfellows, had impressed upon me several points to be observed in dealing with them.

1. Always to keep strict faith with them, but not to trust them; and if I went out shooting with a blackfellow with whom I was not well acquainted, to make him walk before me instead of behind me,

2. Never to stir a yard from the hut without my gun and cartridge pouch.

3. And to be especially on my guard when any blackfellows came near the place with their faces painted, and without any gins or children.

Gilbert had not been gone more than two or three hours, and I was alone in the hut when from the window I saw a party of eight strange blackfellows approaching. They came within fifty yards of the front door, and stuck eight spears in the ground, which they left there, and then retired. This, I afterwards learned, was a native challenge as practised by the Tatiara warriors.

Upon receiving this defiance, I at once set to work to barricade the door and to prepare for defence. I had with me a double-barrelled gun and three dozen round of ball cartridge, which I carried with me all day and had within arms length at night, a single-barrelled gun, and an East India Company's cutlass which I brought out from England with me, also a bayonet with a short handle. There was a large and powerful dog called "Blackfellow"—of whose prowess I might in a future chapter relate some very interesting anecdotes—chained up outside the hut, and inside it one of the shepherd's coolie dogs, who had left his master when the sheep were camped at noon and come home.

I spread the cartridges on my bunk, looked to the caps of the two guns, and then waited to see what would happen.

I had not long to wait. Presently the blacks returned, accompanied by as many more. This time they came nearly up to the door, and asked for flour; the dog, who was all the



while tearing at his chain, mad with rage to get at them, keeping the cowardly wretches from coming to close quarters.

Then they went round to the back and tried to find out a weak place in the slabs. Fortunately, the hut was strongly built, and was impregnable to men without other weapons than spears and waddies. Everytime they came up I pointed a gun at them and threatened to fire; but I hesitated to commence shooting, hoping to intimidate them and to gain time until succour arrived.

To say that I was not greatly alarmed, would be to exceed the truth. The position afforded very little encouragement. I was alone in a hut in a wild, uninhabited spot. The only white man near me was the hutkeeper at the adjoining station, who was probably besieged by another party belonging to the same tribe. The shepherds were two or three miles away in different directions, and I was surrounded by twenty or thirty bloodthirsty savages—caught like a rat in a trap, and with about as much hope of escape.

All the stories I had heard of murders by the blacks crowded into my brain. I had only a few days before been told by the police of a case in which they arrived at a station—having been attracted to it by the sound of continual firing, during a tour of inspection—just in time to find the tenant of the hut lying dead on the floor riddled with spears, which must have been drilled into him after his death, or while he was dying, so numerous were the wounds, and the bodies of twenty-three blacks lying round about the place, whom the poor fellow had shot before he had gone under. I thought of the hutkeeper who had been murdered at the station below us, on the other side of the river, only a few months before, and felt anything but comfortable at the prospect before me.

But although full of fear for my life, I kept a watch on the movements of the attacking party. Finding they could not force an entrance, they had retreated to a clump of she-oaks about forty yards off the hut, where a great deal of gesticulating was going on. They were holding a council of war, and I soon found out what they were up to.

They were going to *smoke me out*. I did not find this out all at once. All that I perceived was, that spear after spear kept striking in the roof, and against the side of the hut, and these I did not fear. But a cry of pain from poor Black-



fellow, who had received his death-stroke from one of these missiles, made me rush to the door, and then I found out the meaning of this continuous spear throwing. Each spear had attached to it a small faggot of dry bark which was fired before it was discharged. The hut was thatched with reeds from the river, and the blackfellows thought to set it on fire in this way. Happily, they did not succeed.

Now, whether it was the death of poor old Blackfellow, who was a great favourite of mine, or the desperate state of things generally which exasperated me, I cannot say; but from that moment all feeling of fear left me, and I became perfectly cool and collected.

There was one white-headed old blackfellow, probably a Tatiara chief, who appeared to direct the attack, and I resolved to shoot him at once and avenge the poor faithful animal who had died at his post, but without having a chance to fight for his life.

The grey-haired old scoundrel was standing in the centre of the mob, close to a sheoak tree, when I, resting the barrel of my gun on the slabs of the window or port-hole in front, took a deliberate aim at his head and fired. The ball must have shaved his head, for a moment after I saw a patch of white about the size of a half-crown in the bark of the tree apparently in the exact spot where his head was a moment before. With the other barrel I wounded another of the party, as he fell, then got up, and fell down again, but finally got away.

The whole mob, after these two shots, retreated out of distance to devise some fresh scheme. I knew now that they would persevere. My friend, the inspector, used frequently to caution us never to fire except in self-defence, as for every blackfellow shot, a white man is sure to suffer sooner or later, even although months or even years may intervene. The law of vendetta is a sacred institution among the Tatiaras.

A bright thought now struck me. The shepherds might or might not have heard my two barrels fired in quick succession, the signal agreed upon as an appeal for assistance; but I had another mode of communicating with one of them which had not struck me until then, and I proceeded to put it into execution.



I took a piece of paper, and writing on it the words, "Come home, the blacks have bailed me up," tied it in a handkerchief round the neck of the coolie dog. I then gave him a good hiding, although it went against my heart to do it, and having extemporised a flight of stairs out of sundry articles of furniture to reach the top of the chimney, I dragged Rover up and thrust him through the opening, from which he rolled on to the roof and then to the ground. I knew that he would at once join his master. Then, feeling certain that aid would soon arrive, I took my place at the port-hole full of hope, ready to defend my life against all odds.

But I was not destined to distinguish myself by any deeds of daring. My story has a very inglorious termination. Shortly after I had despatched Rover with my message to his master, and while that plucky "Hielan'-mon" was hurrying at the top of his speed to the rescue, the dogs bringing the sheep after him in a cloud of dust which I could see on the plain for a couple of miles, I heard the clanking of arms, and my friends the three mounted troopers rode up to the door of the hut and dismounted. They came to pay their weekly visit of inspection, and never were visitors more welcome.

Five minutes later, and not a blackfellow was to be seen of any tribe within a mile of the place. If they had sunk into the ground, they could not have disappeared more completely.

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### CHAPTER III.

For several weeks after the events recorded in the last chapter we were continually on the look out for a fresh attack from the enemy; but whether it was our state of preparedness, or the more frequent visits which we received from our friends the troopers which stood us in good stead, I cannot say; but the Tatiara warriors did not renew their attempt.

But an incident shortly afterwards occurred which, while it turned our thoughts into a new channel, gave us fresh proof of the treacherous character of our neighbours.

One morning three men came to our place on their way to Victoria. They were on foot, and it was a venturesome expedition in every way—the overland journey being some 700 or 800 miles, through uninhabited country—so far as white men were concerned. They were three



strapping fellows, one of them being especially noticeable for his tall and muscular frame—he stood six feet four in his shoes—and good bushmen. Each man was armed with a rifle or gun, and 100 rounds of ball cartridge, and carried, besides his blankets, a knapsack containing biscuit and provisions, weighing not less than one hundred-weight.

As our station was the last link between civilized and uncivilized country, they took a day's spell with us before penetrating the wild and inhospitable bush. During this time they got into conversation with some of the blacks, who came about the place, and very foolishly, and contrary to my advice made an arrangement with three of them—two adult blacks and a lad—to carry their knapsacks for a couple of days journey.

We all urged the folly of this proceeding, pointing out the improbability that their guides would undertake the task for the small remuneration they would receive in the way of flour and tobacco, if they had not some ulterior object in view. But the men were obstinate and ridiculed the idea of danger from a couple of unarmed blackfellows and a boy.

They had a couple of kangaroo dogs with them, and as they left I urged them very strongly, as a last precaution, to make the blacks camp separately, a hundred yards from them at least, so that the dogs would warn them of any night attack.

As it turned out, this advice, like the rest, was disregarded, and the overlanders, confident in their own strength, allowed the darkies to camp at the same fire.

It must have been nearly a week after they left us that one morning, about an hour before daybreak. I was aroused by a chorus of barking from the dogs, and jumping out of bed to see what was the matter, being by this time quite used to sudden alarms, I rescued from them a wounded man, who was half walking half crawling up to the hut.

This man was one of the party of three who had so lately left us in the full possession of health and vigor, now a most deplorable figure. He was completely covered with blood from head to foot, from a large deep gash in his forehead sufficient to have killed an ordinary man, besides other wounds. His shirt was literally stiff with blood, and his whole appearance startling in its gory surroundings.

We got him inside, lit a fire, washed his wounds, and did what we could for him, all the while full of wonder at the



strength and endurance he must have possessed to reach us in such a state.

He was the only survivor of the three, and this was the account he gave of the tragedy, as soon as he was able to speak about it:—

The party had proceeded very amicably for a couple of days, during which they had made about sixty miles, the blacks carrying the knapsacks with great apparent alacrity, and grinning and shewing their teeth in the highest good temper, as if the trip were, as far as they were concerned, entirely a pleasure excursion. In short, they made themselves so amicable that they quite gained the confidence of their employers, and were allowed to sleep at the same camp fire.

It was in the middle of the third night that our informant, the sole survivor of the party, was awoke by the blow on the head, which had so nearly proved fatal. The tall fellow and his companion must have been killed at once. The blackfellows, it appeared, as soon as the white men were soundly asleep, had got up and cut themselves waddies, and each placing himself opposite a white man had, with one or two terrific blows, disposed of the sleeper. Somehow or other one of the party had a head a little thicker than the average, and had escaped in the darkness. How he managed, weakened as he must have been from loss of blood, desperately wounded, and without food of any kind to achieve the two long day's journey, and make our place, will remain a mystery. The man must have had a constitution of iron, and pluck *ad libitum*. The wound in his forehead was a wide deep gash extending right across from side to side; but in spite of it he throve, and very soon got well enough to walk about.

The first thing we did after daylight was to send one of our blacks to the police station, and the Inspector rode over at once. The result was that the head station was communicated with, and a few days after two strong parties of police came up and tried to effect the capture of the murderers. We could all identify them, and all our blacks knew them by name. But to catch them was quite another matter.

The scene of the murder was visited by the police, and there they found the bodies of the two white men, their heads being smashed by the waddies of the blacks, and their feet and limbs mutilated by the wild dogs. Of course they gave them such burial as circumstances permitted.



But the murderers were still at large, and although the police had a boat party as well as a land party, their efforts were fruitless. It was about as easy to find a needle in a bundle of hay as a blackfellow who was "wanted" in that part of the country, the hiding places being so numerous, and the savages so cunning.

At last, however, stratagem effected what no amount of open force could have done.

My friend the Inspector understood the blackfellows better than any man I ever met, and by working upon the credulity of the tribe living close to him, who were in the most complete subjection to him and his troopers, and almost daily employed by them in some duty or other, he persuaded their chief—who rejoiced in the name of King John—to play the rôle of detective. The arguments he used appealed to the blackfellow's inmost feelings. He was to have a bag of rice, a bag of flour, tea, sugar, and tobacco, besides bullocky to any extent; and when he died he was to "jump up whitefellow," in which future state he would, of course, indulge in all these luxuries as the natural consequences of changing his skin.

King John, thus urged, taking with him his brother, and being armed by the police with a sword, set out with the determination to take the murderer alive, and to bring him to the police station to be dealt with.

The old adage, "Set a thief to catch a thief," was successfully exemplified in this case. I suppose King John knew pretty well where to look for his man, or perhaps his hiding place was betrayed by one of his intimates. Be that as it may, his majesty and his august brother contrived to surprise the murderer, whom for distinction, as I forget his name, I will call Peter, asleep in his gunyah, and to take him prisoner. This was not effected without a desperate resistance; but the odds were two to one, and about ten o'clock the next morning the two station blacks might have been seen marching along the bank of the river with their captive between them, his hands securely bound with thongs of hide, and his head—well, at any rate, very sore from blows enough to let out the brains of any white man.

The trio were not more than four miles from the police camp, about opposite to us on the opposite bank, and things



were beginning to look black for the prisoner, when Peter, in as conciliatory a tone as he could manage, begged his captors to let him stop and have a drink. To this, neither King John nor his brother objected. They were exulting in their success, and perhaps a little off their guard for that reason. So they stopped, and Peter at once lay down on his face at the edge of the water to take a drink. The next moment giving himself an impetus with his feet against the bank, he shot into the water and was off. Two other plunges followed in quick succession.

But although Peter's hands were tied, his feet were at liberty, and he was naked, while King John here found a drawback in his civilized habits, for he was dressed in a complete suit of clothes, the reward of some service to the police, and his brother had half a suit, *i. e.*, a guernsey shirt of tight fit, and Peter, who well knew he was swimming for bare life, easily distanced them both.

In crossing the river, he only came twice to the surface, even then not showing his head, but just putting his lips above water to take a long draught of air. Five minutes afterwards he was in the reeds, which fringe the Murray on either side—from fifteen to twenty feet high, in belts often 100 feet wide—and further pursuit was hopeless as well as dangerous.

The only result of this capture was a pitched battle between Peter's tribe and the tribe yielding allegiance to King John, which took place about a fortnight afterwards. As I had the pleasure of witnessing this engagement from beginning to end, and as the tactics employed were remarkable for their utter dissimilarity to those used in modern warfare between civilized powers, I purpose to devote a fresh chapter to the battle.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

THE fight referred to in the last chapter between King John's tribe and the tribe of Peter the murderer, came off about a fortnight after the tragedy, the intervening time having been spent in preparations. It is an understood thing when a pitched battle has been arranged, that for some days previously both sides, in addition to warlike arrangements, shall exert themselves to bring to the ground the materials



for a plentiful repast, of which, of course, only the victors partake. Thus they fight, not only for honor—which is a very shadowy affair with them—but also for the more substantial comfort of a big feed. The ordinary fare of the Murray River blackfellow consists of fish, which are very abundant, and which they spear from their canoes, and a vegetable diet called by them “Minokora,” being the root of a species of bulrush covered with a floury substance which, when roasted, tastes very much like a mealy potato. The fibres of this root after having undergone the process of mastication, are used by them to make nets, and are as tough and flexible as twine. They also spear kangaroo and wallaby, and every now and then vary their fare by snaring birds, especially wild fowl. They will also eat iguanas and snakes, bandicoots—anything, in short, in the shape of animal food. They are very successful in capturing black swans. This bird, which abounds in the Murray River, cannot fly until it is about ten months old, and the blackfellows run them down in their canoes when young. When full grown the black swan flies very heavily, and its motion is laboured and slow when it rises from the water. The Murray River blackfellow, armed with a kind of sling consisting of half-a-dozen pieces of strong twine about two feet long tied together at one end, and having at the other end of each piece a stone about 1 lb. in weight, gets near enough to a flock of these birds as they rise from the river to discharge this missile among them. As soon as it leaves his hand the several pieces of twine of which it is composed separate, and entangle one of the birds, who thus encumbered, fail to keep up with his companions, and flies lower and lower over the plain until he is brought down by waddies and captured. The river blacks have an ingenious though somewhat precarious way of catching ducks and geese. They generally choose a windy day for this sport, when having marked a lot of widgeon or wild geese settled on the water at the edge of the tall reeds which fringe the river from a safe distance, they retrace their steps and get opposite the birds. Then, being provided with a pliant rod like a fishing rod, about the size of one of the large reeds and peeled so as to resemble it, having a noose at the end, they noiselessly approach the game, and letting the rod move to and fro like the reeds, as if agitated by the wind, suddenly



make a rapid descent with it, and lift by the neck a fine fat goose. They often spear wild turkeys in the plains with great dexterity, getting within spearing distance by means of a bough held before them. Game is, or was at the time of which I write, so abundant that the blackfellows living on the river were always sleek and fat. But the Murray River cod is their staple article of food.

When the preliminaries are concluded, and the supply of edibles is adjudged to be liberal the fight takes place. The warriors on either side appear in their war paint. A half-moon of white paint under each eye, various grotesque devices on their arms and chest, and a profusion of red ochre on their heads and cheeks, give them a ferocious appearance.

The courage of the warriors is stimulated to fighting point by the women of each tribe, who muster a few yards in advance of the front rank, and commence to extol the deeds of their own fighting men, and to vituperate their opponents, until the requisite pitch of exasperation is reached, and spears are thrown; then the gins retreat in double quick time and the battle rages.

I was not sufficiently acquainted with the blackfellows' language to understand what the old women who played this part in the battle I witnessed really said, but from what I could gather from members of our own tribe they far surpassed in the coarseness of their abuse anything ever uttered in Billingsgate by the fisherwomen who are supposed to be adepts in slang.

As I stood with two of our fellows leaning on my gun in front of the battle-field, and not more than a couple of hundred yards from the combatants, I can testify to the demoniacal yells and insulting gestures employed by the women as being quite enough to set any number of men by the ears.

The spear throwing, which was very brisk for about ten minutes, was not very effective, the combatants one and all being protected by shields of bark, painted and ornamented like their bodies, so that the wounds given and received were for the most part on the legs and arms of the combatants.

The spear is thrown by means of a "wamerah," a slight piece of wood about eighteen inches in length, having a hook



at its extremity which fits into the end of the spear, and allows a great impetus to be given to the throw.

When the spears had been thrown backwards and forwards until they were either broken or out of reach, the waddies and nullah nullahs were brought into play, and the hand to hand scrimmage which took place for about ten minutes with these weapons was very exciting.

Never did I witness anything in the shape of a free fight to equal it. They shouted, yelled, and ranted, danced, and ran like mad creatures, giving and taking blows which would have been fatal to skulls of ordinary thickness, when suddenly Peter's tribe began to give away, and were soon in full retreat, leaving King John and his warriors masters of the field.

Only one individual, as far as I could learn, was mortally wounded. A spear thrown at random by the enemy struck one of the women of our tribe. She thereupon set up a yell of a frightful character, equivalent to the cry of murder in Irish; whereupon one of the combatants rushed out of the ranks and dealt a shower of blows on her head with a waddie which silenced her at once and for ever.

The amount of blowing which we had to listen to from our blackfellows during the ensuing week was something tremendous. But the victory they had achieved and the praise we accorded them, had the effect of establishing the most friendly relations between us, and thenceforth they were our firmest friends.

But Peter was not again captured, and for what I know is still at large, ready to take a similar advantage of any whitefellow who may be foolish enough to give him the chance.







## A RAILWAY APPOINTMENT.

She vowed she'd be mine,  
I thought her divine,  
And my heart beat with quick palpitation  
When she whispered that night,  
By the moon's pensive light.  
She would meet me at six at *the* station.

I longed for the hour,  
And in spite of the shower,  
Which made the streets muddy and dirty ;  
On love's errand bent,  
To *Ashfield* I went,  
And found myself there at five-thirty.

But I waited in vain,  
And peered through the rain,  
Only to meet disappointment ;  
On the platform she stood  
All this time at *Burwood*,  
Thinking *that* was the place of appointment.

An hour she stayed,  
The true-hearted maid,  
Then we both took the train sorrow-haunted ;  
And colliding midway.  
Her fierce glance seemed to say,  
"Avaunt," and straight way we avaulted.





## TALES OF THE GOLD MANIA.

No. I.

### THE CRAWLER.

SHORTLY after the discovery of gold in this colony, when the rich workings on the Turon River were attracting attention, a party of six Cornishmen left Sydney for the new diggings. They were experienced miners, and well provided with tents, tools, and all the appliances necessary for their work. They had also a supply of provisions for the journey, and a sufficient stock of money to last for a reasonable time. Fine strapping fellows they were, well versed in sinking shafts, tunnelling, timbering, and underground mining. They were steady and industrious, and just the men one would have thought who would be certain to succeed. At that time the roads were infested with a number of lawless characters and it was not altogether safe to make indiscriminate acquaintances in going to and fro. The Cornishmen, therefore, kept to themselves as much as possible, made their own camp at night, and avoided public-houses and other places of call, taking the journey in easy stages, trudging along on foot with a packhorse carrying their swags and tools.

When they had been two days on the road, and were drawing near to the place where they proposed to halt for the night, these men overtook a solitary pedestrian, sauntering along at a careless pace, carrying all his worldly goods in a small bundle tied up in a cotton handkerchief at the end of a



stick on his shoulder, wearing a very ragged suit of clothes, and presenting altogether the appearance of a man who had been going down hill for a long time. They got into conversation with this individual, and finding him, despite his tattered garb, an easygoing, harmless fellow, and learning from him that he was also bound for the Turon, they for once relaxed their rule and acceded to his request that he might be allowed to sleep at their camp. Not that the "Crawler," for so they christened him on the spot, had any property about him which could tempt the neediest bushranger and render it unsafe for *him* to travel by himself. They took him in as a fellow-traveller, on the understanding that he might avail himself of their companionship to the end of the journey, and that then he must shift for himself. However by the time the party reached their destination, the Crawler had so far got into their good graces that the Cornishmen, seeing his evident poverty and helplessness, had compassion upon him, and told him that he was welcome to continue camping with them and to his bit and sup until he saw his way to do something for himself, only that he must work his own way in mining matters.

Having established themselves in a comfortable camping place, the six miners commenced operations. They divided themselves into three parties, obtained the best information they could, and soon three shafts were going down in likely spots, and when those turned out duffers they started three more at once, putting in good honest work and long hours.

Diggers on all sides of them noted the business-like way they went to work, and everyone said that the Cornishmen were bound to "strike it," as indeed they deserved to do, so perseveringly and steadily did they labour.

Meantime the Crawler, who, to use a very common joke on the diggings, was so little afraid of hard work that he would at any time lie down by the side of it and go to sleep, used to get up a couple of hours after the Cornishmen had gone to their work, and after having boiled his quart pot of tea and eaten his breakfast, would stroll lazily to some shallow workings, where he could fossick with a knife and wash a few tin dishes full of dirt, earning by this means a pennyweight or two of gold, which seemed to satisfy him, returning to the camp about four o'clock in the afternoon, where he would be



found dawdling and smoking his pipe, when the Cornishmen returned.

In this way several weeks passed.

The Cornishmen performed prodigies of sinking; their perseverance and skill excited the admiration of all beholders, but no success rewarded their efforts. Hole after hole was put down, and one after another proved a "shicer." They were, however, still very confident, and amused themselves by chaffing the Crawler on all possible occasions. This he took as a matter of course; nothing seemed to disturb his easy indifference; he was a great source of fun to them, and the recipient of jokes without end.

One day when the party came home to supper, the Crawler was missing. This was a most unusual occurrence, and, after a time, when it was beginning to get dark, they began to feel uneasy. The protection they had accorded to the poor fellow, together with his imperturbable good nature, had engendered a liking for him, and they missed him more than they would have believed.

Various were the surmises hazarded as to the cause of his absence. One suggested that he had fallen down a shaft and had been too lazy to call for help. Another was certain he had found a soft piece of grass and had gone to sleep. While a third thought it was probable that he had stumbled over a nugget and gone out of his seven senses at the sight of it.

Just as they were speculating upon other possible reasons for his non-arrival, the Crawler hove in view, and then and there gave birth to the only joke or repartee which he was ever known to utter.

"See," said he "what the Crawler has got."

The spectacle he presented was an unusual one. His arms were bare, and he was carrying on his shoulders the sleeves of his blue serge shirt, stuffed as full as it could be and tied up at each end, so that they resembled two gigantic sausages. Each sleeve was crammed with dirt, nuggets of gold and pieces of auriferous quartz.

It appeared that in his usual lazy way he had been fossicking in a shallow place in the bed of the river in some old workings, and had come across a small quartz feeder which he had followed into the bank, and at a depth of about six



inches he had come upon a perfect nest of gold, which he had brought home in the way I have described.

The battle is not always to the swift nor the race to the strong.

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No. II.

A COUPLE OF DUFFERS.

I WAS very near getting a regular pot of gold on one occasion, but luck was dead against me. If it had been anybody else he would have been as right as the bank, but I suppose I was fated to be unlucky, or fortune would never have gone out of her way to play me such a scurvy trick. It happened in this way. A rich lead had been discovered in a flat about seven miles from the camp at which I was living. No one in our small community knew anything about it; all we did know was that there was a small party prospecting in that direction, and that they were in the habit of coming over for stores from time to time, loading a couple of pack-horses and going away again the next day. No one had ever seen them sell any gold, and to all enquiries as to the success they had met with, they gave careless answers to the effect that they were still sinking, and had not bottomed yet, or that they were prospecting and had come across nothing payable. No one suspected that they were on gold.

One evening I had taken a stroll outside the camp to look for my old mare, who used to stray to a flat about a mile off, where the feed was pretty good, and was just about to cross a gully in which was a fine large water-hole, where she was generally to be found, when I got a glimpse, not of my horse, but of two other animals, both hobbled, and became presently aware that some men had found a camp on the opposite bank. Only for a few bushes between us on my side, they must have seen me, as there was little more than the width of the hole between us.

I don't know that I should have paid any attention to them, and should most likely have passed them with a "Good evening, mates," but for a few words which caught my ear.

"We're much better camping out here, Bill," said one of them. "If we'd stopped over at the public you might have got a glass into you, and let the cat out of the bag."



"Right you are, old man," rejoined his companion; "anyhow, we're safe here. My word! if they knew over yonder what we're doing on the quiet, wouldn't there be a rush?"

"Yes, and we should be pegged up short, whereas now we have got it all to ourselves. If we can only keep it dark for another month, I don't care if the whole lot of 'em come."

I waited to hear no more. I had recognised in the first speaker one of the party of prospectors referred to, and I now knew that they were quietly making their pile in some gully or flat not very far off, that they were returning with a fresh supply of provisions, and that they had got clear of our diggings before camping to avoid any questioning on the part of our fellows.

By keeping the clump of bushes in a line with their fire, I retraced my steps without giving any intimation of my presence, and crossing the gully a little lower down, I soon reached the township.

Now, I am not a selfish man, and when I have a good thing in hand I like to share it with my chums.

I had a good many friends living round about, who had worked alongside of me, and shared in many of my disappointments; and in all matters of this kind we had always been true to each other. So I made up my mind to impart the good tidings to a select few, that they might participate in the advantages likely to accrue from the information I had obtained.

I did this very cautiously and quietly, and, having made all our arrangements over night, we mustered a little before daybreak twelve of us, all carrying tools and swags, and proceeded in the direction of the strangers' camp, which we reached just as it was getting light, to find it deserted.

The tracks of their horses were, however, sufficient to guide us, and, after about an hour's riding, we turned from a sharp pinch, and came suddenly upon a small flat, almost hidden by the surrounding hills; and there was a solitary tent, and in front of it the men we had been following, in the act of unsaddling the horses they had just ridden in.

In another ten minutes we had pegged off twelve men's claims in a line with their workings, the men, seeing the game



was up, giving us all the information we wanted as to the course the lead or gutter took through the flat.

My companions by common consent awarded me the claim next the proprietors, and I made up my mind that for once in my life I was in for a good thing.

Shortly after, as soon as we had made our arrangements for camping, we set to work; and we were not a bit too soon, for in spite of the secrecy we had observed, our departure had been noted, and, somehow or other, the new find had got bruited about.

The consequences was that the very same morning the flat was rushed; the rush comprised several hundred men, and before night set in the ground was taken up from one end to the other.

I chuckled to myself as I thought of the lucky start I had obtained through a mere accident, and worked with renewed vigour to bottom my shaft, the sinking being about 15 feet.

Among the new arrivals who were marking out claims in all directions, until there was literally not a vacant piece of ground left on the flat, was a man with whom I had a slight acquaintance. As soon as he saw me he pegged out a claim on my eastern boundary, and commenced to put down a hole.

Now the lead, as far as it had been laid bare—indeed all the leads in that part of the country—lay north and south or thereabouts, and my ground had been marked out so that a continuation of the gutter would go through its centre. It did not appear that I could possibly miss it, while my neighbour's chance of getting any part of the narrow channel seemed at least to be a very slim one.

We both reached the bed-rock at the same time. My shaft, which should have been the rich one, did not show a speck of gold, coarse or fine, while my neighbour took off the bottom of his (which from its position should have had none) 84 ounces of gold, without driving one foot either way. The lead had formed an elbow at that particular point so as to avoid my ground.

What he took out afterwards I am unable to say; but I heard that an individual bearing a strong resemblance to the owner of that claim left shortly afterwards by the mail steamer for the old country with a regular pile.



But that was a mild disappointment—a mere pleasant surprise—compared to the one I am about to relate, which occurred some time afterwards in a totally different locality. After a great number of failures, it occurred to me, in considering the causes of my continued ill-luck, that I had relied too much upon my own opinion of likely places, and that it would have been better if, instead of continually breaking virgin soil to seek new deposits, I had abandoned the role of prospector, and looked for the precious metal nearer home in spots contiguous to rich claims, where gold in quantities had actually been found.

Impressed with this idea I set to work to obtain information as to the localities which had been already worked and had yielded largely, and making due allowance for the exaggerated yarns of enormous finds in every shaft you come to on the diggings, I managed to satisfy myself, after listening to lies innumerable, that the heaviest take on the goldfield on which I was then residing had occurred in the bend of a gully known to have been fabulously rich. It did seem rather singular that the original owners of this gorgeous claim were walking about the township with scarcely a rag on their backs, but it is well-known that diggers are very improvident, and that they may be rich one day and beggars the next. So one fine morning I set manfully to work to clean out an old shaft which, according to the lowest computation, had yielded to the fortunate possessors about fifty thousand pounds. It was full of mud, slush, and all sorts of abominations, having been abandoned for an indefinite period, but it had at one time, so some scores of informants assured me, been a regular jeweller's shop. Nuggets of all shapes and sizes had been found imbedded in the yellow clay which underlay the rubbish I had to take out, and I was buoyed up with the hope that the diggers who first had it had worked it imperfectly, and that I should probably find they had left as much behind them as they had taken away—probably more. So I baled away the water and mud and worked like a horse, until I was covered with dirt from head to foot. But I persevered, and about 4 o'clock in the afternoon I struck hard bottom, and at the next blow my pick came in contact with something which gave forth a metallic ring, and stooping down and clearing away the dirt with my hands I got a glimpse of a patch of that



peculiar rich yellow colour which causes the heart of a digger to bound. There it was sure enough as large as a good-sized basin, apparently a round heavy lump of solid gold.

Now, it was not at all a prudent thing at that time and in that place to let everyone know that you had found a nugget.

If it had been known that I was the possessor of such a treasure there would have been the risk that I might be robbed of it, and that the claim might be robbed of other equally large nuggets during the night.

It therefore behoved me to be cautious, and the way I exercised caution was by covering up the precious find, and sauntering carelessly to my tent as if I had given up work for the day.

But shortly after the diggers around me had followed my example and the gully was deserted, a sanguine individual wearing the diggers' crest—a patch of mud—in several places on his clothing—might have been seen at the bottom of the hole armed with a pickaxe, on his knees at the bottom of the hole endeavouring by the light of a couple of inches of candle stuck in a lump of clay by way of candlestick, to unearth a monster nugget.

The prize was still there, and by a little steady leverage with the pickaxe, it came suddenly up with a flop—the bottom of an old brass candlestick.

I was so utterly disgusted with this discovery that I went straight home, loaded my revolver, and blew out my brains on the spot.

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### No. III.

#### A GOOD SHAFT HORSE.

HORSES belonging to miners are for the most part very tractable animals, having, however, certain peculiarities which distinguish them from the ordinary quadrupeds. They don't object as a rule to carry anything that can be strapped on to their backs in the way of impedimenta. A tin billy, a frying pan, and a set of mining tools, dangling about their sides, a pair of blankets in front of the saddle, or a couple of well-stuffed saddlebags, with a thirteen stone digger outside of them, is the kind of loading which they are accustomed to.



They know by a sort of instinct when they are approaching a public-house or sly grog-shop, and no incentive in the way of whip or spur will induce them to pass it until the riders have dismounted and refreshed themselves with a nip. They are also good at jumping logs, which is a favourite amusement with miners who take an outing on horseback on holiday occasions. They will stand patiently for hours hitched up to a rail, and, after galloping at top speed a few hundred yards further, will not object to be pulled up suddenly and to go through another hour's penance of a similar kind.

Miners of the better class, who are chiefly interested in quartz mining, usually ride round to the scenes of their several ventures every morning, and their horses soon get to know the claims which they have to visit. In deep sinking horses are employed to work the whims, and the intelligence they display in stopping and retracing their steps at the word "turn" is very whimsical. After a week or two they do not require a driver, habit teaching them that when they have gone round a certain number of times to hoist the bucket up they must go back an equal number of times to let it down again. The brute instinct is quite strong enough to show them that "one good turn deserves another."

But there is one peculiarity in the horses which are to be found grazing in the neighbourhood of mining localities, which often puts their owners to serious trouble and expense. The animals get so accustomed to pick their way through holes and excavations of all kinds that they lose their natural caution and frequently stumble head-first into a pit, from which they can only be extricated by the combined exertions of a number of men. This might be excusable if it were only practised by draught horses who are accustomed to back into shafts, but it is a general failing with diggers' horses of all kinds. Tempting tufts of grass growing on the edge of holes from fifteen to twenty feet deep attract them, and a false step sends them in.

It is said that a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse, but to animals afflicted with imperfect vision, both nodding and winking are dangerous pastimes in the neighbourhood of deep sinking. When I was a miner I kept three horses, which were in the habit of pasturing on an alluvial



flat just outside the township. This, at one time, had been the scene of a gigantic rush. The flat was perforated from end to end with trial holes of all sizes and shapes, some shallow and some very deep.

One of my horses, a bay pony mare, kept for the use of my eldest boy, was, unfortunately, blind of one eye, and this defect was so far fatal to her that she came to grief at least once every week. She had plenty of bottom in one sense, for it appeared as if she were systematically testing the capabilities of every shaft on the flat.

At last I got quite used to the message, "That little bay mare of yours is down a shaft again."

Then I would hurry to the spot, and find the mare quietly seated on her haunches at the bottom of the hole, with her head some three feet below the surface. The miners working in the neighbourhood, always ready to do a good turn, would quickly find their way to the scene and put in an hour's willing labour. A trench would be cut leading from the shaft to give the mare footing for her forelegs; a rope would be thrown over her hind legs, to which a score of lusty hands would attach, and out she would come *vi et armis*.

Under such circumstances, of course, it was only natural to offer some compliment in return for such willing and ready assistance, and a bottle or two of brandy would be sent for and quaffed with the utmost good fellowship.

The little bay mare stood me in at least 5s. a week during the whole time I kept her on the diggings, for brandy alone, exclusive of corn, and she was not by any means a spirited animal when clear of a shaft.

At last I sold her to a cockatoo farmer residing in the neighbourhood, who made light of her blind eye—this is not intended as a joke. Whether he had been disappointed in the cash payments he had received for corn supplied to storekeepers in the township, or whether something else had occurred to sour his temper, or whether he funk'd his wife's opinion of his purchase, I cannot say; but when he paid the money, which he did after a good deal of chaffing, and very reluctantly, he remarked, "I shall get into a hole with that pony yet."

I breathed a hope that for his sake the hole would not be below the average depth.



No. 4.

## THE COMPASS AT FAULT.

IN a mining township at which I was living, where quartz-mining was the principal industry, I was member of a Church Committee. Church matters under the voluntary system somehow were not in a very flourishing condition in that place, and sometimes we were for months without a clergyman.

There was also more or less difficulty in getting the money to pay the necessary stipend when we did succeed in getting a parson to undertake the duties of the district, and the Committee had to exert themselves to their utmost to obtain donations and subscriptions.

In one of my rounds taken for this purpose I called upon a well-to-do blacksmith, and asked him to contribute a monthly or quarterly sum. I urged upon him very strongly the duty which devolved upon him as an old resident and householder to do something to support the church to which he belonged, and, having got him to express his satisfaction at learning from me that a clergyman whose services we had been trying to secure was on his way to the township, tried to apply his own motto, "Strike while the iron is hot," to the subject in hand.

"Come, now," said I, "what shall I put you down for?"

"Well, I don't know," said he, "I'm paying into a good many claims as it is."

"Perhaps the claim I am asking you to go into might pay far better than any of them in the long run," I replied.

"Yes, that's what they all say; but there's very few of them turn out so well as they're cracked up, and they cost a deal of money."

"Then I can't persuade you to give anything at all towards the Church."

"No, I don't think I'll go into anything else just yet."

And I left him, feeling that it was no use to hammer at him any more than it was at one of his own anvils.

On one occasion when there had been no resident clergyman for some time, we had a visit from a reverend gentleman, a most estimable man and an excellent preacher. He merely came up to see the place, but he stayed over Sunday, and, as a



matter of course, officiated in our church. Now, the Rev. Mr. ——— was a High Churchman, and was strict in his observance of the forms of worship which ministers holding his views affect. For instance, in repeating the Creed they turn their faces to the east, intone various portions of the service, and so on. The impressive way in which our visitor read the prayers of the church gave great satisfaction. We listened with pleasure to the clear and melodious tones of his voice as he led the chants, and an excellent sermon at the close confirmed the favourable opinion we had formed of him from the moment he entered the reading desk.

Our prejudices were in no way shocked by the slight innovations upon the form of worship we had been accustomed to join in, and we did not feel in the smallest degree offended when he turned his back upon us to repeat the Creed.

At this part of the service he intended, no doubt, to turn his face eastward, and that he made a considerable effort to do so there could be no question. Perhaps it was the fault of the architect who designed the chancel, or it may be that our new pastor mistook its position, for as a member of his flock I took particular notice of his movements, and I can safely affirm, from my knowledge of the bearing of the quartz reefs on either side of the church as seen from the open windows, that, by the compass, he was standing in a line *exactly twenty degrees west of north.*





## NOTHING TO PAY.

HERE is no luck about the reef ;  
I'm stranded hard and fast ;  
Between two walls I've come to grief,  
They've pinched me out at last.  
I've sunk of shafts at least a score,  
Through all sorts of phases ;  
The drilling I always found a bore,  
The rock as hard as blazes.  
I've followed down the underlay,  
Thinking the gold lay under ;  
But never found an ounce to pay  
For my unlucky blunder.  
I've pinned my faith to many a leader  
Of quartz, and not of fashions ;  
But never yet could find a feeder  
That even gave me rations.  
I've gone down very deep for slate,  
And always have been slated ;  
I'm stricken by a cruel fate,  
To strike it never fated.  
Accountred cap-à-pied, in vain  
I've roamed to find the cap ;  
The cap that fits me it is plain  
Cannot be worth a rap.  
Days and days I've been prospecting,  
Washing countless dishes ;  
But the prospect I'm expecting  
Never meets my wishes.  
I've sunk in many a likely spot,  
But oh ! unlucky buffer,  
When others hit it, 'tis my lot  
To bottom on a duffer.  
While diggers have been blowing  
About the ground they know,  
I've tried it, and their showing  
Has always proved no show.



I never had a crushing  
That did not crush my hopes  
Fine as the tailings rushing  
Along the river slopes.  
The tables always look so queer  
When covered with my quartz ;  
I daren't address the engineer  
For fear of his retorts.  
All my mettle I've expended  
Tracing the precious metal ;  
Now at last the farce is ended,  
And I have grasped the nettle  
When pay-day comes my peace of mind  
Is broken into pieces ;  
And tho' to pay I'm still inclined,  
My power of paying ceases.  
My ready cash has taken wings  
In hunting after patches ;  
This is a pretty state of things,  
I might as well sell matches.  
For then I'd turn an honest penny,  
And should not have to wait ;  
But now I work and don't get any,  
Not even a pennyweight.  
And when hard up to sell I try ;  
I can't, to save my soul ;  
Wholesale buyers refuse to buy  
A half share in my hole.  
Thus I get in a hole besides  
The one I had before ;  
While cruel Fortune still derides,  
And I am sold once more.  
I clearly see that I'm too blind  
To find the golden vein ;  
Yet still my friends cry " never mind,  
But try your luck again."  
Bright thought ! I'll try the " Never Mind "  
And so pit mind 'gainst matter ;  
Yet well I know there'll be no find  
When I'm found pegging at her.





## RED HANDED MURDER.



“THERE’S that brute in the garden again. Here, Tiger, hold him”—and away would go the entire available offensive force of the establishment, boys and dogs, in hot pursuit of the daring intruder—an old black nannygoat, the most obstinate and shameless of her sex, who was literally our *bête noire*

She was in and out of the garden at all hours, and would do more mischief in five minutes than could be repaired in a month. Nothing came amiss to her. She would breakfast on cabbages, dine off geraniums, and sup on passion fruit; the brute was omnivorous.

She was cunning, too, and artful to a degree. The stealthy way in which she would make her entrance through some weak place in the fence, the rapidity with which she would complete the work of destruction, and her alertness in retreating the moment the alarm was sounded, were positively astonishing, and could only have been acquired by long practice. Whether her accomplishments in this direction were the result of early education, or from an inherent love of pilfering, which made stolen flowers the sweetest, or whether in later life she had been led by the force of example to acquire a taste for garden produce, which she was unable to overcome, I leave others to determine. Certain it was, she was an adept in the art of foraging, and that she kept herself fat and sleek solely by plunder.

Time after time she had been caught while engaged in these nefarious practices, and subjected to punishments of various kinds. She had been beaten with whips, rods, and broomhandles; she had been pelted with stones, brickbats, and bottles; had been chased round the paddock by kangaroo dogs; caught and thrown bodily over the fence; kerosene tins



and other impedimenta had been tied to her tail; and on one occasion, when she had been taken, *in flagrante delicto*, after receiving three dozen on the bare back, she had been ignominiously ejected from the premises, with a board dangling from her neck, on which the word THIEF was printed in large letters.

But none of these punishments seemed to have any effect upon Nanny. She had no regard whatever for the rights of property. *Meum* and *tuum* were to her synonymous terms. In short, she was lost to all sense of shame or decency, and trusting to the gift which Nature had bestowed upon her—a quick ear, a great turn of speed, and a tolerably tough hide, she continued to trespass with comparative impunity, now in one garden now in another, indulging in a great variety of esculents, and leading a life of stolen pleasure and excitement.

Our garden had suffered especially, and we were proportionately irate; but a sense of justice impelled me, before proceeding to extremities against this noonday robber, to effect a thorough repair of the fence. It was clearly my business to render it impossible for any goat, however agile, to enter my premises. So I took great pains to close every aperture so that no amount of butting could loosen a pailing or dislodge a rail; and that night we trimmed and watered our plants with a sense of ownership we had not experienced for some time.

But we underrated the cunning of the enemy. No sooner had Nanny discovered that her usual modes of entrance were not available than she adopted altogether different tactics. Early in the morning she took up her position at the front gate, and when the butcher came for orders, she slipped in behind him, and in half a minute was at her old work again. This went on for some little time, and although we at once formed a vigilance committee, composed of every member of the family, scarcely a day passed without some fresh proof of the enemy's presence in the shape of floral destruction.

At last we could stand it no longer; and one morning when old Nanny was detected, standing on her hind legs and devouring with great enjoyment the young shoots of a creeper, which we had taken great pains to train over some trellis work, a council was held and sentence of death formally recorded against her.



Now, although I considered myself perfectly justified in inflicting capital punishment in this instance, I am a humane man, and I desired that the extreme penalty should be carried out with as little suffering as possible. To take the life of an enemy, who was not to be deterred from open aggression by any other punishment, seemed justifiable as an act of self-defence, but anything like cruelty or bloodshed was abhorrent to me. So I turned over in my mind the various modes of destruction which would apply to the case in hand.

It had happened, some weeks before this, that two or three suspicious deaths had occurred among the rabbits kept by my youngsters, and I had purchased a small quantity of strychnine, and put a few grains of it into some pieces of raw meat, which I placed on the ground near the rabbit-hutch. The result was the discovery, on the following morning, of three large tom-cats lying cold and stiff within a few yards of the spot where the bait was laid. They appeared to have died almost instantaneously, and there was nothing about them after death which indicated that any especial suffering had been experienced.

Poison, then, was the weapon which I determined to use to effect my object, and accordingly I procured a further supply of that destructive agent. At the chemist's where I obtained it, I had to write my name down in a book, in which I stated that I bought the poison for the destruction of vermin.

I repeat that I am very tender-hearted, and especially so towards dumb animals. Dogs and children always make friends with me at once, and I never had a horse with whom I was not on the best terms in a week's time; their instinct, I suppose, enabling them to detect my soft-hearted disposition.

Judge, then, whether I was a man likely to commit a cold-blooded murder under circumstances of brutal atrocity. I even felt very tender at the last moment towards the object of my vengeance, remembering how often I had chivied her round the paddock, and the number of blows and hard words she had received from each member of my family, and how kindly she had taken her gruel. I almost felt inclined to let her free, thinking it almost a shame to sacrifice, for the sake of a few perishing flowers—or, as one might call them, "flowerets," for they never, thanks to Nanny's exertions, reached maturity,—



a creature possessing such powers of endurance, fertility of resource, such persistent resolution, such an unflinching appetite, and such rare organs of digestion.

But sterner feelings succeeded, and I prepared the fatal morsel which was to end her lawless career. Thinking that, as the deed had to be done, 'twere well 'twere done quickly and quietly, I led the unfortunate victim to a shed at the back of the house, and then, having given her a piece of bread containing about as much strychnine as would have killed twenty cats, and having seen that she swallowed every morsel of it, I shut the door in her face, and left her to chew the cud of bitter reflection.

Next morning I rose early, with the intention of digging a deep hole in the garden, for what purpose the reader might imagine. But, upon opening the door of the shed, I found, instead of an inanimate corpse, Nanny herself, in the enjoyment of perfect health, with an eye as bright as ever, and an appetite evidently sharpened by confinement. To rush back to the house, and to return with the remainder of the strychnine was but the work of a minute, and in another minute Nanny had bolted it, bread, poison, and all, licking from the palm of my hand a few grains that were spilt out of the paper. I waited another hour, and finding that the only symptom manifested by the condemned criminal was a strong desire to escape, in order to breakfast off my cabbages, I went over to the house of a neighbour and borrowed a Colt's revolver, determined to make short work of the job.

I then took the goat out of the shed and tied her up to the fence. In doing this, I was actuated by motives of humanity. I wished to avoid the possibility of failure. I was anxious to effect my end, or, strictly speaking, Nanny's end, by one well directed shot, which should cause as little pain as possible. Holding the pistol, therefore, close to the animal's ear, I fired. The bullet went clean through her skull, and the blood streamed out. The only effects of this shot were a convulsive effort on the part of my victim to climb over the fence to which she was tied, and a series of the most horrible bellowings I ever heard. I felt myself a murderer, and to end the tragedy with all haste, I fired a second barrel at the animal's head making a second hole through the forehead, at right angles to the other: result.



more blood, and a good deal more bellowing, and a still more determined effort to leap the fence.

Was ever a tender-hearted human being placed in a more distressing situation? I can hardly describe the feeling of shame, horror, and regret which overcame me. Here was I caught red-handed in the commission of a cold-blooded murder, my victim, mortally wounded but not dead, piercing the air with heart-rending cries enough to rouse the whole neighbourhood. To this day I can scarcely look at a goat without a feeling of blood-guiltiness. Determined to put the poor wretch out of her misery, I snatched up a club and belabored its head. I then dragged it to an abandoned shaft, about thirty feet deep, and threw it down into the water. It was not dead then, and I cannot positively state that it is dead now, but if not, its tenacity of life must be wonderful.

No goats get into my garden now, but if they did, I should not have the heart to inflict serious bodily harm upon them, whatever damage they might do, looking back to Nanny as the scape-goat—except that she did not escape—for all the sins of her tribe. Vegetable poisons, it seems, will not kill a goat, and Colt's revolvers are at best but ineffective weapons.

Moral.—One thing leads to another.







## THE DEVIL'S ELBOW.



THE road over which Cobb's coach travels from Brisbane to the Gympie gold fields, now in tolerably good order, was, a few years ago, a caution to stage drivers. The greater part of it is through a mountainous country, traversing the spurs of ridges innumerable on either side of the main dividing range, which it crosses by making a detour of about three miles from the straight line then followed by horsemen, over what was called the Postman's Gap. The ascent of the mountain at this spot is as near an approach to the perpendicular for about three-quarters of a mile as the most enterprising equestrian could desire. It is hard work to keep your footing when struggling up it leading your horse, and next to impossible to ride up it, from the difficulty of keeping in the saddle and keeping the saddle on the horse at the same time. The drivers of Cobb's coaches are the most daring and indefatigable pioneers, and the most expert whips to be found anywhere. Give them any apology for a road and they will take a four horse coach over it in the face of obstacles which would daunt most men. At the time I write of there were a few hastily constructed bridges spanning the creeks which intervened between the mountain spurs. These creeks, winding their way in a serpentine form among the hills, are for the most part narrow, with high overhanging banks, and, having a very slight fall to the rivers they feed, hold the flood waters to such an extent that an ordinary thunderstorm, with a proportionately heavy fall of rain, is sufficient to render them impassible.

The traveller during the dry season, who may have to walk a mile up the bed of one of these creeks or gullies to find a drink of water, may, if he be sufficiently observing,



obtain proof that they are not always in the same state of inactivity.

High up, often as high as thirty feet from the bed, he will see clumps of leaves and sticks left by the flood at high-water mark in the forks of trees, shewing what an enormous volume of water had been temporarily imprisoned between the narrow walls of the gorge. Some of the worst of these crossing places had been, as I have said, bridged over, and approaches to them formed, but the heavy ground on each side, the number of steep and sideling pinches, and the numerous obstructions in the shape of stumps and fallen timber alongside of the narrow road, were sufficient to call forth all the dexterity of the drivers.

On the occasion I especially refer to there had been a heavy thunderstorm over night, and when the up-coach with passengers from Brisbane arrived at a very ugly crossing-place called the *Devil's Elbow*, it was found that the wooden bridge had been carried away by the flood.

There they waited for some hours until the down coach from Gympie pulled up on the opposite bank.

A conference now took place across the creek as to the possibility of exchanging passengers and cargoes, which did not seem then impracticable, as, although the bridge had been broken up and the main portion of it carried away by the flood, there was a good deal of the *debris* left, which formed a partial footing for active men, and there were no women or children among the passengers on either side, with, alas, one solitary exception, out of which the great difficulty arose. In the up-coach there were two or three male residents of Gympie returning to their homes. In the down-coach there was a bank manager and three other men, but there was also an old blind woman who had been sent down from Gympie to the Brisbane Hospital under the charge of the driver. To persuade this old lady, who was infirm, *and as blind as a bat*, to leave the secure shelter of the inside of the coach in order to perform a series of acrobatic feats, in the course of which she was sure to get wet, and more or less bruised and knocked about, in order to expedite the journey by a few hours, was the task to which Ned Murdock, the driver of the down-coach, manfully addressed himself. What arguments he used I am unable to say, but he succeeded in persuading his solitary



female passenger to entrust herself to him in the dangerous passage. By this time the male passengers had all got across with their traps, and had contrived to readjust the scattered logs so that they formed an unbroken link across the creek, the last portion of the temporary bridge, however, consisting of a solitary log about a foot in diameter level with the water's edge.

Arrived at this point with his helpless charge, Ned Murdock deliberately set the old woman astride of the log, with her legs dangling in the water, and then taking up a similar position himself on the log immediately behind her, gallantly achieved the rest of the journey—a distance of about twenty feet—by a series of hitches—I believe that is the correct term—until the opposite bank was reached, when the transfer being complete, the up and down passengers went their several ways, the blind woman taking her seat composedly in the return coach apparently none the worse for her exertions. I obtained these facts from Ned Murdock himself, and I give them as a proof of his ingenuity and perseverance. This was *the only hitch*, he assured me, which occurred during the trip.







## LOST A BABY.

THE Exhibition had been opened fully a month before I entered its enchanted halls. I was told it would take at least a month to see everything it contained, and I could not make up my mind to devote that period to the task. I was not even encouraged to take a cursory view of it by the remark of a volatile friend, who offered to bet that he would do the Exhibition in three hours, take a couple of drinks, and be able to give an intelligent account of the various exhibits when he came out.

But when Angelina reproached me with neglect in not having taken *her* there, and added with true feminine sweetness that she didn't care about going unless I went with her, I gave in at once, and felt that honour called me to the Garden Palace.

We fixed upon the following Saturday as the most convenient day to devote to an examination of the wonders achieved by those

————— mighty souls whose sway  
Controls the thunder and the marching day,

(*vide* prize poem) which I suppose meant the shilling day, when the native Australians might have been seen marching up Hunter Street towards the Palace, as proud as when they assembled to witness the triumph of the Demon Bowler, or take part in the monthly tribute of admiration to the immortal Trickett.

Having come to this determination, I resolved to make the holiday as complete and enjoyable as possible. I would put on my holiday garb, holiday spirits; we would go early and make a day of it.



Angelina and I had been married about two years, and our eldest and only one, "Bobby," was little more than twelve months old—an age especially inconvenient for the purposes of excursion, when a child is too heavy to carry, and too young to trust to his own supporters. Now I knew we should have to take Bobby with us; the slightest hint to leave him behind would have been fatal to the expedition. But, as we had lately added to our establishment a young lady rejoicing in the name of Maria Ann—or, as she pronounced it, "Mariarran"—whose duty was entirely confined to "minding the baby," I hoped the difficulty would be easily overcome, and that, in spite of impediments, I should have a fair share of my wife's society. I felt that in listening to her lively and intelligent remarks upon the different industrial and artistic displays I should thoroughly enjoy myself.

So when the time came we set out in majestic array, Angelina and I leading, with Maria Ann and Bobby, decked in all their finery, in the rear—wholesale, retail, and for exportation—and soon after were sliding along easily in the tramway car to our destination. Bobby was delighted with the trip, and behaved splendidly. He was a strong child, with a hearty appetite, requiring constant supplies, a tendency to fall asleep immediately after his meals; and a propensity to roar at the top of his voice if his wants were not immediately attended to. His indulgence in either of these gratifications was sure to call forth some expression of admiration from his devoted mother. When he slept heavily after a hearty meal, she would call me to see how good he was—he certainly was good on those occasions. The louder his cry, the more she was delighted, it shewed strength, she said—which it certainly did; and when he polished off a basin of bread and milk without a check, she remarked that he took his food like an angel, which, of course, could only be a matter of conjecture.

That Saturday, which was intended to be like one of the festive days of the ancients—a day of enjoyment to be marked with a white stone—was a fateful day for us, all owing to the sudden shock which the wonders of the Palace gave to the faculties of the unsophisticated Maria Ann.

We arrived soon after ten o'clock, and perambulated the different courts on the ground floor of the building until one



o'clock, when I ventured to suggest that after so much "courting" a little refreshment would be acceptable. By this time Bobby being in his usual comatose state from over-feeding, I suggested that he should be comfortably deposited on a sofa close by and allowed to sleep the sleep of repletion, while we adjourned to the luncheon room. This arrangement was carried out, Bobby was made as comfortable as circumstances would permit, Maria Ann was posted at the foot of the sofa as a sentry, with strict orders not to stir from the spot until we returned, and then my wife tore herself away, and we went downstairs.

After an excellent luncheon, which I enjoyed amazingly, I proposed a tour through the grounds, but Angelina was in too great a hurry to get back to her first-born to listen to the suggestion, her fertile fancy conjuring up all sorts of possible dangers.

"Pooh! pooh!" said I, "what harm can possibly happen to the child? Is not the girl minding him? Besides which, if I know anything of his habits, he is safe to sleep for at least an hour." So I persuaded her to go through two or three of the stalls outside, after which we had an ice cream, and then took her to the steps and left her in order to have a smoke, for the *post prandium* pipe is as necessary to me as the meal itself. That is one of my bachelor habits which I have never been able to give up. A pipe is to me a most agreeable companion; it is digestive, it calms any passing irritation, and makes me placable and contented.

I have troubles but they end in smoke,  
I puff them and they fall.  
Why should I fret when I can fume,  
I have my pipe—my all.

Angelina, knowing my thorough enjoyment of the fragrant weed, seemed to think this the natural and proper course to pursue, and smilingly assented.

I had got half through my first pipe, and was sipping a glass of brandy and water at the nearest refreshment stall, when an ominous sound fell upon my ear. I heard my name uttered in frantic tones, then came an interposed arm, and my wife was on the verandah close to me.

"Oh, Robert, how can you?"



"Why, what is the matter?" said I, alarmed at her tone and manner.

"Oh, Robert, how can you sit here smoking your pipe and drinking your horrid brandy when we shall perhaps never see him again?"

"See whom again?" rejoined I, getting nervous and excited. "Who has taken him?"

"Oh, Robert, how can you be so unfeeling. Your own son—your only one."

"Well," said I, soothingly, "we'll go and find him. I don't think babies are at such a premium that it is likely he has been stolen. There is no baby show in the Exhibition, and Gypsies are unknown in Australia. Ha! there's a bobby," I added, seeing a policeman in the distance, "we'll ask him what to do."

"And you can joke about the poor darling," sobbed Angelina. "I didn't think you were such an unnatural father," and she burst into tears. "I think you want to kill me."

The suggestion was certainly not aimed at her life; but she was crying, and I felt like a criminal, though what had I to do with the child's disappearance? But the feminine mind is notoriously illogical, and it was not the time for me to defend myself.

By this time she had dragged me into the Exhibition building, and in a few minutes, like a bereft tigeress, she had confronted the luckless Maria Ann, who stood a picture of helpless terror at the foot of the sofa from which Bobby had been spirited.

"As true as heavins, 'm, I only just turned round to look at them pictures; the darling was sleepin' as peaceful as a hangel, and when I looked back he was gone," and off she rushed in a demented frame of mind, rushing backwards and forwards in such an excited manner that it was only a wonder she was not taken up by some guardian of the peace and locked up as a lunatic-at-large.

With some difficulty, I succeeded in impressing upon Angelina the necessity of controlling her feelings, so that we might make a systematic search, which I assured her could not fail to be successful; but she gave me such cold, cutting looks, and was so unlike herself, that we seemed to be



quite divided—we who had been so fond of each other, so confident of each other's love and sympathy. We had never had a division in the house before. Estimates and ways and means had never provoked this acrimony. Here was, however, a graver question to be decided, affecting the very constitution of the family, and its settlement would brook no delay. So we went to opposite sides of the house and systematically searched into every nook and hiding-place we could think of. Once we crossed each other's path, and just then Angelina espied a child asleep on a couch, who bore almost as much resemblance to Bobby as a family bible does to a pocket testament, and she flew to inspect the sleeping innocent.

"It's not him," she said, piteously. Poor girl, her grammar had gone along with her treasure.

The situation was now becoming critical. We had searched for an hour to no purpose. Angelina was growing hysterical. Maria Ann had probably gone mad, or else was hiding herself from her infuriated mistress. What was to be done.

Just at this awful crisis, piercing through the hum of voices which surrounded us, and going straight to the object aimed at, as a rifle bullet to the bull's eye, came a long, loud, continuous roar. There was no possibility of mistaking the sound. I had heard it too often to doubt whence it proceeded. It was Bobby *redivivus*: he had just awoke from a refreshing sleep and was adopting his usual peremptory mode of summoning attendance. The next moment Angelina burst from my arms, overturning in her frantic haste an old lady who was examining some Japanese *curios*, and rushed off in the direction from which the sound proceeded. I followed quickly, and soon saw her with Bobby in her arms, smothering him with kisses.

"The poor little darling! did its unnatural parents leave him all alone, to go and eat their horrid luncheons?"

Now, I thought this was rather hard on me, seeing that I had taken especial pains to provide an elegant repast for her especial gratification, and had done my best to make the day pleasant to her. But I made allowance for her maternal feelings and was too generous to recriminate.



And I had my reward, for Angelina, recovering all her sweetness of temper with her lost treasure, turned to me and said, with her soft eyes beaming with tenderness—

“Poor dear Robert! you were frightened too; and I have been scolding you as if it had been your fault, poor darling!” and then taking advantage of the friendly shelter afforded by a pyramid of jam tins, she put her white arms round my neck and gave me the kiss of love and reconciliation.

Bobby, we surmised, must have rolled off the sofa and toddled across the building till he came to a case of dolls which had apparently attracted his attention, for there he had turned off and coiled himself up in a corner on the floor, where he finished his nap without interruption. The little beggar had performed a feat which eclipsed the performances of the most famous travellers on record—he had gone overland from Queensland to Italy within the hour.

“I am glad we have found the child, I am indeed,” I said; “but I was afraid at one time I had lost you as well as Bobby.”

But the loving look she gave me assured me that I need entertain no apprehensions on that score.

We spent the rest of the afternoon with great enjoyment. It is true that I had to carry Bobby on my shoulder all the time, as my wife would not let him out of my sight; but she was so happy and beaming, and took such an interest in everything we saw—Bobby being, as if in amends for his misconduct, “as good as gold,” as she observed at least twenty times—that we forgot all about our trouble, and, for my part, I felt almost glad at his temporary disappearance, which had been followed by such pleasant results.

As for Maria Ann, she received warning that night, and had to seek, through the medium of the daily paper, for another situation, where a girl was wanted “to mind a baby.”







## A NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

(On the discovery by the Rev. J. B——, of Brisbane, on his doorstep, of a basket containing a newly-born infant.)

'TWAS early one morning,  
As I have been told,  
The day was just dawning ;  
'Twas bitterly cold.

When our parson arose,  
With a yawn and a sigh,  
And put on his clothes  
(You now shall hear why).

A weak plaintive cry  
Had twice reached his ear ;  
It seemed to be nigh—  
Somewhere at the rear.

He opened the door—  
Lo ! a basket was there ;  
An inscription it bore,  
“ This side up, with care. ’

The fastening untied—  
The work of a minute—  
He just peeped inside,  
To see what was in it.

Gave a cry of dismay,  
Which came with a hiss ;  
At the bottom there lay  
(The picture of *bliss*)



— Not a turkey or pheasant  
Some poultry or game ;  
Or any such present,  
Bearing his name.

To eat or to drink,  
Bottled claret or stout ;  
But what do you think ?  
(The murder must out.)

Guess the parson's amaze !  
In clothes torn and shabby,  
Exposed to his gaze  
Was a *newly-born baby*.

Rudely consigned  
To him and no other ;  
Out of sight, out of mind,  
Its own cruel mother.

Poor little puppet,  
Offspring of shame,  
How could she drop it ?  
Unnatural dame.

Abandoned, neglected,  
Left to his care ;  
A quite unexpected  
And sudden affair.

What will he do with it ?  
He hardly knows.  
Not even a shoe with it—  
Scarce any clothes.

Not a vestige of hair  
On its round bullet head ;  
Its legs and arms bare,  
And *so* mottled and red.

Nothing described,  
Its name or its age ;  
Neither inscribed,  
On the Registrar's page.



Crying and squalling,  
Wanting its pap ;  
And for his calling  
Not caring a rap.

But our parson was mild,  
And soft at the core ;  
And he took up the child,  
Which lay at his door.

Provided so slenderly,  
Thought he'd adopt it ;  
Looked at it tenderly,  
Then nearly dropped it.

Sorely perplexed  
As to what he should do.  
But what happened next  
I really don't know.

\* \* \*

A moral I add,  
The tale to adorn :  
If you don't know its dad,  
Or when it was born,

Don't visit a child  
With the sin of another,  
And do not get wild  
If you can't find its mother.

We all must expect,  
Tho' 'tis doubtless a bore,  
To have some youthful folly  
Laid at our door.

But a welcome is rare,  
On occasions like this,  
When the child of despair  
Seeks the palace of *bliss*.

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## A PICNIC AT CHOWDER.

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JONES is a married man, and devotedly attached to his wife. They live in a charming villa, near a railway station, on the suburban line. Since his marriage, Jones has given up many of his bachelor habits: he has abjured the smoking carriage, and travels respectably, in a non-smoking first-class compartment. He is rarely seen in town after 6 p.m., and when he takes an outing, is invariably accompanied by Angelina, to whom he pays the tenderest attention. In short, he has gone in for perfect domesticity, takes in the *S. M. Herald* and the *Echo*, and rather turns a cold shoulder to his bachelor friends, refusing, persistently, all invitations to the convivial meetings in which he once took such a prominent part. If ever there was a strictly moral, well-conducted, high-principled young man, a living example of the refining influence of matrimony, that man was John Jones, of ——— Villa, up to the date of my story. This state of things lasted through the honeymoon, and for six months afterwards. Then temptation fell in his way and he stumbled over it.

Perhaps Angelina drove him with too tight a bearing-rein, and the daily jog-trot in double harness, unrelieved by a single scamper in the open, became monotonous. Perhaps—but why seek the cause of his discontent? Suffice it to say that he became restless, and domestic life palled upon him. The symptoms were alarming: he no longer went into ecstasies at each fresh proof of his wife's taste in bonnets, twice he had pleaded an excuse, when she had asked him to take a walk with her and he had even been rash enough, on more than one occasion, when sitting down to a *tête-a-tête* dinner with her, to hint that the fish was stale and the mutton



underdone, ignoring the fact that the meal had been prepared by her own fair hands, the cook having thrown up her situation, on account of some fancied slight.

Far be it from me to excuse, or even to palliate, this wicked disposition on the part of Jones, but truth compels me to state that, at this time, he became moody and unhappy, and that he looked back, with a sigh of regret to the days of his freedom.

“———— quondam citharâ tacentem  
Suscitat musam, neque semper arcum.”  
Tendit Apollo. —————

Jones had been as tight a beau as could have been found between Redfern and Parramatta, for at least seven months, but he felt now that he must unbend or break. Did no warning voice whisper to him that, between going on the loose and getting tight, there is but a step—but I anticipate.

One morning, he took his seat in the tram-car, at Redfern, bound city-wards, in an unusually despondent frame of mind, when he was suddenly accosted by two old friends, Brown and Robinson.

“Why, Jones, old man, you’re just the fellow we want, to make up the party,” said they, both in a breath. “We’re going to Chowder, on a fishing excursion. Come with us; it will do you all the good in the world.”

But Jones protested that he could not spare the time; he had business to attend to.

“Business be hanged,” cried Brown; “One day won’t hurt you. Come and take a sniff of the briny. We are going to have all sorts of fun; we intend to make a day of it.”

Jones felt inclined to yield, but he said, “No,” again.

“Don’t tempt the poor fellow,” said Robinson; “it’s more than he dare do.”

Thereupon we began chaffing him, and at last, “saying he would ne’er consent,” he consented, and the trio made their way from Hunter Street to the Circular Quay, only stopping once at the Exchange Hotel, to perform the congenial feat of washing the dust out of their mouths. This was at the instigation of Brown, who, being something in the wine and spirit line, was used to the practice. Robinson was in the wholesale something or other, and a frequent refresher seemed to be quite in his line also. Why did Brown wink at



Robinson, as Jones tossed off, on this occasion, a tolerable stiff glass of potent whisky? Who can tell?

Then they went on board, and would have had a very pleasant passage, if there had been, in round numbers, about two hundred and fifty passengers less than there were on board. As it was, they were so crowded that there was no enjoyment, and they had to liquor up more than once during the trip, for bare want of something else to do.

Jones' spirits rose perceptibly: the sea-breeze is, no doubt, exhilarating, and it was probably that which induced him to burst forth into melody.

“ Ring out, glad bells, right merrily,  
And carol forth, ye joyous voices,  
Your tuneful notes, for that must be  
The poorest heart that ne'er rejoices.

They arrived at Chowder in due time, and then commenced the lark, which extended throughout the day. There were refreshment booths at every turn, which they visited, and at which Jones joined his friends in the colonial custom of taking a nip. This peripatetic stroll lasted for about two hours, and embraced numerous stopping places, then they adjourned to an hotel and lunched. The malt liquor freely imbibed at that meal seemed to have little or no effect on the hard heads of his two friends, one of whom was in the wholesale, the other in the wine and spirit line, but it was different with Jones. When he had joined them in the glass of brandy and water which succeeded, he had thrown off all restraint, and had arrived at that stage when a reckless indifference to everybody's opinion is induced, and a wild desire for excitement is aroused. Nothing would do but he must go and have a polka, in the dancing saloon. Thither they repaired, and Jones was not long in forming the acquaintance of a sprightly and good-looking young woman, who had no pride or nonsense about her, even to the extent of insisting upon his standing a glass, which he did cheerfully. With this young lady he danced several times, his head, as well as his heels, being in a whirl the whole time.

Ah! Jones, could the wife of thy bosom have seen thee in that moment of thy glory! Then he persuaded his partner to take a stroll to some more secluded part, in the course of



which she informed him that she had just arrived in the colony, by the immigrant ship, ———, and that her name was Sophia Jane, and received, in turn, the information, improvised by Jones for the occasion, that he was the proprietor of a large hotel in Sydney, and that he was looking for a wife. Then—tell it not in Petersham, Ashfield, Croydon, Burwood, Homebush, or Parramatta—he kissed her, with many ardent protestations of love and fidelity.

Who would be a Good Templar when ambrosial nectar can be quaffed by mortals which possesses such seductive influence.

At this period, or about this period of the day's enjoyment, somehow or other Jones lost Sophia Jane, and found his friends again. How it came about it is not very clear, for his own recollections are slightly obscured, and I am not disposed to place implicit reliance on the assertions of his two friends.

Their statement that Jones, after having his head placed under the pump for ten minutes by a friendly waiter at the hotel where they lunched, challenged his benefactor to single combat, in the presence of a numerous and appreciative audience, is probably an incorrect impression. Nor can one for a moment believe that their return was delayed until the last steamer, by the refractory Jones insisting that he would not "go home till the morning," or that he had to be carried on board *vi et armis*. The melancholy history of that last hour at Chowder will probably never be forgotten. One fact alone seems tolerably clear, amid the confusion which his conduct gave rise to, and that is—that he was a passenger by the seven o'clock train, and that it was just eight o'clock when he knocked at his own door, and was received by his anxious and expectant wife.

"Oh, John, dear, what makes you so late? I was getting quite frightened."

"Bishness, dear. Bishness. English mail going out; batsh letters—whishky and warter—" then collapse, and Jones lay at his length on the hall floor.

We draw a veil over the scene that followed. The next day Jones was very ill—his head swam and his soul refused comfort. Oh that he had never strayed from the path of duty!



*Facilis descensus Averni sed revocare gradum, hic labor, hoc opus est.* Would he ever dare face his friends again? Even Angelina's presence was more than he could bare. She seemed an avenging angel; he hid his face in the bed-clothes, and groaned.

But his punishment was not yet complete. Horror was to accumulate upon horror. A bustle was heard below. There had been a new arrival. A voice reached him from the ground floor, making some remark about a box and a carpet bag, which penetrated his throbbing temples like the nail driven by Jael, the wife of Heber, into the forehead of Sisera.

It was the new servant—which her name was *Sophia Jane*.

Since that fatal day Jones has been more than ever under domestic influence. He no longer seeks an escape from the connubial yoke, and if ever he is tempted to complain that the soup is unsavory, or the joint badly cooked, he is awed into submission by the terrible threat of *Sophia Jane—to tell missus*. Benedicts take warning.







## A TRIP TO THE OLD COUNTRY BY THE ORIENT LINE.

### CHAPTER I.

“ A ship far out on a smiling sea,  
With it's snowy sails outspread ;  
Cleaving the waters merrily,  
And a bright sun overhead.

“ I'm a young man from the country,  
And you don't get over me.”

MY sudden disappearance from my usual haunts on the 4th September last, for a twelvemonth and a day, has resulted in a number of urgent requests that I should give some account of myself for that period ; and, since it has become known that I have just returned from making the grand tour, that I have done the lions of London and Paris, and seen all that may be seen by a traveller in the short space of a year, my friends have given me no peace until they have exacted a promise from me to write *pro bono publico* a narrative of my wanderings. I have in vain pleaded inexperience as a traveller, and inability as a writer. My objections have been met by counter arguments, which I have been unable to resist. I have been told that the *naïve* expression of the colonial youth unused to travel and apt to take

*omne ignotum pro magnifico*

will be quite as interesting as the more elaborate description of foreign scenes furnished by older voyagers, an argument which is flattering but illogical. And the fact of my being a native born Australian, and a resident of Sydney, will give



my fellow-countrymen an especial interest in my tale, as shewing how the older countries and their attractions are regarded from a Sydney point of view. The last argument has decided me. Other Australians meditating a similar tour may possibly derive a good deal of information, and some little amusement, from the record of my hurried but very pleasant and agreeable trip. That I enjoyed the trip hugely I may state at the outset, but I question if, among all the gay and novel scenes I visited, I experienced the same glad sensation as when I again caught sight of the dear land of my birth—the Queen City of the South.

I was not prompted to take this voyage from any yearning for “the sea, the sea, the open sea.” No one had ever heard me humming any of your ultra-marine ballads, such as

“’Tis oh ! for a gay and gallant barque,  
And a brisk and lively breeze ;  
With a bully crew, and a captain too,  
To carry me o’er the seas.”

the solitary voyage which I once took to Melbourne having convinced me that there is a much closer relation between the briskness of the breeze and the liveliness of the passenger than is altogether consistent with health or comfort.

Nor was I impelled to expatriate myself by any especial desire for novelty or adventure. I was born in Sydney ; at a public school in Sydney I first learned to solve the mystery of the three R’s, and had my

“*Arma virumque cano*”

drummed into me ; and it will be long ere my impressions of that classical academy, especially those which took a muscular form, will fade from my memory. I was brought up in Sydney in the way I should go, in the firm persuasion that when I was old, I should not have occasion to depart from it.

With a strong love of my country, a pride in her beautiful climate and vast natural resources, and an implicit faith in the ability and patriotism of her public men, I was quite content to pursue the even tenor of my way, without feeling any desire to seek “fresh fields and pastures new,” and to devote myself to the duties of my profession, with the sole aid of that invaluable commodity—“colonial experience.”



But fate, and the stern fiat of my medical adviser decreed otherwise. I worked so hard, and consumed so much midnight oil, in the service of my clients, that my health gave way, and some relaxation became absolutely necessary. The symptoms were of a very decided character—an irregular appetite, a frequent desire to take something to drink, indicating fever: and a consumptive tendency in reference to fine-cut cavendish, together with a habit of prolonged slumber, which evidently shewed that there was something amiss with the brain. Perfect rest of mind and body were strictly enjoined by that eminent member of the faculty, Dr. I. O. Dean, as the two things absolutely necessary to my recovery.

Where could these be more readily obtained than on board a well-found vessel, with nothing to do, no cares to disturb me, new scenes to visit, the cheerful society of a score or two fellow passengers, and the sea breeze to cool my fevered brow; to say nothing of the physical benefit likely to accrue from a steady course of emetics, for I was unable to free my mind from the sad suspicion that this discipline would be included in the programme! So I made up my mind to cross the Atlantic, and having arrived at that determination, I felt better by anticipation.

Having provided myself, in addition to the usual outfit for a two-months' voyage, with a large-sized Lett's Diary, a Webster's Dictionary, and a copy of Halloran's poems, to while away the tedious time on board ship, I betook myself to the office of Messrs. Gilchrist, Watt and Co., and took my place, and thus placed the step beyond recall.

“'Twas in the prime of summer time,  
An evening calm and cool,”

when, in company with two friends from Sydney, I went on board the Company's steamer *Lusitania*, Captain Harrison, having secured a comfortable berth in that exceedingly comfortable vessel.

The first emotion I expressed on board was that which fills every well regulated mind when the hour of parting arrives; and I must confess that when the graceful little tender the *Prince of Wales*, which had conveyed us to our mooring off Garden Island, left the ship's side with the friends



who had come to see us off and the slight girlish form of one fair Australian,

“ Who waved aloft a snowy scarf,  
That fluttered in the breeze,”

grew fainter and fainter in the distance until it was lost to sight, I felt a lump in my throat and a sinking of the heart for which no doctor could prescribe. But Jones, who had accompanied me, and whose callous feelings are never the prey to any soft emotion, took in the scene with brutal indifference, and suggested brandy and water, by the aid of which restorative I stilled the beating of my bursting heart, and prepared to enjoy myself.

We were off! Several ambiguous instructions were given to the crew by the chief officer, which had the effect of putting on the screw, and the *Lusitania* glided through the clear waters of the harbor, slowly, gracefully, and without apparent effort, and the voyage commenced.

I could go into extasies at the beautiful and picturesque scenes presented to our admiring gaze as we steamed towards the Heads—the various bays and inlets on either side, with the wooded heights beyond, dotted over with ornate villas and pleasure gardens, the landscape here and there relieved by the bright dresses of ladies grouped under shady trees and watching the busy scene on the water, the fishing boats, the small steamers going to and fro with passengers, and all the attractions, which, combined, render Sydney harbour the admiration of all who visit it. I will content myself by quoting the Yankee's tribute of praise—

“ Jerusalem and thunder mixed,  
Greased lightning and tarnation,  
This harbour euchres all I've seen,  
And fairly licks creation.”

We passed Gabo Island at noon on the following day, Thursday, 5th September, 1878. I then commenced my log with the entry “weather unsettled,” everything in fact being unsettled at the time, and all bustle and confusion. Added to this the sea got a little rough, and the first symptoms of an epidemic in the shape of the much dreaded *mal-de-mer* made their appearance.



The children, who were on board by the dozen, whispered with pale faces to their pas and mas that they thought they were going to be sick, a prediction which was generally fulfilled in the most conspicuous manner, while there seemed to be a very general desire on the part of the seniors to lean over the larboard side of the vessel to gaze in rapt attention on the waters below.

To view the misfortunes of others with satisfaction, it is said, is natural, although humiliating, and I should probably have been able to indulge in this gratification, had I not, by a singular coincidence been seized with a bilious feeling, accompanied by a severe headache, which so prostrated me that I was compelled to retire to my cabin, where I lay for some hours wishing I had been born in Japan, so that I might have quitted with some degree of *éclat* by means of the "Happy Despatch," a world which seemed to my distempered brain to be topsy-turvey. I had the satisfaction of seeing one of my friends, H——, lying near me in the throes of a violent attack of sea sickness, but while the groans that he uttered with such melting pathos brought some relief to my feelings, it was counteracted by Jones' appearance and demeanour, which was expressive of the highest enjoyment.

Good heavens! would that man never be sick?

But what could be expected from a man who has the digestion of an emu, and who has no proper feelings of any kind—a man who will turn the misfortunes of his best friends into a joke. The wretch, never to my knowledge, had a single ailment throughout the voyage, nor was he ever known to miss a meal, while his light frivolous mind was continually showing itself in insane attempts at versification. His appetite seemed to increase with the approach of bad weather, and while the other passengers would be lying on their backs, unable to touch a morsel of food, this audacious villain would be heard seated at the dinner table with the officers of the ship, and two or three other equally hardened individuals, humming, in mockery of our condition, some such arrant nonsense as the following:—

"Let us all be up and eating  
 With a heart for every slice,  
 Beef grows cold and life is fleeting  
 Pass the champagne and the ice.



We got to Melbourne somehow or other; how or in what manner is not recorded in my log, and I could say a good deal that has not been said before about this rival city, where we stayed four days, were it not that my instructions are to hurry over this part of the voyage. Similar instructions seemed to have been issued to the Captain and officers, for we were in a perpetual state of hurry throughout the trip; why this indecent haste on such a trying occasion? Had we not scrambled through the water at such a fearful pace, possibly I might not have succumbed to that attack of sickness. But happily it did not last long; my appetite gradually returned, and the day we left Williamstown I was so much better for the spell on shore, that in spite of the wines and cool beverages of which I partook, my spirits became quite enlivened, and I tried to imagine myself a gainer so far, though if the voyage had ended there I should have been much in the position of the boy mentioned by Sam Weller, who when he had mastered the alphabet was in considerable doubt whether it was worth while going through so much to gain so little.

Appearances are very deceptive, and there never was a truer saying than

There's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip  
with the application,

“Especially when you're on board of a ship.”

I never recollect a finer night than that of the 13th September when we left Williamstown, or a more beautiful sunset. The sea was calm and smooth, there was scarcely a breath of air, and as we left Hobson's Bay and steered away with the open sea before us, harmony seemed to reign on all sides afloat and ashore.

“The pale and passionless stars looked down  
From out their tranquil height,  
On bank and river, on road and town  
That fair mid-summer night.”

Only it was not mid-summer, and the calm was deceptive, for at mid-night it came on to blow great guns. The ship rolled and tossed from side to side and from stem to stern until everybody and everything was upset. All this came on so suddenly that there was no time for preparation of any



kind. We were quietly asleep in our berths with a prospect of a good night's rest, when the wind took a cowardly advantage of us and knocked us about in the most cruel manner. To say that everyone was sick—Jones and a few other hard-hearted wretches always excepted—is to offer the mildest explanation of their condition. I made no entry in my log that night, though I made several in the sea. I was quite incapable of writing, and had to express my inmost feelings in the usual way.

“For there tossed the victim, all bilious and pale  
And nought he could do seemed of any avail,  
For his liver was sluggish, his stomach undone  
And the weight on his chest at least half a ton.”

That gale was No. 1.

## CHAPTER II.

—The hospitable sea, strange word !  
Men's fears to truth are traitors ;  
So blacks greet tigers as “My Lord,”  
And worship alligators.

The love that maketh all things fair,  
The youth which makes one rainbow in the air.

UP to this point in the voyage I had not made many acquaintances on board, having had enough to do to look after myself. I now, however, struck up friendship with a few congenial spirits, whom I shall introduce to the reader in due course. There was no frantic desire for introduction, but occasionally two passengers would be brought together in a most unexpected manner, especially if they happened to be standing opposite to each other on different sides of the deck, by one of those sudden and playful lurches for which the *Lusitania* was famous ; otherwise the passengers at the commencement of the voyage were not disposed to be gushing or communicative. But if they were moody and taciturn under the circumstances, it must be admitted that the sea was suspicious and aggravating in its conduct. It would be as calm and smooth as possible from breakfast time to dinner, and then just when you least expected it, and were prepared to enjoy a comfortable meal, it would get up and force itself



into a passion without any assignable cause for the rest of the afternoon, and all prospect of comfort would vanish.

We had one gloomy-looking passenger on board, whose appearance particularly arrested my attention. He seemed to take a very truculent view of the position. He was a man about 40 years of age, and, judging from the mournful expression of his face, he must have been employed for a number of years in some large funeral establishment, for no man, except by long practice, could have trained his features to such a lugubrious cast. My first impression on catching sight of him was that he was about to commit suicide; then I thought he must have got an aggravated attack of sea-sickness; then I didn't know what to think. I don't believe he spoke a word to any soul on board for the first week, not that his feelings were too deep for utterance, but as he usually soliloquized on the lee side of the ship, with his head hanging over the bulwarks, no one but himself derived any benefit from the performance.

Then we had a squatter from Queensland, a good-looking young fellow, chiefly remarkable for his readiness to fall in love, and especially spooney in reference to a country-woman of his own, a magnificent specimen of the genus girl, whose long wavy hair, the color of her native cornstalks, worn *au naturel* hanging in profusion over her shoulders, entirely captivated him. The imperturbable good nature of this young man was delightful. Even Jones' banter failed to disturb his customary serenity, though that lively youth dared to twit the squatter with a sudden passion for the young lady in question, by singing the nursery rhyme—

“ There was a young lady called Mary,  
Whose hair was a kind of canary;  
Who sang like an angel,  
And danced like a fairy.”

Then we had an Italian priest, a High Church English clergyman, several business men, having no particular characteristics; a Congregational parson, and a military man whom we commenced by calling captain, but afterwards promoted successively to the ranks of major and colonel; and a number of girls and married women, too numerous and too pretty for separate description; in all, 410 souls, besides



the captain and ship's officers, who numbered 120. Of the captain it may be said, in the words of the old song,

“ He was adored by all his men ;  
For worthy Captain Harrison  
Did all that lay within him to  
Promote the comfort of his crew.”

The chief officer and purser also deserve, *inter alios*, the tribute of praise and esteem for the consideration they shewed to the passengers.

During the whole of Saturday we were in the midst of a terrific gale. Gale No. 1 was nothing to it,

“ The thunder rolled, the tempest roared,  
We shipped a lot of sea on board.”

and my experience of the sea to turn a man inside out, became still further enlarged. Our live stock suffered considerably during this storm, from the obstinate habit the ship had got into of rolling from side to side, as if she were a gigantic cradle, and we a lot of babies who required rocking to sleep,—when the rocking was the very thing which prevented us from sleeping. The list of killed and wounded during this pitched battle between the ship and the elements comprised three bullocks and sixteen sheep, and the casualties were numerous. One woman had her collar-bone broken, a sailor got jammed against the side of the vessel by the giving way of the water cask, and there were any number of broken shins and minor injuries.

Anything like a regular square meal was out of the question, and brandy and water was only imbibed under circumstances of great difficulty.

The squatter held up bravely, though not a petticoat appeared on deck, and two or three other passengers shewed up, but they looked pale and anxious, and appetiteless.

Jones alone was fully equal to the occasion. He had lashed himself to some part of the rigging, and was looking out to sea, with great complacency, as if he had just attained the summit of his desires.

“ Oh, give to me the swelling breeze  
And the white waves running high,  
My boys,  
And the white waves running high”

was his expression of boisterous delight.



The next day we managed, by a series of acrobatic performances, altogether unparalleled in my limited experience, to get under the lee of Kangaroo Island, where we very sensibly dropped anchor, and remained all night and the next day (Sunday), but didn't have any service on board, as it would under the circumstances, have been a service of danger. On Monday, we went ashore and none of us, even the most nautically inclined passenger, had anything disparaging to say of the "dull tame shore," or regretted the opportunity of setting foot once more upon *terra firma*.

Adelaide is a fine city, and comprises some large and handsome public building. The House of Parliament is not a very pretentious edifice, in an architectural point of view, but it is a better one than *we* can boast of, at present. Government House, St. Peter's College, the Supreme Court, and the block of Government offices, are all creditable to the colony and worthy of inspection. I was struck with the appearance of the Model School, but I had no time to go over it; but what especially excited my admiration was the large areas of ground on which these buildings are situated, which sets them off to so much greater advantage than if they were hemmed in with other buildings on all sides. The Post Office is a fine building, and as much unlike the Sydney Post Office in design as it is possible to be. I would have sent a sketch, together with one of the Lunatic Asylum, although a view of the latter institution may possibly suggest accommodation for a greater number of lunatics than the population of the place would seem to warrant.

Probably the institution was only partly filled, and there were two or three persons on board the *Lusitania* as mad as hatters, whom I should not have been sorry to have consigned to that safe receptacle. Why a hatter, by the bye, should be more prone to aberration of intellect than any other tradesman, I cannot conceive, unless it is that he has so much head work to do that his brains get turned. If so I can sympathise with him. I found, however, that as we got into calm weather, and my health improved, and I became less nervous, that these eccentricities became less apparent. Jones, for instance, who appeared to me above all others, to merit the straightest kind of straight jacket



Not for a crime he'd done, or cause  
 He broke the ship or nature's laws,  
 But for a simple trick he had  
 Of quoting what he'd learned and read.

improved so in acquaintance that he became a continual and never failing source of amusement even to me.

I must add a word in praise of the Adelaide Botanical Gardens at the risk of infringing my instructions to hurry over this part of the voyage. They are laid out with great taste, and comprise among other botanical varieties a very choice collection of hot-house plants and ferns. In the course of a stroll through this delightful retreat, in a sequestered and shady nook, seated on a rustic bench in close proximity to each other, and apparently engaged in a very tender conversation, I caught a glimpse of two of my fellow passengers—the Queensland squatter, and the young lady with the tawny hair. But I was not the man to spoil sport, and I quickly made tracks in an opposite direction. He was probably teaching his companion the language of flowers.

“For not alone in olden times, but in the present day  
 We find opinions are expressed in this mysterious way.”

Ah! well! they were young, and youth is the season for love.

“Oh! talk not to me of names great in story  
 The days of our youth are the days of our glory,  
 And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty  
 Are worth all your laurels though never so plenty.”

This artful young fellow had made the acquaintance of his fair countrywoman on the ground of kinship. I forget the exact relationship he claimed. He was her great uncle's sister's husband's brother-in-law, or something of that sort. At any rate they called each other cousins, and when young people of opposite sexes address each other by that term they are getting on dangerous ground,

“Pray had you ever a cousin  
 And did that cousin happen to sing;  
 Sisters we've all by the dozen  
 But a cousin's a different thing.



and when this sort of thing breaks out at sea it is generally all up with the party. There was no recognition of the truants in my impassive countenance when I met them in the saloon that evening.

I was very ill the next day when we sailed. Probably it was the unwonted exercise on shore, or something else, which produced such a soporific effect upon my frame enfeebled by the want of rest, that I slept for sixteen hours at a stretch, during which time we ran 257 miles. My diary furnishes no special news of importance here except the addition to our number of several passengers from Adelaide consisting of some New Caledonian expirees, and an important personage who was an Ex-Commissioner of Insolvent Estates, and who had apparently taken all the benefit he could get out of his position even to the extent of getting whitewashed himself. I came to this conclusion from the fact that he presented himself on board with one small carpet bag. The rest of his wardrobe he had perhaps handed over to his friends as a parting tribute of effection. Added to this he seemed nervous and anxious so long as we remained in sight of land, and kept looking back; and when Jones interpreted that longing gaze in his usual barbarous and unfeeling manner by singing *more suo*,

“ Who ran to meet me on the shore,  
Who crowd my steps and guard my door,  
Who long to see my face once more,  
My creditors.”

I felt that I was not far out in my conjecture. But if the Ex-Commissioner had but a scanty outfit, he had a cloak of official dignity which as soon as we got out to sea he put on and wore with much satisfaction for the rest of the voyage.

My birthday occurring on the 21st, I celebrated the event by a champagne treat, to which I invited some six or eight passengers, and which was duly appreciated. The next morning I awoke with a violent headache. I attribute this entirely to the fact that the sea went suddenly down in the night, without the least warning of its intention, and became as smooth and calm as a duckpond. Such sudden changes are very trying to the constitution.



## CHAPTER III.

“ It was the holy Sabbath day,  
A day of peaceful calm ;  
And o’er the ship there seemed to be,  
A nameless spirit balm.

Whenever the way seemed long,  
And his heart began to fail ;  
She would sing some wonderful song,  
Or tell some marvellous tale.”

THE next day being Sunday, and the weather delightfully fine, there was no obstacle to the holding of Divine Service, which was held accordingly on deck, in the presence of a large and attentive congregation. Whether it was to prevent any jealousy arising out of the denominational element on board, or because it is a way they have at sea, or because there is no official connection between the ship and the state, I am unable to explain, but none of the clergymen took any part in the ceremony. It was performed by the officers of the ship by instalments, the Captain reading the prayers, the Chief Officer the lessons, and the Purser dealing with the sermon, somewhat after Midshipman Easy’s triangular duel. However, it all went off very well, and the irrepressible Jones, who constituted himself leader of the choir, gave out at the proper pauses hymns, which were familiar to most of us, and which we could sing without accompaniment. The souls of the saloon passengers being placed under official supervision, the ministers, who were thus debarred from officiating, to mark their sense of neglect, and this three-cornered mode of worship, devoted themselves for the rest of the voyage exclusively to the second-cabin and steerage passengers, and, it is to be hoped, did a great deal of good.

I find upon reference to my log, that the same night I had a tepid bath, and a bad attack of indigestion. Whether the bath produced the indigestion, or the indigestion necessitated the bath, I forget ; but at any rate I slept until about midnight, when we were treated to gale No. 3, which was quite equal, if not superior, in foam and fury to either of its predecessors. I noticed that this sort of thing always happened at midnight. It is not only churchyards that yawn



at that hour. The waves of the Southern Ocean do it also, only on a much larger scale. I find, too, on this occasion, I used the word "fearful," and underlined it, to express my strong sense of the disgust I felt at the ship's performances. Now we would rise up on the top of a gigantic billow, as if we had been shot into the air by a catapult, to descend the next moment in the centre of a vortex, which looked as if it would swallow us up. Every five minutes a sea swept the deck, and a lot of water found its way into the saloon. Groans resounded on all sides as before, but they had a deeper and more tragic sound. We were rounding Cape Leuwin, a piece of information which was conveyed to me by the Mark Tapley of the ship—Jones—in one of his abominable couplets—

" There was a young man of Cape Leuwin,  
Whose motto was up and be doin'."

The temperature about this time became very sharp and cold. We had to put on flannels, and to take our grog at nights, *calidum cum*, instead of *frigidum sine*. Many of the passengers who had quite got over the feeling were sea-sick again going round this headland, so persistently did the *Lusitania* play at pitch and toss. With a change of wind, however, all these unpleasantnesses disappeared, and we left the land altogether on Friday, the 27th September, bounding along at the rate of 13 knots, with all sail crowded on to the boat.

Having now left the Australian coast, and commenced the run in real earnest, with a fair wind and a smooth sea, we began to cultivate each other's acquaintance in a more cheery spirit, and to organize various amusements to pass away the time. Several passengers, chiefly ladies, now appeared on the deck for the first time, emerging from their cabins like rabbits from their holes, and, like those timid creatures, ready to rush back at the approach of the enemy. We established a sweepstakes for each day's run, which created a little excitement; and we organized a Supreme Court, and created the Ex-Commissioner Judge, besides appointing officers of the Court and special constables. When no important cases were set down for trial, we converted the Court into a hall of public entertainment, and formed a Debating Society. A



Scotch minister, with an amusing accent, and a fund of dry humour, gave us great assistance in these amusements; he made an excellent cross examining counsel when an important case came on.

On the 28th September we got into the region of the trade winds, and the voyage thenceforth became very pleasant. Light clothing was now the order of the day, and all the wines were put in ice, which was nice.

The increased animation on board showed itself in various ways. A grand concert was given in the saloon, followed, a few days after, by private theatricals. We found, however, that acting charades were much easier of performance, and required much less preparation. One of these was especially successful.

SCENE I represented the interior of an undertaker's establishment. A large inscription in black letters on a white ground appeared over the door, with the words, MUTE, UNDERTAKER, FUNERALS FURNISHED, while seated at a desk was the proprietor (the melancholy man), got up in a black suit and a white choker.

*Enter Mr. Mizzle.*—(Jones): Oh! dear, oh! dear. So true a friend, and in his prime, too. (*is overcome with grief*).

*Mute*: Ah, sir, I sympathize with you; but flesh is grass, and a handsome funeral—

*Mizzle*: My best—my only friend. Oh! (*sobbing*)

*Mute*: Be comforted, sir. (*Offers a glass of wine, which his visitor swallows, and then holds out his glass for a second*). As I was saying, sir—four coffins, oak, elm, lead and mahogany—

*Mizzle*: Ah, yes; I'm so overcome that I can hardly speak.

*Mute*: Take another glass, sir. Don't disturb yourself. I know what you would say. Leave it to me, sir: we find everything. It'll be a comfort to your feelings to know that no expense was spared.

*Mizzle*: Mr. Mute, you are a feeling man, and your port is excellent. I may leave it all to you, then.

*Mute*: Certainly, sir, certainly; we find everything.

*Mizzle*: Oh! dear; oh! dear, I feel so relieved, Then Mr. Mute, I'll say good morning. (*going*).



*Mute* : There is one thing you've forgotten, sir, which is very natural in your affliction. You have not told me where to find the body.

*Mizzle* : I thought, Mr. Mute, you gave me to understand you found everything.

*Mute* : So we do, sir ; so we do, but——

*Mizzle* : Then Mr. Mute (*throwing off all appearance of grief*), find the body.

(Mr. Mizzle then mizzles, and Mr. Mute is struck dumb.)

SCENE II. was a roadside inn, which afforded an opportunity to several young ladies to appear as barmaids and housemaids, S—— and his wife personating the landlord and landlady.

Enter a young gentleman and his wife (the Queensland squatter and the young lady with the tawny hair) wanting to know what they can have for dinner, which, after a number of delicacies had been asked for and excused on one plea or another, consisted of nothing but cold cow-heel.

SCENE III. opened on a group of anxious friends standing by the bedside of a young lady who was about to undergo an operation in the eye, and the final scene, in which all the sailors were personated by young ladies, with the Scotch minister as captain, represented the whole word "MUTINY."

We had dancing on deck every night, and as the weather grew hotter and more oppressive, steam punkahs were rigged up in the saloon, which were very refreshing. The Christy Minstrels also made their appearance on board on several occasions. One source of amusement, in which some of us indulged, was derived from the fore-castle. There was an old salt among the crew, the best hand at spinning a yarn I ever heard. Yarns may no doubt have been spun in which there were more sanguinary scenes and daring feats, but for a series of the most improbable adventures entered upon and carried to a successful issue by one man, increasing in intensity until they reach the grand climax, I will back that ancient mariner against any historian dead or alive. Whenever we had a dull hour or two to pass away we used to get this old fellow to spin us one of his yarns, and he was always ready and willing. I believe he made them up as he went, but they were not the less amusing on that account, although they would not bear repetition on account of the tremendous oaths with which he



backed up every assertion which seemed to be more than usually difficult of digestion. There was a yarn about a whale which had been the terror of certain seas, attacking every boat sent out to capture it, until he—the old salt in question—adopted a stratagem by which the monster was secured. At his suggestion a large cask was sent adrift upon which the animal expended his ire; the enemy came quietly behind and harpooned him. The dialogue improvised by the old salt between himself and the whale was one of the richest things I ever heard.

We crossed the line on the 7th October, a fact which was made apparent to several passengers by a simple but ingenious contrivance. All that is necessary to bring the equator within the range of one's vision, is to place a hair across the glass of the telescope, when the line comes out in bold relief, and appears to be hanging, like Mahomet's coffin, half way between the sky and the sea. Shoals of flying fish crossed and recrossed the wake of the ship, some of them taking a flight of a clear hundred yards out of water. One of them had the temerity to push his explorations as far as the quarter-deck of the *Lusitania*, where he was immediately seized, and would have been put to an ignominious death, but the ladies pleaded for him and restored him tenderly to his native element, where he sought safety, as he had courted danger, in flight. We all recollect how the sailor was ridiculed when he described the flying fish he had seen in his voyages, and what implicit credence was accorded to him when he spoke of having anchored in the Red Sea and hooked up one of the wheels of Pharaoh's chariot. Thus we see that truth is stranger than fiction. The chariots with the horses and the harness, have disappeared. No traces have been found, while the flying fish is an accepted fact, and has become almost as common as a Yarmouth bloater.

On Friday, 11th October, we sighted the island of Socotra, and shortly after passed Gardafui, where the Captain went ashore. The heat was so oppressive to-day that a lady fainted at the table, and had to be restored with smelling salts and iced punch. I attribute my immunity from a similar weakness entirely to the last mentioned prescription. It is equally efficacious as a preventive. Whisky punch, flavoured with lime juice, which was a favourite beverage on board, is by no



means bad to take at sea, or, for that matter, anywhere. I am inclined to think that, on a sea voyage, it is better than wine, and I have Father Prout's authority for that opinion :

*Vitæ Ros divine,  
Vinum quis laudaret,  
Te præsentè—quis,  
Palmam vino daret ?*

Some of the Frenchmen on board had a number of curios for sale in the way of shells, etc., and great fun arose out of the frantic efforts on the part of the saloon passengers to make themselves understood. H—— spoke French like a native (of Australia), and so did one or two of the others, but the majority were very much in the position of the French governess, who understood the language thoroughly, but could not speak it. Others again, like the Irishman who wanted the loan of a gridiron, commenced by “*voulez-vous,*” and then put the question in their own vernacular, “What will you take for that?” But a good many articles changed hands, nevertheless. The words *combien* and *comme ça* will be found remarkably useful on such an occasion, and not too burdensome for the memory. My friend, the squatter, failed altogether in his effort to make the Frenchmen construe his meaning, which was not to be wondered at considering that he addressed them as if they had been Australian blackfellows, while the Scotchman's accent was by far too broad for the Gallic tongue. The Italian priest was the only one who spoke with any degree of fluency.

The thermometer stood at 90° in the shade on Sunday, 13th October, when we arrived at Aden. But I must give that place a chapter to itself.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

The niggers round us danced and played,  
And sang, but knew not tune nor measure,  
And boatmen, dogs, and children made  
A hideous noise, and called it pleasure.

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The sun like a furnace is glowing,  
The city lies white in the heat ;  
But in fathoms of coolness is flowing  
The river so fresh and so sweet.



THE first view of Aden, the great coasting station of the Indian Ocean, gives but a melancholy impression of the place. It stands on a peninsular jutting out from the coast in a semi-circular form, and looks like a gigantic blue rock, perforated by a number of caves. The tall rugged peaks which stand out in such bold relief, some of them over 1000 feet in height, are the cones of extinct volcanoes, and in the scattered heaps and terraces of lava, can be seen evidence of the convulsions which must have taken place ages ago. The harbor is, however, large and commodious, and, when we entered it, presented a very animated appearance. No sooner had we cast anchor than we were surrounded by the natives—men and boys—most of them naked, with the exception of a strip of cloth tied round the loins, chattering and gesticulating like a cargo of Chinamen disembarking from a gold ship, each man paddling his own canoe, and calling out to us, "Have a dive! have a dive!" I throw a penny piece into the water; down go half-a-dozen natives, head first, and the coin is secured before it reaches the bottom. But I have seen Australian natives do the same thing quite as well, and I soon got tired of this fun.

We took more interest in the wares offered for sale by the Parsee and Jew pedlars who came on board. These consisted of ostrich feathers, smoking caps, slipper patterns, coral beads, *et hoc genus omne*.

The prices asked for these wares seemed rather exorbitant, but the Captain put us up to a dodge that was worth knowing; not to make any purchases until we were on the point of departure.

Acting upon this valuable hint, we contented ourselves with a close inspection, until the operation of coaling was over and the steamer ready to put to sea, and then we found the natives prepared to make an alarming sacrifice, and to sell their whole stock at considerably less than prime cost. The ladies thus obtained a liberal supply of ostrich plumes at about half their value, and smoking caps came suddenly into fashion. I had some misgivings as to whether this was a strictly justifiable proceeding, but, acting on the principle that when you are in Turkey you must do as the turkeys do, I made my purchases with the others, consoling myself with the reflection that the vendors were quite up to the dodge, and



had, in their original demand, put on two or three hundred per cent. to meet the occasion.

The *Lusitania* now commenced to take her coal on board from a coaling barge.

We went ashore in native boats, for which we paid but a trifle, the boatmen taking the change out of us by means of boating songs, yelled in the most discordant tones, and utterly unintelligible to anyone but themselves. On shore, we were again besieged by natives, in every variety of costume, not much exceeding in scantiness the full dress of the Australian savage—a cocked hat and breast pin. Most of them, however, had a substantial covering to their heads, either in the shape of a turban, or an immense crop of woolly hair, resembling a gigantic bird's nest. Some of them were hotel runners from the town; some had donkeys for hire, and some bestrode camels; a few had horses and vehicles, and never were animals so wretchedly poor. Others—the women chiefly—had eggs, fruit, and vegetables for sale.

The agent for the Orient line of steamers is a Parsee merchant, rejoicing in the singular (for a Parsee) name of Grimshaw. He has a store and café, a square stuccoed building, covered with bamboos, and surrounded by a verandah. Here we found late files of European papers, and partook of some iced drinks, which were very acceptable with the glass at 95° in the shade. The natives didn't seem to feel the heat in the least, and we amused ourselves for about an hour by offering prizes for racing, jumping, dancing and, lastly, fighting, into all which entertainments they entered with a vigour perfectly astonishing under the circumstances. A rupee is quite sufficient to set the two oldest friends at loggerheads, and to provoke the keenest emulation in any possible direction.

The following description is that of a Semawley man, who engrossed a full share of my attention. I have seen and read of various modes of getting a livelihood, but the way this party contrives to support himself and family is worth recording. It would make a fortune in Sydney in no time. Even Trickett or the Demon Bowler would stand no chance with him. His sole article of attire is a pair of light drawers, and he carries in his hand a small circular shield. Thus accoutred, he takes the field against all comers, and



challenges anyone to touch him with a stone or any other heavy object that may be thrown at him from a distance of ten yards. When I add that I picked up half-a-dozen stones from the road, and threw them at his curly head with my full force, and with the deliberate intention of doing him grievous bodily injury, and that he received each missile calmly on the face of his shield, without a muscle of his face being disturbed, the reader will have some idea of the quickness of hand and eye which he has attained. His earnings from this source must be considerable. He does not ask for money for this feat of arms, but for the photographs of his wife and himself.

We had time to see the town of Aden, and to enjoy, at the rate of 4s. a head, a magnificent luncheon at the *Hotel de L'Universe*, a splendid building containing accommodation for 500 visitors. At this hotel, which is well kept and will compare favourably with any I have seen elsewhere, the Prince of Wales stayed when *en route* to India. As we sat at luncheon, punkahs, worked by natives, cooled the temperature of the room, while boys with fans followed us about, with the best intentions towards us and themselves, but were rather a bore than otherwise.

Before we left Aden a party of half a dozen, which I joined, paid a visit to the huge tanks built by the Egyptians a couple of thousand years ago. Each tank is capable of containing three million gallons of water. The road to these tanks was long and dreary, and the heat so oppressive that I did not, for my part, think half so much of them as I should have done under happier, *i.e.* cooler, circumstances.

The heat, in short, robbed us of our powers of admiration, and the only remark vouchsafed in praise of these splendid records of antiquity, now in apparently as good a state of preservation as ever, was that made by the melancholy man who accompanied us—that the tank, taken as a *hole*, was decidedly worth coming to see.

There is only one church (English) at Aden. It stands by the waterside, so that the congregation may get the full benefit of the sea breeze. Even then the service has to be conducted before sunrise, on account of the fierce opposition which this luminary offers to public worship. The climate of Aden is essentially not favourable to devotion. I forgot to



ask whether the triangular system of conducting Church services obtains there. Probably that is where it originated, the sun being too powerful to admit of their being carried through except by relays of ministers.

We were all glad to get back to the ship, on account of the heat, which spoilt all real enjoyment. Even Jones, the hilarious, was affected by it, and the only couplet his exhausted nature was capable of was uttered in a desponding tone as we retraced our steps to Steamer Point.

“Though with jewels and gold all my pockets were laden,  
’Twould be vain to persuade me to settle at Aden.”

In truth 'tis a barren and desolate spot, albeit a grand and important half-way station on the Eastern highway.

We got back to the ship, but oh! what a change in the appearance of the *Lusitania*. She was nearly as dirty as the barge which had brought her supplies of coal. As a proof of the climate at Aden I may mention that one of our passengers had a sunstroke, and was delirious for a couple of days.

We weighed anchor at 8 p.m. If we had weighed ourselves I am sure we should have been found to have lost some pounds of flesh even in that short time. Now we were steaming towards the Red Sea, of sacred historic memory, and by midnight we were in the Straits of Babelmandeb. The temperature of the sea water was 90 degrees, and in the engine room it was 110 degrees.

The parched and arid appearance of the numerous islands we passed, utterly devoid of vegetation, was anything but inviting. As we went by one of them the heat came to us like the blast of a furnace, and the little wind there was being directly aft, we did not get much benefit from it. It being next to impossible to remain below, we most of us slept, or attempted to sleep, on deck, and I should probably have succeeded in getting an hour or two's rest, but that a mutiny broke out among the sheep, and they took possession of the ship, trotting about over our recumbent figures in the most reckless and promiscuous manner. One fellow coolly planted his trotter full on my face, and woke me up effectually. That was, without exception, the most audacious *wether* I experienced during the whole voyage. Then the sailors commenced to wash the decks, and we were disturbed by



another set of scrubbers. I don't look back to this night with any particularly pleasant recollections.

My log for Tuesday, 15th October, supplies the following items:—Entered the Red Sea, which is not red after all, but a kind of greenish blue. What a sell! Passed several large steamers taking troops to India. Deputation to the captain to complain of the heat. 120 degrees in the engine room; stoker taken up in a fainting condition. Was standing close by and prescribed whisky punch. Took some myself by way of example. Bad attack of indigestion. Weather ridiculous. Jones doesn't feel it. Very singular. Ran 268 miles.

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#### CHAPTER V.

“Twas in the desert depths we took our night rest on the ground,  
Our steeds unbridled, and by each a Bedouin sleeping sound.  
Afar the moonbeams gleamed upon the long low hills of Nile,  
Round us white bones of camels strewed the sands for many a mile.

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“I prithee give me back my heart,  
Since I cannot have thine;  
For if from thine thou wilt not part,  
Why, then, should'st thou have mine?”

THE day was just dawning on Friday, the 18th October, as we entered the Gulf of Suez, which does not at that spot present a very inviting appearance. All that the eye takes in of the shore on either side is a series of sandstone terraces in irregular order, dry, parched up, and utterly bare and devoid of vegetation. At about 11 a.m. we passed a lighthouse, and near to it a heap of stones was pointed out, which is said to mark the spot where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, pursued by Pharaoh and his host.

Those who argue that this crossing was effected by the operation of natural laws, and not by any miraculous agency, point out how easily a strong North Wind could have caused a sandbank to form at this spot, and, as a proof that this was the case, they call attention to a large basin in depression near Lake Tamsah, through which the Canal has been cut, into which the waters of the Gulf were diverted.



But although that basin would hold water to any extent, this argument would not; for even supposing that the wind shifted suddenly after the children of Israel got over, it could hardly have carried away the sandbank before their pursuers reached the shore. We can only therefore come to the conclusion that Pharaoh made the Gulf at a different point where there was deep water, and being as we know, an obstinate party, insisted upon crossing without taking proper soundings, and so got engulfed.

We passed Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb in the night. I did not see either of them, as I was fast asleep in my cabin, but as all that was to be discerned from the deck of the steamer was a faint outline of a range of hills miles away, I did not lose much. It is said that,

“Distance lends enchantment to the view,  
And clothes the mountains with an azure hue.”

I don't know much about the enchantment, but I can vouch for the hue. Everything in the back ground of a sea-scape assumes the colour of indigo, and when land is sighted at a distance and you can distinguish it from a cloud, you may be said to have a good view of it.

The Gulf runs into a very narrow point before opening out in the Bay of Suez. Here we had to wait for the Canal Pilot, and had plenty of time to admire the animated scene presented to our view. A whole fleet of native boats, some with high prows like the old Roman galleys and large square lateen sails skimming over the waters like huge sea-fowl, feluccas, Arab dhows and boats of every description, manned by half-naked natives and laden with fruit, vegetables, &c., filled the Bay. There could not have been less than 500 of these boats in sight.

We invested in watermelons to a considerable extent, as well as in oranges, dates, lemons, &c., for which we had to pay but a trifle; and then the pilot came on board and we entered the Canal and steamed on until dusk, when we stopped and made fast to the shore by means of a warp, being in the ignominious position of a river barge in the centre of a ditch, with a distance of not more than fifty feet to the bank, and with a barren sandy desert stretching out on either side as far as the eye could reach. The Canal is worked like our railways, on the block system.



Saturday, 19th October, 1878, continued our passage through the Canal, the *Lusitania* being an object of great interest to the natives, who ran along the banks gesticulating, and offering curios for sale. The amount of chaff and the extraordinary dialogues which ensued between these "fellahs" and our fellows on board would have been a study for a linguist. The Queensland squatter, always on the lookout for some present for a lady passenger, would make frantic efforts to convey his ideas in the language of his country. He would hold up a rupee between his finger and thumb, and then, pointing to the article he desired to possess, roar out in a voice which might have been heard a mile off, "You give it him, like o' that"—while the Scotch parson was equally unintelligible in his efforts to drive a bargain, the Scotch accent apparently not being familiar to the Egyptians. Their mode of refusal in all cases was expressed in two words of general application, "*No bono*," but they were not disposed to part without doing business, and a good deal of money changed hands.

Before proceeding any further, I may, perhaps, interest the reader by quoting a few statistics in reference to the cost of the Suez Canal, which may be relied upon, as they were furnished officially to the Department of State by Mr. Farman, the Consul-General at Cairo.

"The entire cost of the Canal was 92,273,907 dollars. The stock of the Company consists of 400,000 shares at 500 francs each. These shares have been sold as low as 100 dols. each. At the opening of the Canal they had advanced to 300 dols.; they are now quoted at 717 francs and are probably worth more. The British Government paid about 568 francs. The number of shares bought in 1875 by Lord Beaconsfield was 176,602. This great purchase, aside from its political and commercial advantages thus affords a clear profit of 25,000,000 francs at present prices. The balance of the stock is held by a large number of persons, mostly in France. The revenues of the Canal have increased from 5,000,000 francs in 1870 to over 30,000,000 in 1877. The expenses including interest, sinking fund and bonds, have been a little over 17,000,000 a year. While the revenues steadily increase, the expenses are decreasing or stationary. Deducting the amount paid for interest and sinking fund, the



actual expenses are about 5,000,000, francs annually. The cost of cleaning the Canal, and its accessories is only about 2,000,000 per annum. Except the ordinary cleaning there is little to be done, vessels drawing 25 feet of water, or less, pass through the Canal. Two-thirds of the vessels going through carry the English Flag."

It is estimated that the quantity of earth excavated in this work is 97 millions of cubic yards, equal to a line of earth one yard high, and one yard wide reaching more than 55,000 miles or twice round the Globe.

I offer that calculation to my fellow countrymen with perfect confidence as a neat thing in statistics, and not too a great tax upon the memory. When found make a note of.

We might have had some capital shooting all along the Canal, which is covered, or was when we went through, with wild fowl comprising pelicans, storks, cranes, ibis, snipe, and ducks, but we had no guns unpacked, and it would have been hardly fair to take advantage of the confidence with which we were treated by these feathered natives. The Arabs call the pelican Gamalel-Bahr or River Camel, as he is the largest bird of their acquaintance. There were also large fish hawks and eagles, sailing in the air overhead, and now and then one of these rovers might be seen sweeping down upon his prey.

"So spread upon the lake with upward eye,  
A flock of fowl behold their foe on high,  
They close their trembling troop, and all attend  
On whom the sousing eagle doth descend."

The next day a little incident occurred which, as the papers say, might have been attended with fatal consequences, but fortunately only resulted in a breakage. After we had stopped for the night and got tight—I mean tied up to the bank, not intoxicated—a small French steamer attempting to pass between us and the shore, ran full but against our warp and came to grief. For an hour or two all was bustle and confusion, and what with loud English, execrable French, Arabian slang, Bedouin Billingsgate with a slight intermixture of Irish, Scotch, and Australian invective, we had a faint conception of the row that must have gone on while the tower of Babel was being erected. The navigation of the Suez Canal as far as I could learn seems to be subject to the old fashioned rule of the road



“If you go to the left you're sure to be right,  
If you go to the right you're sure to be wrong,  
And this is the rule as you drive along.”

The Frenchman went to the right and therefore was wrong, and as we were stationary he was clearly in fault for not keeping a better look out. On the other hand we ought to have had a signal hung out in the shape of a red light. There was a good deal to be said on both sides, and as we had a Supreme Court established on board the *Lusitania*, and were well provided with Counsel, witnesses and all other essentials to the administration of justice, we resolved to cite the Captain of the colliding craft for the outrage. We could not claim damages as the only damage done was to the small steamer whose mast and funnel were carried away, and while we were considering what course to pursue, the Frenchman backed out, and giving us a parting curse in the choicest language he could select, skedaddled.

On Sunday, 20th October, 1879, we arrived at Port Said. This is pronounced Port Side, but as its position in relation to a vessel depends entirely upon which way that vessel is going, it may be either port or starboard.

There for the first time we went ashore, having resisted the attractions presented by any of the other stopping places along the Canal. We passed several villages *en route*, inhabited mostly by lawless Bedouins, who have very little regard for the rights of property, and whose acquaintance we were advised not to cultivate after nightfall. Between Suez and Port Said you obtain a view of Ismalia. We passed within 100 yards of the palace of the Viceroy of El-Kirs. An important personage came down to the river bank to look at us here. He was an old Turk, mounted on a particularly small donkey, and carrying a gigantic umbrella. Reining up his steed at the edge of the water, he took a long and stedfast gaze at the steamer, and then slowly retired. He had seen the smoke of the *Lusitania* and, like one of the patriarchs of old, he had said unto one of his attendants, “Saddle me the ass, and they saddled him.” Could he have been the Viceroy *in propria personâ*? We passed by the villages of El-Fridan and El-Kantara, besides other places of minor importance, at one of which we saw a large dredging machine at work. Encamped on the banks of the Canal, not



far from this machine, which was stationed close to the Bitter Lakes, was a party of Arabs, consisting of three men, two boys with a couple of camels, and some dogs. A more wretched, forlorn-looking group could scarcely be imagined. They looked the picture of misery and want; the animals were evidently half-starved. We amused ourselves by throwing ships' biscuits at them. Those that reached the shore the men caught and devoured, and those that fell in the water were seized by the dogs. We kept this up until they were out of range, the dogs getting the best share of the backsheesh. Port Said is a large and populous settlement and it was there more than at any place along the whole route that I saw a number of sights foreign to anything I had seen before.

The town, which is close to the water's edge, consists of a number of straggling streets so narrow that the houses almost touch each other. These are mostly low one-storeyed buildings, constructed of bricks dried in the sun, and roofed with bamboo, inhabited by a people apparently collected from every nation under the sun, attired in every possible variety of costume, some with long flowing robes and turbans, and some in a state of semi-nudity and with their heads cropped like the priest "all shaven and shorn." The Turkish fez, the Oriental turban, the English wide-awake, and the bird's nest of natural hair were mingled in strange confusion, while the women presented to my admiring gaze a variety of swarthy charms, which I challenge any other place in the world to produce. Such a mingling of nationalities brought to my recollection a verse in the New Testament which speaks of

"Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocea, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphyllia, in Egypt, and in parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians."

The Turkish women, as is well known, cover their faces when they are married, leaving nothing for the photographer to work upon except the eyes, the drapery, and the general contour. Everything else is left to the imagination.

I did not go into raptures about either of the fair objects whose portraits I purchased and who might have been, for aught I knew, the property of some hoary old reprobate, who



Loved his wine and his glass,  
 And was given—alas!  
 Not only to bigamy,  
 Nor even to trigamy,

But, I shudder to tell it, to rankest polygamy,  
 For his sweethearts and wives were so vast in amount,  
 They'd take you a week or two only to count."

Nor did I form a very exalted opinion of the Turkish women from the few specimens I saw at Port Said, although I readily purchased their photographs, which were offered to us at the bazaar, to add to my book of beauty. But while these wives of jealous husbands are compelled to appear in hideous wraps, which conceal their features, and hide the grace of their figures, with the Egyptian girls *c'est toute autre chose*. The native grace of their forms, which they are not so churlish as to conceal by a superabundance of attire, the clearness of their complexions, their exquisitely round and tapering limbs, the soft and tender expression of their large and lustrous eyes, their white teeth and ruby lips, together with their simple and *negligé* style of dress, set off by a tasteful head dress, half turban half hood, comprise a *tout ensemble* which is exquisitely alluring. In my photographic Book of Beauties I have given the place of honour to one of the fairest of the daughters of Egypt as she appeared to me in her youthful and unadorned beauty.

With childhood's starry graces lingering,  
 In the rosy orient of young maidenhood,  
 Her eyes, like woodland violets, newly wet.

I also obtained the portrait of an *Egyptienne*—who would care to spoil the Egyptians thus represented?—about whom my friend the squatter raved during the whole time we were there. Not that this young man was faithless to his yellow haired countrywoman, but he possessed the faculty, not uncommon I believe among Irishmen and Australians, of being able to love half-a-dozen girls, if necessary, at the same time. However desperately he might be smitten with one young woman, he had always a "heart that could feel for another." This young lady sold coffee, and the number of cups which Q. S. paid for at her stall in order to give himself the opportunity of conveying his tender sentiments to the object of his affections in the Queensland dialect was something for his fair enslaver to remember. I got a very good



likeness. She wore no chignon; the magnificent plait of black hair which descends to her waist is all her own.

I may mention here one peculiarity in the houses in this part of the world. The people breed pigeons to a considerable extent, and each house has a turret on the top for the accommodation of these birds. Sometimes a number of earthenware pots are piled up in the form of a pyramid, each pot affording the necessary accommodation for a pair of pigeons. Pigeon pie is, therefore, not an unattainable luxury in the villages of the Nile, but the pigeons which the natives take the greatest delight in plucking, generally arrive per mail steamer.

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## CHAPTER VI.

“There’s language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,  
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirit looks out  
At every joint and motion of her body.”

“A horrid crowd of rambling thieves and drones,  
Who ransacked kingdoms and dispeopled towns.”

*Place aux dames!* We read, somewhere in the Psalms, an exhortation to ladies not to take too much pride in their *coiffure*, in the words, “Set not your horn on high.” That this injunction has reference to women is easily understood by any one visiting this place, for there is a lady here, hailing from Mount Lebanon, who has adopted that fashion in rather an *outré* form. As she appears in the character of a bride, some allowance should be made for her. Surely, on such an important occasion in a woman’s life, she can hardly carry too much sail.

“In shining silks and delicate lace,  
The lady is fair to see;  
The baughty grace of her form and face  
Is wondrous fair to me.”

There is a soft and tranquil expression in her face, and an amount of jewellery about her person sufficient to render any woman attractive. A coquettish cape of fine lace is usually worn by the women of the higher orders, while a kerchief or veil of snowy white, thrown over the head, is all



the head-gear they care to put on. Some of the Arab girls are also very intelligent and good-looking, but, as a rule, they are not to be compared with the girls of Egypt. They live a hard life, and do a good deal of hard work, carrying enormous burdens on their heads. Neither is their taste in dress to be commended. Nose-rings, in my opinion, are not only a drawback to feminine loveliness, but must be exceedingly inconvenient in case of a cold in the head. Sometimes these rings are worn so as to connect the two nostrils: at other times, either on one side or the other of the nasal organ. In neither case do they seem a desirable appendage, but, of course, that is entirely a matter of taste. Besides nose-rings, these ladies are, most of them, ornamented with various devices tattooed on their arms and necks, and occasionally, their faces. I had not the good fortune to be introduced to an Arab lady of the upper ten, and I may possibly be doing an injustice to her tribe generally by the selection I have made, and if so, I apologize.

The Arabs are in the habit of beating their women, and I was told that they indulge in this habit pretty freely. But if they exercise their marital authority rather harshly in this respect they make up for it by allowing their wives and daughters the same liberty they exercise themselves, the prejudices with respect to the sex which obtain amongst the Turks, and in most parts of the East, not finding any favour among them.

I did not have an opportunity of witnessing any of the dancing girls who are so famous—Ghozeeyeh they are called—go through a regular performance, our stay being too short.

Modesty is not the prevailing characteristic of the women in these parts, and, although they veil their faces, they are not especially careful to conceal the charms of their persons. The dance itself commences with a mute pantomime in which the dancers appear to be rehearsing some love scene; then as the music quickens it changes to rapid and graceful evolutions and voluptuous movements. The imagination of the performers becomes kindled into flame; they are alternately agitated by passion or prostrated by despair; they whirl round and round in a mad kind of a waltz of a most impassioned character; then pause and form a graceful tableau, when the applause comes in. The attitude and inflexions of



these girls, their amorous gestures and arch glances, the fantastic dresses they wear, and the careless abandon they display, if not particularly decorous is fascinating and would bring the house down if exhibited—well say in Sydney. I saw all this in my mind's eye. The only girls I actually saw engaged in a public entertainment were a party of French demoiselles, about half-a-dozen, who formed a band, each playing a different instrument, in a café in the main street of Port Said. They were unmistakably French; but, I suppose in compliment to our arrival, they struck up "God Save the Queen" as we approached.

I also had the privilege of hearing a party of Arab musicians go through a wretched performance on violins and tambourins which they accompanied with their voices. They sat cross-legged on a carpet in the middle of the floor. The number of cafés, drinking and dancing saloons, all in full swing, although it was Sunday, did not speak very well for the morality of the place. Port Said is in very truth a nest of immorality. The women are naughty and the men are anything but nice, being as cut-throat a set of villains as could be found in any portion of the globe. From one end to the other of our walk through the streets we were followed by a crowd of men and larrikins, yelling into our ears and forcing upon our notice wares of all sorts for sale. There is no regular bazaar at Port Said, unless a number of common wooden stands such as may be seen in Paddy's market every Saturday night can be called one. In fact, the quarter containing the shops is not unlike that Sydney emporium of commerce with an Oriental garb, and the row carried on in both places is about equal.

We dined at the Netherlands Hotel, a fine spacious building with excellent accommodation, and apparently doing a good business among the constant arrivals by the steamers to and fro, and after dinner we took a walk through the Gardens of the Place de Lesseps which are not much to boast of, though they afforded a pleasant retreat for half-an-hour from the pestering we had been subjected to by the street arabs, and the cries of "Backsheesh" which sounded incessantly in our ears. In the bird's-eye view I had of the place I did not catch a sight of any places of worship, but as among the many photographs which are sold at the stalls.



or forced upon the traveller by the Arab larrikins, there are a good many of priests and others engaged in devotion, I suppose there are some; otherwise I should conceive the resident population in the neighbourhood of the Suez Canal to be very much in the position of the man about whose walk in life the following question was asked of his son by a lady district visitor in an English country:—

Lady: "Is your father a religious man?"

Boy: "Yes ma'am, *but he doesn't work much on it.*"

With such an awful admixture of creeds as there is in these villages, the denominational principle must be established on a sound basis. Anything like a state religion must be a rank impossibility. The prevailing creed I should fancy to be the Mahomedan, but the large influx of Europeans and other races of late years makes it very doubtful which is the most popular sect in any of the small communities near the Canal.

The term of invitation to drink in the Arabic language, equivalent to the phrase "Well! what do you say" adopted in New South Wales when approaching an hotel by the party who is going to stand drinks, is "Eishereb," and the polite way in which it is said renders it difficult to resist the request. I don't know the proper rendering into Arabic of the ordinary Australian reply "Well, I don't care if I do," but I found the word "Bismillah" accompanied by a drawing-room smile, very effective in most cases, and not at all calculated to give offence.

As we stayed only a few hours at Port Said while the steamer was taken in coal I did not see half the sights which a longer spell on shore would have afforded me, and if any of my countrymen expect a description of the Nile scenery with its groves of stately palms and date forests, its fields of rice and plantations of sugar cane, and luxuriant grassy meadows fertilized by the overflowing stream, in which the graceful gazelle, the lively camel, and the playful buffalo are gambolling, while the lordly hippopotamus and the sacred crocodile are disporting in the river, they will be greatly disappointed, for I give them my word that I did not see a single hippopotamus or a solitary crocodile during the entire passage.

What I saw when I returned to the *Lusitania* was an army of niggers, passing to and fro on long planks from the



coal barge to the steamer, each with a basket of coals on his head, and in such numbers that they formed a continuous line up and down the boards, each darkie at the heels of another. In this way, the process is carried out in an incredibly short space of time, and I was told that 100 tons of coal can be put on board a vessel in the short space of an hour.

The breakwater at Port Said is a very substantial, though irregular piece of work. It is composed of large blocks of concrete, thrown into the water at haphazard, and without any pretension to order or uniformity, as many of them stand up several feet out of the water. They look not unlike a cluster of huts, when seen from a distance. The mention of the breakwater at Port Said puts me in mind of the beer they sell there, which is superb. The excellence of this beverage goes far to redeem the character of the place. On one occasion, I drank of the waters of the Nile, and was convinced that, to have any beneficial effect, they should be qualified with a little of Hennessy's "three star." But the beer needs no addition; it is clear, sparkling, and an excellent tonic. Good drinking water is hardly to be obtained there. At Aden, the water used is all distilled from the sea, so that good beer is doubly precious, and the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb. The stock in hand at Port Said must have been considerably diminished when the *Lusitania* left. We had one or two Good Templars on board, and they must have fared indifferently; indeed, what with bad water and the temptation of good beer, tetotallers have a hard time of it in that thirsty land, and should be treated with great respect. In the words of the poet:—

“ May they who love the cup that cheers,  
 Their kettle always keep hot;  
 Enjoy their brew for many years,  
 And never lack a teapot.  
 I love the foaming glass to see,  
 Where amber sparkles glitter;  
 They make their tea too strong for me,  
 I like it better bitter.”

On Monday, the 28th October, 1871, we left the Canal and steamed into the Mediterranean, with a fair wind and a calm sea. In the course of the day we passed Damietta, at



the mouth of the Nile, and saw the last of the river which flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands.

“Like some grave, mighty thought threading a dream.”

Then I went below, and musing over what I had seen of the land we had just left, and all its wonders and mythological associations, I fell asleep, and dreamed of mosques and pyramids, catacombs, crocodiles, comets, bazaars, Turks, niggers, Bedouin Arabs, and black-eyed dancing girls, until I was awoke by Jones' voice, improvising one of his non-sensical rhymes—

“I courted a maiden,  
Who dwelt at Port Aden,  
And I sent her my love in a letter;  
We went to Port Said;  
I made her my bride,  
And left her at Port Damietta.”

#### CHAPTER VII.

— of time, there's no denying  
One-half in how-d'ye-doing goes,  
And t' other in good bye-ing.

For he himself has said it,  
And it's greatly to his credit,  
That he is an Englishman.

As we steamed along pleasantly through the Mediterranean, we had, every day, something to look at; small African craft passed and repassed us at short intervals, and every now and then a large steamer or sailing vessel hove in sight and afforded abundant theme for observation and conjecture. The days began to get shorter, and we had to dine by lamplight. But a very few of the passengers, it appeared, had kept their diaries throughout the voyage, although almost every one had come on board resolved to write a continuous account of his adventures, so listless and apathetic does one grow at sea. The temperature was still very warm, and the steam punkahs were started in the saloon again. The heat was, in short, preposterous, but the atmosphere was moist and depressing. Nevertheless, we fought manfully against its influence and, to



kill time, got up some private theatricals, which went off with great *eclat*, the pieces selected for the occasion being "A Chapter of Accidents," and "Box and Cox."

On the morning of Thursday, 24th October, we passed Malta, and then obtained a view of the mountainous coast of Sicily, at a distance of some 10 or 12 miles, and could perceive, with the aid of a good glass, several low flats lying between the spurs of the hills, and covered with orange groves, set off by the white country houses and gardens of the residents—then the steamer glided swiftly through the water, the landscape faded into obscurity, to be replaced by another, perhaps an island, appearing, at first, like a speck just distinguishable, and looming larger and larger, until it also receded in the wake of the vessel. Every day we see more steamers and more sailing vessels, and fresh evidence that we are nearing our destination.

I notice, too, that tender scenes between certain of my fellow-passengers and some of the young ladies on board are more frequent. My friend, the Queensland squatter, is in constant attendance upon the tawny-haired girl, his offences at Port Said having apparently been condoned. But, as a rule, passengers, during a long voyage, are moody, not so much from illness as from idleness and sheer vacuity of mind; at least such is the result of my observations.

At times the melancholy man presented such a picture of hopeless despair that even Jones the hilarious became affected by the woe-begone expression of his countenance. When no other amusement was available the idle ones would bet, and when subjects upon which to wager were scarce their ingenuity was surprising. Bets would be laid upon the drops of rain which coursed each other from the cabin window; bets upon the character or rig of the next vessel we passed; bets upon the dishes to appear upon the saloon table at dinner time; bets upon every conceivable occurrence to happen. We passed the coast of Barbary the following day (Friday) and Algiers on the Saturday, the weather getting sensibly cooler and more moist. It was on this day that we discovered, for the first time, that we had a medium on board. What a fund of amusement he might have afforded us if we had known of him before. Better late than never; we immediately made arrangements to hold a *séance*. But whether it was that we



were getting excited at the near prospect of landing, or because the furniture was lashed to the deck—or from some other cause, the magnetic current which should have been caused by the contact of hands, as we sat round a small table in the saloon, was wanting, and the table remained immovable, to the great vexation of the self-constituted professor. We repeated the experiment day after day, changing the circle each time, and all to no purpose. We passed the coast of Barbary, but no spirits, barbarous or civilized, came to our summons. We were off the coast of Spain, but no departed Don volunteered to answer our questions. Ships of all kinds, with choice spirits on board, passed and repassed us, but they cared not a rap for our efforts to communicate with them; the whole thing was a most consummate failure.

On Sunday, 27th October, we had Divine Service on board, and on the evening of the same day we passed Gibraltar, and saw the lights plainly. A day or two before, the passengers' luggage had been got up out of the hold, and those who purposed to land at Plymouth had theirs marked accordingly. Taking the Captain's advice, I resolved to disembark there.

We passed Cape St. Vincent at noon on Monday, 28th; signalled, and stood on for Cape Rock; obtained a view of the coast of Portugal, which looked very barren and uninviting, and on the following day, the *Lusitania* was rolling in the Bay of Biscay with a head wind and a high sea. We were assured that we should reach Plymouth on the evening of Thursday, the 31st October, and a sweepstake was got up on the event. I forget who won it, but I know that, at a quarter past eleven that night, I first set my foot on English ground, and the voyage was at an end, as far as I was concerned.

A hurried farewell and a hand-shake to those of our fellow-passengers with whom we had been on terms of intimacy, a cordial goodbye to the Captain and his officers, with hearty thanks for the kindness and attention we had received at their hands, a graceful bow to the ladies assembled to see us off in the shore-boat, and Jones and I bid adieu, not without a certain feeling of regret, to the ship which had been our home for nearly two months, and in which we, at least, had passed many very happy days.

That night, taking the express train called "The Flying Dutchman," travelling at the rate of 60 miles an hour, we



reached the Paddington Station, and shortly afterwards found ourselves comfortably housed at Morley's hotel, Trafalgar Square, London looking cheerless and gloomy, with its snow-covered houses and sloppy streets.

And here my narrative ends for the present. During the two months I stayed in London, I endeavoured to make the best use of my time; in seeing everything worth seeing, including all the lions of the huge city, and a great number of smaller animals, besides obtaining a few peeps at English scenery in some of the most picturesque counties, all of which I reserve for description on some future occasion.

Of my fellow-passengers, I saw little or nothing after our arrival in England. Jones went his way the next morning, and I found myself handed over to the tender mercies of some antiquated relatives, who were profuse in their offers of—advice.

One piece of news I may add, which I obtained from the London *Times*. My friend, the squatter, led the object of his affections to the altar of Hymen about a month after we landed. The matrimonial tournament was duly notified and came off without any interference from the police. The contracting lunatics, it appeared from information subsequently received, were equally criminal, that is, equally spooney.

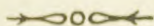
N.B.—I had often heard of Cockneys, and the way they drop the letter "h," but I had no idea the habit was so general. When we told the waiter in the morning to have breakfast ready for us at 9 o'clock, he asked whether we would "have 'am and heggs." This reply furnished my companion an opportunity for one of his everlasting quotations, this time a very apt one:—

" I addressed the man in English  
And he answered in the same ;  
But he spoke it in a fashion  
That I thought a little lame ;  
For the aspirate was wanting  
Where the letter should have been,  
And where it wasn't wanted  
He was sure to put it in."





## A TRAITOR IN THE CAMP.



WHY Simpkins should have been selected as a fit subject to become an apostle of temperance, it would be difficult to explain, for he had no leanings in that direction either natural or acquired. Indeed, he was the very last man imaginable to play the rôle of Good Templar. Not that he was of intemperate habits, far from it; he was simply a *bon camarade*, who had no objection to a bottle of good wine at appropriate seasons or in good company, or to a glass of whisky punch either *calidum cum* or *frigidum sine* by way of night-cap or in congenial society. Then he would take the cup that cheers as one of the good gifts of Providence, and reject the final tumbler which inebriates. No one had ever seen Simpkins unsteady in his gait or in any way incapacitated for business from a too free indulgence in what he was wont playfully to term the elixir of life. In short, he was a pleasant easy going fellow who took things as he found them, and shunned everything in the way of notoriety as well as inebriety.

But he was not destined to remain long in a state of social obscurity. Greatness was unexpectedly thrust upon him, and he became unwillingly a marked man in the small but distinguished circle in which he moved.

Simpkins, being a bachelor about 40 years of age, passably good looking and possessed of a comfortable property, was not unnaturally an object of great interest to the unmarried ladies of his acquaintance, and it was not to be supposed that his habits and mode of life should escape female criticism, or that he should fail to be the recipient of a good deal of attention and advice, prompted by tender concern for his welfare.

It is generally found that ladies who are unmarried, especially when they have reached an age appropriately compared to the Algebraic figure which represents an unknown



quantity, are prone to seek a vent for their superfluous energy outside the sphere of domestic life. Debarred from the privilege of family broils, they rush frantically into strife of some kind or other, and soon find a mission to suit them. Unfortunately for Simpkins' peace of mind, one of these strong-minded females had marked him for her prey, and the sister of our guileless and unsuspecting hero, a frisky maiden of some five and thirty, who kept his house for him, was her confederate: what can a man do when the members of his own family are against him?

The object these ladies had in view was to induce Simpkins to exert his influence in the cause they had taken up—the promotion of temperance. He was to become a total abstainer and a member of the Grand United Order of Good Templars who had established a lodge in the suburb in which he dwelt.

Simpkins' well-known convivial propensities, his frequent boast that he was a temperate member of society, but not a member of a temperance society, and the chaffing manner in which he resisted the advances of the enemy only served to whet their ardor. They felt that their triumph would be great in proportion to the obstacles they had to encounter.

Arabella Simpkins and her friend Priscilla Sharp were not easily daunted. They were resolved to make him a convert to the cause, and a bright and shining example.

"Dear Isaac," Arabella would remark, sweetly, "what might we not accomplish if you would only join us."

Then a sigh would escape from the bosom of the fair Priscilla, and she would tenderly express a hope that the day was not far distant when dear Mr. Simpkins would aid them in their work.

Vain, however, were all their attempts to induce Simpkins to sign the pledge. In vain did the persevering Miss Sharp return again and again to the charge and try to awaken a responsive chord in his heart: the only concession she could obtain was that he would escort the ladies to the next meeting of the association.

But constant dropping will wear away a stone, and the daily pressure brought to bear upon the unhappy Simpkins at home and abroad was not without its effect. Though he reproached himself with being an ass, a fool and an idiot, and



denounced the G.U.O.G.T. to be an institution which ought to be indicted as a public nuisance, he began to waver.

He felt at last that unless he yielded to some extent his existence would be that of a social martyr.

The touching look of reproach with which Arabella regarded him when he sipped his wine after dinner, and the way she expatiated upon the invigorating effects of coffee as a healthy stimulant made him feel criminal.

At last in an unguarded moment he promised—though he still resolutely declined to sign the pledge—that he would say a few words in favour of temperance at the next meeting of the G.U.O.G.T.

Thenceforth Simpkins was looked upon as a convert to the great cause. That he would before long become a total abstainer, a bright and shining example, no one doubted for a moment.

Arabella embraced him gushingly as he made this promise, while her friend regarded him with a look which was intended to express affection as well as admiration.

The object of the meeting was not only to enlarge upon the great importance of extending the temperance movement, but to inaugurate a series of lectures with a view to obtain contributions to the fund for the establishment of Coffee Palaces in the more populous portions of the city and suburbs. It was essential to the success of the movement that the meetings should be addressed by popular lecturers, and Simpkins being a man of some position in the neighbourhood and universally liked, besides being a recent convert, it was considered the right thing, that he should deliver an address on the occasion of the first meeting.

Extensive preparations were made for the great event. Placards were issued announcing the meeting and the interesting fact that Isaac Simpkins, Esq., would open the proceedings with an address, the title of which would be "A Healthy Stimulant," which would necessarily be of interest to abstainers.

The hall of the School of Arts was engaged for the night and there was every prospect of a crowded house.

The Mayor, a retired linen draper, who was a G.W.V.T., and weighed sixteen stone, consented to occupy the chair. Cribb, the wealthy ironmonger; Judkins, the leading grocer;



Potts, the proprietor of the Emporium of Fashion, with their families—in short, all the leading notabilities signified their intention of supporting the movement by their presence. The members of the Lodge, resplendent with the decoration of the order, were, of course, to attend.

The fatal evening arrived. The hall was crowded, the ladies especially mustering in great force; a look of triumph beamed from the eyes of Arabella and Priscilla, not unmingled with pride, as the head of their house, having been introduced by the chairman in a short but appropriate speech, advanced to the front of the platform and bowed gracefully.

“Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen,” said Isaac, “although I have never appeared before you as a public lecturer, I feel that the importance of the occasion is sufficient apology for my presence, and that, if you will make allowance for my limited acquaintance with the art of oratory, I shall be able to offer a few observations of an interesting character. I have been asked to express my opinion on the subject of stimulants, the only stimulants which actuate me on this occasion being, I need scarcely add a sense of duty (Cheers) and the presence of so fair an assemblage of beauty and elegance. (Applause).”

“It is scarcely necessary, or becoming, that I should take up your time by enlarging upon the evils of intemperance, since they have been so frequently and so forcibly illustrated by prominent members of this Association, whose fluency of speech I can never hope to attain. I could not, were I to tax my memory to its deepest recesses, call to mind more vivid pictures of that social crime than have been displayed to your view on previous occasions from this very platform. Is not the story so pathetically related, a short time ago, by our worthy chairman, fresh in your memory, of the pious wife of a missionary, who, after spending eight years of her life in teaching the Christian religion to the Chinese, suddenly took to drinking, and was found one morning dead in bed, with a bottle of brandy half empty by her side? Have we not lately heard of a fiend in human form who stabbed his wife, cut off all his children’s heads, and garrotted his grandmother during a fit of delirium tremens? It is not my purpose to dilate upon the terrible results of intemperance, but rather to point out, since Nature requires us to drink more or less of some beverage,



how we may baffle the common enemy by substituting, for the many noxious compounds which exercise such a baneful effect upon the community, a pure, refreshing, wholesome, and healthy stimulant. (Cheers). A short review of the different drinks in common use, and the various modes of adulteration, may not be considered out of place.

“To go back to the first, and for a considerable period, the only beverage of our infancy—milk, can it be said that the article left in a jug on our window-sills, morning and evening, is as pure and wholesome as that which nourished our tender youth? Do not chalk and water enter largely into the composition of the milk of modern times, or is the proverbial cow with the iron tail only a popular delusion? (Hear, hear.) I anticipate your reply. From milk we proceed, by an easy transition, to beer, of which there are numerous kinds, from the bounding Bass, and the attractive Allsop to the insidious colonial compound commonly called “stringy bark.” It is a sad and palpable fact, that this popular and British beverage is adulterated by *coccus indicus*, tobacco, and other deadly ingredients, besides salt to create thirst.

“Drugs to make them very dry,  
So that, the more they drank,  
The more they would, till they swilled  
Like horses from a tank.”

(Applause.)

The brandy as imported to this Colony contains, as we know, bitter almonds, maize, orriceroot, quassia, spirits of nitre and a variety of other drugs used in coloring. (Cheers.) Do we desire to quaff the generous vintage of Champagne and flatter ourselves that we are doing so when we are merely imbibing a wretched beverage concocted by a clever chemist, the basis of which is the gooseberry of our youthful days? (Cheers.)

Where now is the generous old crusty wine from Oporto? Has it not almost entirely disappeared and taken with it that fine old gentlemanly disorder, the gout? Alas! we now in bitter mockery sip with our walnuts a miserable mixture in which sloe juice, logwood, alum, catechu and other abominable ingredients play a prominent part. Is our best sherry anything more than weak Cape wine, or our claret anything but *vin ordinaire*? My friends let us beware of adulteration



in our articles of domestic consumption. Spirit drinkers may be shocked when I inform them that a fine bead may be put upon spirits by adding oil of vitriol and oil of sweet almonds and mixing them well in a mortar. In short, it is a sickening fact that two-thirds of the liquors we use are more or less adulterated. (Loud cheering.) Then if we come to effervescent drinks will any one pretend to say that the gaseous compounds manufactured under this head are wholesome or beneficial to the system?

It is not only in the manufacture of intoxicating drinks that the adulteration is employed. Some of my lady hearers will, perhaps, be shocked when I tell them that raspberry wine is largely composed of ale finings, lump sugar, oil of tartar, raspings of red sandalwood, and alum, flavored with raspberry juice. (Hear, hear.)

Nor can I stop here. I appeal to the ladies again to say whether the tea they consume is the genuine article from China, or whether it is not originally found on the hedges of our native land in the form of sloe leaves. (Cries of question.) Possibly we may obtain a less hurtful article from India, but there can be little doubt that our best tea at 2s. 6d. is little better than a fraud. (Groans.) Then we come to coffee. (Cheers.) Who is not familiar with the rich yet delicate aroma which proceeds from this delicious berry when duly roasted and prepared for use? (Deafening cheers.) How grateful to the palate, how soothing to the senses! A mild stimulant, yet containing no intoxicating element, an excellent tonic, a drink that may be taken not only without injury to the system, but with the most beneficial effects whether as *café au lait*, or *café noir* in all climates by persons of all ages and under all circumstances. (Tremendous applause.) Such is the pure genuine Mocha! Were it possible to substitute this delicious beverage for the vile compounds to which I have alluded, what a blessing to the community would be achieved, and this I am informed is the result to which the efforts of the Grand United Order of Good Templars is directed. (Long and continued cheering.) How sad, continued Isaac, is the truth which is forced upon our notice by every day experience that little, if any, of this luxury finds its way to this Colony. (Oh! Oh.) I do not mean to say that *all* the coffee imported is a mixture of



chicory and burnt beans, but my knowledge of these and other hurtful ingredients of which the coffee in common use is composed, enables me to affirm that to encourage their consumption on a more extensive scale, would be largely to increase the evils we wish to avoid. (Chair, chair.) When we can succeed in the cultivation of coffee in Australia or in opening up a direct trade with Ceylon or the South Pacific Islands, then and then only shall we be justified in promoting its general use. (Groans and cries of question.) The question then is what, in the face of all these adulterations, is the safest drink to recommend; what is at once the most wholesome, the purest, the most enjoyable, the most HEALTHY STIMULANT, one that we can take to our homes without fear of adulteration, which we can confidently set before our friends and recommend our enemies, if we have any, to purchase for themselves. I have been asked to express my opinion on the subject (A voice—"Mr. Chairman is this to be allowed to go on?") and the result of my experience is that the purest, the most genial and invigorating beverage, the best tonic, free from fusil oil, and other injurious ingredients, the most HEALTHY STIMULANT is Walker's old wh— (uproar and confusion).

Here the meeting terminated abruptly, and Simpkins modestly retired without waiting to receive a vote of thanks. It is needless to add that he was never again solicited to mount the platform as a temperance lecturer.







JONES *v.* JENKYN,  
OR,  
THE BUSHRANGER'S REVENGE.

*THERE'S A MEDIUM IN EVERYTHING.*

CHAPTER I.

“The harmless jest, the playful spirit's sway,  
The local hit at follies of the day,  
The tale to pass an idle hour away.”

“A little nonsense now and then  
Is relished by the best of men.”

Why will not a chair dance? Because it is *notable*.—TOMKYN.

LET no one peruse these pages who is not a medium, or the intimate friend of a medium, and a staunch believer in mediumistic agency, as applied to the overthrow of furniture, the mysterious appearance of cabalistic sentences on inverted slates, and all the phenomena which manifest themselves at spiritualistic *seances*. The sceptic who scoffs at these and similar dark doings may possibly refuse credence to my story, which is as true a tale as any which was ever received from the spirit land by the recognised code of signals. He may deride the achievements of my bushranger and sneer at the utterances of my medium. Let him: for such a man I care not a rap. I here affirm, and am prepared to back my assertion by oath before a Commissioner for Affidavits, that, during the time I have been engaged in writing this novel—which has been mostly in the evening, just before bedtime—



I have been frequently under the influence of spirits. Nay, more : while under their control I have talked with a fluency never attainable at other times, and my pen has glided over the paper with a rapidity only to be accounted for by spiritual agency, and if I had been asked the next morning to repeat what I had written overnight, I should have been utterly unable to do so. What more can I say to prove the spirit inspiration ? The spirit I have generally summoned to my aid has been ———. But, no ! that brand shall never be attached to me.

John Jones was a youth of great promise and of some note, and was duly honoured at maturity, as all promissory notes should be. He was of lowly extraction :

“ — his ancient but ignoble blood  
Had crept through scoundrels ever since the flood.”

and there was nothing in his humble name or antecedents which gave any indication of the remarkable career which awaited him. But while some men are born great, and others have greatness thrust upon them, there is a third class who have the merit of achieving it ; and it was this class to which my hero belonged. He was naturally of an aspiring disposition, and having set his foot on the lowest rung of the ladder of Fortune, he resolved to climb to the top of it, and to allow no one to take a “rise” out of him during that process. Jones possessed that great essential to Colonial advancement —cheek—

“ He that hath but impudence  
To all things hath a fair pretence ;  
And if among his wants be shame,  
To all the world he lays a claim.”

In the Grecian upper lip, the Hibernian nose, and the haughty but carefully arranged curl of scorn upon his noble brow, the phrenologist would have seen in the dim distance the wealth and distinction which were to follow. His father had been a fisherman, and he had early acquired a liking for plaice ; while his mother was the daughter of a baker. It is possible, therefore, that the hankering after the loaves and fishes, which was one of his principal characteristics, was to a certain extent hereditary.



At the time my story commences Jones was twenty-two years of age, but he looked three months older, a peculiarity which attended him through life. He then occupied the humble position of a third-class clerk in the Waste Lands Department of New South Wales, and when at home surveyed the outer world from the peaceful retirement of a two-pair back in the charming and picturesque village of Macdonaldtown, one of the delightful suburbs of Sydney, the capital of the colony, immortalized by the poet Laureate in his poem, commencing—

“Ye environs of Sydney,  
How fearfully ye smell—  
There’s poison in the atmosphere,  
And sewage in the well.”

His occupation in the Lands Department brought him in continual contact with Members of Parliament, and woke within him the germs of ambition. He was not slow to perceive that whenever conditional sales were effected the principal condition to be observed in the sale was the payment of a liberal *douceur* to the member acting as land agent, or—as he was often irreverently termed by the unthinking public—“land shark,” who effected the negotiation.

Jones looked on and admired, mentally resolving to go and do likewise when the right time should come. There is an old French proverb which says that “everything comes to the man who knows how to wait.” Jones knew how to wait—having once been a waiter in a hotel, and he bided his time. In the meanwhile he commenced to prepare himself for the duties of a member of Parliament. He became a prominent member of a Debating Society, where he frequently assisted in turning out a Ministry upon some popular question: he also attended Spelling Bees innumerable, and became a practised and fluent orator—

“Whether he knew the thing or no,  
His tongue eternally would go;  
For he had impudence at will,  
And boasted universal skill.  
Ambition was the end in view:  
Thus by degrees to power he grew.”

He had also another string to his bow. Observing the number of adherents to the new doctrine of Spiritualism, and believing that they would soon become a power in the land, he became



a convert to that mystic science, and soon, by a regular attendance at the *séances* of its professors, he developed into a first-class medium.

## CHAPTER II.

“Love in a cot  
Her dream was not,  
And, her defence to wind up—  
From her high estate  
To derogate  
She couldn't make her mind up.”

In the city of Melbourne, the capital of the adjoining colony of Victoria, in the humble post of house and parlour maid to a wealthy ironmonger, there lived at this time a young lady whose name was Marianne Smith. As she is destined to play a prominent part in our story, it is necessary to say something about her by way of introduction. She was tall and of noble proportions, with eyes of heavenly blue, a nose decidedly *retroussé*, and hair of that rich colour so fashionable in the time of Queen Elizabeth. She was in her seventeenth year, and possessed all the charms which belong to that age. In short, she was a sweet girl—

“Sweet is the scented air that blows  
O'er the grass the reaper mows,—  
The briar with its breath divine,  
The fragrant perfumed jessamine,—  
Sweet the wild honey in the wood,  
But sweeter still is Maidenhood.”

On one occasion she had met Jones—on one occasion only—when that hero had paid a visit to Melbourne. She was then but a child, and he was then all that may become a man—a youth in knickerbockers: yet some subtle influence attracted them to each other. Something in the girl's large, lustrous eyes arrested the boy's attention, and he had whispered in her ear, “You're a medium,” to which she had involuntarily replied “You're another.” They had never met since, yet each knew that the other's destiny was closely interwoven with his (or hers).

She was a very spirited girl, and—although she was not aware of the fact—*she was a medium*. Marianne had plenty of admirers; but she was ambitious, and had as yet met no



one who could offer her the position to which she aspired. She had seen too many instances of advancement from the rank she occupied to the highest positions to doubt her future; and like our hero Jones, she bided her time. And while she dusted the furniture in the ironmonger's drawing room, she sang—

“Who knows what may happen or what may befall,  
I may yet be mistress of Workington Hall.”

### CHAPTER. III

“For what potent lever the few doth uplift  
Above the unhonoured and grovelling throng?  
Is it intellect? No! not uncommon the gift!  
What, then? 'tis a purpose immovably strong!”

The Ministry having been turned out on the Circular Tramway question, it occurred to the aspiring Jones that now was the time to act upon the hint given to Colonial statesmen by Mr. Gladstone in the memorable words, “Speech is a power in the colonies.” Jones not only possessed the power of speech, but he had made a power of speeches on various subjects during office hours, for which he had been frequently rebuked, and at debating societies, where he had been as often applauded. Now he resolved upon making a still more powerful speech, and to address that speech to the electors of Sydney. The next morning he addressed an official letter, written on half-margin to the head of his department, resigning his post, and made his arrangements to contest the electorate. He resolved that no mock modesty should withhold him. Accordingly, at the appointed time and place he presented himself on the hustings, before a large assemblage of free and enlightened citizens, and the electric light having been turned on full tap, he proceeded to enlighten them upon the popular questions of the day, in a speech which occupied an hour and three-quarters: free trade, land at six pence an acre, no taxation, the abolition of the duties on wines, spirits, beer, and tobacco, and the education of Chinamen on the roads of the colony, were among the reforms he advocated. The result was triumphant; Jones's name appeared at the head of the poll, and after the payment of a considerable sum of money spent by his committee in whisky and hansom cabs, he was permitted to enjoy his triumph, and to occupy the proud position of a Member of the



Legislative Assembly of New South Wales. Devoting himself assiduously to his duties, Jones soon became known as a rising man, and was credited with a prodigious amount of learning. "What he knows, and what he does'nt know," observed one of his admirers "would make volumes." He introduced a Bill for the abolition of bushranging as a dangerous phase of Colonial society, which in due time became the law of the land. Under its provisions various well organized attempts were made to capture the men who thus set law and order at defiance, but they all failed, the only measure of success which crowned them being the apprehension of a free selector named Jenkyns, who was accused of aiding and abetting, and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. This man, justly believing he owed the loss of his liberty to Jones, conceived a deadly and implacable hatred against that honorable member, and swore a fearful oath that he would exact a terrible revenge. We shall see how he kept his oath.

"Begone, outstrip the kangaroo,  
The wind in speed subdue ;  
Fear cannot fly so swift so true  
As vengeance shall pursue,  
And hate like mine in panting pain  
Smiles o'er one hope—we meet again."

#### CHAPTER IV.

"Which I wish to observe,  
Tho' the fact's not assuring,  
That for fresh garden herbs  
And a trick of manuring,  
The Heathen Chinees is peculiar."

On the bank of the River Tchín, in the outskirts of the City of Hongkong, pursuing the peaceful and industrious occupation of a market gardener, lived a Chinaman named Hung Foo. No gardener in the neighbourhood could grow turnips of such Brobdignagian proportions, or could cultivate cabbages with such tremendous results. The secret was only known to himself, and was probably like all Chinese customs, of ancient date. It was said by some, who denied his merits but envied his prosperity, that the mode in which he prepared his soil was open to objection, but the freshness of his lettuces dispelled these suspicions, and his customers, while they



munched his radishes at breakfast, were not curious to enquire into what species of compound their roots had penetrated. Every morning at five a.m. he left his home, carrying a long bamboo cane with a hamper suspended from either end, containing five hundredweight of vegetables. The choicest of these he sold to the wealthy English merchants, at high prices, the rotten and decayed specimens he kept for home consumption, and thus he became wealthy. On Sundays and holidays he would hire a sanpan and visit a friend in the country, when the two Celestials would amuse themselves by flying kites, drinking green tea out of the best china cups, and smoking opium. To this latter indulgence Hung Foo was greatly addicted, and after a second or third pipe he usually went into a trance. Decidedly Hung Foo was a prosperous man, but he was something more than that—he was a *medium*!

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#### CHAPTER V.

“ For bread and cheese and little ease  
 Small thanks but no repining ;  
 Still o’er the sky they darkling lie—  
 Clouds—with no silver lining.”

MEANTIME, the unhappy Jenkyns languished in durance vile: a whole year, twelve dreary months, had elapsed, and his prospect of release was as remote as ever. Tidings of the outer world reached him from time to time in his confinement, and he knew that Jones, his deadly foe, had triumphed, and was now a Minister of the Crown, while he was a hopeless captive. Oh! for the days when, with his comrades in arms (the bushrangers), he had ranged over the Australian bush, owing allegiance to no man—when he lived upon the fat of the land and replenished his purse from the spoils taken from the purse-proud squatter or timid bank manager. Ha! ha! an inspiration seized him. Years ago, when attending a spiritualistic *seance* in the Isle of Man, he had been informed through the medium of a loo table that a spirit *en rapport* with his existed in a foreign country, who would render him essential service. He resolved to invoke the aid of that sympathetic spirit. He would do it in a trice, or, if not, in a trance. Ha! ha! the tables should be turned upon the enemy—*Jenkyns was a medium.*



## CHAPTER VI.

“ With visions such as these beguiling  
My soul from darker thoughts to smiling,  
I cheer my spirits, drooped with care,  
By building castles in the air.”

It must not for a moment be supposed that the Honourable John Jones—into whose hands a sudden turn of the wheel of fortune had placed the welfare of a large and important community—was not fully impressed with the responsibility attached to his position. He was quite aware of it, and the knowledge added an inch at least to his stature. Jones was in many respects a remarkable man, and was now a devout believer in the doctrine of spiritualism. His researches into this question had led him to the conclusion that the failures which so frequently occurred in invoking spiritual advice arose in almost every case from the want of unanimity on the part of those who took part in the performance. It was necessary that each person present should be animated by the same desire—one strong wish should rule the minds of all who composed the circle. The short acquaintance he had enjoyed with the other members of the Ministry had been sufficient to show him that upon one point they were, one and all, actuated by precisely the same feeling—a *resolve to keep their places against all opposition*. Whatever dissensions and divisions might take place in the House, they only served to cement this feeling more strongly. The mere hint of a threatened vote of censure while the Cabinet was seated at the table in the Council Chamber had such a magnetic effect that its influence was sufficient to compel the attendance of any spirit, however refractory. This psychological discovery was turned to good account. Each Cabinet meeting was converted into a spiritualistic *seance*. The messages from the spirit world, conveyed by a friendly spirit, with the assistance of the official furniture of the chamber, were duly entered on the minutes for consideration at the next Executive meeting.

“ Like streams supplied by springs below,  
Which scatter billets as they go.”

This was the plan pursued by Jones and his colleagues to get to the bottom of every question which it behoved them to



deal with, and to its adoption, combined with a consistent determination to take the opposite course in all public questions to that advocated by the leading journal, may be attributed the remarkable success which attended his Government. Occasionally the replies from the spirit world were couched in enigmatical terms, like those of the oracles of old. But Jones was never at a loss to derive comfort and encouragement from them. Here is an instance:—On one occasion, after the usual preliminaries had been gone through, and the spirits had, by a number of vigorous raps on the Council table, expressed their willingness to afford information, the following question was written on the slate:—

“Will the police succeed in capturing Banks’ gang?” (alluding to a notorious gang of bushrangers who had held the interior of the Colony in a state of terror for over ten years), and the answer came promptly.

“Occurrences which ought not to happen are the facts which serve as clues to new discoveries.”

This message, if oracular, was at any rate a little mixed; but, as a rule, the inhabitants of the spirit world were favourable to Jones’ administration. Unlike his predecessors, he neither courted the favour of the public nor did he fear their frown: his motto was—

“There is a medium in everything.”

On one point he was resolved—no bushranger should remain at large to endanger the lives and properties of her Majesty’s subjects while he assisted to rule the destinies of the Colony.

## CHAPTER VII.

“And busy scenes came back, as thus he sat all lonely,  
For there in his narrow cell he lived in memory only;  
Once more he was a careless youth, unknown to grief and sadness;  
Again he roamed the forest wild, and sung of joy and gladness.”

WE must now return to Jenkins, the incarcerated. The dreary monotony of Darlinghurst had begun to tell upon him; he had still plenty of cheek, but it had lost its ruddy hue; his appetite was good, but the gruel and dried bread supplied by the authorities ill satisfied its cravings. He slept



well, but no visitation from the spirit world attended his slumbers. Where was his *alter ergo*, the sympathetic spirit of foreign extraction by whose aid he was to effect his release? On the morning of the 24th ultimo he rose as usual in an unusually despondent frame of mind, and spent the day in killing cockroaches, the only relaxation which the narrow limit of his cell afforded him.

“What recks the doomed, deep hid in silent cell,  
Sunshine, bird's song, or distant surge of life,  
No light is there for him, and sounds but tell  
Of moments passing to the last dread strife.”

It was sufficiently evident to this lonely man that no spirits were able to obtain admittance into the precincts of the gaol, and that to find a medium of communication to his friends he must have recourse to stratagem. The adjoining cell was occupied by a Chinaman. Somehow his heart warmed towards his almond-eyed brother, imprisoned by the barbarians for some paltry act of petty larceny. Here was a man accustomed to the ceaseless chatter of a score or two of Celestials throughout the day, doomed to hear only the echoes of his own voice—a gregarious, if not particularly clean biped, used to smoke himself to the sleep of unconsciousness through the medium of opium, with eight or ten bedfellows, similarly engaged, in a shanty twelve by ten—now forced to lie awake on a spare bed, the sole occupant of a lofty and well-ventilated chamber, *solus cum solo*. Mutual misfortune begets sympathy, and Jenkyns began to pity the Chinaman. It was hard upon a foreigner. Ha! a foreigner—a Chinaman! Could he by any chance be the long-lost medium? Ah, pooh! The idea was absurd.

He uttered these words with such emphasis that his next door neighbour, whose name was Ah Foo, believing himself to be called, said softly in reply—“Welly good!”

The next day the joyful discovery was made—Jenkyns and the Chinaman were sympathetic. One grasp of the hand was sufficient to show that magnetic influence was negative in each case, while both were positive in the possession of one ruling desire—to escape?

It is hardly necessary to add that Ah Foo was a relation of the rich gardener of Hongkong; in fact, he was his



younger brother, and the poor relation of the family. Yet he had not always been poor. At one time Fortune had smiled upon him, and so had a young lady, whose attractions were unquestionable, her feet being no larger than sheep's trotters. Happy days, never to return, when, in his brother's garden at Hongkong, he had basked in the sunshine of her smiles—when

“They spooned in the way  
That true lovers do,  
And Ah Foo kissed Too Hay,  
And Too Hay kissed Ah Foo.”

He saw her in his mind's eye, gracefully waddling across the room to meet him; then he awoke, and found it a *cell*, and he gnashed his teeth in despair. The first chapter of this romance had been written, but there seemed little promise of the second; for now he was an exile from the Flowery Land, the barbarians had him under lock and key, and, oh! horror of horrors! *they had cut off his tail!* Often, in his moments of bitter reflection, he had exclaimed, “Ah! if I were Hung!” It was, perhaps, fortunate for him that he was not hung, and especially so for Jenkyns, though it is an open question whether Society would not have been a gainer. The gift of divination ran in the family, and nothing more was required to put any member of it into a trance than an ounce of opium and a pipe. But these were unattainable luxuries at Darlington, and there were other obstacles to the success of a *seance* which seemed insurmountable. The prison cells boasted of no table. There were no wash-hand stands or chests of drawers, and the beds were firmly fixed to the floor. Would the spirits condescend to a manifestation in connection with furniture which was immovable? Would they not feel insulted by being asked to deliver a message upon an inverted water-bottle, the only article available for the purpose. Then, again, writing materials were absent. But necessity is the mother of invention. Desperate situations call forth desperate resolves, and evoke extraordinary ingenuity. Before long the fertile brain of Jenkyns had made his arrangements for a *seance*. A sheet of note-paper and an envelope were procured, ostensibly for the purpose of writing to the Governor of the Gaol, and a piece of magnetic wire, picked up in the yard, and passed through the grating of the cell,



served to connect the two criminals, already joined together by the common tie of misfortune. The envelope, duly closed, was placed upon the jug. Jenkyns grasped one end of the wire, Ah Foo the other, and, both fixing at the same moment their thoughts on the hope of escape, the necessary conditions were fulfilled, and a slight rustling of the paper indicated to the watchful ear of Ah Foo that a message had been received. It was in Chinese, and, when deciphered by that Celestial, contained these words in the writing of Confucius, translated into English for the benefit of our readers:—

“Force cannot exist without matter; matter cannot be sensibly active without force. Reason is a flower, and its fragrance is liberty and knowledge.”

Jenkyns gathered from this that, as he had been forced into the matter, there was every reason to employ his knowledge in obtaining his blooming liberty. The spirits were evidently propitious. A subsequent message from the spirit of Jack Sheppard—

“Clear out with the Chinese clyfaker!”

confirmed him in his resolve to escape—but how? A lucky incident placed the means within their reach. The contract for the supply of beef and mutton for the gaol was in the hands of an unscrupulous contractor, and the articles were of a very inferior description. The prisoners, who had the greatest stake in the contract, were the sufferers. The next day, at dinner, a joint of beef, which had formerly belonged to a working bullock, smoked on the dining table. It was so bad, that it scarcely held together, and the artful butcher, to preserve it intact, had transfixed it with *an iron skewer*. For one moment the diamond optics of the celestial glittered as he saw within his grasp the means of escape; a second later, and he had *severed* the weapon, dexterously hiding it under his sleeve, while the look, “so child-like and bland,” with which he regarded the company was refreshing to witness.

The conspirators resolved to make the attempt that very night. By feigning sickness Jenkyns contrived to ward off the suspicion of the warders, and by twelve o'clock they had pierced through the third brick wall, and the outer wall—



some twenty feet high—was now the only obstacle between them and freedom. But how to scale it, with an ascending scale—*pianissimo*?

Fortune favours the bold. At one corner of the courtyard, adjoining the quarters of the attendants, a gigantic creeper had been trained against the wall, one of those magnificent tropical productions which are only to be found in the sunny land of Australia.

It was the *Victoria Regia*!!!

Joy! joy! Here was a ladder provided by Nature ready to hand. The rapidity with which these exotic plants send forth their tendrils may be guessed by the fact that not a vestige of verdure was perceptible in the plant the day before. Now its gorgeous blossoms hung in festoons from the summit of the wall to within a few feet of the ground on either side.

To seize the opportunity, and, at the same time, one of these tendrils with the prehensible grasp of a ring-tailed 'possum was with Jenkyns the work of a moment, and in less time than it takes to relate the daring feat, the escapees had cleared the impediment, and were speeding on their way rejoicing. The next morning, disguised as gentlemen, they were on their way to Jerilderie. With two mouldy biscuits, a tin panniken, and the iron skewer as a weapon of defence, they felt that all was not lost.

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#### CHAPTER VIII.

“Day and night my toils redouble,  
Never nearer to the goal;  
Night and day I feel the trouble  
Of the wanderer in my soul.”

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“The journey is weary,  
The road is briared;  
The day is dreary,  
And we are tired.”

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How interesting are the investigations of science, and what praise is due to the hardy explorer! Who can express the charms which present themselves to the enthusiastic admirer of Nature in the pursuit of botany! Until recently it was popularly believed that the pathetic ballad of “Jack



and the Beanstalk" was merely an imaginary romance improvised by an ingenious nurse of a literary turn of mind in order to quiet some fractious infant insensible to the drowsy influence of Godfrey's cordial or soothing syrup. Now, it has been proved beyond doubt that this delightful story was founded upon fact. On the shores of Northern Queensland may be seen whole groves of the *Faba Siliqua Gladiola*, or sword bean, the identical plant by which the hero of the narrative so cleverly effected his escape. The incident on which the tale is founded is as follows:—A small vessel was off the Queensland coast during a terrific storm. Dark clouds hung like a funeral pall over the ship, which was drifting under bare poles, at the rate of fifteen knots, on to the rocks. The compass was out of order, the skipper had lost his reckoning, no one knew where the horizon was, not a star was visible, all was doubt, danger, and uncertainty.

"They were crowded in the cabin,  
Not a soul would dare to sleep;  
'Twas midnight on the waters,  
And the storm was on the deep."

Suddenly one of the hands exclaimed (he was a Scotchman, but had been for some years in Queensland), "Eh, mon, dinna ye hear the rattlin' of the bean-pods;" The vessel was then thirty miles from the shore and going free, too free, alas, for safety. The captain at first thought of putting the man in irons, as a helpless lunatic, but Jack persisted, and shortly afterwards the sound was plainly distinguished by all on board. Every head was turned in the direction from which it proceeded, but as nothing could be seen the ship's head was also turned and the danger averted. These magnificent trees, often towering to a height of three hundred feet, are covered in seedtime with long pods over six feet in length, each pod containing from three to six beans about the size of a Clarence River oyster. No two pods contain the same number, a fact in natural history which has given rise to the query—how many beans make five?—and when a high wind gets up and the pods become shrivelled and partly open, the beans rattle like peas in a bladder. Thus we see that everything in Nature has its use, and nothing is made in vain. The cackling of geese saved the capitol of Rome, and the rattling of a bean-pod gave warning to a vessel at a distance of *thirty miles from land*. A strong



corroboration of this touching incident is found in the use of the bean by the Sydney people as a match-box. It was found that in no other way could the story be matched. Envious critics have attempted to show that any connection between the Queensland bean and "Jack and the Beanstalk" is a chronological impossibility. We can only say in reply that we don't see it in that light. Some people are never satisfied.

Some five hundred miles journey from one of these bean forests, in a northerly direction, in one of the mountain fastnesses of New South Wales, and not a great way off the Victorian border, about five miles off everywhere, was the home of the outlaws.

"Where it was seen, apart the cedars stood,  
A hidden shelter, opened in the wood."

The spot they had selected for their camp was in the midst of an impenetrable scrub, where, if there was but little law, there were plenty of lawyers ready to take the very clothes off the daring intruder. These prickly shrubs, with their long serrated leaves bristling with sharp points like the teeth of a saw, were formidable obstacles to encounter; and as there was about a mile of jungle to traverse to get to the camp, and that camp was known to contain four desperate men, armed with repeating rifles and Colt's revolvers, besides a lot of other equally murderous weapons, the mounted troopers who were sent after the bushrangers usually preferred to camp outside the scrub, and to lose the track at that particular spot; and, under the circumstances, we say small blame to them, if any. Yet one blazing hot day, about a month after the occurrences related in the last chapter, two ragged, unhappy-looking individuals were trudging along towards the scrub in question with the evident intention of exploring it. They did not look much like troopers. The latter often affected various disguises, but the characters which now appeared in sight were hardly such as would have been chosen even at a Mayoral Ball in Sydney. The first was a little, lean, wizened old party, with a face the colour of a mahogany table, almond-shaped eyes, a bald head and a pigtail, dirty and dishevelled. His height was five feet nothing or thereabouts, and he was slim in proportion. The few articles of clothing which still belonged to him hung in tatters, his shoes



had large holes in them, and his whole appearance was eminently disreputable. His companion was a larger and stouter man, but equally ragged and objectionable in his get-up. He carried in his right hand a goad, which a close examination would have shown to be an iron skewer such as butchers use to connect and to force into circular form a fillet of veal or a rib of beef, and with this effective weapon, prodding the Chinaman *a tergo* (for our readers will have recognised from the above description, Jenkyns and Ah Foo), he had forced him to do his thirty miles a day along the dusty road for a fortnight or more since they had left the gaol at Darlinghurst. The poor little beast was almost dead beat, but Jenkyns, albeit a kind-hearted man, was compelled to put him through his facings; for, although he was eager to rejoin his friends, he did not care to travel without his medium. The sympathetic feeling on Ah Foo's side had pretty well died out, and it was now a week since he had uttered his favourite exclamation "welly good." For the last three days they had subsisted upon a kangaroo rat and a fig of tobacco. But now they were at the end of their journey, and rest and food awaited them.

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### CHAPTER IX.

"I'm a robber, I'm a thief,  
 I'm a great guerilla chief,—  
 I can either knock you down,  
 Or prig your pocket handkerchief.  
 Every kind of villainy,  
 Cometh natural to me,  
 And I finish all my actions  
 With a one, two, three."

Of the birth and parentage of James Banks, the leader of the outlaws, but little is known, except from the accounts given by the newspapers of the day, which are slightly mixed. From these we learn that he was a native of the Colony, born in the North of Ireland, of Welsh extraction, and that he was sent out to this Colony at an early age for sheep-stealing. Certain it is that in the pastoral settlements of the colony, among the great sheep walks of Australia, he gained the notoriety which marked his career.



“ He smiled on those bold squatters  
 A smile serene and high ;  
 He looked upon the troopers,  
 And scorn was in his eye.”

We first hear of him in Victoria, with his brother and a mutual friend, sticking up the bank, and forcing the manager to jump over his own counter, and his wife to sit down to the piano and play the “ Battle of Prague ” to silence interruption while the safe was broken open and its contents appropriated. Then in an encounter with the police, shooting a few troopers, and taking their horses, weapons, and ammunition. Afterwards, in New South Wales, sticking up stations, and even townships, dining at the best hotels at the landlord’s expense, riding the best cattle taken from the squatters’ paddocks, and behaving in a generally amusing don’t-care-a-d—natory sort of way. They thought as little of bailing up a township as you, gentle reader, would think of bailing out a bucket of water. The alarm penetrated to Sydney, even the Government stronghold, the Treasury ; and the administrative head of the department quaked in his shoes at each record of the bushrangers’ prowess. But at the time we are describing, it was noticeable that the bushrangers had become much more cautious. Jones had vowed to extirpate them root and branch, and had offered a reward of £10,000 for their heads—alive or dead—and this being a time of considerable commercial distress, when the banks were giving 7 per cent. for fixed deposits, there were a great many persons in want of £10,000. Thus it was that the outlaws were forced to exercise the greatest vigilance and to sleep metaphorically with one eye open. There were plenty of plucky men among the police, but as yet none had dared to beard the lion in his den. The outlaws were well supplied with provisions by the cockatoo farmers in the neighbourhood, and wine and grog *ad libitum*, which they drank in bumpers to the overthrow of Jones’ administration. Thus they hurled defiance to the outside world, and drowned care in the flowing bowl. In the words of the old song:—

“ Troy had a breed of bold stout men,  
 But Greece made shift to rout her,  
 ‘Cause each Greek drank as much as ten,  
 And therefore was the stouter.”



It will not, therefore, excite surprise to learn that about the time the two travellers had got half way through the scrub, and the last vestige of clothing attached to Ah Foo had been dragged from his body by the thorns and briars, leaving only an attenuated specimen of naked humanity, the report of fire-arms resounded through the woods, and a rifle ball lodged itself in a tree about one inch above the head of that despondent and fatigued celestial. The next moment, with the infuriated bound of a spring chicken after a grasshopper, a tall, bearded ruffian sprang from his ambush, and the ominous words "bail up," shouted in a stentorian voice, brought the party to a stand. A glance, however, showed the outlaws that the newcomers were not troopers in mufti—indeed, they were almost in bufti—and the next moment their chief executed a *pas de seul*, and, exclaiming "Jenkyns," rushed into the arms of the escaped aider and abettor, like the father into the arms of his long-lost daughter in the closing scene of a melodrama. The camp was soon reached; supper and champagne, from the cellars of a purse-proud squatter, were produced and done full justice to; and then, for the first time for a whole fortnight, Ah Foo uttered his favourite exclamation—"Welly good."

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## CHAPTER X.

"Her eyes were bright; her locks were light,  
 Yet strong enough to bind him;  
 She had a kind of clinging way—  
 The girl he left behind him."

MARIANNE SMITH was one girl in a thousand. It is not easy to see how she could have been more, but the phrase is employed to show her superiority over any nine hundred and ninety-nine other girls the colony could produce. In consequence of a slight difference of opinion between her and her mistress as to the number of times during the week in which it was expedient for her to leave her household duties for the purpose of *seeing her mother*, she had left her situation, and hearing that wages were high in Sydney, had persuaded her mother to leave for that city. She had even ventured to hint that a message from the spirit world had informed her



that a high destiny awaited her there. But the old lady, although not unwilling to quit Melbourne, was not disposed to place any reliance upon spiritual tidings, the only medium which she acknowledged in connection with the "sperruts" being the gin and water which she consumed during the lonely evenings when her daughter was out. The *séances* which Marianne attended she looked upon as a "pack of trumpery," and ridiculed the idea of a number of young persons of both sexes sitting round a table waiting for the spirits to manifest themselves. Indeed, she went so far as to quote Scripture against these manifestations :

"Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished."

Marianne, however, gained her point, and before long they found themselves in Sydney, where the young lady soon obtained a situation as barmaid in a fashionable hotel. Before many weeks had passed over her head she turned the heads of at least a dozen young men.

"Than the beer which she served her complexion was clearer,  
Than the price which she charged for that beer she was dearer."

The spirits she served certainly backed her up in this position, and soon her admirers became legion. They drank nobblers from her fair hands, and became intoxicated without getting tight, and the custom of the hotel increased so rapidly, that the proprietor offered her his hand, and, upon being refused, doubled her wages on the spot. The bar was anything but a bar to her advancement.

One evening, as she was taking the air in Hyde Park, in that sequestered avenue known as the "Lovers' Walk," she was accosted by a tall and distinguished-looking individual, who insisted upon entering into conversation with her. What was it that attracted her to this man, so that her heart warmed to him at once, and she—so coldly repellent—became sympathetic all in a jiffy?

Before she had talked to this gentleman for ten minutes, she seemed to have known him for years. Was it?—yes—no—could it be?—yes, it was the hero of her youthful romance, now the Honourable John Jones, a Minister of the Crown. He came again and again; he saw her and was conquered.



while she, having made a conquest, soon rivetted the chains which bound him by the thousand-and-one fascinations of which she was mistress. He spent all the time he could spare from his Ministerial duties, besides a good deal of ready money, in her presence, and on one occasion actually voted against the second reading of a bill he had himself introduced—his thoughts being, not with the measure before the House, but with the measures which the fair Marianne was serving out in another place. In short, he had lost his heart to the pretty barmaid—it was bottled, corked up, and hermetically sealed, and safe in her keeping at the hotel—

“He speaks in dulcet silv’ry tones,  
That sweetly Mary thrill;  
The name by which he’s known is Jones,  
But Mary calls him Bill.”

Letters passed between them—letters chiefly in his hand, but adroitly transferred to hers—until she had accumulated a store of *billets doux*, sufficient to have obtained heavy damages in a court of law, if her admirer had dreamed of breaking off his engagement; but that never entered into his head—he was too far gone for that—

“He loved her, oh! He loved her so  
Outrageously, that soon he  
Became what men will now and then  
Characterise as spooney.”

They were married. To describe with any degree of accuracy the bride’s dress, and the majestic air with which she walked up the aisle, followed by her sixteen bridesmaids, would be simply impossible—

“She entered, but, oh! how imperfect the verb  
To express to the senses her movements superb;  
To say that she ‘sailed in’ more clearly might tell  
Her grace in its buoyant and billowy swell.  
Her robe was a vague circumambient space,  
With shadowy boundaries made of point lace,  
The rest was but guess-work, and well might defy  
The power of masculine critical eye.”

The honeymoon, which happened during the recess, was passed at a seaside watering-place called Manly Beach, where



at evening time, at the end of the solitary wooden pier which graces that favourite resort, watching the debarkation of passengers from Sydney by steamer, the happy pair might have been seen—she, exhibiting the glories of her *trousseau* to an admiring public—

“ A vision fair, with glowing hair,  
And lilies white twined in it ;  
With eyes, whose bright seraphic light  
Transfixed him in a minute ; ”

he, smoking the pipe of contentment, with a fishing line in his hand, leaning over the railing, and vainly endeavouring to secure the artful mullet or the wily flathead. Marianne took no interest in this piscatory amusement. She had hooked *her* fish with very little trouble, and she panted to return to the metropolis and take her part in its gaiety and amusement. She had now reached the goal of her ambition : she was the wife of the most influential man in the Colony, and she determined to profit by her position to the full extent of her power. Upon their return to the metropolis she soon became a leader of fashion, and, at the numerous balls and parties to which she was invited, she shone resplendent in silks and satins, like a diamond of the first water set in Australian gold—or like one of those crack liners described as A1, coppered and copper-fastened, and a remarkably fast sailer. The latter simile is, perhaps, the most appropriate, for she carried so much sail, that Jones, upon observing the amount of her quarterly bill of millinery, was compelled, in gentle but forcible terms, to direct her attention to the motto of his family—“There is a medium in everything.” But he never ventured to repeat the remonstrance, for reasons which may be better imagined than described. What says the poet?—

“ Wives of great men oft remind us,  
We should pick our wives with care,  
Or we may not leave behind us  
Half our natural crop of hair.”

Meantime, while the fair Marianne was thus enjoying her advancement to riches and honour, and doing her level best to ruin her husband, her mother was found by both husband and wife to be considerably in the way. The old



lady, who had not been educated up to her daughter's standard, and was not particularly refined in her habits, was Jones' *bête noir*. She was not only objectionable as a mother-in-law, but as an unrepresentable member of society. Jones, as we have endeavoured to show, was no ordinary man; he was not only a Prime Minister but a prime strategist, and the way he succeeded in ridding himself of this encumbrance did equal honor to his head and heart; it was diplomatic—it was ingenious. Perceiving that the old lady had a decided *penchant* for gin and water—a taste which had been fostered by a short residence in the hotel at which her daughter had acted as barmaid—he introduced to her notice a new kind of ardent spirits, called “schnapps,” at that time undergoing a good deal of puffing in the newspapers as an infallible cure for rheumatism, dyspepsia, tic-doloureux, want of appetite, and the several other ailments with which his mother-in-law was afflicted. Mrs. Smith took kindly to this prescription, and was so persistent in her efforts “to keep her spirits up by pouring spirits down,” that he had the satisfaction of seeing her—shortly after undergoing several sharp attacks of *delirium tremens*—safely lodged in a lunatic asylum at Parramatta, an inland town about fifteen miles from the city, which was once the seat of Government, and is said always to have contained more lunatics than any three towns in the colony; and there the old lady may be seen any afternoon by a visitor, threatening all the attendants with immediate dismissal if her carriage is not brought round in twenty minutes.

The mother and daughter being thus comfortably disposed of, it is now time to return to the other *dramatis personæ*, who are playing high jinks in a totally different part of the Colony.

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## CHAPTER XI.

“Nor is there anyone in sight  
 All round, in valley or in height;  
 No shout or cooee strikes his ear—  
 What is the fellow doing here?”

ON the summit of a lofty, breezy knoll, on a spur of the great Dandelion Range, at the extremity of a thin wall of limestone which juts out from the crest of the hill, one clear



summer evening, about a couple of months after the events we have just described, might have been seen, by anyone in sight of it, the solitary figure of a man standing erect and gazing intently in the direction of the sea, which was not visible at that point. A thin wreath of flame for a moment lit up the scene, deepening the gloom of the forest in the background, and affording a momentary view of his face. What was he doing there?

He was lighting his pipe!

A tall, powerful looking individual, with a bright eye and a resolute cast of countenance, covered with a bushy beard. A reckless, desperate-looking ruffian, dressed in an old velveteen shooting jacket with breeches and boots, and carrying four revolvers and a large bowie knife in his belt. Not the sort of man it would be pleasant to meet in a dark lane on a foggy night if you had a few hundred pounds, a gold watch, and sundry other articles of valuable portable property in your possession, and were entirely unarmed.

This man was Jem Banks, the bushranger!

“ Why does he tear his raven locks,  
And look so ashy pale?  
Why does his manly bosom heave  
Like billows in a gale?”

Why, indeed?

“ Perhaps despair disturbed his rugged breast;  
Perhaps the wind had shifted to the West;  
Perhaps he had some call upon his mind;  
Perhaps was sick, in love, or hadn't dined.”

After smoking in silence for some minutes, he put his fingers in his mouth and gave a long, shrill, and thrice repeated whistle. Presently several other forms emerged from the shelter of the trees and approached the spot, until there were fourteen men assembled around their leader. The whole gang were in attendance, and if a photograph could have been taken of the group, there and then, it would have portrayed fifteen as ragged, ferocious, and hungry-looking individuals as could have been found at that time in the Colony outside Darlinghurst and Berrima gaols.



“ They were a motley ragged generation.  
 Beards, shoulders, eyebrows, broad and square, and thick  
 Their accents firm and loud in conversation  
 Their eyes and gestures eager, sharp and quick,  
 Shewed them prepared on proper provocation,  
 To give the lie, pull noses, stab and kick,  
 And for that very reason, be it said,  
 They were so very courteous and well bred.”

Among these were our old friend Jenkyns and his familiar Ah Foo,—who having been, on account of his remarkable culinary skill, appointed head cook and bottle-washer to the gang, attended in his official capacity. The ingenuity displayed by the Chinaman in providing dinner when the party were on short commons, and the energy he showed in hunting for succulent herbs to season them with, was fully appreciated. Haunches of kangaroo, stuffed and roasted by Ah Foo, became delicacies not to be despised ; while his 'possums, smothered in onions, his jugged wallaby and baked bandicoot, or fricasseed flying squirrel, and his celebrated caterpillar custard were dishes of sufficient merit to tempt an epicure. To the bushrangers, who had no regular supply of food, this diminutive foreigner was invaluable.

It was evident that on this particular evening something was on foot. Indeed, for that matter, every one was on foot, but their horses were not far off. A cave on the steep side of the mountain, and accessible only by a narrow path among the rocks, had been converted into a stable, so that to the uninitiated it appeared that the bushrangers were like the grenadiers who scaled the heights of Abraham—

“ What was astonishing, nay, very particular,  
 They marched up rocks which were quite perpendicular.”

A consultation was about to be held to decide upon the next movements of the gang. To aid this object a manifestation of spirits became desirable, for each outlaw, if not a medium, was a firm believer in spirits, and frequently under their control. The spirits on this occasion were not long in manifesting themselves in the shape of sundry bottles of brandy, rum, and whisky, levied from various sources in the course of midnight attacks. Seated round the slab of rock to which they had been summoned, and which served as a table, the bushrangers held their *séance*, and the raps which



resounded from the table soon became as decided as the most ardent spiritist could desire, with the advantage, not always obtainable at *séances*, that there was no possible doubt as to the quarter from which they proceeded. Numerous were the propositions made by members of the gang, and numerous were the libations which followed those propositions, but nothing was decided.

The bushrangers had been drinking heavily for two days. Never was a more desperate drinking bout since

“The days of bumper toasts and salt and water fine;  
 Broiled bones and deviled biscuits, three times three and nine times nine,  
 When underneath the table you were bound to land,  
 And no man rose to go till he was sure he could not stand,”

But now the liquor ran short, and an earnest and excited conference took place, the result of which was a project to attack the Bung Bung head station, bail up the inmates, and carry off the contents of the larder and cellar, besides such other valuables as they could lay their hands upon. This proposition was mooted by Jenkyns, who had obtained information at a bush public-house not far off that his enemy Jones would be there on a visit in a few days, with the intention of proposing to the voters of that electorate one of his supporters to represent them in Parliament. The outlaw, as he sat by the camp fire that evening sharpening his bowie knife on the sole of his boot, chuckled at the thought of the revenge which awaited him. Jones in his power! Jones, the purse-proud member of Parliament, face to face with the convict of Darlinghurst! If the spirits could only bring that about, he would never doubt them again. A consultation with the cook with the object of evoking the aid of the spirits to the success of the expedition only resulted in the prophetic exclamation, Ah Hung! The bushranger received this message in moody silence, then he swore fourteen horrible oaths and retired to rest.

## CHAPTER XII.

“Are things what they seem, or is visions about?”

THESE our actors as I foretold you were all spirits, and are melted into air and like the baseless fabric of a vision leave not a *rap* behind.



In the meantime a *séance* of a very different character was being held in Sydney. The science of spiritualism was in high repute at that time in the metropolis, despite the sneers and ridicule with which it was assailed by self-constituted scientists in many quarters. Marianne had always considered herself a medium; and since she had joined hands with Jones, who was an adherent from political motives, she was more than ever impressed with the advantage of having the spirits on her side. Many were the occasions on which the spirits manifested themselves to a select party of friends in her back drawing-room, and delighted their audiences with messages from departed friends. Mediums became the rage in Sydney, and anything that happened which was at all out of the ordinary course of events, was attributed to their agency. If a man, on getting half-way to his office, suddenly recollected that he had forgotten some important papers, he was convinced that he had been reminded of them by a friendly spirit, and on taking out his handkerchief he would find a knot tied in it. If he knocked his head against an article of furniture when he came home from his Club at 12 o'clock at night, he was sure it was the spirits, as no doubt it was in most cases. Mrs. Jones had received a message from a certain John Smith, who had been dead about two years, and who claimed to be her ancestor, which was satisfactory as showing that she came of a respectable and ancient family; and one of her wealthy friends, who had lost a diamond brooch, was directed to a pawnbroker's where she found the article ticketed for sale at half its value. The eccentricities displayed by the spirits excited as much admiration as the marvellous feats they performed. Although stationery was plentiful and pens cheap, and cream-laid paper could be purchased at one shilling for five quires, no spirit could be induced to convey a message upon anything but a school-room slate with a chip of pencil about the size of a barleycorn, while the inhabitants of the spirit world reversed the mundane order of things by invariably writing under the table instead of upon it. There was no end to the wonderful things they did. Pocket compasses, when controlled by a spirit, would insist upon pointing East or West instead of North and South. Messages were received from persons who had never existed, giving the minutest details in the most



ungrammatical language, showing that there were lying spirits as well as truth-telling ones. In short, there was no limit to the tricks they were up to. On the evening to which we refer, the wife of the minister had invited some friends to preside at a *séance* at which a celebrated medium, then on a visit to Sydney, had promised to attend. All the necessary conditions had been complied with: the party consisted of four persons of either sex; a square deal table with flaps had been sent up from the kitchen, and several preliminary taps upon it shewed that it was sound and not hollow. A minute examination of the table and surroundings, by an inquisitive visitor, shewed conclusively that there was no prestidigitative or mechanical apparatus concealed in it; it was evident that there was no intelligence present, even in the faces of the enquirers after truth. All was fair and above-board except the slate which was held *under the table* by the great medium. The circle having been formed, and the usual number of raps, signifying—make ready, present, fire away, having been given on the table, according to the usual code of signals, a series of spiritual knocks, in rapid succession, resembling a postman's knock at the front door, shewed an unusual alacrity on the part of the spirits to go to work. Perhaps the presence of the great medium stimulated them to a more than usually ready demonstration.

Meantime the fair hostess, seated at her piano, favored the company with some appropriate selections from that beautiful operatic air,

*“Questo è nockin à que dooro.”*

Then the business of the evening commenced.

Will you give us a manifestation? was the first question. Immediately the table rose, as if by magic, about eighteen inches from the floor, then pirouetted upon one leg for about a minute, knocking two or three of the party off their chairs, and finally danced a Highland fling, *con spirito*. On enquiry it was found that this feat was performed by the spirit of Robert Burns. Lights were then extinguished, at the request of the Professor, and a number of spirits made their appearance known and felt by sundry touches at the arms and legs of the party, and several hollow sounds gave evidence that some of the visitors had received tolerably hard raps on the head. Those, the Professor observed, were the spirits of schoolboys,



who had gone to the spirit land before their education had been completed, and were still up to their larks.

It was now proposed by the hostess to obtain, if possible, some messages by means of a slate and pencil, and the spirits having expressed their willingness to communicate anything, Mrs. Jones ventured to ask if Mr. Jones would meet with a good reception.

The Professor then, having carefully washed a very dirty slate, and placed upon it a piece of slate pencil about one-eighth of an inch in length, held them under the flap of the table with one hand, while with the other he signed to the others to join hands.

“For that fine madness still he did maintain  
Which always should possess the *medium's* brain.

For full five minutes the party listened in breathless silence: presently a faint scratching was heard, and on the slate being withdrawn the following words were found written upon it in a fine bold hand:--

“They intend to make it pretty warm for him.”

Everybody was delighted, and no one more than Marianne, who saw in this prediction an ovation for her husband and fresh honours in the distance, possibly knighthood, when she would be Lady Jones. After some further interesting phenomena, performed by the spirits at the request of the professional medium, and a slight exchange of property in the form of a cheque, between that favoured individual and his hostess, the party broke up and the *séance* was at an end.

### CHAPTER XIII.

“His scull was as bald as the palm of your hand,  
And surrounding its base was a silvery band  
Of curly grey hair. And he brushed it well up,  
From ear round to ear,  
Till it looked from the rear  
Like a very smooth egg in a very white cup.”

THE head station on the Bung Bung run, which run comprised some 20,000 acres, more or less—probably less—of the richest pastoral country in New South Wales, was distant some 15



miles from the outlaw's camp, in the Dandelion Range. It consisted of a cluster of huts resembling a small village surrounded by stock-yards and paddocks leading one into the other in such a way that to get up to the residence of the proprietor was almost as difficult as to thread the maze at Hampton Court. It was not a very pretentious building, but it had its advantages. The rain never came through the roof except in wet weather, and the chimney never smoked unless there was a high wind. It was built on a slight eminence at the foot of the range. Behind the station was a wooded mountainous background, while a long grassy plain stretched in front of it for miles. A large creek ran—when it ran, which it only condescended to do for about two months in the year—through this valley and enlivened the landscape, besides watering the cattle. It was one of those picturesque spots which novelists generally assert are only to be found in the particular country they are describing, but which are really to be found all over the world. In short, the scenery was truly rural and beautiful, as all Australian scenery is, or ought to be. And when there was anything going on in the shape of a muster of cattle, or there were visitors at the station, which happened occasionally, the place was pretty lively. Then the owner kept open house, and—

“The chambers were fragrant with feasting,  
The atmosphere tuneful with merriment,  
The guests were all smiling with pleasure,  
Or smiling may be for experiment.”

At other times it was as dull as ditchwater. But it was a remarkably healthy spot, and the people who lived there had prodigious appetites.

These consisted of the proprietor, whose name was Grimshaw; his daughter; a married couple who cooked and looked after the house; and half-a-dozen men, stockmen, splitters, and so on.

Grimshaw, the proprietor, or “the cove” as the men were in the habit of calling him among themselves, was not one of your blue-blooded aristocrats who had come out to the colonies and invested a few thousands in pastoral pursuits, who lived at their clubs and paid their overseers high wages; on the contrary, he was a hoary old reprobate who had



been originally a stockman, in which capacity he had displayed remarkable energy in hunting up stray saddle and putting his own brand upon them until he had got together a respectable herd, when he took up a small tract of country and commenced squatting on his own account. He was very illiterate, and could neither read nor write, but he was naturally shrewd, and was very chary about putting his mark to any document which was likely to bring him into trouble. He had got on, bit by bit, until he was now the owner of one of the finest properties in the colony. A close-fisted old fellow was Grimshaw,

“Stealthy and stingy, and shabby and miserly,  
Every morning his wont was to rise early,  
Search in each nook of his farming dominions,  
Count all the eggs and the apples and inions,  
Listen at keyholes for candid opinions  
Propounded by uncomplimentary minions.”

When we add that he drank like a fish and swore like a trooper, the reader will have some idea of the individual in question. He was about 60 years of age, but still strong and wiry, and a tough customer in a row. His daughter Susanna, who had just returned from a young ladies' school in Sydney, and was a high-spirited and accomplished girl, was the only person about the place who could manage him, and she ruled him with a rod of iron. This young lady, who was called the “Belle of Bung Bung” and had reached the age of sweet sixteen, was a magnificent specimen of the genus girl. She was tall and slender, and of a romantic disposition. Her great attraction was her hair, which she wore *au naturel*.

“In length it was ample, as you may suppose,  
It rippled away till it reached to her toes;  
She'd have made, had necessity ventured to drive her,  
A very respectable Lady Godiva;  
It was long, it was silky and wavy and mellow,  
And about as much flaxen as sunbeams are yellow.”

In addition to the above-mentioned residents at the head station, we may mention that a friendly tribe of blacks had made Bung Bung their head-quarters, and that their chief “Cookaburra,” or “the Laughing Jackass,” almost lived at the station. Grimshaw and he were linked together by the



ties of friendship and gratitude. Some years before, when Susanna was a child of four, a large old man kangaroo had taken a fancy to her, and taking the child up in his paws had hopped away with her, and but for Cookaburra she might never have been seen again alive. The blackfellow had met this strangely assorted pair about four miles from the station, had speared the kangaroo, and brought back the child in safety. Thenceforth he had always been a welcome guest at Bung Bung, and Grimshaw felt confidence in his presence against any surprises either from hostile blacks or other bad characters.

This was the station which Banks and his followers had determined to "stick up" on the night of the 29th May, 18—.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

"O'er the golden grass-land  
Floats a drowsy hum,  
Like the distant, dreamy  
Roil of fife and drum."

THE sun rose in a clear unclouded sky on the morning of the day fixed upon by the marauders for their deeds of rapine and bloodshed tinting with gold the peaks of the Dandelion Range, and making the long kangaroo grass in the Bung Bung Valley glisten like a field of golden corn. The busy hum of insect life had commenced; the wild fowl had left the quiet lagoons where they had passed the night, and flown away to inland waters; the opossums and other nocturnal animals buried themselves in holes and hollow trees now that night was turned into day; the cattle and horses rose from their camping places and began to feed; smoke issued from the kitchen of the homestead and the gunyahs of the aboriginals; the king of the poultry-yard clapped his wings exultingly and crowed long and loudly; the wattle-birds chattered in reply; the paroquets screamed from the tops of the lofty gum trees, and the day's routine commenced peacefully and pleasantly.

"The milch cows lowing at the gate,  
The magpie whistling in the dell,  
The bull-frog calling to his mate,  
The tinkling of some bullock bell."



On the verandah, clad in a light morning wrapper, and looking as fair as Aurora herself, stood Susanna, surrounded by her pets—offerings from the hand of her preserver and faithful follower, Cookaburra,—a tame kangaroo, a young emu, a native companion and a white cockatoo, were waiting for her, while on her shoulder perched a young opossum which had only been brought in the day before, the whole forming as pretty a picture as you would be likely to see if you were to travel the length and breadth of the Australian continent. Having fed her pets, the girl was about to retire into the house, when suddenly the shrill unearthly yell of the laughing jackass fell upon her ear, and Cookaburra stood before her in his Sunday attire, which consisted of a pair of military inexpressibles, no shoes or stockings, and a blue serge shirt, open at the front, and showing his manly chest, tattooed into a variety of devices, which were, no doubt, marks of honour equal to the titles of K.C.M.G., C.B., or A.S.S., worn by some of the great colonists whom the Queen delights to honour, and very probably the reward of equally meritorious achievements. But even this slight attire was more than he usually wore. Ordinarily he was like the ancient Briton who

“wore no clothes  
But a coat of paint, with painted hose,  
And a dab of red on the tip of his nose.”

His hair, which on this occasion was annointed with native bear's grease, with a slight tinge of red ochre to give him a martial appearance, had never known brush or comb,—

“His tangled ebon tresses  
No comb had e'er gone through;  
His forehead, it was furrowed by  
An elegant tattoo.”

and resembled, more than anything else, a huge bird's nest. It served as a receptacle for his majesty's pipe and various other small articles of daily use including a thin stick about a foot long, to one end of which a small bone hook was attached, and used for the purpose of drawing out from the holes in the bark of gum trees, those large maggots which are considered such a delicacy by the aboriginals of Australia. The features of the king of the



Bung Bung tribe, although possibly they might not have been considered handsome according to our standard of beauty, were, no doubt, greatly admired by his own people. In consequence of a custom practiced by his tribe, his nose had been flattened in infancy, and was now about three inches wide at its base, while underneath was a mouth which would have gained a fortune to its possessor if he had been Bones in a company of Ethiopian serenaders, on account of the extremely broad grin of which it was capable. Then he displayed a splendid set of teeth; and his hearty and frequent laugh—for he was keenly alive to humour—had gained for him the title of Cookaburra, or the Laughing Jackass. But the most remarkable feature in his face was his eye. It was not an eye to threaten and command, but to observe and detect—nothing escaped it. Put Cookaburra into a lady's drawing-room for ten minutes, and he would be able to tell for years afterwards what the room contained and all about it. Let him once get a good look at a man, woman, or child, and he would recognise him again under any circumstances or in any disguise. His powers of observation were something marvellous. The surface of the earth, which was a sealed book to the obtuser vision of the white man, was to him an open page or chart, on which he could follow with ease the movements of man or beast, and by noting those movements closely he could often arrive at a tolerably correct conclusion as to the object of the pursued. He could tell, by the amount of spring left in the grass, trodden by a man or horse, how long the track had been made; and he would at once perceive a peculiarity in the shoe that made that track, which would distinguish it from all others. In short, Cookaburra was born to be a detective, instead of which he was a mere good-natured idler, amusing himself by hunting, shooting, or tracking lost horses and cattle for his friend and ally the owner of Bung Bung, and the devoted servant of that old party's fair daughter, Susanna. Old Grimshaw was not unappreciative of the good qualities of the king of the blackfellows of that district and the protection his friendship afforded him, and was always ready to testify it by rations, rum, or cast-off apparel, of which his majesty might be in need. One little speck alone tarnished the lustre of Cookaburra's character, and that was his habit



of beating his wives—of whom he had three—until they roared again. This was always the case whenever a bottle of rum found its way into his gunyah—

“For then, until the grog was gone  
He filled the flowing measure;  
And, ere he went to bed at dawn,  
He kicked his wife for pleasure.”

But customs differ. Among the native Australians the women are not considered particularly weak vessels; at any rate whenever they carry on too much sail they are very soon brought to their bearings by a liberal use of the waddy.

“Good morning, Cookaburra,” said Susanna.

“Good mornin’, Miss Susy. You like him parrot, plenty yabber that fellow by’ m-bye,” pulling out of his bosom a pair of young paroquets which he handed to the young lady.

“Oh! what beauties. Oh, thank you, Cookaburra! What must I give them?”

“You give it him plenty damper, plenty sugar, by’ m-bye plenty yabber, all same white man.”

“Wait a bit, Cookaburra, I’m going to bring you something,” and the girl tripped away to return with a glass of grog, which the blackfellow tossed off with great relish.

“Missy, you tell him, Mister Grimshaw, Cookaburra want him.”

Just then the old man came out of the house, and entered into conversation with the blackfellow.

“Well, old man, did you want to see me?”

“Yes, Mister Grimshaw.”

“Why, what’s the row?”

“You remember, two days ago you give Cookaburra bottle of rum—budgery that. Cookaburra drink plenty grog that night—plenty sleep; By’ m-bye dream—see plenty white-fellow along of house—no good that fellow—what you call’em—bushmen.”

“Do you mean they were bushrangers, hey, old man?”

“Believe so, no good that fellow sit down over there (pointing to the range), plenty whitefellow, plenty horse—like that (holding up the fingers of both hands). You get him gun ready. Cookaburra make a light.”



"All right, old man. You go in and get some dinner. I'll look out."

Grimshaw was a man of few words, but he had implicit faith in his friend and ally and he knew that the situation was a serious one. For himself he had no fear, and, had he only been concerned, would have been quite ready to meet any number of the gang with no other assistance than the station afforded, but he was cautious for his daughter's sake, and also for the visitors whom he expected that evening from Sydney. The Hon. John Jones was coming up on a visit in company with a neighbour of Grimshaw's, a squatter named Griggs, who had put up in the pastoral interest for that electorate, and who was an admirer of his daughter Susanna. They must be protected from any attack if possible, but he would do more than that, he would capture the whole gang. Collecting the stockmen together, he informed them that a visit from the bushrangers would probably be made that evening, and Cookaburra, having been summoned to the conference, informed them that since he had spoken of his dream he had seen three suspicious-looking men on horseback, who were evidently reconnoitering the station. It was proposed to send off to the township, and, if possible get half-a-dozen troopers over and secrete them in one of the outbuildings shortly after dark in readiness for the attack. This suggestion was acted upon, and at about seven o'clock the station contained in various hiding places twelve good men and true, all well armed.

Now here was a singular phenomenon, Cookaburra had never heard of spiritualists or *séances*, and yet, while under the influence of spirits, he had been warned of danger impending to his friends. Could he have been an unconscious aboriginal medium? We leave that for scientists to determine. Grimshaw was slightly taken aback when he heard of the mode in which the information had been transmitted; but he was, as we have said, a man of few words, and the only remark he made was "Well, this is a rum start!"

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## CHAPTER XV.

“ The evening breeze passed by,  
 The leaves were gently stirred ;  
 But the thumping of her heart  
 Was all the sound she heard.  
 And now as wilder blew the wind,  
 And as the night grew drearer,  
 Adown the glen rode armed men,  
 Their trampling sounded nearer.”

“ Tell her I die devoted,  
 Victim to a noble task.  
 Have you got a drop of brandy  
 In the bottom of your flask ? ”

It was about half-past nine o'clock the same evening when six men, armed and mounted, might have been seen approaching the Bung Bung station. They consisted of Jem Banks, the leader of the outlaws, Bray, his lieutenant, our old friend Jenkyns, and three others. They wore no masks, and advanced with a confident air to a clump of trees outside the paddock where Ah Foo, the Chinaman, was waiting to take charge of their horses. They anticipated an easy victory, and took no precautions against surprise.

Meantime the Hon. John Jones and his friend had arrived, and Susanna had exerted herself to her utmost to entertain her visitors. Her father had given her no hint of the attack he was expecting, and the *lête à lête* she had enjoyed with her admirer had been disturbed by no thoughts of danger. She was sitting at the piano singing that simple Scotch ballad beginning “Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,” when Messrs. Banks and Bray walked up to the front door and summoned the inmates to bail up. Jones was congratulating himself on the warmth of the reception he had met with, and was in the lower room smoking a pipe with the proprietor, and taking the opportunity of sounding him as to the number of votes he was able to influence, when these ominous words fell on his ear.

But Grimshaw was prepared for the newcomers, and, whispering to his companion not to be alarmed, opened the door promptly, and admitted the two bushrangers with two others who had followed them. He knew that the black-fellow had been on the lookout, and that his men were closing



round the hut. The next moment a shot was fired outside, and at the same instant four troopers burst into the room, and a free fight ensued, which fully satisfied Jones that there had been no mistake in the message he had received from the spirits, "That they would make it pretty warm for him at Bung Bung." Never had he seen the tables and chairs so disturbed at any *séance* since he first became a medium. Everybody was fighting, and it seemed to him that they were fighting for the possession of his person.

"The combatants fought with a hubbub and screech,  
And fury which boded destruction to each;  
They threatened to rival those wonderful elves,  
The quarrelsome cats of Kilkenny themselves."

But Jones, accustomed to hold his own against a powerful opposition, gave way to no craven fear, but dashed boldly into the fray. Oh, for the pen of Homer, to describe the conflict that ensued.

Then the son of Jenkyns, singling himself from the throng, and perceiving his mortal enemy before him, rushed forward, looking terribly, and aimed a furious blow at his throat. But the haughty Jones, leader of councils, avoiding the blow aimed at his slender neck, escaped black death by letting go his variegated necktie; and admiration possessed those looking on, both the horse-taming settlers and the well-booted bushrangers, at the dire encounter. Then Jenkyns, firing off his pistol without injuring his assailant, threw his arms round the shoulders of the husband of the fair-haired Marianne, and hurled him with violence to the ground, till he lay supine in the dust of the well-slatted floor, provoking him at the same time with harsh, cutting words.

But while a dark cloud obscured the vision of the eloquent debater in Parliament, and the lookers on trembled lest the warlike son of Jenkyns should transfix him with his silver-hilted knife, which he had drawn from its sheath made of ox-hide, Grimshaw, the owner of cud-chewing cattle, rushed to the rescue and flung the attacking bushranger on his back with fierce hostility, hurling at him terrible words, and placing his foot on the prostrate body, shouted loudly, "Lie there, you blooming son of a sea-cook, and think not to escape the fate that awaits you."



While the battle thus raged, the valiant leader of the well-booted bushrangers, Banks the long-armed, seeing that black night had overtaken his comrade in arms, and that his only chance of safety lay in gaining the shelter where his solid-hoofed horses were waiting, rushed to the portal and attempted to fly. This he did; and would have escaped the grasp of the avenging troopers, had not Cookaburra, chief of the native warriors of Bung Bung, raising his weighty spear, hardened in the fire, and casting a long shadow behind it, hurled it by means of the bone-tipped womerah at the retreating figure. Swift flew the deadly weapon till it pierced and quivered in that part of the frame of the flying Banks which was most prominent as he stooped to pass under the thrice-railed slip-panel.

"Ky yi," shouted Cookaburra, as his enemy lay prone on the dung in the stockyard. "You are like a dingo come from a distance skulking round a sheepfold; while I am an ally of the white man, living near and fighting for his rights."

It will be seen from the above description that the fight terminated on the side of law and order. The bushrangers were unmistakably routed, and Jones and his host were triumphant. A review of the killed, wounded, and captured showed the following results: Banks, the leader of the outlaws, wounded and unable to stir: Jenkyns in the front room *hors de combat*; two of his comrades bound hand and foot alongside of him; and two lying dead in the front paddock.

But where was Susanna, the princess of Bung Bung? When we last saw her she was seated at the piano, treating her admirer to a little plaintive music, and discoursing about various matters, the principal theme being life in Australia—

"She talked of her pa, her pets and pianner,  
And the bird of her country a' singin' Susanna."

Then a shot was fired, and the warm blood faded from her damask cheek, and she clung to Griggs for support—

"One trembling arm stretched out for aid,  
And one was round her lover."

But when the muster roll was called, Susanna was nowhere to be found, and Jenkyns had skedaddled.



Here was a pretty go !

We may as well record here the lamentable fact that the festive Ah Foo disappeared from that time forth. The bush-ranger's horses were secured, the harness was all there, but no traces of the unfortunate celestial could be found. Dark suspicions were excited. The Chinaman had waxed prodigiously fat. He was no longer a medium in point of girth, and it is surmised that his oily condition had been too great a temptation to the followers of Cookaburra. They probably speared him in the first place, and in the second place, as to inter him would have been an undertaking—they ate him. Be that as it may, he was never again seen in the flesh, and a good cook, under peculiar commissariat difficulties, was added to the inhabitants of the spirit world.

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#### CHAPTER XVIII.

“The tongue of the absent,  
The sword of the brave,  
The song of the poet,  
The knife of the knave.”

GREAT was the joy expressed by Mrs Jones, *née* Smith, when the tidings of her husband's double success reached her—the triumphant election of the Government candidate, who had been returned by a large majority, after an eloquent speech from Jones, and the capture of the notorious Banks. Never did a man so suddenly become famous. It had got about that Jones had gone up on purpose to assist in the apprehension of the bushrangers, and that their capture was due entirely to his foresight and management, and the press were unanimous in crowning him with laurels. One paper, having a large circulation, piled on the agony to such an extent that it concluded a long panegyric by likening him to a second *Cœur de Lion* :—

“’Gainst whom the lawless Jenkyns could not wage the fight,  
Nor guard his spoils from Jones's might.”

The spiritualists made great capital out of the exploit, and proved conclusively that the spirits had warned him of the



impending danger, and that thus only had he been able to meet it so successfully. The leading Sydney journal promptly offered one hundred pounds prize for the best epic poem which should be written to commemorate his prowess, and twenty-two Australian poets thereupon sharpened their pencils and went to work. Some remarkably talented effusions were sent in, but that to which the prize was awarded was the following poem by a native of the colony, who chose the appropriate motto, "*Quod tuum tene*" (Hold your own).

## CANTO I.

Sing gentle muse the story of a fight,  
That woke the silence of a summer's night,  
When Banks and his party did environ  
A cattle station on the Dandelion :  
And all were killed or captured to a man,  
Before the fifteenth Parliament began.  
Come prompt me now the battle to rehearse  
In terms befitting Halloran's flowing verse,  
Or to the fire of Kendall's manly strain  
Or Lyric's spiritualistic songs attain.  
Oh ! animate for once my silken sail  
To charm my readers with a thrilling tale.  
'Twas in the Western district far away,  
Three hundred miles or more, so travellers say—  
Where sheep and cattle fatten year by year,  
And neighbours ten miles off, are thought too near—  
Within a drawing room some twelve feet square,  
In slab-built house—for brick and stone were rare—  
Reclining on a couch Susanna lay,  
And watched the summer sun's departing ray.  
A lovely maid endued with every grace,  
Slim as a cornstalk, seraph as to face.  
No haughty peer or nobleman begot her,  
Susanna was the daughter of a squatter.  
Her father was the founder of his tree,  
No richer tenant pastoral than he.  
'Twas evening and two visitors were there  
From Sydney—aristocrats from Wynyard Square.  
Both of distinguished and refined address,  
Swells of the class called heavy, nothing less.  
This a slim youth, tall, elegant, and pale,  
The other one, the hero of my tale.  
Refreshed with food, they sat and smoked their pipes  
And drank the wealthy squatter's swipes,  
While strains melodious fell upon the ear—  
Susanna sat and played the piano near.



## CANTO II.

What distant sounds disturb that tranquil scene  
 What does that noise of rushing horses mean?  
 As when some new chum of uncertain seat  
 Gallops at random down the winding street;  
 Or is a wild bullock, broken loose  
 From stockyard or from paddock—what the deuce?  
 Six mounted horsemen—steeds with reeking flanks,  
 And at their head the dreaded outlaw Banks.  
 At that fell sight and unexpected call,  
 Fear seized the inmates, one and all,  
 Then fright infernal filled the female mind;  
 The women fled and slammed the door behind.  
 Susanna peeped and saw six bearded strangers,  
 Then screamed "My word—oh Pa!—bushrangers;"  
 While Banks dismounting armed from top to toe,  
 Stood underneath her father's portico.  
 And while the frightened girl was running up,  
 Roared out in tones stentorian "bail up!"  
 Well was it then for those inside that room,  
 Ill for the savage men who met their doom,  
 Those two blue-blooded visitors were there,  
 Unused to fight, yet prompt to do and dare;  
 No thought of pistol, gun, or bowie knife,  
 Slung shot or other instrument of strife,  
 Following their host's example, these two bricks  
 Rushed boldly to the conflict—three to six.  
 As when some noble hound to seize his prey  
 Flies at an old man kangaroo at bay  
 Full at his throat in one terrific bound,  
 Then tugs and strains and bears him to the ground;  
 So Jones, my hero, seized the outlaw chief,  
 And floored the moment after, came to grief,  
 While his opponent drawing forth his knife,  
 D—d both his eyes and swore he'd have his life.  
 But Jones undaunted by that savage roar,  
 Sprung lightly from the dusty wooden floor,  
 And while the fire of rage inflamed his brain  
 He went into the enemy again  
 Unarmed, then clutched the seeming victor  
 Who hugged him like a boa constrictor,—  
 They tug, they wrestle, till the building shakes,  
 Now gentle youth look out for snakes.  
 No lady's arm is lightly round thee thrown,  
 And you're a little, just a little, blown.  
 With arms entwined, down, down, they go—  
 Jones falls above, the bushranger below.  
 Then with a foot upon the outlaw's breast  
 Unhurt, but minus half his coat and vest,  
 Our hero turns and bears a welcome shout,



And friends bring timely succour from without ;  
 And every single bushranger gets roped,  
 Except one individual who sloped.  
 It is not for my muse t'extend this lay  
 And sing of other deeds of arms that day,  
 What skulls were then first cracked, what broken bones—  
 I sing thy praise alone—heroic Jones !  
 Who then into a famous warrior sprang  
 And singly took the leader of the gang.

## CANTO III.

Breathes there the man with intellect so dark  
 As never to have seen or known Hyde Park,  
 That urban, calm, and picturesque retreat  
 Where tired citizens at evening meet,  
 And lolling on the grass exchange their views,  
 And quote the *Echo* or the *Evening News*.  
 Where arm in arm the amatory couples stalk,  
 And hold sweet converse on the "Lovers' Walk ;  
 Or sit and whisper on some rustic seat  
 Near to the slope that faces College Street,  
 Where, dexter arm uplifted, Captain Cook  
 Surveys the landscape with a martial look.  
 Here Sunday idlers take the Sydney air,  
 And rival pastors wage religious war.  
 There at the northern end, within the gate,  
 Where patient cabmen barred from entrance wait,  
 Stands an ungainly structure built of wood,  
 Towards which in humorous or angry mood  
 Crowds of excited voters come and go  
 To hear their fav'rite politicians blow.  
 What makes the branches of those noble trees  
 Flutter so wildly in the evening breeze ?  
 Why do the citizens so mutely stand  
 And brave the horrors of the German band ?  
 What means that gay and brilliant cavalcade,  
 Both men and horses in their best arrayed ?  
 Why does the crowd excited surge and sway  
 Upon that ever memorable day ?  
 Why are the flags from every window hung ?  
 He comes, he comes, the hero of Bung Bung  
 Then rose aloft one grand almighty cheer  
 Striking the tympanum of every ear  
 Like martial music, while like roll of drums  
 Reverberates the welcome sound " he comes !"  
 Macquarie Street takes up the joyful sound,  
 Which quickly went the city wide round  
 From where the Immigration Barracks stand  
 To Circular Quay, and thence to Public Lands—  
 Th' Assembly on the spot is counted out,



Balmain and Watson's Bay return the shout,  
 That cry goes forth to the descending sun,  
 Through Redfern, Waterloo, and Paddington;  
 Backward again it hurtles on the ear  
 Through Pyrmont, Camperdown, and places near.  
 Its echo runs along each railway block  
 To Ashfield, Burwood, even to Five Dock.  
 Its sound was plainly heard at Cockatoo,  
 Through Kent and Sussex Streets it quickly flew,  
 Till died away those joyous jubilant sounds,  
 Expiring in the Exhibition Grounds.  
 While wall resounded and the very stones  
 Gave forth the cry of triumph—This is Jones!  
 Then modestly emerging from the ranks,  
 Exultant rode the capturer of Banks.

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 CHAPTER XIX.
 

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“She loved a knight, renowned in fight,  
 But very poor in rental;  
 What we should style, in town slang vile,  
 A very detrimental.”

“Make me to feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,  
 When I had my days before me, and the tumult of my life.”

WHERE, where was Susanna Grimshaw? and what had become of Jenkyn's the undaunted? To obtain a satisfactory answer to these questions old Grimshaw would have given fifty of his fattest cattle, or even his favourite racing mare, Lady Godiva. But no trace of them could be found. Susanna did not come down to breakfast the next morning, and it was clear that her bed had not been slept in, while every possible hiding place in and around the station, capable of concealing the missing bushranger had been explored in vain. That they were alive seemed probable, inasmuch as there was nothing to show that they were dead. That they were together seemed also likely, since if they had adopted different places of concealment, one or the other must have been discovered. The distracted parent of Susanna went about like one demented, crying, “Oh, my darter! oh, my darter!” and what between grief and rum, his dependents had a hard time of it.

“From sport to sport concealment's guile  
 Preys on this heart of mine,  
 And when the worm provokes a smile  
 I'll drown my grief in wine.”



Even Cookaburra's encouraging words, "By'm bye make a light," failed to bring consolation to the bereaved cattle-breeder. "Oh, Susanna!" was all they could get out of him.

"Remembrance woke, with all her busy train,  
Swelled at his heart, and turned the past to pain."

What puzzled the blackfellow was that there were no tracks leading from the house; that, after a minute examination of the ground, was as clear to Cookaburra as mud in a wine-glass. Where, then, could the fugitives be concealed! Cookaburra had a son—a promising piccaninny of some eighteen summers, and a very smart specimen of the semi-civilized savage. The lad had never been christened, but, some years before, a gentleman from Sydney, who was on a visit to the station, on being asked to give the youngster a name, suggested the following, "Oh, rare and glorious Apollo," a high-sounding appellation which greatly delighted the parents. Unfortunately, they did not succeed in acquiring the correct pronunciation, and the boy was called Pollo. To him was entrusted the task of keeping a watchful eye on the premises, for in some part of the building Cookaburra felt certain his young mistress would be found sooner or later. With Pollo on the watch at home, and Cookaburra trying to make a light abroad, there seemed very little doubt that a discovery would soon take place. But love laughs not only at locksmith but detectives, black or white, and there are very few dodges which an Australian girl is not up to when her heart is bent on success. Yes! the truth must be told. Susanna had fallen in love with the handsome bushranger, and the bashful Griggs, who seemed likely to bear away the prize when no rival was nigh, had now not the ghost of a chance, and was doomed to bear the pangs of unrequited love and to realise the truth of the lines—

"'Tis sweet to love, but oh, how bitter  
To love a girl, and not to git her!"

Jenkyns came; he saw, and she saw that he saw; and although a captive, he conquered. This is how it came about. We left him lying on the floor of the room in which the fight took place, to all appearance insensible from the blow he had received from Grimshaw. But the wily Jenkyns was only playing 'possum,



and while the troopers were securing the other bushrangers, believing him to be *hors de combat*, he slipped quietly through the back door. Then feeling that his only chance of safety was to remain hidden in the house, he crept into a cupboard, the door of which was invitingly open, and lay *perdu* for a couple of hours till everything was quiet. Then emerging from his place of concealment, he stole noiselessly upstairs, and encountering Susanna on the landing, fell literally and metaphorically at her feet. It was a case of love at first sight. Susanna neither screamed nor fainted. If she had been a fashionable young lady she would probably have done both. All the romance in her nature came into play. She regarded the good looking youth at her feet with a tender interest, while as for Jenkyns, admiration was so plainly written on his face that the young lady was entirely disarmed, and the tear of pity bedewed her brilliant eye.

"Oh, Susanna! don't you cry for me!" said Jenkyns. There was a pause for several minutes, say eight or nine at a guess. Meanwhile the wild winds whistled plaintively through the silent stars, and the branches of the lofty gum trees on the summit of the Dandelion Range waved impatiently. Then, leaning her balmy brow upon her agitated elbow, while her golden locks coruscated with the sparkling teardrops that suffused them, she whispered softly:—

"Tell me, blue-eyed stranger,  
Whither dost thou roam;  
Why art thou turned bushranger,  
Hast thou no friends, no home?"

Susanna pitied him, and pity, we know, is akin to love:—

Then he told her the reason he wore a disguise,  
Was to bask unrestrained in the light of her eyes.  
Then he made a neat speech about Cupid's dart,  
And offered his hand and with it his heart;  
And whenever he mentioned that organ he thumped at it,  
She did'nt reject it—I may say she jumped at it.

But there was no time to lose; at any moment their *tête à tête* might be interrupted. Then it was that the quick-witted Australian girl hit upon the expedient which saved the life of her lover. Beckoning him to follow she led the way to the kitchen, and softly opening the door which led into the yard



she lowered him noiselessly down the well, where, although he kicked the bucket more than once in his descent, he was in no danger of losing his life :—

She gave him her fingers at parting,  
He tenderly pressed their tips,  
And then from his hiding place starting,  
Back to her chamber she slips.

Then for the first time she recollected that Jenkyns had seen her *deshabillé*, She was like a lovely edition of the "Woman in White,"

"Her arms were bare—what arms they were ;  
She hadn't e'en a quilt on ;  
The dress she wore was little more  
Than Eve's described by Milton ;"

and she blushed to the roots of her hair, until her pearly skin and alabaster brow assumed the roseate hue of a Sturt's Desert Pea, or a Waratah in full bloom. But Jenkyns was out of harm's way, and if his ardour was a little cooled he was safe for the present, and her father was not likely to go to the well, water being a liquid in which he very seldom indulged. What she did with herself during the whole of the next day until night came on and gave her an opportunity of releasing Jenkyns from his confinement, and where she concealed herself, we havn't the slightest idea ; but certain it is that she managed to baffle all pursuit, and for the first time in his life Cookaburra was at fault. Pollo, however, had found out Jenkyn's retreat, and had whispered to his father, "Whitefellow sit down along a well ;" a piece of information which would at once have been conveyed to Grimshaw had not the delighted eyes of the black-fellows *père et fils* at that moment rested upon Susanna's matchless form advancing towards them, her finger on her mouth, and such was the fascination she exercised that in a few minutes they were both her confederates, and had arranged the escape of the hunted bushranger. Then she went in search of her father. The old man was sitting on the verandah watching for her—

"He watched for the feet that used to tread  
With him on the cattle track ;  
And he heard but the echoes dull and dread,  
Of the feet that came not back ;"



and his joy at seeing her again was so excessive that he quite forgot to ask where she had been, and she forebore to volunteer the information :—

She flew to his arms, extended they caught her,  
She clung to his bosom, "Susanna, my daughter!"

Truth, we are told, lies at the bottom of a well, but when that truth is personated by a bearded outlaw, six feet two inches in his elastic-sides, it is not always desirable to bring it to the surface.

Late that night, after the household had retired to rest, she drew up Jenkyns from his watery bed, and three days afterwards they drew up at an hotel in Sydney.

Few hours they tarried,  
Before they got married ;  
In private—no bridesmaids—no breakfast or fitnesses,  
The clerk and the pew opener only were witnesses,  
The bride though in stuff looked a beauty bewilderin ;  
They lived a long life in the midst of their childerin.

## CHAPTER XX.

The clock is ticking onwards,  
It nears the hour of doom,  
And no one yet hath entered  
Into that ghastly room,  
The gaoler and the sheriff  
They are walking to and fro  
The hangman sits upon the steps,  
And smokes his pipe below.  
Beside the murdered corse,  
Fierce murderer, lie this night  
Till terror and remorse  
O'erwhelm thee with affright.

THE prisoners were conveyed next morning under strong escort to Sydney and safely lodged in Darlinghurst Gaol, to the great delight of the Sydney public, and especially of the Press who had now something sensational to publish. Not a day passed but some fresh incident connected with the affair came to light. Reporters were sent to interview the prisoners, and the morbid taste of the readers of penny dreadfuls was gratified by the most minute details of the prisoners, their habits of life



from their earliest infancy and the various exploits which had distinguished them since that interesting period. A new illustrated paper started into existence on the strength of Bank's capture, and the illustrations, which were done by an obscure artist, while they adorned the tale pointed also the moral by shewing to what a deplorable condition the criminals as portrayed by the artist had arrived at. Their own mothers would not have recognized them in the woodcuts of the "*Weekly Scavenger*" so vicious and utterly depraved were they made to appear. Portraits of the common hangman and his predecessor in the act of stretching the fatal rope, together with that of a lady in striped muslin engaged in the manufacture of a cap for one of the doomed men, completed the picture.— This was after the trial, which resulted in the conviction of Banks and his three partners in crime. The jury found them all guilty and at the same time strongly recommended them to mercy. Thereupon a reaction took place in their favour and a desperate newspaper controversy ensued.

By some writers it was shewn conclusively that Banks was a cold-blooded monster of the deepest dye, who had several murders on his conscience and had now filled up the measure of his guilt—hanging was too good for him. Others published authentic descriptions of his career which shewed that he was a harmless inoffensive creature who had been driven by hunger to rob, but was naturally of the most amiable disposition—Touching reminiscences of his artless boyhood and stainless afterlife were brought forward in his favour, and no one knew what to think.

When fiction seemeth pleasing to the eye,  
Men will believe because they love a lie ;  
For truth herself, if clouded with a frown,  
Must have some solemn proof to pass her down.

Then some humane men who argued that the worst use you can put a man to is to hang him, got up petitions to His Excellency, for a commutation of sentence, which were largely signed ; and hanging or no hanging became the all engrossing question of the day. Some openly sympathized with the unfortunate men and deprecated severe treatment for the pursuit of what in old times used to be looked upon as a gentlemanly vocation. By these the bushrangers were exalted into heroes



who were not afraid to risk their lives, and who were far less contemptible than the petty robbers who cheated their fellow colonists in various ways without infringing the letter of the law. The motto of the party was:—

A little stealing is a dangerous part,  
But stealing largely is a noble art ;  
Tis mean to rob a henroost of a hen,  
But sticking up a bank makes gentlemen.

The exercise of the Royal Prerogative was invoked ; the constitutional points involved were discussed with unusual acerbity, and one distinguished senator got so riled that he gave notice of a series of lectures on " Dummies in High Places," in which he proposed to shew that the said prerogative was a mere farce, and that responsible government in the colonies would be quite as effectively and much less expensively administered without the great panjandrum with a little round button at the top.

At last a compromise was effected—The people's government decided to hang three of the bushrangers and let off one, the popular opinion at that time being about in the proportion of three to two against mercy, and the Bung Bung depredators suffered the extreme penalty of the law ; the newspaper readers being treated with a sketch in the aforesaid illustrated paper in which two individuals wearing night-caps, and each in unpleasant proximity to a rope, were the most prominent figures.

But no tidings could be heard of Jenkyns, that astute individual had succeeded in baffling the ingenuity of the Sydney police.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

" Now beams the glimmering gaslamp in the light,  
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
Save where the last 'bus echoes through the night,  
Or drowsy bobbies catch their death of cold."

" He stoutly asserted his fitness to  
Attend to the duties he had to do,  
And so far from appearing sad,  
His spirits unwontedly light and high,  
Were clearly but little affected by  
The narrow escape he had had."



ABOUT six months after the events recorded in the last chapter, and about three months after the execution of Banks and two of his comrades, a fancy ball upon an unusually splendid scale occupied the attention of the fashionable world. It was given by Lady Jones, wife of the Prime Minister, and was attended by all the *élite* of Sydney.

Marianne, although she now occupied such a distinguished position in society, and had a great portion of her time taken up in the case of Jones junior, who had lately appeared upon the scene, was more than ever a devout believer in spiritualism. She was not, therefore, surprised, on the evening in question, at being accosted by one of her visitors, evidently a lady, attired in the costume of a Greek slave, who begged for a few minutes private conversation.

“’Tis sad, altho’ profoundly true,  
That there must be at least,  
One skeleton at every feast  
To whisper that no earthly joy  
Can ever be without alloy.”

Drawing her guest aside, she entered a private apartment, and listened to the following story. The young lady informed her that she had been married about six months. Her husband was a medium, and had been for a long time in the habit of attending Spiritualistic *séances*. On one occasion he had been informed by the spirits that if he came down to Sydney he would obtain a Government appointment. She knew she was addressing a medium. Would Lady Jones be the medium of bringing about that desirable consummation. Marianne was greatly struck with the young lady, and became deeply interested in her story. Her visitor told her that she was the daughter of a squatter in the Dandelion country, at which Marianne pricked up her ears, and when she went on to say that she was the daughter of the owner of the Bung Bung station, at which the fight had occurred in which Jones had played such a prominent part, the wife of that distinguished statesman was fairly overcome. She burst into tears, and the two young women fell into each other’s arms, weeping like a couple of watering pots.

The next day, Susanna, for our readers will have recognised the Australian girl through the flimsy disguise of a Greek



slave, introduced her husband, a tall, handsome-looking man, clean shaven, with the exception of an enormous moustache, and wearing a pair of green spectacles. Some interesting conversation ensued on the subject of mediumistic influence, and Lady Jones promised to exert all her power on behalf of the husband of her newly-made friend. In due time he waited upon the Minister, who had been urged by his wife to give him an appointment. Jones was not the man to withstand the pleadings of two fascinating women, and he gave in on the spot. Fortunately, an important vacancy had recently occurred in the management of a department which appeared the very thing for his wife's *protégé*. They met as entire strangers; the applicant was questioned as to his previous career, and stated that he had been nearly all his life *connected with the police*. the following week he was gazetted

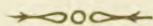
#### INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE!!

It was Jenkyns the outlaw, and *that was his revenge!*

From that time forth, no more bushrangers stuck up passengers on the high roads of New South Whales. The two families flourished and multiplied. Jones's sons married Jenkyn's daughters, and the male scions of the Jenkyn's tribe mated with the fair daughters of Jones. The hatchet was buried, the two deadly enemies became firm friends; the quondam bushranger, in the course of time grew wealthy and adopted for his family motto:—

*In medio tutissimus ibis.*

At a family gathering which took place some years after at Bung Bung station, there were no less than eleven Jones and nine Jenkyns of various ages present; and, while the silent moon shone serenely upon their upturned faces, and the spirits hovered about the room, and rapped out blessings by the dozen, the faithful Cookaburra and his son Pollo, in the innocent gladness of their aboriginal hearts, danced a corroboree in front of the station, and called upon all created nature to witness the touching spectacle.







## ACTING CHARADE:

A WORD OF TWO SYLLABLES.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A Retired Street in a Country Town in England.*

*Enter Dick.*—Oh, dear! oh, dear! it's very dark. I have always found that at night time, when there is no moon or stars and you haven't a lantern with you, it *is* dark. This is the place where Julia promised to meet me. I wonder if she'll come. I feel that I am catching a severe cold; but I am happy, though chilly. But where is she? Something must have happened. Something always is happening in this confounded country.

*Enter Julia.*—Yes, this is the spot, and there he is. Poor fellow! My heart shudders at the bare thought of his grief. What if he should blow his brains out, or take to drinking, or go mad? But it must be done. A cruel fate makes me cruel. I cannot marry a poor man, and Dick is poor. Poor Dick!

*Dick advancing.*—My adored Julia.

*Julia.*—My goodness! Only fancy meeting you here. When did you come? (*Pretends to be surprised.*)

*Dick.*—I've only just arrived—not more than three-quarters of an hour ago. The moments are precious. Oh, Julia, be mine! Fly with me from this cold inhospitable country to some distant southern land, where there will be no barrier to our happiness—to that sunny shore where the intestines of the mountains are stuffed with gold and precious stones; where the flying kangaroo and the bounding squirrel skip over the pebbly promontory at full speed; where, while



the sweet fragrance of the lofty grass-tree perfumes the air, we can recline under the umbrageous foliage of the wide-spreading gum, and listen to the lively chorus of the bullfrog, and the merry laugh of the jackass. Come to Australia. Will you—won't you? Say yes, or no.

*Julia.*—Alas, no—o—o—o!

*Dick.*—Oh, fickle, falsehearted flirt, is it thus you trifle with a true heart? Mercenary creature, like all your sex, you would sell yourself for gold. (*Walking off.*) I am racked by one thousand five hundred and fourteen conflicting emotions, but I will conceal them all and have r—r—r—revenge. Instead of a wife, this shall be “a young man's best companion” (*pulling out a large table knife. Walks about in an excited state brandishing the knife.*) I will kill her in cold blood, the cold-blooded creature—in the c—o—l—dest possible blood. (*Exit.*)

*Julia.*—He pleads with an earnestness few women could resist. Poor fellow! Of all the hard-hearted actions I have committed at one time or the other, especially the other, this is about the hard-heartedest. Oh, dear, when I think of this alone, it is—it is—lonely. He's all my fancy painted him, and more even than the photographer has made him; but he has no money. That I must have, and a poor girl can only get it by marriage. And what shall I do when I get it? I know—I'll spend it.

*Enter Julia's Mamma.*—My dear child, what is the matter with you? With the exception of four hearty meals a day, you scarcely eat anything. You drop off to sleep at night, and don't wake up till late in the morning. You grow plumper and plumper, and you dance and sing when there is no occasion for it. All these symptoms tell a watchful parent that something is amiss. Tell me what is it. It is high time you were married.

*Julia* (looking at her watch).—It is only six o'clock.

*Mamma.*—Have you quarrelled with your sweetheart? Produce him, and let me see if he will brave the indignation of an outraged parent.

*Re-enter Dick.*—'Twere vain to tell thee all I feel.

*Mamma.*—But I insist upon hearing it.

*Dick.*—Then, you shall. Your daughter has jilted me. I loved her still, but she wouldn't be still, and left me like



the false-hearted girl she is. I resolved to kill her and then kill myself, but by a superhuman effort I changed my mind and determined to leave her. *Adieu!* (*Exit.*)

*Julia.*—Gone, fled, decamped, skedaddled! What have I done? Oh, my! Oh, Dick! Not my Dick! Oh! oh! oh!  
(*Swoons.*)

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ACT II.

SCENE.—*A Mining Township in New South Wales. The Parlor of the "Golden Dragon."*

*Coroner.*—Gentlemen, we are met together to enquire into the death of an unfortunate individual (John Jones) who was found last night, or early this morning, at the bottom of a shaft with his head battered in, an 18in. drill through his heart, and about half a ton of quartz on the top of him. We will first examine the body and then the witnesses. (*Body carefully examined.*)

*Dr. Sawbones.*—I examined the body of deceased, and found an irregular compound fracture of the *os frontis*, about the size of a frying pan. If there had been any brains, they must have been knocked in. The drill which pierced the heart must have been put in by a practised hand; it was calculated to produce severe palpitation. I consider that the weight of quartz resting on the abdomen was sufficient to impede respiration. Upon making a post mortem examination, I found a portion of the lungs were gone, and the whole of the liver. Am of opinion that all these causes combined would cause death to a person of irregular habits unless prompt treatment were resorted to. The deceased had been dead upwards of an hour before I was called in.

*Thomas Mulligan, examined.*—I was mate of deceased, and was in the same shift with him; recollect the night he was found in the tunnel; have been afraid to go down the shaft ever since; I was braceman and lowered him down; will swear he did not kick the bucket then.

*Mary Jones, wife of deceased.*—My husband was in the night shift; I was in the same predicament when I heard of the accident; deceased was very strange at times; have heard him say that something would be found in the claim that would startle me; he frequently said he would lie down



in gold before he died. I have known him remark that drilling was a horrid bore.

*Coroner.*—Gentlemen, you have heard the evidence, and it now remains for you to bring in your verdict. If you are of opinion that the injuries received by the deceased were sufficient to produce death, it will then be for you to determine how those injuries were inflicted. It seems almost incredible that a man should be able to bore a hole through his own body, but the evidence shews that the deceased was rather soft, and this may possibly have been the case.

*Foreman.*—Your worship, we find the deceased guilty of accidental death, and we are of opinion that the conduct of Thomas Mulligan was very suspicious. We think the claim should be abandoned, in case of further accidents.

*Little Boy* (peeping in).—Bob, have they brought in the verdict?

*Bob.*—Yes, I saw the waiter carrying it in.

*1st Boy.*—What was it like?

*Bob.*—I didn't get a good look at it.

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ACT III.

SCENE.—*The Blue Boar, a Roadside Public-house in England.*

*Landlady.*—Drat them railroads, I say. Time was when there'd be a matter of twenty or thirty folks sittin' down to dinner on market days in our best parlour; but now it's days and weeks, sometimes, afore we get a sight of a traveller. The commercial room is shut up, and the beds are getting mouldy for want of sleeping in. Give me the good old times, when the up and down coaches to Lunnon stopped twenty minutes for dinner, and didn't eat half what they paid for; when the travellers' room was mostly full, and it took me and Betsy all we knew to mix the hot toddy for the gentlemen. Ah, deary me! there's no doin' any good now they've got these railroads and telegraphies. Why, they've gone an' put up a post with a lot of wires right opposite our front door, and you can't say a word to a friend above a whisper, but it's known all over Lunnon.

*Landlord.*—You're right there, old woman. Things ain't now what they used to be. It's a blue look-out for the



Blue Boar. It's enough to make a man jump into the river and drown hisself without stopping to say good-bye to his relatives. As I'm a living sinner (*jumping up*) if here isn't a bony fidy traveller, and I do believe he's coming this way. Look alive, old lady. He seems, too, as if he was somebody.

*Enter Traveller.*—Are you the landlord of this wretched-looking, tumble-down, dilapidated packing case, intended, I suppose, to serve as an apology for an hotel.

*Landlord.*—The Blue Boar, sir.

*Traveller.*—You need not say another word. I know exactly what you were going to remark. Blue Boar, indeed! I'm afraid I shall find him a horrible bore.

*Landlady.*—I'd have you to know, sir, that the Blue Boar—

*Traveller.*—I'd paint him pea-green just for a change. you need not tell me anything about him; I don't want to be bored more than I can help, especially as you are going to have the distinguished honour of accommodating me for a few days. See that my bed-room doesn't overlook a church-yard, that my sheets are well aired, and that the food you give me does not entirely ruin my digestive organs. As for drinking any of your home-made tippie, that is a feat of which I don't feel capable; but if you have any champagne or claret send me up a bottle, and be careful that the fish I have for my dinner is not more than a week old.

*Landlord.*—Sir.

*Traveller.*—Excuse me if I decline to discuss the point with you. Dinner at eight o'clock. No attempt at any of your abominable pastry; and as for the coffee, I think I'll make it myself.

*Landlady.*—If you would like —

*Traveller.*—Oh, dear, no! don't mention it. I am sure I shouldn't. (*Exit.*)

*Landlady.*—Well he is a particular one, and won't be made too free with. I'll put him in the best bedroom, and see what we can do to make him comfortable. Pastry, indeed! I'll let him see that we make as good tarts at the Blue Boar as he'll get in Lunnon!

*Landlord.*—Perhaps he won't be so particular about his bill. Them sort don't care what they pays, but they must have things nice.



(*A week after.*)

*Landlady.*—The job we had to get them boxes of my lord's up-stairs. They're as heavy as if they were stuffed with gold.

*Landlord.*—Perhaps there is gold in them. A man who orders everything of the best must have a tidy bit of cash with him. What's he up to to-day?

*Landlady.*—He gave Betsy strict orders not to call him till half-past three o'clock in the afternoon. Why bless my soul (looking at the clock), it's that now!

(Knocks at the door and receives no answer.)

(Both enter the room, and find it empty.)

*Landlady.*—Why, sure—ly, if he hasn't been and gone away, without so much as asking for his bill.

*Landlord.*—He's left his luggage, at any rate; that's some comfort. (Opens one of the boxes.) Why, they're chock-full of stones!

*Landlady.*—Oh! the thieving, murderin', rascally counterfeit! to go and give us all this worry and trouble, as if the whole house belonged to him—and he a marquis or duke, at the least; and then to turn out to be no one, after all! Oh, dear! oh, dear! I shall never get over it!

*Landlord.*—We're sold, old lady; that's a fact!







## A PENNYWEIGHT OF JUSTICE.

COURT OF MINES.—MUSHROOM FLAT.

(*Before Mr. Warden Jenkins and a Jury of Four.*)

### O'HOOLOAHAN V. ROONEY.

**T**HIS was an action for trover, brought by Mary O'Hoolahan to recover certain goods and chattels, to wit, an irregular piece of quartz and gold, value one pennyweight, of which she was seized and possessed in virtue of her labour, alleged to have been found in the possession of defendant. The defence set up was that the defendant found the specimen in question in his tailings.

Counsel having stated the case, the plaintiff and defendant, and several witnesses on either side, were examined. The evidence in substance showed that the disputed piece of quartz had been displayed in triumph by the plaintiff as the result of her day's work, that she had mislaid it, and that the next morning it had been seen in the possession of defendant by a neighbour, and identified. The cross-examination only elicited the fact that "tailings" and "headings" are synonymous terms.

The counsel for the complainant, Mr. Gabbles, thus addressed the Jury:—

"Your Honor and Gentlemen of the Jury,—My learned brother, the counsel for the defence, with his usual eloquence has attempted to prove that the defendant, Pat Rooney, found the disputed property in his own ground; and the unblushing effrontery with which he has put forward that line of defence does equal honour to his head and heart. But, gentlemen of



the jury, my learned friend forgot, for once in his life, that he was addressing a high-minded, right-thinking, intelligent, and independent jury of diggers, well acquainted with gold-washing in all its various branches, whom no ingenious sophistry, no amount of bounce and audacity, no combination of cheek and argument, no glaring distortion of facts could divert from a consideration of the simple equity of the case, and their plain duty to the public. Truth, it is said, gentlemen of the jury, lies at the bottom of a shaft, and it would have been well for the defendant, if, instead of surfacing and washing other peoples' tailings, he had sunk low enough to reach this inestimable jewel. But, gentlemen of the jury, you will probably be of opinion, after the evidence you have heard, that he has sunk low enough—low enough, at all events, in your estimation—when he has attempted to defraud my client, a lone widow with seventeen children, of a piece of gold, which was the rightful spoil of her tub and the legitimate produce of her cradle. Gentlemen of the jury, my learned brother has fallen into the great mistake of endeavouring to confuse you with technical terms—he has spoken of 'hoppers,' he has laid an emphasis on 'mullock,' and has been facetious on the subject of 'tailings.' But, gentlemen of the jury, his client will find to his cost that no mullock was ever sifted through a hopper as his statements will be sifted by you, and that on no occasion, since he embraced mining as a profession, has he run such a risk of having his tailings curtailed. It is laid down, gentlemen of the jury, in 'Coke upon Trent,' Vol. 300, p. 2754, by Baron Flummery, in the case of *Soapy v. Chisel*, where the plaintiff, a washerwoman, identified a shirt worn by the defendant as having been mangled by her, that although possession is nine points of the law, the law must go hand in hand with the possessor. In 'Chitty upon Petty Larceny,' vol. 99, p. 3301, the *Queen v. Graball*, where the defendant was seized of a cat proved to have belonged to the informant, and counsel for the defence claimed an acquittal on the ground that cats were erratic animals and could not be considered property, yet the jury returned a verdict of guilty upon a clear showing that the collar worn by the cat was her property. Gentlemen of the jury, my client positively identifies the specimen produced in court as her property. Three long years,



gentlemen of the jury, had she followed the honest pursuit which finally reward her industry. Three long years had she spent in rocking and cradling, which I need hardly inform you, gentlemen of the jury, are the natural avocations of her sex. The splash of her tub was a familiar sound to the residents of Mushroom Flat, and her cradle was continually on the (bed) rock. Three years, I say, had my client laboured to support herself and her large family with credit, though at times she had a hard job to get it, when at last her industry was rewarded—as industry invariably is rewarded—and, to use a term with which, gentlemen of the jury, you are no doubt familiar, she ‘struck it.’ A pennyweight of gold, gentlemen of the jury—not much in itself it is true, but possessing a peculiar value from the circumstances of the case, as indicating the possible vicinity of great wealth,—a pennyweight of fine gold, embedded in crystallized quartz, scarcely requiring the aid of the lapidary to transform it into a brooch or other feminine ornament, was the first tangible evidence of her good fortune. She exhumed it from its natural bed of clay, or ‘mullock,’ as my learned brother correctly terms it; she washed it in her tub; she rocked it in her cradle; she handled it tenderly as a new born infant; she exhibited it with honest triumph to her friends, and finally wore it in her bosom, the hard-earned trophy of her labour. She received the congratulations of her neighbours; and visions of comfort, and even of wealth, of which this piece of quartz was a specimen, flashed before her eyes. She saw her little girls in new frocks and pinafores, and her boys in knickerbockers. Her children regarded it with wonder and delight. Her example stimulates them to exertion, and they fossick with renewed energy in the gully which adjoins the maternal dwelling. But alas, gentlemen, for the depravity of human nature. The peaceful and industrious community of Mushroom Flat contained one black sheep. The defendant Pat Rooney, residing near my client’s shanty—too near, alas! for her peace of mind, and the safe custody of her piece of quartz, and too near, as he will find to his cost, for his liberty, cast his covetous eyes upon the little specimen—the sole nugget of my client; the widow’s ewe lamb, and sold his birthright, gentlemen of the jury, his honour and conscience, for—a pennyweight of gold.



Yes, gentlemen of the jury, prompted by the demon avarice, he hovers about the calm abode of the O'Hoolahans, and in the dead of night when, fatigued with the day's exertions, my client is courting

“Balmy sleep, tired nature's sweet restorer.”

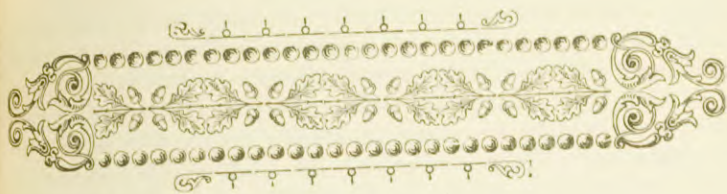
and her seventeen children are peacefully slumbering around her, he seizes the opportunity to abstract the much coveted specimen.

And now, gentlemen of the jury, he comes before you with a cock and bull story of having *found it in his tailings*. Gentlemen of the jury, if acts like these are allowed to go unpunished, property, nay, life itself will no longer be safe; quartz mining will only be a question for large capitalists, alluvial digging will become a dead letter, our mining resources will never be developed, our waste land will offer no attraction to an industrial population, there will be no inducement to European immigration, we shall be over-run by chinamen and coolies, and all classes of the community will suffer. Gentlemen of the jury, the defendant seems fond of specimens, and I will now leave him in your hands, convinced that you will give him such a specimen of the majesty of the law as will cause him to regret the peaceful society of Mushroom Flat, to bewail his fatal disregard of the laws of *meum et tuum*; and to rue, for some months at least, his unhappy and unlawful penchant for crystallized quartz.

Verdict for plaintiff.







## HOW BINKS SPENT THE FIRST DAY OF HIS HOLIDAY.

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IN what part of Victoria Binks' permanent residence was, or what was his peculiar avocation, matters very little to any one, since we have only to tell what he did and what he saw during the first day of his holiday. After twelvemonths' unremitting attention to business, he conceived himself entitled to a trip to Melbourne, and he made up his mind to enjoy himself thoroughly—that is to say, to crowd as much enjoyment into the small space of time he had allowed himself for that purpose as possible. Binks was naturally a sober man, but, to use his favourite expression,

“One does'nt kill a pig every day ;”

and, from the time the process of killing commenced, until there was nothing of the pig left, Binks was not in the habit of putting much restraint upon his convivial propensities. Had he been a classical scholar, which he was not, he might have expressed himself in choicer language, and quoted, as an excuse for an occasional excess, that,

“The bow of Apollo was not always *tight* ;”

but this would hardly have been applicable, since, on rare occasions like this, he was pretty generally tight all the time. It is said that wine brings a man's natural instincts into full play: some get uproariously jolly in their cups, some get



quarrelsome, and others display a maudlin sentimentality which is very ludicrous; some grow abusive, as the fumes of the liquor rise to the brain, and others are gentlemanly from first to last. To the latter class belonged Binks: when sober he was invariably courteous, and when drunk he was the pink of politeness. Having no particular method to regulate the week of madness which he proposed to spend, Binks was prepared to enjoy himself in the first way that came to hand; and, accordingly, the morning after his arrival, having joined himself to a couple of choice spirits bent on the same errand, he sallied forth from his hotel in search of amusement and adventure. The great attraction in Melbourne was then Cooper and Bailey's Monster Circus. A grand procession through the streets of the city of lions, tigers, elephants, camels, and caravans containing other wonders too numerous to mention, had been duly announced, and was then starting. Binks and his friends, following the crowd, soon formed part of the procession, and marched away in great glee at the tail of an equestrian troupe in mediæval costume, escorting a Chinese Mandarin, seated in a species of sedan chair, drawn by a young camel. Binks was in high spirits; the day was fine, the novelty was attractive, and whenever the procession came to a halt at the corner of a street, either from the elephants jibing at a steep pinch, or because the horses in some private vehicle were frightened at the savage aspect of the tiger, Binks' party would adjourn to the hotel at the corner, and indulge in a cooling drink, Binks quoting the proverbial pig as an excuse for defraying the cost of the entertainment. The procession stopped frequently, the stopping places were conveniently situate, and, by the time they had got through the principal streets, Binks had ceased to wonder at the difficulty which the elephants appeared to experience in keeping step, or at the eccentric way in which the camels kept nodding their heads. He began to feel similar symptoms himself. Another nip, so far from removing these sensations, only aggravated them, besides producing a binocular vision, which made it clear to him that there were two lions chained in the first carriage which had started with only one, and multiplied the rest of the cortege to such an extent, that the elephants and dromedaries appeared to be mixed up with the mounted riders in the most inextricable confusion, and for



the life of him he could not distinguish the hyena from the sacred ox. In short, he had got "procession on the brain."

Finding that, as a part of the exhibition, he had become more ornamental than useful, and that his legs had developed an unsteadiness quite unusual to them, he slipped out of the ranks with the intention of getting [anywhere, anywhere out of the crowd. His companions somehow had parted with him, when or where he could not recollect, but he felt they were "jolly good fellursh" for all that. Making a Z line in a direction exactly opposite to that which the procession had taken, he staggered along for about half an hour until he found himself in Carlton Gardens, where he hoped the fresh air would soon clear his brain. He entered the gardens at the commencement of a broad gravel walk, flanked on either side by a row of trees, and, taking the centre of the walk, began what he proposed to himself should be a brisk walk from end to end. The first check he received was from a sharp contact with a tree to the left of the path. Shocked at his rudeness he took off his hat, made a low bow, and said, "I beg your pardon, sir," and then sheered off to the right. The next moment he came bump against the trunk of a tree to the right, at an angle of 45° from the first, upon which he again uncovered, and begged pardon. Again to the left with a similar shock, and a similar apology, working along his course with a zig-zag motion, which would have been highly creditable if he had been in a sailing boat beating up against a head wind—until, receiving a violent concussion from tree No. 26, he was reluctantly compelled to admit that he was not exactly in a state to travel in such a crowd. So, sinking down gently to the grass, he said, "*I'd better shtop till the prosheshun's gone by.*" There he was found the next morning sweetly sleeping by policeman A199, and in spite of his remonstrances hauled to the Police Court, where, after having explained that he had eaten too many buns on the previous day, and that it was his first offence, he was duly admonished and discharged.





## TAKING THE OATH.

THE difficulty experienced in swearing the Heathen Chinese received an illustration in the Water Police Court, when Ah See was charged with fraudulently obtaining from Ah Chee certain goods, to wit a pair of fowls (cooked), and £9 in cash. The advantage of securing gentlemen learned in the law will be apparent in the following relation of the case. When we have stated that the prosecution was conducted by "———," and that that ornament to his profession, "———," undertook the defence, we think we have said enough to shew that the case was in good hands. That Ah See stole the fowls in question and ate them we entertain no manner of doubt, or that Ah Chee would have done precisely the same thing under similar circumstances. The difficulty was to prove it *ad demonstrandum*: therein lay the glorious uncertainty of law. We were not present at the trial, and are therefore in a position to give a thoroughly unbiassed account of it.

The usual preliminaries having been gone through, and the customary but useless question "Do you speak English?" having been addressed to the prosecutor, and elicited from that injured individual a child-like smile, an attempt was made to administer the oath.

This is usually done in the case of a Mongolian by means of a match. The match is lit, and the witness is cautioned not to speak anything but the truth. He then blows it out, signifying by the act "I'm blown if I do."

The Inspector in charge of the prisoner having produced a match, was about to ignite it on the heel of his boot, when

Defendant's Attorney objected, his client refused to be bound by such a proceeding, the article produced was not a match in the legal meaning of the term; it was a wax vesta.

This objection was sustained by the Bench, and a box of wooden matches sent for.

D. A. objected again. The matches now produced were patent ones, warranted only to strike on the box.



Chinese customs, he observed, were of ancient date and had nothing to do with the patents of modern times. The old fashioned match commonly called a lucifer, and thus embodying an illusion to the prince of darkness, was the only one admissible under the circumstances.

This objection was also sustained, and a policeman was ordered to ascertain whether any half-penny brimstones were on sale at the nearest tobacconist's.

*D. A.* had no desire to take up the time of the Court unnecessarily, and, therefore, he would inform their Worships that he should be compelled to object to this mode of administering the oath in *toto*. The low price to which matches had fallen of late years had depreciated their value as a swearing commodity.

This point having been debated for three-quarters of an hour, the counsel for the prosecution, said he was quite prepared to swear the witness by the smashing of a saucer.

*D. A.* objected. His client was indicted on a charge of felony, not sorcery.

*The Bench* reserved the point, and asked whether the testimony of the prosecutor would be discredited by his countrymen if he took the oath by cutting off the cock's head.

*Mr.* "—————" had no objection to that form.

*The Bench*: Have any preparations been made for this ceremony?

*Inspector*: Yes, your Worship, here's a pair of 'em (producing two long-legged dissipated-looking roosters).

*The Bench*: Untie their legs.

*D. A.*: Your Worship, I object. An oath can only be recognised if the cock's head is cut off in a Joss-house or place of worship with due reverence. Besides, the fowls produced are game-cocks, and this will only be making game of the case.

At this stage of the proceedings, one of the birds flew on to the witness-box, clapped his wings triumphantly, and gave a shrill defiant crow, as much as to say "Who cares?"

*The Bench*: Cut off that bird's head.

*D. A.*: I must protest——

*The Bench*: Off with his head.

No better implement being available than the Court pen-knife, which was found far too blunt for the purpose, a delay now took place while a chopper was sent for.



*D. A.* craved the indulgence of the Court while this deadly weapon was being procured. He found that according to usage the cock to be sacrificed must be a white one. No other kind of bird was ever introduced into a Chinese Court of Justice. The two specimens produced were a sort of dandy grey-russet color, and were not even birds of a feather.

"———" hoped his learned brother was not going to show the white feather after all.

The chopper having been handed to the Clerk of the Court—

*D. A.* asked if it was proposed to cut off the bird's head *on the Bench*, as the consequence might be serious?

This point was also reserved, and the fowls where respited while the learned counsel adduced arguments *pro. and con.*

"———" said that prosecutor and prisoner being countrymen resembling each other in habits, religion, and even in name, might be said to be well-matched ——

*D. A.*: "My learned friend will probably find that we are more than a match for him."

"———": And, in spite of the match-less effrontery of the learned counsel for the defence in opposing this well-known Chinese custom, he would submit that the objection raised by him should be waived by the Bench. In no other way was it likely that any light would be thrown upon the case. The prisoner had indulged himself in a blow-out with the prosecutor's fowls, and justice demanded that the next blow-out should be in connection with a congreve, and not a dorking. In the celebrated case of *Regina v. Paddy*, where a blackfellow was tried for murder at Dubbo, it was held that any form of oath might be administered, so long as the witness considered it binding. But, as the learned Judge had wisely added, an oath delivered upon an uncovered edition of the New Testament could not be said to be binding, as in that case it might be considered an *old* Testament, and because no man could be expected to swear the whole truth upon half a Bible. With regard to the cock in the witness-box and that in charge of the policeman, they were as much alike as Box and Cox, and, although his learned brother had ingeniously attempted to show that they were game cocks, he was prepared with evidence to prove that they were both reared



on the same dunghill. The spurs which were found on game cocks were wanting in these birds, and, according to the *lex talion* ———

Here the learned counsel sneezed so loudly that Ah Chee, believing himself to be addressed in his native tongue, nodded approvingly, and said, "Welly good!"

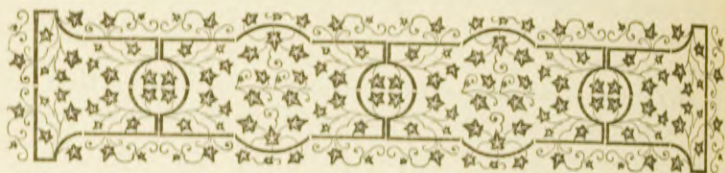
D. A. contended that the case cited by the counsel for the prosecution had no bearing whatsoever upon the case before the Court, since there was as much difference between an Australian blackfellow and a Chinaman as there was between a bantam and a Brahmah Pootra. The fact of the judicial blunderbuss at Dubbo having been allowed to go off at half-cock, was no argument for similar carelessness in Sydney. An oath administered by simply blowing out a match was about on a par with the exclamation, "Oh, my colonial oath!" which was not admitted even as a solemn asseveration. In China, the pure white Cochin was the only fowl they swore by, and to ask his client to be bound by an oath over the carcass of the miserable specimen of the *Gallus Australis* produced in Court was an outrage to his feelings. As the Emperor Confucius once observed, when he heard that his minister, Chang, had beheaded an entire province, "that was carrying things to an excess." He hoped the Bench would adjourn the case, as it would be a fowl wrong to his client to force him to be bound by such an oath. If the Bench were of opinion that the birds should be decapitated, he would suggest that he and his learned brother should each take one and dine off it. They would then be able to get to the very backbone of the subject. That would be better than locking them up, as they would then become gaol-birds, and unfit for any religious ceremony.

The case was then adjourned for a week, and the learned advocates proceeded, arm-in-arm, to a neighbouring hotel, where they took the oath cheerfully, with a slice of lemon in it.

We understand that defendant's counsel is now prepared to raise a further point of law—whether a fowl beheaded in the Water Police Court should not, strictly speaking, be a water-fowl.

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## SECULAR, COMPULSORY, AND FREE,

OR

### “THE MYSTERIOUS PACKET.”

A SENSATION NOVEL IN NINE CHAPTERS.

[*After the French.*]

#### CHAPTER I.

HE had made up his mind to die by his own hand.

What terrible calamity had induced this fatal resolve? Was he poor and in debt—were his wife and children starving?

No, he was a bachelor, in easy circumstances. “The world was before him where to choose.” Why then should he choose to leave it behind him?

Was he suffering from some insidious disease, beyond the reach of physicians or healing mediums?

On the contrary, Smithers was a healthy young fellow, with the appetite of a kangaroo dog, and the digestion of an emu.

Had he received tidings of the death of a rich relation from whom he had expectations, and found that he was not included in the will?

Nothing of the sort; he had neither father nor mother, brother nor sister, uncle nor aunt, and as a natural consequence he had no cousins. Not a relative existed to mourn his loss or to appreciate the sacrifice he meditated.



The reader will naturally be tempted to enquire what *was* the matter with him—what was the nature of the disaster which had so overwhelmed him that he contemplated self-destruction? What was the cause of the poignant grief which drove him to this fatal determination?

In our editorial capacity we have had frequently to reply to questions of a much more puzzling character, and we shall therefore not hesitate to answer these queries, but shall state the fact in all its simplicity and without any circumlocution.

Smithers was suffering from a disorder to which all humanity is liable—an affection of the heart; in short he was in love, and she—

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## CHAPTER II.

—WAS engaged to his rival, a Member of Parliament with unsettled ideas on the Education Question.

We must now go back to the year '63.

On a cold bleak afternoon in the month of August in that year, at about 5 a.m., a stranger knocked softly at the back door of a house in Redfern.

He was attired in a suit of dark cloth and carried in his hand a carpet bag made of black leather. He might, from his appearance, have been an undertaker in good practice, but he wasn't.

The undertaking on which he was engaged was connected with life and not with death.

Upon being admitted by Maud, the general servant, he rushed up stairs and entered a room on the first floor, the sole occupant of which was a lady of a certain age. Advancing to the window, and opening the bag he held in his hand, he exposed to her delighted gaze the beautiful form and features of an infant about three years old.

He had picked it up in Moore Park!

It was thus that our heroine first saw the light.

Thus does bountiful Nature regulate the universal law of supply and demand.



## CHAPTER III.

THE railway contractor having absconded, Peter was suddenly thrown out of employment.

A natural delicacy prevented him from obtruding his grief upon anyone, and he turned his steps towards a sequestered lane in the suburb in which he dwelt.

'Twas a lovely evening, the balmy air was fragrant with the perfume from the flowers which grew in the gardens on either side of his path, and from the open window of a neighbouring villa the dulcet voice of a fair Australian girl rose and fell in tones so exquisitely sweet, so plaintively touching, that his soul vibrated with the melody.

The peaceful calm of the evening exercised its soothing influence. Purer thoughts succeeded and he began to take a more hopeful view of his prospects. Suddenly he formed a resolution—he would turn burglar.

Peter possessed the secret of being able to leave a house *with all the doors and windows securely fastened.*

## CHAPTER IV.

THE only difficulty experienced by Smithers was how to carry his project into execution—should it be by rope, by razor, or rail? Or should he throw himself into the harbor?

But he suddenly recollected that he could swim, and he decided not to attempt to drown himself, as, even if he succeeded, he would be sure to catch his death of cold, and then there were the sharks.

Neither could he resolve to make use of a rope, "I'll be hanged if I do," said he, emphatically, while the idea of cutting his throat and being discovered by his landlady in a pool of his own blood was repugnant to his sensitive feelings.

It might be done quietly with his neck on the railway line, but could he be sure that he would have resolution enough to remain in that position until the train came up to him?

Or, he might purchase a revolver and blow his brains out. But Smithers, after revolving this project in his mind, decided against it.



He was unaccustomed to fire-arms, and he felt a conviction that in such a case he would be sure to miss himself.

There was but one other alternative—poison; sombre, fatal, deadly poison.

Yes, upon reflection, he would swallow an ounce of laudanum and sleep the sleep that knows no waking.

This decision was characteristic of the man.

He never did anything in a hurry.

Whistling a popular air nonchalantly, he proceeded in the direction of the chemist's shop.

Smithers lived in a one-storey house having one door and one window facing the street.

It is desirable that the reader should bear this in mind, but it is not absolutely necessary.

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## CHAPTER V.

WITH Peter to resolve was to act.

That night the palatial residence of Howe Green, Esq., M.P., was broken into and robbed. The job was evidently the work of a practised hand, and the police were entirely at fault.

There were no traces of the intruder.

How he had entered and how he had quitted the house was a complete puzzle, as all *the doors and windows* were found *securely fastened*.

Peter had made a coup.

The honourable member was disgustingly rich.

Besides some thousands of pounds in money and valuables, it was found that the writing desk of the proprietor had been abstracted.

*That desk contained the mystery of his life.*

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## CHAPTER VI.

It was a quarter to 12 o'clock.

Smithers was returning from the chemist's.

In his breast pocket lay concealed a small vial containing a dark looking fluid.



Screening himself under the shelter of a Moreton Bay figtree which overshadowed his path, he drew the vial from his pocket, and drained the contents.

It was only then that he realized the full force of the rash act. Up to that time his resolution had been like a Bill about to be introduced into the Legislature, which might be withdrawn or amended. Now it was an Act duly signed and past recall.

Absorbed in a deep reverie he was unconscious of approaching steps. Suddenly a hand grasped him by the collar, and the ominous words "Your money or your life," fell on his ear.

But Smithers was past all fear, and he replied calmly, "I have no money about me, and, as for my life, I have just taken it."

To say that this unexpected reply startled the would be robber out of his ordinary self-possession, would be to give a mild idea of the astonishment they created. The very hairs on the wig which formed part of Peter's disguise stood up on end, while his manly form oscillated on its base.

He was naturally surprised that any man should be able to report his own death, but, quickly recovering himself, he continued his enquiries in a voice as full of emotion as circumstances and a regard to his calling permitted.

In what way, he asked, have you taken your own life?

By poisoning myself.

With what?

With poison.

The simple logic of this answer completely disarmed the burglar.

A profound sympathy for the suicide entered his breast.

Taking the arm of the youth with a gentleness that was almost paternal, he conducted him to his lodgings, where Smithers believing himself to be on the point of death gave him a full and succinct account of his troubles.

Exactng from him a promise that he would live as long as he could, Peter then drew from his bosom a packet of papers, which he thrust into the hand of the other, and abruptly retired.

Smithers not knowing exactly what to do with himself during the remainder of his existence, went to bed and slept soundly till the morning.



The wily chemist had given him a bottle of liquorice water flavoured with Ipecacuanha.

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## CHAPTER VII.

PERDITA, besides being very beautiful, was a very pious girl. She had a class at the Sunday School, and her sweet young voice could be heard at church, morning and evening, joining in the hymns and anthems which form a portion of our beautiful service.

But now that silvery voice was raised to its highest pitch in tones of anger and indignation.

"What!" she cried, as she clutched in her convulsive grief a packet of letters written in a bold, free, masculine hand, "have I at last discovered the mystery of his life."

"Does he think, that knowing this, I would ever consent to be his wife?"

Never! sooner would I chop this hand off at the wrist than bestow it upon such a man.

"No! whatever may be her fate, Perdita will never marry a FREETHINKER!"

"Ha! ha!" she cried, in bitter mirth.

He is secular!

Then I am free!

And separation is compulsory!

Then she threw down the packet, stamped on it with her pretty little foot, gave one cry of anguish, and fell prone on the richly carpeted floor, while the color flew from her cheeks, and her ashen lips resembled the pale petals of a flower that has lived its day.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

It is hardly necessary to say by what means our heroine became possessed of the fatal packet. By a singular coincidence, Smithers found himself shortly afterwards pacing up and down the path which fronted the garden where she usually spent an hour or two each evening watering the plants with her tears.



Their eyes met.

A sad sweet smile of gratitude lit up her pale face, which not even the cruel blow she had received could rob of its pensive beauty.

As she turned her flushed face to his, and saw the lovelight that sparkled in his eyes, a joyous sensation flashed through her soul, which only the spark of love could create.

What need of language. Heart spoke to heart, and soul to soul.

Each knew the other's secret.

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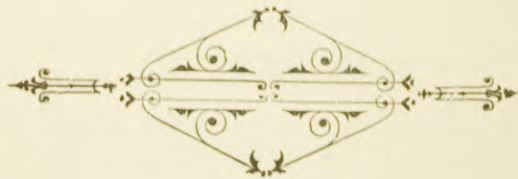
### CHAPTER IX.

OUR tale draws to a close. We have endeavoured to avoid prolixity, and will be brief in the winding up.

Perdita became Mrs. Smithers exactly three months from that date, and all the troubles of her husband were from that time knocked into Smithereens.

Peter made a snug fortune, and retired into private life. He refused more than one overture from an unimportant constituency to represent it in Parliament, having proved by experience that he could always get into a House or out of it when he liked.

Howe Green accepted the situation with the philosophy of an advanced Rationalist, and declared that the match was simply the result of natural causes.





# THE OUT-AND-OUTER.

A TALE OF CRIME AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

By the author of "My Proxy," "Fowl Play," "The Three Convicts," "His Unnatural Life," "At the foot of the Gallows," "A Drop too Much," &c., &c., &c.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

## CHAPTER I.

"Beside the murdered corse  
Fierce murd'rer lie this night;  
Till horror and remorse  
Overwhelm thee with affright."

JUSTICE was at last triumphant. The savage outlaw who had so long set the law at defiance, and whose career for years past had been marked by a trail of blood lay heavily ironed in the gaol at——. A murder of a more than ordinarily revolting character had been committed, and the ruffian had been taken redhanded in the act, cleverly captured by a small party of sixty-three mounted policemen, tried, and condemned to death.

It had been decided that the law should take its course. That was considered a matter of course by all order loving citizens. Yet, there were not wanting those, who are found in every country to sympathize with crime, who attempted to obtain a commutation of the death penalty.

A petition, containing 17,000½ signatures, was presented to the authorities but in vain. The offence was too glaring even for that sin-loving community and for once the Executive were firm.

The execution was resolved upon, and the day was fixed. He was to die by the hands of the commonest executioner that could be found.

As the day approached, intense interest was exerted by persons of a morbid turn of mind to obtain an entrance to the gaol in order to witness the last moments of the condemned criminal. This was no ordinary case, he was no common murderer. Such was the fearful notoriety which distinguished



him, that an undefined feeling existed that he would sustain even at the foot of the gallows, by some wild act of desperation, the character of reckless ferocity which had gained him the title of the Out-and-Outer. Yet who, possessing the most vivid imagination, could have conceived to be within the range of possibility the tragic and startling *dénouement* which verified this fear. But we anticipate.

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## CHAPTER II.

What recks the doomed, deep hid in silent cell,  
Sunshine, birds song, or distant surge of life?  
No light is there for him, and sounds but tell  
Of moments passing to the last dread strife.

THE supreme indifference exhibited by the prisoner, after the sentence of death had been passed, was the subject of general comment. Every detail connected with his daily life now drawing to a close was eagerly sought for by the reporters for the daily press. Each day some fresh sensational paragraph appeared. Meantime the wretched man's appetite was uniformly good; his spirits never failed him; he chatted gaily with the turnkeys, received the visits of his relations and friends without emotion, made himself as comfortable in the condemned cell as circumstances would permit, and repeatedly expressed his conviction that he would never be hanged. Whence this callous indifference to his fate? Was it due to the recklessness of despair, or to some peculiar conformation which rendered him incapable of any mental emotion? Here was a problem for psychologists to consider. Yet, the Rev. Peter K——had been assiduous in his attendance upon the prisoner, and it was stated that the murderer, within the last two days, had paid special heed to his ministrations. Sweet in the hour of adversity are the consolations of religion.

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## CHAPTER III.

The clock is ticking onwards,  
It nears the hour of doom;  
And no one yet hath entered  
Into that ghastly room.



The gaoler and the sheriff  
Are walking to and fro ;  
The hangman sits upon the steps,  
And smokes his pipe below.

THE fatal day arrived.

About twenty-five persons besides the sheriff and his officials were present to witness the execution. The usual formalities having been gone through, the prisoner was led forth. His hands were pinioned behind him, but there was no sign of dejection about him. His beard shewed a week's growth, but he wore the fatal white cap jauntily on one side of his head, and there was a gleam of defiance in his eye which ill comported with the solemn occasion. Brownjack, the executioner, was new to his office. He had never officiated before and the hangman's knot was to him as intricate a combination as the 15 puzzle. He was *not* used to it, and it was unfortunate for him that his first subject should be a man who for years had made his living by sleight-of-hand—who was up to a good many tricks and, among others, the Davenport trick. He did his best however, and no man can do more. Having adjusted the rope, he awaited the signal. Meantime, the Rev. Peter K——was whispering some last words of comfort in the ear of the moribund murderer.

Then——and at this awful moment, when the soul of a human being was about to be launched into eternity, everyone present involuntarily cast his eye to the ground, for where is the heart that can look unmoved at the death throes of a fellow creature? Then the "Out-and-Outer," freeing his arms by a dexterous movement from the clumsy pinioning of Brownjack, with an equally rapid and dexterous movement, slipped the noose off his neck, threw it over his father confessor, and forced him on to the drop. At that moment the signal was given. The drop was eight feet from the scaffold ; there was the fall of a heavy body—the Rev. Peter was a man of portly presence—and the next moment the black gaiters of the unfortunate clergyman were dangling convulsively over the heads of the spectators, while his white choker assisted in the work of strangulation.

With an unmoved countenance the savage ruffian looked upon the now lifeless body of his victim, and calmly remarked, "Such is life !"



## CHAPTER IV.

Then borne upon the midnight air  
 Came piercing shrieks of wild despair ;  
 Yet one brave spirit never quailed,  
 Nor in that hour of danger failed.

It would be idle to attempt to describe the horror and consternation which seized upon the group of affrighted spectators assembled at the foot of the gallows, as soon as they were sufficiently recovered from the shock to be able to realize the extent of this startling catastrophe. Three strong men fainted on the spot, and had to be carried away and placed under the pump in the prisoners' quarters.

The outlaw, who was out-and-out the most collected person in the room, on being conducted to his cell, then made the following audacious statement :—He swore that the deceased gentleman had whispered in his ear his intention to suffer in his stead, in order to give him (the prisoner) time to repent, and had with his own hands placed the rope round his neck. After that the convict lapsed into a state of sullen apathy, and could not be induced to utter another word except "Lemme go," which the authorities were finally obliged to do. No one had actually seen how the transformation had been effected, and there was consequently no evidence to disprove the prisoner's assertion.

No less than twenty-five meetings of the Cabinet were held to consider the situation. The highest legal authorities were consulted. It was finally decided that two men could not be hung for the same offence without imperilling the glorious majesty of the law, and that the condemned man having been executed by proxy, it had no longer any hold upon him. As the leading journal remarked somewhat sarcastically, justice was *more than satisfied*.

We pass over the wailing and lamentation throughout the country at the sudden and deplorable end of the Rev. Peter K—.

The "Out-and-outer" disappeared from that time forth, but several cold-blooded murders committed under circumstances of unusual barbarity in a totally different part of the country led to the belief that his criminal career had not yet been effectually checked. To use his own words "Such is life !"





COLONIAL EXPERIENCE;  
OR THE  
FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF HORATIO HIGGINS.

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CHAPTER I.

"Tell her I die devoted, victim to a noble task—  
Have you got a drop of brandy in the bottom of your flask?"

"MY daughter, sir, shall never marry a man who has not an income of £500 a year!" said the portly British merchant. Gubbins was considered a warm man in the city, and he spoke with some heat.

The youth retired crest-fallen.

He was in love, but, alas! he was also in debt, and the heart of Higgins, like his liabilities, was heavy. Yet he had dared to aspire to the hand of the rich grocer's daughter—he, a penniless adventurer! The only excuse for this folly was that he couldn't help it. You can't sometimes.

And Amelia returned his affection. She gave sigh for sigh.

Oh! *si sic omnes!*

They sat on a rustic seat in Kensington Gardens, and reviewed their position, which may be said to have been represented by £ s. d. without the £ s.

In for a penny in for a £.

But Higgins had to go in for £10,000 at 5 per cent. Money was said to be close that year, but, alas! he had not found it close enough to reach.



Yet something must be done. What was to be done? Ah! there was the rub—where to obtain the capital? Ha! a capital idea! It struck him with such force as to knock him clean off the bench. The only way to liquidate his engagements was by water—he would emigrate. But how? When? Where? There was the rub again in a treble form.

Higgins had relatives—many persons have. Their kindness had been unremitting. He would appeal to them once more. Yes, the front door bell of the uncle who lived in Golden Square should sound a peal which should echo through the halls of the purseproud aristocrat.

Then he would fly to foreign fields forthwith, and force fickle Fortune to fork out the finances fiercely insisted upon by the furious father of his *fiancée*.

His relations were not backward in coming forward.

“He wants pushing,” they said, as if Higgins had been a wheelbarrow, and they gave him the required impetus in the form of passage money. They felt that—

“He who fights and runs away  
May fight again some other day;  
But he who runs away in debt  
Will ne'er come back again, you bet.”

They had his interest at heart, and he had their principal in his pocket! That had been his principal object.

A fair exchange is no robbery.

To what part of the habitable globe should he direct his steps? Should it be India, China, Africa, or Fiji?

No, he would betake himself to some new country.

Ha!—NEW ZEALAND OR NEW SOUTH WALES! which should it be?

Ah! there was the rub again?

This difficulty was overcome by the time-honored process of skying a copper. Heads New Zealand, tails New South Wales, and the result was—woman. She is generally at the bottom of our mishaps; here she was at the top.

Upon what slight incidents do our destinies turn! We launch our boat on the smooth stream of prosperity without a thought of danger. Suddenly the wind shifts; we fail to let go the sheet; we are driven on to the snag of adversity, and



changed into the waters of tribulation. How few like  
Higgins strike out boldly for the shore!

Fortune is a mere toss-up. In the midst of life we are  
in debt!

It is hard to be over head and ears in love and debt at  
the same time. Either is sufficient to drive a man to  
destruction. Both combined drove Higgins to Australia

But how about Amelia?

They had exchanged vows, and now they had to exchange  
farewells; it was a question of p. p. c with the chill off.

The parting was a bitter one.

Unknown to Gubbins *père* she had accompanied her lover  
to the pier, which vibrated with their joint emotions.

The manly bosom of Horatio heaved till he became a  
heavy swell, and she, while she watched his *pierless* form as  
he mounted the side of the ship, presented the appearance of  
an animated watering-pot in convulsions!

But they met in after years? Oh! certainly, by all  
means. (N.B.—This is in strict confidence.)

“On sped the barque, the howling storm  
The funnel’s tap’ring smoke did blow far;  
Unmoved young Higgins’ lifeless form  
Lay stretched upon a horsehair sofa.”

Everything is wisely ordered. Sea-sickness must have  
been good for Higgins at this crisis of his life, and the  
blessing was not denied him.

“They were crowded in the cabin,  
Not a soul would dare to sleep;  
It was eight bells on the ocean,  
And the storm was on the deep.”

Yet he neither enjoyed the sensation nor approved of the  
accommodation. Ungrateful Higgins!

Yet, after all, it was only a little thing at three months,  
which he had often done before easily and without a qualm.

Then it was a P. N. Now it was a P. and O. Yet he  
was wretched. When he looked back, he could see nothing  
before him, a film came over his eyes, his breast heaved, and  
all was gall and bitterness.

It was only when he leant over the side of the vessel,  
apart from the other passengers, that he could freely unbosom



himself. The lee scuppers had a fascination for him which only those can appreciate who have felt so.

His appetite failed him ; he could not touch salt pork, and his stomach refused brandy.

What could be done for a man who rejected these fine remedies ?

But Higgins had a very sensitive disposition, and was easily moved. Be still my throbbing heart, be still ! There is a mystery in the sea, yet who cares to get to the bottom of it !

*(Half-a-dozen chapters are supposed to elapse here.)*

#### CHAPTER VIII.

“There is a land—a cursed land,  
With skies of changeful hue ;  
One moment naught but clouds of sand,  
The next a heavenly blue.”

HIGGINS kept no diary during the voyage out, but he had not been a week ashore, before he was seized with a violent attack of sickness, which entirely prostrated him. On the recommendation of his landlady, he consulted an eminent member of the medical faculty, who felt his pulse, sounded his lungs, made him put out his tongue, and then prescribed for him as follows :—

*Sulph. Mag. z 3*  
*Aq. pur. 0*  
*Misc. bib. ter die.*

for which he was charged three shillings and sixpence by an equally eminent apothecary. It struck Higgins forcibly that, in his younger days, when, under maternal control, he had frequently imbibed a similar potion in the form of a pennyworth of Epsom Salts ; but invalids are proverbially discontented and full of fancies.

*(The author here breaks off abruptly with the remark that no one can be expected to face the troubles of colonial life without a CHECK. His note has been forwarded to our cashier.)*



## CHAPTER IX.

THOUGH his barque was on the sea, his foot was on the shore, and he resolved that no grass should grow under it. As may be supposed there is plenty of grass under foot at the antipodes, but the number of cattle tracks across the bush seem to indicate that it does not flourish in that position. But let that pass. If we come to that, all flesh is grass, and down-trodden humanity will make a struggle to get up again. Even the worm will turn if you tread upon it, and one good turn deserves another.

Higgins' first impressions of Australia appear to have been favourable, judging by the letters he sent home by each mail.

Ha! a bright idea. In your interest I'll turn clairvoyant, and give the letters themselves. You can have them photostyped, and then *you'll* have the first impressions. N.B.—Copyright for sale; right of translation reserved for the highest bidder.\*

They were written to his adored, and are full of tender passages—*j'aime, tu aime elle aime, &c.* But as my aim is to give only what relates to this country, I shall leave out all that nonsense. † The first letter is left out altogether.

This is the second:—

“Sydney is not half a bad sort of place, and the natives seem very good fellows when you come to know them. I have been nearly three months coming to know them, and am getting well up in colonial experience. There seems to be no formality or nonsense about them, or perhaps my arrival may have roused a dormant enthusiasm. Not a day passes but I am asked several times, “What I am going to take?” This is a point which requires serious consideration. I am told that the appointment of Agent-General in England is vacant; but I must not be hasty.

“I have taken up my abode for the present at a family hotel in Little George Street. I did so because I was informed that the principal literary talent is collected in that quarter of the town. Twice I have been mistaken for the

\* Note by the Author.—There's an idea for you; Of course, that will be extra. Anything on account

† See tem, “Revision.”



editor of a leading journal. So you see I have already obtained a leading position.

"Yesterday Sir H. Parks, the Governor of the Colony, was pointed out to me. He is a tall, distinguished-looking man, with a commanding presence and snow-white hair. He wears his hat a little on one side. They say he is the only real statesman in Australia, and a stern upholder of the British Constitution. He takes a constitutional every morning at 7 p.m. in the spacious grounds attached to the Vice-regal residence, which is situated in Blackwattle Swamp. The land was originally a part of the sea, and has been reclaimed at a prodigious outlay. It is all made land, and Sir H., they say, is a made man.

"Thinking it my duty to pay my respects to this distinguished personage, I waited upon him the day after my arrival—or stay, was it the day after, or it might have been the day before.

"I rang the front door bell, and a gorgeous flunkey made his appearance.

"I sent in my card : it was sent back to me.

"I sent it in again : it was sent back again.

"I sent it in a third time, and was informend that H. E was gone down to the 'Ouse.

"I am told he is deep, very deep—past finding out.

"The only way to find him out is to do as I did—*call when he's not in.*

The Colonial Secretary is Mr. Augustus Lofty ; he lives in a cottage on the banks of the river in the Inner Domain. They don't think much of him here as a public man, but in private life he is much admired. He leads a quiet domestic life, and his wife is always to be found At Home. It is rumoured that he amuses himself, after the daily office routine, in writing for a weekly paper, under the title of "The Muddler."

"There are two Houses of Parliament in Sydney, which used to be joined together, They had joint Parliamentary officers, joint standing orders, and joint refreshment rooms, where they used to eat their joints in perfect harmony. Now they are divided, and the Legislative Council—the peers of the realm—legislate on their own hook.



"It is said that in the neighbouring colony of Queensland, owing to an eccentric Colonial Architect, the Upper House is placed on the lower floor.

"There is an Usher of the Black Rod, and a Sergeant-at-Arms, here, the same as in England, but the position of the last-named officer is not a sinecure in the Colonies, as he has to ring the bell every five minutes to bring members out of the refreshment rooms, to which they retire when they get bored by prosy utterances.

"Besides the Parliament Houses, there are some fine public buildings and 750 public houses. These are placed conveniently at the corners of the streets, and are largely patronised. You run against a man and nearly knock the breath out of him, then you shake hands and he says, 'What do you say?' to which, if you have been a sufficient time in the Colony to be aware of the usual formula, you reply, 'don't care if I do.' Then you take your tonic-water, slightly diluted with p. b., and proceed calmly on your way. Being a stranger in the land, I have not yet ventured to invite anyone, but I have responded to the invitation scores of times. It is an acquired habit, but I found no difficulty in acquiring it.

"There are plenty of amusements in Sydney. The theatres have crowded houses every week-day, and on Sunday they discuss religion in every shape and form. The point in dispute just now is whether the whale swallowed Jonah, or whether Jonah swallowed the whale. There has been a considerable amount of spouting and blowing about it, but the throat of the fish is still an open question; they say it must have been one of the New South *whales*.

"In the School of Arts a Debating Society discuss questions of Colonial policy, with the object of training young men to become public speakers. The other night I entered when a vigorous debate was proceeding. The question was—Who is the biggest man in the Colony? Opinions seemed to be divided between the Premier and an hon. member who occupies the cross benches, and who weighs 23 stone.

"The great Exhibition was just closed as I landed. I am told there was not much to see in it, except the picture gallery, which contained some fine paintings by the old masters. But, as the waiter at my hotel observed, the



prettiest sight of all was the young Australian missuses. Flynn is a very smart fellow, the son of a baronet. He left Ireland on account of some love affair, which preys upon his mind to such an extent, that you can't rely upon him after 6 p.m., but up to that hour he is a complete walking encyclopædia. He knows everybody in Sydney, and I am indebted to him for many of my facts."

### CHAPTER X.

THE Supreme Court in Sydney is a fine building when you get used to it, and there is nothing in its internal arrangements to injure the sight of the blind Goddess. When you begin to pierce through the gloom you get a bird's eye view of the Judge, and by crossing over to the other side of the Court you can sometimes obtain a glimpse of the jury. It has lately been the scene of an exciting trial, in which an M.P., a solicitor doing an extensive privat practice, sued an ex-M.P. for impugning the fair fame of one of his clients. The defendant lost, and was mulcted in the sum of £2000 damages and costs, which he has declined to pay, a stern sense of what is owing to himself having induced him to prefer free quarters in a city gaol. The principal witness was the principal sufferer. It appears that he acted the part of Peeping Tom, and would persist in looking through a crack in a door which was marked "Private" for which he is also consigned to the same receptacle for the obstinate. It is felt that if a lawyer cannot have confidential relations with a client without being subjected to impertinent curiosity he might as well close his doors at once. Considering that out of every six persons you meet in this city two are solicitors, this case has created the profoundest interest in professional circles. The best counsel were retained on either side, and the hotels in the vicinity of the Court have had an unusually large bar practice.

Sydney is a great place for openings; they are always opening something or other—either a church or a theatre, or a branch line of railway, or a new lunatic asylum. The cricket season has just opened, and they are now opening subscriptions to send home the Australian Champion Sculler, who is expected to open the eyes of the Britishers. He is the hero of the day,



and whenever his Committee meet, the streets leading to the hotel where he puts up are lined three-deep with open-mouthed spectators. Yesterday I met a member of Parliament, who told me he would shew me an opening. We walked arm-in-arm till we came to a large pit recently excavated in Pitt Street, which he pointed out to me as a fine opening for a young man. I have found out since that he is not a Member of Parliament, only an odd fellow, and that he writes for a wretched comic paper. Flynn says I ought to keep myself to myself, but it seems to me that would be following a very narrow line of conduct.

You will be glad to hear that I have joined the Accident Association. Accidental deaths are rather a common complaint in the colonies, and I thought it would be as well to adopt a safe policy. I did this at Flynn's suggestion, and he has undertaken to recover the amount of the policy in the event of its falling due. It is satisfactory to feel that whether I get mangled by the tramway, cut into pieces by the railway, drowned, shot, or burned to death I shall be equally the gainer.

An interesting discovery has just been made here, by an enterprising agent, of the long-lost son of a nobleman, or the son of a long-lost nobleman, in the person of a well-known public character, called "The Flying Pieman," who has been in the habit of hawking about newspapers. He is now the heir to untold riches. What will be the effect of this sudden change from poverty to wealth? Will it make him less flighty, or more pious? As the intelligent Chinamen remark "No savee." At present it only worries him. Fifty times a day, he is asked what he is going to stand, and he says he can't stand it much longer.

Kangaroo hunting is the finest sport in the world. A sporting friend persuaded me to go out with him on Saturday. We mounted two colonial-bred hunters, and wended our way to the gentle slopes of Botany, where these graceful creatures are to be seen feeding on the burnt grass, which is to be found all over Moore Park. We didn't see any, and my companion said it was because I made too much noise. We therefore adjourned to Captain Cook's Hotel, and he remarked that I could shout there as often as I liked, without disturbing the game. I found this meant calling for drinks, and paying for them, which I did several times. One must pay for one's



experience. In this way, we kept the game alive for about three hours, and then took the tram-car home.

They tell me that there is a great change in Sydney from what it was 100 years ago, and I can well believe it. I never knew a place where change was so much required. A pound goes no way at all, and five shillings is almost valueless.

I found out all about Flynn's *affaire de cœur*. It was a lovers' quarrel; she was the belle of the county, and an heiress in her own right. They were engaged; the day was fixed, when, one evening, while he was whispering (h) airy nothings in her ear, and toying with her beautiful ringlets, which fell gracefully over her snowy neck, the whole *chevelure* came off in his hand. He accused her of sailing under false colours, she said some cutting words in reply; he charged her with a false-hood? she retorted; a storm ensued; they parted; she left her chignon behind her, and he his hat, and they both scudded away under bare poles. Difficulties, not altogether unconnected with the bottle, prevented a reconciliation, and the heartbroken Flynn took his passage in the *Orient* Steamer, for Sydney

\* While she with heavy grief was saddled,  
And wept for him who had skedaddled.

Since he landed at the Circular Quay three years ago, Flynn has seen a good deal of life. He made a large fortune on the diggings and spent it in a fortnight; he has been in Parliament; was Mayor of a country municipality, a travelling photographer, and the editor of a paper. Then he turned publican, and for several months drove a hansom. Circumstances have shaped his lot, at least a lot of them have, but this I will say for Flynn, he is the best hand at brewing whiskey punch I ever met. After all these ups and downs he, a baronet's son, has settled down as a waiter at an hotel: that accounts for his settled melancholy, as well as his fatal habit of intemperance after his daily work is done.

“ From sport to sport concealment's guile  
Preys on the heart of Flynn;  
And when the worm provokes a smile,  
He drowns his grief in gin.”

\* This is an addition by “your truly.” I am obliged to touch up the letters a good deal. Bear this in mind when you send your next cheque.



## CHAPTER XI.

SINCE I wrote last I have been up to the diggings; I am up there yet, and if something doesn't turn up I shall soon be higher up still—up a tree, or as the diggers call it U.P. This came about in consequence of my answering an advertisement in a daily paper—"Wanted a mate to proceed to the diggings." That struck me as being the best proceeding for a man who wants to know something of colonial life, and I made the acquaintance of the advertiser. His name is Blogg; he is a man of vast mining experience, and has been off and on the gold-fields ever since he was a baby. Born of poor but corpulent parents in a small mining township he was literally cradled on the (bed) rock. He is a rough-looking fellow, and does not prepossess you at first sight, but he says he has a heart of gold; if so, that is all he has to show for about 30 years' search for the precious metal. I find that a mate signifies a man who pays all expenses while the other finds the experience—the term is equivalent to second-mate on board a ship. Blogg had a horse in a paddock just out of town, and so I had to buy one. One was recommended to me as being specially adapted to the work; he is a bright slate colour, and will carry a swag; besides this he has a brand on his rump the size of a frying pan, so that I can easily find him if he is stolen. I have since discovered another peculiarity in him which is equally shared by Blogg's pie-bald, *he won't pass a public-house unless his rider gets off and takes something.* The consequence was that it took us two days to clear the town, but after that we got on better, as the houses are further apart. Blogg has the most wonderful capacity for stowing away victuals and drink I ever saw—nothing comes amiss to him.

The scenery of Australia is truly rural and beautiful, especially in the neighbourhood of the Blue Mountains, so-called because it was a blue look-out for anyone to get through them until the road was made by convict labor, or perhaps because

"Distance lent enchantment to the view,  
And clothed the mountains with its Prussian blue."\*

\* A quotation was evidently wanted here. I have supplied it. See extras.



It is a zig-zag road, and the ascent is one in three, which is very awkward for two persons. We had to lead our horses up, and we camped at the top to admire the landscape. The road runs through an avenue of gum trees. Large lumps of amber gum hung from every projecting branch and sparkled in the sunshine. The playful possum, suspended by his ring tail, swung gracefully to and fro, and peeped at us out of his sleepy eyes. A small white owl from a shady corner offered us "Morepork" some hundreds of times, the pigeons cooed, the parrots screamed, and the wattle-birds chattered overhead, while a pert young jackass perched himself on Blogg's saddle and burst into a joyous fit of laughter. One bird cracked a whip, and another rang a bell so naturally that I'm certain if it had been heard by Flynn at any time before 6 p.m. he would have jumped up in a moment, and said, "Yes, sir, coming, sir." All nature seemed animated and bent upon giving us a hearty welcome, and in this enchanted scene in spite of the beauty of the landscape, the fragrance of the flowers, and the music of the birds, with this glorious prospect to admire, Blogg the insensible, whose only idea of a prospect is a penny-weight to the dish, the soul-less, matter-of-fact Blogg, who has no more idea of beauty or harmony than a cat has of Euclid, slept heavily and snored like his own broken-winded piebald.

Here I first saw a kangaroo in its natural state; there are only 'possums and coons in the United States. It was a female—a doe—with a young one—a joey. Until he was a month old this little beggar had been carried in his mother's pouch, now he was hopping after her, holding her tail tightly with his fore paws, skipping over the ground and keeping exact time, without once making a *faux pas*. It was a pretty sight. The male kangaroos are called old men, but it is a rare thing to see one of them bald-headed or wearing spectacles. Some of the Australian eagles, however, are bald-headed, and the spectacle they present when perched on the summit of some tall pine in the dim distance must be seen to be appreciated. The huge dugong disporting himself in the tea-tree swamp, the scrub-turkey strutting on the fallen-log, the corrugated sand-stone glittering in the sun's rays, the stupendous boulders overhanging the flashing cascade which discharges its diamond stream into the distant valley below,



where the lordly emu stalks majestically over the plain, and the melodious notes of the bull-frog echoing through the mighty chasm were objects in the panorama on which I gazed spell-bound, till the eye, growing weak from the contemplation of such fairy-like splendour, recovered itself in the endeavour to penetrate the gloom of the mountain gorges, and the dense mass of sombre vegetation, which clothed it like an ulster price 30s. This picture is not at all overdrawn. At 2 p.m., having succeeded in rousing Blogg from his noon-day slumber by applying one of his own spurs to that portion of his frame which appeared to me to be the best adapted for the purpose, I suggested a start, and we saddled our horses, and commenced the descent of the giddy slope. Passing the Weatherboard and forcing our steeds to jump over Govett's Leap we came in sight of a valley, and saw in the remote distance bright flashes of lightning, which on a nearer view turned out to be kerosene lamps belonging to the New South Wales Shale and Oil Company just lit up for the night.

Here I paused to drink in the majestic beauty of the scene, Blogg preferring a drink from a bottle of rum-and-water which he carries, in his saddle-bag, and with which he refreshes himself from time to time, in a spirit of thoughtless liberality. Then we trudged slowly on, and, half-an-hour afterwards, our nags were hitched up to the verandah posts of the Duke of Wellington Hotel, a small wayside Inn, in the lonely and picturesque village of Hartley, which was heartily welcome. Then for the first time since I woke him so unceremoniously from his slumbers, the taciturn Blogg found his tongue, and stepping on to the verandah, turned to me, and said:

"Well, youngster, what do you say?"

To which I, with an appetite sharpened by the bracing air of the mountains, responded: "I don't care if we do."

And we did.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Monday, 30th February, 18—.* Blogg is lazy. I mention the fact in a general way. He is also obstinate. This morning he got up at ten o'clock, and insisted upon having a



"spell oh," as he calls it, for twenty-four hours. I took the opportunity to sally forth into the provincial wilderness of this great continent with a breech-loader, for a day's sport. The practice of beating about the bush is denounced at home, but here it is the only way of circumventing the game. Having no particular beat to follow, I took the first track which led to the trackless forest. I had some rare sport, but was obliged to leave a black swan and seven pelicans behind me, for reasons which must be obvious. My bag, at the close of the day, consisted of 1 wombat—a nocturnal animal, but infernally heavy to carry; 3 piebald magpies (I shot these birds to stop their chattering); 1 mopoke, who found himself quickly transferred to my poke; 2 lyre birds, who will never tell any more lies; 1 bower bird, who was sitting watching my advance from a bower on the top of a *Eucalyptus Mimosa* (why my *mosa* ?); 1 gigantic crane, something under seven feet high, and stout in proportion (how's that for high ?); 6 duck-billed platypi—very good eating in a patty or pie—the real ornithorhynchus paradoxus; 3 flying foxes, who were flying after three black cockatoos. I fired both barrels, and brought them all down at one shot, and a native bear, who was nearly as sound asleep as he is now. All these are mammalia, and peculiar to Australia. So my first day's sport was not quite a failure.

*Tuesday, 31st.*—We are off. Blogg has packed up his swagg and taken his last swig. He says he knows every inch of the country, and proposes that we shall take a bee line through the bush, and prospect as we go. I am quite agreeable. I wish I could say as much for him. If taking a bee line means travelling all the morning with the sun in your face, and in the afternoon with that luminary behind your back, we have done it to-day to a nicety. I call it a Blogg line; but he has been prospecting or "fossicking," another name for dawdling away the day, all his life, I haven't a word to say.

*Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup>.*—We have been going up and down the most precipitous mountains we could find, for the last three days. Whenever he sees a piece of quartz, Blogg stops to have a smoke and examine the stone. This has delayed us considerably. We have sunk several small holes. "Where there is black sand, there is gold," remarks my companion.



We have found plenty of black sand. Where, then, is the gold? I ventured to suggest that we should get to the bottom of this mystery by sinking the holes a little deeper, but the only reply I got was "Higgins, you're a hass." Blogg is a brute; he may have a heart of gold, but it is encased in a very crusty exterior. Perhaps he is a rough diamond.

*A fortnight after.*—We have sunk 14 holes, all the same pattern, all the same depth—about three feet—and all containing black sand. Yesterday we came to a hole newly dug. Blogg immediately sat down to smoke. He said it was probably a prospect hole, *sunk by a couple of muffs who hadn't bottomed it.* He knew every inch of the country, and we were not far off a mining township. He then asked me to get out a dish from the bottom. How could I if it wasn't bottomed? I did, though; there was a lot of water and mud in it, and I managed to scrape up some slimy, stinking slush. Blogg said it was *good-looking stuff*, and he carried it away to the water-hole to wash. While he was gone I picked up a match-box, which I recognised as his. He had dropped it three weeks before. *We have been travelling in a circle, and come back to our second trial hole, not five miles from our starting point.* Blogg is a humbug.

*The next morning.*—While Blogg was washing out the dish last night, a jackass perched on a tree by, and burst into a fit of hoarse laughter. The bird knew what he was about: there was food for mirth!

Ha! ha! ha? *We have struck it!*

At the bottom of the dish imbedded in the black sand was a shining speck of gold, clear, bright, untarnished gold; and, as if Providence had not sufficiently rewarded us for our exertions, in the second dish there were two specks. No spectacles were required to see them, they were plainly visible to the naked eye. Blogg knew at a glance *it was the right kind of mullock.* We have decided to pitch our tent here. Blogg says we must keep it dark. Fortunately that will not be difficult as we are in a blind gully, and no one has seen us. He actually worked hard to-day, even his sluggish nature is excited. He has only smoked fifteen pipes since breakfast. He would be positively amiable if he knew how.

*Friday.*—This morning two men came to our tent and asked if we had seen a bay mare in hobbles. I said no, our



horses were slate color and piebald; they then retired abruptly.

*Saturday.*—There is a rush to the place. The men who spoke to us yesterday have given the alarm. The diggers are coming by scores and hundreds. The excitement is tremendous. No one likes to commence sinking in one gully for fear of gold being discovered in another. Our specks have been greatly admired, and there has been a good deal of speculation about the lead.

*6 p.m.*—Fifty-three claims have been marked out north of ours, and seventy-two south of it. Our ground has been reserved for us, it is in an angle of the gully, and has been christened "Blogg's Point." I could mention several other of his points which are not nearly so attractive. We are shepherding our ground. One of Blogg's points is to let others do the work for him if possible. There are over 200 tents on the flat below us.

*Monday.*—Twenty-two holes have been bottomed, and they are all pronounced to be duffers. Nobody has been able to find even the colour. Blogg's popularity is beginning to wane. It is darkly hinted that he must have salted the claim. They have threatened to duck him in his own shaft, which is half-full of water. I wonder if he will consider that *the right kind of mullock*. The only notice he has taken of this is to get drunk.

*Sydney, next week.*—I am back again in Sydney. The population at Blogg's point disappeared as if by magic. The diggings turned out a regular sell. Blogg and I have parted.

P.S.—I reopen my letter to say that I have just heard from a reliable but respectable party that a second rush has taken place, and they are getting 3 oz. a day out of our claim. *The hole had been sunk by a couple of muffs and had not been bottomed.*

P.P.S.—Blogg is in the Lunatic Asylum.







## ESSAYS BY A LOWER FORM BOY

### ON IRON.

IRON is a hard substance dug out of the ground. In its raw state it is called ore; when it is cooked it generally takes the form of a saucepan or frying pan with a hole in it. It is made into various domestic utensils: there is the flat iron, the gridiron, and the large iron pot, and there are fire irons. There is also sheet iron, but this is not used in connection with blankets except in a quartz crushing machine. Iron is not used for clothing, or in the case of shirts, and collars, and muslin dresses, which require a good deal of ironing. In the navy, however, most of the men-of-war are iron clad. Agricultural implements, railroads, and cannon balls are manufactured of iron, but when the iron enters into a man's soul, it does not mean that he is knocked over by one of these useful articles, or that a carving knife has been stuck into him. It is merely a figurative expression conveying the idea that he is getting rusty.

It is quite a mistake to suppose that all the iron out of which our railways are made comes from Iron Cove. Most of it is imported, although there is plenty of it in Australia. There have been several other iron coves mentioned in history; there was King Ironsides, the Cove with the iron mask, and the Iron Duke. I cannot think of any more iron coves, but I have seen plenty of iron stoves.

Iron is first of all put into a furnace to free the ore from all impurities, and then it is sent to a foundry to be cast, or to a blacksmith to be wrought, so that it is either cast iron or



wrought iron. But when sharp cutting tools have to be manufactured, a further process is gone through, which converts the iron into steel. When this is properly done the steel is said to be good tempered, but it is very dangerous in the hands of bad tempered persons.

A blacksmith who steels an axe is not taken up for theft, and if he forges a deadly weapon with the iron he has been steeling he is not charged with forgery; but if a blackfellow steals a tomahawk he is put into chokey (this is ironical). Sometimes iron is galvanized; it then takes up a higher position, frequently on the roof of a house. Sometimes it is magnetized, and then it become a very attractive article.

A steam engine is called an iron horse, but an iron grey horse is an animal of a different color. Iron is largely used for pipes, but smokers prefer clay or meerschaum. If you throw a piece of iron into the water it will sink, unless you make it into a steamboat, when it will swim like a duck.

There are several other kinds of iron, such as hoop iron, scrap iron, bar iron, old iron, and iron wires, besides iron pyrites. There is also the rod of iron, with which the stern parent rules his household. It is also used for the tires of wheels, and for horses' shoes, so that it may be said to be a commodity which is always on demand for wheel or for whoa.

When a blacksmith joins two pieces of iron together, and makes one piece of them, the process is called welding. In doing this he has to strike while the iron is hot, cold iron being proverbially intractable.

“ Ah me! what troubles do environ  
The man that meddles with cold iron.”

as somebody remarks. Years ago there was a blacksmith who used to join people together in matrimony, and the fetters he forged for them lasted a lifetime, but that was at Gretna Green a long time ago.

Iron is used for lightning conductors; it is also a good conductor of heat, water, gas, and sewage, but I have never heard of an iron 'bus conductor.

(We are sorry to learn that the author of the above got two bad marks for his essay, the master remarking that there was a little too much irony in the composition. Ed.)



## ON FIRE.

FIRE is an element which has a natural antipathy to water. When these two elements meet, one or the other has to give in. It can be produced by striking a flint against a piece of steel, or by chemical substances, such as phosphorus, or by rubbing two pieces of wood together till your arms ache, but that is an old-fashioned method only employed by black-fellows. There are various kinds of fire. There is the domestic fire made in a grate, which is very grateful to the feelings when the grate is full and the fireplace doesn't smoke. There is the fire which often burns itself out, and the slow fire made of stringy bark, which has to be relit every ten minutes. There is the bush fire caused by a digger dropping his pipe into the long grass, and then walking coolly away as if he had nothing to do with it, and the house on fire which attracts a crowd of larrikins in no time, and about half-an-hour afterwards a fire engine, by which time the fire has gone out of itself. But sometimes it can't be put out, and then they bring a fire escape to shift the people out of the house. When you let off a gun you are said to fire, but sometimes a gun will go off without firing when the back door is left open. You can produce fire by means of a burning glass, by drawing a focus on your knee on a hot summer's day. A fire arm does not mean a man's arm on fire, but a loaded pistol or blunderbus. A fire-brick is put at the back of a grate to keep the heat in, but a smart member of a fire brigade may also be considered a brick at a fire. Fire is generally of a red color, but when you put salt with it, it turns blue.

Spirits are sometimes very fiery, but the spirits which attend a spirit *séance* are not likely to set the house on fire. When a man's head is the color of carrots it is called a fiery red, but there is no fire about a firefly, and that's all I have to say about fire. If anyone knows anything more let him fire away.

## ON DOORS.

A DOOR is a wooden frame, made to fit an aperture in a wall, to afford entrance into a house, garden, back-yard, or other enclosure. Doors have hinges, and are made to shut, as well



as to open, but no one thinks of shutting a church door after him, or to knock at it when he goes in. A door is not the same as "adore," though one often hinges on the other, especially when the cook expects a visit from her cousin. There are doors of various kinds. A safe has an iron door, and it is not safe to leave it open if there is any cash inside. A stable door is in two pieces, so as to allow the horse to put his head out and see what is going on. It should always be shut, even if the horse has been stolen, in case the harness should follow, and then there would be no traces left. The door of a mouse-trap is a falling door, which saves the mouse the trouble of opening or shutting it. Even a dormouse gets taken in occasionally. Girls and boys—girls, especially—frequently leave the door open, and then the fowls get into the garden and scratch up the plants, or the cat jumps on to the tea table and drinks up all the milk. When the cupboard door is left ajar, children's fingers often get jammed. Sometimes the hall door slams so violently, and breaks the large panes of glass. Great pains should be taken to avoid this. There are various other doors, such as battle-dores, stevedores, and commodores, but to say "shut up" to a Commodore would be considered rude. Trap-doors are very dangerous, especially after dark, when there are traps about. Doors are made with panels, locks, and brass handles. Sometimes the handle comes off, and then a quarter of an hour is lost in hunting for the screw, which no one knows how to put on again. The best way to prevent a boy from banging a door is to bang him, and if he leaves it wide open, the wisest thing he can do is to bolt. Front doors have numbers painted on them, but sometimes the owner of the house has taken too many buns in town, and when he comes back, he goes to the wrong door. After that, he never gets a latch-key given to him again. There are a number of other things connected with doors, such as door-knockers, door mats, door steps, and door scrapers, which you can find out for yourself. All you have to do is to ring the door bell gently, some day when it is raining, and the family are gone out, and you will have plenty of time to observe them ;— and that's all I was told to write.



## A SNAKE STORY.

WHEREBY HANGS A TAIL.

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THE following instance of heroic but misdirected courage on the part of a cockato farmer's wife, residing less than a hundred miles from the capital of a neighbouring colony, has just been transmitted to our office by hydraulic telegraph. Certain circumstances not fully detailed in the message, probably her husband's absence from home, had led to her being left alone for the night, except for the company of an old female servant of nervous temperament—two lone women, in a lone house in a lonely spot.

Having partaken of a frugal supper and a cup of the beverage which cheers but not inebriates, they prepared themselves to meet the perils and dangers of the night, and before retiring to rest proceeded to make a careful survey of the premises. There were four rooms in the house, all on the ground floor. Evidently there was no place of concealment for a midnight intruder in either of the sitting rooms, but there might be a man under one of the beds.

"Goodness gracious hevins? what's that?" shrieked the terrified domestic, pointing to a taper black form coiled up close to the door of one of the bedrooms.

"Whisht, Biddy, it's a shnake," rejoined her missus, intrepidly brandishing a flat candlestick in the face of the enemy. "Fetch me the axe."

Biddy retired irresolutely, but shortly returned with one of Collins' No. 3. A rapid exchange of weapons now took place, and while Biddy with slow and faltering steps approached a cupboard in the corner of the room with the intention of hiding in it, our heroine, the farmer's wife, advanced with dauntless front and uplifted arm to the attack. The axe was raised, and descended with fearful force. "Then rose from heaven to earth one wild despairing cry," and while Biddy succumbing to her fears swooned in the corner, and the gudewife exultant cut another caper on the doorstep, Dido, the old man's favourite black kangaroo slut, minus her tail, rushed into the yard, *howling a hurricane.*





## ISABELLA—A FRAGMENT.

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SHE was one girl, only one, in a thousand, and was going by tram-car to see her aunt at Waverley.

He was tall, and of aristocratic appearance, and was on his way from Redfern to keep an appointment at a Government office at 10 o'clock. They met at Liverpool Street.

It was a case of love at first sight. A precious sight, but very little of it. But, alas! even a steam motor cannot always make the course of true love run smoothly.

One fleeting glance from car to car, one electric message and its reply, and then—the tram went off the line, and recourse was had to screw-jacks.

Horror upon horror! The whistle of the Randwick engine is heard. Motor upon motor, a collision, a crash, wheels within wheels, weal, and then wo!

There was a complete deadlock. The upper and lower lines were at loggerheads. The old buffers had come in contact with one another, and the wheels, though untired, refused to stir.

It was what some persons term an accident; we merely use it as an incident.

Isabella had crossed the line once before; but then it had been all smooth sailing. Now there was a shock as the car went over the rail; she was shocked, and railed at the shocking management.

In her hurry to embark she had taken her seat in the smoking department, which was *not* labelled. The three engines were smoking, but the collision had put out the pipes of the passengers, and there they sat fuming at the delay.



The fumes overpowered her, and she fell fainting on the floor of the car. Julius, seize her!

Away, away to the nearest chemist, Watts his name, for a soothing draft.

To reach George Street, and to return with a pint of prussic acid and a tablespoonful of strychnine, was, with him, in spite of a pair of tight boots, the walk of five minutes.

By the time he got back to the spot both engines had been righted—practice makes perfect—and *she* had left it. The two trams were steaming away in the dim distance, and he alone remained *solus cum solo*.

Picture his despair, or, if you haven't the materials handy, imagine it. "To drink much of this," said Julius, smelling the bottle, "might give me a headache;" and, gently dropping it into an open sewer, so that its contents might be drained, he repaired to a neighbouring hotel, and took a glass of whiskey instead.

Days, weeks, and months rolled on. So did the tram-cars.

She went to stay with some friends at Wagga Wagga, and he was unable to leave Sydney. That was probably the reason they saw so little of each other.

In short, we may as well state—not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith—that *they never met again!*

Yet, day by day, as the tram-car by which he journeys to his office runs off the line, sweet but painful memories fill the breast of Julius, and he finds himself compelled to take a restorative to enable him to regain his composure; and at times the cordial suggests a safer, if less expeditious, mode of travelling by its expressive title—*Walker*.







## QUEENSLAND HUNT CLUB.

No. 1.

“ Every gentleman should take to 'unting ; it's the sport of kings, the image of war, without its guilt, and only five and twenty per cent. of its danger.”—JORROCKS.

SATURDAY last was a *dies non* with the Q.H.C., inasmuch as they hunted over a country which produced nothing except a strong feeling of disgust at the total absence of game. Some people would simply state the fact, or say nothing at all about it. But the interests of the sporting public of Queensland, keenly alive to everything which relates to the Q.H.C., must be consulted, and your correspondent is resolved that after each day's sport, kill or no kill, one tail at least shall be served up—the tale of the hunt. So here goes with a very bad start, and over somewhat difficult country.

“ We met, 'twas in a crowd,”—at the Kangaroo Point Ferry—

“ The punt was hailed, the nags embarked,  
And we did all get in ;  
Six precious souls, and all agog  
To dash through thick and thin.”

Doughboy Creek was the destination of the pack, or, more properly speaking, Bulimba ; for in these days of refinement, doughboys are unknown, and johnny-cakes a mystery to the civilised. Crossing Norman's Creek Bridge, the party reined up at Galloway's Hill to admire the beautiful Australian landscape suddenly unfolded to their view. Far away to the left, in peaceful security, lay the metropolis of Queensland, which has been so often held up to the admiring mental gaze of intending immigrants, as the brightest gem in her



Majesty's dominions ; looking especially bright in the morning sun, but wearing an indolent and rural aspect eminently suggestive of a field for labour and enterprise combined with capital. On the opposite side of the river the eye rested with pleasure upon the trellised walks and tastefully laid out grounds of Kenallan, the charming and picturesque country seat of R. R. Mackenzie, Esq.; while, in the remote distance, the mist was just dispersing which hung over Fortitude Valley, and a glimpse of that busy suburb was obtained—a sort of architectural kaleidoscopic view, in which no two houses appeared to be the same size, colour, or style of building, faced the same way, or had anything in common. Up and down each bend of the river, fishing-smacks and pleasure-boats were dotted here and there, and one heavily-laden steamer going up stream was putting on the screw, and labouring heavily against a strong tide. Thence, for about six miles on the Cleveland Road, the pack proceeded until they reached Belmont, Bulimba, a fine estate, comprising 700 acres of choice alluvial land in a ring-fence, the owner of which, W. H. R. Weekes, Esq., acting in the genial character of the old English squire, gave the members of the Hunt a hearty welcome, and invited them to partake of his well-known hospitality. The day being unusually hot, it was resolved not to hunt until 3 p.m., and precisely at that hour—to adopt the style of the novelist—a goodly cavalcade of horseman might have been seen to emerge from the park gates, and wend their way along the stony heights of Bulimba in a southerly direction. There were six horsemen in all mounted on powerful steeds richly caparisoned, the riders in hunting costume, and followed by four couple of noble hounds in a dog-cart drawn by a piebald palfrey. It is unnecessary to state that this group was comprised of members of the Queensland Hunt Club, or that the advent of the hunting party in the sylvan retirement of Bulimba created a profound sensation.

At the distance of one mile from Belmont the hounds were uncoupled, and “the horn of the huntsman was heard on the hill,” commonly called the Eight-mile Hill, were kangaroos used to abound ; and where, it is hoped, they will yet be seen, when some sporting member of Parliament has brought in a bill to put a stop to Sunday hunting, which has ruined the sport



in this neighbourhood. The country between Bulimba and Cleveland is very inviting, and especially adapted by nature to harbour game, as it comprises an alternate mixture of rich flats and patches of grass-tree cover, and is bounded on the right by a high range thickly covered with timber. Indeed, such likely spots were crossed every now and then, that in the momentary expectation of a good burst, the excitement never flagged, and it was not until nearly five o'clock, when several miles of country had been explored, that the hopes of the party were at all damped. Once, and once only, was a glimpse obtained of a solitary flyer, but the distance at which she got up precluded all chance of a kill, and slowly and reluctantly the huntsman turned his horse's head homewards. It was still hoped that, as the sun was now getting low, a run or two would be obtained on the way back, at the head of one of the gullies leading from the big hill, but at this time the sport, such as it was, came to a premature check, from the sudden and unexpected illness of C —, one of the prominent members of the Hunt. This gentleman was seized with an attack of remittent fever, caught during a late visit to the Downs, and was powerless to proceed. The chief symptoms manifested were intense thirst, a violent appetite, and a strong desire to get home; and as this sort of thing is very catching, nothing remained but to push on to town at a hand gallop, in order that the patient might be placed under proper treatment. Arrived in Brisbane, every attention was shown to the invalid; a strong dose of shandygaff was prescribed, and I am happy to be able to record the fact that the indisposition vanished in a marvellously short time. It is gratifying to learn that his medical attendant gives strong hopes that there will be no impediment to his joining the Q.H.C. at their next meet.

It may be as well here to state, for the benefit of all whom it may concern, that the first step to be taken by any aspiring sportsman, who desires to become a member of the Hunt, is to forward the sum of one guinea (half-yearly subscription) to the treasurer of the Club, when, if otherwise eligible, his name will at once be enrolled. The subscription list being still considerably in arrears, it has been found necessary to carry out the plan largely adopted by hunting clubs in England, viz., to make a charge of (say) half-a-crown a head each day



upon all strangers or non-subscribers in the field, in addition to the usual share of the expense of the day, to be collected on the spot. This rule will for the future be rigidly enforced. All sporting men will admit the justice of the tax, and it is to be hoped that it will have the effect of increasing the number of subscribers, and placing the pecuniary affairs of the Q.H.C. upon a sound bottom. *Verbum sap.*—or, a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse. Cards, with particulars of the next meet, will be issued to subscribers this day.

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No. 2.

SATURDAY last was a day to be marked with a white stone in the annals of the Q.H.C. The best meet took place which has yet been gathered together; the country was open, and the ground in capital order; the arrangements were perfect, and the sport first-rate; or, as was remarked by a wag, first-rate and a half. The weather, too, was unexceptionable, although grave doubts of its behaviour were at one time entertained, and many and anxious were the looks cast upwards by keen members of the Hunt on the morning of Thursday. The sky on that remarkable day presented a most bewildering appearance. A dense fog, so thick that you could almost cut it with a knife, ushered in the day. Then the fog cleared away and revealed a clear blue sky, undimmed by a single cloud. Again all was black as pitch, and the ground was literally deluged with water for the space of half-an-hour. Then again the sun came out brilliantly and chased away the clouds; then the clouds came back and obscured the sun; then it rained cats and dogs for a full hour, with the sun shining its best; then it didn't seem to know what to do; and finally took refuge in a mysterious mist, which was equally indicative of extreme heat or a heavy downfall. In fact, it was a very foggy lookout at bedtime; and S —, who would not miss a day's run with the hounds for a small fortune, is computed to have done the distance of five miles and a fraction, fair heel-and-toe walking on his verandah, in a state of feverish impatience, for a break, watching the population of Brisbane parading before him, slip-slop, splash, clatter and dash, up and down the street, and finally retired to rest



in a very unsettled frame of mind, with a sense of personal grievance only to be dissipated by the cheering rays of the morning sun. But there is a "sweet little cherub" in pink who looks after the interests of hunting men, and a special arrangement must have been made with the clerk of the weather by which the downfall was adjourned for forty-eight hours, for a cooler or pleasanter day never dawned upon a hunting party than the 30th March, *anno domini* 1867.

But we must try back, as we have not yet got our men to the *rendezvous*, which took place overnight at Moodie's Station on the Logan, nineteen miles from town if you take the right turning to the left, and then bear a little to the right at the proper distance from the Ipswich road, and reverse the direction as you near the place; but a good twenty-five miles if you go *via* Oxley Creek or the Eight-mile Plains. The hounds and second horses having been sent forward at an early hour, the regular hunting members started at 4 p.m., and proceeded leisurely along the road to their destination, where they were all assembled by sundown, with the exception of C— and H— who were compelled to stay in town to witness a thrilling melo-drama, got up under their especial patronage, and bound in honour to be in at the death, which did not take place until the end of the third act, when they had to wait for daylight to hurry on to the meet. A substantial supper, for which a ride of 20 miles was no bad preparation, awaited the hunters at Moodie's. There appeared to be no end of strapping lasses and young men belonging to the Moody clan, and the alacrity with which the united services of the whole establishment were called into requisition was refreshing to witness. Rasher after rasher of delicious bacon, cured on the premises, was cut in rapid succession, and tossed into a gigantic frying pan to be served up hot and hot. A large but indescribable joint of beef, placed at the head of the table, challenged the hungriest man to cut and come again, while huge sections of Brobdignagian loaves of home-made bread and tempting piles of delicious butter appeared and disappeared as if by magic. The tea which was required to wash down these solids must have been made in a vessel of fearful dimensions; no ordinary teapot could have withstood such a drain upon it. Supper ended, came the digestive pipe and the social chat; horses were duly looked



after and fed, and, with a view to an early start, arrangements were made, and, by the exertion of no little ingenuity, completed, to give each person a bed, the said beds being necessarily about as closely packed as the bunks in an emigrant ship, and the house nearly as crowded as that in which C— and H— were at that time cheering their amateur friends to increased display of histrionic power.

To sleep in a strange place is not, however, always a feat to be achieved, even by the possession of a clear conscience and an easy digestion. Unfamiliar sounds will fall upon the ear and keep the senses awake, and there is always one lively individual ready to spin a yarn or provoke a discussion on such occasions, so that it was not until near midnight that the party got into the regions of dreamland. First, a kangaroo dog belonging to the place would insist upon setting up a plaintive howl every five minutes, and an application of the thong was found necessary; then a mysterious noise was heard, which appeared to come from under the table, and a light had to be procured to find out what it was. The result was the discovery of a young goat, who had apparently been making great efforts to solve the problem of perpetual motion. Then, just as everyone was getting drowsy, the candle had to be lit again to eject another intruder, in the shape of a thin-skinned hound, who had got in when the goat was being turned out, and exhibited a strong desire for a share of one of the beds; then, the door having been secured, it was found too close to be pleasant, and the department had to be re-illuminated, in order to discover the window and open it, which was done. A dead silence now ensued, which was broken in about ten minutes by S—, who volunteered the information, *pro bono publico*, that he hadn't been able to sleep a single wink, although his bedroom was very comfortable, and there were no mosquitoes. This remark, of course, provoked a disquisition as to the best mode of securing a nap under difficult circumstances, ending with a practical suggestion by B—, to count a thousand imaginary sheep running out of an imaginary fold, a recommendation which was apparently acted upon, for long before the tally could have been arrived at, the miller had thrown dust over the eyes of the whole party, and

“Balmy asleep,  
Tired nature's sweet restorer,”



came to the summons to refresh the weary frames of the hunters, and fit them for the long day's sport which awaited them on the morrow, and the whole house was buried in repose. In the morning, the musical note of the black and white magpie—or "settlers' clock"—announced the break of day, and soon everyone was astir. The celerity with which breakfast was laid on the table, and disposed of, was marvellous to witness. The horses were brought up and fed, and by 7 o'clock everyone was ready for a start. One hour's grace, however, was accorded by the master of the hounds, to give H—— and C—— an opportunity of joining the Hunt; but, as they did not make their appearance by 8 o'clock, a lad was directed to wait for them, and bring them to a spot indicated for a halt at midday. The hounds were then unkennelled, and, guided by young Moodie, mounted on a lively little grass-fed black mare, and, like all Australians, a dashing rider through his native timber, the pack wended their way to the scene of action under the brightest auspices. The day promised to be all that could be desired—neither too hot nor too wet; and, as in this locality there is not the slightest thread upon which to hang the skeleton of a doubt as to a speedy find in almost any direction, a more hopeful set of men never put toe in stirrup than the said members of the Q.H.C. That evil bird, the laughing jackass, who rang forth his merry peal from the topmost branch of a tall gum tree, chuckling at having been up in time to secure the worm or snake upon which he breakfasted, did not feel happier or more at home than those keen sportsmen in anticipation of glorious runs *ad infinitum*. Slowly the party wound their way through some low lightly timbered flats, now disturbing a score or two of fat, unwieldy milkers, who contented themselves with turning round, and staring dreamily at the sight of riders in pink, and then, in some distrust of the unwonted apparition, trotted lazily away for a couple of hundred yards—now rousing up a large iguana, and forcing him to drag his ponderous tail up to some secure elevation—and proceeded to an open flat about two miles distant, where they speedily found, five large kangaroos being sighted. The hounds, however, were wild, as they generally are the first run, and over-ran the game, so that the gallop had only the effect of warming the horses to their work, and



bringing their riders in bobbing acquaintance with sundry sheoaks and saplings. The pack having, with some little trouble, been got well together again, no time was lost in cutting out some more work for them. This time three flyers hove in sight, and, as if in defiance of the pack, crossed the flat in single file, in full view. "Tallyho! hark! for'ard!" was the cry, and no need of further encouragement, for every hound gets a look, and stretches out at his very best pace; every man gets his horse by the head, and settles down for a good two-mile spin—two miles at the very least at tip top speed, with four couple of hounds in the wake of the hindmost doe, giving tongue every one of them, sterns down, and every hackle bristling for blood. Away goes the flyer like an express train, not fifty yards ahead, and away go the horsemen, standing up in their stirrups, and racing for place. The only chance for safety—and the cunning doe knows it well—is a double in a patch of fern in the creek straight before, and, to enable her to gain this, she drops her joey, who takes to his heels in a different direction, and affords Moodie a burst of nearly a mile before he is taken. Lightened of her load, and bending her back, until her nose almost touches the ground, taking advantage of every little clump of trees and every decline in the ground, she makes for the nearest point of the cover. Now one hound is ahead, now another; there are no struggles, for the pack is fresh, and they are nearly mad to get at her. Nearer and nearer they draw, and at last Diana takes a clear lead of a length, closely followed by Fly and Flora, Veno, Spring, Don, Lion, Nimble, and Ruby at their heels—the sluts, as is invariably the case, showing to the front, and at the rise of the hill on the opposite side of the creek, the Goddess of Hunting carries away the honours of the run, and rolls over with the kangaroo into the bottom. "Who—oop!" cries the master, throwing all his strength into a jerk at the head of "Pull-devil-pull-Baker," who has not yet toned down to his work, and diving into the middle of the pack to secure the tail. Who—oop! cries S—, who, having got Grey Dolphin's head at the tail of the hounds at the start, kept him in precisely the same spot to the finish, and came floundering across the creek with his heart full of glee, and his tops covered with mud. "Never saw a better run in all my life." "Dayvlish good run," cries A—, a



scarlet coat from a distance who joined the pack for the second time, as he unloosened the girths of the "Cure," a springy little well-bred horse, which he had ridden as if he had £100 on the race and meant to win it. "Couldn't have had a finer run if we'd paid for it," says P—, hooking the "Doctor" up to a sapling, both looking as cool and comfortable as if they had just come out of the stable. The tail and pads having been cut off and held aloft triumphantly, twenty minutes' grace was accorded, to give dogs and horses a spell, and the field proceeded in quest of further adventure. Soon another flat is crossed, at the far end of which twenty head of kangaroo, or more, are spied. Again the view halloo is given, and away go the field a second time, like beans, with the prospect of another good burst and no check. Right in the line, and not to be evaded, lies a yawning sort of ditch, half brook half gully, some 15 or 16 feet across, with broken ground, caused by the action of the water in flood time, leading up to it. In the centre is a fallen tree, lying horizontally, the top of which only is visible. Each horse takes the brook in his stride, the Dolphin excepted, who, being put at the most awkward part, and finding it vain to attempt any deviation from the straight line, takes the log as a resting place, and, with a double jump, lands cleverly on the far side. But another grey, a light racing-looking animal, takes the leap at the same instant and skims over the ground in the front rank. Surely that is our friend C—, and with him H—, for that is the well-known squeal of his bang-tailed mare Proserpine, as she rises at a prostrate ironbark, with a slight touch of the persuaders, and ploughs her way up the ridge. The tragical spectacle of last night has given the thoughts of these gentlemen a bloodthirsty hue, and they are determined to show what fresh horses can do. M— and W—, on their way to the Logan, have also joined the field for just one run. Cutting out is now the order of the day; a steep hill covered with large boulders is crossed in the time that it takes to record the fact, and at the foot of the hill, on the opposite side, a score of kangaroos—flyers, old men, young bucks and joeys—are hopping leisurely along, utterly regardless of the vicinity of the Hunt. But not a hound is visible, and the huntsman's cry, which echoes through the woods, is without response. Vain are his efforts to get



them on the track. The start was a long one, and the hounds not having sighted at first, are running a-muck in a contrary direction. "Hold hard," yells the master as he gallops off in the line in which they started; but he might as well have shouted to the gum trees. The sight of a score, or probably two score of kangaroo, right before the whole field, in the open, is too much for the young bloods of the Q.H.C., who dash right at them, regardless of the fact that neither dogs, huntsmen, nor whipper in are with them. The result is a three mile race over some beautiful grassy downs, and the capture of a young buck in a waterhole, cleverly headed and cut from the mob by A——, who, having a second horse out, is not restrained by any considerations of distance. Allowance must, however, be made for this indulgence in the reprehensible practice of riding before the hounds, in view of the excitement which so large a number of kangaroo suddenly getting up must necessarily cause. In fact, the whole bush seemed to be alive with them, and it was truly observed by one of the party that it was hard to say whether the dogs were there or not, or to distinguish the biped from the quadruped—the pace was too good to inquire. The next half-hour was occupied in collecting the stragglers, and as soon as it was found that there were no absentees another flat was drawn. Here the scarlet coats attracted some of the roving population of the country, and the field was reinforced by a party of stockmen, accompanied by a black tracker and a heterogeneous collection of cattle dogs, kangaroo dogs, and curs. Again the pack are in the centre of a flock of kangaroo, two of which are rolled over in less than a quarter of a mile, having been forced up a steep ascent—for doubling is a difficult matter for the craftiest flyer with a field of 12 horsemen and 19 dogs in her wake. Such a hurry-scurry as ensued in this run was perhaps never before witnessed; kangaroos were to be seen in all directions, some with dogs at their heels and some without—some running one way and some another; the cur dogs yelling and snapping like terriers, and each horseman taking a line, which promised a kill, for his own especial benefit. Two tails were secured out of this lot, but there is no doubt that four or five marsupials bit the dust. One of the hounds came back nearly an hour afterwards badly wounded, and showing unmistakeable signs of a kill, and had to be carried nearly



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two miles by the whipper-in to a waterhole. The third and last run of the day was a most exciting chase. Two of the hounds took after a flyer, and raced her for a good two miles in open ground. Four several times did they pull, and four times did she break away, the huntsman cheering and capping them from start to finish. Indeed, the number of finds, and the excellent nature of the country, astonished everyone, and there was but one opinion expressed as to the day's sport. A large old man was put up going home, but he got up at a great distance, and the hounds were not laid on, which was just as well, as they were rather low in condition, and the number of runs now began to tell upon them. I may here observe, that condition is the main thing, and it is especially to be desired that the hounds should have plenty of wind. This, indeed, is the great essential; but the experiment made by the kennel huntsman, to substitute pea-meal for the ordinary food on the alternate days, does not appear to have been successful. The pea as well as the bean is known to contain a large quantity of albumen, but, judging by the condition of the dogs on Saturday, it does not appear the kind of nutriment required. Some improvement in this direction will have to be made.

This ended the day's sport, and a return was sounded to the station, where a sucking pig, roasted to a turn, was sacrificed to the devouring propensities of the hunters, together with a liberal supply of mealy potatoes, backed up by a fruit tart of very respectable calibre and unmistakable flavour—(N.B.—They know how to take care of you at Moodie's). And after the horses had been fed and well rubbed down, the party once more took the road and arrived in Brisbane without any mishap—without any dislocations, fractures, contusions, or casualties of any kind, and with all their teeth—not a soul either sick, sore, lame, or disordered, but jubilant and well-pleased with the day's sport, carrying with them the trophies of the chase.

Think of that, non-hunting subscribers, who passed the day in inglorious indolence and ease; think of that when you are smoking the mild havannah; pay up and brace up your system by a day with the Q.H.C.