Mrs Lowe, del.

R. Hamerton sc.

SYDNEY.

W. Strobel, Publisher, 20, Gt. Marlborough Street, 1850.

EXCURSIONS AND ADVENTURES

IN

NEW SOUTH WALES;

WITH

PICTURES OF SQUATTING AND OF LIFE IN THE BUSH;

AN ACCOUNT OF THE

CLIMATE, PRODUCTIONS, AND NATURAL HISTORY OF THE COLONY,
AND OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE NATIVES,
WITH ADVICE TO EMIGRANTS, &c.

BY

JOHN HENDERSON ESQ.,

LIEUTENANT IN HER MAJESTY'S CEYLON RIFLE REGIMENT.

"Quæque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui."—VIRGIL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
W. SHOBERL, PUBLISHER,
20, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1851.

PREFACE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the number of works which have been written on New South Wales, it has appeared to me that none of them has given that kind of information which is most useful to the intending emigrant, and most interesting to those at home, who have relatives unfortunate enough to live in the lone and far bush,—such a distinct account of the actual experiences of a settler, as would enable the stranger arriving in the colony to form a due estimate of what he has to bear, and what he ought to avoid.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to give a general outline of my life and proceedings in the colony; pointing out the

discomforts, annoyances, losses, and dangers, to which the settler is exposed, and showing the recompense to which, in the long run, he may look forward. Should I be so fortunate as to suggest any useful hints for the guidance of those who are about to emigrate, or to enable the friends whom they leave behind to appreciate their position, and their chances of success in Australia, I shall consider myself amply repaid for my labours. And with this advice I conclude: —Let no one who can live at home be too eager to seek his fortune in a distant land.

THE AUTHOR.

London, December, 1850.

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EXCURSIONS AND ADVENTURES

IN

NEW SOUTH WALES.

CHAPTER I.

The glorious sea—Interruptions to meditation—The Author embarks in the ship 'Fortune' at Gravesend—Confusion on board—Caution to the passenger—Thoughts on quitting your native land—Unprofitable investments—Anecdote of a valet—The Cliffs of Dover—The Isle of Wight—Plymouth Sound—Isle of Ushant—A hurricane—The Bay of Biscay—A rakish-looking schooner—Cape Finisterre—Merry party on board—Song—Some account of the skipper—The Cape de Verd Islands—Sal and Buonavista—St. Iago—Excursions on shore—The Consul's house—Portuguese garrison—Fruit Valley—Attempted extortion—Productions of the Islands.

As it is hoped that the following pages, descriptive of Australia, and the various phases

of life in that country, may not only prove useful and interesting to the intending emigrant, but also entertaining to the general reader, it has been thought not out of place, to preface them with a short account of the voyage to the land of promise. To a true son of Britain, merely to name the sea, is to call up a thousand proud and glorious associations, and such an one is ever ready to listen to the humblest story connected with the scene of some of his country's greatest achievements.

On referring to one's log-book, one will generally discover that a ship is not the best place in the world for study, or meditation. Some interruption or other is constantly occurring. No sooner have you laid your books before you, or spread out your paper and mended your pen, than a fellow-passenger puts his head down the sky-light and halloos out, "A sail in sight!"—or the man at the wheel passes the word, "A shark astern!"—when up you rush on deck, with no probability of sitting down quietly again for an hour or so—perhaps not for the whole day.

To this want of quiet, I presume, or else to some restless mercurial property imparted by the sea-air must be attributed the somewhat singular fact, that, while the naval profession has been adorned by many clever men, it has produced but a very small number of authors; —though it should not be forgotten that such an one as Falconer is "a host in himself." To the above causes also must be ascribed the absence here of almost everything but a simple account of the few incidents occurring on board a London merchantman, during a voyage to the Antipodes.

I shall not accompany my fellow-passengers about to "leave their country for their country's good" (and for their own, too, it is to be hoped), though not on the recommendation of "twelve respectable gentlemen," — I shall not, I say, accompany them in their progress from the various places of their birth, to the modern Babylon, whether their advent come about by the intervention of steam-boat, rail, or covered waggon. I shall suppose them at once on the

deck of the good ship 'Fortune,' lying off Gravesend; and having just bade adieu to the various country cousins who had come to see them off; the said country cousins sitting in melancholy mood in the stern sheets of "Watermen's boats, Nos. 15, 17, 21," &c.—and dividing their sad thoughts between the infamous manner in which they have been *done*, since they came up to London, and the beautiful but mournful admonition and warning, "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sorely for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."

There is no time yet to look at your fellow-passengers. There is too much bustle for that. You find yourself in everybody's way, and in your own too. Such noise and confusion; hallooing and running about; rattling of cordage through pulleys, and clanking of chains,—one hardly knows whether one is on one's head or one's heels. 'Tis as likely you find yourself on the former as on the latter. Ten to one you have been standing on the end of a rope, or in

the centre of a coil, which is suddenly jerked away by some old salt, with a gruff "by your leave, Sir!" and you incontinently discover that you are squatting on the wet and slippery deck, rubbing your bruised elbows, and mentally cursing all ships, and everything belonging to them. There is no sympathy for you, however, in such a Babel.

And now for the anchor. Look out, or you may get a dig in the gastric region from one of those formidable-looking handspikes. Round goes the capstan, propelled by a dozen or so of brawny fellows to the nautical air of "Heave her, and go, my Nancy, O," softening down, as the revolutions become more slow into the melodious and melancholy, "Ho, cheerily men!"

Beware of that huge cable-chain, which they are hauling in, with as much grating noise as if all the prisons in England had disgorged their inmates, double-ironed, and set them to shake their manacles in your face. If you tread on that, a thousand to one it goes off by the run (which you will never do again) and takes

you with it, or leaves you at all events, minus a leg.

At length, the anchor is got and secured; the steamer that is to tow us down the river is lashed alongside; the signal is given, and we are dragged along in the sooty embrace of the hissing, spluttering dragon, just as in the fairy tales of our youth, the gallant knights with snow-white plumes, used to be hurried off by the grim ogres, which it was their knightly but unaccountable pleasure continually to go in search of.

Few positions in this world can be more depressing than that which we now occupy; surrounded by strangers; our country and friends receding from our gaze; before us the waste of waters for four long months—and, after that, a new world and an untried clime—new friends to make—new pursuits to follow—new habits to acquire. Nor do the activity and bustle by which we are surrounded lessen in any degree the bitter feeling of utter loneliness—on the contrary it rather increases it—for we feel that while those around us, if, like us, they cannot

keep their thoughts from straying far from the present scene, have, at least, their hands (peradventure their minds partly) occupied with what is going on, we must, perforce, be passive spectators; must see ourselves hurried away from the land of our affections, with too ample leisure to brood over the change. Alas! for him who cannot learn to combat this and the world's other stern realities!

But, happily for man, it is pretty nearly true that

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast."

Ἁ γὰρ δὴ πολύπλαγκτος ἐλπὶς
Πολλοῖς μὲν ὄνησις ἀνδρῶν.*
Sophoc. Antig. Antistr. β' 628.

Under some such feelings as these it was, that, on a certain fine afternoon on the 29th of March, I plunged into the bowels of the great ship, to seek the space, six feet by five, which had been allotted me—to sit down among my household, or, rather, cabin gods, and to ruminate on the past, the present, and the future.

* For hope, the far-wanderer, consoleth many.

Here all was, of course, confusion. "Everything a-top, and nothing at hand," as the sailors say—boxes in the berth, and the bed on the floor. As yet nothing is kleated down, so everything rolls about at will, though luckily for our shins there is not much motion. Having set to work with a will, I soon got things a little ship-shape, and my *den* assumed a somewhat more comfortable appearance, notwithstanding all my worldly goods were crammed into it.

Here I may remark, that on such an expedition, happy is the man whose *penates* are locked up in a couple of small sea-chests. People are too apt not only to encumber themselves with quantities of unnecessary clothes, but also to invest part of their capital in goods of some kind or other, which frequently prove both a source of great uneasiness during the voyage out, and also of great loss on arrival. This step may be very well for a mercantile man to take, well acquainted with the markets, and with good information as to their state at

the time, but it is by no means advisable for emigrants in general.

A slip of paper, easily convertible into hard cash, is the thing for the man who proposes settling in the country. I knew a person, one of my fellow-passengers, who had the hold crammed with furniture, partly for his own use in Australia, and partly as an investment. As might have been expected, it detained him in Sydney when he should have been up the country, and cost him money in more ways than one. It was not quite so bad a speculation as the venture of skates once sent out to Buenos Ayres, but very nearly.

"Once upon a time," as the story-books used to say, the valet of a French Ambassador, about to start for Constantinople, laid out all his money in a stock of handsome French wigs, having heard that the Mussulmen shaved their heads, and naturally concluding that, under these circumstances, they must wear wigs.

On arriving in the city of the Sultan, what was his horror on discovering that a wig was

anything but a desideratum with the followers of the Prophet! In dismay, he rushed to his master, and told him he was undone. There was no help for it—the wigs were a decided drug in the market—not a true believer came even to price one. But the story reached the ears of the Sultan, who fell upon a plan of converting the Frenchman's disappointment into joy. He was a benevolent man—that particular Sultan; and, moreover, he had a desire to do the Ambassador a pleasure, so he issued a firman, directing all the Jews of Constantinople to wear French wigs, and thus the valet made a very pretty fortune. If my companion could have prevailed upon the Governor of New South Wales to do a similar good turn for him (and I dare say there have been Governors who would not have stuck at that), it would have been fortunate for him.

It was at four P.M., on the aforesaid 29th of March, that we weighed anchor, having, with a large party, dined on board at three. The steamer took us as far as the Nore, and then

returned up the Thames, leaving us to shift for ourselves.

Having arranged my cabin as well as I could, I went on deck to have a look at my brother exiles,

"Doomed the long isles of Sydney Cove to see;"

which "long isles," by the bye, happen to be round.

I now found that only some eight or nine of said exiles had come on board, the rest intending to join us at Plymouth, along with the veritable Captain, another officiating for him taking us as far as that port.

Among those on deck, the only genuine original appeared to be the old pilot, who, with a black glazed hat, and an equally shining nose, rolled about the deck, emitting short hoarse orders at intervals, and, with his great rough habiliments, making me think he looked very like the Polar bear in the Regent's Park, if Bruin could have only been dipped in blue ink. But it is

dark and late, and time to *turn in*, first bidding my fellow-passengers, and (as this is our first night on board)

"My native land, good night."

On the morning of the 30th, at ten o'clock, we passed Dover, and, as the weather was lovely, we had a fine view of the Castle and town, Shakspeare's Cliff, and the whole line of bold chalk cliffs, which seem so beautiful to the eye of the returning wanderer, and to which he who is leaving them, perchance for ever,

"Casts many a longing lingering look behind."

Beautiful indeed are they with the sun shining upon them, and noble withal—

"Ten masts attach'd, make not the altitude
To the dread summit of this chalky borne,
Look up a height; the shrill gorg'd lark so far
Cannot be seen, or heard."

On the 31st, we saw a great deal of the south

coast, as also the lovely and hospitable Isle of Wight. This day, too, we were passed by one of those huge four-masted steamers which run to America. At first, a mere speck, with a little cloud over it, was discovered on the horizon; but with wonderful rapidity both enlarged, and, ere we could well make her out, strange as she appeared with her four masts, the dusky leviathan had shot past us like an arrow.

On the 1st of April, with cold, blowy weather, we arrived in Plymouth Sound; and, on the following day, I landed, and visited Plymouth, Devonport, and the citadel, being shown over the latter by a friend I happened to have there, an officer of the garrison.

On the 3rd and 4th, also, I landed, visiting the fair held at Plymouth, and amusing myself, with others of the passengers, in a shooting-gallery, where I had the fortune to hit the bull's-eye five times out of six shots. Towards the afternoon, one or two of us returned to the ship, and getting a boat, rowed a party of the ladies to the celebrated Plymouth Breakwater.

Here we landed, and walked about this immense and wonderful work, which almost deserves to rank with the Pyramids of Egypt, the Wall of China, the Mole of Genoa, the Tanks of India and Ceylon, and the other stupendous labours of man, which have been termed the wonders of the world. This magnificent Breakwater, which has been formed in very deep water, and converts an almost open roadstead into a secure harbour, is formed of marble, or limestone; and from some people upon it, we purchased very pretty variegated specimens of the stone, formed into seals, letter-weights, &c.

At four o'clock this afternoon, we weighed anchor, and, with a fair wind, bade, as we supposed, a final adieu to England, though it turned out afterwards that it was not so.

April 5th. Fine weather and fair wind. Off the coast of Ushant (an island belonging to France), and about to enter the Bay of Biscay, when we were obliged to run out on the other tack, the wind becoming unfavourable towards the afternoon.

6th. Blowing great guns, and the wind right ahead. The whole day spent in tacking about in the channel. Ship pitching very much. The passengers have not had time yet to get their sea legs on, and so keep rolling about in most absurd confusion. Most of them are on their beam-ends, very sea-sick, and in that happy state of mind which enables them to feel utterly indifferent to all sublunary things; so much so, indeed, that they would care very little even if it was announced to them that the ship was going to the bottom.

For myself, I did not know what sea-sickness was, and innumerable trips in steam-vessels, besides a voyage up the Baltic to Russia, had accustomed me to the pleasures and varieties of a gale at sea, so that I took everything very philosophically.

7th. Still blowing hard, with the wind unfavourable. Several sail in sight, like ourselves, knocking about to no purpose in the channel. At eleven o'clock at night, I saw the two lights at the Lizard Point, in Cornwall.

On the 8th, when we got up to breakfast, we were in sight of Eddystone Lighthouse and the coast of Cornwall, as also of that part of the coast about Plymouth. A pilot-boat, from some port near Falmouth, was not far off; and, as we were doing no good beating about here, the Captain determined to run in again to Plymouth. We accordingly signalled the pilot to come on board, when a little cobble, or dingy, was hoisted out of the interior of the pilot-boat, in which he came alongside. At two P.M. we were at anchor once more in Plymouth Sound.

The 9th was a lovely day, and a large party of us went on shore early in the morning. After walking about a great deal, and procuring tickets to enable us to visit Mount Edgecumbe the following day, we went on board.

The 10th proved a very misty and rainy day, so much so, that we gave up all idea of going to Mount Edgecumbe, which was much to be regretted, as it is said to be a very beautiful place. I managed, however, to pull over to

Drake Island, which is fortified, and lies in the harbour.

The 11th was ushered in by a most lovely morning, and at ten A.M. we set sail for the second and last time from Plymouth. The wind was very light all day, and at night we were in sight of the Falmouth and Lizard lights.

On the following day, we entered the Bay of Biscay, running at the rate of eight knots an hour.

On the 13th, after dinner, while sitting over our wine, the chief mate entered the cuddy, and reported to the Captain that there was a very rakish-looking schooner not far off. Of course, this was enough to send us all on deck, especially as there was something mysterious in the manner of the mate, and some even began to hint that she might be a pirate.

She was a beautiful schooner, with a great rake in her masts, which is generally a characteristic of the pirate, or slaver. On nearing her, we found that she was in rather a helpless con-

dition, having suffered from the same gale which we experienced before running back to Plymouth. Her rudder was gone, and her mizen topmast had been unshipped and rigged over the stern as a substitute. Those on board having written with chalk, on a black board, and in very large characters, the latitude and longitude, as they made it, exhibited it to us, as much as to say, "Is it all right—what is yours?" We accordingly showed them ours in the same way, when she hoisted a flag with a red cross, and ran it up and down twice in compliment to us. It was strange enough that no one on board, not even the Captain, or mate, knew what the flag she showed was, till, remembering to have seen it floating over the palaces and public buildings in Copenhagen, Elsinore, and elsewhere throughout Denmark, I was enabled to inform them that it was the Danish Standard. So much for the pirate.

On the evening of the 14th, we got out of the "still vexed" Bay of Biscay, and were off Cape Finisterre, distant one hundred and thirty

miles. This being Saturday night, we had a merry party in the cuddy to drink the usual toast of "Sweethearts and Wives." As it was the first convivial meeting of the kind, it was kept up with spirit, and many a good song was sung, not forgetting the appropriate one ending with the lines—

"Now we sail with the gale,
From the Bay of Biscay, O!"

There being eight or ten bachelors among us, besides two or three very merry Benedicts, the party did not break up till a late hour, after coming to the resolution of repeating the performance hebdomidally. The following song, a joint composition arising out of the proceedings of this evening, and sung at the succeeding Saturday night's merry-making, may not be unacceptable, as showing that there may be some fun on board ship to while away the time during so long a voyage:—

I.

"Ye gentry of England, who live at your ease,
Ah! little ye think of the larks of the seas!

Come, listen to me while a yarn I indite,
All about the good 'Fortune,' one Saturday night.
Derry down, down, down, derry down.

II.

"On that night of all nights, at eight bells says the log,
The skipper commanded to serve out the grog;
Ye may tipple at home, Sirs, but certain I am,
Ye ne'er tasted stuff like our skipper's schiedam.
Derry down, &c.

III.

"Our chairman elect was a douce Glasgow body,
As constant as steel to a stiff glass of toddy;
Nae cannier chiel ever came sae far south—
Yet ye'd ne'er think that 'butter wad melt in his mouth.'
Derry down, &c.

IV.

"And when he had seated himself in the chair,
He ordered '*hats off!*' with a dignified air;
Then he lugged out his watch, swore he'd ne'er budge till ten,
And struck up the lilt of the 'Laird o' Cockpen.'
Derry down, &c.

V.

"At his elbow (but under the rose be it spoke)
Sat a sinner escaped from the conjugal yoke;
But he roared out his chorus like one of the free,
And 'twas late e'er we sent him to poor Mrs. B.
Derry down, &c.

VI.

"On his left sat a lawyer, whose tongue ran the quicker,
The more it was fee'd with a glass of good liquor;
But with due legal caution he joined in the fun,
And slunk off to bed when the liquor was done.
Derry down, &c.

VII.

"The next was a martial young son of the kilt.
Like his own native pibroch, he struck up a lilt;
In each pocket (his *breeches* except) was a dirk,
If ye'd ne'er drink his toast you must die like a stirk.
Derry down, &c.

VIII.

"Let Hamilton tell—that most gallant of men—
The horrors he met in the Highlandman's den;
But the strength of his stomach insured him his life,
For he drank a whole flask at the point of the knife.
Derry down, &c.

IX.

"Then, stout Squire of Devon, we all saw thy trouble,
When the lights in the cuddy grew dancing and double;
As the statues of heroes fall down from their niches,
You fell—and were bundled to bed in your breeches.
Derry down, &c.

X.

"Of all the good fellows 'twere tedious to tell,
What songs, speeches, toasts, and what head-aches befell;
But, next morning (I know it, who say it), I wot,
There was little 'content to be found in a *cot*.'
Derry down, &c.

XI.

"Now God save the Queen, and our skipper so brave,
And a jolly good voyage to us over the wave;
And if Saturday night should chance ever again,
We'll have 'chickens' enow for 'the Laird o' Cockpen.'
Derry down, &c."

We were all inclined to make the best of everything,—the whole twenty-six of us in the cuddy, including the eight ladies, and Captain and mate,—so no one took umbrage at the

doings of this Saturday night, or the hits in the description of it. The Captain, to be sure, considered his dignity touched by the familiar epithet of "skipper," but soon smoothed his ruffled feathers.

Apropos of the Captain, he was a pleasant little man enough, and wore a fiery red tartan cloak in rough weather. He could sing, too: but he was a man of one song, and that song was,

"The hapless cabin boy,"

performed regularly every Saturday night in a sentimental manner to a right melancholy air; and for this reason, he generally obtained the *sobriquet* of "the hapless cabin boy."

On the 15th, being Sunday, a large barrel floated past the ship, but we were sailing too fast to pick it up. This, of course, was regretted by all. Who knows what vessel it had belonged to, or what tale of shipwreck it might have unfolded? The Captain said that

on a former voyage he picked up one full of Hollands.

Sunday, April 22nd. Nothing of much moment occurred during the past week. A whale was seen at some distance, "blowing a cloud." On Wednesday, we passed Madeira, at a considerable distance, having been seven days out from Plymouth. Passed Teneriffe yesterday, but not within sight. A great many porpoises have been playing round the ship, and a shark followed in our wake for a short time. Prayers were read this forenoon by the captain—the surgeon officiating as clerk. A chapel was rigged up for the occasion around the capstan, just in front of the cuddy, flags being stretched overhead and around. There were seventy-three persons present out of the hundred and seven we have on board.

We are now fairly in the "trade winds," having had an unprecedented run from Plymouth. The weather is very fine, but getting rather warm; the thermometer standing at 70° in my cabin. The coast of Africa is distant from us

about three hundred miles, and we are beginning to talk of the Cape de Verd Islands, at one of which, St. Iago, we intend to touch. Smoking and lounging about the decks chiefly occupy the day. At night, chess and cards are the principal amusements, while some of us endeavour to "discourse most eloquent music" on the flute.

26*th*. Nothing of note has occurred since the 22nd. We have seen a few flying-fish, dolphins, &c. Getting up early this morning to bathe, I found that the Cape de Verd Islands were in sight. The Island of Sal, the first we descried, presented to us a fine, bold, rocky coast, with beautiful mountains in the background, affording a capital subject for the pencils of those among us who sketched.

At nine A.M. the Island of Buona Vista was in sight ahead; and, when we came abreast of it, presented an equally fine appearance with Sal. The rocks and serrated mountains, however, appear to be destitute of vegetation, and no building could be discovered. All day there

has been a fine barque ahead of us. The weather is fine with light winds, but the heat considerable; the thermometer indicating 72° in my cabin. As we are to put in at St. Iago, the largest of the Cape de Verd Islands, we have all been busy writing letters, which we may be able to send home from there.

27*th*. All the morning, St. Iago was ahead of us, its lofty and volcanic-looking mountains towering to the skies. At two P.M., we cast anchor in the bay of Porto Praya, and having dined at three, a large party of us went on shore to see the town of that name. The landing-place was very bad, being merely the rocks in their natural state, no attempt having been made to improve it by artificial means. There is always a considerable surf on it.

Having been detained some time by the Custom-house officials, we were at length permitted to walk up to the town, which is distant a quarter of a mile. The way lay along the beach through heavy sand, aloes in flower, and various palms being scattered about. The town of

Porto Praya is a miserable place, most of the houses being mere hovels. At one part there is a sort of a square, and an attempt at a fortification.

We found very few white men in the place, a great portion of the inhabitants being pure negroes, and the rest composed of crosses of all shades, between the Portuguese and negro. After strolling about for some time, we visited the British Consul, who was very polite, and regaled us with coffee. Having gone out again into the streets, we fell in with a party of our countrymen, who had arrived in a barque then lying in the bay, and bound for Swan River.

At about eight P.M., the Captain summoned us all to go on board, and we accordingly went down to the beach; but not liking so soon to leave *terra firmâ*, two or three of us returned, and having again met with our Swan River friends, we spent an hour or two in rambling about, visiting shops, casinos, &c., and listening to a negress (perhaps the black Malibran),

who sang, and played the guitar wonderfully well.

Getting tired of this, we adjourned to the Consul's house (there being no hotel in the place), where we lay down to repose, to the number of ten, on the drawing-room floor. Sleep, however, was out of the question, chiefly owing to the tremendous snoring kept up all night by a near neighbour of mine.

At five A.M. the next morning, the band marched round the town playing, and we all got up, it being dark. I never saw the planet Venus to such advantage as this morning. Having descended, we strolled about till it became light, which it did very suddenly. We then had an opportunity of seeing the Portuguese garrison parade before the Governor's door. This was truly a ridiculous sight, the men being of all colours and sizes, and in all stages of raggedness and dirt—a capital specimen of an awkward squad. There were some forty of them in dresses of all kinds and colours, and

having arms equally in bad order. Some had shoes, others none; no attempt had been made to size them, a man six feet high standing next to one five feet nothing. They appeared to know very little of drill; and the few white or yellow men, interspersed among the negroes, had a very odd effect indeed.

After this, we went off to the ship to dress, and returned to the town at seven A.M. not waiting for breakfast. At the Consul's I procured paper, &c. and wrote a letter which was to be despatched by a Portuguese brig, then lying in the bay, and to sail fifteen days afterwards for Lisbon.

Behind the town lies a beautiful valley, full of fruit-bearing trees, and presenting a strong contrast to the rest of the island, which, as far as we could see, had a barren, burnt-up appearance. Here we wandered about at will, eating delicious pine-apples, oranges, grapes, &c., and drinking the sweet water of the green cocoa-nut. Returning to the town, we visited the Portuguese Commissary's house, where we purchased a

stock of cigars for the remainder of the voyage.

The fruit-valley, however, was too attractive with its shady walks, lofty cocoa-nut-trees, and cool-looking wells, at which the negresses, in their picturesque and gaudy dresses were filling their calibashes, to be so easily abandoned. I therefore re-visited it with one of the Swan River party, and employed a little negro boy to climb the tamarind and cocoa-nut-trees, and throw us down the fruit.

Once more we re-entered the town, well nigh in a state of fever, for the sun was vertical this day in St. Iago. Having purchased quantities of lemons, oranges, bananas, cassada-root, &c., we proceeded to the rocks for the purpose of embarking. Here the treacherous surf was very near putting a period to my voyaging, for, while watching an opportunity to spring into the boat, which at one moment was on a level with my feet, and the next some seven or eight feet below me, a wave, larger than its predecessors, rolled in, shoulder high, where I stood, and had

it not been that my foot was jammed in a cleft of the rock, it would, in its return, have carried me out with it. I should have mentioned, that while taking my cigars down to the boat, I was stopped by a Portuguese officer and a sentinel, who declared that it was illegal to export them. This, I believe, was not the case, and their object was to extort money. They were easily satisfied, however, for, on the payment of a shilling to one, and sixpence to the other, I was permitted to pass.

The ship lay at anchor all night. Next morning, as before, the natives came off with their boats full of fruit, which they sold at a very moderate price. Barter seemed chiefly to be their object, and no article was prized by them so much as old clothes. A London "Old Clo' Jew" would have no chance here as, for an old coat, you could fill your cabin with the choicest tropical fruits. Poultry, too, appeared to be cheap, especially turkeys, with which the captain filled the coops. In the market, which was held the day before in the square of the town, there

appeared to be no lack of vegetables. Goats, donkeys, and mules also seemed to be abundant, and we regretted very much that time would not allow us to hire some of the latter, and ride up some fifteen miles into the interior, where lay a monastery and small town.

On the whole, the Cape de Verd Islands, though assuming a bold and picturesque outline, have rather a desolate and arid appearance when viewed more closely. This, indeed, is characteristic of all volcanic formations; neither is their productiveness much better than on first sight one is led to suppose, little being grown save maize, and a variety of fruit in the sheltered valleys. I was informed by the British Consul that almost every seven years a famine occurs, owing to the want of rain, when great numbers of the people die, and the goats even find difficulty in obtaining a scanty subsistence. He also told me, that he had most of his supplies from British men-of-war and merchantmen which happened to touch there, and that sometimes, when a long interval had elapsed without a

vessel putting in, he had been so hard pressed as not to have an ounce of flour in his house.

It is probable that this gentleman, who I may here repeat was exceedingly courteous and hospitable, would not have remained long in so remote a place, had he not married a Portuguese lady connected in some way with the island. A coarse cotton is grown in the island of which the natives make very tolerable clothing. A bed-cover made by one of them, and shown us by the Consul, had a very pretty appearance, and was said to be very durable. Sugar and tobacco are also among the productions of the soil; but the latter, I was told, is so strong and coarse that it would take the skin off the mouth of one not accustomed to use it. A plant called perchilla used for fixing colours in dyeing, especially scarlet, is also grown here. Monkeys abound in the islands, and two very pretty ones were brought on board.

CHAPTER II.

Departure from St. Iago—Flying fish—Amusement of the sailors—Storms at sea—Crossing the Equator—Islands of Trinidad and Martin Vas—Tremendous whale — Anecdote of the Honourable Mr. Murray Constellation of the Southern Cross—The Albatross — The troubled ocean — Islands of St. Paul and Amsterdam—Convivial meetings—"My gentle cigar" —Lotteries on board—Discontent among the passengers — Cape Leuwin—The Newfoundland dog—Entry into Bass's Straits—Cape Otway—"Land on the larboard bow" — Twofold Bay — The Author proposes to go on shore—Objections of the Captain —"The Bush of Australia"—Approach to Sydney —Arrival there—The Royal Hotel.

On the 29th of April, at eleven A.M., we sailed from St. Iago, and, being favoured by a good breeze, we soon lost sight of land. Much might be said about the irksomeness of the first

few days after leaving land, not to see it again for three months. But the monotony and the anxious looking forward to the termination of the voyage must be felt to be understood.

This evening, an unfortunate flying-fish, soaring above its fellows, alighted on deck, and, after being duly examined by the ladies, it was dressed and eaten by some of the people forward. The flesh of the flying-fish is excellent; in the West Indies many of them are consumed, being considered a delicacy. These fish, pursued by others larger and more voracious, spring out of the water, and skim along so far as to have quite the appearance of flying. Indeed, their long fins very much resemble wings, and the fish may easily be thus taken for a bird. It is said that they fall back into their native element when their wings, or fins, become dry.

I suppose everyone knows the story of the old woman who would not for a moment believe her son, when he assured her that he had seen

fish flying, but quite readily credited his assertion that in Jamaica the mountains were made of sugar, while the rivers ran with rum—and that in the Red Sea the fluke of the anchor had pulled up one of Pharaoh's chariot wheels. Truth, it appeared, was to her much stranger than fiction.

May 3d.—During the last few days, we have had fine weather. The emigrants in the steerage seem to have got shaken into their places, and appear pretty comfortable, though some of the "village Hampdens," or "mute inglorious Miltons," alias country bumpkins, who are destined peradventure to be the founders of great families, and a great nation, have little liking for the sea.

The passengers are as lazy and listless as usual; as for the sailors, a ship being like a lady's watch always out of repair, they have plenty to do. If nothing better offers, a grease-pot, or a bundle of oakum, is sure to be at hand, or perhaps a piece of junk; for, if not making rope

they are set to pull it to pieces. The commandment for them they say, is,—

"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou art able,
And, on the seventh, holy-stone the deck and scrape the cable."

In the evening, however, they have a reprieve, when many a long yarn is spun, or a bout at single stick on the forecastle is indulged in. Perhaps, as the moon is up, a fiddle is produced, and the sailors,—

"Light of heart,
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels."

In the words of another sweet singer:

"The moon is up: by heaven, a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o'er dancing waves expand;
Now lads on shore may sigh, and maids believe.
Such be our fate when we return to land!
Meantime, some rude Arion's restless hand
Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love;
A circle there of merry listeners stand,

Or to some well-known measure featly move,
Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were free to rove."

During this night, the weather changed, and the rain fell in such torrents, as are only seen in the tropics; we had also a pretty good specimen of a squall.

On the 4th, we were becalmed all day; a ship astern of us being in the same predicament. Towards evening, there was a good deal of lightning, and some rain.

On the 5th, still becalmed. A small shark was captured to-day, and, as he was young, the sailors had a fresh meal of his flesh. I partook of it, and found it by no means bad eating.

The thermometer stood at 94^0 in the shade, and 128^0 in the sun this day; the usual temperature of my cabin is 84^0 or 85^0, which is approaching to suffocation; as a relief I tried bathing at twelve o'clock at night, just before turning in, and derived some benefit from it.

6th Latitude to-day, by observation, $4^0\ 59''$ north.

May 13*th*.—Plenty of squalls during the past week, accompanied by tremendous rain. They generally commenced in this way. In the east was seen a black line extending along the horizon; this quickly spread, as it approached us; the water gradually became broken; and, by the time that the royals, top-gallant sails, &c. were clewed up, and the top-sails reefed, the wind and rain came on together with overpowering force. Occasionally, a death-like stillness precedes these storms, making the uproar and turmoil, which follow, the more dreadful,—

> "We often see, against some storm,
> A silence in the heavens; the rack stands still,
> The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
> As hush as death; anon, the dreadful thunder
> Doth rend the region.

In such deluges did the rain fall, that our cabins leaked, and, as I had not a dry spot in mine, I was fain to sleep one night on the cuddy-table.

During the week, we have seen a good many

fish of various kinds, bottle-nosed whales, or black fish, about twenty feet long, blowing small clouds of spray over their heads, bonettas, &c. A ship or two also have been descried.

On the 17th, at eleven o'clock at night, we crossed the equator. The sailors amused themselves with dashing water over all they could get hold of, but there was none of the usual shaving, &c. Neptune is giving up the practice of coming on board.

24*th.*—During the last three days, it has blown a regular gale, accompanied by heavy rain at intervals.

25*th.*—This evening, we were off the islands of Trinidad and Martin Vas, a spot afterwards remarkable to me as being the place where I finished putting "a girdle round the world" and completed the circumnavigation of the globe, having sailed to Australia by the Cape of Good Hope, and returned by Cape Horn, sailing eastward during both voyages, and on both occasions passing close to these rocks.

Trinidad is very mountainous, and unin-

habited, save by wild hogs and goats, though there once was a Portuguese settlement upon it. Martin Vas is a bare rock, having from one point of view a strong resemblance to the Bass rock in the Firth of Forth, and, like it, affording a resting-place to innumerable sea-fowl. These islands are about six hundred miles from the coast of South America, in 20^0 17″ south latitude, and 28^0 29″ west longitude. We were becalmed for a whole day off them, as was also another ship, whose captain boarded us, and spent the evening with us.

27*th*. Sunday. Service to-day. The cow has unfortunately died, so there is no more milk for coffee and tea. This afternoon a splendid whale came close to, and dived under the ship. He spouted and snorted away in great style, and continued keeping up with us for a considerable time, sometimes alongside, and sometimes astern. He appeared to be about forty or fifty feet long. A few bullets were lodged in his great sides, but he seemed to care very little for them. They were not such "palpable hits,"

or, at all events, such telling ones as that once made by the Hon. Mr Murray, a gentleman with whom (and the hippopotamus) I had the pleasure of sailing from Alexandria to London. This gentleman (now the Consul-General of Egypt) was so fortunate on one occasion as to turn a whale over with a couple of rifle bullets. The balls entered about three feet behind the head, and no doubt pierced the heart, which in the whale lies close behind the neck.*

One of the country bumpkins forward, determined to make an onslaught on the leviathan, produced his rusty old musket, and loaded it with three charges of powder and three balls, no doubt thinking to make sure work with him. As might have been expected, the gun burst to pieces, wounding the man terribly in the arm, and hurting several of the bystanders. One

* Mr. Murray, in his very interesting account of his voyage to America, and travels in that country, mentions this circumstance, and adds, not without cause, that he should have been afraid to relate it, had it not been witnessed by a whole ship's company.

gentleman had a narrow escape, having been struck just over the region of the heart by a piece of the lock, which, however, did not penetrate, being stopped by a half-crown which he had in his waistcoat pocket.

June 3rd. During the past week, we had one day of complete calm, when a shark made his appearance, but was too wary to be caught. We also have had a short visit from another whale, and a glimpse of a waterspout, which was followed by rain.

The nights being generally cloudless, we had ample opportunity of admiring the many beautiful constellations of this hemisphere, especially the southern cross, which well repays the loss of the northern bears, and that star—

> "Of whose true, fix'd and resting quality,
> There is no fellow in the firmament."

This fine constellation, was immediately beside one of the three Magellan clouds, a dark circular space in the heavens, which never varies nor moves. This cloud is supposed

to arise from a total absence of stars within its verge, while the other two, it is believed, owe their white appearance, similar to the milky way, to a congregation of stars, or nebulous matter.

> "The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks,
> They are all fire, and every one doth shine."

The seas, too, are alive, and brilliant with medusæ, which float past the ship in long flickering streams of light. It was occasionally so hot below that I ventured to sleep on deck, exposed to the moon, notwithstanding the tales told by the sailors of moon-blindness, and the face being sometimes drawn to one side by the power of Luna's rays. The former case, there is no doubt, frequently occurs, though I was fortunate enough to escape.

June 10*th*. Yesterday and to-day it has blown very hard, the sea running mountains high. We have been followed during the whole week by albatrosses and other birds, and shall

continue to be so in all probability till we reach New Holland.

The albatross is a magnificent bird, varying in size from six to fourteen feet, measuring from tip to tip of his wings. Not keeping the fate of the "Ancient Mariner" before our eyes, we shot a few of them, as also Cape pigeons, &c.

June 17th. Yesterday we experienced quite a storm, which, however, did not at all take us by surprise, as being off the Cape of Good Hope, and this being the winter of that latitude, we expected severe gales. The ocean was in a splendidly troubled state, gigantic wave following wave as if about to engulph the devoted ship, each one, however, as it approached, appearing subdued, and sinking under her. At times, the vessel between two waves, lying in the trough of the sea, a wall of water mast high, before and behind, seemed cut off from all escape; but presently, while you are still clinging to a rope, and holding your breath in silent expectation of what is next to follow, she rises to the crest of the waters, like a spirit

which controls them, rather than the work of men's hands launched forth,

> "On ocean's foam to sail,
> Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail."

The black clouds careered along overhead at race-horse speed, the rain occasionally pouring down violently. All the elements seemed leagued against us—

> "Beneath the storm-lash'd surges furious rise,
> And wave uproll'd on wave assails the skies:
> With ever-floating bulwarks they surround
> The ship, half swallowed in the black profound."

The larboard bulwarks were split to pieces, and many great seas were shipped, so that the cuddy was a fourth part filled with water. This getting down between decks, where most of the cabins were, created indescribable confusion. The ladies, in terror, to think—

> "What harm a wind too great might do at sea,"

did not mend matters by their prayers and screams. Everything was adrift, and rolling

about; kleats were gone, and lashings had given way.

On descending to my private cabin, and, aided by the labouring of the ship, plunging *in medias res*, that is, head foremost, in among loose boxes and wet bedding, I found that I must make up my mind to spend the night in some other place than my berth. Nor were many of my fellow-passengers in better plight.

On deck, I found there had been some danger. There were two men at the wheel, and these I saw thrown over it, one after the other, in opposite directions, by the force of the sea, striking the rudder. While this was occurring, of course the ship was left to herself, an event that might have been followed with the most serious consequences, as, if the helm had not been promptly attended to, she would (in nautical phrase) have "broached to," presenting her side, instead of her stern, to the approaching wave, which would have inevitably overwhelmed her. However,

"Time and the hour run thro' the roughest day,"

and, on the following morning, June 24th, we

had tolerable weather, though the sea still ran very high.

On the 19th, we saw two sperm whales, huge monsters of the deep, floating idly, with their great square heads partially above water. For some time, I was doubtful what they were, looking as they did more like immense logs of timber, hung round with sea-weed and barnacles, than living animals.

During the 22nd and 23rd, we were becalmed.

Lotteries were now got up, each passenger subscribing so much, and naming the day and hour when he supposes we shall be abreast of the Islands of St. Paul's and Amsterdam.

July 1st. During the past week, we have been blessed with "favouring gales," running during one day two hundred and twenty-five miles.

Up to Thursday, the 5th, we experienced strong breezes and squally weather. On that day, at three P.M., we encountered a heavy squall, which came on so suddenly that, before we could take in sail, the main top-gallant sail was blown to ribbons. Whether this was one

of the white squalls which are so dangerous, I know not, but the heavens gave little or no previous indication of its approach. On the same day, at noon, we were abreast of St. Paul's, which was distant, however, about seventy miles, a great disappointment to us all, as we had hoped to land and ramble over this "lone isle."

The weather being now cool, we were able to enjoy our cabins more than hitherto, and merry parties met in one or other of them almost every night. Cigars, and a variety of hot potations, were the order of the evening, and many a song was sung, and some were even composed, on these occasions. Of the latter, I venture to give my contribution, well knowing that there are many tastes it will not please, but deprecating severe criticism on the score of time and place not being propitious to the muse. I would add, that the sentiment in the beginning of the last verse I utterly repudiate. It is merely there to point a line, if it does not "adorn a tale."

I.

When day brings its labours at last to a close,
And night drives the troubles of business afar,
And the head and the limbs seek their wonted repose,
The man who has taste will firstmok se his cigar.

II.

There be some that prefer (and let each please his whim)
The pipe tipp'd with amber from Turkey afar;
Though the Ott'man luxuriates, I envy not him,
While I breathe the light fumes of my gentle cigar.

III.

There are hookahs and meerschaums, and short pipes and long,
And Dutch pipes, and clay pipes, and cal'mets of peace,
An innocent, elegant, soul-soothing throng,
From the Red Indian's lair, e'en to classical Greece.

IV.

And those who enjoy them will own in their hearts,
Though at home there be quarrels, abroad there be wars,

That they still had that left which could soothe all their
smarts,
While they cherish'd their pipes, or cheroots, or cigars.

V.

When despairing and hopeless of joy in this world,
There was one little pleasure Fate never could mar,
While 'I knew by the smoke which so gracefully
curled,'
That life was still left in my honest cigar.

VI.

There be some trust in woman—as soon trust the
wind,
And some love their gold, or their horses, or war.
I'm at peace with myself, I'm at peace with mankind,
While I breathe the light fumes of my gentle cigar.

Thus we relieved the monotony of the voyage, by good-fellowship, heedless of the wind that whistled aloft among the rigging, and the billows which beat against the oak plank that divided us from eternity.

Lotteries were now proposed by the Captain for Cape Leuwin, Cape Otway, and Sydney—a strong indication that we were approaching the

longed-for haven. Another equally strong but less pleasant symptom was, that the potatoes, porter, and white biscuit had come to an end. This was more than mortal man could stand; to have no potatoes, be obliged to drink ale instead of porter, and eat brown bread instead of white, especially as we all declared we had been "sworn at Highgate."

Accordingly, there were serious appearances of mutiny among the cuddy-passengers, and gloomy conspirators might be seen pacing the deck in angry conversation, or adjourning to private cabins to discuss hot grog and their grievances. The poor little skipper came in for his share of blame, I dare say, without deserving it; but we soon quieted down, which is the wisest plan when there is no remedy. As Rasselas remarks, "what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted;" and there was certainly no repairing this at sea.

On the 9th, being to leeward of St. Paul's and Amsterdam, we passed a great deal of sea-weed, which I suppose came from the coast of

New Holland. On the same day, a large whitish object was descried ahead, with great numbers of albatrosses, cape pigeons, whale birds, &c. hovering over it. The vessel went right over it, and on coming up astern, it proved to be the carcase of a whale which had been stripped of its blubber, by some south-sea whaler.

July 14*th.* It blew hard all this day, the sea running very high, and the ship gave two tremendous lurches, the greatest we have yet experienced. The skylight, dripstone, and everything that could fetch way, went to leeward, and, worst of all, the barometer was smashed to pieces. The ladies all alarmed, some of them in hysterics, everything adrift and rolling about, the confusion may easily be imagined.

More signs of mutiny in the cuddy, the oil having been reported as all consumed, and we find we must burn our own candles.

On Thursday, the 19th, at eight P.M., we were abreast of Cape Leuwin, that is, due south of it, and distant about three hundred miles.

Cape Leuwin is the south-west cape of New Holland, and is called after a ship of that name which, early in the history of the discovery of Australia, sailed along that coast in its outward-bound voyage.

A very fine Newfoundland dog had the misfortune to fall overboard about this time. This event caused a great blank on board ship, and was really a loss to the colony, which was to have been his future home. It is astonishing what a commotion an incident of this kind makes in a vessel, where there is so little to excite the attention of landsmen.

On the 21st, it blew a gale of wind, the sea being in a splendid state of turmoil.

The weather is exceedingly pleasant and warm, notwithstanding its being the winter of these southern latitudes. Summer we have been completely cheated out of this year, having left Britain just before it began, and come through the winter of the Cape into that of New Holland. However, if summer consists

in heat, we had our share of it under the line.

On the night of the 27th, the Captain informed us that we were past Cape Otway, and had entered Bass's Straits. It blew hard all night, and next morning, at ten A.M., a sailor on the look-out sang out: "Land upon the starboard bow!" Though I saw it very plainly, yet the Captain and mate doubted it for some time, as not agreeing with their reckoning. By-and-by, the mist over it cleared off, and it proved to be King's Island, which is opposite Cape Otway, and at the mouth of Bass's Straits, so that the Captain had been twelve hours out in his calculation, no great matter, perhaps, in the distance between this and Trinidad, where we last saw land, two months and six days ago, and yet quite enough to be exceedingly perilous. All this day, and till the following morning, we had very hazy weather, the vessel scudding under a mere patch of canvas, and shipping heavy seas, the dead-lights in the stern being knocked in, the cuddy and cabins full of water, the passengers

in dismay, and everything in "most admired disorder." Truly, we passed the night

> "In cradle of the rude imperious surge
> "And in the visitation of the winds."

In the morning of July 29th, we passed the barren-looking islands at the eastern extremity of Bass's Straits, glad to get safely away from them, for such a passage was considered very dangerous in the gale and dark night that we had.

July 30th. This morning, I was roused by the joyful cry of: "Land on the larboard bow!" and, running on deck, I saw Cape Howe, the first point of "Hollandia Nova," (as it was called by the early navigators), on which I cast my eyes. Delighted we were to see land once more, and that land the country to which we had so long been looking forward, and my delight could not be satisfied till I had commemorated the event in the following rhymes, duly sung to the air of "A wet sheet and a flowing sea:"

I.

There's land upon the larboard bow,
There's magic in the word,
And gone is all the sickness now
Of hope too long deferred.
Oh! then were glist'nings of the eye,
Mute graspings of the hand,
But not a word, save that glad cry
Of 'land, companions, land!'
For there's land upon the larboard bow, &c.

II.

There's beauty in the calm blue sea,
There's grandeur in its roar,
As it bounds along upon the lee
To lash some distant shore.
There's life and lightness in the eye,
When our bark flies with the wind;
But still for land we ever sigh,
And friends far left behind.
For there's land upon, &c.

III.

Earth give us back thy fields, thy woods,
Of thousand hues and shades,
Thy lakes, thy hills and mountain floods,
Thy green and cooling glades.

Let it be balmy Ind the blest,
Or Scotland's rugged shore,
On our mother's breast we'll gladly rest,
And tempt the deep no more.
For there's land upon, &c.

All day we were becalmed off Cape Howe, and, on the following, instead of being in Sydney, as we had hoped, we were still abreast of that promontory. In the course of the day, I, with three or four others, tired of the irksome delay we were experiencing, proposed going on shore, and walking to Twofold Bay, the nearest settlement, distant about one hundred miles, where we hoped to procure horses to take us on to Sydney. All the others said it was madness to think of such a thing, and that we should perish long before we got out of the bush.

The Captain, however, appeared to consent to land us, and we accordingly got our guns, compasses, small bags of biscuit, &c., ready. A cautious limb of the law, who was to be of the party, proposed that we should wait till after dinner; and, when that was over, he backed

out, declaring he could not leave a delicious hogshead of beer which had been broached that day. *He* wouldn't have done for the bush, and I fancy he never intended to face it.

At last, when we were ready to go, and requested the skipper to lower the boat, he declined, alleging that we had quite misunderstood him; that, in all probability, we should be lost if we went, and that he should be held responsible. In short, he had undertaken to land us with the rest of his cargo "in good order and condition" at Sydney, and to Sydney he would take us. There was no help for it, so we were obliged to go below, looking rather sheepish, and stow away our guns and other *impedimenta*. I saw reason afterwards to feel grateful to the Captain for his firmness, for between the blacks and the brushwood, the rivers and ravines, I firmly believe we should never have been seen again.

During the 1st of August, we were tacking about off two remarkable hills, called the

Dromedary and the Pigeon-House, one hundred, and one hundred and fifty miles respectively from Sydney.

In the course of the day, we saw three considerable fires in the bush occasioned probably either by a tribe of natives, or by some settler clearing the ground. In the afternoon, one of those curious animals, called cuttle-fish, resembling a white slipper, floated past.

During the 2nd, we were dodging about, doing little or no good. At night, we passed Jervis Bay, and threw up some sky-rockets, which were answered by a fire on shore.

On sailing along the coast from Bass's Straits towards Sydney, one is not likely to be pleased with the uniform and thickly-wooded, yet barren appearance of the coast. Wherever the soil can be discerned, rock and sand peep out, and the eye is not relieved by a fine or bold outline of hill. I must mention the exception of the neighbourhood of Illawarra, fifty miles south of Sydney, where the Pigeon-

House, the Hat Hill, and one or two other rather remarkable elevations are seen.

August 3rd. At ten A.M. we sighted the lighthouse on the south head, at the entrance to Port Jackson. We soon passed Botany Bay, a sterile sandy place, where Sir Joseph Banks botanized, and Captain Cook met the gallant but unfortunate La Perouse. Here it was that the first settlement was formed under Capt. Philip, who little dreamed that the inlet within seven miles of him, which had been passed by Cook, and called Port Jackson, after the man at the mast-head, who descried it, afforded one of the finest harbours in the world, capable of containing all the navies of Europe!

The wind becoming foul, we were obliged to tack about off the heads till five in the afternoon; and during this tedious and anxious time, many were the speculations as to what the land of promise would turn out. Among others, I endeavoured to give an imaginary sketch of the place, to the tune of "The King

of the Cannibal Islands." It is, hoped, however, that no one will take it for a "full, true, and particular account," though, I must confess, it wasn't far wide of the mark in some respects, as subsequent events proved.

I.

Now all, intent to emigrate,
Come listen to the doleful fate,
Which did befall to me of late,
  When I went to the wilds of Australia.
I sailed across the stormy main,
And often wished myself back again,
I really think I was quite insane
  When I went to the Bush of Australia.
    Illawarra Moneroo, Paramatta Woolloomaloo,
    If you wouldn't become a kangaroo,
    Don't go to the Bush of Australia,

II.

One never knows what does await,
For just as we enter'd Bass's Strait,
We lost the half of our crew, and our mate,
  As we sailed to the Bush of Australia.

The vessel struck on a bank of sand,
And when we drifted to the land,
We soon were surrounded by a band
  Of savages in Australia.
                Illawarra Moneroo, &c.

III.

But I was so starved I look'd like a ghost,
I didn't weigh more than four stone at most,
Thank heaven! I wasn't fit for a roast,
  For the cannibals in Australia.
So to Sydney town I travelled then,
The Governor gave me some convict men,
And I set off to live in a den
  In the dismal Bush of Australia.
                Illawarra Moneroo, &c.

IV.

And when I came to look at the land,
Which I got by his Excellency's command,
I found it was nothing but burning sand,
  Like all the rest of Australia.

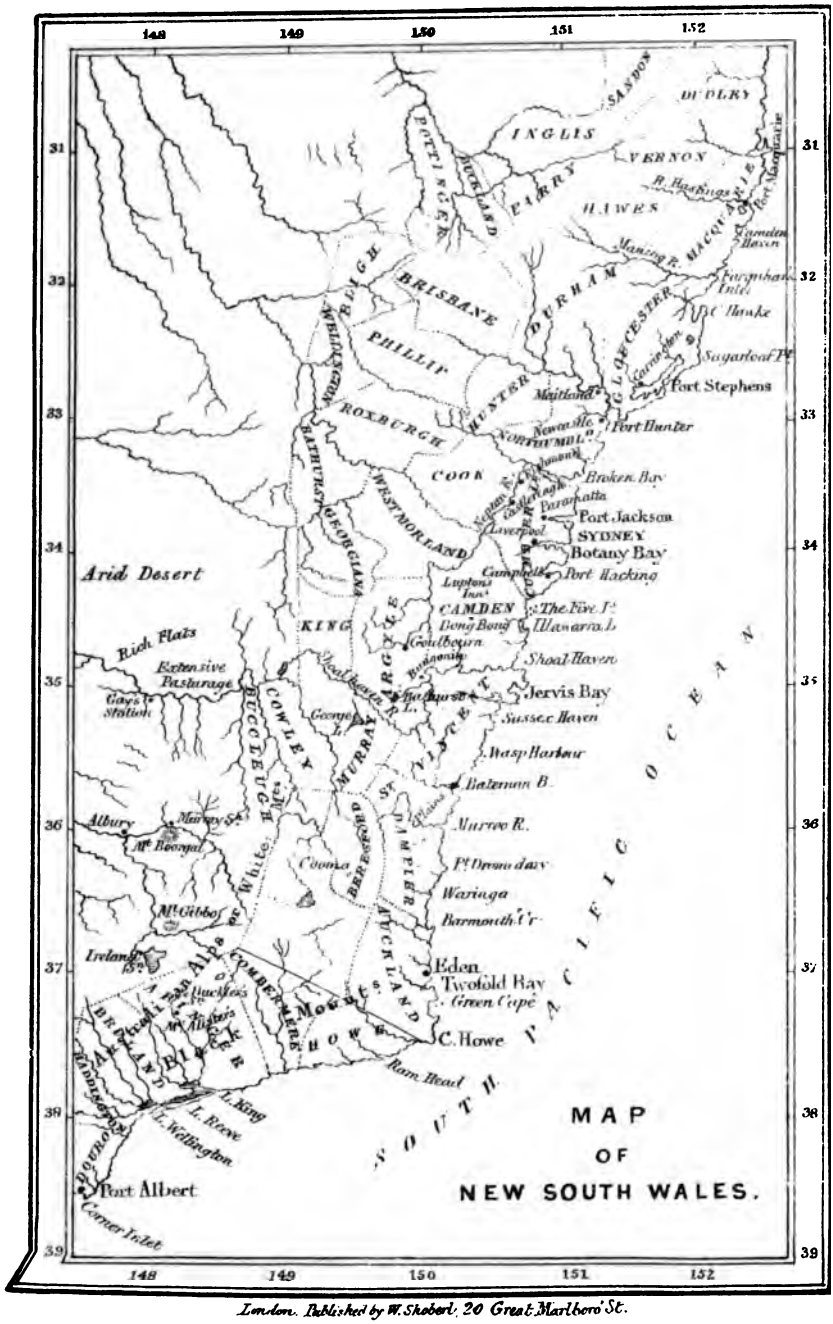
But I bought a flock of sheep at last,
And thought that all my troubles were past,
But you may believe I stood aghast,
When they died of the rot in Australia.
Illawarra Moneroo, &c,

V.

My convicts were always drinking rum,
I often wished they were up a gum-
Tree—or that I had never come,
To the horrible Bush of Australia.
The bushrangers my hut attacked,
And they were by my convicts back'd,
And my log-hut was fairly sack'd
Of all I had got in Australia.
Illawarra Moneroo, &c.

VI.

A thousand or two don't go a long way,
When every one robs you in open day,
And the bankers all fail and mizzle away
From the capital of Australia.
And it's not very easy to keep your cash,
When once in a twelvemonth your agent goes smash,
And bolts to New Zealand, or gets a whitewash;
It's a way that they have in Australia.
Illawarra Moneroo, &c,



MAP

OF

NEW SOUTH WALES.

London. Published by W. Shoberl, 20 Great Marlboro' St.

VII.

So articles I signed at last,
And work'd as a man before the mast;
And back to England I came full fast,
  And left the confounded Australia,
To sell a few matches from door to door,
Would certainly be a very great bore,
But I've made up my mind to do that before
  I'll go back to the Bush of Australia.
                Illawarra Moneroo, &c.

But there is no time for further speculations—the wind is fair, and we are within the heads.

The entrance to Sydney, or Port Jackson Heads, is imposing, and the sail up to the town is extremely beautiful. The Paramatta River, on which Sydney is built, extends from Paramatta, fifteen miles above Sydney, to the Heads, seven miles below it, and appears to be a long and widely-extended ravine with many ramifications or bays, into which the sea has rushed through a vast break occurring at the Heads, in the bold and rocky coast.

On the south headland, the lighthouse rears its head,

> "Celsâ si culmine turris
> Atollit nautisque procul venientibus offert."

We have passed the floating lights on the "Sow and Pigs." There is the lovely Vaucleuse to our left, further on, Shark and Garden Islands, and, on the right, Pinchgut Island, and the Fort on Bradley's Head. On either side are beautiful bays and recesses, with rocky sides surmounted by foliage. Before us is a forest of masts, beyond which we discover the Queen of the Southern Seas. Yes, we are in Sydney at last, for the reporter of the "Herald" has boarded us to get the latest European news; crowds are following him, to look for friends they expect. "Let go the anchor!" halloos out the pilot, who came on board off the heads; and, yielding to the solicitations of "Boat, sir,—boat, sir,—want a boat, sir,—go ashore?" a knot of us

have soon landed at the wharf, wandered up George's Street, and found out the Royal Hotel, where, with heels on the balustrade of the verandah, and cigars in our mouths, we endeavour to realize the delightful idea that we are actually on shore, which the imaginary rocking of our chairs will scarce permit us to believe.

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CHAPTER III.

Appearance of Sydney — Description — Journey to Argyleshire — Goulburn — The Paramatta River — Government House—The Botanical Gardens—Monotonous Country—Ant Hills—Wretched Inns—Shoalhaven Gullies—Goulburn Plains—The Ornythorhincus paradoxus—Return to Sydney.

I CONFESS that, notwithstanding its vast extent and population (considering that it is but fifty-six years since its foundation), I was somewhat disappointed with the appearance of Sydney. It was too like home; I had looked for something foreign and Oriental in its appearance; but I found that, excepting a few verandahs, and the lofty and stately Norfolk

Island pine, it coincided much with a second or third-class town in England.

A closer intimacy did not make a more favourable impression. It is set down in a sandy-desert, is infested by mosquitoes and other troublesome insects and vermin, and is subject to high winds, called, in colonial *parlance*, "Brick-fielders," which bear with them clouds of dust, rendering it impossible to go out while the blast continues, or to keep a door or window open, unless one would wish to be suffocated.

There is only one house deserving the name of hotel in the whole town, and there the attendance is wretched. Places of amusement there are none, except one theatre, where there is generally found a very poor performance, and a "beggarly account of empty boxes." There are many striking and beautiful views to be obtained about Sydney, and the bay of the Paramatta River; but one must not go inland to look for them; for beyond the immediate vicinity of the town,

all is sterility and gum-tree. The town itself occupying a slight valley and the slopes on each side, stands on a promontory formed by a deep bay called Darling Harbour, on one side, and the cove on the other. A new, extensive, and, as seen from some points, elegant Government-House, though of a nondescript style; a battery in its neighbourhood, and a handsome monument to Sir Richard Bourke, which looks well from the harbour, help to vary the scene.

The Botanical, or Government Gardens, beyond the new Government-House, are elegantly laid out, contain many fine plants and trees, and afford an extremely pleasant and beautiful walk, to the few respectable inhabitants who indulge in that exercise. Beyond these, there are few or no objects worth mentioning, in Sydney or its neighbourhood, and, as the Bush is my subject, I shall forthwith conduct my reader beyond the busy haunts of man.

Having staid about four weeks in Sydney, busied in making inquiries and acquaintances, I found it expedient to journey into the country,

or Bush, in order to see for myself, and to pick up what information I could. I therefore purchased a horse (for nothing can be done without that useful animal in New South Wales), and started for the neighbourhood of Goulburn, where a gentleman resided for whom I had letters. A coach (so called, but actually nothing more than an open car) runs on this road; but the apology for a road is such that all who would avoid broken bones, and who dislike being jolted to a jelly, prefer the mode of travelling which I adopted.

On the way, I passed through a small town, beyond which there is nothing to vary the monotony of the scene. The road itself, as I have already said, is execrable, and one sees no scenery, no fine view, nothing, in fact, but the everlasting gum-tree. For a considerable distance, you pass through Bargo Brush, a favourite haunt of bushrangers, and a more miserable and cut-throat looking place one would not wish to ride through. The sameness and desolateness of the country are excessive, and this, my

first excursion, gave me striking experience of the monotony and cheerlessness of the Bush, a feeling which my future wanderings fully confirmed.

On this occasion I saw, for the first time, the large ant-hills which abound in many parts of the colony. Their shape is conical, and their substance is indurated, rising frequently to a considerable height, as one which I examined reached to my shoulder as I sat on horseback. The interior is hollowed out into chambers, inhabited by a large red ant, commonly about an inch long, remarkable for its courage, and capable of giving a very severe bite, or sting.

There are inns on this road, and large buildings, too; but, like all others in the country, they are very uncomfortable, and share in that universal curse of the colony, an abundance of vermin. Seldom did I close my eyes till cock-crow, and generally I passed the live-long night in walking up and down my apartment.

Having passed through Berrima, a small township, and Bungonia, a still smaller one,

I arrived by sunset at my destination, about a hundred and twenty miles from Sydney. Here I was very hospitably received; and, being pressed to remain, I staid with this family a fortnight.

Although the middle of winter (August) when I arrived in Sydney, I found the weather extremely warm. The dust, heat, and glare from the houses, were very annoying to a new-comer; and, finding it most oppressive to wear a black hat, I was very soon glad to adopt the straw. During my journey to Argyleshire (in which Goulburn is situate), I also found riding all day in the sun very fatiguing; but, on arriving there, the climate seemed considerably cooler. Before I had been a week in that quarter, we had a two hours' fall of snow.

The house of my friend was seated on a small elevation, round which a few fields had been cleared of the timber, and the stumps taken out. These fields were chiefly used as paddocks for horses and cattle, being apparently scarcely worth cultivating. The proprietor, who is

extremely fond of horticulture, had an excellent orchard near his house, in which, from his elevated position, he managed not only to grow most of the fruits usual in the colony, but also the gooseberry, raspberry, and currant, forming a very pleasing sight to me, especially from being mingled with the almond, and other trees of warmer climates.

With the surrounding country I was much disappointed. Except the ground cleared about the house, and the clearances of the few neighbours, at distances of five and ten miles, all was interminable and barren bush. The grass was extremely scanty, and what there was appeared brown and parched up.

While at this spot, I made an excursion to the "Shoalhaven Gullies," the name given to the bed of the Shoalhaven River, which here passes through deep and almost inaccessible ravines. This certainly is a grand and romantic place. The stream is seen from the edge of a magnificent precipice, winding like a silver thread far below. On each side, within a few

yards of the water, rise high, rugged, and perpendicular rocks, most picturesque in appearance, from the fantastic shapes which the grey projections assume, and from the gnarled gum, and formal, but oriental grass-tree, which have planted themselves wherever they could find a footing.

The kangaroo drinks unmolested of the crystal stream, the eagle-hawk soars majestically above, in search of his prey; and the place seems sacred and untrod by the foot of man. This is one of the few situations where anything really fine or grand is to be seen in New South Wales, and some of the best views have been painted by Martins, an artist in Sydney of some merit. I must not omit to mention, that in this neighbourhood, and throughout Argyleshire, very good marble is to be found close to the surface, and cropping out from it.

After visiting the "Shoalhaven Gullies," I made a short excursion of fifteen or twenty miles, to Goulburn, a small township, and

the capital of the county. It proved to be a paltry village, consisting of perhaps a hundred small cottages, planted in the midst of a gravelly plain, one of a series of "downs," not far from the River "Wallondilly," which at this time was merely a chain of water-holes in the apparent bed of a river.

I spent the night at the house of the colonial surgeon here, to whom I had an introduction, and whom I found extremely hospitable. My horse I put up at the inn, or public-house, where I found, as in most others of the kind, they knew well how to charge, the sum of ten shillings being the modest demand for the stall, and rack full of withered straw which my poor nag enjoyed during the night.

Goulburn Plains are of considerable extent, and varying by a few feet in elevation from each other. They are without timber, and appear to be of a gravelly bottom. Beyond them, are Yass Plains, which are larger and better, being of richer soil, and through these

passes the route, or track, towards Port Philip, crossing the Ovens, Morumbidgee, &c.

I returned to my old quarters by a different route from that which I took in going, crossing part of Goulburn Plains, passing thereon several farms, or properties, and describing a considerable circuit, but everywhere finding the same uninteresting style of scenery. A stranger might have expected to meet, during such a trip in a country new to him, with many objects of wonder and curiosity; but, on this occasion, I was disappointed. It was a season of great drought, and I had often some difficulty in getting a drink of water for my horse.

Near my friend's house were some water-holes, inhabited by some of the Platypus, or Ornythorhincus paradoxus, of which a gentleman residing in the neighbourhood gave me two specimens which he had shot and stuffed. This extraordinary animal, called by the common people, water-mole, or "duck-bill," from its bill, which exactly resembles that of a duck, though on a larger scale and black, inhabits rivers and

water-holes, in the banks of which it burrows to some extent, and rears its young. It is exceedingly timid, and difficult to be shot, diving the moment one attempts to lift the gun. Though a rare animal, and peculiar to New Holland, it is pretty well known now at home; but for the benefit of those who have not seen a specimen, I may add that it is generally from a foot to eighteen inches long, is clothed in a beautiful and fine fur, provided with a short, broad tail, somewhat like the beaver, and having four paddles, or feet, with sharp claws and webbed, the male being armed with large spurs on his hind feet. This animal is said to propagate its species by means of eggs.* It abounds chiefly in the Western waters, and is called by the natives, or blacks, Werwar.

I saw also some cockatoos, and a variety of parrots and parroquets of beautiful plumage. Some of the parrots, including the Rosella, I succeeded in shooting and skinning. The last-

* This is, however, denied by some of the natives.

named species is extremely beautiful, and is said to derive its name from Rosehill (very properly now bearing the native name Parramatta), where it was first found, and abounded. In this locality too, I, for the first time, heard the frog of the marshes and water-holes. Its noise is extremely loud during the night, sometimes sounding like the distant rumbling of carriages, at others like a kettle-drum.

Finding it at length expedient to return to Sydney, I mounted my horse, with my vallise strapped behind me, and my holsters, with a brace of double-barrelled pistols before. Razor Back, a steep mountain over which the road passes, and Bargo Brush (both at the time infested by bush-rangers), were before me, and the prospect did not add to the comfort of my solitary journey. Both of them I had already passed in safety (the former by moonlight), and I was equally fortunate on this occasion. During summer, night, if you have the moon, is far the pleasantest time to travel, although in winter it is very cold. In going up

the country, I remember being much struck by the appearance which some gum-trees had in the moonlight. The trunks straight, and of a white, or pale-blue colour, looked like tall spectres in their shrouds, or grouped together as they were, they rather resembled monuments and gigantic tombstones; indeed, I at first thought that a churchyard was ahead, and I was only undeceived on a more close approach.

But I must hasten to Sydney, which I reached without any greater misfortune than being nearly devoured by vermin at the inns. These certainly are the curse of the colony. If a hut is deserted for a month, it becomes *alive* with vermin of all kinds. The very sand swarms with them. The sheep-stations supply you with sheep-ticks, and the farms furnish their quota of weevils which know how to bite as well as their neighbours. The trees in the bush are full of bugs; the brushes abound in ticks; the emu is covered with them, and so, I am told, is the kangaroo. I have seen huts in the bush *crawling* with cockroaches, like a hive of

bees at swarming time; and even in the most respectable and cleanly houses, I have been made ashamed and miserable by one of the most active of these varieties of vermin getting into my clothes; indeed, for the first six months after my arrival in the colony, I suffered so much in this way that I seriously contemplated leaving on that account alone; for I felt almost unable to support the fatigue of travelling by day, and of walking up and down my room all night, instead of sleeping. General Macquarie, who was fond of immortalizing his name, it is said, dignified with it one of the indigenous varieties of bugs, and the "simax Macquariensis," along with the "Pulex irritans," (called, by the New Zealanders, on whom we have conferred it, "the little European,") were no strangers. But enough of this disagreeable subject.

CHAPTER IV.

Various advice received on the subject of Settling, &c.—Journey to the southward—Campbelltown and Appin—Jordan's Creek—Sand Region—Flowers and Fruits—Illawarra Mountain—Forest Giants—The Brushes—Woolongong—The Cabbage Tree—Sporting Excursions—Dapto and Kyama—Extraordinary Cavern—Shoalhaven—Kangaroo ground—Return to Sydney.

DURING my last expedition, I had not gained much valuable information. I had come out with the intention of settling in the country as an agriculturist, or grazier, but what I had already seen was by no means encouraging. Catarrh was raging among the sheep, and carrying them off by thousands; the drought had left the cattle little either of grass or water, and consequently they were following the sheep;

and the agriculturist, as might be expected, was in as bad a plight as the grazier.

With advice I was furnished in abundance, but it was so various that it was difficult to judge of it. One person recommended me to buy sheep, and to form a squatting station beyond the bounds of the colony; another, to embark in cattle; and a third to purchase land within the bounds, and combine farming and grazing together as I best might. Land at this time cost five shillings per acre, *i. e.*, such was its minimum price; but, on applying for a section it is put up to auction, and it may mount up to any sum people are foolish enough to bid for it. The principal advantage proposed by those who advised me to buy land was the obtaining convicts (or Government men as they are called), five or six of these being assigned with every section of six hundred and forty acres which are bought.

This certainly seemed a very fine thing to a new comer, and all who could, availed themselves of it. It was very well indeed for the large

capitalist, but I afterwards knew gentlemen who had been ruined in this way, and that not so much by laying out money on land (though that was folly) as by beginning on too large a scale, and maintaining prisoners for whom they had no use.

Under all these circumstances, I resolved to lie upon my oars for six (perhaps twelve) months, and to spend that time in travelling over the colony, and in gathering information and experience.

I had not been long in Sydney before I was invited by a very kind friend to accompany him on an expedition to the southward, in order to visit his stock and farm in the Kangaroo ground, which lies near the Shoalhaven River, and considerably beyond Illawarra. I of course gladly embraced the proposal, and having provided myself with saddle-bags to carry a few clothes, I proceeded to my friend's house seven miles from town (it being in the direction of our intended journey), in order to pass the night previously to starting. Our party consisted of

two gentlemen in a sort of cab, and myself on horseback.

Before we had gone many miles, one of those hot winds for which Australia is noted, began to blow. The gale was high, raising clouds of dust, and yet it scorched one like the blast from an oven. We went some thirty or forty miles that day, passing through Campbelltown and Appin, annoyed by the dust, and suffering much from thirst and fatigue. Our ride had been as little interesting, and the country had proved as monotonous as on my former excursion.

We staid all night at a small roadside inn, and the next morning set forward towards Illawarra, which we intended to reach that night. This day's journey was considerably more interesting than the last, especially towards the close of it. After passing through several farms, where a few fields had been cleared, we arrived at Jordan's Creek, a small stream, flowing in a deep and rocky chasm, having very rugged and precipitous sides. It was a work of some time and labour to get the vehicle in which my

friends travelled across this chasm; as, though the brushwood had been cut away, little more seemed to have been done towards forming a road. We, however, obtained some assistance from the nearest location; and, having led the horses across, succeeded in dragging the cab over.

Our route for a considerable distance after this lay through a region of sand, chiefly producing brushwood and stunted gum-trees, and here and there some very beautiful flowers, among which I may mention as pre-eminent the "Warataw." This grows to the height of from two to four feet, consisting of a woody and tapering stem, surmounted by a flower of a brilliant scarlet, not unlike the peony-rose, both in size and colour, but more beautiful. The leaf very much resembles that of the English oak.

I also saw here, for the first time, the native pear; a fruit of the size and shape of an English pear, but proving itself of genuine New South Wales origin by being exactly the opposite of that

fruit in other respects. Unlike the edible pear, the stem is attached to the large end of the fruit instead of the small. It is of a beautiful fawn colour, with a down on it, hard and firm as solid wood, and, when plucked and kept any time, splits down the centre to near the stalk, each side folding back in an exceedingly graceful shape, and displaying a very thin flat seed between.

About the middle of the day, we halted at a small stagnant water-hole, mantled with green, in order to take our meridian repast. Soon after leaving this, we were met by the Episcopal clergyman of Woolongong (the settlement or township of Illawarra) who had come thus far to meet my travelling companions, having been previously apprized of our intended trip. As he was like myself, on horseback, he became my more immediate *compagnon de voyage* over this rugged and sterile tract, and by his intelligent, agreeable conversation, beguiled the path of its monotony.

Leaving this waste behind, we arrived at Illawarra mountain, called *par excellenee*

"The Mountain," an elevation presenting but little ascent on the side from which we approached it, but both very long and steep in descending towards Woolongong. From the top is obtained a most beautiful view of the district of Illawarra. To the right is seen Lake Illawarra a very fine sheet of water, but unfortunately salt. Beyond that extends the sea, sprinkled with a few small rocky islands (from which the district is sometimes called the Five Islands), and more to the left, are some remarkable elevations and bold bluff-heads, peering out from the dense forest.

Near the top of the hill, I saw some very large stringy bark and gum-trees,* all of them (as is the case all over the country, even in the far interior) exhibiting marks of burning, Into one still living and thriving but the heart of which had been burned out, I rode, and with the greatest ease turned my horse and passed out again. Such giants of vegetation are not uncommon in the bush, but all trees of any great size are mere

* Eucalyptus.

shells, the heart being consumed by fire and decay.

A tolerable road leads from the top of the mountain to the vale below, passing for the most part through a rich brush. This is the name given to those spots occupying the banks of rivers and creeks, the ravines and hill-sides, and occasionally the sea-coast, where vegetation is of rank, and even tropical luxuriance, consisting of white woods, and other varieties, found nowhere else, mingled with large gums (eucalyptus), the whole being one thick mat of brushwood, woven together with vines, or creepers, of various kinds. In these only, grow the beautiful red and white cedars, the elegant bangala,* and the tall and stately cabbage-tree,† the two last being of the palm tribe, and having a decidedly Oriental appearance. Here, too, we find many beautiful flowers, if we examine the outskirts, or stumble on a spot where a ray of sunshine can penetrate. I may also mention the noblest flower of Illawarra, perhaps of New Holland, the gigantic

* Seaforthia elegans. † Corypha Australis.

and beautiful lily, which, rearing its head to the height of twelve or fifteen feet, on a straight and tapering stem, reigns the sovereign of all Flora's train.

The brushes are inhabited by paddy-mellons (a small species of the kangaroo), by kangaroo rats, bandycoots, &c., besides affording shelter during the day to vast numbers of the flying-fox, and, during the night, to a great variety of birds. Having descended the mountain, we passed through a rather pleasing country dotted with one or two farms, till we reached Woolongong, a pretty little township, or village, on the sea-side. It was then a thriving little place possessing three churches, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic, but a very poor inn.

There was no harbour, the steamer or any little craft that might touch there, being obliged to lie in the open roadstead, but an iron gang was at work excavating a basin out of the solid rock. Now, however, I am informed that the great depression which has occurred in the colony, has affected Woolongong to such an

extent that it is almost deserted, two-thirds of the houses being uninhabited, and the streets being green with grass.

We staid here a day or two, and made some very pleasant excursions to places in the neighbourhood; among others, to a beautiful property in the immediate vicinity, called Balgownie, where I saw some splendid specimens of the tall and airy cabbage-trees. The proprietor informed me that they were considerably above a hundred feet high. They generally stand in clusters; the stem is small, round, and perfectly straight, and has neither branch nor excrescence, from the ground to the top, which is surmounted by a cluster of leaves, resembling in lightness and elegance a bunch of ostrich-feathers.

In the calmest day, these graceful trees, pointing like spires towards heaven, are seen waving to and fro, moved by the light zephyrs that float above. On this occasion, I found, for the first time, in the brushes, a singular tree, having dark green leaves, so rough on the

upper surface as to act like a file, or rather like emery paper, on the finger nails. In this neighbourhood, very good coal has been found.

The following day, I went on a shooting excursion through a part of the district called Dapto, to Lake Illawarra; but except a few ducks that we found on the Lake, we were not successful. Indeed this is a poor sporting country; and, barring wild duck on the rivers and waterholes, and pigeons of various kinds in the brushes, together with parrots, cockatoos, and bronze-winged pigeons in the forest, little or nothing edible, or affording sport, is to be met with to recompense the sportsman for the extreme toil he must encounter in such a country, under an almost tropical sun, and often without even a drop of water.

The next day, we pursued our journey southwards, passing through Dapto, near which is a rather fine waterfall (when there is any water in it). Our route lay over some very pretty country, at first taking us through three or four tolerable farms; but it soon became more

rugged, leading us up some steep ranges and ending by landing us in a very large and dense brush, a few miles from Kyama, our halting-place for the night. As it was now dark, and the road very bad, we had some difficulty in getting the cab along, owing to the stumps and holes which everywhere beset the path. However we reached the public-house, or Bush Inn, in safety, prepared to enjoy the humble fare that was there to be had.

Kyama is a village reserve, that is, a place set apart by the Government for a future village; but as yet there are no inhabitants, but those of the inn. There is no harbour; merely a small bay, on the verge of which the inn stands. The coast of New South Wales is all of much the same character—sandy bays and lines of abrupt rock alternately. In both cases the timber, generally small and scrubby, sometimes brushy, approaches the verge of the bay, or rock. Occasionally, the heights are rounded off, and covered with greenish turf; and,

in such cases, they are bare and without timber.

Next morning, before breakfast, we walked upwards of a mile along the coast to see an extraordinary cave in the rocks, called the "Blow-hole," from its spouting water up into the air after the manner of a whale, or like an immense *jet d'eau*. We found it quite equal to the description we had received. A large cavern runs inland two or three hundred yards, and into this the sea dashed with violence. At the end of the cavern, the crust has fallen in in former ages leaving a round orifice of considerable size through which the water propelled from the cavern rushes in a tall, high, beautiful spout, dispersing itself as it falls in spray.

Between this and our humble inn was pitched the tent of a young man, a Government Surveyor, engaged professionally in that quarter. He breakfasted with us, and, after partaking of an excellent substantial meal, we set off on our

journey. Our route this day lay sometimes inland, sometimes on the immediate coast; and, after travelling a considerable distance on the sand, we reached Shoalhaven, the property of Alexander Berry, Esq., Member of Council. Here we passed the night, being received in the most hospitable manner. The following day, we went over this extensive and magnificent property. It is situate near the mouth of the Shoalhaven River, the house and stock establishment being furthest down, and the cultivation, dairy, windmill, &c., higher up the river.

At another point is found a bay, where is a wharf, from which trade with Sydney is carried on. On this establishment, I understand there are upwards of two hundred men, almost everything being provided, and made, and mended on the spot.

The following day (being Sunday) we attended divine service, performed by the excellent Episcopal clergyman of Woolongong, who had accompanied us thus far for that purpose, and who at least, once or twice a month, makes this long

and dreary journey on a similar errand. In the afternoon, we ascended a high conical hill, called Coolan Gatta, from which we had a very extensive view to the southward. The grass on this hill, having been set on fire by the blacks, when we descended a short distance, we found ourselves hemmed in by a belt of fire, which, blazing and crackling fiercely, looked very formidable. However, as it was ascending, there was no help for it but to make a bold push, and rush through it, which we accordingly did, escaping with a very slight scorching.

At night, the whole mountain was in a blaze, and looked most grand and beautiful; so much so, indeed, that one of my travelling companions, who had seen Vesuvius in a state of eruption, declared that the sight before him was equally splendid.

At Shoalhaven, I saw that singular bird, called the "gangang," grey and red, and having a crest or top-knot. It looks as if it were a cross between the parrot and cockatoo, though it is probably a species by itself.

On Monday morning, we started for the Kangaroo ground, leaving the cab behind, on account of the difficulties we had to encounter. By mid-day, we arrived at the formidable range, or hill, over which one must pass, that being the only means of entering the Kangaroo ground, which is a large and deep valley, hemmed in by mountains on all sides, and sunk as a cup in the midst of them. Like the happy valley of Rasselas, it is not easy to get into nor out of it; and no drag nor wheeled vehicle has ever yet succeeded in surmounting the obstacles. When you are once in, the scenery is beautiful.

Through the centre runs a large and clear stream of excellent water. On its banks the grass is most luxuriant, and, at a little distance, rise majestically and abruptly the rocky and thickly-wooded mountains. Of course, a place like this, unapproachable as it is by any conveyance, save a horse, or pack-bullock, is unfit for the purposes of farming, but for a grazing establishment it is well calculated.

After spending a couple of days in this se-

cluded and romantic glen, we bade adieu to it; and, climbing the steep ascent by which we entered, proceeded to retrace our steps to the Shoalhaven, and thence to Sydney, over the same ground we had traversed before.

The district of Illawarra which I had just visited, has been called the garden of the colony, and is not undeserving of that name. It is but a narrow strip of country lying between the sea and a line of rugged and unavailable mountains. The soil is generally a rich black alluvial deposit, and the climate warm, and not so dry as in most parts of the colony, giving birth to fine timber in the forest, and in the sheltered and rich bottoms to most luxuriant brush, or jungle. It is somewhat famous for its fruit, producing most of the species peculiar to warm countries, and indeed some of those belonging to the tropics; but in this respect it is not singular, as the same effect can be obtained with care in most parts of the colony. There are some very good farms in the district, but it is too confined to admit of large grazing

establishments. I fancy there is not much field for the labouring emigrant, and it is unsuited to the intending settler, unless he wishes to sit down in a cultivated quarter, and purchase a farm already formed.

While here, I conversed with a settler who was busy preparing his land, and found that he had a small piece of ground from a proprietor in the neighbourhood, on what is called a clearing-lease. The terms of his bargain were that he was to clear a certain portion of the brush and forest land, for his own use, and to occupy it rent free for seven years. He did not seem to think very well of his speculation; and, considering the immense labour and expense attending the operation, the uncertainty of the seasons, and small value of the crops, together with the distance from a market, and the difficulty of transport, I should decidedly say that the landlord had the best of the bargain.

Whether the labourer can make anything or not in this way, it is certainly the best and

cheapest method a man can take to get his land cleared. For the single labourer, I think it would be much better to engage himself as a servant; though, for the married man, who has a family, it has advantages, and, by dint of hard labour, he may thus be enabled to support his wife and children, though he must not expect to do more. If he has a cow or two, the keep will cost him nothing; and except as regards butcher's meat, he must feed his family on what he raises by his daily labour. Wheat, maize, and pumpkins will be the staple; and clothes, along with tea and sugar, must be purchased with the money obtained for the wheat and tobacco which he may sell.

At the same time, nothing can be done for a year, after commencing on a clearing lease; and, unless the tenant be supplied by his landlord with tools and rations for six months, as is the case in some instances, it will most likely be a hard fight with the poor man. To the landlord, whose ground is useless to him (except for

grazing) until it is cleared and fenced in (to do which will cost from three to ten pounds per acre), the clearing-lease system is by far the safest and best, though, of course, it is a process of some time.

CHAPTER V.

North Shore—Botany Bay—Parramatta—Windsor—Newcastle—Port Macquarie—Road to New England—Lake Innis—Convicts—Specials and invalids—The "Wilson" and plains—Trip up Piper's Creek—Expedition to the "McLeay"—Description of the river and country—Of the sawyers on it—Advantages mentioned, and general remarks.

DURING my stay in Sydney at this period, I made some excursions to different places in its neighbourhood—such as over to the North Shore, to Botany Bay, &c.; but these afford little or nothing to describe. The land is invariably composed of white sand, bearing a great variety of beautiful flowers, but scarcely any

other thing of larger growth than brushwood and small gum-trees. I also made a trip to Parramatta and Windsor, the latter town being situated on the Hawksbury, and about thirty-five miles from Sydney. The sail by steamer to Parramatta is very pretty: it is fifteen miles from the capital, the tide flowing up that distance.

In the Parramatta river, close to Sydney, lie Cockatoo and Goat Islands, used by Government as penal establishments. From this place beautiful bays branch off on each side: the water-worn sandstone rock is crowned with gnarled gum and grass-trees, assuming a romantic and fantastic appearance. Further up, the river, becoming more narrow, winds a good deal; and here and there are seen neat cottages, or elegant villas, the gardens and orangeries sometimes extending to the waterside.

The country about Parramatta is very level, and so it is between that town and Windsor, around which it is perfectly flat.

The river Hawksbury, which joins the sea at

Broken Bay, is here deep and sluggish. The town is small, dirty, and badly built; and the country, as I have said before, is flat and uninteresting. A good deal of clearing has been effected around the town; and, as it is comparatively an old settlement, the stumps, which in most places form such an eye-sore, have disappeared. Of course, this is no place for the emigrant, unless he wishes to purchase or to rent a farm at a much higher rate than he could do at home.

Having been recommended to visit some of the northern settlements, and happening to meet, about this time, with a gentleman from one of them, I determined on embracing his offer, and on accompanying him to his quarter. I accordingly went on board the steamer for Port Macquarie, at this time the most northern settlement in Australia.

We started at seven in the evening, and next morning, at eight, I found we had put in at Newcastle, for coals. This town is built at the mouth of the river Hunter, and serves in some measure as the port of that river and of Mait-

land, a small town thirty miles further up. Its chief importance, however, is derived from its coal mines, which belong to the Australian Agricultural Company, and which produce coal of very good quality, and that within a couple of hundred paces of the harbour. The town is small, is built on a sand-hill, and has rather a bleak appearance.

The view up the river is better; the wide channel narrowing into some graceful windings, the mangroves lining it to within the water's edge, and the mountains of the Upper Hunter forming a fine background. The entrance to the river is dangerous, the channel being narrow and irregular. In the mouth of it lies an isolated and lofty rock of sandstone, called "Nobby," which by art is now about to be restored to its former junction with the mainland.

For a long time, Government has employed gangs of convicts, in irons, in forming a breakwater from this rock to the headland on the south, or Newcastle side of the river. The material used is the sandstone rock from the south

headland and that composing the "Nobby" itself, a considerable part of which has been cut away. This work will probably improve the harbour to some extent, though this is doubted; but it is evident that it will be one of great labour and time, rivalling (if ever completed) the celebrated Plymouth Breakwater.

The following morning, we were off Port Macquarie, lying about two hundred miles north of Sydney. There is little or nothing interesting to be seen in running along the coast. We passed, at some distance, Port Stephens, the inlet on which a portion of the Australian Agricultural Company's settlements lie, and the Manning river, where three or four settlers are established.

Towards night, we discovered fires near the shore, being doubtless caused by the blacks. The coast between Camden Haven and Port Macquarie (a distance of twenty miles) is very pleasing being ornamented near the latter place by several of those detached, conical, and remarkable-looking elevations called "Nobbies."

In order to reach the township, or "Settlement," as it is termed, we were obliged to embark in the pilot's boat, which landed us at the boat harbour, half a mile or more from the village. The steamer could not enter the harbour (so called), on account of the roughness of the bar and its deficiency of water. Indeed the bar at the entrance is so bad that she is detained almost every trip, either out in the open sea, or inside at the wharf.

Port Macquarie is decidedly the best built and most prettily-situated township I have seen in the colony. It stands partly, almost on a level with the "Hastings" (which forms its harbour), and partly on the high land overlooking the sea. Above the settlement, the channel takes a great bend, forming, when the tide is in, a large lake, bounded on one side by a sand spit dividing it from the sea, and on the other by the low flat bank of the river, fringed to the waterside with mangroves. This is a great resort of pelicans, and various kinds of sea-fowl.

The settlement, or camp (for it has occasionally borne the latter name ever since it was a penal settlement), contains little worth mentioning, if we except the two churches (Presbyterian and Episcopalian), a large Jail and an extensive and handsome Hotel, and stores erected by Major Innes, the only large proprietor in the district.

Port Macquarie, like Moreton Bay, or Norfolk Island, was, until about ten or twelve years ago, exclusively a penal settlement; in fact, a *dépôt* for doubly convicted felons, or those who had, after being transported from the mother country, been tried and convicted in New South Wales. Of course, all the great improvements in it have taken place since it was opened for settling, although some good Government buildings remain. A great deal—and indeed a great deal too much—has been done for it, by iron gangs, and other Government appliances, which would have been much more usefully and profitably bestowed on the roads leading to the interior.

A track having been found over the barren and mountainous country between New England and Port Macquarie, a road has been attempted to be formed to unite the two, in order to make the latter the shipping-port for the wool and supplies of the former. A road-party, consisting of prisoners, has been for some time employed on it, but the "Big Hill" presents such an obstacle, that many people think the road will not be worth much. There is some very bad country, with some long brushes to be encountered; and, from the nature of the soil, and the number of sidelings, it will doubtless require constant repair, the rather as the rains are occasionally very heavy.

The road, on leaving Port Macquarie, winds along in the neighbourhood of the Hastings, and in this part is very good, being well supplied also with inns, chiefly erected by Major Innes, who, in a spirit of great liberality and enterprise, has done much in this and other ways for the district. Several drays, loaded with wool, have already arrived in the settlement from

New England, and a good many dray-loads of supplies have been sent up in return; and those who are interested in the matter seem confident as to the roads being ultimately of great use. If this should prove the case, it will be productive of two great benefits: it will give Port Macquarie (which now seems to be dying a natural death) a fresh impulse, and it will save the New Englanders an immensity of time, labour, expense, and uneasiness, all of which their traffic with Maitland on the Hunter costs them.

The only place in the neighbourhood of Port Macquarie worth mentioning is Lake Innes, the elegant residence of Major Innes. The view here is very fine; in fact, I think the most beautiful I have seen in the colony. In front, lies a very large fresh-water lake (a sight peculiarly pleasing in this arid country), beyond are seen, at a distance of from twenty to forty miles, Coolapatamba,* Brokenbago, and the other

* "The place where the eagles drink."

mountains of the Wilson and the Hastings, to which the former is tributary, while Mount-Sea view, on the verge of New England, towers aloft in the background. This fine scenery is enhanced by discovering from the same spot, on looking to the left, a noble sea view, terminated by a bluff called Camden Haven Head, supported, as it were, a little further back by one of the three remarkable mountains called the "Brothers."

It is an unusual and extraordinary thing in any country, and most of all in New South Wales, to see so fine a sheet of fresh water in such immediate juxta-position to the sea. There is scarcely half a mile of slightly-elevated sandy soil between them; and when, after heavy rains, the lake becomes very full, it finds a vent by a small creek to the ocean, at "Catti."

Port Macquarie, ever since it ceased to be exclusively a penal settlement, has been used as a *dépôt* for what are called "specials;" that is, special, or *gentlemen*-convicts, and for invalids. Here may be seen gallant naval and military

officers, eloquent parsons, learned lawyers, acute, and once opulent bankers and merchants, "*et id genus omne.*" There is also a sprinkling of aristocracy—of brothers and sons of lords, right honourables, baronets, &c., and some claiming such titles, or succession to them for themselves. From these are found all grades, down to the London Jew and the Tipperary murderer. Those who claim the an of "special" are better off than, and often placed above, their fellows, the authorities evidently forgetting, or discarding, the admirable apothegm of the ancients—"*fiat justitia, ruat cœlum!*"

When circumstances favour them, they are assigned to their wives, or made constables, jailers, wardsmen of the prisoners' barracks, overseers, or storekeepers of road-parties, &c. Some of them, as well as many of the invalids, are lent out to settlers, who thus obtain slaves for their keep, but in general they are not of much use. I have seen lawyers and bankers tending sheep, soldiers and parsons acting as stockmen, and gamblers and pickpockets filling

the capacity of hut-keepers; but it is not to be expected that they will be found well adapted to a mode of life so different from that to which they have been accustomed. It is wonderful, however, how soon some of them learn to be useful; and I well remember a gentleman pointing out to me his best shepherd, and stating that he had formerly been a notorious London pickpocket.

The invalids are, on the whole, perhaps of less use to the settler, as they are constantly either laid up at home, or demanding passes to the hospital—an inconvenience most serious to their masters, living, as many of them do, at distances of from fifty to one hundred miles from the settlement.

The "Hastings," a fine broad river as far as the tide flows up, is joined by the "Wilson" from the northward, a stream which affords on its banks sites for some excellent farms, that have been accordingly occupied. The former river, which rises on the table-land of New England, at a distance of about one hundred

miles, though occupied in nearly its whole length by grazing establishments, is not very available for agricultural purposes. Its banks are clothed with brushes, which shroud the river, as it were, with a dark pall; and this sort of land, though it is the richest, costs a great deal before it can be got under cultivation.

The Wilson, on the other hand, while in many places silently and darkly winding its way through rich brush, displays also in several localities small open plains, or flats, of the richest alluvial soil, and naturally devoid of timber, which consequently afford admirable positions for the settler to take up. Both this river and the Hastings are navigable for large boats, to the distance of from fifteen to twenty miles, being as far as the tide flows up; and near the head of the navigation of the former a salt-water inlet, called Piper's Creek, branches off, and extends to within ten miles of the M^c^Leay, a very fine river, falling into the sea at Trial Bay, seventy miles to the northward of Port Macquarie.

Piper's Creek, divided near its head into two

branches, one of which is called the "Maria," is navigable to its rise, about forty miles from the settlement, and is salt through its whole course, no water flowing in at its head except after rain. It is a dark, dismal-looking creek, shrouded in dense brush, which occasionally almost meets overhead; and, except when the ear is startled by the smack of the coach-whip-bird, and the clear silvery tinkle of the bell-bird, or the eye is caught by the graceful feathery bangala, or cabbage-tree, nothing occurs to break the monotony and dispel the melancholy which the gloom of the scene inspires. My first trip, while in this district, was up this creek, in a small boat; and, from the discomfort endured, I am not likely to forget it. I had started with one or two companions, and a couple of Government men to pull our small boat. Having reached the head of the creek, I had walked two or three miles across the bush to inspect a place which at that time I was anxious to see.

The weather, up to this period, had been very

fine, indeed exceedingly hot; but, before I could reach the boat again, it began raining most heavily, and in those pleasant circumstances we embarked to return a distance of nearly forty miles in the dark. The blacks, to whom we had lent a gun and ammunition, had shot some wallobies * and wild duck for us; but, owing to the heavy rain, we did not attempt to cook them.

We soon passed the place where we had encamped the previous night (my first in the bush) in a most uncomfortable manner. We had made a large fire, and hung the boat-sail to windward; but what with the heat on the one side, cold on the other, and a cloud of ravenous mosquitoes all round me, I did not close my eyes all night. Having proceeded beyond our former encampment, and about five miles in all, the rain falling in a deluge the whole way, hunger prompted us to land and attempt to cook some of our game. With some trouble

* Small kangaroos.

we succeeded, by means of a gun, in making a fire; but we were only able to half roast a wild duck before our fire expired.

Having devoured our hasty meal, we again embarked, it being now dark, and at last arrived at the point where the river divides into three branches, called the "Legs of Man." Here we held a council of war; we had come up the third leg, which is a good, but circuitous passage, but we determined on going down the middle branch, which is considerably shorter than the other two.

This was rather unadvised, as we were unacquainted with this branch, and it was now dark as "Erebus," save when the lightning (which was very vivid, and accompanied by terrific peals of thunder) illumined the scene. As might have been expected, we suffered for our folly. The creek was every here and there choked up with dead limbs and trees, some of them extending quite across, and we were constantly running foul of them, and getting entangled in them. Of course, we kept a man in the bow to look out, but he was unable to

see a foot before him, except when a flash of lightning appeared. I was steering the whole way, and a cold miserable berth I had of it. On one occasion, I was rather rudely chucked under the chin by a protruding branch, and very nearly got jerked out of the boat altogether. However

> " the darkest day,
> Wait till to-morrow, will have pass'd away,"

as will the night; so, by dint of perseverance, we at last made the settlement towards morning, after " biding the pelting" of a most " pitiless storm."

Once more under shelter, and with a good supper before us, we soon forgot our misadventures and miseries, though at the time I thought, with the luckless Clarence,

> " I would not pass another such a night,
> Though 't were to gain a world of happy days."

My next exploring trip was to the McLeay River, crossing the Hastings at " Black Man's

Point," five miles from the settlement, where it is joined by its tributary, the "Wilson." I then passed through "Rolland's Plains," being those flats (converted into good and pleasant-looking farms) to which I have already alluded. Leaving these, I struck to the northward, travelling for fifteen miles over an uninhabited, hilly, and unavailable country, and crossing those mountain ranges which divide the valley of the McLeay, and and its tributary creeks, from that of the "Wilson."

There are three different bush-tracks leading to different parts of the McLeay; one from the lowest point of the "Plains" to "Commandant Hill" and Kempsey, practicable for drays, passes a lime station on the way, adjoining "Piper's Creek." The other two start from the same point, near the top of the "Plains," the one (a mere bridle-path, or "marked tree line," and a very rugged one, too) branching off towards the stations near the middle of the river's course, the other (a dray road) proceeding to the Upper McLeay, and striking

upon that river at a station called "Wabera," forty miles from the "Plains." This latter I pursued, and found it to be merely a track worn by the drays which pass that way. It is one succession of heights and hollows, now passing through some deep stony-gully, or water-course, anon over some almost perpendicular ridge, and occasionally landing you in a boggy creek in the centre of a brush. Nothing but the heavy drays in use, and the eight or ten strong bullocks which are yoked to them, could withstand the shocks received in encountering these gullies, "pinches," and abrupt hills.

At fifteen miles from the Plains, I descended from a high range into the valley of Dungi Creek, one of the largest and best of the M'Leay's tributaries. There was little water in it, this being a season of drought; but, in wet weather, it becomes a foaming torrent of considerable size, and, as it rises very quickly, and is sometimes impassable for many days together, it is both dangerous and inconvenient.

Six or eight miles further on, the road arrives

at the bank of the McLeay itself, but does not cross it, retreating further back again among the ranges, and crossing within three or four miles of "Waberoo," "Innes' Creek," a stream of the same character as "Dungi," but rather larger. "Waberoo" station is itself on a small creek, the river being five miles distant. The latter, which rises in New England, at a distance of about one hundred miles from this point, is joined by many creeks of various sizes, and by one large branch, at a point called the "junction," about thirty miles from the foot of the Table Land of New England.

The McLeay, rising, as I have already said, in the borders of the elevated plains of New England, falls over the rugged and inaccessible precipices forming the verge of that tract in its course towards the lower country, through which it winds its circuitous way to the sea. In all, its direct length may be about one hundred and fifty miles, but it is so extremely sinuous that, including its various windings, it probably trebles that distance. In fact, it is a second "Meander,"

stretching away every here and there into immense horse-shoes, and forming large tongues of land, the stream occasionally almost meeting at the neck.

For the most part, in the bends of the river, at the *embouchure* of creeks, and in many places along the banks, thick and luxuriant brush is found, matted together with vines, and abounding in the red cedar, which, at the time of my visit, afforded employment to numerous sawyers, pitmen, squarers, rafters, &c., as also to ten or twelve small craft, sloops and schooners, which conveyed the timber from Trial Bay to Sydney.

This wood, which is red, and of a porous texture, is, when polished, very beautiful, equalling some mahogany, and not unlike it. The trees frequently grow to a great size, and are very handsome. This is one of the few species of trees in New South Wales whose wood is soft, and which are deciduous. The white cedar, also growing in brushes and on their verges, is very handsome, being in its season covered with a beautiful

blossom, very like the lilac of Great Britain. Its timber is white, and not of much use, being only applied as small paling, and that rarely. It splits up very easily, but soon decays.

There are, moreover, a few rather pretty kinds of wood found in the brushes besides these, of which I may mention the tulip-wood, rose-wood, and one or two other woods used for flooring, &c. It is the red cedar, however, that is the most valuable; and the McLeay, at the time of my visit, produced the best. Now, the greater part has been cut, except that which is so far above the first falls, or fords, as to be unavailable. It is found not to pay, when cut at any distance from water-carriage; and, consequently, the sawyers at first confined themselves to that which grew below the point to which the tide flows. That becoming scarce, they attacked the brushes, ten, twenty, thirty, and at last forty miles above tide flow, felling timber ultimately eight miles up "Henderson's Creek," which falls into the river ten miles above the point where I first struck upon it.

These sawyers and their mates are a strange, wild set, comprising in general a good proportion of desperate ruffians, and sometimes a few runaways, they themselves commonly being ticket-of-leave men, or emancipists. Two or three pair, accompanied by one or two men for falling, squaring small timber, and digging pits, shoulder their axes and saws, and with a sledge or dray-load of provisions, proceed to some solitary brush, where they make a little "gunya," or hut, with a few sheets of bark, and commence operations. They labour very hard, stripping to the waist in the hottest summer days; but they live in extreme abundance, and, indeed, wastefulness, though their fare is but simple, consisting only of salt beef, damper, tea, and sugar. From their migratory habits, they are unable to have any kind of vegetables, but they invariably indulge in flour of the finest quality.

The timber is only squared with the saw into large logs, and is left at the pit, a new pit generally being dug, when all the trees in the immediate vicinity of their former one have been

felled and squared. After working for two or three months in this way, these men will go down the river to receive their wages, or "have a settlement," as they call it.

Though, generally, from one hundred to two hundred per cent. is charged by their employer, on the rations and clothes supplied to them, they have always a large amount to receive, on getting which (invariably in the shape of orders, &c.), they start off to the nearest public-house, (perhaps a distance of forty miles), there to remain till they have spent every farthing, often exceeding thirty or forty pounds, when they return once more to the brush, in order to resume as before the same labour. They are certainly the most improvident set of men in the world, often eclipsing in recklessness, misery, and peculiarity of character, the wood-cutters of Campeachy, and the lumberers of the Ohio and Mississippi.

In riding along some path leading through a brush, and bewildered and lost amid the various and endless mazes of cedar tracks, one will often

stumble upon a miserable cabin, shut out from the genial rays of the sun, instinct with life in the shape of gigantic mosquitoes and other vermin, and inhabited by a lonely sawyer and his dirty and forbidding wife, or mistress, probably a ticket-of-leave woman, or emancipist. If there are any children, which is occasionally the case, they are in the last stage of squalor and filth, their pale and emaciated features already showing that fever and ague—the demons of these brushes—have begun their work with them.

When rum is brought to these abodes of labour and wretchedness, and a few sawyers are convened, then begin the scenes of riot and mischief. It is well known that men have been killed on these occasions; and I have been assured that in lonely places one or two sawyers have combined to make away with another, in order to share the fruits of his toil. Their usual carelessness of money, when they have it, is well exemplified by an instance which fell within my own observation. Out of a spirit of bravado, or "flashness," as it is called,

one of them actually used a pound-note as wadding for his powder and shot; an application to which the Bank would doubtless have no objection. These extraordinary habits are attributable to several causes: the depraved and degraded class to which most of the sawyers belong; their loneliness and seclusion, being cut off during their whole time from any chance of good advice, or example; and the comparatively high pay for their work, together with the large sums which they receive at one time. The rafters are of the same class, and partake of the same habits.

When the sawyers have completed their work, the bullock-drivers go up with their teams, and draw the logs to the bank of the river. The rafters follow them, and, with levers, throw the timber into the stream, where (if below tide-flow) it is fastened together at once by means of ropes, sometimes vines, passing through an iron staple in each log. A raft is thus formed, on which the men, and sometimes their wives, float down to Trial

Bay, a distance of about forty or forty-five miles from the first falls.

The timber cut higher up the river, after being thrown in, lies waiting for a flood to take it down, and is sometimes in this predicament for a twelvemonth, or more. If, however, there happens to be enough of water at the time of its immersion, the rafters follow it, commonly in a canoe, getting out at every fall, or ford, and pushing onwards every log that is aground, taking care also to examine every pool and corner, in order to extricate all logs that may be caught in bushes, or cast ashore by eddies.

It often happens that a large flood will occur when there is timber in the river, on which occasion it is carried far back upon the flats and forest land, and left high and dry on the subsiding of the water. I have often, after such a flood, seen immense blocks of cedar perched up in the tops of the oaks and other trees, and the ends of others peeping out from such masses of wreck, and at such a distances

from the river, as renders it not worth removing. To catch those logs floated singly down the river a rope, or chain, is stretched across below the lowest falls. But many logs float out to sea, and occasionally a whole raft will break adrift, and share the same fate.

The brushes have now been well nigh exhausted, and most of the sawyers have migrated to the Nambucca, the Ballitean, the Clarence, Richmond, and Brisbane. Wherever they have been at work, they have left immense numbers of cedar slabs, generally from eight to twelve feet long, and from one to three feet broad, sawn flat on one side, and forming a useful material for building rough bush houses. The settler, whose station is near these brushes, finds them very advantageous on this account; as, instead of falling and splitting gum-trees, he has only to send his team to the brush, and *spare-chain these slabs. They are not to be

* This is the term applied to dragging anything with bullocks, by means of the extra chain belonging to the dray.

recommended, however, for dwelling-houses as they are always found to harbour vermin.

At about thirty miles from Trial Bay, and ten miles below the highest point to which the tide reaches, is situated a small village, or rather an attempt at one, called Kempsey; and a couple of miles further up "Commandant Hill," a site chosen for a village, or a Government reserve, by Major Innes, while Commandant of the penal settlement of Port Macquarie. Kempsey only contains three or four houses, and a few huts, and has hitherto been supported by a public-house and a blacksmith; but now that the sawyers have abandoned the river, and that these bad times have followed, most of the houses are shut up, it has become a second edition of the "Deserted Village," a monument of misdirected speculation.

This part of the river abounds in swamps and brushes, and is very unhealthy, being extremely prolific in cases of fever and ague. On the south, or Kempsey side, there is very little land fit for anything from that point down to the mouth of the river; but, on the opposite

side, there are several extensive plains of the richest soil, devoid of a single branch or root of timber, and capable (were the management and sale of land on a more equitable and sensible footing) of affording locations for hundreds of families.

The back part of these plains is swampy, but beyond that there is good forest land for grazing; and the swamps afford grass, or reeds, for cattle in the longest droughts. Such a place would be admirably adapted for a philanthropic capitalist as the scene of his labours. Here he might purchase a tract of land, and plant around him, as small farmers and cotters, many of these unfortunate beings who, with their families, are starving at home. Here they could ensure at least a rough plenty; and, if the drought consumed their wheat and potatoes, or the flood washed away their tobacco, they would still have their maize, their milk, and their pumpkins. With cattle and horses to be purchased for very little, grass in the bush to feed them for nothing, and a fine

river at their doors offering water-carriage direct to Sydney, what could they want, if they were industrious ?

The river is here a noble stream, ebbing and flowing with the tide, and quite salt the greater part of the year, unless after a great flood; but there are a sameness and darkness about it, rather inducive of *ennui*. The banks, all along of the same height (about twelve or fifteen feet), are clothed in thick brushes of the richest foliage; but all of life that can be seen is a stately black swan, or a startled red-bill, or dragoon bird.

There are one or two islands further down the river, namely, "Shark Island," "Pelican Island," &c., and, at about six or eight miles from the mouth, it is joined by a large creek, called the "Klybucca," on which now a cattle station is formed. Within a mile of the river's *embouchure*, it widens into a large lake, two or three miles across, but the water is shoal. It again narrows, and at last disembogues itself through a narrow gut into "Trial Bay," a large reach trending away to the southward.

On the north side is a sand-spit, supported by a rocky headland behind, and from this runs circuitously a channel of backwater, called the "Gulchway," very rapid and dangerous for boats. From the headland, or "double corner," as this part is called, a northerly walk of four miles, partly along the beach, brings you to Werral Creek, a branch of the Nambucca, on which one cattle-station is formed, and a few sawyers are at work.

Opposite Kempsey there is a ship-builder's yard, and another further down the river; and from these several small vessels have been launched, and I believe one of about a hundred and twenty tons.

From tide-flow upwards, the river is a fine, broad, clear stream, with a bottom either shingly or rocky. In every bend and bight, there is a flat, commonly of alluvial earth, and producing ferns and apple-trees,* certain symptoms of a rich soil.

* This is an indigenous tree, so called from its similarity to our own apple-tree.

These flats are of various elevations, there being generally two or three of them, one behind the other, rising up as they recede, like extensive terraces. A few of those nearest the river are free from timber, and, with a little fencing, are ready for the plough.

The falls, or fords, are almost invariably at the turns of the stream; and, wherever there is a flat on one side, there is found elevated and rocky land on the other, rising frequently into high hills, whose base ascends from the water. It is consequently impossible to make a road along the river-side; and those settlers who live high up take their drays along the bed of the river, sometimes over shingly beach and sand, sometimes across the apple-tree flats, cutting off the corners and peninsulas as much as possible, and constantly crossing and re-crossing the falls. Opposite the high banks, there is always a beach of stones and sand, dotted, and sometimes clothed with oak-trees, which are somewhat like larches; and the immediate verge of the stream is fringed with the bottle-brush, a tree which

produces a brilliant red flower, of the size and shape of the domestic instrument from which it derives its name.

I have, perhaps, already been too particular in my account of this river; but I have been thus minute, both because I on this occasion chose a run on which I afterwards settled, and because this description will also serve for most, if not all, of the other rivers which run towards the east.

On going down the stream, in order to return to the settlement, I passed the greater part of the stations then formed, which I found to be at a distance of from four to ten miles apart. I also had experience of the bewilderment of being lost in the bush; to add to my discomforts, I was overtaken by a torrent of rain, the fall of which would no doubt revive the hopes of the settler, as there had been a long drought, and the river was very low; so low, indeed, that at more than one place, I was able to cross it on foot, and dryshod.

I should have mentioned before this, that all

one side of the McLeay, and the greater part of the other, are beyond the bounds of the colony. The boundary line of the county of Macquarie (the most northern in the colony), runs from Mount Seaview, by Mount Wirrikimbe to the northward, heading the Wilson, running along the ranges dividing that river from the valley of the McLeay, striking upon the latter in the vicinity of Commandant Hill, and following its course onward to the sea. Thus only Kempsey, and one or two farms below it, are within the colony, the settlers on all other parts of the river being squatters, and holding their stations on a very insecure and unfair footing, by a mode of tenure which I shall in the sequel have occasion to notice.

Arrived once more at the plains, I proceeded to return to the settlement, but met with nothing worth recording, except, perhaps, the large and abandoned sugar-mill, erected by Major Innes, while Commandant, for the purpose of manufacturing the produce of a cane-piece, which by way of experiment he had

planted by convict labour on the plains. Some tolerable sugar was made, but it did not pay for the labour, and the climate was found too cold in winter for the sugar-cane.

Between "Ballingarra," where one crosses in a Government punt, and "Blackman's Point," at which there is another ferry, I passed through several swamps, boggy and covered with long reeds, and until the present road was made, almost impassable. At "Blackman's Point," where the river appears to be about half a mile broad, a large punt is stationed, capable of taking over drays and teams of bullocks. It is rented from Government by a person who exacts a toll of sixpence from every horseman who crosses. The road from this point to the settlement runs along the river bank, is only a foot or two above its level, and has a salt marsh on the other side, so that it is constantly liable to be flooded, on which occasions it is generally strewed with drift-wood.

The country over which I rode was very much the same, in style and appearance, as that which I had previously visited, except that I found it to be decidedly better grassed and watered. Lying considerably to the northward, it is said to catch the fag-end of the northerly and tropical rains; but, be this as it may, it certainly does not suffer so much from drought as some of the southern and western parts of the colony. There are several high mountains in it (particularly a remarkable one on Henderson's Creek, named by me "Table Mountain"), which help to attract and break the watery clouds that may approach them.

Each river has, on the lower part, a very narrow valley; on the upper, almost none at all. The creeks have their small alluvial flats, and nothing more, the ranges rising commonly from the side of the stream. All the rest of the country is one continuation of broken hills and ranges jumbled together without any apparent

connection, or order; in fact, a mass of mole-hills. They are covered with timber pretty thickly, and I in vain looked for the park-like scenery of which I had heard.

These hills are not deficient in grass, which, as all over New South Wales, does not form a sward, but is thinly scattered over the ground in isolated tufts. Towards the coast, that is, within from twenty to thirty miles of it, the country is more scrubby, brushy, and interspersed with swamps, and the grass is sour and not very good for stock. The rich flats on the banks, and in the bights of the rivers and creeks, are the only places fit for cultivation; the ranges are only available as pasture, but the cattle scarcely ever stray up the hills, except in winter, confining themselves during the rest of the year to the banks of the creeks and rivers.

On this expedition, as on my former ones, I saw several kangaroos and snakes, having startled some of the former on the spot where I afterwards settled, and up a creek where I believe

the foot of the white man had never trod before, and which now bears my name. I also encountered some blacks, but shall reserve for another chapter my notice of them.

CHAPTER IV.

The Author's return to Sydney—Blacks murdered by white men—The Squatters and the Natives—Execution at Sydney — The Hunter River — Village of Morpeth — Maitland—Scenery around Darlington—Tremendous hail-storm—Expedition to the Liverpool Plains—Nature of the soil—Bad roads—Teams of bullocks—A settler's annoyances—Muscle Brook—Arrival at a gentleman's house—A droll incident at night.

I HAD not as yet spent six months in the colony, and having neither decided finally on my future proceedings, nor met with any very eligible opportunity or mode of settling, I determined to see yet more of the country which I had for the present adopted. I accordingly returned to Sydney preparatory to making a

tour through the Hunter river district and Liverpool Plains.

While in town, on returning one morning before breakfast from bathing, my attention was attracted by a crowd at the back of the old jail, and walking up, I, at that moment, saw seven men led out to be hanged.

Their crime was the slaughter of a large number of blacks, men and women; and certainly, if the statement I heard was true in its details, it was a most atrocious affair. It appears, that they captured these natives, and, leading them a mile away into the bush, there shot them, burning their remains. They were at first acquitted, but, as it was determined to make an example of them, a new trial was somehow procured, when they were condemned.

A very strong feeling was manifested in their favour by most of the colonists, and subscriptions were raised to defray the expense of counsel. It was argued, that these stockmen had been in danger of their lives from the

blacks, who had also speared their master's cattle; and that, if they were hanged, settlers would not know how to defend their lives and property, nor be able to procure men to go out into the far bush, knowing as they would, that they must protect their master's stock, and that, at the same time, they must refrain from injuring the blacks.

These reasons, however, were no excuse for the deliberate and atrocious manner in which they retaliated, and they were insufficient to save them from the arm of the law. A great outcry was made; and certainly, viewing the law, not with reference to this case in particular, but generally, and in the abstract, it appears to a great extent one-sided.

If a white man injures a black, he is amenable to the law as much as if he wronged his own countryman; and is almost as likely to be detected in the one case as the other. If, on the other hand, the black is the aggressor, he flies to his ravines and brushes, where no horseman can follow him, and where the white

man will never find him, unless, peradventure, he has another black, to track his enemy. If he finds him, he can only shoot him, at the risk of being hanged, for the savage will rarely be captured alive under these circumstances, unless wounded.

If the culprit be taken, it is a thousand to one that he is acquitted. Probably, neither he nor his tribe understand a word of English, and there is the difficulty of procuring witnesses and identifying him, to be contended with. The consequence is that, in most cases, he receives a suit of slops, a blanket, and a tomahawk,—to dash out more men's brains with. If, on the other hand, he is transported, or hanged, his brethren see and know nothing of this; and, though they wonder that he does not return, they soon forget him, and are not deterred from further depredations. The "black fellows," too, will often escape, after they have been taken; and, from their knowledge of the bush, and cunning in secreting themselves, they are not likely to be retaken.

I heard of one instance, where a black had been removed one hundred miles from his own district, and placed in a lock-up, but, from the smallness of his hands, he drew off the hand-cuffs, and got off in the night. Of course, he was soon among his friends, and was never re-taken. Under these circumstances, it is evident that the same law cannot be justly and equally administered to the two races, who are continually thrown into hostile contact on the frontiers of the colony. The gun is the only law the black fears; the only power that deters him from murder and plunder; and the only available administrator of punishment for his offences.

Those who denounce the squatter as a murderer and land-robber, it has been well said in "Kennedy's Account of Texas," "take no thought of the spirit that has impelled him onwards, of the qualities he is constrained to display, and the social ameliorations of which he is the pioneer.

He loves the wilderness for the independence it confers—for the sovereignty which it enables him to wield by dint of his personal energies. The forest is subject to his axe—its inhabitants to his gun."

By daily toil, and at the risk of his life, he earns his bread, and leads a life of conscious independence where the grand old forests have stood for ages, and where the foot of the white man never trod before. His life is one of continued labour, solitude, and too often warfare. He has an enemy untiring, and often waiting long for his time; cunning, wary, and expert; frequently displaying great courage, and, if he has wrongs to avenge, heedless on whom he wreaks his vengeance, so long as a white man is the victim. Surely, then, the man who is the pioneer of civilization—who, going out into the wilderness, spends his days in toil and danger, and his nights in dreariness and solitude—who must send out his shepherd with

a musket on his shoulder, and sling his rifle at his side when he rides among his herds—who, making a lodgment in the bush, causes "the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose," and opens the way for the smiling villages, the good old British institutions, and the happy population which follow surely, this man has not laboured in vain; but has deserved at least leniency at our hands.

Far be it from me to advocate the causeless and indiscriminate slaughter which has often taken place. At the same time, on is indignant when one hears those comfortable and luxuriant philanthropists, who, overflowing with sympathy for all races but their own, sit by their own warm fire-sides at home, range not beyond the smoke of their native cities, and there consign to everlasting destruction the hardy and adventurous backwoodsman, whose own right arm is his only defence.

If he were unable, or unwilling, to protect his own life,—to defend his own property—the bush is indeed no place for him. The Bushman, however, is seldom the aggressor. Cool murders have, it is to be regretted, doubtless been occasionally committed. I myself was informed of a case where a young gentleman who had formed a squatting station in the interior, finding a "black fellow" in his neighbourhood, quietly rode up to him and shot him through the head, on the principle that it was safest to permit none to come upon his run; but such cases are rare, and are now unheard of. Warfare there will be wherever a new country is found, and new stations formed. This is to be expected, and cannot be prevented; but, in places that have been long settled, the natives suffer no wrong—are not interfered with; but, on the contrary, protected, even to the extent of prohibiting their being supplied with spirits,

which however they procure, and which tend, along with other causes, to hasten their disappearance from the land of their fathers.

But I am tarrying too long cogitating at the back of the old jail. Before I go, however, I cannot help noticing that mechanic, or labourer dressed in coarse clothing, and standing near me. He is emphatically "one of the unwashed," but he is a philosopher; and, as the seven unfortunates dropped from the scaffold, he exclaimed (apparently soliloquizing), "Well, they know the grand secret *now*."

My attention was, however, called away, by being propelled by the crowd against my next neighbour, a woman well dressed, and leaning on the arm of her husband, or beau, who had brought her to see the sight. She held a gay parasol over her head to shield herself from the sun, whose rays had already become very powerful, and, being incommoded by me, she exclaimed against me

with some asperity, for the inconvenience I caused. I, however, took the liberty of reproving her for being there, and admonished her to go home, which advice she received with a very bad grace. The crowd was not so great as I expected, seeing that the Governor had thought it necessary to have a strong military guard in attendance on the occasion; but, sooth to say, executions were an every day affair there, and attracted little attention.

After a short residence in Sydney, I addressed myself to the business in hand, and prepared for my journey to the Hunter. Having embarked on board one of the Maitland steamboats at night, I had the satisfaction to find myself by breakfast time a little beyond Newcastle, and steaming quickly up the placid river. There is little to describe in the scenery I met with here; as usual in the case of these rivers, the banks were low and flat, as far as the tide

flows, at least. The mangroves gave a dark fringe to the land, and behind these arose the tall gum trees, growing thickly together in all cases, and (where brush grew) enveloped below in a mass of underwood and a tangle of vines.

The river itself, containing one or two islands, is everywhere encumbered by flats and shallows, and in many places large masses of tall reeds rear their heads. Here and there an opening is seen, where some settler has established himself; but, on the whole, the river has a sombre and sluggish appearance. About a mile from Greenhills, (called also Morpeth), where there is the head of the navigation, the Hunter is joined by the Paterson, a river running through a flourishing and rather pleasant district.

Morpeth, a small village, is distant about five miles from Maitland, which is divided by a road a mile long, into East and West Maitland. These are good-sized

villages, though very straggling, and containing hotels, churches, &c., with those indispensables in Australian towns, a court-house and jail. The water up to this point is very brackish; but fresh water is obtained from Wallace Creek, which here joins the Hunter. West Maitland is situate immediately on the banks of the river, and has occasionally been completely flooded and injured in rainy weather. The country around for many miles is level and uninteresting; but the soil is rich, and is all occupied by excellent farms, which are perhaps the best situated in the colony, having the advantage of steamers almost every day to Sydney, the only emporium and market for colonial produce.

Having taken my horse with me in the steamer, I rode up to Maitland from the place of disembarkation. There are, however, two coaches for the convenience of those who are not provided as I was. Hav-

ing spent a day here, I proceeded to the neighbourhood of Patrick's Plains, to the residence of a gentleman with whom I had become acquainted, and whose property lay in this quarter, and at a distance of about twenty-five miles from Maitland; Darlington, otherwise called Singleton, which may be styled the township of Patrick's Plains, being four or five miles further on.

The ride to this point is flat and uninteresting, there being little to vary the monotony of the interminable gum-tree. For a few miles, however, around Darlington, the land is level and rich, and to a considerable extent free from timber, consisting, in fact, of some of those plains occasionally found on the banks of rivers.

Darlington is situate on the bank of the Hunter, and in one of those flats, or plains. The weather appears to be in general more than usually warm here; and, as these plains suffer often and long from drought,

the village and roads around it are commonly very disagreeable from the quantities of finely pulverized dust abounding everywhere. There is a Presbyterian church in Darlington, as also one or two shops (here called stores), and a couple of inns, or public houses. These, as well as a small mill worked by steam, are the only objects of consequence in the township. As in every other settlement, there are a lock-up and court-house, and a police or stipendiary magistrate, to administer justice.

In the course of a residence of three weeks with my friend, I visited most of the country around, but saw nothing worth recording. In fact, the only exception to the unvaried insipidity of the scenery, is the outline of the Wallombi, the mountains over which the road to Windsor and Sydney passes.

During my stay here, I witnessed, and for a few seconds encountered, the most tre-

mendous hail-storm with which I ever met; and this was rather unlooked for, seeing that it was now January, which, with December, is the hottest season of the year. The hail-stones, which fell prodigiously thick, were of the size and shape of the brass handles, or knobs of doors, and were armed all round with high sharp points of ice. Their force must have been very great, as they broke off the small branches of the trees, chipped, and left visible marks on, the dry, hard, gum paling, and shivered to pieces the thick and lofty stems of some fine aloes, which were at the time in flower.

The windows of the house were of course destroyed; and a man, who happened to be exposed for a short time during the storm, was severely cut and otherwise hurt. I was fortunate enough to obtain shelter immediately on the commencement of the storm, which, from its violence, was capable of inflicting severe injury, and possibly death,

if the head were exposed. I regretted that I had no opportunity of weighing the hail-stones, but they were fully of the size mentioned, and must consequently have been of considerable weight.

About this time, it happened that my host found it expedient to visit his sheep and cattle-stations in Liverpool Plains. In fact, it was the season in which he always went up the country in order to superintend the sheep-shearing, which by this time (the end of January) was over with most of the settlers.

On this expedition I determined to accompany him; and having rested (or, as it is termed, spelled) our horses for a day or two, and packed our saddle-bags, we started, after breakfast, on a very warm February morning. On the road, we were passed by the coach, an open kind of car, one of which leaves Darlington, and another Maitland, every day, with passengers and the mail.

At Darlington, we crossed the bed of the Hunter, which was perfectly dry as far as the eye could reach, with the exception of one pool of stagnant water, mantled with a coat of green, and emitting the most abominable effluvia, from the decomposition of a few bullocks which lay rotting there. Our route was, as I expected, tedious, from the dull sameness which is so universal here. This being the height of summer, as well as a season of uncommonly long and severe drought, the roads were very dusty and arid; and all water had been so completely dried up, that it was impossible, without calling at a settler's, to obtain the means of quenching one's thirst.

Ever and anon, too, the nose was assailed by the stench arising from the carcases of working bullocks, which had died on their way for want of water and grass. In some parts of the road, the soil appeared to be a black loam. In others, it was a bright red,

having a considerable admixture of clay; and where the track rises at all over ranges, or hills, it generally displays a gravelly, or sandy bottom.

The road is a mere track formed by the passing of drays, never having had anything done to it in the way of making or mending beyond Harper's Hill, a stockade about fifteen miles from Maitland, where an iron gang was stationed. On either hand is the interminable forest, thickly timbered, and consisting of the gum-tree and its congeners —the blackbut, stringy-bark, box, blood-wood, and iron-bark.

We passed only one or two locations, or clearances, in the bush; but we met several drays travelling down the country with wool, and overtook one or two on their return up, with stores for the sheep-stations. I was not surprised to see the teams of bullocks, consisting always of eight or ten, in most wretched order; indeed, the wonder was

that they survived at all, seeing that of water there was seemingly none, and the supply of grass appeared to be nearly as scanty. The wretched animals, chained to the ponderous drays (each carrying ten bales of wool), choked with dust, and marked from stem to stern by the unfeeling lashes of the bullock-drivers, presented a most pitiable spectacle, as they laboured to "drag their slow length along."

In such seasons, many of them perish from sheer thirst and inanition, and then drays are detained for weeks, or even months, beyond their time. I have seen the drivers camped by the road side, waiting till their master could learn their position, and send more bullocks, which he has often to buy at double their value (in those days, £10 a-piece). On other occasions, the bullocks are lost, from their straying far off in search of food and water, and it may be days or weeks before they are heard of;

while, occasionally, they are never forthcoming at all.

Again, a wheel will come off, or an axletree break, and this, too, will cause a long delay. In short, the difficulties of transport and the labour, loss, and anxiety attendant on it are so great, and bear so heavily on settlers in the interior, especially those in Liverpool Plains and New England, (and that even in good seasons,) that they are almost unendurable by men of a sanguine or irritable temperament, who meet with crosses and anxieties, as I have heard said, "enough to break the heart of a stone."

First, the bullocks die or are lost, or the dray breaks down, and is consequently delayed a month or two beyond its proper time. All this while they have been on short commons at the station, and what they had was borrowed from the nearest neighbour who had anything to spare. When the long-looked for dray does at last arrive,

it is found that a great part of the provisions has been stolen by bushrangers, that another large portion has been consumed by the men during their long journey, and that all remaining must be paid back to the neighbour who helped them, and who is now perhaps in want himself. The debt is accordingly paid, and the borrowing system is again recurred to, entailing on the settler a load of arrears, of which he may scarcely ever be able to clear himself.

These unfavourable circumstances are of more frequent occurrence in Liverpool Plains, where nothing but beef and mutton are grown, and to which, consequently, all other necessaries must be carried in drays. These consist chiefly of flour, salt, tea, sugar, tobacco, slops, sheep-medicines, &c. In New England, where wheat and potatoes are cultivated, this evil is not so much felt, especially as roads are now found to Port

Macquarie and the Clarence both infinitely shorter than the old route to Maitland.

At nightfall, we reached Musclebrook, a small village, where was a wretched little inn; and, making our minds up to be victimized by the vermin, we early retired to our "stretchers," after a supper of the usual bush-inn fare—bacon and eggs. Next morning, having seen our nags eat their miserable allowance of maize and withered bush-grass, for which we were charged enormously, we again set forth, and travelled the greater part of the day without seeing or meeting with anything worthy of record, —except, perhaps, a salt-water creek, then only a series of holes of brackish water.

Before sunset, we reached the house of a gentleman with whom my travelling companion and guide was acquainted, and here we remained for the night. At a late dinner, we were treated to a bottle or two

of wine made on the farm, and the production of this settler's own vineyard. It was light in colour, and particularly so in body, being of the tint of pale sherry, and of a thin, acid flavour, indescribable; however, being heated and tired, in default of better, we managed to consume several glasses each, unheeding the woful work which common sense might have told us it would make with us.

My friend and I lay (I cannot say slept) on stretchers in the same room, but our quiescence was soon disturbed by the *bonâ fide vin ordinaire,* which, in no great space of time, set me walking up and down the room. The heat of the night was excessive; and that, together with his libations, quickly induced my friend to join me in my perambulations. It might be now twelve o'clock; the moon was shining brightly, and the heat being unendurable, despite the mosquitoes, we opened the window, and walked into the

verandah. Judge of our surprise, on getting there, to find our host *en déshabille*, indulging in the same peripatetic restorative as had brought us forth. There he stalked along, six feet nothing, on his bare soles and in his shirt, until arrested by our sudden appearance. It was rather an amusing rencontre, and, for my part, notwithstanding the heat and my suffering otherwise, I could not help bursting into peals of laughter.

My companion very bluntly blamed the wine at once, though our host was much inclined to lay the "onus" on the mosquitoes and the hot weather. So much for Australian wine!*

* I should mention that they produce very fair wine now in some parts of Australia.

CHAPTER VII.

Desolate appearance of the Country—Petrified Trunks of Trees—A Stone Forest—Creek, called Kingdon Ponds—Singular Changes—Burning Mountain of Wingan—Stupidity of the Natives—Waldron's Ranges—Intense Thirst—A Well Discovered—A night at a Farm-house—The Page Inn—Variation of Climate—Diseases—Cases of Imposture—An effectual Remedy—Salubrity of New South Wales—An Unfortunate Settler—Liverpool Plains—Drays drawn by Bullocks—Beautiful View from the top of the Range—A Thirsty Plain—Breeza Station—Interior of a Hut—The Myall Tree—A Bush Shop—Passage of the River Namoi.

After breakfast next morning, we started on our journey, which, for some miles, lay over flats and gently undulating country, here and there divested of timber, and

known as "the Downs." The soil is for the most part rich, being apparently composed of decayed organic matter. But this is a dry part of the country, scarcely producing remunerating crops in the best seasons, and this being a time of drought, the appearance presented was arid and desolate in the extreme. In fact, the whole country at this time had a brown, burnt-up appearance, and the little grass anywhere to be found was of a dull russet hue, and so completely withered that, by rubbing it in your hands you could convert it into a tolerable imitation of "high-dried," or "Irish blackguard."

In crossing these downs, we passed a large number of petrified trunks of trees, standing on end, and projecting from an inch to a foot above the surface, thus, to all appearance, disproving the theory hitherto existing on the subject of petrifaction, namely, the doctrine of the necessity of sub-

mersion. It is possible that these downs may have been covered with water in bygone ages, so that the petrified trunks may have at one time been buried in the soil. But it seems more probable that the petrifaction has taken place on the surface, and that the accumulation of soil, from the decomposition of vegetable matter, has in the lapse of time risen to the level of the fossils, and wholly or partially covered them, according to circumstances.

That petrifaction without submergation is possible, and has actually occurred, is proved by the celebrated petrified forest, which, according to a late "Topographical Description of Texas," lies near the head of the Pasigono River:—"Here is a forest of several hundred acres of trees standing, which are turned into stone." It is further stated that "petrifactions existing in many parts of the country show evident marks of recent formation; and trees which are grow-

ing are sometimes partially changed into stone." Remarking on this geological phenomenon, Mr. Kennedy, in his "Account of the New Republic of Texas," says that "minute examination will probably deprive this stone forest of much of its marvellous pretensions, which are doubtless owing to silicious springs, or the rapid formation of incrusting concretinary limestone, which readily moulds itself to the shape of a foreign body."

Without entering into the plausibility of this theory, I may state that it can in no way apply to the petrifactions found on the Downs, these being solid and very hard rock, of a yellowish tawny hue, displaying most beautifully the concentric circles, or annual growth, of the timber, and, I believe, yielding fire to steel. The most remarkable feature in their case is, that they appear to exist, as it were, only "between wind and water," that is, between earth and air.

Some lie on the surface, but most project six inches or a foot beyond that, and only reach a depth below the soil equivalent to their projection beyond it. There seem to be few large trunks among them, the common diameter being about a foot, or eighteen inches.

By-and-bye we passed the deep but empty bed of a creek called Kingdon Ponds. This creek, even in moist seasons, is now only a chain of ponds; but I was told by a person who was one of the first settlers on the Downs, that on his first discovery of it, about ten years previously to my visit, it was a large running stream, so deep and wide that he had to ride for a mile or two along its banks before he could find a place fit for crossing. This great change is not peculiar to Kingdon Ponds, but is doubtless universal through the colony; and I have been informed of the same phenomenon in other places, as in a marked instance near

Shoalhaven, where a large swamp, formerly impassable, has in the course of a few years become firm and dry.

These changes are hardly to be attributed to an alteration of the climate, for as yet nothing has been done in the way of clearing sufficient to have any tendency that way; nor is it likely that in an unfertile and pastoral country like New South Wales this will ever be the case. Such changes are, however, general, and have been observed to follow the locations and settling of colonies, more or less, in all countries. One cause, which I have observed, operating to the drying up of ground previously wet and swampy, is the treading of sheep and cattle, by which the soil becomes firmer below at first, and is ultimately hardened and baked by the sun, on the surface, inducing the rain afterwards rather to run off than to sink into it.

In the course of the day, we passed, at the distance of three or four miles, the burning

mountain of Wingan; and, as the weather was clear, we could see it smoking very plainly. I did not visit it, but heard it described by several persons who had been on the spot, from whom I learned that there is little to be seen, and that it is far from being of a volcanic nature, as has been represented. It is, in fact, nothing but a certain substance, probably a seam of coal or bituminous matter, burning with a slow fire, and similar to what has been observed in other countries, and even in England. On approaching this place of fire, a crack is discovered in the side of the range, long, and from one to three feet in width, from which a considerable degree of heat and smoke is emitted.

On looking down, the rock is seen, at a few feet from the surface, to be red hot; and beautiful crystals of sulphur are found adhering to the edge of the gulph. The blacks, so far as I could learn, have no tra-

dition or superstition regarding it; and it is therefore impossible to tell how long the fire has been in action. One would have supposed that the natives would, at least, have had an awe and veneration for this natural and enduring principle of fire, if they did not, indeed, make a God of and worship it; but they are too stupid and degraded even for that. Let me not be misapprehended. I do not mean to say that these savages would give any proof of wisdom, or dignity, by deifying the element of fire; I only would intimate, that they appear incapable of deifying any spirit, person, or thing whatever; and that if they succeeded in obtaining a light for their sticks, or a fire for their *gunyas**, they would walk away as listless and unthinking as ever.

Towards the afternoon, the road led us over some very high and steep ranges, which,

* The name of the temporary huts of the natives, formed of a sheet or two of bark, reclining against a stick or log.

to my inexperienced eye, appeared insuperable barriers to the further progress of drays. These hills are called Waldron's Ranges, and occur in the direct line of road from New England, Liverpool Plains, &c., to Maitland. This was an intensely hot day, and, on crossing these ranges, as I had to dismount and lead my horse up, I suffered from the most parching thirst. This was not to be wondered at, seeing that we had travelled upwards of thirty miles without finding a single drop of water. I had filled a very small spirit-flask with water previously to starting in the morning, and to this I now applied in my extremity; but I did not experience much relief, which was partly owing to the small quantity, and partly to the high temperature to which the sun, beating on the metallic flask, had raised the liquid within.

At length, suffocated with dust, and my tongue cleaving to the roof of my mouth, we arrived at the location of a gentleman

with whom my travelling companion was acquainted, and here (being hungry as well as thirsty) we hoped to supply our wants, as well as (to a certain extent) those of our jaded nags. Unfortunately for us, however, the master of the house was from home, and his domicile locked up, so *bon gré, mal gré,* we must take the road again.

Before proceeding, we went down the hill, to where a long pole, balanced in a forked stick, and having a bucket at one end and a rope at the other, bespoke a well; and here we drew water, and slaked our own thirst and that of our weary steeds. I felt much inclined to linger near this oasis of the desert, but sunset was approaching, and there was no help for it; we therefore remounted, turning our horses' heads—

> "Where wilds innumerable spread,
> Seem length'ning as we go."

Proceeding a few miles, we arrived, soon after sunset, at the farm of a gentleman with whom my companion had spent a

night on a previous occasion, and here we were very hospitably received. We slept in a small slab hut detached from the house, and received the usual accommodation of stretchers and blankets. Sheets are a luxury not always procurable in private houses in the bush, especially if so situated as to be much resorted to by travellers; and, indeed, when supplied, they are commonly second hand, and so uninviting as to be often rejected by bushmen, who seem to consider dirty blankets preferable to dirty sheets. I imagine it is a toss up between the two, though the former certainly afford the best cover for the "light infantry" and "heavies" which everywhere abound.

As we did not recline on "beds of roses," we got up with the sun, and saddling our horses, proceeded three or four miles to the Page Inn, where we breakfasted. Notwithstanding the season, and the heat of the previous day, the air was

cold and sharp; so much so, indeed, as to make the fingers of my bridle-hand tingle; so great are the changes of climate here.

Yesterday, the thermometer must have been, at or near 100° in the shade; and had it been blowing a hot wind it would have been much higher. A month before, on Christmas-day, I saw it stand at 108° in Sidney; and on the Hunter, I am informed, that it has reached 110°. These high temperatures are often succeeded by very low ones; and it is not unusual to see the mercury fall 35° or even 40° in the course of a few hours.

This is, I believe, the principal fault of the climate of New South Wales, which, in other respects, I should consider one of the most healthy in the world. But this cold so suddenly following heat, has a powerful effect on the body, previously bathed in the most profuse perspiration, and is productive of perhaps the greatest enemy of the labouring

man in this colony—rheumatism, or as it is expressively styled by its victims, "the pains."

This complaint is very prevalent among the lower orders, and especially the prisoner servants, many of whom, doubtless, contract it from exposure, want of dry clothing, and their own recklessness; and thus they are laid up for months or years, and sometimes for life. Being a complaint not apparent, nor to be detected by the surgeons, the convicts are much in the habit of complaining, and going to the hospital, when there is nothing the matter with them. This malingering is practised chiefly by the lazy and incorrigible, and by those who fancy they will improve their position by a change of masters, or by going into Government, as it is termed.

Owing to this imposture, the really ill are often disbelieved, and run the risk of getting a flogging as impostors, instead of the medical aid and comforts which their state

requires. The colonial surgeons are continually puzzled by them; and I have heard some anecdotes tending to show this. One official of this kind, a gentleman of a warm and humane nature, informed me that one malingerer was sent to the hospital under his care, as a patient who had suffered long and acutely from "the pains." The man pointed to his joints and feet, as the principal seats of the disease; and, though a great lusty fellow, appeared to suffer dreadfully. Something, however, occurred to rouse suspicion in the surgeon, who at last became convinced that the man was deceiving him. He therefore applied the lancet and the cautery without mercy, and in fact used his patient rather cruelly, while the fellow bore all with a fortitude worthy of a better cause, and would by no means give in. However, after putting him to the "question" (as the fathers of the Inquisition would have termed it), every morning for a few weeks, blistering

and burning seemed to become efficacious, and the invalid at last announced that he was getting better; in short, he (as he would have said himself) "dropped down to his luck," and confessed that he had been malingering all the while.

Putting out of the question rheumatism, fever, and ague, which last is more local, the climate of Australia may be described as very healthy. Sir James Clark, in his work on the "Sanative influence of climate," says, with reference to this colony: "Fevers are almost unknown, and the same may be said of hooping-cough, croup, &c. Europeans, enervated by a long residence in India, become very much invigorated and improved in health by a short stay in Australia." It is also stated in the Military Statistical Report, that "The extreme salubrity of the climate may be estimated from the circumstance that, on the average of

twenty years from 1817 to 1836 inclusive, the mortality did not exceed fourteen per thousand of the force annually, whereof more than a fifth part arose from violent or accidental deaths, principally attributable to the nature of duties on which the troops were employed.

"Thus, the mortality from disease alone could have amounted to little more than one per cent. annually, being lower than in any other colony, except the eastern provinces of the Cape of Good Hope, to which the climate of Australia is in many respects similar."

I must not omit to state, that our yesterday's route had been not on the Hunter, which turns to the north-west, but up the Page, a branch of the former river, and coming from a north-east direction. The Page Inn is the last on the road, and near the head of the creek (for none of these can

be called streams), from which it takes its name, being in fact the last location in this direction within the colony, so called.

Here, in addition to the Inn, is a small store, a post-office, and that great essential in such a country, a blacksmith's shop. This little village (if it deserves the name) is very prettily situated, being by far the most romantic in its appearance of any landward settlement I had yet seen. It nestles in a small narrow valley, bounded on each side by picturesque hills, rising abruptly around, and crowned by bare and precipitous rocks. The channel of the Page (now scarcely boasting of one stagnant water-hole) winds its course through this vale, and in wet seasons laves the foot of the mountains.

As we stayed rather long at this Inn—in fact, till nearly ten o'clock, we found the heat very great on preparing to start; and the proposal, therefore, to rest till the heat

of the day was over, was readily agreed to by me. At lunch, we had for company an unfortunate settler, or rather, a beginner, who was just commencing to experience the troubles of settling. He was travelling up the country with his drays, but his bullocks had been lost for some days, and he had scoured the ranges and gulleys in all directions round, without finding them. He seemed to think that his being a beginner, or (as it is termed) "new chum," had been taken advantage of, and that his teams were "planted," that is, secreted, in order that a reward might be offered for them. This is a very common occurrence, and was very probably his case, but I never heard how he managed, or what was the result.

By two in the afternoon we got under weigh; and, after a few miles' ride, arrived at the foot of Liverpool Range,—a long and high series of hills over which the track passes, forming the boundary between the

colony and the large tract of level country called Liverpool Plains. The first object that struck me here was an immense collection of trunks of trees, evidently felled with the axe, and deprived of their branches. I was at a loss to assign a reason for so much labour having been bestowed (in vain, as I thought), in felling and piling up these useless heaps of timber, till my more experienced friend informed me that every dray descending the range on that side, had a tree attached by way of a drag,—a precaution rendered necessary by the steepness of the descent.

Thus, in the course of eight or ten years, during which this line had been known and used, a large space had been strewn with the shafts of gums.

On different parts of the range, which here presents a very steep ascent, there a long rugged ascending pull, and further on a precipitous descent, we passed several

drays bound for the interior, each with its team of eight oxen, straining and pulling to surmount this formidable obstacle: but apparently with little effect. There were but small loads on the drays; the last one, which I observed in particular, having only a few bags of flour, salt, and sugar, a plough, the men's bedding, a small keg of water for their use, and a tarpaulin, which had covered the bales of wool on the downward journey.

In the rear was slung an iron pot, with two or three tin quart pots, to boil their tea in, and as many pint pots to drink out of, while beside these swung a bullock's horn full of grease for the wheels. The bullock-driver flourished his whip of green hide on the left, or near side of the team, while his mate hallooed and belaboured the cattle with a stick on the off side, and the bull-dog bringing up the rear, completed the group. The poor animals seemed scarcely to move the dray, while the men shouted at

the top of their voices, cracked the bullock-whip, and banged the sides of their beasts of burden without mercy. On such occasions, no quarter is shown to the wretched creatures; and if, after all, they come to a stand, the driver will give them a rest or spell; then, throwing his cabbage-tree hat in the air, as a signal that this time it must be "do or die," he seizes his whip, and carbonadoes them from head to heel, an operation he continues till the task is accomplished, or both he and his oxen are knocked up. If he fails to make them proceed, he has nothing for it but to unyoke his team, and camp for the night. When two or three teams are together at such a pinch, they are yoked together, and drag up the drays one at a time, and when one is alone, the load is sometimes divided into two or more lots, and taken up by successive journeys.

After a hot and toilsome pull, we arrived

at the top of the range, when I was repaid for my fatigue by a fine view, different from anything I had as yet found in the colony, and all the more admired because unexpected. In truth, I had seen nothing heretofore worth calling a fine or extensive view, and the eye, wearied by the dull unpicturesque gum-trees which so uniformly clothe hill and dale, longed for open and naked scenery, where the very bareness and sameness would by contrast be beauty and variety.

Here, then, I was at length gratified. At our feet lay ten or twelve miles of flat wooded country; beyond that extended a wide plain, level as a bowling-green, and without a tree or bush of any kind; and further on, far as the eye could reach, were spread similar plains, divided from each other by low wooded ranges. The scene was altogether so different from the country through which I had been travelling heretofore, that

I was much struck with it, and, despite my love of my native mountain-scenery, imagined it must be a delightful place to live in. Whether it is so or not, the sequel will show. Near the foot of the range the track divides into three, the one to the left leading to Warra, the cattle station of the Australian Agricultural Company; that to the right proceeding to the Peel, the Company's head-quarters in this district, and thence to New England; while the middle one, which we pursued, strikes upon the Mooki, a branch of the Namoi, and continues till it meets the latter river.

By night-fall, we passed the first station on Liverpool Plains, and entered first on one or two open spaces, and then on the first plain, known by the name of Breeza Plain. Before entering on the plain, we turned aside to water our horses at a lagoon with whose position my friend was acquainted; but alas! water there was none;

for the lagoon, formerly a deep pool, was, by reason of the drought which consumed the land, quite dried up. There had been "death in the pot too," for the breeze that cooled our faces, evidently did not blow over a bank of violets. Our weary steeds would have been much rejoiced by a drink of water, but there was no remedy, so turning again to the track, we pursued our way across the thirsty plain.

The moon shone brightly, and served to guide us; and, in truth, we needed all her light, for the plain so black and like a harrowed field, scarcely left the track distinguishable. No grass, or herbage of any kind, was to be seen; no dew-drops sparkled among our horses' feet, "like orient pearls at random strung;" the dust rose at every footfall, and the few lean gaunt cattle that crossed our path, as they returned to the forest from slaking their thirst in the Mooki, seemed to the dreamy midnight fancy of a

tired traveller, to stalk along the plain—the ghosts of the departed, or the demons (alas! poor wretches, they were only the victims,) of the great drought.

By midnight, the barking of many dogs gave evidence that we approached a station, and soon after crossing the bed of the Mooki, which is only a few feet below the level of the plain, we reached, a hundred yards further on, the bark hut called Breeza Station, and occupied by a low man of no very enviable character. My friend, however, had been there before, and had, on a former occasion, been of service to this individual. Moreover, this was no time to be particular, and our position, the jaded state of our horses, the lateness of the hour, and the want of all Inns formed excuses more strong and numerous than were necessary. We therefore knocked the sleepers up, and got admittance.

While they were preparing such a supper

as their means and the lateness of the hour admitted of, we unsaddled and rubbed down our horses, and hobbling them with hobbles which for that purpose we carried with us, we turned them loose to ruminate on the bran and maize left far behind, and to chew the cud of bitter reflection—the only thing they seemed likely to chew in such a desert. Having seen that they got a drink at the solitary pool which the Mooki here could boast of, we returned to the hut, and having eat heartily of the simple fare set before us, we lay down each on his sheet of bark and rolled in a blanket, and, despite the hordes of nocturnal visitants, snatched a few hours of broken, not gentle, sleep, the consequence of our toilsome day's march.

In the morning, I was enabled to inspect the establishment and the country around. In front lay the Mooki, which, in the best of times, more resembles a broad deep ditch than anything else; while at present it was

only a chain of stagnant ponds, boggy and muddy, and far apart, the spaces between them being often perfectly dried and baked by the sun's rays. Beyond, stretched the plain we had crossed the previous night, appearing, in the dim haze of the morning sun, of great magnitude, though in fact only eight or nine miles across, in the direction we had come. Behind the station rose a scrubby and wooded range, dividing this plain from others further on.

The station itself appeared miserable enough, though like most others in this quarter. The hut was of the usual gum-slabs, rough as split from the tree, and so far apart that the hand might be thrust through between each. These were sunk half a foot in the ground, and nailed at the top to the wall plates, which rested on round posts, about seven feet high.

The floor was earthen,—not of trodden clay, but gravelly, and full of holes,—while

the roof, of course, was composed of the customary bark, which is stripped from the trees in lengths of from six to eight feet, and laid on the sapling frame like Brobdignagian tiles, overlapping each other, and crowned by saddle-sheets sitting astride the roof-tree. There were only two apartments, "a but and a ben," divided by a partition of slabs, and having a doorway, but no door, while a small room, or, as it is called, "skillean," leaning against the back of the hut, served as a store and servant's room.

In the principal apartment, a hole cut in the slabs eighteen inches square, served as a window; and the man having a wife, this window was ornamented by a small curtain, though, as the woman was a slattern, and, in fact, an old convict, the drapery was none of the cleanest. A similar hut was occupied by the men, while a stock-yard, with a gallows for hoisting up slaughtered bullocks stood behind, and a dirty sheep-

yard, fenced with bushes and boughs of trees, exhaled odours not far off. Cultivation or garden there was none, but these were not to be expected, for no crop, and seldom any vegetables, will grow in Liverpool Plains.

I was informed that the cattle came every day from the forest across the plain, a distance at many points of ten or twelve miles, in order to drink at the Mooki, whence they returned towards evening, to look for the withered herbage under shelter of the trees. The sheep, too, had to be driven every day across this plain, and brought back at night; but even after all this toil, they could not get wherewithal to fill their bellies.

In Liverpool Plains great quantities of a small low tree called "myall" are found. It is generally about the thickness of the wrist, or arm, and its wood, which has a peculiar smell, and is partly black and partly yellow,

is much prized for making the handles of stock-whips. Of the leaves and young branches of this tree the sheep are very fond, and in this season it was customary, and indeed necessary, for the shepherds to cut them down for their flocks; while the apple-tree was felled for the working bullocks and other cattle which lingered near the stations. At Breeza, I found a black girl (one of the aborigines) tending a flock of sheep, and I was informed that she did her work very well. Proceeding along the Mooki, we arrived, after two miles ride, at a bark hut, dignified by the name of store; and here, having previously learned that there were bushrangers out in the neighbourhood, my companion bought a gun and some ammunition, for neither of us had brought any arms. This purchase was made more with a view to increase the stock of fire-arms at the station than to be of use to us on the road, and we were lucky in

being able to procure this, as there was little else in the (so-called) store. The fact is, it was chiefly an establishment for "sly grog-selling," sheltered under the garb of a bush shop, or store, but at this time they were out of everything, even rum.

Journeying on, we crossed several plains, divided from each other by belts of trees. One of these, Battery Plain, takes its name from a large rock rising abruptly with perpendicular sides from the level ground below. It is crowned with trees, and, from its strangely isolated position, looks not unlike a fort, or battery.

Passing a station called Carroll, we crossed the River Namoi, now merely a chain of ponds, but having a deep bed, and in wet seasons appearing a large and rapid stream. Here our route lay for some miles through level forest land. Having crossed the river more than once, and passed over

several alternate plains and strips of forest, we arrived, after a ride of thirty-five or forty miles, at my friend's station, well pleased with the prospect of repose, after so hot and fatiguing a journey.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sheep-Washing and Shearing — Preparation of the Wool—Excursions into the Country—Bush Fair—Interior of a Hut—Difficulties and Losses of the Settler—The Native Dog—The Cumberland Hunt—Punishment of a Runaway Black—Phenomenon on the Plains — Propinquity of Bushrangers — Their Depredations—Expedition in quest of them—A Midnight Ride—Wonders of the Heavens—Station on the Mooki — Whirlwinds — Cattle Hunting—Chase of the Emu—The Kangaroo described—Banks of the Namoi—Want of Water—The Author's Cattle—A Bad Character.

On arriving at the station, we found that the sheep-shearing had already commenced under the management of the superintendent; and early the next morn-

ing we visited the shearing-shed, where the proprietor himself thenceforth took the management, and where I very frequently spent the day, keeping the tally of the sheep shorn.

Besides the men belonging to the establishment, a good many extra hands were employed for this especial business,—these latter consisting of free, or ticket-of-leave men, who move from one station to another at this season of the year, in order to get employment at the shearing, as the Irish at home do during the harvest, this being, in fact, the Australian harvest, and the wool the largest and most valuable crop that is reaped.

The shearing is carried on in a large barked shed, as many as fifteen or twenty men often being at work together. Tarpaulins are laid on the ground to keep the wool clean; and these, together with the number of sheep and men, make the shed

a very hot place. The men shear on an average sixty or seventy a-day, though some will reach even a hundred. They are paid according to the number shorn, and usually at from half-a-crown to three shillings and sixpence per score. As each sheep is shorn, the shearer takes the fleece to the sorting-table, and either calls out his name or, if he is known, tells the tally-keeper to mark one for him. As there are often many strangers at the shearing, and many of these are sons of Erin, one's ears are often saluted in a rich brogue, with "one for Paddy Doyle," "one for Mick Kelly," and so forth.

The work is fatiguing, being always conducted in the hottest season of the year; and the men have two or three glasses of rum a-day. Some of the sheep were scabby, and these, of course, required to be *doctored*, at which operation I also assisted. Each infected sheep was bled in the cheek, with a pen-knife, and then immersed in a tub

containing a mixture, of which the chief ingredients were corrosive sublimate, and tobacco-water.

A good many of the flocks had still to be washed, preparatory to shearing; and, as I was anxious to learn as much as possible in every department, I took part in this also. No water-hole, large enough for this purpose, could be found nearer than two miles and a-half from the station, and to this, the flock to be washed each day, was driven in the morning. A small platform was erected by the edge of the deep water, and a pen of moveable hurdles was around it.

On this stage stood a man who threw the sheep, one by one, with a great plunge, into the river. Below stood another man, immersed to the shoulders and provided with a large piece of soap, with which he rubbed each animal as it came to the surface, and passed it on to another behind him, who, rubbing the place well with his hand so as

to create a lather, passed it in turn to the last man, who rubbed the soap off, and allowed the drenched creature to swim to shore and crawl up the bank, looking more like a drowned rat than a sheep. The washing-place is chosen with a view to two principal points: enough of water, and a good and clean place for the sheep to land on.

After this operation, they were driven home by the cleanest way that could be found—camped all night on a fresh clean spot—and shorn the next day. Some settlers do not wash before shearing, but this is not to be recommended. Wool in the grease (as it is then called) does not fetch so high a price as when washed; and is, moreover, heavier and bulkier, so that additional expense is caused in land-carriage and freight.

Having finished shearing, the wool was assorted on an open table composed of bars, according to the quality of the fleeces; and

the process was concluded by putting it into woolpacks, and pressing it as tight as possible by means of a lever hung on a forked post. A few have proper screw-presses for this purpose, but the way I have described is that usually followed. All the woolpacks, however, are again pressed by means of strong screws, either on the wharves at Sydney, or on board the ships that are to take them home, besides getting an additional screwing and jamming in the hold, after the fashion followed with flax and hemp in the Baltic.

During my stay at my friend's station, I made one or two excursions to distances of thirty or forty miles, visiting, among other places, the "Australian Agricultural Company's" establishment on the Peel, a tributary of the Namoi. I saw nothing, however, of any interest; the same drought and the same scorched appearance prevailing everywhere. The Peel was dried up entirely

through nearly its whole course, not possessing even a water-hole for many miles at a stretch. How our horses subsisted at the station I cannot imagine, for the few bags of bran taken up by the drays were soon finished.

I used, every evening, to cut a handful or two of the reeds which grew by the pools in the bed of the Namoi, and, as they had broad green leaves, my horse relished them very much; especially as nothing else, succulent or green, could be found: but these speedily became exhausted, before which time I sometimes walked two miles before I could collect two handsful.

Our own fare was also circumscribed, by the dryness of the weather. It consisted as usual of "damper" (dough baked in the ashes), salt beef and mutton, with tea and sugar. There was rum, and some peach preserves (both sent up, packed inside a large cask of salt to prevent robbery), and

once or twice we got a few cabbages from an out station twenty miles off, the watchman having succeeded, by some extraordinary means, in making them grow. During the whole time, the heat was very great; so much so, that the superintendent one day cooked thin steaks on the stones heated by the sun.

The hut we lived in was only a few feet square, barked and slabbed, and having an earthen floor, but the superintendent had amused himself by ornamenting it with the dried yellow reeds from the river, the walls being hung all round with these, fastened with a string, and looking like some kinds of eastern matting. The door always stood open, having, indeed, no fastening, a common case, and yet strange in a country full of hostile blacks, convicts, and bushrangers. But the huts are otherwise so insecure that a fastened door would afford little protection. Of course, there was no sawn timber

on the place, and the door, such as it was, consisted merely of slabs split out of the tree and adzed down. The timber here is not very good for building purposes, the pine, a yellowish and soft wood, which splits easily, being chiefly used.

While at this place, I became acquainted with the difficulties and losses attending sheep-farming. In the first place, there are the rot, scab, and deadly catarrh, to be contended with; the last disease, in particular, sweeping off whole flocks in a short time. Then the shepherd may lose some of his flock during the day; or a native dog may rush among them, biting a few and scattering the rest.

At night, again, though a watchman burns a fire and lies by the hurdles, the native dog will occasionally jump in among the sheep and commit great havoc, for these lean and stealthy animals, which swarm over the whole colony, when they get among a flock,

do not kill and devour one sheep, but run from one to another, biting each in the throat, so that sometimes one dog has killed fifteen or eighteen at a time.

This dog is somewhat like the English fox, generally of a red or brown colour, though I have seen one or two black and white. He is always miserably lean, abounds in the bushes, whence he emerges to seek his prey, and the female is very prolific, litters having been found in hollow logs of eight, ten, and twelve. He gives a long, dismal howl, delighting to bay the moon in packs of various sizes. Wilson, in the fifth number of the Journal of Agriculture, as quoted by Sir William Jardine, derives all the domestic dogs from the wolf and jackall, allowing the native dogs of Africa and America, and the New Holland dingo to be distinct species. The shepherds catch them in traps, some settlers poison them, and they are often hunted on horseback with kangaroo dogs (a cross be-

tween a mastiff and greyhound), affording very good sport, unless he can make to a bush, where he is secure.

In the county of Cumberland, in which Sydney is situated, there is a club established, called the Cumberland Hunt, for the purpose of meeting to hunt the native dog as they do the fox at home, and to this end they keep a pack of hounds. But an English fox-hunter would be out of his element here—the thickly-wooded country, fallen trees and branches, as also the large holes, presenting a more break-neck style of country than the clear fields, broad ditches, and five-barred gates of the green holms of England.

There was a black fellow staying at the station at this time, who was in the habit of taking out a flock of sheep every morning, and he succeeded very well in this simple calling. One day, however, he thought proper to leave his flock of jimbucks (as

they call the sheep) to the tender mercies of the myall dingos, or wild dogs, and join his tribe.

The sheep were recovered, but our black was not seen for several weeks, when, thinking his *faux pas* would be forgotten, he made his appearance. He, however, found himself in the hands of the Philistines, for my friend prepared to execute judgment upon him. A hearing was granted him; but, being unable to show cause why sentence should not be passed and executed upon him, he was forthwith tied up to a tree, and one dozen lashes were administered to his swarthy skin with a hunting-whip.

This was considered a lenient sentence, though executed with vigour. The young savage was at first very vociferous and energetic; but after the first lash, he did not deign to say one word, or to utter a single cry. When released, however, he was sullen in the extreme, and scowled ferociously on

us; and for my part, I felt convinced that some day or other, at least one white man's blood would flow to appease his vengeance. This anecdote induces thought, and affords room for speculation on the nature and feelings and faculties of man, fresh from the mould in the Australian savage, and modified by civilization in the enlightened Englishman.

The drought caused several changes in the out sheep stations, several being abandoned for want of water, and others formed. Parties were also sent to deepen water-holes, and make an attempt at digging wells. In visiting one of these out-stations, I took the opportunity of examining a phenomenon which I had previously noticed on many, chiefly of the smaller plains. This consisted of regular furrows, or risings and depressions on the surface of the plain, something like narrow lands in a field, and

at once calling up the idea of the plough, and its effects on the soil.

These lands are parallel to each other, but by no means straight, frequently taking a large sweep, or turn, near the edge of the plain. The ridges are about from four to six feet broad, separated from each other by narrow hollows, and present a good deal the aspect of certain states of the sky; resembling also the ribbed sea-sand, as seen in such a bay as the Solway Firth, when the retiring tide leaves it beautifully rippled.

Doubtless this appearance has been caused by the action of water; and these plains, formed as they are of the richest soil, have been the bottoms of lakes, divided from each other by the wooded ranges which still mark their boundaries. There is indeed a tradition among the blacks to this day to that effect, though upon this I would not place much reliance. They seldom have

any tradition regarding anything, and they may have seen the plains in a marshy state after wet seasons, or before the desiccating influence had extended so far as it has now done.

In the meantime, the bushrangers were not far off, and had indeed been seen in the immediate vicinity of the station; a propinquity by no means agreeable, seeing that the gang was a very desperate one, and had, at an out-station, expressed an intention (should an opportunity offer) of administering a severe flogging, and other rough usage, to my host and his guests.

Before our arrival at the station, they had stolen a fine horse belonging to a young gentleman, who, like myself, was on a visit there. The animal, however, not liking his new masters, had wandered back to his old quarters; but the bushrangers again secured him, and one of them, mounted on the unfortunate steed, and having a silk

handkerchief passed through his mouth for a bit, had the audacity and impudence to call at one of the sheep stations and demand some green-hide to make a bridle of.

Their depredations called for the immediate exertions of the police, and we were well pleased one day to see a corporal and trooper ride up to the station. They informed us that they had some idea of the position of the banditti; but, as the day was intensely hot, and their horses jaded, they could not proceed unless supplied with fresh ones. They not only obtained these, but also a reinforcement, being accompanied by four or five of us, mounted and armed with muskets and pistols, such as the station afforded.

We also took Monday, an intelligent black fellow with us, for the purpose of tracking. Towards evening, we started a herd of more than a dozen kangaroos of the largest and swiftest kind, called old men, and blue

flyers; but having no dogs with us, and flying at higher game, we did not pursue them.

Having crossed several plains, and belts of wood, we at last arrived at the foot of a high and rocky ridge, from which it was said smoke had been seen to ascend, and on the side of which Monday assured us a spring existed. Picketting our horses below, and leaving two of our party to guard them, we climbed the range cautiously and silently, and arriving at a large rock, behind which the supposed encampment lay, we cocked our guns, and with the corporal at our head (for only one could pass at a time), dashed round the intervening wall, when lo! the birds had flown.

They had not been long gone, however, and we had the satisfaction of seeing recent traces of them. The ashes of their fires were still warm; the spring was dried up; but the bottom of the little water-hole was

still damp, and had evidently not been deserted many hours. Retracing our steps, we left the policemen encamped on the plain, that they might see if any smoke rose from the ranges at sunrise, while we bent our steps homeward, regretting the failure of our expedition. Over the open plains, and through the umbrageous forests, we had the stars alone to guide us, though they did not enable us to avoid the dead timber, stump-holes, and other dangers of our midnight ride.

The stars shone with unusual lustre that evening; the unclouded sky of Australia, and the total absence of dew, or exhalation, permitting them to unveil all their beauties. Supreme among them reigned the Southern Cross, that magnificent constellation, to which I have already alluded, whose beauty made Dante speak of the "widowed sight" of those who had not seen it. It is indeed a fine and a remarkable constellation, resting

as it does on one of the Magellan clouds. These very singular objects are three in number, two white and one black, and it is the latter with which the cross is in contact.

These wonders and beauties of the heavens compensate the sojourners of the antipodal regions for the loss of the Pole-Star and Ursa Major of the north; and as they also enjoy Orion, and many other splendid constellations, their unclouded skies are as brilliant as our own, with the lamps that are hung in heaven.

Soon after this, I started for a station on the Mooki, thirty-five miles off, where I had arranged to purchase a herd of cattle. In riding through the bush, I perceived at some distance before me two men on horseback, who, from their appearance, I was apprehensive might be bushrangers. They were travelling the same way as myself; and not having seen me, I made a détour of some miles through the bush, riding hard

all the way, and was fortunate enough (having steered by the sun) to strike upon the track again in advance of them.

Having crossed the Namoi, I entered upon a large plain, over which I made all haste, as one can there be seen at a great distance. Whilst on the plain, I witnessed one of those whirlwinds which are common here, and are very beneficial. The wind not only performs its gyrations on its own axis, but moves along the ground also; and its progress across the plain is finely marked by the tall pillar of dust which it raises in the air. On other occasions, I have seen these whirlwinds so powerful as to raise clouds of dust and quantities of leaves, sticks, &c., and even to tear sheets of bark from the roofs of huts. I once came within the influence of one, but the edge of it only passed over me, and without other inconvenience than what arose from being enveloped in dust.

This day was intensely hot, and *still;* such an one as when

> "The birds drop lifeless from the silent spray,
> And nature faints beneath the fiery day."

The earth, turned to dust, rose at every foot-fall of my horse; "and no water was for man or beast." Such weather, however, is preferable to the hot winds, which are almost insupportable:

> "And often o'er the level waste,
> The stifling hot winds fly,
> Down falls the swain with trembling haste,—
> The gasping cattle die."

The day after arriving at the station, we commenced looking for the cattle, a most difficult and tedious business, as, from the scarcity of grass and water, they had wandered to immense distances. This was a most unpropitious season for purchasing and settling, and I had reason to regret the step I took.

In cattle-hunting, we were engaged for

more than a month; and, during all that time, I slept in the open air at a distance of several hundred yards from the station, owing to the swarms of vermin, more especially of the *pules irritans* with which it was infested. On a certain occasion, while riding over one of the plains, we saw a herd of ten or twelve emus stalking along, and, in the distance, we at first took them for a troop of horsemen.

Another day, happening to have kangaroo hounds with us, we discovered a solitary emu, almost on the horizon, and starting in pursuit, we enjoyed a noble hunt. The riding was very dangerous, as, from the excessive drought, this plain had subsided into immense holes, with divergent cracks, strewed all around, and frequently large enough to bury a man and horse. It was no easy matter to steer clear of these, though, notwithstanding, we were in at the death.

The emu, after running some time in a straight course, during which the dogs could not gain on him, appeared to get confused, and lost much ground by useless doubling. At length, the swiftest dog got up with and seized him; but the emu dragged him along, and, although pulled down once or twice, always sprang up again and fled; and it was not till both dogs clung to him, that he was overpowered. Coming up, I gave him the *coup de grace* with a deer-knife I happened to have about me; and, cutting a steak from his breast for supper, and securing one of his legs, and a bunch of feathers, as trophies, we left the dogs to enjoy their hard-earned meal.

The emu is a noble-looking bird, resembling the ostrich in size and shape. Its wings are mere flappers, scarcely used, even in running. Its legs are long and powerful, sufficiently so, it is said, to break a man's leg with a kick; and it is endowed with

great swiftness and keen sight. It is a majestic, but withal, gentle-looking animal; its feathers are elegant and remarkable, possessing this peculiarity, that two grow from one quill. The female abandons her eggs, to be hatched by the heat of the sun. What was said of the ostrich by an ancient and sublime writer, may be well applied to her: "She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath He imparted to her understanding." Job xxxix. 16. Its flesh is whitish, and forms excellent food, somewhat resembling beef, and known by the name of steaks; and its oil is highly esteemed, principally, I believe, as sanitary in rheumatic affections. When I have said that its eggs are very beautiful, being rather smaller than those of the ostrich, but of a very dark green, I have given all the information that I personally possess. I may add, that the emu, though

seen by Sir Joseph Banks, in the neighbourhood of Botany Bay, is now almost entirely confined to the plains of the interior and the unsettled districts.

During these long rides, in the course of which we strayed through many "devious paths," sometimes over plains and wooded ridges, and anon through scrubs and branches; we occasionally indulged in a kangaroo-hunt, and procured for ourselves a fresh repast. The kangaroo, as it is well known, is a graceful and timid animal. Its hearing and sight are both acute; its fore legs are very short, and used merely to rest upon when the head is lowered to feed. It is furnished with long and powerful hind legs (armed with formidable claws), and on these and its tail, it rests while alarmed. Its hind legs, too, are, together with the tail, its means of locomotion, while the fore ones hang in front, useless, unless for balancing itself. Like the hare, which in a slight

degree resembles it in formation, its speed is great on a level, or in ascending a hill, while it is soon overtaken in the descent. Its movement consists entirely of a series of leaps, or bounds, and it advances at a great rate. There is no fat on the kangaroo. Its flesh is good enough, but insipid, though its tail, which is frequently the only part used, makes excellent soup. The sinews of the tail are used by the blacks as thread, and some of the bones as needles, while the teeth either ornament their hair, or barb their *mutachs*, or fishing-spears. The skin makes very good thin leather, and is used for boots both in the colony and at home.

The kangaroo, when severely pressed, will stand at bay, and fight for his life most desperately; and, under these circumstances, an *old man*, which may stand about six or seven feet high, has been known even to kill a man. Dogs are very frequently lacerated and killed by them, the kangaroo placing

his back against a tree, seizing his opponent with his fore paws, and ripping him up with a stroke of the powerful claws with which he is armed behind. Sometimes, he will take to a water-hole, and, standing erect, endeavour to drown the dogs by holding them under water.

The Mooki, as I have said before, is a tributary of the Namoi, and the latter river, though supposed to join the Lachlan, the Murray, Morrambidgee, or some one of the larger rivers, which, uniting, fall into Lake Alexandrina, appeared to terminate (when Sir Thomas Mitchell explored it) or rather to lose itself in swamps. These rivers are commonly mere chains of water-holes, but occasionally are flooded to excess, when, owing to the low banks and the flatness of the country around, they do much damage to the stations near them.

"Two tyrant seasons rule the wide domain,
Scorch with dry heat, or drench with floods of rain."

The Blacks of the Namoi, Gydir, Big River, &c., have frequently committed great depredations, spearing cattle, driving away sheep, and murdering shepherds and stockmen.

At this time, I met a man going down the country to report the murder of two of his comrades, and it was my fate frequently to be aware of similar atrocities. The banks of the Namoi, before being settled by white men, were long inhabited by a bushranger who had joined the blacks, and who rejoiced in the name of "Billy the barber." How he escaped death at the hands of the natives is not known, but for many years he lived with them, entering into their habits, and possessing, by artificial means, their swarthy hue. He had a herd of cattle, too, and had made a stock-yard, into which he could drive them on foot. Although taken at last, he contrived to escape for a long time; and, though on one occasion the police found him up a tree, and asked him where Billy

the barber was, by his appearance and cunning, in repeating everything said to him, he passed for a native, and escaped.

During our long rides over the plains, which resembled harrowed fields more than anything else, we were often much distressed for water; and I shall never forget my disappointment when, on arriving at a pond in the Mooki, and stooping down to drink, I found it salt. This was the more strange, as the water-hole was in the bed of the river, and those above and below it, (though at the distance of some miles) were fresh. Soon after this, I spent a few days at the station of a most hospitable gentleman, ten or twelve miles off, and he informed me that he had sunk wells at two or three of his stations to immense depths, and, wherever he had found water, it was salt.

At length, a sufficient number of cattle were collected, and we proceeded to branding, a dirty and troublesome business Every

beast was pulled up to a corner post with a green hide-rope thrown over the head with a running noose, by means of a long roping-stick. A leg-rope was then thrown round the hind legs, and the animal brought down on its side, when the hot iron was applied to its hide, fixing my mark indelibly on it. Only one animal was killed, having had its neck broken in the fall.

Leaving my cattled to be taled by a man I had engaged, I proceeded to Sydney, in order to make certain arrangements; and I was very glad to get away, for I had not only been very uncomfortable, but had been subjected to most disagreeable society for some time back. The man from whom I purchased my stock had risen from the lowest walks of life, and was not only disgusting in manners, but ruffianly and (it turned out) of notoriously bad character. While under his roof, my saddle-bags, which were secured with a padlock, were broken

open, and the agreement that had been made between him and me was stolen from my pocket-book. From the nature of our transaction, he may have hoped to turn this to his advantage, or he may have expected to find also a subsequent agreement which, from his apparent disinclination to fulfil his contract, I had obliged him to sign; but this latter document I had chanced to retain in my pocket, and his nefarious designs were thus defeated. Such are the people with whom one comes in contact in New South Wales!

CHAPTER IX.

The Author and his Partner proceed to Maitland—Amusing rencontre—Excursion up the Hunter—Nocturnal Journey—Cattle-Station—Imposition in the Bush—Want of Water—Tree on Fire—Banks of the Peel—Station there—Band of Desperate Bush-rangers—Singular Rocks—Ascent of the Moonboy Range—Another night of Discomfort—Salisbury Plains—New England—Different kinds of Grain—Roots for Port Macquarie—Sheep-Stations—Lady Settlers—The Banks of the Clarence—The Beardy and Byron Plains—Return to Salisbury Plains—Purchase of a Dog—Vigilance at Night—Stray Cattle—The Author loses his Way—Encamps for the Night.

WHILE in Sydney, I was introduced to a young gentleman who was recommended to me as a partner, and who, it was arranged,

should accompany me on my journey with the cattle. Arrived at Maitland, we provided ourselves with a good blanket, a tin quart and pint pot each, and with these strapped on behind, our holsters in front, our saddle-bags across the saddle, and rifles slung at our sides, we commenced our journey.

Our route lay through a part infested at that time by a desperate gang of bush-rangers, and, though well armed, as there were only two of us, and our horses were heavily laden, we had no desire to fall in with them. We were, however, not a little dismayed when, on passing a bend in the road, we found ourselves in front of seven men, mounted and armed. Flight was useless; we were too near, and they at once extended to the right and left, to intercept us.

Putting a bold face on the matter, therefore, we rode up and came to a halt in front of the party, which we found to consist of

six constables, headed by Mr Grant, the police magistrate of Maitland. While we had taken them for bushrangers, they had paid us the same compliment; and while they regretted, we were most agreeably disappointed, for we felt assured that we had fallen into the lion's jaws, and expected to be dismounted and robbed, and perhaps roughly used. Without any accident, however, we arrived at Patrick's Plains, whither I had sent a convict servant, who had been assigned to me. Here I bought a horse, on which I mounted my man, who also led another, with which my companion, R—— had provided himself.

We now made a tolerably respectable cavalcade, and proceeded by slow journeys up the Hunter. As we could not progress very fast, we were occasionally benighted; and at the close of our last journey within the colony, we had been for some time in this predicament, when "the lantern dimly

burning" over the Page Inn hailed us through the gloom, and we praised the law by which every inn must light a lamp over its door at sunset, whether in the town or in the wilderness. Here we spent a night, and, with the usual extortion of the colony, were charged enormously, paying two guineas for our horses alone. When it is considered that they had but two quarts of maize apiece, and some sapless, withered bush-grass, which they dignified with the name of hay, it will be allowed that "mine host" was not troubled with a conscience.

Our next day's ride was a long and late one. We had entered Liverpool Plains, and the track was not very plain, when, to add to our perplexities, night overtook us. It was very dark, and I was obliged to make the best use of my previous knowledge of the country. But, in spite of all efforts used, such as dismounting occasionally, and feeling for the wheel-ruts, &c., we at last

got fairly bewildered. At one time, a distant fire led me to suppose that I was near some station or Black Camp, but I soon found that the bush had been on fire, and that burning trees and logs were scattered all around.

At length, when (nearly overcome with fatigue) we thought of tying up our horses and lying down to sleep, we heard the barking of dogs at a distance of a mile or two, and with much difficulty in following the sound, we succeeded in stumbling upon a station by about one o'clock in the morning, where we were hospitably supplied with such fare as the place afforded.

Wrapping ourselves in our blankets, we reclined on the earthen floor,—a hard bed, but not unvisited by the refreshing sleep which fifteen hours in the saddle had earned; for thou, O sleep!

——— "Liest in smoky cribs,
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And hushed with buzzing night flies to thy slumber."

On the following forenoon, we arrived at the station where I had purchased my cattle, and found that they had been removed by my overseer, some fifty miles onwards, in hopes of finding some grass. I had now the pleasure of hearing the number of deaths which had occurred in my herd, and of being presented with the brands cut out from their hides as infallible witnesses.

Before leaving this place, some accounts had to be settled, and the character of the man I had to deal with now showed itself in its true colours. Because I declined submitting to his impositions, he became so violent as even, by his gestures, to threaten blows. In my own defence, I prepared to make use of a pistol, which I had in my pocket, when my worthy host, overcome with passion, called for his gun, and rushed to the hut for it.

Fortunately, however, for the prevention of bloodshed, his wife interposed, and pre-

vented his purpose until he cooled sufficiently to see the madness of the alternative he was choosing, namely, that of being either shot or hung. This intervention was more than he deserved from his spouse, whom he had once brought to death's door by cutting her head open with a sabre. I afterwards met the surgeon who attended her on that occasion, and was informed that the scoundrel, her husband, in terror that she would die and leave him to be hanged, on his knees offered his whole herd of cattle to the medical man if he would save her; and, after her recovery, would not give one farthing in return for having his neck saved from the halter.

In the evening, we proceeded to a small station, a couple of miles off, where, after placing our horses in the stock-yard, and giving them a few handfulls of reeds which we cut at the water-holes of the Mooki, we passed the night in the hut. Here my mare

had the misfortune to slip her foal, an accident which rather retarded our progress for a day or two.

After this, we proceeded across a large plain, and through a pass in the ranges beyond. Here, notwithstanding the remark that the remains of volcanic action are seldom or never to be discovered, I found a conical hill which, from its appearance and composition, was evidently volcanic. At its base, I found a tolerable specimen of cornelian. Leaving a cattle-station which is formed on a small creek, we arrived at another gap in the hills, through which a cattle-track leads to the road conducting one from the Page to the Peel.

As it was now sunset, we were compelled to encamp. The little creek, on the banks of which we found ourselves, was dried up; and, after searching for a considerable distance, both up and down, we could only collect about a quart of water from one

little and somewhat muddy hole. Our poor horses got no water whatever, but we hobbled them, and turned them loose, to pick up any withered grass they might find. Having lighted our fire at the foot of a dead tree, and partaken of a meal somewhat scanty as regards the liquids, we stretched ourselves on our blankets and opossum-rugs, and composed ourselves to sleep.

This was no easy task, however, as we were very uneasy about our horses, which we knew would be likely to wander a long way in search of water. Indeed, we found it necessary to set a watch, and bring them back every ten minutes, as they strayed away. The tree, too, at the foot of which we lighted our fire, was by midnight all in a blaze. In consequence of this, we found it advisable to leave our camp, for fear of the tree's falling, an event which occurred soon after we got beyond its reach. It was a sight worth seeing, to behold through the

darkness of the night the decayed old giant go down, amidst a shower of sparks, and with a crash that resounded through the silent forest.

At daylight, we found our horses—eat our dry morsel—and proceeded on our way. We had not gone more than a mile, when we discovered, in the bed of the creek, a small pool of water on a rocky bottom, where we enjoyed the luxuries of drinking and washing; and where our thirsty steeds were also refreshed. After a journey of five and twenty miles, we arrived on the banks of the Peel, a tributary of the Namoi, (when it has anything to contribute), and on which the Australian Agricultural Company has a large grant of land, and many sheep and cattle-stations.

Having succeeded in finding a pool of water, we encamped there all night, and next day arrived at the Peel station, where was a bush-store. Here we staid till the

heat of the day was over, and having learned from a New England settler, who arrived the same morning, that a band of six desperate bushrangers were out in that part; we examined our fire-arms, and set out in the afternoon.

This band had committed unparalleled depredations in New England, and had culled for themselves the best fire-arms and horses of the district. Each man rode a good steed and led another, bearing a fortnight's provisions, so that at any time they could retire a long way into the interior.

As they were so well armed and mounted, and made very long and unexpected marches, they were the terror of the whole district for a month or two after this time; when they were captured by the mounted police, before they could fulfil their intention of retiring into winter-quarters in the interior.

At some miles' distance from the Peel, we passed a number of strange rocks of various

sizes, having, as it were, large heads supported on slender necks, or pillars, and standing chiefly on a gentle declivity. They appear to have been subject, at some remote period, to the action of water, which has worn away the softer pedestal, and left the capital, which must have been of harder structure.

By starlight, we ascended the Moonboy range, a long acclivity of considerable height, and the principal ascent between Liverpool Plains and New England. We expected to reach a sheep-station on the Macdonald River that night, but none of us had ever travelled the road before; and, after riding till two in the morning, we concluded we had passed it, and determined to encamp. We were now at a considerable elevation, and found the air extremely cold.

The grass was covered with hoar-frost (June being one of the winter months), and my companion's hands were so benumbed,

that in trying to strike a light he lost our only flint, thus depriving us of the comfort of a fire. To add to our distresses, no water could be found, and R—— was glad to suck the frozen dew from the blades of grass.

Next morning, we passed several large water-holes, half a mile in advance of our bivouac; and a few miles further on, leaving the Macdonald River on our right, we arrived at the sheep-station. Here I found my cattle under the charge of my overseer, and another man, whom he had engaged to assist him. In the forenoon, we went down to the river, and washed our clothes.

On returning to the huts, we found a man, who had just arrived, and who, travelling the same road we had come but two or three hours later, had been robbed and ill-used by some bushrangers. My man had found great difficulty in managing the cattle, owing to the want of a proper stockyard to keep

them in at night, and consequently two or three had been lost.

At night, we slept in the hut, and found it bitterly cold, notwithstanding we kept up a good fire. At daylight, we rose, the country being then enveloped in a thick white mist. Several other travellers stayed in the hut that night, sleeping, like ourselves, each in his blanket on the floor. One of them was a settler, going to visit his sheep-stations, where the men had been living for six weeks on mutton alone, the drays having been robbed, and there being no flour in the neighbourhood to be borrowed.

Before starting, one of our party had a narrow escape, through the carelessness of one of the convict men belonging to the station, who, meddling with R——'s carbine, fired it off in the hut, the charge passing through one of the gum-slabs of the building. We now saddled our horses,

loaded the pack-horse, counted out the cattle, and proceeded on our journey.

The day following, we arrived at Salisbury Plains, where is the first station in New England. Here we rested (or, as it is called, spelled) our cattle for a day, and enjoyed some wild-duck and teal shooting on a chain of water-holes of considerable extent and depth, and pointing out the channel of a small river. The country now assumed the appearance of open and undulating downs, intersected here and there by low, wooded ranges. These downs, in many parts, consist of rich black soil, and, being free from timber, only require fencing in, to render them fit for cultivation.

New England, as its name leads one to suppose, bears considerable resemblance to the mother-country, both in general appearance and in climate. Though hot in summer, it is very cold in winter, snow and ice being no rarity. Notwithstanding this cold,

however, the sun has considerable power in the middle of the day.

Lying at such an elevation above Liverpool Plains, the station escapes the sweltering heat and protracted droughts under which the latter district so often labours, though the wheat-crop has more than once failed from want of rain. This grain commonly thrives well here, but the common maize, or Indian corn, which abounds in other parts of the colony, will not ripen. Its place is partly supplied by a smaller variety of the same plant, called Cobbet's, or ninety days' corn —the latter name being derived from its growing and ripening in that period.

New England is well adapted for British colonization, from the quantity of good and easily arable soil found there, and from its climate, which to an Englishman will appear very much like his own, but a good deal ameliorated. The great drawback will always be its distance in the interior, and the diffi-

culty of transporting goods to and from Maitland.

Routes have since been found to Port Macquarie, down the Hastings, and also down the Clarence to its navigable part. It is doubtful, however, from the broken nature of the country, whether these will ever be available on a large scale. From the coldness of the weather, and scantiness of the grass in winter, it is not easy to keep cattle in this district. It is therefore entirely occupied by sheep-stations, and affords most excellent sheep-runs, being peculiarly adapted for this purpose, from the openness of the country and the thinness of the wood, which enable the squatter to run his sheep in flocks of from one thousand to fifteen hundred. This gives a great advantage to the settler in these parts, over those in the lower country, where the flocks only average five hundred, and consequently require two or three times the number of shepherds and watchmen.

New England is studded with stations at the distance of ten and fifteen miles from each other, and is chiefly, or entirely, occupied by young gentlemen of respectability and education, who have emigrated from Great Britain. In this respect it is much superior to Liverpool Plains, the stations in which, for the most part, belong to old-established settlers, who live within the bounds of the colony, and leave their establishments in the interior to be managed by superintendents and overseers often procured from the lower or emancipated orders.

Within the last two years, one or two ladies have found their way into the New England district, which was formerly inhabited by young bachelors exclusively; and when wives can be found for more of them and their men, the comfort of the stations, and the respectability of the district will be much increased. The belt of elevated land

which girdles New Holland, at the distance of eighty or one hundred miles from the sea, and forms the table land of New England, extending to the northward in country of the same style, assumes in different places, the names of Beardy and Byron Plains, the former being derived from the long beards which the occupants of it wear.

From these, access to the sea has been found, by means of a track falling upon the Clarence River, and continuing to a small settlement at the head of the navigation, where a hut or two have been built, and a bush-store established. The cedar on this river having attracted many sawyers, together with small vessels for the conveyance of their timber, this little settlement sprang up for the purpose of supplying them with stores and rum. A few squatters with sheep and cattle followed, taking possession of runs on the banks of

the Clarence, and its tributary, the Arorra. The cedar vessels, and a steamer which occasionally plies from Sydney, afford the means of conveying stores, and now and then a mail to the settlement.

Latterly, the taking down from New England and Beardy Plains, part of its wool, and the carrying up of stores in return, have tended to increase the prosperity of the Clarence; and, if this route from the interior should prove good, and come into general use, it will not only much benefit the river and the settlement, but save the inhabitants of the table-land the carriage of one or two hundred miles. This is a good river for both sheep and cattle, and, at the time of its discovery, was said to be one of the finest districts in the colony. That, however, goes for nothing, as every new district and new settlement enjoy that reputation on being first opened or set-

tled. It is just the M^c^Leay River on a larger scale, affording equally good locations, and room in the country about it for more of them.

Still farther to the northward than Beardy and Byron Plains, extends a large tract of similar country, approaching Morton Bay, on the coast, and known by the name of Darling Downs. At the time that I passed through New England, this part of the country had not been explored, and Morton Bay had not been thrown open for settlers, it being until that time a penal settlement of New South Wales, to which the doubly convicted (being those convicts who have been found guilty of a crime in the colony) were sent. All these plains and downs have now been traversed, and partially settled. They are admirably adapted for sheep, cattle, and horse-grazing; and, as they extend to a great distance inland,

and no limit has been found to them to the northward, they afford field for very extensive colonization.

For the last two years, Morton Bay has been thrown open to the enterprising emigrant, has become settled to a considerable extent, and is now the port of the adjacent country, as well as of Darling Downs. But I have wandered full five hundred miles to the northward, and must now return to Salisbury Plains. This run was a very excellent one, and a good specimen of the better class of sheep-stations. The proprietor's hut, with the kitchen and stable behind it, built as usual of gum-slabs, and roofed with sheets of bark, stood upon an acclivity overlooking the cultivation paddocks. At a little distance, were seen the huts for the men, and near them the large shearing-shed. At various distances of from three to five miles were the out-stations, at each of which a flock of sheep was grazed.

Starting from this in the morning, we travelled to the southward and westward, and reached at dark another sheep-station, where we encamped for the night. Next day, we were delayed for several hours by the loss of our horses, but having at last found them, we proceeded to the last station in New England in that direction. Here I purchased a dog, which I thought might be useful, in case of being attacked by the blacks, and having procured and slaughtered a sheep for our sustenance during the remainder of our journey, which was thenceforth to be through a *terra incognita*, we set out soon after sunrise. The route which we were now to pursue had been travelled only once or twice before, and one of the parties that preceded us had made a marked tree line, by blazing the trees on each side with a tomahawk, at intervals of fifteen or twenty yards from each other. This was our only guide on

the track which we must pursue, but, as the line was not well defined, we found great difficulty in adhering to it.

Part of our route lay along a small creek, which forms one of the sources of the M'Leay, and near it we encamped for the night. As it was very cold, we made a large fire, and having no tents, endeavoured to shelter ourselves by making arbours of boughs, which we cut for that purpose. As the blacks in this quarter had the character of being very savage, and as we were all, to a great extent unacquainted with their habits and modes of attack, we thought it necessary to keep a watch all night. Certainly we were all startled from our repose by the violent barking of our dogs, and sprang upon our feet, not knowing what to expect. The cause of alarm, however, proved to be the taking fire of part of our bedding, close to which one of the dogs had been tied up.

In the morning, we found that the cattle had wandered a good deal; but fancying we had them all, we proceeded on our journey. It was my duty to ride a hundred yards a-head of the herd, and look out for the marked tree-line. R—— and one of the men drove the cattle where I led, while the other man led the pack-horse, and assisted them in the rear. I found it almost impossible to follow the marked tree-line both from the blazes on the trees having, to a considerable extent, disappeared and grown out, and from falling in with many trees marked by the blacks.

At one place, I came upon a large number of trees, evidently marked by the natives in the way which is usual, at some of their ceremonies; fantastic shape sbeing cut out of the bark in all directions, and many of the trees being circumscribed by rings from the butt to the topmost branches. At some distance back, I had feared I was deviating

from the proper line, and here I lost the track altogether. Not knowing how far back I might have to go to find it, and convinced of the impossibility of following it when found, we held a consultation, and determined to steer by the compass, a dangerous and, perhaps, somewhat rash expedient to adopt.

We, however, proceeded at all hazards, and having travelled over a rather broken country, arrived in the afternoon at a pleasant and green-looking flat, where we thought it advisable to encamp. We found excellent water here in a small creek, which ran towards the coast-side of the table land, and, having a little daylight before us, we fortified ourselves against the cold by our usual arbours of boughs.

The night was extremely cold, and the pools of water in the morning were covered with ice. The cattle and horses were very uneasy, straying about in all directions and

demanding our constant attention. At daylight, the whole of the former began, as usual, to move, and required the strictest watch to be kept upon them to prevent their being lost altogether. Having spent an hour or two along with one of my men in looking out for the best route to follow, I returned to the camp, where R—— and the remaining man had been tending the cattle and preparing breakfast. This, as usual, consisted of part of our sheep and Johnny cakes, baked of flour in the ashes of our fire, having first been kneaded on a piece of bark stripped from the tree for that purpose.

We had a great deal of trouble from a heifer, which was constantly breaking back, probably to join its mother which might have been left behind, and from a cow which, having calved at the camp-ground during the night, was unwilling to leave the place where its dead calf lay, for we had been obliged to kill it, as we must do with all that are calved

during a journey, they being too young to travel, and being sure of detaining or afterwards attracting their mothers back to the spot where they may be left.

We proceeded on our journey, and soon after lost the heifer which had given us so much annoyance, being unwilling to knock our horses up in galloping after it. As usual, I rode ahead with the compass in my hand, and the cattle, with the rest of the party, guided by the grey mare which I rode, followed in my track. The country over which we travelled was a good deal broken, and, towards sunset, we came to an almost precipitous place which stopped our progress. During the daylight which remained, we employed the time in searching for a route by which we might avoid this difficulty, but being unsuccessful, and finding water near, we forthwith encamped for the night.

CHAPTER X.

Surveys of the Country—Stupendous Precipice—Missing Cattle—The Author has a narrow escape—Takes shelter in a hollow tree—Arrival on the Big Hill—Descent with cattle—Encampment for the Night—Want of Provisions—Course along the bed of the River — Fords and Falls—Serious Losses — Fresh Discomforts—Passage of the River—Perpetual Rain —The Rocky Ranges—Red Ants—Human Skull—Fat Hen—The Signal answered—The Shepherd and his Flock—Return to the Cattle-Station—Journey with Cattle continued—Trappand's Flat—Arrival at the first Station on the River—Horses missing—Reward for their recovery—The Author arrives at his destination.

NEXT morning, my man and I spent several hours in surveying the country and in fixing on the line which it was best to follow. Our

prospect was not very pleasing, the land appearing to be extremely rugged, with a large and extensive range of hills which we saw no chance of being able either to surmount or to penetrate. We found not a symptom or track of any living thing except emus and kangaroos; and we wandered so far through this perplexing country, that it was with difficulty we found our way back to the encampment. There was no resource left, however, but to steer by the compass in as direct a line as the rugged route would permit. After spending a fatiguing day in climbing ranges and descending one or two steep and rocky places, where our horses could hardly keep their footing, we arrived at dusk in a small glen shut in by lofty and abrupt sides. Here we found a very little water, sufficient only for our own use, and we accordingly encamped for the night.

As there was some brush at the head of the valley, we procured saplings and

formed a bush stock-yard in a rude way, into which we drove the herd, anticipating that they would be very restless during the night, for want of water.

The cattle, however, were not inclined to stay here, and soon broke through our frail barricade. They got adrift in all directions through the brush, and, it being a very dark night, we had the greatest difficulty in again assembling them in the glen. Finding that there was no chance of their settling and lying down, we lighted fires at short distances all round them, and divided our party into watches of two each, taking it by turns to guide the cattle for two hours. As the night was very cold, and the long grass was saturated with dew, we had a most unpleasant time of it, notwithstanding which the activity required in attending to the cattle must have made it appear to pass quickly, since I and my companion were surprised by daylight, and found, to our astonishment, that

we had watched upwards of four hours instead of two.

At daylight, as usual, I and our principal servant mounted our horses, and looked out for the route which it would be most advisable to pursue. The country did not seem by any means to improve, and I began to grow somewhat doubtful of the issue of our adventure. R—— and the men had for two days past been expressing their fears as to the result; and as our provisions were beginning visibly to decrease in quantity, I determined thenceforth to put the party on a stated allowance, and to mark the trees on the advanced side as we proceeded onwards, so that in case of extremity we should at least be able to trace our way back to the place where we now were.

Our course had hitherto been as nearly as possible due east, unless when turned aside by some insurmountable obstacle, after rounding which we again reverted to the

same direction. Towards evening, after having passed over some very rough and scrubby country, we arrived at a small green level, when I thought it advisable to ride ahead for some distance, to explore. I had not gone a quarter of a mile when, to my great delight, I perceived before me, as it were, a great break in the country, forming a stupendous precipice, at the bottom of which and onwards lay extended a most confused and broken-looking tract, which I had no doubt was the country of the McLeay, and part of that which was called the coast side of the range.

A large gum-tree, marked by the steps which the blacks had cut in order to ascend, stood near me, and, for the purpose of obtaining a better and more extensive view, I pulled off my boots, and attempted to climb it. From the elevation which I reached, as far as the eye could roam, both north and south, I could perceive no break

or spur leading down from the enormous barrier, whose edge I almost looked over. Convinced, however, that this was the true limit of the table-land, and equally satisfied that there must be leading ranges dipping down towards the coast-side, I returned to my fellow-travellers, and told them what success I had met with. I then sent one of the men to the northward, with directions to keep a sharp look-out for marked trees, and for any leading ranges dipping towards the low country.

I went to the southward myself, upon a similar errand, and, after travelling two or three miles, was delighted to hit upon a marked tree, which I knew at once to belong to the regular line. Returning to the cattle, I moved them about a mile in the direction of the marked tree I had discovered, and we employed the little remaining time before dark in looking for water.

We were, however, not fortunate in

finding more than sufficed to make a pot of tea a-piece for ourselves, the poor horses and cattle being obliged, as before, to go without water.

As might have been expected under such circumstances, we had considerable difficulty in keeping the cattle during the night, being very much fatigued by our exertions and want of sleep on former occasions. In the morning, finding that we had the cattle all right, we sat down to take breakfast, and allowed them to feed up the valley. Having finished our meal, loaded our pack-horse, and mounted, we rounded up the cattle, and were proceeding to start, when my principal man, who was then considered and afterwards became my overseer, thought he missed some of the leading beasts, and on letting them draw out slowly in a long line, and counting them over, we found that about thirty head of the best and leading cattle, with a valuable bull among the number,

had strayed away since we had sat down to breakfast.

The weather had hitherto been very fine, but this morning it came on to rain heavily, and increased our difficulties by effacing the tracks of the strayed cattle. After several hours searching in all directions, one of the men hit upon their track, which he followed up till he found them, at the distance of a mile or more from our encampment. This was almost unexpected good fortune; for, from the nature of the country, I scarcely hoped to succeed in recovering them. After having taken my turn in looking for them, and having returned to tail the herd while some of the others went to search, I was under the necessity of encumbering myself with two horses and a dog, all of which I had to lead for a short time.

While in this position, I and my own horse had a narrow escape from a severe injury, for the dog getting between the feet

of the other horses, alarmed them, and made them press forward upon mine, by which means I was thrust into a clump of young trees, and at this moment my rifle, which was slung by my side, went off, the bullet passing through the bucket in which the muzzle lay, and grazing the edge of my boot with sufficient violence to make my great toe shake in his shoe. This was really a providential escape, as the muzzle of the rifle commonly rested on my foot, and had only been thrust aside by the boughs of the trees, one of which must have caught the hammer, and so discharged the piece.

Being in an uninhabited part of the country, at least a hundred and fifty miles distant from medical aid, and ignorant of the correct route either backwards or onwards, I cannot but consider this escape as a deliverance from a most dangerous and painful dilemma. Had my horse been less fortunate, and received the ball in his thigh,

(which I somewhat wonder he did not), the consequences would have been scarcely less fatal to the speed and success of our journey, than if it had passed through my own foot, though of course they would have been by no means so painful or distressing to me individually.

Indeed, had this latter event occurred, it is not improbable, from the position in which I was placed, that either loss of blood, or mortification, would have prevented me from ever reaching the end of the journey. Scarcely had this accident happened, when I heard the shouts of one of the men, who was approaching with the cattle which had been lost. Having rounded up the herd, we retired into a hollow tree, where we were sheltered from the rain, and succeeded at length in lighting a fire, so that we were enabled to enjoy a pot of tea and a pipe, two luxuries that are much relished by the bushmen.

We now got the cattle under weigh, and proceeded to the place where I had found the marked tree the day before, the rain still continuing to fall in torrents. From this point, we were enabled to follow the marked-tree line for a short distance, sufficient, however, to bring us upon the general line of ranges which leads to that span of the table-land conducting to the low country, and known by the name of the Big Hill.

As it was late before we started to-day, we did not travel very far, falling considerably short of the usual length of our journeys, which might be from ten to fifteen miles, as we found the cattle able to bear it. From their leanness when we started, and the paucity of grass and water on the way, we were always obliged to *spell* them for an hour or two in the middle of the day, and never advanced more than fifteen miles in one day; but, indeed, this is far enough for any cattle when on a regular journey.

Next morning, we made a long march, and within an hour of sunset found ourselves on the Big Hill, at the foot of which I believed the M^c^Leay to lie; and there indeed we saw a sheet of water reflecting the setting rays of the sun. We had little cause to doubt that this was the M^c^Leay, yet from none of us having ever travelled the road before, we could not be positive as to our position; and this uncertainty gave rise occasionally to unpleasant feelings, the rather, that our stock of provisions was well nigh exhausted.

Being at the top of the ridge, where there was no water, and no ground to encamp the cattle, we determined to push on to the bottom, albeit we feared we could scarcely get down before dark. The descent is nearly a mile and a half long, very narrow, and at one point near the middle so confined as to resemble the ridge of a house, being precipitous on each side, and not affording footing for more than one horse at a time.

It was extremely difficult to get the cattle to enter upon the descent, and it required all our exertions both of whips and lungs to induce them to proceed. We were obliged to dismount, the way being very steep. R—— led three horses, I took charge of two, while the principal labour of driving the herd devolved upon the men.

The cattle, disliking the steepness of the hill, went down in a zigzag line, constantly endeavouring to break away along the almost precipitous sides. We were hoarse with bawling, our arms were tired with cracking our long stock-whips, and darkness overtook us before we were two-thirds down. In this predicament, we had nothing for it but to keep driving the cattle on before us till we arrived at the foot of the hill, where we left the cattle to their fate, it being too dark to admit of looking out for a good camping-ground and getting them quietly bedded. We trusted, however, that from

their being very much fatigued, they would not stray far from the little creek on which we now found ourselves.

The weather happened to be dry all the afternoon, which was fortunate, as it was so late and dark before we encamped. We lighted a fire, and waited anxiously for R—— to come up, or rather, I should say, to come down, with the pack-horse, which he was leading, and which carried all our provisions. We waited in vain, however, for after an hour or two had elapsed in anxious expectation, there was no sign of him. I *cuied* to him, thinking that he might not be far off, but have lost his way, and I fancied I heard an answer; but I may have been mistaken, as the men did not hear it,—or it might possibly have been a distant echo. We were, therefore, obliged to be content with a soldier's supper, as it is called, namely, a drink of water and tightening the belt.

I found a considerable difference in the temperature now that we had arrived at the foot of the table-land, though it was still cold enough during the night to waken us frequently, and pain us with cramps and stiffness.

At sunrise, we made up our fire, which was almost out, and I dispatched one of the men in search of R—— and our breakfast. He met him coming down the hill, and found that he had encamped about midway on it, having been overtaken there by night, and being unable to manage three horses in the dark. We were very much annoyed at him for having deprived us of our supper, and kept us so late without breakfast, though, in truth, he had not been much better off himself, though he had all our larder in his keeping. Having no water, and no meat cooked, he was obliged to be content with a piece of damper; and he was afraid to light a fire, because he was alone,

and we had seen the smoke of the blacks during the day, by which we knew that they were not far off. He had therefore tied the unfortunate horses up to trees, and the two dogs having remained with him, he placed one on each side of him for warmth, and passed a tolerable night, though he suffered somewhat from thirst.

Having now breakfasted, we gathered the cattle together, and found that they had not strayed far, being somewhat in a confined position. Our provisions had dwindled to such a small amount, that we were unable to feed our dogs, and they had assumed somewhat the appearance of the *Myall Dingo*, or wild dog. Before setting out, I managed to shoot several carrion crows, which we roasted and offered to them, but, although starving, they would not touch one of them. Having spent an hour in exploring the route which we were to pursue, we counted the cattle and resumed our journey.

We soon came upon a considerable stream, which I had little doubt was the M'Leay, though I was sometimes afraid that we might have kept too much to the northward and hit upon the Nana Bucco, an unexplored river running parallel to and north of the M'Leay. Our course now lay entirely along the bed of the river, which we were obliged to follow as a guide, and to cross very frequently at distances of a quarter of a mile, or so. This was necessary, from the very circuitous course of the river, and from abrupt rocks and ranges constantly presenting themselves to obstruct our passage. Luckily, whenever such an obstacle opposed us, we found a ford, or fall, where we were able to cross the river to the flat which invariably lay on the opposite bank from the eminence.

The whole course of the river down to tide-flow is of this character. At every bend, and it meanders excessively, is found

a ford; and in passing down the flats on the banks of the river, one almost invariably perceives a rocky precipice of considerable height, often rising into a range immediately opposite to one. Thus, the traveller down the river is compelled to take advantage of these shallows, and to keep continually crossing from side to side, in order to avoid the barriers, which would otherwise altogether stop him. From having constantly to pass over large beds of shingle and the stony bottoms of the fords, the cattle and horses both become very footsore, this being a most fatiguing and painful style of country to travel over.

At night, we encamped on one of these flats, at a little distance from the river. The dew was extremely heavy, and, to shield ourselves from it, we made thick coverings with boughs of trees, which we stuck into the ground, so as to shield our heads and

the upper parts of our bodies. Our sheep was now well nigh finished, for nothing remained of it but a little suet, which we had kept to run with our bread. Of this pittance, however, we were deprived by one of our hungry dogs, which ran off with it before we could suspend it as usual on a tree. The other dog also had his supper of green-hide, having got hold of one of the stock-whips, which he gnawed to pieces.

Both of these were serious losses to us; and, to add to these, the following morning, during my absence, somebody devoured nearly all my portion of damper, as well as that of one of the men. Our want of provisions was now getting rather a serious matter, and had it not been for our tobacco and clay pipes, we should have been but poorly off. An occasional smoke, however, went a long way towards soothing our minds, and staying our stomachs.

The weather had again become very much overcast, and, during the greater part of the day, it poured in torrents. This sort of weather continued for three days, during which time it can scarcely be said that we had a dry stitch upon us. To-night, again, we encamped upon a grassy flat, and, as it rained very heavily, we used our blankets for making tents, stretching them over large boughs, whose ends we stuck in the ground, and whose tops we twisted together. The edges of the blankets we pinned down to the ground with small pegs, and this being accomplished, I pulled off part of my clothes, the first time I had done so for a fortnight, and crept beneath our temporary shelter. Everything was so saturated with wet, that we found it impossible to light a fire; and, as the rain very soon penetrated the blankets, we passed anything but a pleasant night.

The next day was similar to the one that

preceded it. We crossed the river again many times, as may be supposed, when I state that, before we arrived at our destination, we had forded it upwards of ninety times. The cattle were extremely troublesome to drive, it being frequently a matter of great difficulty to make them face the river. Our continual exertions in shouting to them, and cracking our stock-whips, together with our exhaustion from want of food, had almost knocked us up. The wet weather, too, added to our discomfort; and, having now finished the last morsel of our provisions, we were in terror of the river's rising, by which means we should have been precluded from all possibility of obtaining a supply.

At night, I went down to the river with R——'s carbine in my hand, in hopes of being able to shoot a wild duck, or crane; but though I saw several birds, they were so very wary, that it was impossible to get

within shot. On leaving the river, I met a native dog on the beach; which seeing a white man, no doubt for the first time, appeared transfixed and astonished, and allowed me to advance very near to it. It was different from any I had seen before, being handsomer, and of a black and tan colour. I fired, and wounded it; but the carbine being only loaded with small shot, it succeeded in getting away. My fellow travellers had been anxiously awaiting my return, trusting that I should have secured some game. They were, therefore, very disconsolate when they saw me return empty-handed. As it still continued wet, we fortified ourselves as well as possible against the rain, and spent another unpleasant night.

During this day, we had passed a place called the Junction, where another branch of the M^c^Leay, nearly of the same size as that down which we were travelling, joined us

from the north-west. Our encampment this evening was again upon one of those flats near the river, one or two other flats as usual rising in terraces behind us. After a good day's journey, we reached a small flat in a corner of the river, where we thought it would be best to encamp the cattle.

We had now been two days without food, and I therefore determined to take one of the men and push on to the first station we could find on the river, in order to procure some provisions. Somehow, it never struck us that we might have killed a young beast; but even if we had, we should not have found meat, without anything else, palatable, until reduced to greater extremity than we had yet arrived at.

As it wanted an hour or two till sunset, I encamped the cattle, and started off with one of the men attending me. R——, and the other man who were left behind to take

care of the cattle, did not like their position at all, on account of the blacks, whose smoke we saw in the ranges not far off. Our position, however, was as bad as theirs, and I could not trust any one but myself to start upon such an important mission.

Immediately on leaving the cattle, we were stopped by the depth of the river, which offered no ford for crossing. After some delay, we succeeded in finding a fall at some distance up, where we crossed with considerable difficulty, the bottom being very rocky. We were then obliged to ascend a rocky creek for a short distance, and then climb a range so steep that it was with great exertion we could pull our horses up. We pushed on as fast as possible; and, when it became dark, encamped on the side of a range not far from the river to which we went down and supped upon a drink of water.

The dew was very heavy this night; but

we were so fatigued that we contented ourselves with making a good fire, without taking the trouble to erect a cabouse. However, notwithstanding this drawback, we passed a more comfortable night than of late: for the last three days and nights we had been subjected to almost constant rain, and had not known the comforts either of dry clothes, or a dry spot, to lie down on. At daylight, we lost no time in hurrying on, though the nature of the country prevented our advancing very fast.

The first part of our journey, for about sixteen miles, was confined to one side of the river, on account of the broken and brushy country on the opposite bank. The route lay along a most confused track, consisting of alternate gulleys and sharp ridges, being the spurs of high ranges which rose in the back-ground. The country was strewed all over with a quantity of immense blocks of stone, from which we called this

place the Rocky Ranges. We were obliged to lead our horses almost the whole way; and even then they could not pick their steps so well but that my mare fell on her side, and was nearly slipping over a steep place. My boots being in a very dilapidated state, one of those pied ants, of about an inch long, found entrance, and bit me on the foot. The pain was intense, causing a considerable part of the foot to swell; and I had no idea that so small an animal could inflict such torture.

On the rocky ranges, we found a skull at a certain place, where we afterwards learned that a white man, who had taken the bush, had been killed by the blacks. Having, at last, got over this difficult style of country, we pushed on as fast as possible, travelling, as usual, down the bed of the river; fording it at every turn. In many instances, we had difficulty in finding proper places for crossing; and, on one occasion, got involved

in a brush, or jungle, where I was dismounted by a large vine catching me round the neck.

We were so much in want of food by this time that I proposed making a fire, and boiling some fat hen in our pots. My man Dennis, however, advised me to push on, in search of better fare, to which I accordingly agreed. This fat hen is a weed which is sometimes used as a vegetable by settlers, and tastes very much like spinach. The tops of it only are pulled, and it is really very excellent in this way, when one can get no other vegetable. It is best for use when it is a couple of feet high, the sprouts being then tender, and covered on the lower side with a white and mealy, or frosted kind of bloom, which adheres to the hands upon being touched. It is sometimes troublesome from growing abundantly in wheat, and when ploughed ground has been left to itself for some time, it will frequently grow

extremely rank reaching the height of six or eight feet.

After riding hard, and travelling such a distance as I thought must bring us to the first station on the river, and not finding any, I began to be apprehensive that we might have passed it, as I was not sure that it was near the river; and, indeed, rather suspected that it was upon a small creek. At last, to our great joy, we discovered some tracks which we took to be those of sheep, and endeavoured to follow them, and every now and then gave a loud *cui*, in hopes that we might be within hearing of some shepherd, or sheep-station. Everybody considers himself bound to answer a cui, because it is the infallible signal that some one is lost, or some one wanted.

To our great delight, and I may say surprise, an answer burst upon our ears, and repeating that signal once or twice we hastened to follow the sound, though we did not as yet know whether we had been

answered by a white man, or a black fellow, not yet being sufficiently good bushmen to detect the difference.

As the blacks on this river had the character of being very savage, and had committed many depredations and murders, I was glad at last to perceive before me a shepherd, with his musket over his shoulder, tending a flock of sheep. He directed us to his hut, which formed the out-station of the establishment, and was at the distance of a couple of miles from the spot where we found him. On reaching this, the watchman supplied us with a good meal of mutton and damper, which, together with a pot of tea, formed the first repast we had enjoyed for about three days. We soon reached the head station, where I got a supply of beef, tea, and sugar. They could not spare us any flour, but we obtained some wheat, with the use of a steel mill, and employed the afternoon in grinding and sifting it.

In the morning, we started back towards the cattle, guided by the overseer of the station, who showed us a near way, at the back of the ranges, by which we shortened our journey considerably, avoided crossing the river so often as before, and managed to reach the encampment that night. This route lay through what is called the New England Gully, because leading towards that district, and brought us to the top of a range whence we had a beautiful view, embracing a great extent of the river, and some large and verdant levels on its banks, known by the name of Trappand's Flats.

On approaching the cattle at night, having missed the way by the range and the rocky creek, we were obliged to make our horses swim the river, bearing the provisions on our shoulders to prevent their being wetted. Arrived at the spot where I had left my fellow travellers encamped, I could discover neither man nor beast,—a circumstance

which caused me great uneasiness, for I was aware that the blacks were in the neighbourhood.

On advancing a little farther, however, and *cuing*, I was answered by my stockman, whom I found alone, and who had moved the cattle to what he thought a better place. Knife and fork were now the order of the day, and my servant was not relieved too soon from the pangs and prostration incident to hunger. He then informed me that, in spite of his persuasion, R——, who could no longer cope with hunger and anxiety, had left him the day before to follow in our footsteps; what, however, had become of him, it was hard to say. He had not reached the station when we left: we did not meet him on the way, and therefore I concluded that he had fallen into one of three evils—he must have lost his way, been drowned in the river, or killed by the blacks.

In the morning, we gathered our cattle, and proceeded on our journey. We had a great deal of difficulty and labour in making them swim the river at the deep crossing-place, but eventually succeeded in forcing them all over. At this deep crossing-place, I discovered a very beautiful and distinct echo. That night, we encamped near Trappand's Flat, and the next day reached the first station on the river without any extraordinary occurrence or accident, except one which befell me on Trappand's Flat, where I and my horse, while gallopping over the plain, were buried in a large hole, overgrown with grass, and which I supposed to have been a stump-hole, that is, the place where the roots of a large tree have been burned out.

At the station, we found R—— comfortably located, from whom we got an account of his journey and disasters. It seems that, after a hard day's ride, and losing his way several times, while he was crossing the river

at night-fall he was immersed over head and ears in a place deeper than he supposed. On reaching the bank, he perceived a light at some distance, and heard the barking of dogs. Fearing that this was a black camp, he did not dare to approach it, and spent an uncomfortable night—wet, and without a fire.

In the morning, he saw before him the sheep-station at which we had first arrived and, as may be supposed, was much annoyed to find that he had lain all night within sight of it, hungry, wet, and cold. There, like us, he was hospitably entertained with such fare as the sheep-station could afford, and, proceeding to the head station, he quietly took up his quarters there, leaving us to fish for ourselves. I was much displeased with him for leaving the stockman alone with the cattle, but hunger and anxiety are not to be reasoned with, and he had paid pretty dearly for his conduct.

At this station we stayed all night, and intended to have started early in the morning, but our horses were missing. From several circumstances, I had reason to suspect that two of the men had planted, that is, hidden them, for the sake of a reward. As we could not find them ourselves, and were anxious to proceed, we were obliged to offer two pounds for their production, upon which they soon made their appearance. This practice of planting horses and cattle is common through the whole colony, and new-comers are apt to suffer very much from it, and to be often very awkwardly situated for want of their nags.

We now proceeded with the cattle, and ascended a very steep range, at a distance of five miles from the station we had left, which station, by-the-bye, is called Towel Creek; and though near the river, is not on it, but on the creek from which it takes its name. By the evening, we had advanced five miles

further, and encamped upon the confines c
what was now to become my cattle-run
We managed to strip a sheet or two of bark
and the next morning advanced betwee
three and four miles to the place I ha
previously fixed on for my station. Ou
fatiguing journey was now at last complete
without any serious accident, althoug
attended by great privation and discomfort.

CHAPTER XI.

Henderson's Creek—Table Mountain—Difficulty in procuring provisions—Erection of two Gunyas—Requisites for the Settler in the Bush—The Author's Neighbour, and differences with him—Visit from a party of Blacks—Bush Stocky yard—Purchase of a Dray and Bullocks—Completion of the Huts—Steep Ranges of Table Mountain—The Dogs attack the Blacks—Culture of the Ground, and Crops—Clearing the Land—An Encounter with the Natives—The Author goes in pursuit of them—Renewed Depredations—Story of a Visitor—Melancholy fate of Mr. Robinson—Straying of Cattle.

We were now encamped on a flat at the mouth of a creek which falls into the McLeay, and which afterwards took the name of Henderson's Creek. In the back-

GUNYAS INHABITED BY THE AUTHOR AT ELSINEUR.

converted into the bed of a torrent. We were thus completely insulated, and, to make the matter worse, our provisions were again failing. We had killed a kangaroo a day or two before; but now that we were in want of one, we could not by any contrivance fall in with any. The river was some time in falling, and we busied ourselves in stripping bark and making gunyas to sleep in. At last, one of the men, at considerable risk, swam his horse over, and procured for us a supply of flour and mutton, after we had been without food for two days and two nights.

The men had boiled a potful of nettles, but of this food I did not partake; and indeed, after the first day, hunger did not trouble me much, the most disagreeable feeling being a sort of lassitude, accompanied by an intense anxiety as to when I should be able to procure food. To be sure, I could always shoot one of the cattle, but I was unwilling

to do this until compelled; and it is questionable if beef alone would be a very wholesome diet, though doubtless it would support life.

Having made two gunyas, one for R——, myself, and the overseer, and another for the remaining man, and any others I might procure, I left the men to tale the cattle, and set off for the settlement of Port Macquarie, distant about eighty miles, in order to obtain supplies, tools, men, &c. Here I hired a splitter and fencer, to help in building some huts. I also bought the necessary tools, consisting of a crosscut-saw for felling trees and cutting them into logs, maul-rings, and seven wedges for splitting out the billets and slabs; saw-files, adzes, felling, morticing and broad axes, nails and a hammer.

Provisions also I purchased, being flour, tea, salt, tobacco, and sugar, and a pack-bullock to carry them upon. This last cost twelve pounds. For the flour, I paid sixty

shillings the hundred pounds; for tea, five shillings per pound; for sugar, four pence; and for salt, ten shillings per hundred pounds. Colonial tobacco cost from one shilling and six pence to two shillings per pound, and was an indispensable article, for men will do little work without it; and indeed I found it a great solace in the deep and painful solitude I was now to undergo. R—— soon left me for a considerable time alone, and then, to my horror, I discovered that I had found what the poet sighs for—ignorant of what it is:

> "Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
> Some boundless contiguity of shade,
> Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
> Of unsuccessful and successful war,
> Might never reach me more!"

My nearest neighbour dwelt at the station called Wabroo, on a creek ten or eleven miles down the river; I could therefore have no society, even if he had been inclined

to be social. But the fact was, that, like most other squatters, though at such a distance from him, he thought I had encroached on his run by coming so near. This of course led to a rupture, and finally to an adjustment of our differences by the Commissioner of Crown Lands. Before we had been long encamped, a small party of blacks came down to us. They were great, strapping, and ferocious-looking fellows, fully armed with spears, boomerangs, and tomahawks. Only one of them could speak a word or two of English, which he had learned at the station up the river.

By means of a little tobacco, however, and signs—the usual language of strangers, we soon made them understand that we wanted sheets of bark for enlarging our gunyas. They accordingly set to work, and stripped a good many trees, and were amply rewarded by a little meat, damper, and tobacco. They were anything but agree-

able neighbours, though they displayed no hostility, and we were therefore glad when they moved their camp.

During this time, some of my men were engaged in stripping bark and splitting slabs for a hut, while the stockman and I occupied the time that was not required in looking after the cattle, in making a small bush stock-yard, sufficient to hold them at night. This we did by morticing the trees contiguous to each other, with three holes for receiving saplings, which were thus supported like rails.

Here and there, where it was necessary, we inserted posts or forked sticks for props. We also erected a calf-pen, and gallows, the latter for suspending slaughtered bullocks. Although it was winter, it being the month of July, it was very warm in the middle of the day, yet we felt the cold extremely during the night. We now made a small truck, which we mounted on wheels

formed of short sections of the round barrel of a tree, which we discovered by tapping with our axes to be partially hollow, the pipe, or bore, affording a ready-made opening for the axle. On this car, I set the men to carry in the bark and slabs, by means of the pack-bullock, which was fastened to it with ropes of green hide of our own manufacture. I now found it necessary to start down the country again, to Port M'Laurie, in order to purchase more supplies, together with a dray and working-bullocks, to carry them up. Working-bullocks at that time cost from ten to twelve pounds, while a dray was valued at from sixteen to twenty pounds.

As my proceedings at this period were such as it is necessary for every person settling in a similar manner, and forming a station to a certain extent, to adopt, it will be a tolerable guide to the intending emigrant to relate explicitly what they were;

taking care, of course, to point out any better modes of procedure than those which, as a new hand, without any experienced person to guide me, I was led to pursue.

On returning to the station, I assisted in completing my hut, which was a small building formed of gum-slabs, having an earthen floor and a bark roof. The area might have been about twelve feet long by about ten broad, with a fire-place six feet deep, and seven wide. We afterwards attached a small wing for a store. The situation commanded a very beautiful view of the river, the hut being placed on a high bank at a sharp bend of the stream, and therefore giving a prospect both up and down its course. A little to the right, at the foot of the bank, extended a flat, which I proposed cultivating, and in the nearest corner of which I formed my garden,

Directly beyond the flat, the creek, mentioned before as Henderson's Creek, wound

through a considerable piece of dense brush. Behind the station were many high and steep ranges, the table mountain forming a fine back-ground in the distance. This situation, though certainly one of the best that could be found as regards view, I afterwards discovered to have many serious defects. In wet weather, it was almost inaccessible to drays, which could not cross the creek on the one hand, or surmount the Ranges on the other. In fact, from being on the north bank of the river, it could not in such weather be reached from any other station, the country on that side being exceedingly broken, and full of jungle. The flat, too, intended for cultivation, turned out to be, for the most part, poor soil, and the large brush in our neighbourhood was dangerous, as affording good cover for hostile blacks.

Having erected in our hut two separate berths, one for R——, and one for myself, I took up my abode in it. A large gunya was

soon built for the men, whose number was increased by the loan from the barracks in Port Macquarie, of one or two from the ranks of the specials and invalids. Seven or eight black fellows had made their appearance, and assisted in stripping bark for this large gunya, and one of them, who spoke a few words of English, gave me to understand that he was principal man of the tribe belonging to this place, which was called Kuggengora. Wishing to conciliate the natives, I made a good deal of him, giving him his meals in my own hut, and promising him a brass plate, bearing his name, as King of Kuggengora, this being an ornament much prized by them, and occasionally bestowed by settlers.

In the afternoon of the second day that they were with us, stripping bark, my bull and mastiff dog attacked them, when they were returning to the huts. They immediately, for protection, climbed trees with

the agility of monkeys, and, on descending, they indignantly went off into the brush, fancying apparently that we had set the dogs upon them. We saw nothing more of them for some little time, and busied ourselves, meanwhile, in felling the timber on the flat which we intended to cultivate.

May and June are the months in which wheat is sown: it was therefore too late to think of that crop, but we hoped, by great exertion, to have some ground ready for maize by November. The timber on the flat consisted of gum and apple-tree, the former of which is very hard, and frequently of great size. These all required to be cut down with the cross-cut saw, then sawed across into logs of a proper weight and length, and, lastly, dragged off by the working bullocks, which are attached by means of large spare chains.

As in the team, the oxen are coupled by a large wooden yoke, which passes over their

necks, and by iron bows, depending from the yokes, and inclosing the entire necks. Each couple is attached to that behind it by a chain, passing from one yoke to the other. Of course, the pole-bullocks (that is, the hindmost) and the leaders are the steadiest and most valuable, the young and restless ones being put in the centre.

Some people prefer burning off the timber to drawing it off, but, in order to do this, it must lie for at least a year to dry before it is even piled up for this purpose, and this mode, therefore, will not answer when the ground is required as soon as possible. The drawing off is, perhaps, on the whole, the best plan, as with little, if any more labour, the ground is so much sooner cleared.

During this time (and, indeed, most commonly afterwards, notwithstanding my having a partner) I was living alone,

> "Far from all resort of mirth,
> Save the cricket on the hearth."

and, had I not been for the most part very actively engaged, I should, doubtless, have felt the solitude much more than I did. All my men, except the overseer, were convicts, and he proved no better than the others.

Having as yet no books, and often no light at night, it was no easy matter, even with the help of the customary pipe, to pass away the dull evenings, but an affair happened about this time which caused us some uneasiness, and kept us on the alert. The men were all absent on various missions, except two, and these went every morning to milk a cow in the bush stock-yard, for we had not as yet been able to erect one at the station. In order to reach this yard, they had to cross the flat and creek, over which we had thrown a primitive bridge, by felling a large gum-tree so as to lie across it from one bank to the other.

The distance from the huts to the old

camping-place was about a quarter of a mile; and when the men had one morning finished milking, and had just crossed the creek on their way back, five blacks started out of the brush upon the bank, fully armed, as if intending mischief. Dennis, my assigned servant, called out to them, "What you look out?" when one of them answered, "Toorki!" meaning that they were going to hunt the wild turkey; but Dennis knew that he was part of the game for which they had lain in wait that morning.

The blacks did not attack them at once, for they seldom strike a white man, except from behind. The two unfortunate whites, with their heads half-turned round, and keeping their eyes on the savages, walked swiftly towards the station, and got a little a-head of the blacks, who followed them. When about the middle of the flat, however, they discovered several more of their enemies running quickly along the range towards the huts, so as to

intercept them. They now saw that their only chance of safety lay in speed, and, dropping the milk-pail, they fled towards my hut.

It was not yet seven, and I was still asleep, when the door was burst in by the men, whose cries of "The blacks, the blacks!" soon roused me. Jumping up, I seized my rifle, which stood ready loaded in the corner, and sprang to the door. When I reached this point, I saw the foremost black fellow, at a distance of about twenty yards, poising his spear in the air, and almost in the act of launching it at one of the men, who as yet had only reached the doorway. Our foes stood on the brink of the steep bank, and the moment they caught a glimpse of me, or of the rifle, they were off like deer, springing at one bound down the bank, and before I could raise the piece to my shoulder!

So cunning were they in keeping under the bank, and so quick in making to the

large brush which skirted the flat, that though I followed them even to the edge of the brush, I could not get a shot at them, and I had determined not to fire without being pretty sure of hitting. Their disappearance was so sudden that it almost seemed supernatural. Of course, I could not have followed them in the brush, even if I would, and it would have been madness to attempt it, the consequences being commonly fatal. The leader of this attack was one whom we had heard to be a desperate wretch, who had been at the murdering of several white men. Poor Dennis described him, as he ran along the range, as an awful savage, whose eyes flashed like two coals of fire! I consider myself as having had a very narrow escape on this occasion. Had the men been killed, doubtless the savages would have murdered me in bed, and, before I could be well awake, for the door had no fastening. It was lucky I

had not to deal with men more civilized and thinking. Had they first murdered me, they could have taken the fire-arms, and slaughtered the two men with the greatest ease; but Providence did not permit them to fix on this most evident and most eligible plan.

After this affair, I put myself in a better posture of defence, than I had hitherto assumed, in case of another attack. I gave the men part of my fire-arms, retaining, of course a sufficiency for myself, and I cut loop-holes in all sides of my hut, as well as one on each side of the door, so as to command it, and give a cross fire in front of it.

About the same time, the blacks committed several other depredations. My neighbour, who, as I have said, dwelt ten miles down the river, anxious to prevent my occupying part of the run adjoining my station, had erected a hut at the distance of about two miles, and placed two men in it.

This hut stood upon a fine creek, commonly called Saunders' Creek, from a man of that name, who had been murdered there some little time before by the blacks. The same spot was again to become the scene of savage revenge.

While one of the two men who now occupied this place was absent one day, the blacks took advantage of the age and weakness of the hut-keeper, whom they attacked and left for dead, finishing their work, of course, by rifling the hut. The man was afterwards removed, and taken down the country to the hospital, where, after a long and painful illness, he became somewhat better, but whether he ultimately recovered or not, I never heard. This event, though much to be deplored, was of service to me, for the hut was immediately abandoned by my troublesome neighbour, and taken possession of by me. I should have mentioned before this, indeed even when I was describing our first en-

campment on the run, that an accident occurred which grieved me very much, and showed from what dangers I had myself narrowly escaped.

A fortnight after we came down the river, and while smoking our pipes one evening by the fire in front of our gunyas, to our surprise a man approached, and telling us his story, requested our hospitality. A pot of tea was immediately put to the fire for him, while he told what had befallen him. He was the servant of a Mr. Robinson, whom I had seen in Liverpool Plains, and who was driving a small herd of cattle in our rear. It appeared that, like ourselves, he and his men were short of provisions, and that he had taken one of them and set off. in order to procure a supply, if possible, at the nearest station.

The account this man gave was, that he had fallen behind his master to light his pipe, and that, on pushing on, he could

nowhere find him. It was before traversing the deep crossing-place that they parted, and, whether his master had been drowned in getting over, or been murdered by the blacks who were in the neighbourhood, was unknown, for he never again made his appearance. It was surmised by some that his own man had slain him for his watch and other property, but this was never proved. His horse was not found for six or seven months. The man told us he had a dog with him, and this, too, had disappeared

A night or two after hearing this tale, we fancied we heard a dog barking at a distance from us, and back among the ranges. Thinking it possible that poor Robinson might have only lost his way, and made to our neighbourhood, and that it might be his dog barking, we used to listen attentively, and endeavour to follow the sound, but always unsuccessfully.

This continued for several nights, and we

pictured to ourselves the unfortunate young man, dying of hunger, and faithfully watched over by his humble friend. The idea recalled to my mind those beautiful lines of Sir Walter Scott, written on a somewhat similar occasion:

> "How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber,
> When the wind waved his garments, how oft didst thou start,
> How many long days and long nights didst thou number,
> Ere he faded before thee,—the friend of thy heart?"

Our pity was indeed for the dead, though it was excited to such an extent in a manner that afterwards appeared absurd. It was no dog that we heard, but the cuckoo, that cries at night, with which fact we were then unacquainted! The young man's bones were found about a year afterwards, by the edge of the river, a little below the

deep crossing-place, but whether he was drowned, or murdered, was never known.

At the time of the attack upon my neighbour's men, we were kept in a state of great uneasiness by the natives, who continued to hover about the station. I often saw their fires, and even heard them chopping in the brushes. The cattle at this time were giving us much trouble by breaking back towards New England, being inclined, as usual, to return to where they were bred. We had taled them for two months, but this was not sufficient, six months taleing and yarding at night being generally considered necessary. Many of them made as far back as to between the junction and the foot of the table-land before we could overtake them to bring them back, and about fifteen head got away altogether.

In the following winter, too, three bulls, though they had been a twelvemonth on

the run, set off together up the river, and were never recovered. Whether they returned to their old run, or joined a herd of wild cattle on the edge of the table land, I never ascertained; but, two years afterwards R—— found several head of those which had first gone away, at the station in Liverpool Plains, where they had been purchased.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.