

The Tasmanian Lily

Bonwick, James (1817-1906)

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The Tasmanian Lily

London
Henry S. King
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Preface.

THE “Tasmanian Lily” is written with an object.

The author had heard the common remark that, with the greatly advancing prices, England was no longer fit for the home of any but the very busy and the very rich. The former must gain their living, or they wish to add to their store. The latter can enjoy their wealth in the high civilization here.

But there is another class, comprising those who are not what is called rich, but who have a moderate competency, with no desire, or ability, to enter the competitive strife for an increase of gains. To these the present bounding prices have a very sensational meaning. Many of such persons have families around them, and they sigh as they contemplate the coming struggles of their offspring in a land so crowded out, or where King Capital has so great a supremacy.

There are, also, some whose infirmity of frame requires a milder climate. With British leanings and ideas, they would not like to bring up a family amidst foreign and uncongenial associations.

Honestly believing that emigration to Australia, and especially to Tasmania, would suit the pocket, tastes, and health of the class in question, giving a *Present* to themselves and a *Future* to their children, the writer has sought to picture simply, but fairly, the condition of Colonial life in the following tale.

LONDON, *Oct.* 13, 1872.

The Tasmanian Lily.

Chapter I. The Immigrants.

IN the month of October, a few years ago, a vessel made the land on the western side of Tasmania. The voyage had been unusually tedious, and the delight of the passengers at the long looked for shore was freely expressed.

The white-crested quartz coast caught the eye. It was the same which Tasman first saw two hundred and thirty years ago. It is still the mighty barrier of the Island Home, ever hurling back the ever-repeated assaults of the angry western waves.

Rounding the south-west cape, the course was eastward till the Eddystone rock was left on the larboard bow. The wild birds rose with a screaming salute to the new comers, and the breakers roared a welcome against the cliffs. Then the voyagers to the north-east that they might enter Storm Bay. The coal regions of Recherche Bay and Southport were left behind, and a natural obelisk of basalt off the south end of Bruny Island was their landmark.

Entering Storm Bay, the romantic magnificence of the scenery of Tasmania came before them in successive kaleidoscopic views of beauty. To their left stretched the long and narrow island of Bruny, nearly divided at its centre, where Cook's celebrated Adventure Bay murmurs on a sandy beach. Every varying form of peak and swelling top was brought forward by the slate and basalt rocks of that coast. To the right rose the shaggy woody heights of Tasman's Peninsula, once the scene of volcanic fury, and for many years the principal convict establishment of Van Diemen's Land.

The Iron Pot, with its lighthouse, guided them out of Storm Bay, and beyond its junction with D'Entrecasteaux channel. But the gay Frenchmen of revolutionary times had left it for seventy years; while the dark-eyed maidens, about whom they wrote such romantic tales, have passed away with all their race.

The wind now dropping off, the seamen amused themselves with fishing, and brought up that splendid fish the Trumpeter, a great luxury to those who have long feasted on salt junk. A puff coming, the ship made its way into the broad waters of the Derwent river. The scenery increased in interest. To the richness of uncultivated nature was now added the spring green of farms. The pretty tenements of settlers were dotted about on bossy heights, in sheltered coves, or amidst the dark

foliage like bowers in groves. Everywhere was seen the English taste in love for flowers, and everywhere the English fancy for a garden home.

But when the long line of lofty tiers was brought into vision, when Alp on Alp arose to the rear of budding settlements, when cascades of sunlit charms were noticed glistening through the woods, when the stern front of that table mountain, Wellington, towered grim monarch of the country round, the admiration of the passengers became unbounded, and they loudly hailed the isle as the gem of the Southern Ocean.

When, also, the soft breath of the shore came off to them, laden as it was with the perfume of acacias, and the mingled odours from aromatic shrubs, the younger and more imaginative among the group were reminded of the Indian clime from which they had come, and the spicy groves of Indian seas. And would they here have the sensuous enjoyment of such perfumed air, and not receive along with it the miasmatic poison so often dwelling in the dearest, loveliest vales of the romantic East?

A young man, who seldom left his mother's side on the deck while these changing landscapes flitted by, now smilingly said to her —

‘What would our Persian poet, Ferdusi, say to this, mamma? It put me in mind of his verse, —

“The tender silken grass invites the tread;
With murky odour breathes the fanning air;
Pure waters glide along their perfume bed,
As though the rose gave them her essence rare.”

And I cannot help exclaiming with him, as I look upon such a panorama of charms, especially with the eye of a prospective dweller in the land, —

“Oh! never — never — long as time shall last —
May shadows o'er these beauteous scenes be cast!
Still may they in eternal splendours glow,
And be like paradise, as they are now.”

‘Bravo! Horace,’ his mother cried. ‘But — ’ and here she looked archly at him, ‘you may, for aught you know, be fortunate to find that Ferdusi's

“Afrasiab's daughter there, Manizha bright,
Makes the whole garden, like the sun, all light.”

‘Now really that is too bad of you, mamma, thus to make sport of my rhapsody, and drag me down from the sublime to the ridiculous. After all, who knows that what the poet's Asiatic Paradise failed to exhibit of a Manizha bright, this very lovely Tasmania may develop before my enraptured gaze?’

A merry laugh of the pair followed.

A rocky promontory was gained, and there, lighted up with the farewell rays of a setting sun, was Hobart Town. The forests were in a deepening shade; the bright beach of Sandy Bay glowed in the sunset; the scattered houses of the city were set in orchards and gardens, that rose and fell with the billowy hills, and Mount Wellington had its massive front festooned with clouds still laughing in the sunlight.

As the ship swung at her cable in Sullivan's cove, the passengers landed with light and joyful hearts, though with somewhat unsteady sea legs.

Chapter II. Meeting of Old Friends.

IT was such a lovely day. The sun was out, of course, and yet, this October spring-time, he good-humouredly and playfully rested so often behind clouds of fleecy whiteness, as if he wanted to show he was not coming out in full summer glory all at once.

A gentleman sat by an open window in a public office, resting awhile from his pile of papers, being drawn irresistibly to look at Mount Wellington. That mountain had still a part of its snowy cap of winter remaining. The contrast of its dazzling brightness with the sombre shade of the forest below, was engaging the gazer's attention.

After a while he closed the window, and returned to the pile of papers, smiling to himself as he thought how few officials in smoky London would be thus tempted to stray from dull work to gay Nature.

The messenger tapped at the door, and presented the card of a caller.

'Shew the gentleman in immediately,' said the superior.

Rising hastily from his seat, he met his visitor at the door, and warmly greeted him.

'My dear Captain Douglas! How glad I am to see you! Wherever have you come from?'

'The old place, my friend, the steaming plains of India, where you and I sweltered together in past campaigns.'

'But what in the world brought you to this outlandish part, that some call the other end of nowhere?'

'Ah! that's too long a story to be told all in a breath, Roberts.'

'And were you in the "Dolphin" that dropped anchor last night?'

'I was indeed, and drop anchor in your office this morning.'

'Of course you are not alone, Douglas?'

'No; I brought the wife alone with me, and all the family left to me — my son Horace. We had been intending to leave India for some time, on account of Mrs Douglas and poor Rosa, as the health of both of them was so very delicate. The removal of our darling from earth hastened our departure.'

'I am sorry to hear of the loss of so beautiful a girl, and hope this climate will soon set Mrs Douglas up again. But whatever made you steer this way?'

'I'll tell you. I was tired of the service over there. I am not so young as I was; though, by the way, Roberts, your dozen years here have only made

you younger. At first I thought of nestling in Old England. But I am about sick of ceremonials, and couldn't stand the sound of them in private life. France, Germany, Switzerland seemed to extend their hands in invitation. But I shook my head at them all.'

'And could neither the Alps nor the Baths tempt you, leave alone the courts of princes and the gay delights of Paris?'

'No; I wanted rest myself, and not further excitement. My wife was equally unwilling to enter into fashionable life, or be for ever rambling. We wanted a quiet and healthy home, if we could get it, and still be among our own country-people.'

'And that you will surely get here,' exclaimed the official with emphasis. 'But whatever made you come out to Tasmania?'

'Your first letter to me from Hobart Town. I happened to catch sight of it again, as I was turning over some records of the past, and when very undecided what to do.'

'I understand, old fellow; and you said to yourself, "I'll be off to that Roberts, and see his Paradise." Not a bad resolution, I assure you. But you must know that it is an awful dead and alive place. You'll be ennuyed to death, and thin off to ghostly proportions.'

'Indeed!' cried the Indian. 'Anyhow your proportions are not ghostly. Your hearty enjoyment of life is told in the very ring of your voice.'

'Well, well; perhaps it is so. But then, you know, I lead a regular dog's life — eating, drinking, sleeping, and running about.'

'And a little of your regular dog's life is what I want. I am sick of high civilisation, with its rich viands, its heavy wines, its uneasy slumbers, and its grand and solemn gait.'

'Why, Douglas, you are turning quite a philosopher.'

'Which at fifty odd is about time to do,' added his friend. 'I am not at the age for love in a cottage, Roberts, but I long for a more natural and simple style of existence. That was not to be got in Europe any more than in India. I thought in your colony I might seek and find it.'

'And that you will, my dear fellow, I assure you. But having said all about yourself, including Mrs Douglas, a part of yourself, allow me to ask what about Horace?'

'Horace,' said the father, 'is now one-and-twenty. He was educated, as you know, in England, being a very delicate boy. He took a good class position, but had no fancy for the military profession. He went in for civil engineering, but had to give up through an attack of the lungs. Returning to India, he resolved, before the death of his sister, to accompany us here.'

'I see,' interrupted the other; 'you wanted, all of you, to be together. Quite right, if the lad be not consumed with ambition, and don't disdain the shepherd's lowly life.'

'No, his ambition evaporated during his late long illness. He has taken

it into his head that the world has gone crazy after honours and wealth, to the loss of peace and true progress. He is more of a philosopher than I am, and talks sentiment by the yard to his mother.'

'Until somebody a little younger takes her place,' again interrupted Mr Roberts.

'There you are wrong, my friend. The young fellow is affected with a violent anti-matrimony malady, and declares that all womankind, always excepting his admirable mother, are vain coquettes, heartless flirts, or slanderous spitfires, wholly and utterly unfit to be partners of men of sense, and fated to drag down to their own level of insipidity, acerbity, weakness, vanity, and restlessness, every fellow they can catch.'

'That is, Douglas, they are seized with a moral hydrophobia, and delight in biting every dog in their way, and dropping their poison in the wound they make. A very respectable opinion of the sex, indeed. Has your juvenile philosopher ventilated his views on that subject since his arrival?'

'No,' said the parent; 'he has been so smitten with Dame Nature here that he has had no tongue for slander.'

'I am extremely glad to hear it. There is no harm in courting that respectable old lady; in fact, attentions to her may develop a latent faculty of his soul. But I would seriously counsel him to keep his ascetic, monkish ideas to himself, or our strong-minded, merry, colonial lassies will wig him nicely. He might spout his aphorisms in Indian, or even English, drawing-rooms, but he had better not show off his eloquence after that fashion at a *pic-nic* in Tasmania. But he won't. You'll see that once getting acquainted with our unrivalled and unrivalable Tasmanian belles, they will soon pack off his morbid philosophy; and if they don't absolutely cure him of misanthropy, they will certainly make him in love with themselves.'

'Capital!' exclaimed Mr Douglas, 'then the youngster has a prospect before him here — that's one comfort for an anxious father.'

'God bless the lad! I am sure he is a good fellow, and will be a favourite of mine. He comes from a good stock — sire and dam of unquestionable celebrity — and must be good on the turf. As his godfather, I'll steer him through the rocks and shoals of the pomps and vanities of life here. And if he wants to gain colonial experience, I think I have influence enough to pop him into a Government billet, where he may scratch his ear with a pen.'

'Thanks, my dear friend, for your goodwill to me and mine. But you must come off, if possible, to the hotel and see the tribe from the jungles.'

'And I,' said the other, 'will introduce them to the kangaroo wonders of Tasmania.'

It was not many days after this conversation when another debate arose

upon the subject of settlement.

'Well, Douglas,' said his energetic friend, 'have you decided upon your future destinies?'

'Indeed I have not. Can you help me? I hardly know the best plan to adopt.'

'But I know what you have thought about. You have dreamed of a hut in the wilderness, something of a rude cottage in a wood instead of near it. Now that sort of thing won't do. I was troubled with romance once, but gave it up. Excuse me, old fellow; but do you want to pile up rupees here?'

'No, my ambition don't lie that way. I sold out, after saving up. Wife and I invested for an annuity. The balance is enough to buy a farm and stock it, and still leave something for contingencies!'

'All right. But there's the lad!'

'As to him, Roberts, you need fear nothing. An aunt has settled two or three hundreds a-year upon him, and that sum he will scarcely need touch, as his fancies are neither extravagant nor commercial.'

'Now I begin, then, to see which way the needle turns. He wants to worship nature in quiet. You, I know, have no business to pitch your cash in the plough furrow. So you must give up the farming ideas.'

'Yet that will be to sacrifice all the pleasure that we have been promising ourselves.'

'Then I'll tell you what we'll do. A farm it shall be, so that you may have your own milk, butter and eggs, without entering into competition with the honest grower of grain. But it must be near town for several reasons; you will want to see me, and hear the news; your wife can't live without shopping, and knowing the fashions; and Horace, forsooth, must be a Fellow of our Royal Society of Tasmania, and make acquaintance with all our naturalists and geologists.'

'Really, my dear friend, you have hit off the thing exactly.'

'Certainly I have. The next thing is to see how these glorious results can be obtained. There is now a place to let some half a dozen miles out of Hobart Town. To-morrow afternoon I will go with you on a tour of inspection.'

The next day Mr. Roberts took the whole party to a charming little farm of about sixty acres. It was nestling under some of the roots of Mount Wellington. The house was not very grand or extensive. But the garden and orchard were in capital order, and the paddocks were safely enclosed. The road to the farm from the town was admirable, as are all the main thoroughfares of the island. The distance was a short hour's drive, passing through New Town, by the Race Course, and over the picturesque O'Brien's Bridge into Glenorchy.

The lady was pleased, and the gentlemen were pleased. A little expenditure might make the house thoroughly suitable, and a lease was

to be obtained on very moderate terms.

The bargain was concluded, and an early removal accomplished. Rosedale was a charming name for a really charming home. Experience of its pleasures only added to its interest. The lady could get to the shops, Horace to the library and museum, and the Captain to a chat at the club with his friend Roberts.

Chapter III. Why Seek a Colonial Home.

THERE was a farm to let next to that where our Indian friends were living. Report came that a new arrival from England had been to look at it. A few days more passed, and then report came that the new arrival had taken the farm.

'Who is he?' 'What is he?' 'Where does he come from?' 'What does he intend to do?' 'Is he agreeable?' 'Has he a family?' 'Are they agreeable?' These were some of the interrogatives thrown into the ears of Captain Douglas as he came in from town.

There was no long trial of patience. The full intelligence arrived soon. Captain Douglas, who already felt himself quite colonial, was resolved not to follow English fashion, and give the neighbour a month to get straight before a call. On the contrary, he walked across on the very day when the goods were going in, and offered his neighbourly service. He was sure the good folks had no chance of preparing a meal, and his wife had sent him over to say they must all come to dinner.

The Englishman stared a little at this unceremonious visit, and his wife blushed at being caught in a comparative deshabelle; yet the offer was made so frankly and kindly, that they could not but accept it, and went, accordingly. This was not all. Other little services were rendered, and due counsel was tendered, as the privilege of an older resident. The locality was described, the soil was criticised, and some improvements were suggested. The lady got many domestic hints from Mrs. Douglas, especially in relation to her children, for she had a full half dozen of all sorts, and of ages from two years to fourteen.

It was natural that the two families should be brought into contact. An increased acquaintance increased mutual confidence, and established a sincere friendship.

One evening, after a dish of tea together, Captain Douglas ventured to say how pleased he was to have such pleasant neighbours as Mr. and Mrs. Latham. They warmly expressed the reciprocity of feeling on their part; the gentleman adding,

'The question of society was the only thing that troubled us when resolving to come here. Everything else about Tasmania was so attractive, but we sighed at the thought that we might have improper associations for our children. We knew it had been a convict colony, and must contain much of the old character of population.'

‘But still you will admit,’ observed Captain Douglas, ‘that Rome with as bad a beginning had a far more honest and noble character than could ever be boasted by Greece.’

‘True, sir; but the conversion took time.’

‘That may be. But this country had some advantages. It was planted by British convicts, certainly. Yet these ever formed but a part of the population. The leaven of free immigration was perceptible soon after 1820. This new blood did not consist of the sweepings of workhouses, too commonly constituting the free emigration to portions of Australia; but it was of men of some capital, or educated in a profession. They had no assisted passage, though at one time favoured with grants of land, that they might relieve Government from the rations of men in their absorption as servants.’

‘Thanks for that intimation. Such a lesson was not without its influence; particularly, Captain Douglas, when so many retired officers made this their home, and when so large a proportion of free arrivals were from your northern land of the Mountain and the Flood.’

‘Your compliments to my nation and profession, Mr Latham, are gratefully appreciated. But I would have you take a less gloomy estimate of the convict population.’

‘O, I am sure the children of transported men here are in their general deportment, and their freedom from the gross vices of civilization, an ornament to society. I honour their progress, and respect their worth. My wife and I are very favourably impressed with the young people of the so-called lower classes.’

‘Still, I would like you to take a charitable view of their parents.’

‘In what way?’ inquired Mr Latham.

‘By remembering that England fifty years ago was a very different place to what it now is, that her laws were then brutal if not unjust, and that many were sent out here for trivial offences, if not for political acts which were rebellion then, though now called patriotic.’

‘I understand you, sir.’

Captain Douglas resumed. ‘My own experience of life in India, and elsewhere, has taught me that men are to be judged not merely by what they are, but by the circumstances which have made them such. In coming to what had been so long a convict colony, I was prepared to see queer physiognomies, and hear of coarse crimes. But I was sure that many a wild fellow, and many an untutored one, by a change of scene, and with opportunities here afforded to make a good living and earn a good name, would reform. My observation has confirmed this impression.’

‘Yet you must admit, sir, that the moral agencies producing the present social order here, and social virtues, too, have been wisely directed.’

‘They have, indeed. I do not believe any country in the world can

exhibit more remarkable evidences of moral action. The agents of this good may have been few, but their influence was extraordinary. The leaven was little, but powerful in its working.'

'And few,' added the English settler, 'can feel more grateful than I do for their philanthropy and public spirit. My children have the moral atmosphere purified for them by the labours of those worthy men and women.'

The conversation then drifted into the reasons for the removal of the Latham family. The story was thus told: —

'I was the younger son of a so-called independent gentleman, the reputed owner of many broad acres. Fairly educated in one of the public schools, and intended for some profession, I was, like other young fellows similarly situated, in no hurry to drop my gun and fishing-line, and was never urged by my father to prepare for the future.'

'One of the great curses of England,' interrupted the Captain.

'And I found it so,' rejoined Mr Latham. 'Well, just as it became necessary to commence a profession, if intended at all, my father died. His affairs revealed a sad confusion. My brother succeeded to the encumbered estate, and I found myself possessor of a small farm. Distaste for town life, and an age too advanced for specific studies, induced me to take the farm in hand for my living. A farmer needs a wife. The most sensible and satisfactory thing I ever did was the choice of one.'

'A very loyal speech of your husband's,' observed Mrs Douglas, with a smile, to her lady friend.

Mr Latham continued: —

'The wife and I jogged along very comfortably for some years, and saw one little one after another take a seat at our dinner-table. My farm was small, my capital was small, my profits were small. In Great Britain, as you may have heard, Mr Douglas, small farms are being swallowed up by great capitalists. My few acres were bid for by my richer neighbour. I should have held on had not a severe attack of illness laid me aside for months. This, unfortunately, induced a sort of partial paralysis. It was then I had to look round at my growing family.'

'Indeed it was, John,' sighed his wife. 'Six children in England, and that in our position, became a source of anxiety.'

'And that increased by the difficulty of keeping up appearances,' said Mrs Douglas.

'That was the real trouble. Food for our children we might get, but society for them in our altered circumstances was quite out of the question. A mother grieves to feel that her children are slighted by those not so well brought up as themselves.'

'Yet that was not the worst, my dear,' interposed her husband. 'What puzzled us was this. I was not fit to continue the farm, through failing

health. When selling the farm, what was to be done with the capital? The interest would keep us, but would not do more. How were the boys to be put out? They could not farm, having no capital. They could not enter professions, as I had little to spare them till they got a footing, which might be years and years. They could not hope for much in competitive trade without means. Then the wife often cried at the thought of their being snubbed by their more fortunate relations. It was the daily burden of her life, too, whatever could become of her girls. An alliance suitable to the dignity of our family connexion was not within our dreams.'

'I declare,' ejaculated Captain Douglas, 'you *have* drawn a picture. And yet I am told it is often to be now seen in Old England.'

'It is sadly too common. The mischief is, that the rise of manufacturers, and the general increase of wealth, have so developed the necessity of luxuries, and so excited the craving to be as good as one's neighbours, that living is enormously growing in expenses there, and shutting off the chances of saving for a rainy day.'

'Then these things caused you to think of the colonies,' the Captain observed.

'Undoubtedly. I knew there must be elbow-room for the young folks there, and less scope for the triumphs of Mrs Grundy. I knew labour was honourable as well as remunerative there. In Great Britain my lads would lose social position by work; in the colonies they will not be less esteemed for it. Then, though I could not hope to do much myself on a bit of land, I could guide the boys at it.'

'Your capital, also, could be better invested, Mr Latham.'

'I have found that out already. As the lads want education at present, I have put out my cash at interest. This little place suits my old country tastes, and the wife is happier with cows and fowls about her.'

'That is my case, too,' said Mrs Douglas. 'I am not only healthier but happier. I don't know what I should do now, if I had not my dairy, garden, and poultry-yard to amuse me.'

'Aye, and to pay the expenses of a family as well,' added Mrs Latham, 'besides giving us a famous table. Then, in this delightful climate, with lots of fruit and good things, the dear children do so enjoy themselves. I can never be thankful enough for the exchange.'

'But you pouted a little about coming, my dear,' the husband said, with a laugh.

'I own I did not like parting with the old places and with old friends. I was frightened at the voyage, and I wondered what sort of society we might have there.'

'Perfectly natural,' cried Mrs Douglas emphatically. 'These husbands of ours cannot comprehend women's fears, which are reasonable enough, as we know. And yet a mother is willing to encounter anything for her children, or a wife for her husband.'

Both husbands knew this to be a profound truth. If they said nothing they thought the more, it may be hoped.

‘I suppose you are pretty well satisfied with your location at this distance from Hobart Town?’ asked the Captain.

‘It suits me admirably. The wife can get in to her shopping, the little ones can run about in a semibarbarous condition, the elder boy can ride to school on his pony, the girls can have a few lessons from a lady near, and I can learn the news by an easy trot.’

‘Then you don't regret not going upon a farm in the interior?’

‘By no means. It would have given me unnecessary anxiety and outlay, and deprived my family of educational advantages. I am quite satisfied with going on slowly, and enjoying life.’

‘Yes,’ Mrs Douglas said, ‘we, too, find the distance from town all that we could desire. There are a few nice neighbours, and we can always add to our society by a trip to the capital, or by having our friends down here. As to Sunday, it is a great satisfaction that the younger branches are not deprived of religious teaching, and that we elder ones can have a church so convenient to us. We Presbyterians have a very comfortable place of worship near, while you Episcopalians have the same advantages for yourselves. I certainly was not prepared to find so great an advance in this, the best part of civilisation.’

The other mother professed herself equally pleased.

‘I ought to be satisfied myself,’ observed Mr Latham, ‘for my health has undergone a wonderful improvement. That voyage was a capital start for it, and the residence here has advanced it. I have employment enough for exercise and pleasure, without any burden. Then this glorious climate suits my nervous state to admiration.’

‘Ah! my dear,’ remarked his partner, ‘there is another important reason for better nervous health. You have not the worry you had in England about keeping up appearances, and as to what would become of the children when you were gone.’

‘Rightly placed to the credit side, my thoughtful wife. A man can't help being better when he loses his morbid cares. It is something, also, to feel that our children, as they grow up here, will be less liable to those dreadful nervous evils which are now the curse of many an English household.’

‘Bravo for ourselves!’ sung out the Captain merrily. ‘Anyhow we are rowing in the same boat, my friend.’

‘Yes, and that puts me in mind of asking how many of you are going out with some of us boating this afternoon.’

‘Bravo! again, for ourselves. This is the place for boating. All of us will launch upon the deep with you.’

Chapter IV. The Boating Excursion.

THE party gathered. Each family owned a boat, and each boat had now its merry group.

What a glorious scene for a sail or row! Such a landscape of wood and farms, of hill and dale! Then, as to the water, — it was just the very thing. The river Derwent was no narrow Cam, no tortuous mud-flat Thames. There was a splendid expanse, and deep water. One could row from bay to bay of charming pic-nic suggestions, or let out the flowing sheet before the breeze. There was no danger of getting foul of a steamer or a barge, no dread of a stick in the mud, no call for frequent tacking.

‘This is just the very thing for old folks,’ said the captain, as he lounged backwards in the boat, now slipping through the water. Then, turning to his son, who was that moment fancying it the very thing for young folks, he said,

‘When I was a youngster like you, Horace, I used to have a sail on the Scottish lakes, and thought it mighty fine too. But I had many a drenching and chill that took off the keen edge of the enjoyment.’

‘Yes, pa, I fancy I should prefer the Derwent, having a wholesome dread of coughs and colds after my taste of a British climate. Here, as I float along under this bright blue sky, with old Wellington and the Dromedary looking down upon the river, I am half disposed to believe myself the dreaming Shelley luxuriating in a boat on the romantic lake Leman.’

The jolly youngsters in the other craft were shouting and *coo-eying* to their heart's content. As the wind slackened, the sails were lowered, and the oars were plied. Again and again the two companies drew near for a chat, and a lazy drift with the stream. A song was struck up, with a merry chorus at the end.

But the young folks were impatient to begin their fishing. All the apparatus had been thoughtfully stowed away before starting.

‘Who will catch the first fish?’ was the challenge.

A little lassie had the honour of drawing up the first. It was a Flathead, and properly so called. Sweet enough, it was rather slighted because it was common, and on account of its bones, which were awkwardly distributed for the eater.

‘Just the thing,’ cried out her brother Bob. ‘Hand it over, Bessy, we want it for bait.’”

In vain did the girl assert her right to possession; public necessity must rule over private rights. Besides, it was the regular thing to cut up the first fish for bait. Then, everyone knows that sisters must yield to their impetuous brothers; theologians assert that it is one of the consequences of the Fall. Bessy with a sigh resigned the Flathead.

A regular run of good luck set in for the Latham fishers, and a corresponding ill turn for their friends. There were a dozen Flatheads, and quite as many Rockcods. The latter, not bigger than their mates, being less than a foot long, were thought much nicer. Their flesh was firmer, and the bones were more complacent. If larger specimens of the finny tribe were wanted, the fishermen had to go to the mouth of the river or down the channel.

The colonial waters are rich in fish. Names have been imported, but are absurdly applied. The cod is not a cod, nor the salmon a salmon. The latter is about the size of a mackarel, but is of better flavour. The perch and bream are first-rate. The latter broad-backed fellow is ever welcome. Mulletts are not to be despised any more than the flounders. The mulletts are plentiful enough in the rocky rivers, and have the reputation of rising to the fly as easily as trout in the old country. The period of perfect taste is in the summer, from spring October to autumn March. The sweet little black fish may be caught in the small creeks of the interior. Lakes and larger streams furnish magnificent eels. As to oysters and crawfish, they are excellent in quality, and ready to hand.

There is no want of foes, besides man. The shark is busy enough in the seas around the Island, and will venture up the Derwent itself. Sailors love to catch a shark, and fishermen have an especial down upon the fellow. Now, in the South seas, the creature was worshipped as a god, because in his benevolent voracity he drove the timid fish in-shore, and gave a haul to native catchers. A singular specimen of the family, though not so much to be dreaded, is gathered in Tasmanian bays. It has the form of the shark, though only two or three feet in length. The jaws are not on a corresponding scale of development, and its teeth are not prehensile, as in the mouth of its rapacious relative. On the north side of the Equator the Chimera, as it is called by naturalists, is recognised as the king of the herrings. The colour of the Derwenter is of ever-changing splendour. Underneath it is of a bright silver, and elsewhere of a golden hue. On the front of the head there is a bright black spot, of a metallic lustre. The upper surface generally has this dark lustre. The iris is brown, and the pupil orange. A raised line runs from head to tail. The fins are large for its length, and the pectorals particularly so. The abdominal fin is roundish and not extensive. Behind the caudal fin it possesses the shark's fin on a cartilaginous piece. There is a curious vascular structure of fine network, between the posterior rays of the dorsal fin and the spinal column, which is the air bladder of the creature; other fish rise and fall

by the action of the air bladder within the body. This machine is worked by the fin, which rises to allow the expansion of the gas, when the body of the chimera becomes lighter to rise.

The fish has every opportunity to make its way in the world. Its particular delicacy lies with the testaceous mollusca. These require to be cracked; and the operation is capitally managed by the crushing order of teeth. Two huge ones are fixed in the under jaw, and the upper is paved with four others. The gullet is wide and short, so that there is an easy and rapid passage of the food into the stomach, to the great convenience of the fish, which thus extracts the needful nourishment at once, without the formality of detention in an alimentary canal. The spinal column is of one entire piece of tough and elastic cartilage. As the chimera has a particular delight in rapidity of motion, the flexibility of its tail is a decided convenience.

The Tasmanian Barber is one of the Serrani, and has its relations living in the warm equatorial waters of the West Indies, being all alike destitute of elongated dorsal rays. The colour is reddish brown. A bright blue stripe runs round the eye, and along the side toward the tail. There are at least a dozen blue streaks on the lower part of the flanks and tail. The island salmon is a *Centropristis*. The apparatus which protects its gills, and which rests on four bones, has a covering of five rows of large scales.

The Gurnards come out strongly in the bays. Their square heads are covered with body plates, and their bodies are covered with small, rough, prickly scales. Some have these scales studded with minute spiny points. The sides of the head are finely granulated. One of these Tasmanian Gurnards has been also picked up near the Cape of Good Hope, and must have been a distinguished voyager. The Colonial Perch is a Gurnard, and has a bright silver colour, with dark spots. Another has, like the species in the northern hemisphere, eye-like marks on thin, large pectoral fins, somewhat similar to the ornaments on the wings of insects. One at Port Arthur has not only stiletto-shaped spines on its head, but a noble projection of one of these formidable horns on its snout.

There are plenty of odd-looking fish by Tasmania, worthy of being called devil fish, or any other ugly name. There is one peacefully subsisting upon seaweed. As this substance requires plenty of mastication, the teeth stand in eight or nine crowded ranks in the upper jaw, and in five or six in the lower. The teeth in the interior rows have the same shape as the outer guardians of the jaws, but are much smaller. The Hippocampus, or Sea Horse, from the shape of its head, is a curious creature, a few inches in length.

Some singular forms of the Saw fish are now and then found in the Derwent. There is one five feet long, with strong, pointed spines each side of the snout, while under these is a series of minute, and, perhaps,

partially developed spines, of a flexible character. From the outer side of the snout there spring out two fleshy, pliant, and curly appendages, four inches long, like the two cords of the Sturgeon. The flesh is like that of the Dog-fish.

The colonial fishery is distinguished by possessing the representative of the oldest, if not the most respectable and admired, family of fishes now to be found in the world. It is of the Shark tribe, though of very moderate length, and is identical in structure with the most ancient fossil specimens of the order, and long believed to be quite extinct.

The bold fishermen of Tasmania pursue the ponderous Black Whale, and steal along the rocky shore to catch the soft-coated Seal.

Man is not the only fisher. The sea-birds are wonderfully numerous around the coast, especially on the rocky islets. The Mutton birds, of the petrel sort, fly in such clouds as really to darken the heavens. Young Tasmanian lads are not too proud to eat the flesh of the young birds, though rather fishy and oleaginous in flavour. When first caught, the small ones may be made to discharge a large quantity of oil. The feathers make good beds when well cleansed and dried. Some land birds, as the King-fisher, the merry Laughing Jackass, have a beak fitted for the grasp of the finny rambler in the streams.

The Penguin is a Tasmanian fisher, though chiefly feeding on crustacea. The feet are far back, and of little use for waddling. When ashore, gazing unmeaningly at the outer world, the Penguins can be readily knocked down, like nine-pins, by a stick. Their wings are very small, and of no practical advantage for flying. Having a sort of scaly fur over them, instead of feathers, they occupy an intermediate position between bird and beast. If to be called feathers at all, these are rigid and short enough. The bird lays its eggs in the sand. In the water, its real home, it paddles away with ease and comfort. The Jackass Penguin has a note not remarkably unlike the abused but useful quadruped.

Juveniles in the Southern Colonies have one source of amusement in watching the Water Flea.

This crustaceous animal is so nearly transparent that the heart can be distinctly seen beating, in spite of the shell-like armour. The two jointed antennae are branched. The five pairs of branchiopods, by which it moves and breathes, appear to contract as the heart does. The eye is compound, as in spiders, there being a centre, with gems all round it. Such is the translucency, that the antennae of the young, which are born viviparous, can be seen to move in the maternal home. The Water Flea is a splendid leaper, springing upon its tail after the lobster fashion. The creature thus dancing on the sands of the river side is no bigger than a good-sized dot.

The Tasmanian angler has the advantage of a larger share of fine weather than his brother sportsman can boast of in Britain. He is subject

to less annoyance from competing crowds, and especially happy in being under no terrors of trespass. Private preserves of fisheries have not become an institution in Australia and Tasmania. It is true, that of late years the several legislatures have passed ordinances to restrain the foolish greed of some sportsmen, who do not know, or will not observe, the habits of animals as to the period of reproduction.

But the disciple of the venerated Isaac Walton has a quiet felicity in his favourite pursuit, when beside the laughing waters of a rocky streamlet in Tasmania, with the arching fronds of the fern tree shading him from the sun, and the rich, mellowing sound of the bell bird reaching his ear. If favoured with suitable human company, even if it be of the other sex, a chat or read together, or, perchance, a part song, will relieve the tedium of otherwise solitary hours, and beguile the weariness of a walk homeward through the bush.

Chapter V. A Good Climate.

A FAVOURITE walk with the two old Indian friends was up Davey Street, and by the Soldiers' Barracks, to Battery Point.

'Not much of fighting display,' remarked the Captain, after his inspection of the Battery.

'That may be; though to hear some of our young volunteers, one might imagine that the invader of colonial hearths would meet with a terrific reception. If none but the brave deserve the fair, there ought to be plenty of warriors amongst us, for there are lots of pretty girls to fight for.'

'This is not a good harbour for defence, Roberts.'

'You are right. I do not fancy these guns will ever be used but for salutes. It is a long way for a European enemy to send a fleet: what ships they have would surely be wanted nearer home for the worrying by British bull-dogs.'

'Then you have no fear of an attack?'

'Not I. They might get a good stock of apples by landing. But should any foes reach the shore, and go fruit gathering, their digestion would suffer; for no better hiding places for bush fighting can be had than about Hobart Town, and our youngsters could handle a gun well in the forest.'

The Captain got quite excited at this idea, and felt how glad he would be to head a troop of bush lads on such an occasion.

'Come, come, Captain Douglas,' exclaimed his companion, 'those fierce looks of your's are unbecoming a retired gentleman. It is necessary to give you more Christian sentiments; so let us turn into the cemetery hard by.'

The position of this city of the dead was well chosen. Formerly, though near the sea, it was far out of the town. Now it is being rapidly enclosed by houses. The view from the ground is much admired. As a cemetery, it has not the attractions of a *Pere la chaise*, nor the dinginess of a London burial-ground. The paths are neatly laid out, and a good number of trees and flowers are scattered about.

Two governors were interred within its limits. The founder of the colony, Colonel Collins, was laid in his earthen bed in 1810. The tomb got into a sadly neglected state, and was the subject of public scandal. But Sir John Franklin, when governor of Van Diemen's Land, erected a handsome monument to his brother sailor. Sir Eardley Wilmot was the last governor who died in the colony.

Another burial-ground lies higher up in the town, and has been preferred by Presbyterians and other Protestant bodies outside the Episcopalian Church. The Roman Catholics have their interments in ground more elevated still. The wall was mainly constructed in the primitive days of penance-yards of masonry. The priest was poor, and his people were naughty. The use of their muscles provided him with an enclosure, and served as some expiation for their offences. It is observed, however, that the sulky fellows had no real pleasure in their work, for it is sadly scamped. Convicts had no reputation, at that period, for fine work. Tailors, actors, and weavers do not make effective masons all at once.

The hospital in Liverpool Street sent many a poor victim of his own vices to the cemetery. Another hospital, established by private subscription, has been the resort of the free class more particularly, though closed against none.

Doctors in Hobart Town have seldom the gratification of having an epidemic. It was once a saying, that nobody died except when he was killed. It is certain that drink has produced more sickness and accidents than any other cause there. With such a temperate climate, with so little extremes of heat and cold, with good air, and with the comforts of good living, there is not much occasion for the sober to call in the doctor.

Malformation and crime go so uniformly together, that among the convict population there was a large proportion of deformed bodies and diseased brains. Cases of mania, from unrestrained passions, and from the provocation of liquor, were frequently known in former times, though rare enough now. The asylum at New Norfolk is well managed. Most of its inmates are old and wretched tenants of many years' residence. Good care and an inspiring atmosphere have lengthened their days.

Old folks are the great institution of Hobart Town streets. The Captain was taken to an old lady off Melville Street who had landed in the colony nearly sixty years before; and even then she was the mother of a large family.

He went to a sort of asylum for old men, outside of the town, near the domain. Here he heard some fine yarns from old soldiers who had served under Wellington in Spain. One who had reached the other side of one hundred was bed-ridden. But his intellect was vigorous and clear. His tongue was not only too loose, but too profane, even for his old scrupulous neighbours of a convict region. Complaints were made of his language, and a wish was expressed that the old sinner should be removed to a ward by himself. But he explained to the Captain that a lot of tales had been told of him by some of the youngsters (men of eighty), for that he was only repeating Scripture and hymns he had learned when a boy. Enquiries, however, satisfied the visitor that the citations were not so harmless, and that songs of unusual vulgarity were themes of address.

A man had recently died there after reaching the age of 108. The Captain found the average of about an hundred of the inmates to extend above seventy years.

Captain Douglas came home quite full of the subject of longevity.

‘See here, my dear,’ said he to his wife; ‘there is no prospect of my getting rid of you, or you of me, for at least half a century more. If such old rascals as those can live on, in spite of rum, exposure, and a vicious course, what chance has a decent fellow to die at all in this country!’

The lady smiled. ‘I really begin to feel a great deal younger, I must admit,’ she said. ‘Pottering about that garden is more than amusement to me. I can walk better, eat better, sleep better, and——

‘Scold no better,’ added her gallant husband.

‘Indeed, I ought to scold when you persist going off such tramps with Mr. Roberts. You know he is younger than you, and he has no wife to make him careful of his health. To-day it has been quite a hot wind, and you have been in it for hours.’

‘And pray, have you kept yourself all day under a mosquito-curtain indoors?’

‘No — I am thankful to say mosquitoes don't visit us; and I have not kept inside either. It was not so very hot under the shade.’

‘Nor an injurious heat either, my dear. The thermometer stands close to the hundred under that verandah. In India, with our moist warmth, we should have been done up altogether long before the mercury got there.’

‘But don't you really think the hot wind bad?’

‘That I don't. It comes dry enough, so that the perspiration is rapidly carried off; there is not the clammy skin as in India and Queensland. Then it is unattended with the malaria so common in countries less windy than this.’

‘Why don't we have here the marsh and other low fevers so common even in England?’

‘Because, my dear wife, you are in another vegetable region. Here the botany reminds one of wood and not of juices. You complain sometimes that the trees here don't give the nice shade the English ones do. But did it never strike you that it is the decomposition of so much leafy matter which gives birth to malaria?’

‘I never thought of that. I see in our back paddock that trees which were felled, as I am told, nearly fifty years ago, lie there still as hard as flint.’

‘Yes, and will ring like metal when struck by the axe.’

‘But why don't they rot away like our English trees?’

‘I hardly know, unless it be that instead of being almost all carbon and the gases, they contain so much lime, flint, and other mineral substances, iron included. You know what a lot of ash you get from a wood fire. That is the stuff that keeps the trees from decaying so soon.’

‘Then that must have a great effect upon the health of the inhabitants.’

‘Certainly, my dear. And they say there is here an extra quantity of ozone, another element of health in the atmosphere.’

‘I know,’ said the lady, ‘another cause for longevity. People are not so silly in their dresses, and prefer parties out of doors to stuffed crowds in confined rooms. What dreadful folly that old-fashioned system of balls, routs, *at homes*, and receptions seems to be now! If I were a girl again, I should prefer keeping my good looks, by the simple manners and healthy amusements of this island, rather than lose them by late hours, bad air, and spoiled digestion.’

‘What a speech, madam! quite a speech! It is all true as gospel. And think how many a fellow in England, who haunts his club, is a martyr at parties, and gains an early acquaintance with a stomach and a swollen toe, to say nothing of nerves and renewed bills, might come out here, live longer, and enjoy the life while it lasts.’

His wife had evidently not heard the whole of this. The handkerchief was to her eyes, and she sighed deeply.

‘What is the matter, my dear?’ said he anxiously.

‘I was only thinking of our poor girl, and how even her life might have been spared had she come here.’

Chapter VI. Churches and Schools.

'I SEE you are in no want of churches in Hobart Town,' observed the Captain to his official friend.

'No; we were heathens once, but call ourselves Christians now,' answered Mr Roberts.

'But so many for so small a place, and in a land consecrated to villany from its commencement, I never expected to see.'

'I dare say not. Most folks at a distance take us in Tasmania to be a cross between a wolf and a sloth, not particularly tame and not particularly wise. Yet you must confess you walk about without being bitten, and fall in with fellows not exactly fools.'

'Right, most certainly, Roberts. Man for man, I'll back your population in point of intelligence against any like-sized town of England. The order of your streets is superior to what I can recollect in the old land. Property is certainly as safe. Though what surprised me most was your propriety on Sunday.'

'What! and did you expect to find us as godless as the whites of India?'

'I can't help thinking, however, that your strict observance of the Sabbath may be owing to the presence of so many of my countrymen,' said Captain Douglas.

'Don't flatter your race too much, my dear fellow, you quite forget they are only so good while inhaling the fogs of Scotland. Let them breathe the clear atmosphere of the colonies, or labour with the moist, hot air of India, or even cross the channel into the novel region of France, and this national institution of church-going becomes a myth.'

'Then what is the reason of your virtues on that day?'

'The purity of the blood, of course. The island was for years the dust-hole of Great Britain. There was a striking mixture of nations and crimes. Herded together, the friction, I suppose, rubbed off the vices, which had so obtruded themselves through the skin, and left nothing remaining but the native good. Will that account for it?'

'I don't see why you should not claim the virtues, when Rome, with as queer an origin, became the model of justice.'

'You have doubtless noticed, Douglas, that the places of worship have an architecture as varied as the denominations. Some, that arose when the Georges, those patterns of taste, illustrated the Fine Arts, have all the elements of beauty adorning the Georgian era of England. Don't you

admire St David's Church, now?'

'It is assuredly more useful than ornamental, but quite an advance upon what I expected to see.'

'Perhaps you have a sympathy for the deformities of the Scots Church, or the pinched-up pettiness of the Roman Catholic St Joseph's. What think you of the four square walls of the Wesleyan Chapel, with its Grecian portico?'

'I am not in the humour to criticise what sprang up out of that terrible past. I am sure that those who worked to get these buildings up deserved all honour. As to taste, I expected to see the more modern illustrate the better style. The Independent Chapel of Macquarie Street, though not large, is in thorough good taste. My own later Presbyterian Church is better than the former. The last Episcopalian Church is in advance of the earlier.'

'Your magnanimous charity, as a new chum, is wonderful as rare. It is believed to be the solemn duty of every snob that comes into the island to express his pity for us benighted savages, while, at the same time, he can show no parallel progress in his own wretched, slow, little market town.'

'Remember, I have not been in Britain for so long a time that it will not do for me to make comparisons as to preachers.'

'You had better not make odious comparisons; for the faithful here of each individual sect have strong convictions that they are highly favoured with parsons.'

'I must acknowledge my satisfaction, Roberts, with a hasty run through the churches. At St David's I heard a first-class discourse from your bishop, with a thorough good style of singing. My own Presbyterian churches are well served, and rather above the ordinary home standard. There is one old gentleman, at any rate, who could have taken a capital position in Scotland.'

'And did you enter your handsome Independent Church?'

'I did, Roberts, and heard a sermon which was logical, profoundly suggestive, full of learning, happy in illustration, and with a delicacy of finish, and a purity of piety, that could not fail to please and benefit a fastidious audience.'

'What a pity you did not hear some of the ranters. They might have edified even you, a stern Presbyterian.'

'Never mind that; but I am astonished at the position Dissenters have taken in these Colonies.'

'Hold there. Don't say that ugly word, or mayhap your head will be broken. There are no Dissenters here, my good fellow, as there is nothing to dissent from. We don't even grow Nonconformists, however they may thrive in Britain.'

'How is that, Roberts?'

'It is as I said. The Catholic is as good as a Protestant, a Presbyterian as

an Episcopalian, a Methodist as either of the others.'

'Yet it was not always so.'

'Alas! no, say some, who once reigned supreme, and had the full and only cut at the State loaf for support. But by and by the Romanist thrusts out his hand for some crumbs, and gets them. The Presbyterian thunders at the gate, and wants to know, you know, why he is not admitted to the feast; and, laying his hand upon his spiritual sword, he talks of Bannockburn, Culloden, or some of those places. The Methodist, more meekly, but as readily, pleads his necessities more than rights.'

'And did he get some of the loaf, too?'

'He did, after long knocking at the door.'

'What of the Nonconformists?'

'Old Governor Arthur offered a salary to their first preacher, and he was flat enough to refuse. Then afterwards his friends began to find fault with those who did gnaw the loaf.'

'Why so?'

'On the pretence that their own contribution of taxes was taken against their will and conscience to back up the rest.'

'But wasn't that a dog in the manger style?'

'They said not; for they protested that Government, acting for all, could not, and should not, be of any particular religion.'

'Must they be atheists, then?'

'No, they wouldn't leave to Government that poor consolation. As men they might be even Muggletonians, but as officers and legislators they ought not to patronise contending sects. It was robbing Peter to pay Paul, and Paul to pay Peter.'

'And what came out of it at last?'

'Why, there was another large party, and a pretty strong one, who might go to church, but objected to pay any other than their own parson, and that they would like to do themselves, so as to have a hand in affairs.'

'But if the four religious bodies held together, the outsiders were too few to take the loaf out of their possession.'

'True, Douglas; but though the clergy of the four Churches might like the bawbees, the people decided that they should no longer have them from the State.'

'That is not like my old Scotia; for I fancy the outsiders would, if they could, keep up the loaf system of Government, in expectancy of getting a slice some day. But how is the voluntary system likely to do with such a sparsely populated colony?'

'An answer cannot be given at once. No one seems to cry out yet, "I am starving." I believe no parson has lost a stone-weight by the change. There are a few who might part with that quantity with decided advantage to themselves.'

Captain Douglas was quite interested in education, although not requiring instruction for his son.

The High School, planted in the Government domain, was a noble structure, and was open freely to the respectable classes, without creed or catechism restraint. On the other hand, a Church of England institution, called after the much-esteemed Archdeacon Hutchins, imposes some restrictions on entrance by the character of its religious teaching. Its scholastic reputation is good. The Roman Catholics have also a Church establishment for youth. The nuns are employed in ladies' tuition. There are, also, a number of well maintained private schools.

Launceston is well provided with schools. Two good boarding-schools, or colleges, have been established in the interior. One at Bishopsbourne, with an estate of three thousand acres, was formed by the first Bishop of Tasmania in 1846, and that near Ross is under Wesleyan patronage.

A public system of instruction is maintained with efficiency. The schools are scattered throughout the island.

In no respect are the Australian colonies entitled to so much commendation, as in the liberality of their State support to schools for all classes, to public libraries, museums, mechanics' institutes, and universities. In Tasmania, however, certain young men, who pass the approval examination, are provided with Government funds for a course at the Cambridge University. This is a noble encouragement to the studious among the Colonial youth.

The Mechanics' Institutes of Hobart Town and Launceston have been always favoured by the authorities, and deserve the public support they have thus received.

Everybody goes to the Hobart Town Museum. This is, naturally, far below that in Melbourne, which can be excelled by only three or four in Great Britain, but it has its attractions to the visitor, and is educational to the young folks. Horace spent many profitable hours there, and at the public library.

With such decided tastes for natural history, our young friend was gratified in being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in Hobart Town, before which excellent papers are often read.

It was at the close of a ramble through some of the literary institutions of the town that Mr Roberts turned to his friend, and said,

'I should like to know now, whether in all your British experience, you can call to mind any district, containing the ninety thousand odd people this Tasmania possesses, which can exhibit one-half the exponents of our educational progress, or which spends one-fourth the cash that we do for the intellectual, social, and religious advancement of the inhabitants.'

'I imagine, Roberts, it would puzzle any one to find such a parallel in either England or Scotland.'

Chapter VII. The Regatta.

REGATTA day is the very carnival of Hobart Town. It is anticipated by young folks months beforehand. Every girl must have some extra bit of finery by that day, and every lad of the place is either hard at his oar, or a hard student in general naval affairs.

And yet it is not a carnival after the Italian type. The fun does not consist in the throwing of *bonbons*, or the scattering of lime-powder. The sport is not in a street race of horses, cruelly barbed to make them run. It is a Saturnalia without its vices. It is not a Cashmere Feast of Roses, in which woman is the toy or slave. It has not the solemn grandeur of the Doge's annual wedding of the Adriatic, when all eyes are fixed upon the gilded Gondola and the richly robed president of the awful Ten.

Fun there is, but that in which children and old men take their share. It is, nevertheless, a Feast of Roses, for flowers at the beginning of gay December are in their height of glory. The June of England is far less brilliant than the Tasmanian December. Gardens are crowded with floral favourites, and the bush is a very carpet of flowers. It is no street festival, for the town is emptied of people. All are thronging to the adjoining public pleasure-ground, the undulating and verdant Government domain. There is room, and to spare; for lots of couples find ample opportunities to stray beneath the shade of the forest, or wander along the shore, without fear of eavesdroppers.

Tasman's discovery of the island, in 1642, is kept in the memory of the juveniles by this festive occasion. The Dutchman, as he listened to the strange *coo-ee* of the sable tribes, and as he looked upon the strange Flora of the new lands, little thought that hearty lads and bonnie lassies of his own colour would laugh in those bright glades, and sing songs in honour of his enterprise.

And what sport was so suitable for the sons of Britons as that upon the main Britannia rules so long! What more agreeable to the ghost of the worthy Dutch navigator than deeds of oar and sail!

All the Douglas family were there. The day was as bright as a first of June in the old country. The sun came forth as if personally interested in the affair. How determined every one seemed to be as gay as Nature herself on the occasion! What a day of days it was to the dear children! They verily believed the regatta was instituted wholly on their account. How they did laugh and chatter! And how those merry cicadae in the

trees trumpeted their very loudest from their insect instruments! The wind neither sighed nor blustered, but danced along with a lively briskness, as if it quite understood it had its work to do, and that thousands of bright eyes were looking for its performances upon the spreading sails.

The new arrivals were charmed with everything. It was the very place for a boat race. There was plenty of room at the Cove. The River Derwent was three miles across. Tacking room could be had, and yet the crafts keep in sight all the way. Sailing was not without its danger there, as sudden gusts rush down the mountain gullies, and sweep across the waters, with a violence that calls for skill and courage.

But what a panorama! To the right was the picturesquely situated Hobart Town. Before one was the broad stream, bounded by farms, by pastures, by woods. Bays stretched hither and thither, as if nestling under romantic cliffs, or seeking the reflected beauty of the shore. Mountains reared near and afar, the circumscribing ornaments of the landscape. But high above all mounted the head of Wellington, the colossal genius of the place, calmly regarding the sports of that day as it had beheld unmoved the evershifting scenes of rolling centuries.'

'The band — the band!' shout the boys, who dart through the trees to greet the military music.

'Ain't they going to start yet?' asks an impatient little fellow.

But though all came on purpose to see the regatta, there were numbers so happily engaged that time did not hang heavily for them. There were swings in the trees, balls on the green, gambols up in the foliage, fruit and provender in exposed baskets, and tricks and fun everywhere, for children. The old folks were seated more tranquilly on the grass, chatting about the times when they were young, and feeling nothing like so old that day. Married pairs had all the responsibility of heaps of tarts, of sandwiches, of oranges, &c., &c., together with the pleasing worry of their little ones.

There was another class not less happy. They were not so flurried as the responsible parties, not so excited as the noisy youngsters, and not so placid as the old folks from home. But they were busy in their way, and thoroughly enjoying themselves. A considerable portion had paired themselves off, even though grouped together. Amusements were more agreeable for the particular presence of the particular other one by the side. There were some young fellows who herded together, as if disdainful to be 'always with those girls.' And there were sundry parties of merry lassies playing apart, though casting quizzing, if not longing, glances at the wandering and really discontented young fellows.

'Well, my dear,' said Mrs Douglas, 'I am delighted to see so many happy people here. And how nicely they are dressed!'

'Yes,' rejoined the husband, 'and how well behaved! I am sure no

holiday in Great Britain could be kept like this. No rude pushing, no coarse swearing, no vulgar drinking, as in the old country.'

Just then their friend, Mr Roberts, walked up, and shouted forth,

'What do you think of us convicts of Van Diemen's Land now, old fellow? Are we not a pretty set of blackguards?' At this he laughed out right heartily.

'Indeed, Roberts, I was remarking to my wife that the old country couldn't match them in manners. I am as surprised at the turn-out of pretty faces as she is at the pretty dresses. The children swarm out like rabbits, and are the very pictures of healthy good humour.'

'Then, if ever you should write to the "Times," as every respectable old gentleman threatens to do every day, don't forget to give us a character. I'll be bound some of your Indian friends sighed over your sacrifice of good taste in going to a land 'where every man is vile.'

'Ha! ha!' laughed out the Captain. 'I was assured that there was a satisfactory reason why the animal called the Devil should be found only in Tasmania.'

'But did you know,' put in the friend, 'that this fellow never shows his ugly face in the day, and will never look at anything but a sheep or rat at night?'

All were ready at last. The several races were set forth in the programme of the occasion. Of course there was a Publicans' Purse for one prize. There were others given by the officers, the governor, the people. There were crafts of this tonnage and that. There were boats of four oars and six oars.

What a roar of voices rose as the cannon boomed for the start! How the youngsters left off their individual sports for the great sight, the old folks dropped the yarning, the responsables forgot their cares, and sweethearts turned from sparkling eyes to sunlit waters!

How intently the vast throng watched for the strengthening of the wind as crowded canvas yearned for its salute! How sympathy was felt for the cutter that dropped astern! And how eager were the hopes that their own peculiar favourite might win!

The rowing was the most exciting part of the whole. The boats were not frail canoes, or dandy river wherries. They were substantial whale-boats, made for use, and fitted for rough seas and rough work. Head and stern alike, they went either way with equal ease. They were heavy to pull along, and the oarsmen had their muscles well tried.

Excitement grew apace after the passing of the buoy with its floating flag. Round the boats came, and new energy sprang them forward homeward. The rowers strained for the goal. They saw not the crowd, they heard not the shouts, for sight and hearing were unheeded then. They knew nothing, they felt nothing, but the oars they pulled. Spectators all cheered, and cheered all. Arms were spasmodically moving, and

chests were heaving, in sympathy with the rowers. Women waved handkerchiefs, gasped hysterically, wept unconsciously, laughed wildly, and screamed they knew not what. But higher rose the shouts, and more excited grew the crowd, as the winning post was neared, till, in a perfect hurricane of sounds from throats, from horns, from guns, the victory was gained.

Then was the press. Every one wanted to see the happy winners of the race. All longed to grasp the hand of brother, friend, or neighbour in the proudly exulting company. A joyous ring saluted them, and, hoisted on sturdy shoulders, they were borne in triumph to the prize-giver.

Thus the day passed on in a succession of excitements, varied by seasons of repose and hearty feeding. The youngsters ate every available chance, ate anything, and ate to any extent. How the dear, good housewife provider did delight in the rapid disappearance of glorious piles of viands! How she did enjoy the praises so gratefully and boisterously bestowed upon her bountiful supply, her capital pastry, her inimitable cheese-cakes! Many declared they never had such a *pic-nic* in their lives.

Then, while the contented matron was collecting scattered fragments of the feasts, counting forks and spoons, or calmly reflecting upon kitchen triumphs, the younger members were all abroad. Impromptu dances were got up. Any fiddle would do for the occasion, so long as it kept the toes in time. And pretty nearly any step would do, judging sometimes by the desperate plunges, the laughable collisions, the merry disorder, apparent in the maze. But no one was fastidious, and a jest was ready for each misadventure.

Cricket, foot-ball, swing, hunt the slipper, touchwood, skipping-rope, hoop trundling, were all in vigorous exercise. Games of forfeits were being cried amidst mingled feelings of satisfied pleasure, anticipated pleasure, and postponed pleasure, as well as pleasure at the pleasure of others. But the time-honoured, never-to-be-forgotten, and ever-to-be-admired "Kiss in the Ring" was begun the first, and maintained without weariness or lack of interest. There was always somebody to be caught, somebody wanting to be caught, somebody to be caught again, and somebody wanting to be caught again. There was such a vehement denunciation against being caught, and yet such a resigned martyrdom when the hour of capture arrived.

There was no manna to be got under the trees then. The early comers had collected the sweet morsels as they dropped from the branches pierced by the busy, noisy beetles. The honey soon crystallized as white sugar plums upon the grass. But no sooner had the sun risen high enough to look under the bushes of the government domain than the honey evaporated.

But if no manna, there was the sweet cherry of the native cherry tree,

or Exocarpus. Although it carried its stone outside, although it was only like a currant, and although but a wild fruit after all, it was none the less eagerly clambered after by boys, and swallowed by the girls.

There were groups of poor and home neglected children there. But these had been cared for by loving-hearted ones. Abundance of food had been provided for them, and bright glances of love from the donors had sweetened the gift. And if a song were required from them it was one they liked to sing themselves, and one that had been taught by their Sunday-school friends.

There were speeches delivered under the shades of gum trees by stout-hearted temperance men. Not that much drunkenness could be seen even on that idle day for idlers. But this very absence of reellers was justly attributed to the efforts of temperance advocates upon other than regatta days. Cordial was the invitation then given to meet in the Temperance Hall that evening to the tea festival, which was to close the day's festivities.

There were devotional meetings in the domain At any rate there were groups of men and women singing the hymns of praise, when their hearts were rejoicing in the God who spreads abroad his gifts.

They who strayed a little further had a peep at the grand Government House in the Domain. That a colony, boasting of a population only one-thirtieth part that of London, should erect so noble a palace for the residence of a governor, may be taken as an evidence of its wealth and loyalty, or of its folly and toadyism, according to the sentiments of the beholder.

As the Indian visitors expressed their surprise at such an outlay, their friend enlightened them a little.

"This," said he, "was erected as a monument of the past. We were wonderful people once, as this relic will prove. We had a dim vision at that time that Tasmania would draw gold enough from Victoria to pave the streets of Launceston and Hobart Town. We were, in short, disgustingly rich. As we have now grown modest by a fall of prices there is a little shame felt by some of us. But as a trophy of loyalty, there is nothing like it perhaps south of the Line."

Wandering down by the water, they came to Carnelian Beach and amused themselves with gathering the pretty pebbles.

Here they entered the Hobart Town Government Gardens. The landscape-gardening was mainly effected by dame nature herself, but no pains have been spared to make this one of the most attractive retreats in the southern hemisphere.

The botanist here finds representations of not less than two hundred and thirty natural orders. The fruits are nobly set forth. Of apples, the glory of Tasmania, there are more than two hundred varieties; and of pears just one half that number. In vines they could not expect to be so

rich as their neighbours on the sunnier side of the strait.

As to flowers, the delightful climate furnishes any amount of gems. Its garden boasts of two hundred and fifty sorts of roses, and eighty of fushcias.

The Royal Society of the island has exchanged plants and seeds with all the world besides, and so obtained a selection of no small educational profit to the young *gum-suckers* of the place. The latter may study the Flora of the neighbouring colonies without the trouble of a voyage. They will see, also, corresponding forms to those in their own forests; as the clematis from Australia, Japan, Spain, North America and New Zealand. Not less than fifty varieties of the Acacia are assembled there from the Australian settlements.

As the Douglas family returned from this pleasant trip they, one and all, declared that a jollier day they never spent than the Hobart Town regatta-day.

Chapter VIII. A Nice Young Man.

AND Horace was a nice young man. The old men said he was, for he was a good listener to their yarns, and always treated them with consideration and respect. He said his own dear father was getting an old man; should he not esteem others who were aged?

The old ladies said he was. He did not tire of their company; he used no slang expressions; he indulged in no joke at their expense; he was polite, even to reverence; he was such a good son to his mother.

The young ladies avowed he was so. He was gentle with them, and kind to them. He would undertake little offices without grumbling or fussiness. He did not seek to take advantage of their little weaknesses in ungentlemanly criticisms or in ungenerous sallies. He was certainly a deal too quiet for some, and, while smilingly attentive to all, had no special devotion to one.

The young fellows were divided in opinion about him. A party admired his straightforwardness, believed in his honour, and praised his cleverness, though not liking his reserve. He was not a 'jolly young chap.' He did not laugh boisterously, nor join boisterously in sports. He rather shunned violent exercise, and never courted companionship. No one was jealous of his glances at the special favourite, and most set him down as cut out for an old bachelor.

His long and serious illness had left a delicacy of constitution that required judicious management. He was cheerful, if not gay, and indulged in amusements that were not too exactive to vital energy. As he grew stronger by exercise, and living in so glorious a climate, he gradually exhibited more force of character, and took a heartier interest in the sports of youth.

In physical appearance he presented no peculiarities. He could hardly be called handsome, though his person was rather above middle height, and his countenance was not wanting in attractive expressions. His nose was not of Grecian beauty, nor of Roman dignity. His lips were not full, and neither were they thin. His chin may have failed in decision, and his brow in energy. His cheeks were not sallow, but their delicacy was seldom enlivened with ruddiness. His forehead was rather lofty than broad, and in marble smoothness rivalled that of the other sex. His hair was darkbrown in colour, silky in texture, with a gentle inclination to curl. His eyes were somewhat dark, but singularly mild in their light.

They were not flashing orbs, but there was that unmistakeable something in their aspect that marked at once the gentleman of refinement, the man of honour, the master of himself.

Having had the good sense to make use of advantages he possessed, his education was advanced. His studies had led him to the culture of ancient learning, but his tastes had been matured by modern literature, and refined by Christian ethics. The love of beauty was a strong part of his mental organisation, and led him to the culture of the fine arts. He handled the pencil with skill, and the brush with taste.

And yet, notwithstanding his imaginative faculty, there was a good substratum of common sense which he had inherited from his father. For all his devotion to the muses, his interest in science was profound, and his acquaintance with mathematics gained him reputation.

Left to choose his line of life, while quite a boy, he showed more judgment than lads usually display. Very early he decided not to follow the profession of arms, and declined an offer to go to Sandhurst, while in England. With no mean artistic skill, he saw no road to a maintenance, leave alone distinction, in a painter's career. It was positively necessary, he was told, that he should carve out his own future. To go to the law was foreign to his tastes. He objected to the medical college for several reasons. He believed the practice of medicine injurious for his health, especially in India, his ultimate home; surgical operations were abhorrent to his gentle nature; and he shuddered at the thought of being the servant of the public at all hours, night as well as day.

In his high tone of thought, and his purity of conduct, he might have been regarded as a suitable subject for the ministry. But his very truthfulness and conscientiousness here interfered with the projects of some of his friends. 'I have no internal call for the Church,' said he, 'and could not presume to enter without it.'

But as India opened a field for constructive ability, and as his own mental inclinations went that way, he decided upon being a civil engineer. His ready command of the pencil, and his intimate acquaintance with mathematics, were thus made available in a profession. By earnest devotion of time and intellect to his adopted course he gained the esteem of his employers, and promised to become a distinguished engineer.

The feebleness of a frame nurtured on the plains of India, and exposed to the rigour of English winters, was not fitted for long continued study. Laid upon a bed of sickness, and, as he believed, a bed of death, his ambition for distinction was lamented as an error. When sufficiently recovered to return to his parents, his opinions did not alter; and he assured his father that, although physically unfit to cope with the competitive adventurer, he was morally persuaded that his future happiness lay in retirement from efforts, in the pursuit of which ambition

would be laudable for others.

This resolution not to enter an honourable path to wealth and honour may have been rashly made, and have been maintained by the same morbid feeling which had originated it; nevertheless, Horace adhered to it with a consistency that silenced the appeals of others.

His father regretted the necessity there appeared for relinquishing a supposed brilliant future. His thorough faith in his son's good sense and sound principle stayed complaint, and induced resignation. A mother's pride suffered some shock, as she saw Horace turn from a course for which he was intellectually so fitted; but her womanly instinct, not less than her maternal feelings, assured her of his unfitness for the competitive race.

That which more than ever decided the young man, and which removed the lingering doubt of his parents, was the sad loss of his sister.

Between these two, in the few months they were together in Bengal, such a loving sympathy was apparent, a bond so delightful and endearing, a communion so intimate and elevating, that, when the connection was severed, as far as this world was concerned, the mind of the survivor reeled under the stroke, and the sorrowing parents feared the loss of their first-born son, their sole remaining child.

It was then that the decision was made as to removal to Tasmania.

But the trial had more than ever driven earthly ambition from the heart of the young man. He wished for none of the pomps and glories of life, since he regarded them as associated with care and vanity. He sought no avenues to wealth, as he esteemed it a curse and not a blessing.

He lived more and more in his own thoughts. He mingled less and less in society. But his tendency to morbid feeling was counteracted by his love of nature, and his ability to discern her mysteries. In looking at a landscape,

‘His spirit drank

The spectacle; sensation, sound, and form

All melted into his.’

He thoroughly appreciated the inner teachings of the Divine wisdom abroad in the universe. Schiller says,

‘To some she is the goddess great:

To some the milch cow of the field:

Their care is but to calculate

What butter she will yield.’

It was after the death of his sister, especially, that his imaginative impulse was called so into exercise, and that he withdrew himself from his kind. And yet there was not the same blind selfishness, and

heathenish disposition of nature, which appeared in the eloquent language of Rousseau: — ‘The impossibility of finding actual beings threw me into the regions of fancy; and seeing that no existing object was worthy of my delirium, I nourished it as an ideal world, which my creative imagination soon peopled to my heart's desire.’

The more he decided upon yielding the claims of ambition, the more was he drawn tenderly to the bosom of nature. He studied, that he might know; he observed, that he might know more accurately. He would approvingly quote these words of the great Goethe, ‘I lie down in the grass near a falling brook, and close to the earth a thousand varieties of grasses became perceptible.’

But while the music of the fountain was heard within his soul, awakening tenderness and pleasure, his religious convictions brought a Maker before him, and so exalted and purified the harmonies which flowed from communion with nature. Schiller was right in singing,

‘How blest is he whose heart ne'er pays
For gifts from knowledge flowing.’

Fully aware, with Petrarch the lover of retreat, that solitude ‘must not be inactive,’ he was accustomed to sketch at one time, read at another, or breathe out his soul in song. His pleasures and joys were hallowed by a chastened spirit. His favourite author, George Herbert, had said, —

‘My God, my God,
My music shall find thee;
And every string
Shall have his attributes to sing.’

Although in India, although in the age of Positive Philosophy, he deemed it no loss of manliness to avow his recognition of the Supreme, and his hopes of life beyond the grave. In spite of the mysticism shrouding the teachings of a modern New England poet, Horace frequently quoted these lines when in his lonely rambles: —

‘I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life or death
His mercy underlies.’

‘And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from him can come to me,
On ocean or on shore.

‘I know not where His islands lift

Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
 Beyond his love and care.'

Chapter IX. Ascent of Mount Wellington.

A PARTY was made up for Boxing-Day. Some proposed spending it on the water. They might take the steamer in that delightful trip up the Derwent to New Norfolk.

‘O, that will be joyful!’ merrily struck up a youthful voice.

‘That is what we did on our wedding-day, dear,’ more softly whispered a young wife to her approving spouse.

‘Didn’t we have a lark in the boat?’ exclaimed a boy to his brother.

All the elderly people pronounced in its favour, as the expedition was attended with little fatigue.

But a knot of the young folks had come to a desperate resolution to have their way.

‘Hurrah for the mountain!’ they shouted.

Now the motives impelling to this adventure were various, and not all declarable. The young men said there was no sport like mountaineering, now they had a whole day before them, as a row or a sail could be had at odd times. Young ladies protested that wild flower gathering in the mountain gullies was so nice. Then the sun was so hot on the water at Christmas time, and the trees of the forest gave such a shade, while the fresh breezes aloft were so invigorating.

Though nothing was exactly said on the subject, sundry glances had intimated to the masculines how pleasant a ramble might be had with such partners there, and to the fair ones how agreeable a chat and a laugh could be had in the cool gullies with those bearded fellows there.

The pressure was overwhelming.

‘You know, papa,’ said a young lady, ‘how you do enjoy a clamber.’

‘But what am I to do with mamma, my dear?’

‘Oh! she can easily get up to the Springs by carriage part of the way, or horseback all the way. That is half-way up, you know, and it would be so nice to leave most of the things with her and you, papa dear; it will be such fun too for you to get the kettle boil against we return.’

With that the little puss gave him such a pretty kiss, and pulled his hair so provokingly, that what could the poor persecuted victim do but submit.

Mamma had a word.

‘And, pray, what is to be done with Kate and Tommy?’

‘They can gather flowers for you at the Springs, to be sure.’

All this interesting clatter took place the day before. Christmas-day was being spent, as usual, in a festival out of doors. This particular party had, it is true, had the dinner in the house, and adjourned to the garden-shade for dessert. Many families that day carried their cold fowl, ham, and pudding along with them in pursuit of country enjoyments, or a cool blow on the water.

‘But we must have some gentlemen,’ observed one of the lassies. ‘Can you run over to Mr Horace Douglas, Tom, and get him to come?’

‘I can,’ her brother replied. ‘But I believe we want some more girls. There are those two at Mrs Moore’s, who have just arrived in the colony. It will be a jolly thing for them. I’ll go and make them promise to come, and Tommy can slip across to young Horace.’

‘And why not ask Mr and Mrs Douglas to join us?’ inquired mamma.

‘Capital! Then they can keep you company at the Springs, and help you get the tea ready for us. That will be jolly,’ cried the aforesaid lively young lady.

It was forthwith agreed that Mary herself should accompany Tommy. She was to ask the old folks, and the boy was to ask Horace.

When the messengers returned with bright looks, the success of their missions was clear. But each had a tale to tell of eloquence rewarded. Tom said the Misses Stewart didn’t like to leave the widow all day, and he had to argue the point with them before gaining consent. Tommy spoke of Horace having a shooting engagement. ‘But when,’ said the youngster, ‘I told him there was such a swag of girls going, he thought he could put off his going shooting.’ Mary, with her pleasant face, could not possibly have had much trouble with her business.

‘And how shall we go? And where shall we start from?’

These were important questions. Two roads were open. An ascent might be made from their side, but it was too rough a climb for ladies. The regular road was from Hobart Town. It had been made, after a fashion, as far as the Springs.

‘But how are we all to meet?’ asked one.

A very noisy but delightful debate followed.

It was settled at last that those who lived on the Glenorchy and New Town side were to ride to Hobart Town. Tom undertook to call everybody right round, though he would have to rise at three to do it.

Boxing-Day appeared in all its glory. But it was long past six o’clock before everybody mustered in Macquarie Street. Enormous efforts had been made by the Commissariat officials to get down baskets and packets of provender. Everybody answered for everything. The old people were doubtful if enough were there, while the young ones protested there was lots of tucker.

The procession formed. A carriage was hired for some, and humbler traps conveyed others. Horace and another went on horseback, asserting

their horses to be so gentle and sure-footed for the ladies, when the wheels could mount no higher.

Tom was in a perfect fever about the delay.

'I knew we should have the sun out boiling hot before we could start,' said he, almost cross.

Yet he was rather particular about Jenny Stewart being quite sure she was comfortable in that cramped-up seat, amidst piles of bags and baskets.

As there still seemed something to be done about a fresh distribution of passengers and stowage, Tom sang out,

'I'm off.'

And away he started a-head, and on foot.

'I'll wait for you at the Springs,' was his parting sally.

He knew fast enough that the wheels might pass him at first, but would hang fire at the pinch in the track. He had better wind than the horses had, he remarked, and could be in plenty of time to hand the girls out when the panting steeds were tired of the weight.

What a cheery morn! And what a clattering party! Didn't the magpies give them a merry salute? They had quite a fellow feeling for these chattering holiday makers. The dogs barked with delight, and sleepy grazers in the field gave a neighing recognition to their harnessed friends.

Degraves's Mill was reached. The Hobart Town creek, so dingy and dirty in the town, became clearer and clearer, and sparkled at last in the sun, as it came tumbling down the rocky glen, all unconscious in its simplicity of the grimy fate before it.

Then came the reservoirs for collecting the purest of mountain streams, and gently conducting their healthgiving properties by pipes to the townfolk below. Here chirping birds increased in number and variety. They paraded their gay garments, and did their best in songs. The insect world was all alive with excitement, but on entire good behaviour.

The trees had been fearfully slaughtered at the foot of the ranges. What monsters they must have been, judging by the stumps twenty yards round. There was a noble fellow left. The grace was not owing to human benevolence, but because it was in an awkward position for hauling out. Handkerchiefs were offered for a measuring cord.

'No, no,' cried Tom; 'just get out and stretch your legs, to say nothing of breathing the horses. Join hands, and see how many of us it will take to span the chap.'

The dismounting took place at once. Although there were a few 'Oh's!' and pretended pouts at the clumsy young fellows, as they squeezed the hands they should have held so tenderly in the circle, the approximate size of the giant was declared to be the full twenty yards circumference, chin high.

Horace had a mind to study the geology as he went along, but found it

practically useless. He did induce a pretty girl to go with him just to look where the limestone was upholding the claystone, while higher still was poised the sandstone. She listened to his story till he got out the word, 'Palaeozoic,' when she took fright, and darted back to the rest.

But the flowers! They were such dear things, such pretty things, such live things; not like hard, ugly, dead stones.

In spite of Mamma's warnings, how tired those girls would be! the girls would scatter, along with the young fellows, gathering flowers. One of the boys halloed out.

'Sally! do you want something pretty to put in your nosegay?'

'Yes, Harry, and thank you,' was the gracious reply.

The young monkey emerged from the thicket with an immense banksia. Holding up this rough bottle-brush of the native honeysuckle, he burst into laughter, and got a chase from his deceived sister.

But the heathlike epacris was well represented, though all the three hundred species did not appear there. The white, the yellow, the red, little bells were readily plucked, and put with climbing clematis and the pink bauera. The wattle was not forgotten, nor the humble creeping corea, with its plain coloured bell. Some specimens of the boronia were rather pretty, with the hairy stamens. But a mischievous lad put one sort under the nose of a girl, which excited her decided disgust, as it had the pronounced smell of an opossum. The native forget-me-not was admired for its fragrant white blossom.

'Come along, girls,' shouted a paternal; 'I want my breakfast, and we must be at the Springs first.'

The straying ones were gathered up, and a start was made. But the sight of a glorious fern-tree valley was so tempting, especially to the Misses Stewart, that a stand was made, and a rush down was contemplated. The temptation was, however, most laudably resisted.

But what a charm there was in the sighing of the morning breeze through the she oaks! How some of the aforesaid *girls* longed to sit down for a rest quietly beneath that shade, to listen to the soft whispers of —— the wind, of course!

'Come along; do, pray, come along,' was again the cry.

It was easy work enough for those who rode, but not for the walkers.

'O dear! how steep it is! I declare I can't get up.'

No sooner was this melancholy wail raised, than two heroic young fellows dashed to the rescue. The lady paused not to say, 'How happy could I be with either!' but pounced upon the pair, making use of an arm from each.

The *road* was not macadamised certainly. It was of its own native bush character. Wood carts, bearing fuel for town, came plunging down these steeps, tearing up the soil, and breaking through natural drains. After a heavy shower, the water coursed like a river along the centre of the track.

‘The Springs! the Springs!’ the foremost band shouted.

It was a welcome sound indeed. But the voice was so faint, that the almost fainting toilers of the steep knew that there was still more work to do. The last half-mile took nearly half-an-hour with some of them. How some of the elder folk did groan and puff, did fan and perspire.

Then, everybody was so hungry. The early coffee and substantial before leaving had been long since absorbed in that heavy pull. It was nine o'clock in fact.

But all toils as well as joys have an end. The opening came at last. The gurgling stream prattled about having just passed by a fire with a *Billy* swung over it, and how it had allowed some of its brightest draughts to be taken for the lassies coming up. Then the cool wind in the open suggested the covering up of necks, and the buttoning of coats, as the climbers were overheated.

A turn in the level road revealed a landscape enough to call up the wildest enthusiasm. But it was seen without emotion now. It was so cheering to sniff up the smoke from the fire. That was so aromatic, and had a delicate flavour of chops about it.

There was the fire, there was the hut, there were the earlier arrivals, there was breakfast waiting to be eaten.

And didn't they eat?

Nothing was spoken about, or thought about, but the inevitable breakfast. No milk had been provided. But what did that matter? The tea was boiled in the tin *Billy*. But what did that matter? The water was decidedly strong with the taste of peppermint leaves. But what did that matter?

The chops had been cooked by sticking them through with a sharpened piece of wood, and toasting over the flames. They would persist in an occasional spring off the spit, and a dance in the ashes. But did ever chops have a sweeter flavour?

Eggs had been baked in the embers, and impromptu cups prepared from paper packings. Pannicans, of course, were forthcoming. They had the advantage of not being easily broken, and of retaining the warmth of the brewing. Some, whose throats had not been turned into leather by long continued scalding, took their pannican to the little chirruping stream, and stuck it in the mountain water for a refrigeration.

The Springs' Palace of the Forest, — or the mountain hut, more commonly called, — had been swept by branches ready for the company. It had a real wooden roof, though no door. The sides were sufficiently open to give a thorough ventilation. But a shelf-like table had been constructed for the use of travellers.

The younger ones soon put their heads inside, and had a roll on part of the table to the imminent risk of sundry pies and tarts.

But the view! Even before the meal was over, and after the early

ravings had been quieted, eyes were turned aside, and murmurs of delight arose.

And there was just cause of pleasure. Down those two thousand feet the eye caught sight of civilisation. The tiny dots of houses and farms, the miniature fields, the silver thread of a river, the far-expanding sea, the many promontories and bays, the distant ranges, all excited acclamations of astonishment and interest.

‘We mustn't stop here,’ cried Tom, the master of the ceremonies. ‘Pack up the traps, and leave them with the old folks and the young 'uns. Now then, girls, pack yourselves, too, and that in as close a compass as you can, or you will have more followers in the bushes as you go than your mammas will care to know. Remember, girls, every follower you leave, the shorter your dresses will be.’

‘Go along with you, Tom, you disagreeable fellow,’ was the universal and indignant salutation of the aggrieved.

But the ascent had now to be made in real earnest. The royal road was to be left, and the best track was to be selected. The greenstone blocks projected from the soil, the conglomerate showed in strength. The spongy mossy hollows wetted boots at once, and the damp of the forest gave them no opportunity for drying.

How they slipped on wet stones, slid down claytracks, stumbled over rocks, barked their shins against another and a tougher bark, reeled upon thorny spikes, and fell all fours again and again!

So much the more necessity of the care of stout and gallant gentlemen to steady steps, uphold the wavering, and catch the totterer. It was not by the mere touch of a finger that this could always be accomplished, but by a right down clasp of the gentle frame. And then, it was so kind of the young fellow to give up the enjoyment of other company of his own sex, there shouting and *coo-eying* a-head, on purpose to tend the helpless and weak. Could a glance of gratitude be avoided? Could he help, in a sudden panic at the lady's fears, giving a squeeze of her hand, to allay her excitement, and give her confidence! Then, if a pair happened to stray on one side, and be lost awhile in the thick foliage, was it not with a desire to penetrate the jungle for another and a better track?

The scramble up Mount Wellington has torn many a lady's dress, whose tattered fragments have decorated aromatic shrubs; but it has done worse things by far, for it has pierced bosoms with Cupid's darts, lacerated feelings, and left blighted hopes on that mountain side.

There are slanderous reports that the clergy strongly advocate the physical advantages of the ascent, but for the secret reason that it will cause more banns to be published.

Sorrows and charms befell the mountaineers. Here one suffered a terrific tear of clothing, and there a tear of the flesh. It did look easy to pull oneself up a pinch by the aid of some grass; but a shriek and the start

of blood from the hand warned others of the cutting grass. Yet, when pausing to recover breath, or when sitting to recruit strength, the bracing air did come so gratefully to blushing cheeks, the mountain cliffs did shine so brightly in the sun, the odours of bush plants did rise so pleasantly upon the sense.

Then it was not possible to pass by the rice flower. The Richea, a broad-leaved grass, straggling often fifteen feet long, has spike-like panicles of wax-like flowers, crowded together like a number of grains of rice.

The wonder of all, the floral Queen of Tasmania, was the Waratah of the Natives, the Teloepa of Whites.

This island Tulip tree grows upon a rhododendron sort of plant, running up twenty to thirty feet in height. The laurel shrub bears heads of marvellous beauty. The flowers are often four inches across, and are of the brightest scarlet colour. The names Waratah and Teloepa signify *seen at a distance*. Hung out at the side of the mountain, they are like fiery beacons to the clamberer. The lovely tulip will only grow among the rocks of its own elevated home.

‘O the darling! the dear, charming Waratah!’

Such expressions rose from enraptured feminine gazers, as they sprang upward to rob the yielding stems of their gorgeous appendages.

The *Dead Forest* was entered. Bare poles creaked as they passed amidst them. A sudden calamity had befallen the woods there. They were stricken with death. Stems fall from time to time, and the Dead Forest will be soon an open space.

Long *coo-eyes* were borne upon the mountain air. They were the announcement of the *Ploughed Field*.

This was an astonishing feature to the new comers.

‘Here are the Giants’ marbles!’ said one.

‘No,’ put in a lad; ‘only their cherry stones.’

‘Had they been playing a game at bowls?’ asked another.

But the balls were far from globular. Most were almost true parallelopipedons. The square faces were scarred, and the edges were rounded by lengthened exposure. Various in sizes, they were usually a yard or so across, though some would weigh twenty or thirty tons. They were lying as if shot out of a mason’s cart. Tumbled over one another, leaving clear spaces between of often indefinite depth, the stones looked like a ruined city, as the wall of Jerusalem when broken and strewn by Roman arms. There were monster masses five yards across. All were firmly wedged in their places, though presenting different angles to view.

Acres upon acres were contained in the *Ploughed Field*. The clods, as

one suggested, were a long time crumbling, to enable the sower to sow, and bring a harrow over his seed.

Right above this field rose the lofty columns of the Wellington prismatic rock. The formation was greenstone, with which the basalt came in contact from the other side. It seemed as though these blocks of the Ploughed Field had been hurled down from those cliffs by earthquake violence, preserving their prism regularity in this rude dismantlement. Some imagine that the crushing force was the ocean wave, before the rise of the Table mountain. Others again conclude that the slow tooth of Time has been the agent. The giant strength of King Frost is well known. The lengthened exertions of his disintegrating power may have strewn these fragments of the *Ploughed Field*.

The timid crawled from rock to rock; but the bold visitors sprang from monument to monument, assured that the steps would not be betrayed by the rough but steady stone.

It was not long after this that the party gained the saddle of the mountain.

Here the chill of the atmosphere called for careful attention to a wrap up, as pores had been opened freely by the violent exercise. A fire was got with some difficulty. The stunted wood near the top had been well picked over before their coming, and materials for a blaze were only to be got at a distance.

The view was a grand one. As clouds were seen coming up from the southward, a rapid survey was made. In one direction the horizon was about fifty miles off. Hobart Town and its Bay were toy-like in appearance, while the broad Derwent was but a streak of light.

Ambition must be gratified to the full, by the ascent of a pile of stones on the very summit of all. The flagstaff of the Trigonometrical Survey was there.

The deed was done. The battle was won. The hasty dinner was eaten in peace.

Then the flat greenstone and basalt top was examined in detail. Swamps were on the summit, though only in shallow depressions. A few stunted Pepper plants, and rough Pear trees with their curious wooden fruits, were found in sheltered positions. Water of purest quality lay in pools on the Saddle. But, in spite of Christmas heat, a considerable amount of snow remained. This gave capital sport to the young people. In crossing one patch of it a gentleman sank up to the armpits in a drift, and was extricated with some difficulty, after the immersion had thoroughly cooled him.

“O this soft Turkey carpet!” cried a lady with rapture, as she sprang from an elevated rock upon a bed of grass. And yet it was not grass, though the tufted leaves resembled it. The herb was so woolly in texture, with a white down on one side of the leaf, that the feel was similar to a

velvet touch. The leaves were three or four inches long, and so closely matted together as to give the firmest footing in the marshy neighbourhood.

Fatigue was forgotten in the romance of the day. On the top a collection was made of Alpine plants, which are similar to those of the Alps of Australia, New Zealand, and Europe, and like those of the Himalayas and the Grampians. No one hurried to take a departure. But Tom remembered his responsibilities.

“Now then, my jolly mountaineers,” said he, “let us all join in a hearty good *coo-ee*, and be off down stairs.”

The *coo-ee* was given. The notes were not in unison. But screeches and growls mingled harmoniously enough for the merry group. Then all girded up their loins for the move.

The *new chums* at the work exulted in the easy part they had to play. It was nothing to that awful strain of up hill. Now they could trip it down hill with such ease and comfort. The knowing ones winked at each other and smiled.

Alas! the experience of a few minutes at the descent changed the minds of the sanguine trippers. How they did slip and slide! How they stumbled far worse than when mounting, and how much uglier were the falls! And didn't the joints crack, and the small of the back groan! But what punishment they endured from the shaking! Yet, could anything be worse than the excruciating pain of their thighs and their knees? They rested, not from exhaustion, but to quiet the excessive trembling of their limbs.

The young ladies had many “oh's,” and “O dear's!” While sometimes, notwithstanding restraining effort, tears would burst forth as a fresh shock came to the nervous system or a severer strain upon muscle. One or two young men were heard to mutter something between their teeth, as they made a false step or kicked a corn against something harder than itself.

“What did you say?” asked a lassie of one.

“O, Nazareth!” was his rather sulky reply.

But they got down in safety to the Springs, where their arrival had been awaited by papas and mammas, not to mention the boiling *Billy*, and the bread and butter.

They did not remain lingering long over the pannicans, for twilight was approaching, and much of the way was deeply shaded by the forest. But the triumphs of their progress were secured. The boys had huge branches of flowering shrubs. Horace had vegetable as well as mineral specimens, and all the ladies must have both rice plant and waratah.

The journey from the Springs was nothing like so lively as that going up to them. There was no hurrying. Those who walked were so tired, and those who rode tarried for company. The ladies had another motive for

delay. How could they be seen by daylight! And then they glanced, half in mirth and half in real concern, at their draggle-tails. They had clearly been in the wars, and had come off with more wounds than glories.

Bedtime followed closely upon arrival at the respective homesteads. The sleep was long, but attended with many starts; for dreams were busy on the brain, and precipices were yawning for the sleeper.

And the morrow! O the subdued movement! What tender solicitude was shown for joints and skin! How the party moaned and groaned, while laughing and chaffing! Yet no one would have missed the trip, and all declared that there was nothing like the ascent of Mount Wellington.

Chapter X. A Colonial Lad.

TOM TURNER was not a bad specimen of a Colonial lad, more commonly called in Sydney a *Currency lad*. He proudly boasted of being a Tasmanian. There was at one time some confusion in the title, as the Aborigines were properly Tasmanians. But, alas! that difficulty has been removed by the destruction of all the men of all the tribes. The native-born of the white intruders have now the sole distinction of Tasmanians.

The Colonial boy is not a stupid fellow. He does not stare like an English clod-hopper, and scratch his head to find an answer to a question. He is more likely to propose a query himself. He is not clownish in appearance, nor awkward in gait. His hair does not grow down his forehead, nor do his legs come after him at an unwilling and clumsy drag. But he has not generally so grand a display of teeth as the grinning chaw-bacon, nor the same massing of muscle about the loins. He is taller and slighter in frame. It must not be supposed, however, that he is deficient in strength and stamina. His capacity for the endurance of fatigue is marvellous; and this, with his activity and nerve, gained compliments from the visiting English cricketers. He does not indulge in the slow and heavy pull of the British lad, but goes at the work with vigour, as if he wanted to get over it soon. The first is better at the steady collar, the other is apt to fret and plunge if the thing don't go off quickly. His higher nervous organization gives him, nevertheless, a capacity for accomplishing feats of strength and agility beyond what mere muscle might be supposed to do. Great on horseback, where he sits with grace as well as firmness, the Tasmanian is mighty on foot, walking up hills at a rate that would surprise the English field-boy.

Tom was a Colonial lad in zeal at cricket, a race, a row, a swim, a ride, a clamber, or a day's tramp. It would take a great deal to make him tired, while a short rest would fit him for fresh conflict. But, like other *Currency boys*, he had no fancy for boxing or wrestling. Quick at temper he might be, but rapidly cooling, and not given to enforce his will by blows. A fight between boys at school in the Colonies is as rare, as it is common with the same class in Great Britain.

That smartness of movement, that restlessness under restraint, that impatience for action, all indicative of a nervous type, indispose the Colonial lads for a steady, uniform round of duties. They want change of employment, and weary of monotonous toil. They could never brook a

long apprenticeship to a trade. Plenty work at carpentering, bricklaying, stonemasonry, &c., but have served no time. They picked up the thing. Sharp at imitation, with a natural facility for using tools, they readily take up with a variety of trades, and move from one to another as circumstances require. This, in a region of unsettlement affairs, and great vicissitudes of fortune, is a decided good, if not a necessity. Every year the occasion lessens, as the Colonies are dropping down to the everyday condition of British life.

Tom's father had been in the service of Government, but had of late retired to a small farm near Hobart Town. He wanted the lad to take up a trade or profession, and stick to it. Some inducements were offered. Having been formerly somewhat connected with the law, and still possessing interests in that direction, he recommended the profession. Tom easily assented, with the lightheartedness of his tribe. He had sagacity enough to reason this way: —

‘As Tasmania is not going ahead, there may not be much scope for me here. But I know lots of our fellows who have done first-rate in Melbourne, which always must go ahead; and so, when I have passed here, I can take a trip over the Straits, or go to one of the rising New Zealand townships. A Tasmanian lad, like a cat, will always fall on the feet.’

He was articled to a respectable Hobart Town solicitor, and showed the Colonial readiness in mastering details.

As to mental characteristics, there was less of the Baconian and more of the practical philosopher about him. He had no delight in the abstract, and seldom puzzled his brains about general principles. The matter of fact things brought professionally before him suited him, and he took pleasure in tracing out a case. He was not fond of reading for its own sake, and did not see any advantage in studying English literature outside of law-books, excepting Dickens and the newspapers. Dickens is pre-eminently adapted to the Colonial mind. His wit, his hearty mirth, his droll characters, his tender pathos, have all especial charms. An attempt was made to introduce to Australia low, trashy, flashy, dirty, and sensational stories from New York. But the introduction was a failure. There was too much common sense, too just an appreciation of morals, too healthy a passion, too much reverence for mothers and love for sisters, to incline young fellows to read them. A bad class of literature has less chance of success in the Colonies than in London, Manchester, and Glasgow. The newspapers are well sustained in tone. Public sentiment would put down a literature allowed in Britain, and welcomed in America.

Tom was a good lad at home. He got on well with father, was doated on by mother, was a dear fellow with sisters, and a jolly companion to brothers. There was a famous household of them all, and a merry one.

Nothing like a large family for the interests of children. Favourites cannot be had, and spoiled ones are unknown. Such a well regulated establishment is a good school of life, as well as a nursery of virtue. Its members are likely to battle better with the world, put up with inconveniences and annoyances, exhibit more self-denial, and get along easier with their fellow-men.

The temperance of Colonial youth is well known, and Tom was no exception to the rule. However common the plague of drink may be in Australia and Tasmania, the infirmity is witnessed in those trained amidst the supposed superior moral and intellectual advantages of Great Britain and Ireland, and not with those born under the Southern Cross.

The only charge substantiated against some Currency lads has been that of complicity with the Bushranger. But this, though confined to New South Wales, has, perhaps, arisen less from sympathy with crime than from a feeling of liking for bold deeds. English gentlemen once openly expressed their admiration for Buccaneers, and our fathers had a sneaking kindness for the bold Dick Turpin, as their ancestors had for Robin Hood.

Colonial lads, in spite of the origin of some of them, are seldom seen at the bar of justice. In business they have a reputation for shrewdness, but not a character for sharpness. Without any prominent organ of veneration, with no particular taste for stimulants, they have been pronounced susceptible to religious impressions, and, for a time at least, will yield to the eloquence of a revivalist. But there is a sad deficiency in the argumentative for faith, and not a few sects would suffer in their distinctiveness if the special marks were left to the defences of Colonial youth. They are too gregarious to separate, like cattle on a run, into independent camps.

One good thing can be said on their behalf. They are not given to the display of their own intellectual excellence, in contemptuous treatment of others' opinions; nor are they guilty of exhibiting their own particular wisdom in the ridicule of sacred subjects, or in coarse jokes at the credulity of others. Tom went to church himself, and listened respectfully there. But he thought his mate who went to chapel was as good as himself, and went to as proper a place.

Colonial lads are not sentimental. A certain class of gushing English ladies would pronounce them boors and bores. They have no idea of assuming romantic attitudes, or of simulating emotions they do not feel. They are too honest for a make-believe. But they really are defective in point of sentiment, are not quick in the discernment of finer shades of sensibilities, and lack the power of more delicate sympathies. They do not realise the wild passions of excited poets, nor enter into the tender distresses of susceptible heroines. Having a country not overburdened with romantic associations, they are indisposed to be interested deeply in

famous places, and not renowned for heroworship. A landscape may be admired by them, but not for those suggested forms, and colours, and thoughts which the man of refined taste has brought before him in the view. The fine arts are not in their way.

Worse than all, though such lads will think about the other sex, will fall in love, will marry, indeed, they do not indulge in those raptures usually attributed, *in books*, to European lovers. It is questionable if any of them call their sweetheart 'adorable charmer,' 'angelic Angelina,' or 'divine goddess.' One has been known to weep bitterly over rejected addresses. But, generally, in the event of such an accident, the young gentleman would have pitied the lady rather than himself, and would certainly have sought consolation in the doctrine that there were as good fish in the sea as ever were caught.

The girl who calculates upon being treated as a fairy or a goddess, although she does not swallow whole oysters or drink porter, had better not submit herself to the attentions of a colonial lad. But a girl who is natural and honest herself, with simple modesty, and tolerable looks, would run a great risk of being naturally, honestly, and modestly courted by the aforesaid Colonial lad. Though not stringing together many pretty speeches, and indulging in many pretty ways, he would be an ardent lover, and make a right-down home-staying, honourable, good husband.

Now Tom was in all this true to the standard. As to girls, he was fond of their society, plagued them in a pleasant manner, was thoroughly familiar, did them many a good turn, but brought no blush of shame upon the cheek of any of them. And yet he was attached to no one in particular, though his sisters knew of half-a-dozen they were sure he had been thinking of, at one time or another, and could name more than a dozen who would jump at him.

Out of his articles, twenty-two years of age, and able to keep a wife, after the moderate and sensible Colonial fashion, some wondered Tom had no sweetheart yet.

May the good Colonial way of early marriages, virtuous unions, and lots of olive branches, never give place to the modern civilisation of wild youth, illsorted mates, and heartless homes without the laughter of a child!

Chapter XI. The Gallop across the Island.

‘I SEE you have no railroads yet,’ observed the captain to his friend Roberts.

‘Alas! we are in such a benighted state in Tasmania as to have none at present, although sworn to have before very long. We dash through the bush on horses, as the wild Indians roll over their rolling prairies with their snorting Mustangs. But I am free to confess privately my own degraded taste for Shank's Poney. I am of so mean and grovelling a nature as to admire the humble pace of a walk. I have, in some places, dropped down lower, and indulged in a crawl and a creep.’

‘And so have I,’ answered the first. ‘In fact, I am making here the discovery of a long lost faculty, the art of walking.’

‘You are not the only Indian fellow who has regained the use of his limbs by coming to Tasmania.’

‘I own my recovered powers. But who can help it here? The landscape is so inviting, and the air is so inspiriting, that one is irresistibly led on for a trial; and then the climate is so mild and bracing, that the sense of fatigue is not so depressing.’

‘You here forget to name the other thing, Douglas. Whether you will or no, if you want to get about this part you must walk and crawl. I would defy any circus rider clambering up our rocky steeps, or taking his horse up our forest-matted gullies. No, old fellow, you have to foot it here.’

‘Yes, and my wife, that could hardly walk a few yards in a garden under our Indian sun, with the atmosphere so charged with moisture, can do her three miles at a stretch now.’

‘I can see a wonderful change in your Horace.’

‘You may well say that. The dear lad eats like a real hunter. His love of flower-hunting leads him off into places that test his leg capabilities to the full. His lungs, too, have recovered tone. Besides all this, he has gradually been dropping that cynicism which our young chaps in ultra civilisation think it their duty to assume. He finds less fault, observes more excellence, smiles oftener, and is happier in himself.’

‘I see — he is forgetting himself in thinking of something outside of him. The self-complacent critic of men and manners has that amiable virtue drawn out of him here. First of all, he is put into good humour by a charming country and bright climate. Then, he lacks material for his agreeable criticisms; for artificial, simpering, namby-pamby human

nature don't thrive here. When he comes in contact with honest, hearty, healthy subjects of his own sex, and honest, hearty, healthy subjects of the other sort, what is the poor wretch to do? He has to throw away his own artificialities, and laugh like the rest.'

'Anyhow, Roberts, you enjoy yourself here.'

'And mean to, my lad. This brings me to what I was going to ask you to do. I have to go to Launceston on official business, and want you to go with me. You have about got things straight at home, and must humbly crave permission from the governess to have a slant for a few days.'

The arrangement was made. The country gentleman was to sleep in town at his friend's house, as the start had to be made at break of day.

The coach, — one of the old English genuine mail coach species, was being loaded up as the pair gained the office. Four splendid bays, of the true Tasmanian breed of horseflesh, were induced to go into traces. They were got up in a style that reminded the traveller of the glorious days of the road. The ostlers looked at the creatures' coats and harness as a triumph of art in general, and of their own powers in particular.

The coachman was of the real old sort, a solitary specimen of a fast dying out order of creation. He was not a Sam Weller, senior, however. Not that he was absolutely deficient in the swallowing capacity, nor wholly wanting in the wit of the stable; but he lacked a little of the rubicund rotundity of the English type, and had a slang of his own. There was more activity in his movements, and less of the touch-my-hat servility. He did not disdain a glass of something short, but gave the donor to understand that he could treat himself if he liked. While eminently civil, he left not the impression that his jokes and attentions were valued at the crown or half-crown, to be duly paid at the resignation of his whip.

Neither could he be mistaken for the Yankee driver on the Victorian side of Bass's Strait. He was not so tall and slim. He did not chew the tobacco, nor was he at all acquainted with the same vocabulary of oaths. He did not sit so lightly, nor handle his ribbons so carelessly. He thrashed his horses more, but shouted at them less. He was certainly not so taciturn, nor did he regard himself as a grade above his passengers. His jokes were broader, and his laugh was louder. But he was not equal in the quality of his wit, nor a match in information and argument. The Yankee, though a younger man, and having already taken part in half-a-dozen trades and professions, was apparently as experienced as himself in horseflesh, and a better driver under difficulties. To extricate a coach out of a bog, to tame half broken-in hacks, to mend a broken shaft or bit of harness, to rush a team through a swollen river, to take them up and down a precipice, and to thread a trackless bush amongst stones, fallen timber, arching boughs, and a wilderness of trees, there was no match to the Yankee in all creation. He is the *tallest* driver in the universe.

The guard of the Tasmanian mail had his own peculiarities, distinguishing him, also, alike from the English and the American type. He was almost always a Colonial. He could ride fast and safely. He could handle the reins as well as the man on the box. He showed a celerity of movement, and becoming dignity. He was aware of the importance of his office, and quietly made others acquainted with it. While not wholly indifferent to bar practice, he drank but little, and was never seen the worse for liquor. If not remarkably obsequious to his passengers, he was careful of the interests of his employers. There was a certain sort of loquacity along with a measure of reticence. He knew more than he chose to tell. While quite at home with colonials of the island, he looked upon Victorians as flash, and English-immigrants as fools.

But the coachman is mounted, the cloths are moved from the restless steeds, the guard gives a merry blast with his horn, and the wheels are soon rattling over an unrivalled macadamized road.

Away the travellers went up Elizabeth Street, over the coal shale rise, passed the Race Course, and rapidly turned the grim features of Mount Wellington behind them. It was such a splendid road, that the coach seemed to be exultant rolling over it. The horses knew it too, and trod safely and pleasantly, little heeding the gentle incline, and gaily footing it down each graceful descent. There were plenty of curves, for Wellington had sent down its rocky roots toward the Derwent, and many a detour was made to round a promontory.

But the first hour was so joyous. The air was so crisp, the company so jolly, the pace so rapid, the motion so musical, the horn so lively in waking up echoes, that ten miles ran away as it were no time. Then, when the sun fairly rubbed his eyes to real wakefulness, and laughed upon the stern mountain, winked into private fern tree glens, and brought glad ripples upon the river that ran alongside by the coach, the merriment of the travellers was quite boisterous. Icy natures thawed, that would have remained in their cold crystallization for a century of railway shaking; and jokes were cracked and tales were told on the top, that could never have been heard behind a locomotive, or have been half lost in the booming, gnashing, screeching, grinding, and groaning of the way.

Then three cheers for a coach top on a Tasmanian road!

But the brave bays are fancying that they have had nearly enough of it by the time they reach Bridgewater. Not that they are tired — not they. The coachman and guard would have taken their solemn *davey* that they were not. Still it was not in human nature to give such fine creatures more to do than a splendid run for fun and exercise.

So these were tenderly extricated from their trappings, and got bright looks from the ladies, with pats and cheery words from the masculines all round.

‘Does any gentleman want any Epsom salts this morning?’ inquires the

guard.

‘What makes you ask that?’ said Captain Douglas.

‘Because there is plenty of it under the Dromedary.’

There stood that fine mountain, overlooking themselves and the Derwent, and presenting, from one point of view, the Dromedary humps.

But now the beautiful district of Bagdad was before them, laden with the perfume of wattles, which grew upon the greenstone and basalt, that had poured forth over a large space near.

‘Why, Roberts!’ cried his fellow traveller, ‘have you got the Caliph of Bagdad here?’

‘Poor fellow! If he be, it is in a very petrified condition. But I must confess our topography is curious. Bridgewater is intelligible enough for a crossing place. But this is Bagdad; the township beyond is Brighton; the river near you is the Jordan; while Jerusalem lies to the eastward, and Abyssinia is not far off.’

‘Well, that is a conglomeration.’

‘Further, let me tell you, Douglas, that though you might often have been told, in your troublesome boyhood, to “go to Jericho,” you will, on this passage, have the bliss of reaching the place.’

It was a journey of pleasure through so smiling a plain of farms and sheep pastures. What a pull that was up Constitution Hill! At the bottom, on the north side, was spread before the passengers the thriving township of Greenponds. But what was of much consequence just then, there was spread ready for them their breakfast, which, after thirty miles coaching, would be welcome enough.

The substantial and extensive hotel at which they stopped astonished the new arrival. The market near, at Crossmarsh, the thoroughfare to Launceston, the country westward to Bothwell, and the rich farms of the neighbourhood, supplied it with visitors.

The residence of a celebrated colonial patriot was pointed out. The farm was called Mount Vernon, after the estate of the American patriot, Washington. Mr Kemp was engaged, when over forty years of age, in the rebellion against Governor Bligh, at Sydney, in 1807, and lived to have a share in political conflicts in Tasmania, against colonial governors and the Home Office, for nearly fifty years more.

The sheep walks of Lovely Banks formed a pleasing sight. The violence which scooped out the vallies of this Paradise was followed by a pastoral peace, well worthy of the Vale of Tempe itself.

But it is time to mount Spring Hill. Here the mountains closed in and confronted the travellers, giving a world of collar work to the plucky horses. Hell's Gates at the top were passed. Such a tough cutting through the Greenstone Plutonic rock made the convicts give it that name. The presence of patches of this hard deposit on the tops of hills is one of the marvels of Tasmanian geology. Go where you will, the feature is seen.

Greenstone caps, as they are called, are of various ages of terrestrial history, from coal times to later than chalk or London clay. As they rest there, mounted up above the head of the rambler several hundreds of feet, one is reminded of the tertiary limestone caps by the valley of Chamouni.

The peculiar interest of this formation in so unlooked for a position lies in the suggestion that, in ages long gone, some rough forces must have been at work in the vicinity. The deluges must have torn huge passages through the country, digging out the sandstones, limestones, and claystones of the Palaeozoic period, after having quarried through a hundred feet or more of basalt and greenstone. High and dry peaks were made and left, showing the remains of their topmost story as isolated caps, though the hissing fiery fluid had once rolled evenly over the country, then the bed of the ocean.

‘Here we are at Jericho, at last,’ shouted Mr Roberts.

‘But where is the Jordan?’ asked his friend.

‘Why, we have a slight change here. Old Jericho was down in the hot valley of the Jordan, you know, and was liable to floods of that historical stream. We, in Tasmania, have shifted our Jericho among the hills. But we have not lost sight of the Jordan. There, three or four miles from you, are the sources of the colonial river.’

‘But what is that lake?’

‘That is Lemon's Lagoon, called after a noted Bushranger; a class of residents once well-spread and popular in the country. A few murders took place here in the long stand-up fight with the Aborigines. The reward of merit fell to the lot of the darkies, who received far more bullets than they threw spears.

‘A lively time, I should fancy. It suits my years to live in a screener condition of things.’

‘Yes, you have cast down your warrior shield, and retired to rural peace. But there is Oatlands.’

‘And high enough, in all conscience, for oats. The climate must be pretty sharp there in winter.’

‘It is, being 1300 feet above the sea level. It must have been sharp to poor Mike Howe, another of our unfortunate and duly lamented bushrangers. He had his hut by that swamp over there, and his solitude was partly consoled by ‘Black Mary.’ Mike Howe's Marsh was subsequently given to Mr Anstey, the father of the English politician of that name, and the best magisterial hunter of blacks and bushrangers of the aboriginal past.’

St Peter's Pass was now threaded. The bold acclivities, its strategic points, struck the old soldier, who thought that, with a company of his old regiment, he could here withstand a moderate army.

Antill Ponds came next, and the Tunbridge Township on the Blackman

river was reached. The Salt Pan Plains extended eastward. The ponds, or pans, once gave the settlers a relish to their mutton. A little rise, Don's Battery, was the stronghold of a fellow surrounded by Blacks, who managed to hold his own against a host of spearmen.

'But whose is that magnificent house there?' inquired the Indian officer.

'That is Mona Vale estate, belonging to the Kermodes, — and a palace fit for a king. I guess, though, a king would hardly like to be pitched so far from civilization. It is a long way hence to balls and routs of town delight.'

'Well, Roberts, it is my opinion that the man who has cash enough to set up such a pile as that, would have done more sensibly building elsewhere. But every one to his taste.'

'What a mercy it is, then, that you and I are removed from the horrors of wealth, and the perplexities of knowing where to build our new barns!'

Ross and its fine bridge next appeared. The mountains of primitive rocks had receded, and the basaltic plains were once more to be seen. Whenever the volcanic formation came, farms and rich grass came with it. The banks of the Macquarie river were early settled from this geological cause.

It was a noble agricultural country for a dozen miles or more, this platform of the igneous rock. The real capital of the farming district is Campbell Town, on the Elizabeth, eighty miles from Hobart Town, and forty odd from Launceston. The building freestone of the hills about is of great service to the inhabitants. It will make a good grindstone. Miller's Bluff, the extremity of the Western Tiers, looks down upon the smiling corn fields of the plains, while an equally rugged range lies to the eastward, by the Township.

The driver then turned off from the direct northerly course, to avoid the hills, and entered Epping Forest, a heartless region of poor trees, thick scrub, and coarse gravel. But what a road the gravel makes, — so smooth and level! The stage between Cleveland and Snake Banks may be done at nearly twenty miles an hour.

The old coachman was proud of relating his deeds.

'Do you see this road?' said he to the two gentlemen. 'Well, it's a long while ago, but I run it to please a gentleman from India.' Says he, 'you talk too fast of what your horses can do in Van Diemen's land.' 'Not I,' says I. 'I don't swallow all you fellows say,' says he. That put up my monkey. I was just a-going on for the seven mile stage, — short and sweet, you know. I knew what I had in hand, a pair of the nicest little dears that ever a man handled. 'Just look at your watch, Sir,' says I. Then I shook my ribbands, and shouted, 'Off you go, my darlings!' And didn't they go! Well, when I pulled up, and not a whip touch they had, I asked

my box mate the time. How he stared! 'Seven miles in eighteen minutes! It is wonderful!' Well, he was very civil after that to me. But I must give the end of the yarn. When he was coming back to Hobart Town, after a week or so, he gave me a gold watch, with my name and all about my driving done inside, and said not all the world outside could have done that run."

The South Esk river came in sight. Here was another farming district. It stretched over the Longford Plains to the west, right under Dry's Bluff, and a long way to the eastward as well. But this time it was not the greenstone or basalt. It was a tertiary deposit of siliccous breccia, sand and marl, of which Cressy and Perth were the centres, so to speak. It extended right on to Launceston.

Now for some time the travellers had been delighted with the grand spectacle of Ben Lomond range. This vast pile has burst upwards with a solemn grandeur. It towers above five thousand feet, and shows off in the distance to great advantage. The top is greenstone, though the framework is Palaeozoic rock of all sorts. The floor is granite, which has intruded also through the slates. The last great upheaval has mounted a portion of the carboniferous beds thousands of feet up one side of the range.

Behind Ben Lomond is the interesting coal district of the east. The mineral is a bright bituminous substance, though its deposits have been terribly shaken about by subsequent eruptions. The gold fields of Fingal extend southward of the range in question. The whole of the country of this coal and gold is at once picturesque, fertile, healthy and charming; but it is so shut in by wild and precipitous hills as to be nearly unapproachable. The produce of the fields and formations cannot be brought to market but at considerable cost. The want of a harbour on the coast side is another serious drawback to this delightful locality.

Perth has considerable pretensions, and boasts its stores, its churches, its schools, its temperance society, and other civilizing agencies. A capital bridge is thrown over the South Esk. Paterson's Plains, to the right, were named after Colonel Paterson, the early commandant of Port Dalrymple, now the town of Launceston.

The Cocked Hat Hill, so called from the shape, is as much the resort for Irish as Ross and Campbelltown are for Scotch settlers. The elements of progress are seen to most advantage among the sons of Scotia.

Launceston, over one hundred and twenty miles from Hobart Town, is its commercial rival, and the northern capital. It is seated on and around the beautiful Windmill Hill, at the junction of the North Esk and South Esk. The united waters run on thence, as the Tamar, to Bass's Strait.

Both these rivers are fed by the Ben Lomond and Ben Nevis ranges; but while the first glides peacefully into the harbour of Launceston on the eastern side, the more bold and rapid South Esk makes a sudden detour, and plunges down a basaltic cataract with noise and fury to the town at

its western point.

A walk to these cataracts is the favourite one with the Launcestonians. While twitted with the swamp in front of their houses, though now drained and utilized, they point to the romantic crags of the cataract hills, and ask the southern tourist if he can show at Hobart Town so fine an Arthur's Seat, as grand a fall. It was by a shute, led along the rocky side, that the town was supplied with water from above the cataract, as the Tamar by the wharf is flavoured with ocean salt.

Chapter XII. A Trip Westward.

MR ROBERTS introduced his friend to the notabilities of Launceston. The excellent clergyman could tell him tales of past sorrows and trials there. The magistrate related stirring incidents of a criminal past. A Savings' Bank authority discoursed of the triumphs of a peaceful crusade against the wrongs of enforced convictism upon the colonists. Though the officialdom must be sought at Hobart Town, the chief enterprise and energy of the island will be found northward.

'Now,' said Mr Roberts, 'you must not, for very shame, think of returning to the Derwent till you have seen the western country by the Straits. If you don't go you will grievously offend the Launcestonians, who have a just pride in that district, and you will miss an opportunity of worrying a Derwenter, who is so jealous of the Northerners.'

A suitable companion was found for the holiday maker.

Once upon a time the roads were loudly and justly condemned. Aided by the government, the men of the north have constructed a railway to the west.

Westbury, on the Meander or Western River, was the first place of stay. A rich grassy valley was the object of admiration. The cream of the dairies there can be cut with a knife, so rich and succulent are the grasses.

The Van Diemen's Land Company was formed in London in 1825. Their possessions extend westward, southward, and north-westward from Westbury, embracing some of the most fertile soil, the roughest country, the scrubbiest gullies, and densest forests, to be seen in any part of the globe. At the Surrey Hills they have 150,000 acres, at Middlesex Plain 10,000, and a splendid domain near the north-west corner of the island. The dividends have not been plentiful during the interval of half a century. The flocks and herds ought to have paid well, and had paid others who looked after the animals themselves. Land was sold, but not to much profit; the leases were more profitable. Farming on the company's own account has not been so remunerative as with their tenants elsewhere.

And yet the district is a glorious one. The north-west of Tasmania is the best watered settlement of all the Australian colonies. Some residents fancy it a deal too well watered.

Between the Tamar and the western limit are the Rubicon, the Mersey,

the Don, the Forth, the Severn, the Emu, and a host of other streams rolling down from the lofty plateau of Central Tasmania. On the banks of all these waters black soil is known nearly a dozen feet thick.

Deloraine, 30 miles west of Launceston, is the chief town of the west. It is a most romantic locality, bristling with mountain peaks, bursting with vegetable luxuriance, with green and beauty everywhere.

'This is fine,' exclaimed Captain Douglas. 'But how unfinished it looks! The fields are wonderful, but the roads are frightful.'

'Wait a bit,' answered another, 'get up to the Mersey, and over the Mersey, before you find out what mud is.'

And so it was. The very richness and fatness of the soil made it a regular *glue-pot* with a little rain. The very absence of stones, elsewhere in the island too prevalent, forbade the formation of roads with anything like comfort. Trees were plentiful enough, and were cast down into ruts. Corduroy roads, of fallen logs, were the only passable thoroughfares. Yet oh! the jolting over them was a caution.

'But just look at the crops,' said a farmer. 'There's my fifty acre paddock, there, as regularly turned me out from forty to fifty bushels to the acre.'

'How long have you been cropping?' inquired Mr Douglas.

'A matter of fifteen year.'

'And get forty to fifty bushels an acre?'

'Not exactly; call it from fifty to forty, as the yield is dropping off just a little. I must just stick the plough a little deeper, that's all.'

'But why not put on manure?'

'Where am I to get that from, I should like to know.'

'Why, the stock on the farm would give you some.'

'Indeed! But I see you are a new chum, or you would know that it would never do to knock down trees at a matter of from thirty to sixty pounds cost an acre, only to turn stock into worth a few shillings a head.'

This was an insight into colonial farming.

The old road from Deloraine to Emu Bay was forty miles longer than the present one is, which is sixty miles long. It went over terrific passes. Not very far from Deloraine it reached 2600 feet above the sea level. At a very great outlay the government struck out another line of traffic, which avoided the most dangerous pitfalls for travellers.

Near the Mersey Captain Douglas entered a limestone cave. The entrance was sixty feet by thirty. The extent already known is fully two miles. Magnificent halls, and chambers of crystal splendour, were traversed, and stalactites of beauty were brought away in triumph. The limestone is a great source of the fertility of this western country.

The metamorphic rocks were in great force near the Mersey River. The Asbestos range is so denominated from veins of that substance detected in the serpentine rock. The Dysodile is an inflammable resinous matter,

got out of a formation also near the Mersey. It is sometimes in a vein six feet thick, and it burns with an offensive odour. Between that river and the Tamar is a greenstone tier, a thousand feet in height, with grand vertical columns; but its iron mountains will some day be a mine of wealth.

Two hills attracted the tourist's attention.

'What may they be?' asked he.

'That on this side of the Mersey is Gog, and on the other is Magog,' was the information given, with this addition: 'The originals may be seen at the Guildhall in London.'

'The odd appellations appear to have travelled far south,' was the captain's next remark.

'You should see, then, the Devil's Glen further on, and the Chimney Stacks.'

Toward the Middlesex Plains, belonging to Van Diemen's Land Company, the last named curiosity presented itself.

The Vale of Belvoir was fitted to be the scene of the residence of Johnson's Rasselas. It was three miles broad, with the hilly sides clothed with grass. A stream, after wandering like a silver thread, suddenly disappeared within the limestone caverns below. Myrtle trees towered to an enormous height, and were of the richest green.

At one end of this Vale of Belvoir was a basaltic mountain. Along the top was almost a regular row of prismatic columns. Their singular appearance, and the blackness of the stone, made some visitors call them the Chimney Stacks. One more refined than the rest had the suggestion of a chimney sweeper's day, and called the place May Day Mount.

The traveller did not admire the country about the Forth, as he had done that by the Mersey. The latter has the best of land along both banks. Indeed, he never more doubted the stories of yield per acre.

'But how do you get the produce to any market?' said he.

'That's the trouble of our lives,' replied a farmer. 'We have been hoping so long for roads, a tramway, or a railway, that we begin to think it will come in with the millennium.'

'But if you could only get your potatoes and corn out, you ought to make a lot of money.'

'Ah!' sighed the man. 'We did dream of that at one time of day. But the best market is now shut against us.'

'Where is that?'

'Melbourne, to be sure.'

'But in Victoria they can never grow your crops.'

'That is true enough. But don't you see theirs is another country to ours. They can run a plough for miles and miles without stick or stone to stop them; and if the yield be not so much, the expense is less.'

'But wages, I hear, are greater than with you.'

‘They are. Yet look at me. I cleared this land. See what a power of cash that took away. There was an average of thirty big trees on every acre, some of which were fifty feet round. I say nothing about the smaller sort. A friend of mine counted over two thousand trees on one single acre. There were fifteen hundred under two feet in girth, and a score of them from twenty to forty feet round. He counted eighty tree ferns as well. If we have the best land in the world, it costs us a mighty deal before we can get the plough into it.’

‘But you seem satisfied to remain here.’

‘I am. The land is my own. The climate, in spite of the rain, suits my family. We can live, anyhow. And the time will come for my children, when a good road shall be made, and when schools and churches may travel this way. When that time comes there won't be such a place anywhere else.’

‘But you must be troubled with low fevers and agues in so damp a climate, with rank vegetation, and confined air.’

‘No, not at all. Do you take this to be the backwoods of America? Go there, if you want agues and low fevers. That's the country for sallow faces. Do my children seem sallow?’

‘By no means,’ quoth the captain. ‘They are models of rosy health.’

‘Well, then, we must put up with the rest. Another man, used to fine society, and more book learning than me, might find it dull to be shut up in this valley, without seeing a soul, maybe for months. No morning newspaper comes this way, and not many travellers show themselves.’

‘Are you not afraid of your children being lost here?’

‘My wife often is frightened about that. But the youngsters born up here are pretty 'cute, and know how to take care of themselves. Your town folks are in the greatest danger. Did you ever hear of the surveyor on this road being lost?’

‘No, tell me the story, if you please.’

‘Well, I had it from himself. Like a great flat, he got off the track of his working party, and by the merest chance like got into it again. But he had a great shock to his feelings. Thinking it was all up with him, he made a sort of will in his note-book. He showed me what he wrote, and I copied a part.’

‘What did he write?’

‘These were his words,’ said the man, reading them from an old pocket book: —

‘If it be the will of Divine Providence that I perish in this dreary forest, these are my last words. Let my imprudence in quitting the main track, (unfortunately without a compass, without food, or the means of kindling a fire,) be a warning to others.’

‘Poor fellow!’ ejaculated the listener.

‘Did you ever hear of Commissary Creek, sir?’

'I saw it marked on the map.'

'Do you know why that name was given it?'

'No, I don't; but I suppose it was in honour of some commissary officer.'

'Not at all. There was a chap lost in the scrub there. He ate all he could to sustain life, and at last finished by eating his cap. As he was a convict, and the leather caps furnished by government were called *commissaries*, the creek got named after his devoured cap.'

Captain Douglas did not venture through to Emu Bay, nor visit the wonderful potato region about Circular Head. But he was satisfied that, though a little too moist and rude for him, the locality would be a happy home for many working men. Already the fruit trees were in full bearing, and the soil produced almost a hundred-fold.

It was on this trip the traveller learned some facts upon the natural history of the Island.

He knew many of the animals from description. The kangaroo and opossum were familiar enough. He did not see in Tasmania the Tree Kangaroo of New Guinea, though aware of the singular coincidence of many forms of Flora and Fauna in both countries, so far removed from each other. The Kangaroo Rat is much complained of by the potato growers. The other burrower, the Bandicoot, he observed to have the tail of a rat, and occupy a position somewhat between the Kangaroo and the Opossum.

The Wombat, or native Pig, was common up that quarter. It burrows like a badger, eating the coarse grass and nuts. Clumsy enough to be styled a pig, although a marsupial animal, its flesh has a pork-like flavour. The hair is very thick and coarse, and the head is large and flat. The fore feet have each five toes, and crooked nails; but the hind feet have only four. It never comes out of its hole but at night, to gambol and feed.

Tasmania has no Dingo, or Wild Dog, as Australia owns, but boasts of a Tiger and a Devil.

The latter is an ugly-mouthed creature of the size of a dog, but wolf-like in aspect. The broad white bands on the black short fur of its chest and haunches give it an odd and unpleasant appearance. The tail is thick and short. Its habits are nocturnal, sneaky, and cowardly. Its favourite food is mutton, when a stray sheep can be caught.

The Tiger is of the cat kind. Tasmania, in addition to the ordinary Australian native cat, has a Tiger-Cat and a Tiger. All are marsupial. A cat may be found with seven or eight young ones attached to her pouch. The creature is hopelessly savage. The Tiger-Cat has weasel-like legs, and a long body, sometimes even a yard long. It is also nocturnal, and uncommonly fierce, though never attacking anything but birds and small quadrupeds. The Tiger, or Hyena, is also one of the marsupial,

carnivorous animals. Though possessed of great strength, and running to four or five feet in length, it is singularly timid at the approach of man. It is now nearly extinct in the island. The colour is brown, with tiger-like black stripes on the back and haunches. The cat itself is remarkably spotted white on a black or dark grey fur. The Tiger-cat has the spots on a rusty brown ground. All the tribe have very short legs, and are quite untameable.

The Tasmanian Porcupine-Anteater, or Echidna, is marsupial. The legs and tail are very short. The claws are made for burrowing. The tongue and snout are long. It has no teeth, and has very small eyes. When pursued, if unable to burrow, it will roll itself up in a ball, and present its spines to the foe. The body is about a foot long, and the yellowish white spines are tipped with black.

But the Platypus, or Ornithorhynchus Paradoxus, is the most remarkable of all. With the bill and feet of a duck, it has the fur or skin of a quadruped. There is no external ear, and the eyes are uncommonly small and lively. It burrows in the ground, and is quite amphibious. When asleep, it rolls itself up in a ball, and lays its flat, obtuse tail over its back for warmth. Two teeth, with flat tops and no roots, are placed on each side at the back of the mouth. It is about fifteen to twenty inches in length. The female lays her eggs; the male carries a bag of poison, and has a spur on his hind legs. This near approach to the reptile has its home in quiet retreats by rivers.

According to Dr Krefft of Sydney, Australia has eighty marsupials, and thirty rodents. It has also six hundred and seventy birds, a hundred and fifty reptiles, and four hundred and forty fishes.

Chapter XIII. Loyalty in the Colony.

As the Queen's birth-day was at hand, Captain Douglas received an invitation to the Government ball.

'I am glad to see you are loyal enough, Roberts, to have her Majesty's birth-day kept up here.'

'And did you fancy that the leopard had changed its spots by crossing the line? Believe me, my friend, we Britishers in the Australian colonies are not like the Britishers that go to America. The first are true to the Union Jack, though the others too frequently desert their colours for a striped rag with some stars on it.'

'I rejoice to find myself under the old flag I have fought under. But I was told you had all turned Republicans in the colonies.'

'We are so pretty well as to form of government; but it is a republic with a queen at the head.'

'But does that system work well, Roberts?'

'What do you think yourself? Are we such a mob of misrule? Do you hear *à la lanterne* in the streets? Are our gaols emptied and fired? Does the governor mount the cap of Liberty?'

'No, no, my friend. I am struck with your obedience to law. But with this extent of freedom, have you no expression of a desire to get rid of monarchy?'

'Why should we? Those in England who pay for the toy may grumble at the charges; all we pay is so much a year to a representative of Majesty, but who spends here about the amount we grant. That is no great hardship.'

'But don't you wish for Independence?'

'But haven't we got it? Have the Jonathans any more real and practical independence than we enjoy?'

'Perhaps not; but the child cried for the moon?'

'Which it wouldn't have done had the moon been handier. The colonists are not children. They are abundantly practical. They did growl once, and cry out loudly enough. Yet it was about no distant moon, of no use to them if they got it; but about a real burden which they wanted removed.'

'And the English parliament did them justice, and took away their disabilities.'

'Yes, and gave them, in extension of suffrage, vote by ballot, and

control of Crown lands, a freedom not enjoyed at home, and not likely to be for a hundred years.'

'That did astonish us in India. But we were told there that it was done on the principle of a horrid example. The colonists, directly they got the boon, were to have begun worrying one another, kicking over the traces, establishing a Red Republic, and I know not what, to warn Englishmen of the folly of seeking such an absurd indulgence.'

'And, pray, what is your opinion now about that?'

'Why, I don't see much sign of the blood and thunder school growing up here.'

'And won't folks have something to lose here? With all their radicalism, there is far more conservatism in the colonies than in England, because so much larger a proportion have something at stake. The loafers here are the few, and there the many.'

'I begin to think you are right, Roberts. Already the story is getting another rendering, I hear, in Britain.'

'And will do still more. Englishmen in the colonies may be trusted with power more readily than Englishmen at home, and more safely than any other race anywhere.'

'Anyhow, I trust they will be true to the Queen.'

'They certainly will. When those fellows in Britain turn hot republicans, we mean to invite her down here. What a glorious time we'll have of it!'

A few days after this, the two friends went to the levée, held at mid-day of the 24th of May. It rather astonished the Captain to see the free-and-easy way of folks going to salute his Excellency. He supposed that the visitors would have been only those belonging to the upper circles, and he found his own butcher at the levée.

The company marched through, made their bow, received a bow and a shake of the head, and then passed on. The military band were in front of the vice-regal residence.

As to the ball, it met with the entire approval of Mrs Douglas, accustomed, as she had been in India, to nobler gatherings.

'All was in very good taste, my dear,' she remarked to her husband. 'The people were not all very refined, but were well-behaved, for all that. The dancing was correct enough, if some grace were wanting; but the good humour of all was a relief that more distinguished parties might envy.'

'Right, sensible wife of mine. I met a lot of fellows down from the country, who knew lots of old Indian friends of ours. You know I introduced you to some, but there were plenty more.'

'Indeed, at one time I began to think I was in Calcutta, from the number of uniforms about.'

'And the supper was good too,' added the gentleman.

‘Ah! I saw you enjoyed it.’

‘Of course I did, with such a pleasant company, and less reserve than in correcter assemblies, you know. The supper was a real one, and not a sham side-table.’

‘And what a hearty cheer they gave when drinking the Queen's health. I declare I felt proud of the colony. There's no republicanism to hurt here. They may call the spirit bad, if they like, so long as the conduct is manfully loyal.’

It was after this that the Captain took more interest in local politics. He went to both the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, and listened to the speeches. Talking afterwards about his visit, to Roberts, the latter said,

‘And what did you think of our colonial spout?’

‘I must admit, I have heard better English; but for sound, sensible matter, and ease of expression, no afternoon speeches in Calcutta would come up to those of your legislators. I admired the natural style of talk. There was not the monotonous droning and awkward stammering of our House of Commons, nor the lively spread-eagleism of the American Congress.’

‘Hansard is a great card among them, you found.’

‘Yes, and the forms of our houses were well observed. I don't think your colonial lawmakers imitate the farmyard cries to drown the voice of opponents.’

‘No; braying is no convincement.’

‘But I want to know, Roberts, what on earth they have to dispute about, and get hot about here.’

‘That puzzles me at times. But wherever human passions can find room to play, there they play. If hair-splitting be a joke to some, it must be serious and necessary employment to others. But parties must exist, say our wise men of Gotham.’

‘Yes, that is reasonable enough in England. There certain great families have long retained power, and don't want to part with it. Church and State versus Reform will always produce strife. But what have these to fight about?’

‘Certainly not much for private ends. Yet, whatever their zeal for the progression of the colony, opinions will differ as to the best way of promoting it.’

‘Perhaps a little personal animus may help to a little strife.’

‘Assuredly; and the wish for a seat on the Treasury Benches. There are loaves and fishes, honey and sugarplums, to be had. Changes in administration give other fellows a turn at official pomp and glory; but the business of State is sadly injured thereby.’

‘You and I have seen what personal ambition has wrought in that direction with Great Britain.’

‘Yes; and a little forbearance with our rustics here, who have to learn legislation, would become some of our English jokers. They may learn to bray and crow down opponents in time.’

Chapter XIV. Something to Eat.

HORACE got many a bit of information as to plants from an amateur in botany, long resident in the island.

One morning the young man started the conversation.

‘Really, Mr Smith, I could not have believed that a country so rich as yours in plants should be so ill provided with any fit as food for man.’

‘Before taking up that question, I should like to know whether your ancestors, who dwelt in Caledonia before Caesar came, found so many native fruits.’

‘No; I rather think those were no great shakes. I don't despise the cranberry, but object to the wild crab.’

‘Then don't crow over Tasmania. But there is still something to be said upon our supply. Let us see. You will admit that the Aborigines may have found vegetable food here.’

‘Certainly. I do not dislike the native cherry, though it is rather too sweet; but the Tasmanian wild cranberry is inferior to the British one.’

‘But have you tasted the native bread?’

‘What is that?’

‘The Mylitta is a tuber in the ground, often as big as a man's head. Dug up near rotten trees, its flavour is not admired by us, though something like boiled rice. Aborigines ate it eagerly. There is another excellent fungus found growing on the branches of the myrtle tree westward. When the skin is peeled off, one might fancy, at a meal, that he was eating cold cowheel.’

‘Not a highly spiced substance then. But there are mushrooms, I know, and just like the English sort. But what fern is that the natives indulged in?’

‘The edible fern is the *Tara*, and very similar to the common brake of British woods. The root when ripe is as long as the finger. Our blacks would roast it in the hot ashes, drag off the black peeling with their bright teeth, and devour it with their roast Kangaroo and Opossum.’

‘I am aware that pigs root about the fern; but is there any quantity of fecula, or arrowroot material, in it?’

‘If you will grate a root, or beat it well, and then mix with water, you will get the nourishing precipitate. As to the Tree-fern heart, I never knew our people take to it. The wild man split open the top, and roasted the heart, a sort of turnip substance, several inches thick. There is, also, a

nutty substance obtained from the base of some sedgy leaves.'

'When thirsty in the bush,' said Horace, 'I have gladly chewed the queer branchlets of the leafless She Oak. The cattle like a munch at them too. But now for a description of your Tasmanian fruits. I will leave out the catalogue of what are called the English ones, in the culture of which you manage to get a flavour that the mother country could prefer to that of its own varieties.'

'Our native fruits, like our vegetables, have no great reputation. But while Sir John Franklin, to save starvation when wind-bound in Macquarie Harbour, was well content to take some wild cabbage, other Bush-bound heroes have not been ungrateful for kangaroo apples.

'Please describe this aboriginal apple.'

'The shrub sometimes grows nearly as high as a man. The apple follows the birth of a blue flower. As the fruit ripens the skin bursts. It has a mealy taste, and is somewhat acid, though perfectly wholesome. Our own youngsters go in for the same.'

'What are the Botany Bay greens?'

'These were eaten in a terrible famine at Port Jackson in the days of the first settlement. We have the same plant here. It belongs to the goosefoot family. The Colonial housekeepers still pickle the young shoots.'

'Your Macquarie Harbour vine is now so common as a climber in Hobart Town, that I have often admired its rapidity of growth, and the bright green of its ivy-like leaf. But what of the fruit?'

'This hangs in a bunch, and has a sweet taste, though its triangular seed is unpleasant enough. The convicts were often glad enough to gather it for pies and puddings, and we sometimes make a jam out of it.'

'Indeed! when the Island abounds with such delicious raspberries. I pity your taste. Is the cherrytree common?'

'It is not found universally through the Island, being scarce to the north-west. It always needs the shade of a larger forest tree. This exocarpus is like the she-oak, you know, in having no leaves, but a sort of knotted branchlets or branches, with a slight green fringe at each knot.

'I know the fruit is of an oval shape, the size of a large currant, of a sweet taste, and attached to a nut, instead of having it inside.'

'We have a variety of currant-like fruits, but of an acid flavour. Children are sometimes drawn to a taste by the pretty-looking currants. The epacris family, including the native cranberry, yield so much seed to the thin pulp that the fruit is not worth the gathering. The juniper sort of trailing plant, on which the cranberry grows, bears lovely scarlet blossoms in winter. The ordinary native currant is a leucopogon. The species is named after the French naturalist M. Riche. When here with D'Entrecasteaux, in 1792, he was lost in the Bush for three days, and supported life on these berries. They are observed near the coast, small and white, hanging from a scrub five or six feet high.'

‘When I was scrambling about the breast of Mount Wellington, I gathered some of the heath wax clusters. I found the little white wax-like fruit taste something after the fashion of a young gooseberry. But your tea plants amused me.’

‘And yet the old Colonists were glad enough to try a brew of the leaves, when the Chinese quality was a guinea to two guineas a pound. The burr, whose seeds so unpleasantly fasten on to the ladies' dresses when going near them, has a leaf which is no bad substitute for tea. The melaleuca and leptospermum are colonial tea plants. There is a correa called the Cape Barren tea.’

‘What part of the grass-tree did the Blacks eat?’

‘The xanthorrhoea, which throws up so lofty a flower-stalk, and which is a safe indication of bad land, is a coarse grass. The waddy was used to knock off the stiff leaves from the trunk. At the base of the fresh inner leaves was a tender morsel joining on to the stem. Our boys will sometimes get this and roast it. The roasted native yam was always welcome to Whites or Blacks.’

‘But is there not a native potato, which is not a berry but a root?’

‘There is. It is the gastrodia, growing at the decaying roots of the stringy bark. Though without leaves, its brown flowers mount up to a couple of feet. The bulb tubers below grow out of one another, like kidney potatoes, which they resemble in size and form. The nourishment is drawn directly from the decaying roots of the tree. When roasted, these native potatoes taste like beetroot.’

‘You have spoken of tea-plants, but never named the lovely sassafras, a decoction of the bark of which was once recommended to me.’

‘Yes, that magnificent laurel, our sassafras, the atherosperma, will often run up 150 feet, growing like a pine. When the decoction is flavoured with milk it becomes no unsatisfactory drink. We have a sort of Peruvian bark in our forests. The coprosma, or native holly, grows half-a-dozen feet high. But the red or purple berries are sweet and wholesome, and have a couple of seeds in each, somewhat like coffee-leaves. There is a taller species, forming a dense underwood in gullies, whose red peas, as they are called, were greedily picked for puddings in older days. But in eating the fruit one's mouth gets full of seeds.’

‘What is the native carrot?’

‘The root of a pretty geranium. It is fleshy, and when roasted is not objectionable, though far from equal to our English carrot. The native apple-berry is quite respectable, though plagued with a lot of hard seeds. The cylindrical fruit is green in colour. The plant is a pittosporum.’

‘Have you no edible peas?’

‘No — although, exclusive of acacias, we have no less than sixty species. The Blacks would occasionally roast some sorts of acacia seeds. There is a rose, our common bramble, which bears a capital fruit, though

the common trouble of big, hard stones has to be encountered. A yellow-flowering, creeping bramble, to the north, has really a delicious cranberry-like red fruit.'

'Your pig-faces amused me.'

'That is the *mesembryanthemum*, a sort of figmarigold, by the sea-side everywhere. The fleshy seedvessel of this low-spreading plant may be sucked to great advantage by the thirsty tourist. Children are very fond of the pulp. The fruit is an inch or two inches long, and of a reddish colour when ripe. The native elder has a white sweet fruit. The tree is an annual, two or three feet high.'

Horace had been previously attracted by the sweets of manna at the Hobart Town Regatta.

This sugar of the wilderness is so minutely described by Moses as to be easily recognized anywhere. In Tasmania and Australia it is abundantly found; though, like the Israelites, we have to be quick in picking up the droppings there, or the sun would absorb them.

Under a dwarf sort of gum-tree the children expect to light upon the sweets. The pretty snow white drops soon crystallize, and soon evaporate. Manna is very pleasant to the taste, and is nutritious as a food. The constituents are chiefly gum, sugar, and a substance called mannite.

Many trees discharge this honey-dew. In one hot summer the Linden trees of Strasburg were observed to throw down a small rain of the honey dew. But the manna is not a mere exudation of juices, but a product of insects.

Though many tiny creatures find it their interest to erect a sort of tent for protection against wet and foes, which they manufacture from certain secretions, the colonial *Psylla* has a greater quantity of gummy pabulum than its kindred the other side of the Line. The cloak of white filaments comes from its own body. These comical little cone-tents of the larvae and pupae of this insect are seen hanging from the under branches of the bushes. When they drop they are eagerly snapped up by the youngsters.

The eggs are in clusters of yellow grains, and uncovered. As the egg bursts, the larva appears. It is far from handsome, though nearly transparent. It seems bristling all round with filaments from its body. A thread issues like a tail and ends in a round lump. The white fluid can be detected at every articulation of the almost microscopic creature.

When proceeding to form its dwelling, it throws out from a centre fibrous radii, like the spokes of a wheel, and proceeds, after the style of the spider, to fill up the interstices with finer threads of its glutinous material. The cup tent is very thin.

The honey secreted oozes out in drops, and hardens while it raises the roof on the wall. The insect, when it has devoured enough to complete its transformation, eats through its sugar house, and leaves its skin at home.

The perfect insect has ten joints in its antennae. Its so-called sucker

enables it to pierce the leaf for juices. The eyes are very large and round, having an ocellus behind each, though occasionally a third ocellus may be distinguished, if it be not simply the union of the the two others. The wings are particularly elongated and without colour. The elytra are longer than the wings. The abdomen is green, and has two points at the extremity for the discharge of eggs. The feet have a couple of hooks and a bladder. The male, though smaller than its mate, is similar in appearance. The animal indulges more in leaping than walking.

In examining these pretty cup-coverings, tufts of hair, like extensions of the thread of the insect, are presented. It is said that the saccharine matter of the manna is confined to these hairs.

One species of colonial *Psylla* builds on the red curled leaves at the ends of fresh shoots and protects itself with the lerp, which is waxy and tasteless. The insect is much larger than the cone maker; the head is yellow, the abdomen is green, and the elytra are yellow.

A third sort lays dark red eggs. The larva is a reddish brown colour. The form of its covering resembles the valve of a cockle-shell. The hinge is fastened to the leaf. The Lerp is bright in colour and quite translucent; the outside is often half an inch wide. All the threads appear to spring from the point of security on the leaf. The fine hairs cross in all directions, producing a marvellously beautiful specimen of animal lace. It is a brilliant carpet covering. Both in the pupa and perfect state, this insect is quite double the size of that making the delicious white lerp. Its head and thorax are highly coloured, though the abdomen is green. The delicate and regular nervures of the elytra are bright scarlet in colour.

Underneath these limpet-like appendages to the leaves a reservoir of honey is deposited by the insect.

Some people have doubted whether all sorts of manna are thus produced by the incision of an insect. One colonial kind, from the Mallè scrub, a sort of dwarf Eucalyptus, has a lerp which is pronounced by natives to be only an exudation from the young Mallè. Entomologists doubt the truth of this, and suppose the existence of a new genus of insects.

This manna differs from the other chiefly in being partly insoluble in either water, spirit, or acid. Moreover it contains no true mannite. One kind is thus described by a settler: —

“I had no dinner, but I got plenty of lerp. Lerp is very sweet, and is formed by an insect on the leaves of gumleaves; in size and appearance like a flake of snow, it feels like matted wool, and tastes like the ice on a wedding cake.”

But this new sort consists of tiny cups, six to an inch, covered with the usual white curled hairs. The outside is rough, but the inside smooth. Each hair is a tube, and contains starch as well as sugar. Only the hairs taste sweet; the other part is like gum to the palate. The point of

attachment is not observable, and this has given rise to the opinion that it is not the product of insects. Half the weight of the substance is sugar, and one-sixth water. The remainder is classed as gum one-sixteenth part, starch nearly as much, inulin one-seventh, and cellulose about an eighth.

Chapter XV. Hard Rocks and Hard Talk.

ACCOMPANIED by an agreeable local geologist, Horace had his geological as well as botanical rambles.

The first hill behind Hobart Town is Knocklofty. The green bossy head is bare of trees. But what a charming view did he thence obtain! The harbour lay below, with its snug little coves, into which shadows of gardens were dipping, — with its proud masted vessels, with the haunts of men by its side, and the laughing lads and lassies who paddled on its bosom. Seabirds screamed over it with delight, and land songsters raised their notes as they darted across it from shore to shore. The sun cheered it by day, the moon threw its chastening beams upon it by night. The sage stars twinkled their telegraphic communications to the ripples, that rose as if they would like to salute those watching, loving orbs.

Then a look up the New Town Valley brought such a change again. Man had gladly appropriated the charms so exposed to his gaze. How dearly had nature rewarded his service and affection! The gentle rises heaved with pleasure, revealing ever varying beauties. The plain was blooming with floral loveliness. The fields were smiling with luxuriance. The orchards, the pride of the valley, were hanging about babbling brooks, sheltering happy homesteads, and nodding over the teamster on the road.

Some of the gardens crept down to the river, and others clambered up to the forests of Wellington. There rested the village, reposing amidst garlands. The school-bell scattered groups of wayside gambollers. A distant sheep-bell sounded down the valley lazily on the still air. Here were proud mansions of wealth, and there were lowlier tenements, though not abodes of poverty. All alike were embosomed among trees, were encircled by flowers, and were fanned by healthful breezes.

From gazing around Horace turned to the rock on which he stood. It was the igneous greenstone.

‘Here,’ said Mr Wanfel, ‘the boiling, bubbling mass cut off the sandstone of Mount Wellington from the sandstone of the domain on the other side of the town.’

‘What an astonishing quantity of this formation you have here in Tasmania,’ exclaimed his listener.

‘Few, if any, countries can boast of such a proportion. It exceeds in area the basalt. Of a livelier colour than its companion, it is often harder

in structure, though both are worthy of the ordinary appellation of ironstone.'

'You spoke just now of the sandstone. What is that?'

'Well, as we have a good view here, I can speak of the formations better. This greenstone overflowed the sandstone here, and did not seriously affect the horizontal of the rock. But a worse foe to the peaceful existence of the sandstone was a devastating deluge, which tore huge gaps hundreds of feet in depth, and left here and there platforms or shelves to mark the shores of its ravages.'

'But what sandstone is this I find alike by the side of Mount Wellington, by the Domain, by Kangaroo Point across the harbour, and up that sweet vale of New Town?'

'It corresponds to the Liverpool sandstone, and serves as the burial slab over the remains of ancient forests turning into coal. As you have heard, it is, where extra silicified, an unequalled building stone.'

'Yes, the excellence of your own public edifices is a proof of it. The finest, whitest specimens you appear to ship off to your richer neighbours of Melbourne and Sydney for the adornment of their palaces.'

'Yes, we poor Tasmanians must make something out of the golden colony across the Strait. They have shut out our produce from their market pretty well by their newly revived old doctrine of Protection. They may grow corn and carrots, and gather apples and apricots; but they have nothing for their building ornaments like our Hobart Town sandstone, the *white liver* rock.'

'What fossils does it contain?'

'They are few and far between. They must have got washed down to the claybeds below. The carboniferous claystones or mudstones are fully four hundred feet thick, and have a sufficient display of ancient life to interest the geologist. Below this again we have the limestone.'

'When at the museum, Mr Wanfel, I was surprised to find such an absence of fish in your carboniferous beds.'

'True; but you could not fail to notice the wonderful similarity of our fossils with those of the like formations in England.'

'That surprised many at home. It had been evidently considered at one time of day that, because your vegetation was so peculiar, and your animal life so peculiar, all your fossil existence should have been as strange and peculiar. There have been occasions, therefore, when this Tasmanian part of the world must have exhibited identical phases of being with Britain.'

'A shrewd guess of yours, Mr Douglas. When a clever Frenchman undertook to prove that all our Australian region had dropped from the moon, our dissimilarity to Europe must have struck the learned. But gradually we have been urging and establishing our claim of kinship. Fossil after fossil rose up to confirm the story of our relation.'

‘Indeed you may say that, since Professor M’Coy has sent to London such magnificent specimens of southern Ichthyosauri, those monstrous fish-lizards of olden times.’

‘And, allow me to add, since this very sandstone of ours has revealed a Labyrinthodon.’

‘Where was it found?’

‘Some of us disinterred it from the Triassic quarry in the Domain, not far from the Derwent. At first only two leg bones were turned out. It was some time before we could be believed that this enormous frog-like croaker of the old world had once given his hop of a dozen feet at a time on this side of the Line.’

‘Pray,’ enquired Horace, ‘is that limestone we saw as we came up the hill the same as that beneath your claystone and sandstone?’

‘Certainly not. But we shall get a better sight in the Gerlstown Bay over the Derwent, some day.’

Not long after this conversation the same couple took a row across. The limestone was being then burned in kilns.

‘Ah!’ cried the young man; ‘you have a tilt here.’

‘We have; but don’t you see that black basalt between us and the river? That was the intruder.’

‘But what a curious stone we have here!’

‘It is a Travertine. Fresh water deposits were brought into this basin. You can distinguish them in that section. There you have one hundred feet depth. Three beds of different thicknesses of Travertine can be distinguished; they range from ten to fifteen feet each.’

‘Is this a recent formation, Mr Wanfel?’

‘Yes. I have gathered bones from these beds still holding their phosphoric acid, and preserving their very cellular tissues.’

‘That must be post-tertiary. But if so, your tilting basalt would be younger still.’

‘It would so. But what is more marvellous, there are pretty good grounds for belief that this noble river Derwent had then no existence, or else ran elsewhere.’

‘Those were changes.’

‘But not the only recent ones I could show you,’ added Mr Wanfel. ‘Just beyond, to the south of this spot, are the oyster-beds of Sorell, stuck up one hundred feet from the sea level now. They are clearly but a fragment of an extensive bank.’

‘Another of your wonderful denudations, sir. But, amidst all your stirring recent times, I fail to discover the ordinary Vesuvian displays, such as, I am told, so commonly show themselves in Victoria, as well as New Zealand.’

‘Right. We have any amount of Greenstone, Basalt, Trachyte, thrusting themselves forward in primitive, secondary, and tertiary days, but no

modern lavas. You may pick up fragments of scoria on the cornelian strand of Sandy Bay there, but no ash from exalted volcanoes has fallen this way.'

'Yet you are not wanting in fragments of petrified wood. I often come upon these in my walks.'

'And may find them for fifty miles up the Derwent. By all means visit the petrified tree on the Macquarie plains, on the other side of New Norfolk.'

'Thank you, I hope to do it. But is that silicified like my collection?'

'It is embedded in a Greenstone floor, and is converted into opal. But have you been to Rose Garland, on the Derwent?'

'Not yet.'

'Then you have a geological treat in store. There, in some very recently formed sandstone, perhaps Pleistocene, you have some curious masses of greenstone enclosed. It is a plum-pudding, with plums six or seven feet long.'

'Then I must surely go there. But I should like you to inspect a cave not far from my house, in Glenorchy.'

'I think I know where you mean. I have crawled in there more than once.'

'What a singular chasm in the greenstone! Some of the chambers are pretty large, but others have far too low a roof for comfort. I did not admire going lower than all fours in some of the passages.'

'You missed a treat by your lack of creeping exercise. I came upon a treasure by submitting to a kind of worm-wriggling in those recesses.'

'And what was your discovery?'

'Some bones of original kangaroos and opossums. How they got in, unless washed there in broken detachments, I know not, as the space would never permit of their walking to that retreat.'

'Do you suppose that a long time ago?'

'I do; for the soil in which they were found indicated it. You may remember that Major Mitchell turned out kangaroo remains from a limestone cave in New South Wales, digging them out of red earth. Professor Owen declared that the hoppers of those distant periods, and on those ancient plains, were at least a dozen feet in height.'

Mr Wanfel was great in coal, and took his young friend Horace over the field just outside of Hobart Town. On the New Town side of Mount Wellington the carbonaceous material is procured.

'You see,' observed the geologist, 'that the carboniferous rocks have been greatly denuded. Huge masses have been torn away and carried off.'

'What age may this coal be?' asked Horace.

'I fancy Mesozoic; and, therefore, younger than the coal deposit of Newcastle in New South Wales. We passed the shale cropping out on the

rise outside of the town by the road side.'

'But the coal is not bituminous.'

'No, it is but anthracite and yields no flame, while producing a good fire. Whether the igneous greenstone and basalt eruptions have changed the substance or no, we say not. But across the Derwent, a few miles hence, there is excellent bituminous stuff, giving a good flame and leaving but a little white ash.'

'Where is this?'

'It is all along the Coal river which flows by Richmond, and near Jerusalem. The Jerusalem coal has been much admired; but the quantity is too little to pay labour. The carboniferous superincumbent sandstone is nearly one thousand feet thick at Richmond, a dozen miles the other side of the river.'

'How odd it seems to talk about coal at Jerusalem!' the young man remarked. 'How different now would be the circumstances of the celebrated town of Palestine, had its limestone beds been of an earlier age than they are, and belonged to the carboniferous instead of the cretaceous system!'

'Speaking of limestone, let us inspect our Wellington formation,' said the geologist.

They travelled towards it. Horace was struck with the singular fact that everywhere the fossils were only casts of the shells, but some stones were a perfect mass of these remains of past life.

The Butterfly, as the colonial lads called the Spirifer, was in the greatest abundance. The Productus, the Pecten, the Terebratula, the Crinoidal columns, the singular crustaceous Trilobite, the plant Phyllothea, and the lovely lace coral Fenestella, all declared the position to be Palaeozoic. Casts of fossil plants of this primitive age have been seen up the mountain as high as 3500 feet. The hone beds of the hill are 600 feet thick.

'Well,' said Horace, 'if we have not the gold here in payable quantity, there is geology enough greatly to interest the rambler.'

'Yes, and some day our high per centage iron ores will be well wrought, and the good coal of the east coast be more profitably worked. Then will our geology attract the commercial man as well as the student.'

Chapter XVI. Old Times.

‘COME, Douglas! I want you to see an original inhabitant of these foreign parts,’ said Mr Roberts to his friend.

Away they went. They came to one of the original old grants made to soldiers, and to prisoners emerging into freedom. Judging from appearance, the land had endured fewer changes than the owner. It was fenced in after a fashion, though admitting ready ingress and egress for trespassers. However it might once have been ploughed and sown, there were few marks of cultivation now about the lot. Native trees had again seized possession of the soil, though a few ragged specimens of peach and apple trees remained. If the proprietor lived much longer, the whole would return to the primitive wilderness.

‘What a shame to let a farm run to waste like this!’ exclaimed Captain Douglas.

‘May a man not do as he likes with his own?’ asked the other.

‘If his own, as he cannot get a living on it, why don't he sell it?’

‘That is his business. But I dare say he won't be offended by your enquiry. Here he comes.’

‘Good-day, Mr Roberts. Glad to see you down these parts. Ain't often troubled with visitors.’

The speaker, though evidently very old, had a brisk walk of his own, and held up his head with extra stiffness on this occasion. His dress was not of modern cut. It was suitable to his condition, and to the climate.

‘How are you, Daddy?’ said the cheerful official. ‘I have brought a friend to see you.’

‘Any friend of yours is welcome, sir.’

‘But he is a friend of yours, too.’

‘He must be, sir, if he is a friend of yours.’

‘Why, Dad, I swear you are an Irishman.’

‘And you'd swear right, sir, for once in your life.’

Then I must come out of the fog of poetry, and talk prose to you. This is Captain Douglas, of the Indian army.

‘Your servant, sir,’ cried the old man, with a military salute.

‘Not a servant,’ answered he, ‘but a comrade. We have both retired from active service, and are on the same level.’

‘Saving your presence, sir, its higher ground near my hut. I should fancy, sir, our pensions are not on the same level, either. But walk in,

both of you, gentlemen; my old woman is up in the chimney corner.'

Then, turning to Mr Roberts, he whispered.

'Drunk as usual, sir. She is often very moist. But it is early yet. There's no vice in her. When she's extra bad she tells me I'm no gentleman; yet, though that hurts my feelings, I bear with it. She has been an old fellow campaigner.'

'How old is she?' asked the gentleman.

'That I can't tell. When I got her, she was fullmouthed; but that don't help a man as a horse's mouth does. I never put my finger in her mouth to try her teeth. She snaps down hard enough on me without that. But I should take it she might have been rising thirty when I first housed her.'

'And how long ago is that?'

'Why, it was in old Governor Davey's time.'

'But that is fifty years since.'

'Perhaps it is. I think sometimes, poor thing, she will get old and helpless on my hands. It is a woman's business to wait on a husband, not a man to make gruel for his wife. If Sal don't leave off the rum, she'll never weather my days.'

'And what are they?'

'That I don't know. But you're a reckoner, Mr Roberts; so tot it up. I'm as old as my wife since we've been married.'

'You mean you have been married as long as she has.'

'No, I don't mean that, or I should mean a lie; because, do you see, I don't know how many husbands she had before me, and I never told her what I had before her.'

'Never mind, I will put down fifty for that term. How old were you then?'

'I can't tell, it's too long ago to recollect. But I went into the Marines when I was eighteen. I served two years at home; then I served in India ten years; afterwards at the Cape a year or two, and then home. When old Colonel Collins came out I was drafted off with him, and picked up Sal six years after. What's the tot, sir?'

'Why, bless my heart, you are over ninety!'

'Like enough, sir, like enough. I do feel I am getting old sometimes; but, thank God, I can do my rations yet.'

'But why is your ground in such a state?'

'And do you expect me to go grubbing up now? I have not a single child left me. It will last my time.'

'But you can never get your living off this,' interposed the Captain; 'and a soldier never begs.'

'No, sir, a soldier never begs, except for tobacco. But I get my rations, and they do me and the old woman too.'

'You don't seem to grow anything.'

'Yes, I do; I grow grass, and that grows cattle and horses that people

put in here and pay me for. Then, as old England wasn't swallowed up by old Bony, I get my pension regular.'

'And is that enough? How about the grog?'

'There you have me in a tender place. I have taken my drops. A British soldier, though he is an Irishman, likes to drink the health of his sovereign, and the nobles, and the clergy, and the governor, and the officers, and his old mates and new mates. This, I admit, does take a few drops to get through the list. But I am not like Sal; I don't forget my manners, and call folks no gentleman.'

'Do you get to church on Sundays?'

'Can't say I do. I've always found that many people can walk easier on Saturdays or Mondays than Sundays. Then chapel is a deal further than any public-house. If the priest called, I'd be going; but when he passes by this shanty, he thinks it a place that holds no shillings for collections, and goes on.'

'But surely,' remarked the Captain, 'you consider yourself on marching orders for another world, and should have yourself drilled up to the mark for future service.'

'No, Sir, its not my intention to 'list again, and I'm on half pay now. No more marching orders for me.'

Here Mr Roberts drew the Captain aside.

'It is of no use talking to that fellow about religion. He is no more than a bullock, as he has lived so long like one. He has no future, and his past is a long way back. He seems to have no notion of anything that has taken place since his favourite Colonel Davey's time. Tap him about the early days.'

The Captain, therefore, resumed the conversation with Daddy.

'It is a long day since you first came to this country.'

'Country, sir! it wasn't a country, but a kangaroo run. No — I mistake — the Blacks were here, and a deal more trouble to us than all the kangaroos, I assure you.'

'You must have thought it a pretty place.'

'No, I didn't. There was no moving for the scrub. To get water from the creek we had to cut through with an axe. We rigged some tents first, and then the prisoners fetched down some trees, and put up huts. We had a deal of trouble with the prisoners.'

'You mean the Bushrangers?'

'No, I don't. They were gentlemen compared to the sneaks about town, who took the stolen goods, and then told of the thieves, and got them hanged. I've seen a deal of hanging — eight one morning before breakfast, and six the week after. But that was nothing to the cat.'

'Does it not please you to see the country so advanced, and to know that the Government don't send out convicts now?'

'As to that I have my opinion. The convicts we did know, and knew

what to do about them; but these new chums, the free emigrants, as they are called, I can't make out. I haven't much to lose, or I would lock up against them when I never did against the old prisoners.”

“Do you never want to go back to Ireland?”

“No, I'm a regular kangaroo, gum sucker, and cornstalk rolled into one, and mean to dic so.”

Captain Douglas came away by no means gratified with his visit to the old soldier, a type of a degraded class in the old settlements.

Chapter XVII. A Romantic Adventure.

HORACE was very fond of boating. The Derwent, with its pleasant coves and noble scenery, is an attractive river for water excursions. To one who sought to spend an agreeable hour alone, a sail upon its lovely surface was the very thing.

The young man had one evening enjoyed a long run down the stream, and was on his way up with a fresh breeze, when his attention was drawn to a figure upon the bank. A lady was standing upon an overhanging cliff, intently regarding the water. At first Horace thought she was attracted by some special object of interest; but, as he came nearer, he saw nothing likely to rivet her attention there. The person was absorbed in thought, for her eyes were never taken off the river when his own boat came splashing along.

While he was looking up, he noticed that some portions of the clay bank were falling into the Derwent, and he feared for the safety of the entranced enthusiast. He immediately *coo-eed*, so as to warn her off the edge. It was, however, too late. At that moment the bank on which the young lady stood gave way, and she was precipitated into the current.

Horace put about, hauled down the sail, seized the oars, and rowed rapidly to the scene of danger.

The tide was running with considerable force at the time, and swept the body swiftly round a point into a small bay. This arrest of motion gave the young man an opportunity to grasp the insensible form that still floated along.

Unable to lift the person into the boat, he managed to hold her up with one hand while he manoeuvred his craft with the other, and the boat grounded on the beach. Some one on shore came to the rescue. Knowing the lady, he directed the way to her house at no great distance.

Medical assistance was procured at once, and proper remedies were applied with happy effect. The sufferer was restored.

The gratitude of the friends was warmly expressed towards Horace. A widowed mother thanked him again and again. The only other one of the household, the sister of the unfortunate young lady, was quite demonstrative in her declarations of gratitude.

Mrs Burton and her daughters were residing in Woodbine Cottage, not far from the river's side, and a little way off the road that led to Captain Douglas's farm. The garden was a considerable one, and well stocked

with fruit trees, though the house was modest looking from without, while displaying much taste and comfort within.

The mother was born in Sydney, where she had married. As the couple removed almost immediately to Hobart Town, both the daughters were Tasmanians by birth. Mr Burton died within seven years of this change of residence, leaving his family sufficiently provided for. The Woodbine Cottage was a freehold, and a safe investment gave a comfortable income.

The widow's anxieties about the education of her girls were relieved by the advent of a newcomer in the neighbourhood.

Mrs Robertson was a most desirable acquisition to the Woodbine Cottage circle. The lady had passed through vicissitudes of fortune which had elevated and mellowed her character, instead of souring her disposition. Spending most of her life out of England, she had formed an acquaintance with several continental languages, and mixed with some of the best society at foreign courts. A series of misfortunes, however, reduced her husband and herself to a much smaller income. This was not all. Mr Robertson's health failed under the pressure of anxiety, and a long voyage was recommended. It would have been easy for them to have economised their resources in Germany; but, as a milder climate was necessary, a resolution was made to settle in Tasmania. The voyage would be long enough, certainly, and a little farming in that colony might yield a small profit, as well as add to the gentleman's strength.

Unhappily the advantages of the island were not enjoyed for any length of time. The poor man had burdened himself with new cares, and found amateur farming, being an invalid, to bring more annoyance and loss than pleasure and profit. He sank under a renewed attack of the lungs.

The lady disposed of the land. At first she thought of returning to Europe, as her reduced means could have given her more comforts there. But her interest in the colony was so strengthened by her unwillingness to leave the grave of her husband, that she concluded to pass the rest of her days among the green trees.

Removing to the suburban settlement out of Hobart Town, where she could indulge her fancy for a garden, and still have friends about her, she consented to receive a few pupils for occupation of her time, and an addition to her income. Among these were Mrs Burton's two daughters.

The two sides, so to speak, of the lady's own character were illustrated in the training of these girls. Julia received the sentiment, and Annie the social element. The one drank in the lessons of inward teaching; the other sought the outer accomplishments and general information. Both learned much from the conversation of so extensive and observant a traveller, and imitated the grace and ease that marked her movements as a lady. Purity and piety were cultivated by her example not less than her precepts.

Chapter XVIII. The Two Sisters.

Of course Horace continued to make his calls at the Woodbine Cottage. He observed that, while the elder sister received him with evident satisfaction, the other was apparently uninterested.

The two sisters were very unlike. Julia was rather tall, and very graceful in her movements. Her features were regular, but somewhat grave. Her eye had a dreamy expression, with much softness. Her checks were pale, but their delicacy arose from no infirmity of health. Her temperament partook of the melancholic, although she was far from being selfish and morose.

Unlike some who wish to be thought ethereal in their neglect of the claims of others, and in their distaste for labour, Julia was not wanting in attention to household work, and by no means indifferent to the welfare of those around her. Still, her habit of moody thought, her interest in German stories, her solitary rambles, her rapt contemplation of nature, indicated the presence of a poetical element in the girl. Of this a modern writer says: —

“It coloured her thoughts, it suffused her soul; it asked not words, it created not things; it gave birth but to emotions, and lavished itself on dreams.”

When she gazed at the sunset, or watched the changing clouds, there might be seen in her eyes a light beaming as if from some unfathomable depths. In her reading, she indulged in the dreamy pictures of inner life; in music, her favourites were the magical songs of those German composers who read the heart of man, and who sympathise with its beatings.

And what were her musings when alone?

Perhaps young gentlemen imagined they were about themselves in general, and of a favourite in particular. Their vanity was mistaken. The girl had other thoughts in the wide universe, and not unfrequently were they fixed upon the highest and noblest of subjects, — the unseen future of a life to come.

But she was a girl after all, and did think about the lads, and dream of one that might some day come knocking at the door. Of course, he must have the beauty of Adonis, the rapt soul of a Shelley, the tender heart of a Werter, the glowing imagination of a Schiller, the sighing complainings of a Petrarch, the nature-worship of a Wordsworth, the impassioned

devotion of a Hafiz, the romance of a Troubadour. With such a one she could glide through life in peace. It would be no love in a cottage, for the cottage itself never came into her lofty fancies.

Her sister Annie was another kind of body. She was not so tall and graceful as Julia. Pretty and lively, she reminded one of the humming-bird rather than of the pheasant.

“Her cheek was blushing, sheen as Eden's rose.”

But the next line of the Hindoo poet's praise did not fit in so well, when saying: —

“The soft Narcissus tinged her sleeping eyes.”

They were not at all sleeping eyes, especially when a young fellow was within reach of her teasing powers. There was a world of mischief in these orbs of hers, and most provoking mirth. But the lines after will apply: —

“And white her forehead, as the Lotus shows
'Gainst Summer's earliest sunbeams shimmering far.”

Her mouth displayed a fair set of teeth; but the lips were so rosy, so rounded, so coquettishly mobile, that other lips longed for closer acquaintance. Her chin was firmly set, but had no angles about it. Her hair suggested the warning of Goëthe: —

“Beware of her fair hair, for she excels
All women in the magic of her locks;
And when she winds them round a young man's neck,
She will not ever set him free again.”

Not that many young men would take the warning, or that every one was right in fancying that he was the one round whose neck the said locks should wind.

Annie was no dreamer, but no trifler. She was not lost in the clouds, and by no means lost in the flowers of the earth. Though not a careful Martha, a housebound Dorothy, she was quite alive to the practical, and had a real liking for the kitchen, and the bustle of work. As to the needle, her preference was not for a lengthened stitching, though she rattled over a seam in half the ordinary time. Great in fancy work, quick at copy, and inventive of patterns, it was her delight to aid in bazaars, and astonish her lady friends.

Read she did, but not remarkably long. She laughed over a merry tale,

she sobbed at a lover's catastrophe, she held breath when a thrilling incident was recorded, but she seldom sighed over a volume. Her sympathies were ready at command, but the subject that called for them must be genuine. History she devoured, and poetry she admired. The pictures of real life had a charm for her, and the sketches of nature ever interested her.

One must not suppose she was wanting in the soft and in the emotional. There was more delicacy and depth of feeling than the exterior foreshadowed. She enjoyed polkas and operas; but privately played moving strains of heart-music till her eyes filled with tears, and her lips quivered with excited emotion. A book of sentiment was not passed by. It was laughed at in company, but solaced some twilights of loneliness, and supplied food for her spiritual being.

She was not silent about the young men, and most freely communicated her views about the entire genus. Some smarted under her satire, and others were bewildered at the brilliancy of her wit, or the subtlety of her jokes.

She thought less about the young fellows than others who talked less than she. She had no one yet in her eye, though she had ruthlessly flung away the proffered offerings of worship, and had dashed aside more than one cup of bliss presented by an ardent suitor.

She had her ideal, — or thought she had. He must be an uncommon good-looking fellow, tall, powerful in frame, with a strong voice and will, to keep her in order, she said. He must be glowing in colour, bright in eye, beaming in smiles, ready in joke, active in movement. He must dance with vigour, argue shrewdly, talk vivaciously, and yet listen discreetly. He must quote poetry, sing songs, ride gracefully, drive cleverly. He must know everybody, know everything, and have been everywhere. He must be supremely fond of her, very jealous of her, constantly attending to her, and uncommonly considerate of her whims and fancies. Such a man she could love with heart and soul, tease provokingly, obey implicitly, and scold and kiss at alternate minutes of the day.

Horace, the bashful and thoughtful young man, of delicate features and lightness of frame, was not after this type.

Perhaps, had we interrogated him, a discovery might have been made of his ideal of a mate. In company he showed so little a susceptibility for the grand passion, that some accused him of insensibility. Because he had so far roamed free and unconquered in the wilds of love, it was thought he could not be caught and won. A lady might have exclaimed: —

“Welcome thou ice that sitt'st about his heart!
No heat can ever thaw thee.”

It was admitted on all hands that he was remarkably prudent. A single glance of his would have been held to have had a meaning beyond a volume of words in compliments from the impetuous Tom. Whether Horace read the passage or not, he would act upon the Edda's hint: —

“He who would win another's heart
Must his most inner self impart.”

Indulging in fewer ecstasies, displaying less eloquence in protestations of adoration, he was disposed by nature to love truly and deeply.

“Ah!” said some, “that young man must be courted to be won. He is too bashful to take the initiative. But the proceedings will have to be conducted cautiously, for the timid creature would take fright at too sudden or too violent an avowal.”

But Julia, without intending a conquest, was absolutely attempting it, in the fervour of her gratitude, the romance of her feelings, and the simplicity and purity of her character. Consciously, or unconsciously, she looked at him upon each visit as if he were most welcome — to her. She took a wonderful interest in everybody and everything connected with the young man. She conversed with modest warmth, but still with warmth. She sung and played before him as under some special and pleasing inspiration. She believed he was heaven sent to her, and went the way to make him see that she believed he was.

Strange to say, although Horace was placed in this novel and interesting position, he failed to receive the full advantages thereof. He did not reciprocate the friendship to the like extent. Not that he had the least want of kindness or respect in his feelings toward her; not that he thought her bold or unmaidenly in her advances; nor that he was indifferent to her beauty, or unmindful of her culture. All that he knew was this, — that she, perhaps, thought more seriously about him than he cared for her to do, as his own heart was not sufficiently moved.

She might be beginning to be in love with him, when he was not sensible of love to her.

It was an awkward discovery. Though flattering to vanity to perceive another, whom he could not but ever highly esteem, have a preference for his society, and though fancying it quite probable with a little effort he could return such inclinations, his sense of honour would not permit his indulgence of the vanity, nor his reverence for truth sanction the forcing of a sentiment.

Perhaps his high principle was helped in another direction. Somehow he began to suspect that there was a slight tendency on his part to have a preference for the other sister. He never owned this to himself, when speculating upon his duty. Once he almost confessed it to himself, but he

immediately withdrew the suggestion. Would it not be as unfortunately inopportune as for Julia to think of him? Was it not quite evident that Annie, in her freedom of manner, her jaunty air, her careless speech to him, cared less about him than even he did for Julia?

Again, could she help perceiving her sister's partiality for him, and hearing her praises of him? Would not this knowledge alone arrest any possible buddings of regard for him, even supposing the buds were forming?

It was exceedingly embarrassing.

At first he half resolved to speak to his mother about the matter. He had heretofore told her everything. But he could not name this subject. It was so foolish. What right had he to suppose Julia was in love? If she were, was it delicate for him to breathe a word about it, even to his own mother?

He would stay away from Hawthorn Cottage. But to do this, he must not be rude. His absence would excite the suspicions he wished not to arouse. Was it not natural, if somewhat imprudent, for a girl to like the man who had saved her life? Might there, after all, be anything more than a warm demonstration of gratitude, rendered peculiarly glowing by the romantic temperament of the girl? Were he to misinterpret the feeling, and in his egotism treat it as one of love, would he not cover himself with humiliation, and bring blushes of pain to maidenly cheeks?

He did not say there was yet another reason why he should still continue his friendly visits. He saw Annie there. Her conversation interested him.

On the last two or three occasions he had observed her more than usually attentive when he spoke in the family. And when he had turned to her, and, with some extra earnestness, perhaps, had discoursed of books in which he was interested, there was a little softness in her manner, and a subdued look, quite foreign to her usual way. She had voluntarily played tunes for which he had previously expressed a preference.

Then he half believed that Julia was less demonstrative in her gratitude. She had become used to his presence.

One evening, when returning homeward, he suddenly exclaimed: —

“I do wish Tom were with me when I went to Woodbine Cottage. I must get him to go. He is a good fellow, and deserves a good wife. I do believe Julia and he would just suit one another.”

Chapter XIX. Love's Cross Purposes.

TOM was introduced to the family. He was no stranger for all that. In a settlement of a few thousand people all are neighbours more or less, and all know something of everybody there.

He was in his usual rollicking vein, and placed himself at once at perfect ease. A contest of wit arose between him and Annie, affording great amusement to the rest. The young lady was so unmerciful in her attacks, that her mother interposed more than once with a hint of propriety. But Tom exulted in the battle, and dealt return blows with animation and vigour.

As usual, both sides claimed the victory. But what effect had the discussion on them and others?

Though the two were so singularly alike, though each answered the ideal of the other, they both failed to see that they were halves needing but union to make a perfect whole. To his friend's description of the two ladies, Tom had cried out, 'Annie's the girl for me,' to the annoyance of Horace. Now he would have said, 'She is a jolly girl, but not the girl for me.'

Annie was not smitten with him as she expected she would have been. She liked his person, she liked his fun, she liked his candour; but there was a something that rather repelled than attracted. He would be famous at a pic-nic, but not for a party indoors. He would be a merry companion for a walk, but not the mate for her.

Horace had watched the encounter with much interest. It was a hazardous experiment upon which he had entered. What if the young fellow should have been drawn to the one he thought he preferred himself! And what if the lady should have greeted Tom with marks of approval not obvious on her part toward himself! At any rate, that result, although unfortunate, he thought, would relieve him from present doubt and anxiety. If Annie were taken with Tom, it was clear that his own supposed predilections must be retired. It would not only be proof that the door was closed to himself, but that she would be wanting in those special sympathies indispensable in one to be his wife. When first favouring her, it must have been from his defective observation. He could not possibly have regarded her with that sagacity which was essential to so delicate an investigation, or he would have known that the exterior some way blinded him to the revelation of her soul, her inner

life, with which alone his association must be formed.

He even began to think that after all there might be found in Julia not only charms of person, but resources of mind, and deep springs of feeling, unpossessed by the sprightlier Annie. Even if Julia had recognized in him the mateship essential to love before he had caught the same conception, might it not arise from her superior insight into the human heart? And might not there be the certainty of his ultimate, though tardier, discovery of the pleasing and absolute fitness of each to the other? His spirit of rectitude was aroused. He would, at any rate, suspend his judgment, and watch Annie and himself.

But the lively intercourse between the combatants had shown Horace two things: — First, that the parties then in battle arrayed were not likely to be so smitten as he had once supposed; and, second, that Annie had developed before him in such a manner, not to be analysed or weighed, that his susceptibilities were rather strengthened, and his tenderness more than ever stirred. In proportion as he saw she was not the one for Tom, he was learning how much she seemed the one for him.

Then as to the quiet Julia. Some change had been silently passing in her mind. Her romantic feelings toward Horace had yielded to time, as well as being modified by the mode of their reception. The gentleman was not cool and insensible, but was not romantically disposed to think destiny had thrown them together for ever. Tom, on the other hand, though so utterly unlike the dreams of the dreamer, became suddenly an object of awakened interest. It was a new sensation. His very dissimilarity to the ideal of her morbid imagination produced a fresh thought, and developed new emotions.

Unconsciously she revealed the other side of her nature. The practical, the vivid, the present were personified in the young man. There was a joyousness about him which raised her own depression of spirits. There was a freshness which put to flight her own moodiness. She instinctively realized the fact that the complement of her being was before her, — that such a man, even though not he, was essential for the completion of her happiness.

Tom and she had a few words, only a few, in the garden stroll. But in the brief interval he was unusually impressed. He was driven out of his extreme jollity and audacity by her quietness and gentleness; but he gained so careful and sympathizing a listener, and so liked the still depth of her soft blue eye, that he positively frowned at the interruption to the walk.

But it was while those two apparently opposite characters were having that conference without, that Horace and Annie fell into chat within doors. The lady felt she was not put upon her mettle, and had no self dignity to assert. The quieter talk was a relief to the discussion in which she had been engaged. She had a different auditor, and one willing to be

pleased. She saw something different to herself, and understood that there could be found in this gentleman a nameless something with which a higher, tenderer, but somewhat slighted sentiment of her nature might sympathise. With her rapid perception of character, and the innate womanly, intuitive discernment of feeling, there gradually arose in her mind a consciousness that, if not he, such as he, would make a better husband for her than what she had previously calculated.

Thus it was — that, without the general revelation of the state of affairs — each of the four got a conviction of the sort of partner desirable, with the association of an individual along with that theory.

On returning from the call, the two young men were ready enough to say they had been pleased, but were not candid enough to express their particular opinions of the particular ladies. If anything, Tom talked more of Annie, and Horace of Julia. The excellences of the other's charmer were thus portrayed.

The tenants of the cottage were not less prompt to declare the time an agreeable one, and not less reticent in referring to their selected favourite. Annie loudly praised Tom's spirit and good humour, while Julia advanced a word in approval of the other.

'Of course, my dear,' said the smarter sister, 'you must be grateful to your delivering angel.'

'Certainly, I am,' was the reply.

'But you will admit that he is rather slow. Yet that suits you, I know. It must be so nice for you two sentimental souls, — for I feel sure he is one of those queer beings, — to sit and sigh together over the wrongs of some injured beauty, or to delight in the poetic resemblance of a tin pannican to a sweet impulse of the interior sense.'

'O, do stop your silly nonsense, Annie. If you are satisfied with your life in the external, don't ridicule those who look deeper than you.'

'So, so, my prophetess. I did not seek to rob you of your admirer. You saw my devotion to Mr Tom Turner.'

'I witnessed your rudeness to him, and felt for the young man.'

'Indeed! Was the feeling an interior one? For, if so, I may have to abandon the chosen of my heart, and take up with your forsaken though but newly elected one.'

'Annie! do not be so absurd. Mr Horace is a very excellent young man, whom I highly esteem, and to whom I shall be ever most grateful; but he has never paid me particular attentions, and has neither been an elected nor a forsaken one of mine.'

'Beg pardon, sister dear. Calm yourself. It is not proper for a philosopher to display perturbation. I can solemnly promise you that I have no intention to run away with either of the gentlemen. As an evidence of my disinterestedness, I now frankly make you an offer of either, and will engage to padlock my heart against his intrusion.'

‘Ah! Annie, how often I have entreated of you not to indulge in such trifling talk. You are so giddy, that I often tremble for your future.’

‘And you, my darling mentor, are so grave, that nothing short of an undertaker will suit you for a husband.’

This closed the conversation rather abruptly. The case was carried up to a higher court. Mamma was interrogated as to her notions of the same.

‘My dears!’ said she, ‘there is such a difference in your temperaments, your modes of thought, your way of looking at a thing, that you must expect to have variety of view about such a person as a husband.’

‘O, mamma dear! pray don't,’ ejaculated Annie. ‘Do not enter upon so abstruse a disquisition. The selection of a husband is one about which there is a deal of preaching, but which appears such a lottery to me, that I would fain decide it with the toss of a shilling.’

‘For shame, Annie!’ said her sister. ‘How could you grieve mamma with such a silly speech!’

‘Bless her dear heart!’ quoth the other, ‘She knows I love her too well to give her a moment's pain. She lets me rattle on at my own pace — don't you, dear?’

With this she drew her mother toward her, gave her a tender kiss, and smoothed down her hair.

What could a parent do with such a child! She folded her arms around her, and fondled over the prattler of nonsense.

‘Indeed, mamma! you spoil that girl,’ said Julia, almost in anger. ‘You may be making a rod for your own back.’

‘Then I'll come and kiss the place to make it well,’ the wilful sister said.

‘My children!’ now spoke the mother. ‘Bear with one another. Different as you may appear to each other, you are the same in my eyes. I know you are both truthful and loving. I may at times have fears from, Annie, your vivacity, and from, Julia, your morbidity. But I can see honest principle under the gaiety of one, and cheerful tenderness beneath the sombreness of the other. You are both affectionate daughters, and dutiful in your service to the Good One.’

The sisters tenderly embraced, and laughed away any lingering doubt of each other.

Chapter XX. Tom's Courting.

'Why, Tom?' said one of his companions, 'What is the matter with you? You look like Samson shorn of his locks.'

'Or like strained cream,' said a second.

'No,' added a third, 'I have it. He has been jilted by his sweetheart, and takes on.'

'Look here, lads,' answered Tom, now put on his metal, 'you are all wrong. I have lately been putting on sackcloth and ashes, less on account of your sins than for the loss of your senses.'

'Bravo!' they sang aloud. 'Tom is himself again.'

In truth, a change had come over him. Those at home observed it. His mother said that if he had been much younger, she might have thought measles were coming on. As it was, she recommended something good for a cold. There must be one thing or the other the matter with him, for he had not half his usual appetite. 'Poor Tom!' She had not said 'Poor Tom' before.

His sisters observed it. At first a little uneasy, they soon fell to roasting him terribly. No — it was not the cholera, the lumbago, nor even the office. Nothing but love could possibly be the cause. They were sure of it. They commanded him to clear his conscience, and so get rid of his fever; to admit them as confessors, and enjoy his steak once more.

The brothers were less critical than the girls, but were quite at a loss to know why Tom did not go in for exercise and fun as he did before. When told by the sisters it was from love, they devotedly hoped they should never be stricken down with that malady.

Tom stoutly denied the charge. He was quite well, never better. He was as jolly as a sandboy — never jollier. How could a fellow eat that weather! But he did eat, and as heartily as ever. Grave, eh! That was a joke. But was he to be always grinning? The fact was, he told them, he found his mouth getting so large with previous laughing, that he was fearful girls looking into it might fancy a cavern, a shark's maw, a pudding bag, or any other monstrous idea; and he had resolutely determined to shut up a while to get a bit less ugly.

Folks shook their heads at this, and spoke of Sham Abraham and other distinguished tricksters.

It was all perfectly true. Tom had changed. Some went so far as to talk of the loss of three stones' weight; but that was an exaggeration of the

fact. One declared the young fellow's face was as long as his arm; but that was a mere figure of speech. Another ventured upon the assertion that Tom's last joke had interfered with his digestion; but Tom's jokes were not accustomed to be as low as that.

Horace had not been unsuspecting of the affair. He noticed the obvious change in his friend's deportment to date from the evening when they together first went to Woodbine Cottage.

And so it was. The association might have been taken nearer than to Woodbine Cottage; even to a certain conversation with a certain person on a certain evening, near or within the said cottage.

But what had made the change? Had he, with his usual dash and daring, plunged into a matrimonial difficulty? Had he, plump and plain, made an offer right off the reel, without a moment's pause to see if the lady had thought at all of him? And had he, as the result of this ill-timed precipitation, got a point-blank denial, and sent adrift with, or without, the traditional flea in his ear?

No — Tom had not proposed, had not given way to impetuosity, had been guilty of no rashness, and had obtained no repulse from lady fair.

On the contrary, he had been on his good behaviour, was thoroughly satisfied with himself, and by no means displeased with ladies in general, or Julia in particular.

Then, what was the change, if any, — and how had it been brought about?

He was more thoughtful and less selfish. Once he had only cared how to add to his own comfort, to his own pleasure. If he laughed with others, it made him merry. If he played with others, it stirred up his blood to pleasurable excitement. He now suddenly felt his mind drawn to another beyond his own immediate self, and yet not wholly foreign to himself. This made him more thoughtful.

Once again, he lived for the present. In sport and labour, in joke or tattle, he lived in the present, and for it. Now, somehow or other, he was seriously awakened to the thought of a future. That period of prospective happiness was, somehow or other, associated with another, and that took off the awkwardness of a mere selfish policy on his part.

And a lady was the cause. — No — not exactly; but the lady as brought into contiguity with circumstances or feelings with which, or in which, he was personally interested.

Tom had continued his visits to Woodbine Cottage. He sometimes went with Horace, but he sometimes went alone. When he went alone, he did not always face the three ladies there, for he had grown somewhat more timid than formerly; but he sought one, as being sufficient, or, perhaps, less burdensome to a nervous temperament.

It was singular how the Fates favoured him in this search for this unit of the family. At times he felt so confident of his good fortune, that he

boldly walked right up to the door, and entered without hesitation. But then it so happened that no one was at home but Julia. When he was more hesitant, and did not get rapidly along the lane that led up to the cottage, he was lucky enough to meet the young lady just coming down the lane, quite accidentally.

‘It was so singular,’ as she afterward told her sister, ‘that Tom should have been coming up the lane just as she was going down it; and then he would insist upon accompanying her to the township. Not that she always permitted that, for neighbours do talk so; but, it being a fine evening, they had strolled another way.’

Tom thought her so lady-like in her movements, and he could not venture to be rough and rude as he had been with the other girls. She always liked his jokes so, that he contrived to have a few ready, only they were selected ones, and not indiscriminately taken. She evidently enjoyed details of the engagement of his time, and he gratified her accordingly. Now and then, when tempted to jerk out an expression more witty than wise, he looked into the blue depths of her eyes, and his folly seemed to drop out of sight. Once and again, when the old rollicking humour was bursting forth, and he was ready to spring over a five-barred gate, or spin her round as he did his sisters, he would be arrested by some simple word from her lips that softened and tamed him.

For when she spoke,
Sweet words, like dropping honey, she did shed.

Then, as it would not be fair and right for him to spend all the hour with an account of what he had done and said throughout the day, he waited upon the aforesaid honeyed speech, and quite approved of the flavour thereof.

And what did she talk about?

She spoke of what concerned him. Gentle counsels were gently administered. Even rebukes were so sweetly mingled with kindness, that he got all the benefit from the castigation without the sense of smart, as children do from rhubarb when disguised in jam.

She did more. As if sensible that her lover wanted something to make him perfect in her eyes, and add to his happiness in the bargain, she discoursed of heaven above and earth below in such a way as to lead out the inner life of the young man. He was led to the discovery of something beyond his nature, and yet in harmony with it.

He read poetry to her, and pieces of her own judicious selection. Upon such she enlarged, and that with such grace and real eloquence, that poor Tom waited upon the speech with open mouth and tear-lit eyes. Longfellow has said that, next to being a great poet, is the power of understanding one. This was the business of the ‘Young Man's Best

Companion.'

Until of late a primrose by the river's brink, a primrose only was to him. He was induced to look again at it, and through the reflected light from those dreamy, slumbering eyes, and he was presented with new forms and new beauties, awakening new and pleasing emotions.

So it was in music. With established relations, so that Tom could spend an hour with her alone, there was an equal march in the young man's progress in sounds as in sights. She was never sure her pupil properly comprehended those lines of Mrs Browning's:

'This song of soul I struggle to outbear,
Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,
And utter all myself into the air.'

But the apt scholar was supposed to understand it when her eyes turned from the keys to meet his.

Julia proudly acknowledged the conversion through her instrumentality. It was a tribute of praise to herself, not less than a boon to him. Yet she had the good sense not to joke about the change. She accepted it with joy. There was such a toning down of that wild principle in the young fellow, which made him tenfold more attractive. The ardour was there, the freshness was there, the fun was there, only these were all subjected to an intellectual force which mellowed their character.

To Tom himself the change was satisfactory for two reasons; — he really felt himself a nobler and a better man, and he knew himself better suited to the tastes of the being whom he loved above all, and with whom he hoped still more to develop the highest and best of qualities.

It must not be imagined that Tom was becoming a milksop or a drone. In being more refined he lost much of the clownish roughness, but gained in true manliness. If more of the gentleman in bearing, if more of the artist in feeling, he was more of the man in the soundness of his understanding, the delicacy of his perceptions, the purpose of his being.

And what had been the effect of this intercourse upon the girl herself?

A change had come over her. It was not of so striking a character, but was obvious enough to those at home as well as to her lover.

Most young ladies, when in love, are supposed to ramble abroad alone in contemplation, or sit alone in silent thought. Mathematics and metaphysics are not then generally supposed to be the subject matter of thought. But Julia, strange to say, had well-nigh left off her old habits of seclusion and rumination, and bustled about the house as if emulous of her sister's activity. She laughed quite gaily very frequently, and was even detected in the manufacture of a pun.

To her sister this cheerfulness was a surprise, and to her mother a source of delight. What must it have been to Tom? If less boisterous in

mirth himself, he did not the less admire her advancing brightness.

She grew not only more animated in conversation, but more unselfish in conduct. Instead of moodily dwelling upon herself, her own sensations, her own fancies, she turned to others, seeking to interest herself in their affairs, helping them in their duties, and sympathising in their cares. One immediate effect of this was, that Annie lost a mistress, but found a friend.

In her musical lessons she indulged in livelier strains, and her songs partook of less sentiment and more vigour. In her reading she took up practical subjects in preference to romantic ones. Her thoughts were more transparent, her sentiments more healthy. Never negligent of her religious duties, there was now less of the recluse in her devotions, and she practised more of smiling praise than of mournful meditations.

She undertook a larger share of domestic work, assisted in prosaic needlework, and asked questions upon receipts and patterns. She engaged in vigorous exercise, walked long distances, and was not idle in commissions for friends and neighbours.

By this, too, she grew stronger in frame, firmer in step, fresher in colour. Her appetite was better, her happiness was increased, and her beauty of person secured universal applause.

The courtship had improved the pair.

Chapter XXI. Horace and Annie.

AND how did the other couple get on?

Quite satisfactory to the couple themselves. As Tom and his lady were educating each other, so it may be assumed that a similar process was going on elsewhere.

And yet there was no besieging in due form. No parallels of approach were made under cover, and there was no attempt at undermining. For all that, it could not be said there was submission before approach, a treaty without knowledge, an amity without sympathy.

Neither tried to gain the other, nor assumed the defensive against supposed attack. They met on equal terms, for the lady was perfectly competent to take care of herself.

Horace was too sensitive to make a hasty advance, and too conscientious to play the lover at once. To his own surprise, he was not long in making up his own mind, but he would not presume upon the girl's readiness in settling the question. He was not so obtuse as to be unconscious of the favourable impression he had made, but not so vain as to believe his merits had induced an unconditional surrender.

His hopes were flattered sometimes in the softness of her manner, but occasionally checked by a play of sarcasm, or a chilling jauntiness of expression. He was not insensible to the uncertainty of her disposition, and felt both anxious and pained at displays of apparent heartlessness. Yet, as he witnessed a gradual development of other characteristics, he began to fancy his fears were groundless; and that, beneath the frivolity, there lay the strength and sincerity of lofty and impassioned sentiments.

The very sprightliness of her conversation was charming to him, and drew him unconsciously from his bashful reserve. Under the inspiration of this brightness, he talked better than he had ever done before, and his eyes kindled with enthusiasm as he spoke. Even her raillery called forth a wit of which he had no previous conviction, and a warmth to which he had been a stranger.

Annie had not been violently smitten by the young man. There was nothing formidable about him to put her on her guard. On the contrary, while admitting his sense as well as his goodness, she viewed him as a harmless personage, with whom she could practise a few quiet jokes, and from whom obtain pleasantly some useful information. She had not sought him as a lover.

So, again, she had no right to think he had been violently smitten by her. There was no evidence of the excitement in the calmness and gentleness of his demeanour. He had certainly never breathed a word of love, and was unusually chary, as a young man, of his compliments. He talked sensibly, fluently, and agreeably, but nothing more. If pleased with her society, that was but natural, she thought, in any young fellow with one of the opposite sex.

And yet, there was something about his ways and speech that made her, in spite of herself, a listener, and a well-pleased listener. It was not that he spoke of himself or of her.

She was, at length, positively sensible that she was losing her high-toned hilarity, and becoming almost thoughtful, if, not serious. She listened to his discourses so long, and so attentively, that she began to feel under some mesmeric influence. This was more than her dignity could bear. She resented the impulse; and threw off jokes, and hazarded absurdities of manner, in the vain attempt to assert her independence of any of Julia's sort of sentimentality.

The effort, however, was not satisfactory. She did not please herself by it after all, and she saw that such hasty remarks brought a perceptible cloud over her companion. What right had she to give pain to any human being, and, especially, to one who tried to amuse and instruct her? He was not one of the ordinary young fellows, upon whose rhinoceros-skin she could inflict her witticisms without injury.

Somewhat ashamed of her rudeness and unkindness, she gave better heed to his conversation, and played a more amiable part in his society.

She proceeded further. He had endeavoured profitably and pleasantly to make an hour pass; should she not do her part in return? If he knew more of literature and science than she, it was in her power to please with music.

Then she discovered that her listener had more interest in one style of composition than another. Why should she not, therefore, play that? But this was of the emotional character, breathed in the notes of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Mozart. Her listener was pleased. He was even moved. Should she not continue, and even play with more expression?

But music is educational, and this order of music had its own peculiar lessons. It pleased him — it moved him. But it also pleased her more than it had ever done before. This, though, might be owing to her having for the first time so appreciative a listener. It was flattering to her power to please. Then, if one so much more thoughtful and studious than she was so charmed with those tunes, there must be something in them.

So she played that music to herself, and when no one was in the room with her. And she was astonished at the singular beauty of the passages, and began to appreciate the more the taste of the young man. What a true and delicate perception he must have!

And the music entered into the chambers of her soul, and awoke with its echoes such feeling as softened the maiden's heart, and brought a moisture to her eyes and a tremble upon her lip.

Was it wonderful that she should identify Horace, the listener, with such music? And if she did, with blushing haste, put aside the thought, was it wonderful that she should fancy the young man might feel as she did under the inspiration of such chords?

Then, in her pauses at the piano, she could no help calling to mind some sentences of his, — some quotation from a poet, some poetical thought of his own, and all, somehow or other, associated with this particular style of music, and those particular suggested sentiments in her own breast.

If, therefore, as his calls continued, she took an increased interest in him, because of her increased interest in that style of music, was it not perfectly natural, and in agreement with the philosophical Laws of Mind?

And if he were drawn a little nearer to her in confidence, felt more pleasure in her company, perceived new beauties in her, and believed her at last to be necessary to his happiness, was not that perfectly natural, and in strict agreement with the philosophical Laws of Mind?

Farther still; — if, in the course of time, by accident or design, the individual sentiment of interest and attachment became mutually known, recognised, and declared, so that the two young persons became accepted lovers, was not that, also, perfectly natural, and equally agreeable to these said immutable Laws of Mind?

It had been so before, and with others; why not then, and with them?

Chapter XXII. A Country Life.

‘WELL, old fellow, I shall soon be leaving you.’

This was said by Mr Roberts on an evening call upon his Indian friend.

‘What's up now with your restless soul?’

‘All this,’ was the reply. ‘I am sick of the restraints of human civilization, and am resolved to cultivate the association of the Magpie, Laughing Jackass, and the Wallaby.’

‘And have you not all those close to town?’

‘They are about here, but sadly affected by human contact. With my knowledge of real country life, I have more than a suspicion that the Magpie has learned a little extra craft, and is by no means so early a riser as his bush mate. The Laughing Jackass gets low in spirits, and has nothing like the joyous note he rings out in the forest wild. The poor melancholy specimens of the Kangaroo about here are piteous to behold. I suffer the same way. I am getting moody, miserable, and unnatural through hanging about town.’

‘Then you must have caught its duplicity, Roberts, as the Magpie had; for everybody takes you to be the most natural and most jolly man about town.’

‘That want of perception arises from the chimney smoke.’

‘Which,’ added the other, ‘soon mounts the mountain or drifts down the channel.’

‘Or, again, to other observation, climbs up the clouds, or twists itself round the South Pole. But I may attempt some such thing myself, or an equal absurdity, if I don't throw down my grey goose quill, — no, that is poetical, but not true, — my rigid, rusty steel pen, — that will do, correct, though not poetical, — and take a flight from the busy hum of men.’

‘Then you really mean to bury yourself in the bush.’

‘To be sure I do. I am only a lone bachelor, and it will cost less than the entombment of wife and a baker's dozen of children.’

‘But what can you do on a farm, Roberts, more than I could?’

‘I'll tell you. I am longer, thinner, tougher, and stronger than you. I could leap a fence easier with or without a nag. I can hold a plough as well as follow it. I know a beanstalk from a gooseberry bush. I am not too woolly-headed to tell a sheep's tail from calf's-foot jelly. In fact, I was made for a farmer, only they stuck a pen in my hand instead of a

reaping hook.'

Captain Douglas had a laugh at the narrative, though expressing his regret at the prospect of parting. He tried to wean the other from his purpose.

'Now, why should you leave such a nice circle of friends, Roberts? Everybody likes you, you have an easy billet, you are not poor, and you might have about the best girl in the place if you would only settle down a Benedict.'

'As you love me, Hal, pray don't talk such rubbish. You want me to drop down into a gouty, whining old fellow. You want me to rust out my days in easy sloth. And then, to crown all, you would promise me a halter. No — no — old boy. Jack has kept out of that noose so far, and is not to be caught now.'

'But why, my dear friend,' asked Mrs Douglas, 'have you such a prejudice against my sex?'

'Not at all, my dear madam. I am ready this very moment to bargain with Mr Douglas for an exchange into his regiment, quarters and chum included.'

The lady was a little shocked, and blushed, but returned to the charge.

'Don't poke fun, but do tell us why you never married. There might have been an excuse for you in Calcutta, but can be none here with so many pretty Tasmanian girls.'

'Alas! you don't know me, my dear Mrs Douglas. In India the fervour of the sun would never allow Cupid's flame to burn in my heart. It seemed to put it out. Then, too, I was anxious to keep entire, and I saw my married friends reduced to the very moiety of themselves; for half would be flitting to Europe, or turning an angel. To be half in heaven and half on earth, or half in India and half in London, seemed to me worse than having one leg in the grave.'

'For shame! to talk in that way.'

'Well, there was a real reason. I had always a great horror of being comfortable, and never, as you know, indulged in a hookah or took a siesta. Was I the man to submit to all the enervating pleasures of matrimony? I should be condemned to ride instead of walking, to sit an hour at table instead of twenty minutes, to eat indigestible things because my wife liked them, to sit out insipid parties, to be droned by my wife's lady friends, to be kept late in bed of a morning, to be worried into excessive propriety, to be *my-deared* into the sacrifice of private opinion, to become an inert mass of oleaginous indulgence, to be the father of sons who would plague me, and the husband of a wife who might tire of me, if I did not tire of her.'

'Hold! hold! for mercy's sake,' exclaimed the lady. 'You well deserve to be an old bachelor. Go and establish your bachelor's hall in the bush.'

'But where are you going to set up your camp, Roberts?' inquired his

old friend.

‘I have been halting between three opinions. I have cash enough to buy out a fellow from a thorough good farm in full work, having apples stuck on ready for me, the roosters provided a season in advance, the curry-combed cows accustomed to buttering, the fields without stick or stone, the hop fields laden with pockets; and I could then sit down with a moral dignity, twirling thumbs in contented ease.’

‘Not the worst circumstances of life.’

‘That may or may not be, but a vast deal too slow for me. I did fancy I would be lord of a waste, and ride forth each morn to one of the out-station huts some twenty miles from the homestead to inspect a flock, or make inquiries about the lowing herd. It would have a grand sound that of reigning over five hundred thousand acres, although sharing the dominion with black fellows and kangaroos. How it would flourish in a letter, and astonish the Browns! I might not be required to say that I only paid a sort of pepper-corn rent, that I accepted on those easy terms what others had rejected, and that my sheep were mortgaged over their ear marks. To be a lordly squatter was an awful temptation.’

‘How could you resist it?’

‘By remembering that man was not made to live on mutton alone. I could not relish that charming Queensland, the human melting pot. I never could be a warrior, and so disliked being a target for native spears. I should be wearied to death living where a man rode for a week before getting off a treeless plain. I didn't want the Moreton Bay rot. I didn't want to lose the cash I have saved, nor the life that has stuck to me so long.’

‘And now for the third fortune soliciting your acceptance.’

‘Yes, and for the last time of asking. My third is a dive into the bush, but where there is a limit somewhere in the shape of a mountain, a river, or the sea. It was to be a real native wilderness. I wanted trees unlopped, rivers undammed, land without fences, soil unsoiled with rubbishy manure, — in short, a place where nothing had been done by man, — but where everything was waiting for me.’

‘Bravo!’ cried the captain, ‘Who would ever have thought you were such a Robinson Crusoe in embryo? But how do you propose managing to get such an Eden of repose?’

‘No, no — not an Eden, that would never suit me. There was a wife there, and a serpent. Both were very troublesome things to the original inhabitant. An Eden of repose would be unbearable. Nothing to do! — nothing to do! That would be worse than arson, bigamy, and petty larceny.’

‘Now, just compose your feelings, my dear man, and tell an ignorant soldier like me about the land-system here.’

‘I will, Douglas, with the methodical precision of a paid colonial agent,

though without his sanguine temperament, — alias, his doubtful tongue. In the dear, good primitive days, when land was worth nothing, it was generously given away here. A grant was made upon the grantee declaring his intention to clear one acre in twenty within five years. Up to 1810 only a hundred acres were thus bestowed upon a single person, and that grant was subject to the payment of a quit-rent to the Crown of a nominal sum, seldom paid, and never exacted.”

‘Well, no one could complain of these terms, Roberts.’

‘Don't interrupt my lecture. For a dozen years after 1810 the quit-rent was made less, and the grants were made more.’

‘That was for county land; but how,’ enquired the captain, ‘did they manage for town lots?’

‘These were leased for twenty-one years, at the dreadful rental of thirty shillings a-year. In 1822, convicts having come in sharper than expected, as crime had *riz* at home, the benevolent colonial authorities said to new comers, who could be free selectors, “Here, take a hundred acres of the best land you can pick, and all we ask you to pay is the keep of a man; give him his jacket and tucker, without any wages, and get all the work you can out of him for yourself.” ’

‘That benevolence arose, I suspect, Roberts, from a desire to shift a commissariat difficulty.’

‘You are right there. Rations had *riz* in the colony, as crime had in Europe. In 1826, as folks growled so about the ever-changing quit-rent, the Governor fixed it at five per cent. on the value of the land granted. This produced a small revolution among holders, which ultimately terminated in the settlers getting quit of their quit-rents.’

‘And a very good riddance, too.’

‘Why, Douglas! you a Queen's man, and to talk such radicalism. But I turn from you to my story. In 1828 any fellow who could show a bag of five hundred sovereigns, and swear they were his own, could add to his resources the grant of a square mile of land. This was a glorious scheme. Conscientious gentlemen availed themselves one after another of the same bag of gold — for a consideration. It was a credit and debtor account.’

‘That was a severe trial of the Aristides principle.’

‘I admit it. The paternals in Great Britain, ever jealous for the virtues of their people, thought the new system placed angelic natures in jeopardy, and closed the door against the bag.’

‘What was the next move?’

‘They submitted waste lands to public tender, the highest bidder paid half cash, and was allowed a twelve years' mortgage at five per cent. for the rest. This was found to be subject to a charge of favouritism, and cooked tenders. They, therefore, went in at last for the fair thing, putting up blocks to auction competition, at an upset of five shillings an acre.

This was in 1831. The rate was advanced to twelve shillings in 1838. Then, because a lot of fools and madmen over in Port Phillip wanted to swallow any amount of pasture there, the government in 1842 jerked up the upset to twenty shillings.'

'Thanks, my worthy lecturer,' said Captain Douglas. 'And can your excellency discourse upon what changes have since been made in this colony?'

'So long as land sold, and cash came pleasantly in to the Treasury, the 1842 proceedings were maintained. But when our neighbours in Victoria took to raising corn and hay for themselves, and even split their own rails, nobody wanted to buy Tasmanian acres. So the soft-sawder was brought to bear on coy purchasers. In 1863 the Legislature said, "Go and select 320 acres. Pay twelve pounds for survey fees, and the payment for the land at a pound an acre can be eased off. Put down one-fifth cash, and let the balance be thrown over eight years, adding to the amount one-fifth of the cost as interest." That was not a bad scheme.'

'I should think not, Roberts.'

'Then there came a growl from the little men who sought only a hundred acres. To accommodate these, a credit running over fourteen years was allowed. But some cried for lease, and not for purchase. Anxious for the honest penny, the State agreed that they should have the land for twenty years at a rent of sixpence an acre for the first few years, then a shilling, and afterwards two shillings.'

'That was no great catch,' exclaimed the Captain.

'They would only have paid at the rate of nearly two pounds an acre, and the improvements and land go to the Government at the end of the term. But the transfer of land for passage money was the system to draw new comers from Europe. You know that plan.'

'Yes: any one paying his own passage to Tasmania would receive thirty acres for himself, twenty for his wife, and ten for each child.'

'But, you must add, that to secure a bona fide settlement, the grant would not be given till the parties had lived five years on the soil.'

'Perfectly right. But is there any land to be got?'

'My dear fellow, there are over a dozen millions of acres ready for selection. I must confess that the chap who made his choice to the westward ran a good chance of securing a marsh, a scrub, a rock, or a mountain; though some capital patches wait for choice.'

'Then on which suit are you going, Roberts?'

'Not the hundred acre one. In my misanthropic spleen, I don't want another fellow rubbing against my elbow. I am in for a thousand acres.'

'What on earth do you want with all that, when just now you were finding fault with Squatter's wide domains?'

'I might not like a fortune of a million, but be very pleased with ten thousand pounds. Now a thousand acres in Tasmania is a very pretty

estate. I don't expect it all garden mould, though I think I have learned where to find a decent slice.'

'But you will have to go far, far back to get it. You will be cut off from market, as well as civilization.'

'Not quite. The regulations are these: if a man pays a thousand pounds for a thousand acres, the Government guarantees to spend five hundred in making the land valuable, by placing it in road communication with the external world.'

'That alters the story. Go, and my blessing be with thee, Jack!'

'And I'll be bound,' called out Mrs Douglas, 'that you will be so miserable there in that lonely, desolate forest, that, in sheer desperation, you will marry a shrew to give you some excitement.'

'Which may the gods forbend!' exclaimed the merry bachelor, with becoming solemnity.

Chapter XXIII. What Makes a Colony Prosper.

CAPTAIN DOUGLAS sometimes ran against an old colonist in Hobart Town, who was then the man of one idea. The gentleman had been known to the oldest inhabitant from remote antiquity. Some men are said to have been in the mill and come out young again; but his tall, lean figure had undergone no perceptible change for the previous thirty years, and his mental and bodily vigour bid fair for another thirty in advance.

His one idea was a railroad from Hobart Town to Launceston.

Did any one speak of bad times, he would solace the growler with a picture of the railway. When one pronounced the colony destitute of resources, he would say they would reveal themselves upon the opening of the railway. To desponding fathers who saw no fortune for their sons, he unfolded visions of transcendent prosperity upon the birth of the railway.

‘But really, Mr Glen, what does a colony of one hundred thousand people want with a railway?’ asked the Captain.

‘Everything, sir.’

‘What good is it to Hobart Town?’

‘To bring produce down on the road from Launceston.’

‘And what good, then, to Launceston?’

‘To bring produce down on the road from Hobart Town.’

‘But what good to the interior?’

‘Carry off their produce, and bring back cheaper supplies.’

‘Still, look at the expense. Can you afford, like the Victorians, to pay forty or fifty thousand pounds a mile for railroads?’

‘Those were mad days, and the colony threw away its money.’

‘Yet Victoria is far more level than Tasmania, and would present fewer engineering difficulties.’

‘Bless my heart, the thing is as easy as possible.’

‘For all that, Mr Glen, a very large sum of money would be wanted, and a heavy interest would be a great burden to the small island.’

‘My dear sir, that railway could be profitably made for five thousand pounds a mile. And as to the interest, the returns would pay that, and leave a margin for the gradual payment of the loan.’

‘If that could be done, Mr Glen, the thing would be a success.’

‘If, indeed! I assure you, sir, it is as simple as A. B. C. Better still, land now useless, because carriage absorbs profits, would become available,

and mines could be wrought to advantage. Capitalists would then have no occasion to send out their cash to Melbourne, and labour would be drawn in crowds. The fact is, sir, they are all asleep here. They have been so long fed with the government spoon, that they have no energy to get their own living. The Treasury cow is dry now, and they must look for another milker.'

'I can speak of what railroads have done for India,' observed the other. 'They are promoting civilization as well as developing wealth.'

'And we have droned long enough here without them. The opening out of a country has a salutary effect, just as the clearing of a forest lets in the sun to sweeten the soil. Our sleepy hollows would then become hives of industry.'

'It is certainly odd that while all your colonial neighbours had some iron-roads you should have been so long without.'

'There is only one way of accounting for that. We lost heart, Captain Douglas. After cracking up our island as the gem of the ocean, we had dropped down to a belief that it was the most wretched, God-forsaken place in the universe.'

'No wonder, then, you lost so many of your people.'

'Yes, plenty went off on the principle of rats and the sinking ship. But there is no sinking after all. The tight little island will right itself very soon. The runaway rats may then return to the bracing air of our mountains, and the beauty of our valleys.'

'I don't see, Mr Glen, that your railway should not pay part of the interest at first, besides benefitting the country.'

'If it can pay in a poor country like Germany, it ought to do here, especially as our working expenses would not be on the Victorian scale of extravagance.'

'Working men would certainly find this a more enjoyable climate to labour in.'

'And plenty of work there would be for them to do. What I want to see is a line across the island, and then branches from Hobart Town to Port Davey, cutting the Huon forests; from Campbell Town to the east coast, cutting through the gold and coal districts of Fingal; and from Launceston to Emu Bay, opening up the best land in the world.'

'Is there not plenty of metallic wealth to the north-west?'

'Abundance. Why, there are, according to our late government geologist, hundreds of thousands of tons of iron ore, from 55 to 75 per cent., quite surface workings, near Ilfracombe.'

'It surely is worth constructing these iron-roads, too, for other than material advantages.'

'Very true, Captain Douglas. They will not only enable produce to get out of a district, but valuable objects to get in. There will be books as well as groceries finding their way into distant homesteads. Newspapers

will reach the workman, and the Bible enter his family. Had this island been opened up this way a few years ago, many of our young people that have wandered off to other colonies would have stayed here, and been a vast deal happier by it.'

Captain Douglas was very fond of a chat with a farmer at no great distance, and on his way to town. Mr Richards was a noble specimen of a thorough colonial. Strong in frame, active in movement, constant in energy, abounding in resources, he was the man for labour. He knew how to do work, and how to get it done. He did it well, and got it done well.

Though impelled by the very enterprise of colonial life into operations that were not always successful, he knew he had acted with good judgment at the time, and submitted to the vicissitudes of fortune, especially capricious across the line. With a good home, a beautiful garden, a well wrought farm, a splendid family, good health, and an excellent reputation, what could he want to complete happiness?

The Captain sought him for information, but courted his society for the sake of the man.

'You have seen lots of changes here, Mr Richards?'

'Yes, sir, in about fifty years of colonial life one must pass through many changes.'

'But you are far from being so prosperous as your neighbours across the straits.'

'And yet I am always glad when my business is done in Melbourne, and I can get back to my nest here. We are not so grand and rich as they, as our resources are fewer. I can recollect the time when some of our Van Diemen's Land settlers established a colony there, and for many years after we used to pity the unfortunates there.'

'But how they look down on you now!'

'They do. They ask us to throw them a rope, and they will take us in tow. As they get richer we seem to grow poorer.'

'Why is this, Mr Richards?'

'They have the five talents, and get another given in. We cannot cope with their wealth and influence, and are drifting astern.'

'Is there much change here since the gold fever?'

'There is indeed. In 1852 we were prosperous, and Victoria was gently moving on. The gold burst forth that year, and we being near got the profit. Their people went digging, and immigrants poured in; so we Tasmanians fed them, and sent timber for their buildings.'

'That must have sent the gold to you.'

'Certainly: in 1853 our banks had about ten times the specie they now hold. Our exports were twice the present value, and our imports even greater than that. Our beer importation was fully eight times what it is now. Property went up, and we were all crazy together.'

‘And then the bubble burst?’

‘Yes, thank God, it did.’

‘Why thankful for your decline?’

‘Because God in His mercy saved us. We were utterly forgetting Him, and He threw us back to stop us going over the precipice.’

‘Then you don't bow to the great idol?’

‘I believe, sir, that righteousness establisheth a nation. Babylon was a great and rich city, but a very bad one. I have seen two great floods of sin in this island. The first was when Britain overwhelmed us with her prisoners; and the second, when the gold fever plagued these ports.’

‘And what arrested the floods?’

‘Not the voice of man; for we pleaded very hard with the British Government, in the first flood, to have mercy on us, and on our children. But they only laughed at our prayers. God then pointed with His finger to the gold veins of Victoria, and the rulers of the Empire immediately stopped sending convicts here. We did not, we could not, arrest the plague of sin that poured in by the good times of 1852 and '53. But God stayed the plague by damming off the tide of wealth.’

‘Then you now believe Tasmania is better off?’

‘Most assuredly, in the best sense. Our young people are better off in being removed from many temptations. The fiery spirits left us, and a great number of queer fellows well known to our police left us; but we are growing up more thoroughly a Tasmanian settlement, than a land of immigrants.’

‘But you do get immigrants, Mr Richards?’

‘Yes, sir; we get the like of you, and rejoice at it. We ought to get plenty more like you, if they knew their true interests.’

‘I am quite of that opinion, and hope to see many more. But as so few working men come here, you will soon suffer from that cause.’

‘I know the pinch already. High wages in Melbourne drew off our best hands, and left us the worst. These we have to pay more for less work, and then cannot sell the produce to advantage.’

‘And yet you are offering land inducements for more farmers to settle here. You are even talking of a railway across to Launceston, through a country of only 100,000 people.’

‘Why not? We have been asleep long enough. Victoria took the wind out of our sails, and we thought we were never going to sail any more. But as we lived well before the gold, we should do so after it. Because we have not the wealth of our neighbour, it is not necessary to starve, nor fancy ourselves going to the dogs. If with less wealth, we have fewer cares and less temptation. Then, they may beat us in gold, but not in climate. Their gold comes through the skin, sir, and makes them sallow.’

‘What should be done, then?’

‘Use the means God has given us, and ask His blessing. I don't want

our young folks to go mad after riches as most of us did nearly twenty years ago. But let them, while thankful to be in so healthy a country, try and work up what they have. Although Victoria has closed the gate against our flour, our potatoes, our timber, our very fruit, she is glad enough to have our hops, our coal, our building stone. We should turn to with the same laudable spirit of work they have, and get up a few more things they can't beat us in, with all their Tariffs of Protection.'

'And what looming of the future do you discern?'

'That north-west country of ours, when broken into, will be a mine of wealth. The north-east is not penetrated. Industries will utilize the western swamps and mountain streams. Iron-roads will lead capital in. The railway of ours across the island will open up the country bravely. Our fisheries have never been wrought. The coal will yet be got out of the mine to profit. India will one day get our famous apples, as Queensland is now glad to have. Instead of lazily importing manufactured articles, we should set about making them, and so give the farmer somebody to feed.'

'I echo all you have said. I believe myself that this island, so compact and small, might become one of the happiest regions on earth.'

'Yes, sir; but only by a people true to themselves and their God. And here we have more favourable circumstances for moral action. We shall not have our population scattered, as in Australia, but our hundred thousand are close in at home like. They will be within reach of schools and places of worship. They will be under eye, as it were. The sexes are very nearly equalized, people do marry here, and homes are less transitory. Moral forces can play upon folks easier here.'

'I rejoice to see that you in Hobart Town and Launceston, especially, are preparing in the right way for a future. Your religious organizations are effectively worked, your Temperance Societies are exerting a good influence, and the Working Men's Clubs and Mechanics' Institutes are a real credit to you.'

'Thanks for your good word, Captain Douglas. I wish more like you would come out here. We are not a fast people, but we are the happier for it. Now that our dear young folks are growing up strong, healthy, educated, and moral, I predict for this country a happiness and real progress, that will place it as a home above every place else. I fear nothing for it, if the fear of God be maintained here.'

'I do wish,' said the Captain with emphasis, 'that some of the scorners and growlers, without and within the colony, could have heard your talk this morning Good day, Mr Richards, and God bless you!'

Chapter XXIV. A Stroll among the Ferns.

THE Fern leaf, like the Rose, is a universal favourite. Wherever the graceful frond is known, there it is beloved. If so cherished in England, where varieties are not the finest nor most numerous, how much more should it be cherished in the Southern Colonies, its own especial home? There one may exclaim: —

O, the dear Lady Fern! so lovely and green;
'Tis the gentlest and dearest of plants I have seen.
As a veil o'er a bride the drooping fronds fall,
But enhancing the charms while covering all.

O, the dear Bracken Fern! so honest, though plain;
I have welcomed thee oft, and welcome again;
For the Kangaroo loves thy shelt'ring retreat,
And the modest wee flow'r thou shield'st at thy feet.

O, the grand old Tree Fern! the lord of the vale;
Thou hast oft 'neath thy fronds heard lovers' tell tale;
And thy feathers waved when the sigh of the maid
From her lonesome heart rose beneath thy dark shade.

It is thus, like the Fern, my true love has gained, —
By a charm, a sweet grace, a coyness unfeigned, —
The fond worship I yield, the tenderness feel;
And this love I mean by a marriage to seal.

We are not bound to say that every Rambler among Tasmanian Ferns is affected exactly after the sentimental style of the poet, but we venture to affirm that more matches have been made up among ferns than in association with any other plants. Tulips are too obtrusively fine, and roses too joyous and gay, to suit bashful lovers; but the green leaf is soothing to restless natures, its lace work of beauty excites pleasure without distracting attention, and the calm shade of a fernery is suggestive of tenderness, while evoking the soft avowal of a pent-up passion.

A disagreeable old bachelor, — and such a lost creature is to be found even in that sunny clime, — has given his opinion about matters in these words: —

‘This Tasmania is well enough for some things. It suits my gout and my liver. It suits my pocket and my health. But it is a most provoking place for matrimony. Banns of marriage seem born in the very air; at any rate, float pretty freely on it. Too many flowers and shady walks by half, and a vast deal too much leisure for young girls. If old Malthus rose from the grave, and lived here, he would shout out, “Close up every Fern-tree valley.” And so say I.’

But Horace was by no means of his school of thought. He had a friend, too, whose views of Natural History, in this particular instance, decidedly coincided with his own. Is it wonderful, therefore, that they sometimes sought the Fern-shade?

Everybody knows that —

Where the morning dew lies longest,
There the Lady Fern grows strongest.

This is pronounced the Queen of English Ferns. Its drooping leaves are deeply cut. Its fairy-like delicacy, its maidenly bashfulness, and its gentleness of beauty have captivated hearts in all ages. The old writers, who conferred that name upon this most graceful of the family, called the sturdier, rougher, stronger kind the Male Fern.

The common Brake, or Bracken, may be considered a male fern for its stalwart character, but not because it fails in motherly qualities. In Tasmania it throws up its green tops as high as it did in the glen, when Rhoderick Dhu's men lay concealed there. But the Brake or ordinary Male Fern contains much alkali, and is of commercial service, therefore, to soap and glass manufacturers.

Horace undertook, in his gracious benevolence and philosophical condescension, to explain some of the ferny mysteries to a young disciple of botany, who, if indulging in occasional sportive fancies, was, on the whole, a tolerable listener.

‘That dear, darling Maiden-hair!’ exclaimed the aforesaid young disciple, as she stooped to a specimen of the lovely *Adiantum*. ‘Tell me all about it, my dear master?’

‘You know the other name for Maiden-hair is Venus-locks, and pretty enough for her use. Alas! what captives are made of men by these seductive locks of Venus.’

‘Now, pray don't go off here, Horace. If taken like that again, I shall certainly *coo-ee* for assistance. It would be no joke here, in this lonely place, with a man beside himself. Compose yourself, and go on with your lesson.’

‘I will, my tyrant. To compare our Maiden-hair with other ferns, we must just look at the *sori*.’

‘And what are those?’

‘The dots you notice. These are not always on the back of the frond, but at the edge. They cover the seed.’

‘Is the brown dust that is scattered the seed?’

‘Yes. Many of these sori have an *indusium* or cover. Some are rounded; others are kidney-shaped. The capsules conceal the *spores* or seed. Some of the cases have an elastic ring to allow of the escape of the spores. Covers are attached by the centre or by one side. In the Maiden-hair the patches of sori are different to those of the Lady Fern.’

‘How are they in the Tree Fern?’

‘In the *Alsophila*, or Grove-loving Fern, the sori are globular, but are destitute of the *indusium*. In the Bristle Fern, growing on the Tree Fern, the cover is tubular. The veins beyond the fronds give the bristle appearance. In the Brake, or *Pteris*, the sori are in a line at the edge of the frond.’

‘But yonder is one that is very delicate.’

‘That is a Filmy Fern. Our Heart's Tongue Fern is like the English one.’

‘Now I feel myself perfectly sage in the matter. But I am a little curious how to detect a male fern.’

‘It has a particular venation in the leaf, being forked at the mid-rib.’

‘Thank you, I like to be on my guard against all males.’

‘Present company excepted, my lady.’

‘Your wit must save you further reproaches. But what is that climbing fern?’

‘That is the *Gleichenia*, and called *Zigzag* by your friend Mr Hannaford, who discourses so well about the subject.’

‘I am thinking, Horace, of collecting some fern seed next St John's Eve. You know then I shall have the power of rendering myself invisible.’

‘Yet not, I trust, to me.’

‘I don't know. There are times when a girl would be glad of the charm, although she saw her lover come to the gate. Fairies don't make their company too cheap, and the maidens ought to have the same privilege.’

‘If so, every lover would possess himself of Aladdin's Lamp, which he could rub to summon the lady to appear at his pleasure before him.’

‘Then, on that consideration, I would prefer to retain my visible form. I have no desire to be at the beck and call of a lamp polisher.’

Chapter XXV. A Chat about Natural History.

‘Pray, Mr Naturalist,’ said a gentle voice, as Horace and a lady walked together, ‘how do those noisy insects in the trees there make so loud a sound?’

‘The Cicada, Annie, has a pair of concave membranes, on each side of the first joint of the abdomen. They do make a rattle indeed, and quite enough to disturb anything but the absorbing communion of lovers.’

The last remark was intended to convey a personal meaning, and was duly enforced by pathos in delivery, and beaming glances as an accompaniment. A blush was the response, although no ill-humour was positively manifested.

‘Will it please you, sir, to keep to your Cicada text?’ said she. ‘You are at liberty to enlarge upon it.’

‘I bow to your imperial will. Our noisy friend of the rattle has but a short time to beat its drum, — only six weeks. The juices of plants suffice for its meals. After depositing its tiny eggs by puncturing the tree, it abandons the world. As soon as the grub comes forth, it rolls out of its cave, drops to the ground, and crawls down to the roots, where it buries itself to feed on their juices at leisure. As if to compensate for the brevity of its mirth, while flying from tree to tree in the sun, and joining in a tumultuous concert, the grub is permitted to enjoy a dark subterranean existence for a dozen years or more.’

‘That is a sad story, Horace, I could have liked it the other way.’

‘Nature is very wayward, you see. Remember, though, you have not your wings yet, my fair one; and you may have to pledge your sweet word to grub along with me in this gloomy world, though it be even fifty years.’

‘That is another story altogether. But then, you know, I might fancy I lived not in the darkness when under your eye.’

‘Most loyally said, dear friend. You make me chirrup like the cicada. But do you admire the clicking of the grasshopper?’

‘That active tribe are no especial favourites of mine. They spring upon my dress, poke their legs in my shoes, and dash rudely against me as I walk in the grass. But tell me if it be true that our colonial grasshoppers are the true locust?’

‘They are more like crickets, — another noisy set. But while these have their wing-covers folding horizontally, the grasshoppers have them in a

roof-like position. The last differ again from the locust in inferior robustness of body, as well as length and slenderness of legs and antennae. Our grasshoppers have, as you may have observed, considerable leaping powers; but the locusts spring further on their long and strong hind legs.'

'Where is the drum of our musical leaper?'

'It has a pair of taborets, formed of thin, transparent membrane stretched in strong half oval frame in the triangular overlapping portion of each wing cover.'

'I wish all mischievous things gave a beat of their drum in the bush, that we might be warned of their approach.'

'Do you include my sex among the mischievous things?'

'Oh, they do give warning pretty often by silly speeches.'

'Thank you for the compliment.'

'But you know,' observed she with a sly look, 'present company are always excepted. I was thinking of other charming deceivers, — snakes, for instance.'

'Poor things, they do their best to get away from you, as I did at one time of day, until you, with serpent's eyes' —

'Stop!' cried the lady in an attempted fury, 'if you dare.' — Here she looked so awful that the gentleman proceeded quietly with his lecture.

'I was going to say that snakes are harmless enough. I admit it is ugly to come in sight of one, as we did in a short walk on the sand-ridge. Some *have* got bitten, but some, also, have been suffocated with a piece of meat.'

'But surely you don't mean to say snakes in Tasmania and Australia are dove-like in nature?'

'People anyhow frighten themselves without occasion. There is Mr Gerard Krefft, who had such a cluster of snaky pets at his Sydney Museum, to the dread of all approachers, and better than watch-dogs for his premises; he will assure you that the chances are ever so many to one against your being hurt by a snake.'

'His assertions will not diminish my fright at the sight of one.'

'And yet, Annie, he finds all over these Australian regions only five species of poisonous ones out of eighty.'

'Quite enough too, for any one's comfort in the bush.'

'But you must know that this little island has not all of the fatal five species. I need not describe to a colonial girl the features of the *Diamond Snake*, pretty enough to captivate any, but fearfully venomous. But I would contrast it with the Australian Tiger Snake. Both are brown, though the latter is banded. The first has two outer rows of scales with reddish yellow spots, and the second has the two rows paler than the rest. The scales of the head are more elongated in the former. The head of the Australian is twice the size of the other; and, while its neck is very flat,

the other is rather round. The Tasmanian scales are in fifteen rows, while the Continental are in eighteen.'

'Well, after so luminous a description of these charmers, you may restore them to the Museum, and bottle them up. I would counsel you to avoid the fate of Underwood, our Colonial snake tamer, who found the Tiger such a Tiger.'

'But the poor fellow wanted to sell his antidote. The Indian Jugglers pull out the teeth of their snakes, but he only broke those of his, not thinking of their growing again. Professor Halford of Melbourne has been the means of saving life by introducing ammonia to the blood of the sufferer.'

'You have said nothing of the Black Snake, so common with us here, and so fond of water to swim in. I have seen it catch frogs and water rats.'

'I don't approve of its fashion of darting at one, especially as it is so venomous, though only some six feet long. Its scales are in seventeen rows. How lucky its winter retirement under ground keeps us safe half the year! Yet far more risk is encountered from English vipers than Tasmanian snakes, which are too glad to get out of the way.'

'O do please, Mr Professor, close this subject,' entreated the young lady, 'I could sooner put up with Palaeozoic and Labyrinthodon.'

'Be thankful you are not in Queensland, with alligators from twelve to twenty feet long.'

'I certainly prefer our own dear little lizards. They are harmless enough, Horace. I have made pets of them. They are so fond of bread and milk.'

'Even lizards have had bad names. The Geeko, with its broad feet able to walk on under surfaces like a fly, and warted all over, was once said to be poisonous, but is not. It should be allowed in peace to chase the insects. The Molock, however harmless, has a horrid look, with spines on its back and tail, and with horns on its head.'

'But I was reading Gray's Travels in Northwest Australia, where he saw that curious lizard like Queen Elizabeth, with an immense ruff around the neck.'

'Yet living in trees, and being six feet long, it would frighten you as it glared at you when passing under the branches.'

'O dear! O dear! what dreadful topics of discussion. Really, Horace, if you don't change the subject at once, and go into raptures over a German Baron locking up young ladies in his castle dungeon by the Rhine, or play dulcet notes on the lute, or pay me some decidedly pretty compliment, I shall go into raptures over somebody else, who don't put young ladies in a dungeon, but who do pay pretty compliments to them.'

'Hold! hold! Mercy! Mercy! my fair one. I will promise — yes, I will verily promise anything to prevent you going into such extravagant

ecstasies with the Baron, or any other man but my own estimable self.'

'Then I magnanimously grant you my pardon, and accord to you a prolongation of my favour. After that, evidence your devotion by giving me a full and particular account of the English relations of my colonial pets, the birds of Tasmania.'

'Poor things! I pity your pets.'

'Do you? Then I declare I pity your poor snow-bound, half-starved twitterers, hopping disconsolately about trees with not a leaf to shield the unhappy things for half the year. And you, too, Horace, must have presented as lively an appearance as the birds in such a horrid climate.'

'Granted, my sunny Tasmanian. But your birds have more feathers than throats.'

'Granted, my witty Englishman,' replied the lady, with an arch smile at her lover, 'your birds are similarly endowed.'

Horace laughed well at his blunder, but he declared that he meant by feathers and throats to contrast their beautiful plumage with their inferior power of song.

'Thanks,' she said, 'it was kind of you to explain your jest. I am glad you acknowledge the superiority of the charms of my pets, in appearance, at least. I have read a deal of your nightingale.'

'And you must believe in its song.'

'I don't believe all I read; and so I have asked everybody from England to tell me about the bird. But what do you think? I can hardly discover a single person who has heard the wonderful note.'

'But I have heard it, Annie, my dear, and must pronounce that the nightingale has a charming voice, although you have warbled to me.'

'Well, there now. That, I suppose, is intended as a compliment; but it only means you prefer a song from a bird to a discourse from me.'

'O! I didn't mean' —

'Never mind, my friend; I will bear it. So proceed with your natural history. Are any of our birds to be seen in Britain?'

'One might think you have the same, to hear of Whistling Dicks, Wrens, Robins, Plovers, Larks, Cuckoos, Peewits, Sparrows, Magpies, Doves, Kingfishers, &c., &c. But then, in this country your honeysuckle is a big, ugly, coarse, stiff tree, instead of a delicate climber; and your Jackass, though a laughing one, is a bird, rather than the humble and useful quadruped of that cognomen.'

'Positively, Horace, you are growing dangerously witty.'

'That is a complaint which must be catching, then.'

'Your affection is undeniable, I admit.'

'Thank you, Annie, for such an acknowledgment of my affection — toward you.'

'Really, you are quite trifling, my philosopher. Is that a proof of your gravity or sanity? I pray you keep to your text.'

‘I obey once more. A number of your birds, I was going to say, have an English name but not the English characteristics. Your crow does belong to the original stock. I recognise, also, hawks, eagles, ducks, cranes, owls, shags, gulls, and robins, having a family likeness to those of Europe.’

‘Robin, indeed! I saw an imported English robin. What a mean specimen it was! I suppose its breast would pass for red in your London smoke, but not in our bright atmosphere. Our Robin is as gay as yours is sombre. Ours is an independent gentleman and yours a humble suitor for cast-out crumbs.’

‘I will admit, Annie, your robin's brighter plumage.’

‘But have you seen our varieties? There is the dusky Robin, the pink-breasted Wood Robin, the scarlet-breasted, and the flame-breasted. Can you boast of a Diamond-bird in that half-benighted region?’

‘Alas! no. That sort of Pardalotus quite captivated me. It seemed all gold and amber, spotted over with silver. It is a lovely little creature; but it has a poor note.’

‘You unreasonable man. Don't you know there are three Graces? Are you so presumptuous as to fancy you can find a goddess with the charms of the three? Just because you Englishmen discover that your own poor birds are such dowdy little things, in comparison with the Venus grace and Juno majesty of ours, you fly off in abuse of our songsters.’

‘But I have not abused them. There are certainly no nightingales and thrushes to be heard, yet your Blue-cap is a fine warbler. His patch of metallic blue gives his head a most distinguished appearance; and he is so swift in movement and jolly in manner. But his wife is a very quiet creature.’

‘Likely enough, likely enough. Many a man goes sporting his gay smiles and fine clothes abroad, leaving his unhappy drudge of a partner as a Cinderella at home.’

‘But you, my dear, have all the liveliness, happiness, and loveliness to be found,’ quoth the smiling lover.

‘I have simply one word in reply, sir, to that pretty statement of the case, — I am *unmarried*. But proceed with the lesson, sir.’

‘Your Blue Wren is a *Malurus*, and is a gay fellow, with crown and ear-coverts of blue, and his tail of a deep blue. But his wings, I see, are brown, his chest a blue-black, and his back black.’

‘Yet have you observed that he is only particularly demonstrative when he has his new summer dress on? He is dull enough when his finery has faded. I suppose he is then disposed to take some pity upon his brown mate. But have you no compliment to spare for the Emu Wren?’

‘Most certainly. Its tail is like the double feathers of the Emu. In one bird's tail I saw seven feathers, each four inches long. After running down your songsters, I will do justice to one, the Black-Cap, which sings

like a mock nightingale.'

'Thanks, on behalf of my little friend. You have known our island thrush, the Ground Dove.'

'Yes, but I was not taken with its gentle cooing. The dove beside me would frighten me if she made such a loud whirring noise.'

'Then be very good, and not provoke it from me.'

'Your large tribe of honey-eaters much interested me.'

'I doubt it not, for men have a great sympathy with all feeders. Some of you think to offer us girls some honey, but it is cheaply tendered in the form of speech. Just now you were severely criticising our rough, homespun honeysuckle, the Banksia; but did you not perceive that its sweet bags of flowers are courted by your lively honey-eaters, including the chattering Miner?'

'That must be conceded. I beg pardon of the Banksia. These birds were so happy there, with their gold-edged wings and pretty brush-like tongue. What a curious lunar-shaped black mark down each side of the breast the male has! The tail feathers, I find, are of brownish-black, fringed with golden yellow at the base.'

'Yes,' cried the lady; 'but have you noticed the two long, lateral feathers, with long, oval, white spots? The bill and feet are black, but the throat and chest are white. I examined a nest once, and admired the inner lining of the soft woolly parts of blossoms. Our Tasmanian honeyeater revels in the tubular flowers of the Epacris. It flies very high, and after long drawing out a single note rattles off a double one in quick succession.'

'I was some time before I understood your Leather-head, with his bare crown and neck, and his long tail and bill. Then I recognised his likeness to the English *Poor Soldier*. His note is like our *Four o'clock*, and his pate like the Monk-bird's shaven top. What does he feed upon?'

'It is not at all particular, taking the pollen or piece of fruit when no insect is at hand. It has such a funny cup-like nest! But curious as its note is, that of the Wattle-bird is more peculiar.'

'Right. It put me in mind of the noise a landsman makes when crossing the channel in a rough sea. As it loves the Banksia, which grows on bad land, it is not a welcome sight to a farm-hunter. Your Podargus, the Morepork, so called from its calling everlastingly for *more pork*, is not of the Jenny Lind order.'

'And a sleepy-headed fellow is that owl night-roamer. I heard of one, that might have been overtired insect-hunting the evening before, but which never waked at the report of a gun, though his mate fell dead beside him.'

'Your night-birds, Annie, are very numerous, I learn.'

'Our nights, as you must have observed, are so often attractive that others besides owls admire them.'

‘Lovers do, most assuredly, when Romeos and Juliets can walk beneath stars and moon, without fear of toothache or rheumatism. But your bright days are just the times for your merry flocks of shrieking parrakeets. I have been astonished at the clouds of them. There are the blue-banded, the yellow, the blue-and-orange-bellied, the rosehill, the swift, the small, the ground parrakeet, and I know not what else more. The honey-eaters are the most numerous of the lot.’

‘How do you naturalists class the family?’

‘The Psittacidae are in four groups. The first are found in the banksia and she-oaks; the second delight in the orchis; the third love the nectar of your gumtrees; while the fourth, as ground and grass parrakeets, have their affections set on grass seeds. There are about sixty species.’

‘Ah, Horace! you should see the flocks of white and black cockatoos on the Huon, and a flight of many bronze-winged sort.’

‘You are certainly great in the ornamental, dear, but sadly wanting in the useful. You are indebted for breakfast eggs to the hens imported from abroad.’

‘Bless me! Horace, you must not imagine that I am so ardently Tasmanian as to object to importations. I certainly prefer the English pear-tree to that producing wooden nuts on the side of Mount Wellington. I am not bound to pluck the wretched fruit of the Macquarie Harbour vine rather than the luscious grape introduced into our gardens. It does not follow’ —

‘Let me finish the rest, my beauty; it does not follow that you should decline so agreeable an importation as myself to accept a half-caste Tasmanian.’

‘That observation, sir, did not escape me. To your birds, sir. Have you anything more to remark of them?’

‘I have no strength of will to go further, but would fain take my flight from birds on the wings of love.’

‘Now that is really most unkind of you,’ said the young lady, with the prettiest of pouts on her pretty lips. ‘You know I can't even mount to the region of the birds, and you desire a flight even from them. Is that the extent of imported affection for a Tasmanian lass?’

The natural history was then forgotten in some very natural proceedings, of more interest and value to the two persons themselves than to the general reader.

Chapter XXVI. The Pic-Nic under the Mountain.

THE great pleasures of cities are associated with crowds. In Tasmania they are sought amidst the glens of shadowy foliage, by the moss banks of mountain rivulets, and, especially, in Fern Tree valleys.

A grand *pic-nic* was got up by our friends Horace and Tom. Relations, friends, and neighbours were liberally invited. Each party, family, or individual came provided for the occasion. It was no demonstration of knife-and-fork glory, and gave no opportunity for the display of luxurious habits. Everybody brought enough, and to spare. Everybody expected everybody to help through his or her particular assemblage of good things.

And what did they take? Certainly not that English hamper, made up and directed in Piccadilly. No firms catered for the supply, and no neat cases of wines were furnished. Home-made were the packets of provision. All the pasties, pies, tarts, sausage rolls, &c., had been prepared by the ladies of the group. The young fellows had had a hand at the sandwiches, and had helped in fixing the bigger parcels, as well as securing carpet bags. The portage through the bush was confided especially to the masculine element, unless maternal housekeeping anxieties were called forth on account of some special packages of more delicate dainties; then the gentler care of woman was required.

But what did they take to drink?

Here, alas! confession must be made that primitive colonial ways have not been quite superseded, though not a little affected, by the march of civilization since the gold discovery. With a sigh of conscious inferiority in the scale of progress, the *pic-nic* ramblers must admit that they *do not* take anything but eatables, as a rule. But they do take a kettle, or the approved *billy*. They count upon lots of the purest water from the mountain, and the young men are delighted with the operation of fire lighting, only the kettle or billy stands a chance of being consumed in the huge flames, or the lady president of the tea-making is well roasted in an approach to the hot embers.

It is true the company had tea at their breakfast. Never mind; they will not object to the refreshing draught at the mid-day camp in the bush, with another taste before they leave the retreat, although they know they must have the regular tea at home.

The day was not an Ascot of dust or showers, nor a University Race

with rain or snow. The morning was slightly sharp, the air was crisp, the wind swept coolly from off the sea, and the breath of the gullies was not tropical. But so much the better for breakfast appetite, and the jollier for the walk before the sun got too strong. If they only managed to creep under the dense foliage before Sol was fairly under weigh with his chariot, they would be snug enough. He might drive over the tops of the forest trees, but would have hard work to find a road through the mazes of vegetation there.

They were a merry lot when assembled. Of course, they had to wait for that last party, always late, that came in puffing with apologies, with no time for composure before all were *en route*.

And whither would Hobart Town pic-nic parties usually wend their way, but to the mountain? There they could find plenty to see, plenty to enjoy. Nature all round the year had charms for them there. No month passed without its show of wild flowers. The winter had the display of berries of red, of blue, of white. The trees were as full-leaved as in summer; aye, and the leaves were often wanted, too, to shield from the sun in that *inclement* season.

Even English winter could be realized if the parties only rose up the mountain, instead of hugging its roots below in the wind-bound hollows. There snow gave them a fresh delight, and a new sport. A little danger added to the fun, as a fellow now and then sank in a snowdrift and yelled for help. Icicles hung from no skeleton trees, but dropped from green foliage, which with varied coloured berries gave unwonted contrasts to the white frost.

But the preference is given to bright spring, warm summer, and rich autumn, for visits to the glens of Wellington.

'Who is to be leader?' was the question. Loud shouts arose for Tom Turner. 'He knows every gully and nook,' said one. 'And every creek and stump,' added another.

But Tom for once in his life was modest. History does not say he blushed. Yet he did not walk forward, as if bush leadership were his right of office.

'Now, then, Tom; on you go,' sang out voices.

But Tom did not go first.

Winks and nods, with open declarations of opinion, now mischievously followed.

A saucy youngster called out: —

'I know all about it. Tom's afraid Miss Julia's hair will serve her like Absalom's did in the bush, and he wants to be handy to cut her down.'

A loud laughter greeted this speech. Tom roared out at the old-fashioned pitch, resigned Julia's locks to their fate for awhile, dashed to the front ranks, and shouted: —

'Tom's here, lads. He won't desert his post. He'll lead you on to glory

and to lunch. Follow him over the crags and far away!’

A regular ‘Hip, hip, hurrah!’ answered the appeal. Young chaps clapped him on the shoulder, and called him a jolly fellow. The ladies one and all admired his self-sacrifice under the circumstances, and knew Tom would take them to such a nice place. One young lady smiled most graciously upon the leader, who had, to tell the truth, halted to catch that last mark of approval of his heroism. She felt inwardly that she liked him a vast deal better for leaving her then on a mission of public duty, and resolved to pay him out for his desertion by any amount of extra loving words and looks.

‘And Tom did take them to a capital place. But it was not a Fern-tree valley.

‘No,’ said he, ‘as leader, I am bound to look after the ladies. I don’t want them to have a chill this warm day, by sitting on the mossy floor down in that Fern-tree valley. Here is a nice open spot, with room for all to sit and feed. The grass is just enough to serve as a seat. Those that want all shade, can get under that big tree there, or drop among the roots of that old Gum. Here enough light twinkles through the arching bough to tell custard from rolls, and tarts from turkey.’

Then he concluded his speech by saying, ‘Now, mind I’ve done my part. Let another fellow head the herd now.’

‘Three cheers for Tom!’ came as a response, and accompanied him to a seat near a person who had evidently got a space kept for somebody.

The boys got bushes ready for the fire. The Billy was duly swung over the blaze. Packages and bags were opened, to the loudly expressed satisfaction of the younger members, and to no regretful looks of others. A few tarts of extra delicacy had their frames somewhat hurt in the perils of carriage. But when mothers expressed sorrow at their being spoiled, there were lots of martyrs ready to make the best of them.

The rules of table etiquette were not strictly followed. Pocket-knives were preferred to others, and forks were esteemed only carvers’ rights. There was some free handling of legs and wings, with a pitch across of junks of bread. Accidents were treated as occasions of fun. A lady had a piece of fowl on which some crushed pie had left a deposit of jam. She was accused of greediness in taking meat and pudding all at once.

All were generous of their respective stores, and offered a free luncheon to all comers.

‘Do taste mamma’s pastry,’ cried one young lady.

‘O just try this prime ham!’ put in another.

‘You must see if those tarts are not done to a turn,’ quoth a third.

‘I’m ready to give you all a turn,’ sang out the fat boy of the group, ‘only you must give a fellow time.’

Of course, in the very land of jam and fruit, lots of jam and lots of fruit might reasonably be expected. The history of every pot of jam made last

season and this was given by the several manufacturers, and learned debates ensued about the best methods.

'I wish those Melbourne men had put their heads in a bag before passing their Protective Policy, and so shutting up our best market for jams,' growled forth one of the paternals.

But he was immediately set down unanimously, and politics voted a bore.

'All the better,' exclaimed one youngster; 'there's all the more for us here.'

'Is that kettle boiling?' asked another in the bush.

'I believe you, and boiling over too,' was the reply.

The several infusions were made under the inspiriting spurt of the steam. Pannicans were dragged out, and plentifully piled with sugar. Milk, in the land literally flowing with milk and honey, was in abundance.

And how deliciously the tea tasted! A Londoner would have declared the mixture atrocious. How he would have gasped and stamped at his first trial of the metal lip of the pannican! But it suited the palates of the *pic nic* friends to perfection.

'Here's to our better acquaintance!' said Tom, as he raised his pannican.

'What! quarrelled already, Tom?' asked a quizzing lassie.

'No, we have not fallen out, Jane; but we have not got put in the stocks together yet, you know.'

'Better such legbail, than a lagging,' observed a new arrival, attempting what he thought a joke.

But the serious air of some, and the angry look of others, told the wit he had put his foot into it. His company was not estimated so highly afterwards. By common consent, the memory of the Van Diemen's Land past is sunk in the present of Tasmania.

'Are you going to sit there all day,' enquired an impatient youth.

The elder folks were in a heavy chat, though they had shifted their quarters from the neighbourhood of the fire, which some lads persisted in keeping up in vigorous existence.

'O you young folks can go by yourselves. We shall be hanging about this quarter. But be sure to keep together. Don't get lost, for goodness sake.'

'As if I should get lost, mother!' declared that boy of six, who scampered off to join the rambles.

'I've a parting blessing to give you,' shouted Tom.

'What's that?'

'Why, pair off for company. And, mind! don't let the couple be of the same colour. That don't look well for the picturesque in the green lanes of the forest. A hat and a bonnet won't talk the scandal that two bonnets

would, or chance breaking necks as two hats would.'

With a 'Bravo! Tom,' they separated, as directed. When every Jack has his Jill a portion of the *pic-nic* time is occupied passably enough, which might otherwise hang heavily. But, of course, the groups united from time to time, and collective sports and songs aided in the diversion of the hour.

'But what a lovely place!' said one to another.

And so it was.

The Gums and Stringybarks, elsewhere so gawky and stiff, were quite graceful there, and had dozens of more leaves than ordinary. But the Sassafras, — the *Atherosperma* of botanists, — ran up a magnificent green cone for one hundred and fifty feet. And what a delicious green it was! and how delicately it contrasted with the hundred other shades of leaves! The Myrtle ran up to keep it company, with a darker hue, and a more massive stem, some thirty or forty feet in circumference. It is the *Fagus* of Cunningham. One of the tribe appears with fine blue flowers.

Stray plants of the western Laurel are not unknown. Its little white flowers hang in clusters. The Corrijong, so useful for tying properties, was clambering about even forty feet in length. Pittosperm, or pitch seed shrubs, abounded on all sides. The Tasmanian fragrans, or native pepper tree, indulged in higher altitudes, and scattered its pungent pollen, to the sneezing of passers by. The family of the *Bauera* came out charmingly under the cliffs of Wellington. The leaves hung in whorls up the stem; while, upon the tender footstalk, the sweet flowers were like tiny Eglantine roses. It is sometimes called the Tasmanian rose.

As to Wattles, these were quite at home, and appeared in their best humour to receive visitors. Choice bits of gum were picked off their sides by young gumsucking Colonials. The *Comespermae*, or hairyseed plants, were in great force. They are so attractive in a forest, covering dead timber, and filled up awkward chasms, with thin pale blue festoons. That lover of Tasmania, and that sweet singer of the island's charms, Mrs Meredith, has chosen to bestow upon this sort of native Milkwort the name of 'Love'. It twists spirally round anything.

The Australian family called *Proteaceae* has been rightly called, embracing as it does such Proteus forms of vegetable wonders, to the puzzle of bush students. The Orchids are exceedingly varied, but everywhere are welcome, helmet or no helmet. The petals of some are pink, and others are prettily spotted. The columns of some are hard and bold. The pink Orchis has a hairy stem. One has a spike of blue flowers on a stem a foot high. Another, a native potato, is leafless, but has white tubular blossoms.

Boronias are always attractive in the bush. These shrubs have linear leaves in great numbers, and lovely pink flowers. But the smell is not so agreeable, reminding one of Rue. Tea trees of the *Leptosperma* sort here

rose sixty feet and more. Parasites, of many varieties, adorned several kinds of trees. The Mistletoe of Australia is not confined to one season, and that the coldest.

The Leguminous Indigo has its pink flowers converted into pods. The blue tinted Flax is everywhere; but, as it ascends the mountain, it pales with the loftiness of its clamber, and at length becomes white. The shrub Pomaderris rises some half dozen feet, and has a profusion of white blossoms. The Correa, or native Fuschia, selects poor land for its home, and has a humble-looking robe. Its pendulous blossoms attempt a yellowish tinge occasionally to its otherwise dull green corolla. The creeping Hovea has a charming blue blossom. The Gentian reaches to the very top of Wellington.

Then there are the Prostantherae, growing from two feet to six, with racemes of flowers of pale purple or lilac. One sort has long leaves, and white hairy blossoms in large racemes. But the smell of the Prostanthera is profoundly strong and objectionable. The Eurybia is a small, stiff bush, having shining leaves and daisy flowers. The Pimelea is a welcome sight. There is the snowy, the rosy, and the yellow Pimelea. The stems are very slender, and the small flowers are nestled in the axils of the leaves. Some adorn the rocky quarters.

But it is high time to look after the lovers. Not that they require our aid, or suppose they need our sympathy. If satisfied with their mated companionship, it is enough for them. Still, having conducted them to such an Eden, which they are not required to dress, but which they nevertheless adorn, we would like to observe their wanderings therein.

Tom had been most royally received by his lady mate, who devoted herself assiduously to the entertainment of one who had sacrificed even her company on a mission of general good. The young man himself was not sorry altogether to get away from the rest with his chosen friend. His Bush craft was exercised in the hunt for one of the loveliest and cosiest spots imaginable. Here he proposed to camp, and have a chat.

The Clematis over-head formed indeed a *Virgin's Bower*. Wreaths of white blossoms were hauled down by the lover to place round the head of his companion. As she leaned towards the bestower of the chaplet, and appeared to seek comfort from the shelter of his love, she seemed to partake of the Clematis nature: for —

‘It will lean to the nearest and kindest thing.’

And as the plant overspread with its flowers of snow, and threw abroad its feathered seed-vessels, the words of Mrs Meredith came to the memory of the Colonial maiden: —

‘In draperies, with thready gold and pearl,

And emerald, crusted over, like a fall
Of foaming water full of silver shells.'

Was not such a retreat the very one for the cultivation of Tom's rugged imagination? How sweetly could his lady-love there discourse of the hidden beauties of the spiritual nature! How nicely she proved to him that —

'There is a tongue in every leaf.'

Tom was far enough gone to believe that there was honey and spice, and all that's nice, in every word from her tongue.

To put a little more poetry in him, as she expressed it, she gave him a few lessons in the language of flowers; just as if he could not read every one she ever handled. He was informed that Myrtle stood for love. He was silly enough to say he was sure that was true, for it was at the root of the Tasmanian Myrtle they were seated. Requested to be silent, the lesson continued.

'The Acacia, Tom, is for Platonic love.'

'I don't believe a bit about it,' said he, fiercely.

'Why not?' was the enquiry.

'Because Platonic love is all moonshine, my dear, and this Wattle is not,' he said.

'I am quite ashamed of you, you good-for-nothing fellow,' was the teacher's indignant rejoinder. 'That you, a professed lover, should find fault with Platonic love, — which every lady admits is the very portal of bliss, and which is the only form of affection to which any discreet girl will confess, — is a crime against Cupid himself.'

'Then I beg that gentleman's pardon for an unintentional insult. But isn't moonshine nice, Julia? You can't say much against it. We have had some pleasant walks, you know, by moonshine. Your very poets have called it the Seed of Love: and one said it warmed love up more than sunshine.'

'Such an apology ought to procure your pardon,' observed the lady.

But the lecture was here utterly broken through by some irregular exhibitions, on Tom's part, of what he was pleased to call 'Platonic Love.' This caused such fun and laughter, as attracted others to the spot, and quite spoiled the privacy of the retreat.

Horace and his partner had set off upon a supposed botanical excursion, and for the collection of ferns, particularly.

Annie was in high spirits with the sports of the festival, and teased her lover in her most charming style, though not, apparently, to the said lover's conspicuous annoyance. At least, he assumed a fortitude which had a bearing of resignation. Rallied himself, he returned sundry compliments in a style worthy of his mistress, and which provoked a

remark.

‘Why, who would have thought so quiet a young man had such fancies in his head! I declare I took you for an anchorite, if not something more solemn.’

‘And I, dear Annie, took you for what you are, a very nymph of the woods.’

‘I thought as much,’ said she, with a deep sigh, ‘I always suspected something of the kind.’ And then in a lower tone, as if to herself, ‘He did look like it at first.’

‘Like what?’

‘O you know the penalty of meeting a nymph of the woods. The poor creature loses his senses.’

‘Yes,’ the other responded in a voice full of affection, ‘I did lose the sense of loneliness in meeting you; I did lose the sense of aimlessness of being; I did lose the sense of self-absorption — ’

‘There — that will do, dear Horace. You encountered nothing but losses. What shall I say? Mine have been *finds*.’ Then, drawing nearer to him, she whispered, ‘I found all in finding you.’

The next moment her eye caught a truant flower, and she was off to gather it.

‘O where did you come from, you beauty,’ she said.

It looked just like a *Convolvulus* from her own garden, but was a native variety. The daisy near was not a daisy. The botanists call it a *Brachycome*, or hairy-arm. Its flowers were white and large. A variety had blue petals. That lovely trailer, a *Kennedia*, threw up from the ground its pea flower of bright red.

‘Look at these darling Turquoise berries!’ exclaimed the impassioned lady.

And they were beautiful in their delicate light blue. The plant was one of the *Drymophidae*. When in flower, the pretty white blossoms grow on stalks at the axils of leaves.

‘To think that before we white fellows came to the island, there were only Kangaroos and Blacks to admire them,’ she added.

‘Anyhow, dear, we have another evidence how bountifully the Good God has cast beauty abroad, as if it were the commonest thing at His command.’

‘But how few of His creatures recognise the beauty?’

‘True; and how much fewer perceive the more delicate, but far more real, beauty dwelling in the spiritual!’

‘One, at least, dear Horace, has learnt through you to discern something of the higher elements of beauty, and catch a radiance from the flower which the flower itself can never give.’

‘And I, on my part, my darling Annie, have gained from you the power of realizing from the flower itself a perception of its own dear charms,

and a joyousness in its light, I never knew before.’

Here, as in duty bound, the sweet soft notes of the Bell bird struck upon their ears, and added to their pleasure. The rich bell-like sound came from the depths of a neighbouring Fern-tree valley. Well has sung the Australian poet, Henry Kendall: —

‘By channels of coolness the echoes are calling,
And down the dim gorges I hear the creek falling,
It lives in the mountain when moss and the sedges
Touch with their beauty the banks and the ledges,
Through breaks of the cedar and sycamore bowers
Struggles the light that is love to the flowers;
And, softer than slumber, and sweeter than singing,
The notes of the Bellbird are running and ringing.

The silver-voiced Bellbirds, the darling of day-time!
They sing in September their songs of the Maytime;
When shadows wax strong, and the thunderbolts hurtle,
They hide with their fear in the leaves of the myrtle;
When rain and the sunbeams shine mingled together,
They start up like fairies that follow fair weather,
And straightway the hues of their feathers unfolden
Are the green and the purple, the blue, and the golden.

October, the maiden of bright yellow tresses,
Loiters for love in these cool wildernesses;
Loiters, knee deep, in the grasses to listen,
Where dripping rocks gleam and the leafy pools glisten;
Then is the time when the water moons splendid
Break with their gold, and are scattered or blended
Over the creeks, till the woodlands have warning,
Of songs of the Bellbird and wings of the morning.

Welcome as waters unvisited by the summers
Are the voices of Bellbirds to thirsty far comers,
When fiery December sets foot in the forest,
And the need of the wayfarer presses the sorest,
Pent in the ridges for ever and ever,
The Bellbirds direct him to spring and to river,
With ring and with ripple, like runnels whose torrents
Are toned by the pebbles and leaves in the currents.

Often I sit, looking back to a childhood,
Mixt with the sights and the sounds of the wildwood,
Longing for power and the sweetness to fashion,

Lyrics with beats like the heart-beats of passion; —
Songs interwoven of lights and of laughs
Borrowed from Bellbirds in far forest rafters;
So I might keep in the city and alleys
The beauty and strength of the deep mountain valleys;
Charming to slumber the pain of my losses
With glimpses of creeks and a vision of mosses.'

'O do let us hunt up the Bellbird!' cried Annie. 'It is sure to be in some lovely cool spot, and near the rippling water.'

Away they went, and hand in hand as children in glee. A slight bell-like laughter from the maiden, however, scared away the Bell-bird. But now came a burst from the Naturalist.

'O, Annie dear, do you see that charming flower. It ought not to be here.'

'And why not, my philosopher?'

'Because, according to all the books, it should have been at home on the western side of the Island, though this is damp and cool enough. But go, and see it.'

The girl was highly delighted with it.

'I have seen it before,' said she, 'and recognize a very dear friend of mine. Though the Waratah of the mountain is called our finest flower, the Tasmanian Lily is my favourite.'

'But the right name, dear, is Blandfordia, being called after the Marquis of Blandford.'

'That may be a recommendation to an aristocrat from England, but we poor, simple girls of the colony would prefer to have it the Tasmanian Lily.'

'But it is not a Lily white.'

'Certainly, I have no ambition to have the pallid delicacy of a London maiden. Our Lily is crimson, you see.'

'And the cheeks of my Tasmanian Lily are crimson, also,' said the fond lover. He was called to order, however, as his botanical ardour led his lips to the crimson cheeks of the Lily, and was told that his improper conduct had unnecessarily heightened the colour in blushes.

A very close inspection of the Blandfordia took place. The stalk rose nearly a yard high, and carried an umbel of from ten to a score of pendulous flowers an inch long, and good width, of a glorious colour; part being of deep crimson, and the tips of yellow. The calyx was tubular, and the stamens were hidden in the hanging bell.

'And now, Horace, as you have seen the Tasmanian Lily at last, what do you think of it?'

'You know, my dearest,' he replied, 'that it is our privilege to look beyond the form to the spirit, from the sensuous to the ideal, without

losing respect and regard for the suggesting object. So must I acknowledge my pleasure in this dear flower; though my heart of hearts is pledged in dearest love for that which it humbly typifies, — my own betrothed Tasmanian flower and Lily.’

The young lady was subdued by this violent attack, and might have looked a speech, if she could not have spoken one then, had not a shrill *coo-ee* aroused them to a consciousness of the outer world.

Immediately after Tom's voice was heard.

‘Why, Horace, you must have lost yourself. Julia and I have been hunting for you everywhere. All wait for you. Everything is packed, and you must pack up sharp.’

The pair gave a radiant glance at each other, and then left the Blandfordia to its solitude. Though both joined in laugh and song with their friends on the road homeward, they each dreamed, at silent moments, of the last scene of the *pic-nic*.

The parting words of Horace that evening were —
‘Good-bye, my dear Tasmanian Lily.’

Chapter XXVII. A Bachelor's Farm.

MR ROBERTS had made his selection of a thousand acres on the western side of the Huon River, and had gone upon it. Horace had engaged to pay a visit and concluded to do so before any wedding entanglements came in the way.

The ordinary Huon River steamer ran thither at convenient intervals, and Mr Roberts proposed a certain place for meeting, at which horses would be in readiness. Horace contrived to lessen his regret at leaving a certain lady, by stealing away the lover from her sister, Tom having consented to accompany his mate for a holiday.

The voyage was favourable. Mount Nelson welcomed them out of the harbour, and the charming Brown's River district was passed an hour after. Bruni Island then lay to the left, as the varied woody heights rose successively on the other side. Tom, as a colonial native, knew all the points, and was fluent in description.

'Look!' said he, as they peeped into a pretty little bay on the western shore. 'That is Oyster Cove. The last resting-place of our Blacks was here. The last of my dark-skinned Tasmanian countrymen died here, though the last man of the tribes dropped off, through drink, in Hobart Town a year or two ago.'

'How came they down here?'

'They were brought down from Flinders Island, in Bass's Strait. A good many had been landed there after the Black War, and there they were to have been civilized, while kept away from bad and dangerous Whites, who had hunted them on the mainland.

'And what success attended the effort?'

'They were civilized off the earth, Horace. The old folks wouldn't live, and the young folks never filled up their places.'

'That would certainly make short work of the tribes.'

'It did. The remnant were led down here, so as to be better looked after, as it was hoped. But they died after the same fashion. One tough old woman has seen the rest off the scene.'

'Is that our Lalla Rookh?'

'The very same ideal beauty. Strange enough, right across the channel here, on the Bruni side, is the place where Government made a blacks' settlement just forty years ago. They were put under the care of a good fellow, George Robinson, who afterwards got some of them to go with

him after the wild tribes.'

'Why did he do that?'

'To save their throats. Lots of parties were out after them, getting five pounds a head from Government. But for one caught, a dozen or score were murdered. The rest burnt and killed in revenge. Robinson bravely went seeking to get them in. He had some narrow escapes.'

'But did he gain them over?'

'He did after great difficulty, and had the satisfaction of bringing them in *mobs*, at various times, to Hobart Town.'

'So these were the Flinders Island settlers.'

'Yes, and settled for they were to a dead certainty.'

'How sad it seems that not a man survives!' exclaimed Horace.

'That sounds all well enough now; but I have heard my father tell such dreadful tales of the old Black War of Van Diemen's Land, that I for one am glad enough they have shifted to the hunting-grounds above.'

'But surely, Tom, you would not defend the cruelties of the people who stole their country, robbed them of their wives, and shot them down like dogs.'

'It is rather shocking, I admit. We might have handled them more delicately. Still, as my uncle was killed by them, you see, I don't look amicably on them.'

'And I am free to confess that I should not have enjoyed Tasmania with the apprehension of a spear coming into one's back, whenever I ventured out botanizing.'

'Nor if you had chosen a fair lady to accompany you upon the occasion. The spear might chose to go her road instead of yours.'

The bluff old captain here interrupted the talk. He had his yarns to deliver about things in general and shipwrecks in particular.

'This channel is deceitful enough. It is quite gentle now, but roars loud enough sometimes. We have had some horrid wrecks here. I shan't forget the "Enchantress" some thirty or forty odd years ago.'

'What were the particulars?' asked Horace.

'She was coming up in a stiff gale when she got foul of a rock. One boat got off right enough, but the other was swamped alongside the ship, and went down with it. The first could not land because of a heavy sea, and stood off all night. Even then it must have been swamped more than once by the heavy surf, only for a fat old lady who sat in the stern with a big shawl over her. The sea broke against that stout defence, and so the crew were landed in safety.'

'Give us the yarn, Captain, about the "George the Third,"' said Tom.

'Ah! that was a deal worse. She was full of prisoners, and struck not far off, and in the same year as the "Enchantress." The masts went overboard. The long boat, when got out, was washed right upon deck again. The prisoners were fastened down below. Poor fellows! they

begged so hard to be let come up. But the soldiers fired in among them as they attempted a rush. However, the bulwarks giving way opened a back door to them, and some got upon deck. Out of 209 convicts, 128 were lost. Besides these, there were only three children and a couple of soldiers drowned.'

The entrance of the Huon River was magnificent, and worthy of so fine a stream. As the vessel moved up, a vast cloud of noisy Black Cockatoos threw a deep shadow upon the water. The dense vegetation on both sides of the river was occasionally opened out by little patches of farms. A large amount of the land had been formerly purchased by Lady Franklin, and let out upon favourable leases to persons of good character.

The two young men were landed. Their hearty and merry friend was there to greet them, and the horses were mounted without delay.

'Now youngsters,' said Mr Roberts, 'I have but one word of advice. Mind your bridle. M'Adam has not visited this quarter, nor did the Romans form the road. Nothing but a bridle track is before you.'

Tom looked ahead, and replied: —

'I don't think we shall lose our way, for the forest is too thick on both sides. But we might break our necks.'

'Never do that yourself, lad. In this country it has been the exclusive privilege of Jack Ketch. But don't let your horse go into a devotional frame of mind, for his knees need be of future service to me.'

The forest was thick. The gum trees were of enormous magnitude. Some ran two hundred feet and more to the first branch, presenting a barrel as straight as a pine. Brushwood filled up the country below, and hid the soil from the sight of the sun. Constant moisture and a mild climate had developed this mass of growth.

Tom had a tale to tell about a big tree found near the Huon by a clergyman, who came suddenly upon it in one of his botanical ramblings. The height was four hundred feet. He measured the girth at six feet from the ground, and found it to be one hundred and two feet.

'What timber for ship-building!' cried Horace.

'What timber for posts and rails, I say!' rejoined the settler. 'I want these, and am not reduced to the Robinson Crusoe necessity of boat-building here.'

'But how ever do you get your stores up to your farm, Mr Roberts?' inquired Horace.

'Not this road, you may be sure. Government talk of making one here some day; but, at present, I find it easier for drays round by Port Davey. That route is bad enough, as ranges, creeks, marshes, bog holes, and forests lie between the sea and my place.'

'Then, whatever made you take up such land?'

'Two reasons, my lad; first, because the land when you get to it is good, and secondly, because I wanted something to fight against.'

'You've got that anyhow,' said Tom, with a grin.

It was a heavy ride, and not without adventures. A road it was called; but the stones in one part, and deep mire in another, made what the settler termed a diversion. Here was a fearfully steep decline, and there a hazardous spring upon rocks. Water courses came plunging across the track, and larger streams were forded, as Tom expressed it, without a bottom.

The country fell again, the timber became less compact, and the clearing was at length reached. Few trees, comparatively, encumbered the ground. Thanks to the straight-barrelled timber, posts and rails had been easily obtained for the enclosure of the farm.

The house was by no means a mean homestead. It was of wood, of course, but it was nicely fitted up. Mutton-chops, damper, and tea were forthwith prepared, and duly dispatched. A famous wood-fire burned in the deep fire-place, for the evenings were chilly down there, as the cool breath of mountains and forests visited the farm.

It was soon time for bed, for Bush hours are early. The *shake-down* was pronounced much better than had been calculated upon by the young men. With the morning magpie they rose, and had a hearty breakfast. Then they mounted, and inspected the estate.

Mr Roberts had done wonders in a short time. His ardour of mind, his great activity, his fertility of resources, as well as right-down muscular exertion, had been called into requisition. The man had delighted himself in the contest with obstacles which he surmounted. Out superintending his men, and taking full part in the toil, he experienced a pleasure that amply repaid him. Full of vigorous health, he ate and slept well. His time was too much engaged to hang upon his hands.

'But why, Mr Roberts, should you undergo all this hardship, and this isolation from society?' Horace demanded, when they returned to the house.

'Do you think, youngster, that, because fathers are fools enough to wear themselves out to make a fortune for their sons to make worse fools of themselves with, a man can't fell a tree, and clear a rod of ground, for the fun of it?'

'Yes, but you used to be so fond of society.'

'That may be, for it's all well in its place. But I am fond of myself too, and mean now to give myself a treat.'

'There's a nut to crack,' said Tom.

Mr Roberts here opened the door of a cupboard, which revealed a very fair library. Horace at once undertook a survey. He then exclaimed, with astonishment,

'Why, Mr Roberts, half your books are mathematical.'

'They are, lad. Here, I'll let you into a secret. When I was a youngster I was fond of figures. I had to go to work to help a widowed mother, and

not indulge in fancies of my own. After some years I entered the Indian Civil Service, and so had the happiness of forming a friendship with your father. Health broke down, and I came to Tasmania. Not able to be idle, I took Government service here. I regained health, and enjoyed years of social pleasure. Then I resolved to carry out my *fad*. I have come to this outlandish place because I can have work I like, and because I can study mathematics without let or hindrance.'

'But pardon me, sir,' said Horace, 'at your time of life you cannot mean to enter a profession.'

'There you are again. All for filthy lucre, and honour, and glory. No, I study my Euclid, my algebra, my trigonometry, for the same reason that you fellows go courting — because I like it. A man courts an angel, and marries a slattern, a fool, or worse. Now figures are honest fellows, and the three angles of every triangle are always equal to two right angles. That sort of truthfulness pleases me beyond everything, and I can find nothing of it in other studies, nor in society.'

'Yet you can't always be satisfied with tree-felling and mathematics.'

'Do you intend, Horace, to give up that girl after you have been married a few years?'

'Certainly not, sir; we shall be more closely bound together the longer we live.'

'Pretty sentiment, my lad. Give me credit, therefore, for sticking to my pursuits for the same reason. I don't think I can tire of geometry so soon as most men tire of their wives. I shall never be jealous of that mistress, never complain of extravagant expenditure, and never get a curtain lecture. The odds are in my favour.'

The visit, though brief, was heartily enjoyed. But both the young fellows believed their lot would be happier than the old bachelor's in the forest. He nevertheless, was perfectly content. He had his hobby, and what can a man want for more?

When the ramblers returned, and had told their tale, Captain Douglas joked his wife about her prophecy of his friend's misery.

'And pray, John, is not the poor fellow a real object of sympathy? There he is buried in the Bush. He is not only without a wife to solace his solitude, but is so lost to a real conception of happiness as to believe himself comfortable in that miserable condition. I pity him the more, poor fellow.'

'So do I, my dear,' said her spouse. 'Roberts is just the fellow to make a woman happy, as I have always said. The sad thing is, that he won't consent to be a martyr to fulfil that destiny.'

'Why, John, I am quite ashamed of you!' exclaimed the wife. 'You really don't deserve a good wife yourself.'

'But I have got one, though,' was his complacent reply.

Chapter XXVIII. The Double Marriage.

THE young men continued to pay their visits to the same cottage, and the young ladies continued to take pleasure in such visits.

The next step was a visit across between the respective friends. The mother of Horace was decidedly pleased with the mother of the Tasmanian Lily, and cordially adopted Annie as her daughter prospective. The parents of the young man had some private conversation about the future.

‘But you know, my dear,’ said the captain, ‘That Horace is only a little over two and twenty, and I was a dozen years older when I married you.’

‘And better, perhaps, if you had been married a dozen years before,’ was the lady's reply.

‘Then in that case you would not have been the unfortunate victim, as eight is too young even in India. But I suppose the lad must do as he likes. He has no *service* to forbid the banns, as I had.’

‘You forget, also, my dear John, that Horace has positively no ambition, and this country is so cheap to live in. He will never want, you know; and if he should have a family, and need do more, he will not have the difficulty here in increasing his store. He has given proof that he is not an idler even now, when there is no occasion for his labour, by his plan drawing engagements half the week in Hobart Town.’

‘You are right there, my dear; a young man who finds himself occupation suitable to his talents, when there is no absolute need for it, is not likely to be wanting when urgency pleads.’

‘Then you have no objection to his early marriage?’

‘I should object in England or in India, but not here. Public feeling is in favour of the thing in the colonies, as bread and butter are easier procured, and young folks are not supposed to set up a palace at starting.’

‘And a great deal better for all parties. There would be more happiness as well as virtue if the same system were adopted at home.’

‘But that cannot be, my dear, as Mrs Grundy lives there. I suppose your boy and you have had all this matter over between you.’

‘He asked my opinion about an early marriage, but supposed you would laugh at the thing. The young lady's mother and I have talked together, and we have but one wish, that of seeing our children happy.’

‘Yet there's another pair; how are matters there?’

‘O, Mr Tom Turner and Julia first started the idea. The young man

declared he never meant courting on an indefinite period to please other people. In his own jocular style he said that, having hooked a fish, it was absurd to keep it dangling in the water till somebody else had hooked one, or till it was thought proper to land it in the boat.'

'Just like Tom. He is an independent fellow, doing well, and having no occasion to tremble before Mrs Grundy. Then that fellow has got our Horace over to his way of thinking I suppose.'

'Very likely; though, when I spoke to Annie upon the subject, I saw her mind had been made up.'

'Ha, ha! like Tom, she saw no necessity to keep the flatfish she had caught dangling on the hook, but preferred having it in her own keeping.'

'She never said that, John. But, in her laughing way, she pitied me for having evidently lost all control over the wayward young man; and, out of concern for me, was willing to try her own hand at discipline.'

'That is like her merry soul. I'll tell you what, wife, she has more sense than most girls. She will help to keep us old folks alive, my dear.'

'I quite expect you two will get on merrily enough together.'

'Yes, I am so set upon having as much of her company as I can, that I am thinking of adopting the system of some Indian Islanders, by putting up a hut on the top of ours for the young folks to live in.'

'Really, how you do talk. But I have had that subject over with Annie. There is a sweet little cottage to let, on the road to town. It has four rooms and a lean-to kitchen. There is a pretty little garden and a snug little harbour.'

'I see how the cat is going to jump. Now, have you not, you two, bespoken that cottage? Out with the truth.'

'Well, we have seen the landlord.'

'Then I can make another guess. The day is already fixed, and pretty near too.'

It was in vain that the good woman tried to keep the secret. The captain had solved the enigma. He laughed heartily at his wife's good-humoured confusion, — but said —

'I am perfectly disgusted with your duplicity, madam. And what can I think of Annie after this? It is a dark conspiracy against the future peace of your husband and son.'

When, however, the said Annie dropped in at Rosebank half-an-hour after, the salute of the old gentleman, and his boisterous mirth, did not betray a revengeful spirit on his part. On the contrary, he appeared to enter enthusiastically into the conspiracy.

The cottage was taken, for the day was now approaching.

It will be regarded as an unheard of thing, that two lovers should have passed through no dreadful trials, should have encountered no hideous monsters in human shape, — escaping, in short, the perils of poison, murder, adultery, abduction, suicide, and bigamy, — during the whole

course of their courtship. Everybody knows that one, two, or the whole, of the half-dozen evils ought to have been endured, to have made the marriage delightful, and the story interesting to the world.

Yet so it was. Horace had not been ambitious for a sensational courtship; though Annie declared herself perfectly disappointed, for she had not even enjoyed the small consolation of a lovers' quarrel.

Tom took higher ground. He was not going to be imposed upon. He wanted no theatrical scene. If another lady, jealous of his Julia, had waylaid him, and threatened him with any of the aforesaid six misfortunes, and even with an addition to that number, he meant, he said, to defend himself like a man and a Tasmanian.

A Colonial marriage is conducted upon the British model. At anyrate, there is a bridegroom, and there is a bride. There is the inevitable cake, and the inevitable fun. The carriages may not have quite an equal style in Tasmania, and yet not be far behind it.

But what a profusion of flowers! The orange blossom is not forgotten, but is duly honoured there.

Of course the two couples were arraigned together, and at the common bar. It is worthy of remark, that all the victims were resigned to their fate, and submitted to the bonds of matrimony without a struggle.

The wedding breakfast was had on the lawn in front of Captain Douglas's cottage. How could such bounding spirits be kept within four stiff walls! Then only think how many had to be accommodated! There were the immediate connections of the couples in question, the friends of the couples, the neighbours of the couples, and the children of almost everybody for miles around. Only a lawn, and such a lawn, — could have served for the spread.

But how thankful everybody was that everybody else had been invited!

Speeches there were, songs there were, and jokes there were. But there was no jealousy, envy, malice, or other sort of uncharitableness. All came to be happy, and were so. Only one critical remark was made upon ladies' dresses; — always excepting the encomiums upon the lovely appearance of the lovely brides.

Tom's speech was the crack one of the day, and made a deep impression upon the susceptible breasts of Tasmanian young fellows. He closed an eloquent oration by the touching appeal of —

‘GO, AND DO THOU LIKEWISE.’
