

Settlers and Convicts
or, Recollections of Sixteen Years' Labour in the Australian
Backwoods

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Advertisement.

IT is almost unnecessary to state that, though published anonymously, the truth of the accounts given in this little work may be fully depended upon; and the Author can substantiate all the great facts by an exact reference to the names, dates, and places. Of course this would be unwillingly done, on account of the ill-feeling that it would inevitably engender. He has carefully endeavoured to avoid the possibility of the identification of the parties whose actions are the subject of his remarks. His object has been rather to draw attention to a system than to interest by the detail of his mere private adventures.

Settlers and Convicts; Or, Recollections
of Sixteen Years' Labour in the Australian
Backwoods.

Chapter I. Arrival at Sydney.

Perambulation of Sydney — The market — Dungaree settlers over their pipes — The wharfs — The harbour by moonlight — The St. Giles's of Sydney

IN 33° 48' S. lat. and 151° 17' E. long. the precipitous mountain-like wall of rocky coast of New South Wales is broken by a gigantic chasm; the crags on the south side are called the South Head, those on the north the North Head. Passing between the two, the voyager finds himself navigating a capacious arm of the sea, with both the banks picturesque as fairy land. Here points bare, grey, and bolder heaped jut out into the stream; and there the waters retire back into deep bays, mazing off among shores clad with evergreens and winding away into far-off tortuous channels, that to the mariner's glass yield back nothing but a tale of thwart-currents and impenetrable shadows. Piloted dexterously up the main inlet, passing the Sow and Pigs (a larger and some smaller sunken rocks dangerously scattered in the channel), and sailing on past Garden and Pinchgut islands (two small scrub clad piles of hoary stones, each standing solitary amidst the whistling winds of the Stream), you come, after several miles, to the town of Sydney. The main stream goes onward, forming the Paramatta, and, in a minor branch, the Lane Cove rivers: over a great ridge-backed promontory, that stands out in no easily describable shape among the irregular waters on the left, is scattered the town of Sydney; adjacent to which in the broad waters of the harbour is Goat Island, an insulated rock famous in the records of convict discipline. On getting sight of Sydney you see a waterside town scattered wide over upland and lowland, and if it be a breezy day the merry rattling pace of its manifold windmills, here and there perched on the high points, is no unpleasing sight. It gives, even from the distance, a presage of the stirring, downright earnest life (be it for good or evil) that so strongly characterizes the race that lives, and breathes, and strives around: a race with whom it is one of the worst reproaches to be *a crawler*. Looking a little more narrowly at the town you observe that it has several very large piles of building; the most of these, as may be supposed, are offices erected by the Government with the profusion of convict labour which it has had at its command, and with no stint of an excellent free working sandstone, which breaks up in masses through the

ground in every quarter of Sydney, and on every shore of the hill bound bays of the adjacent country. Toward the extremity of the promontory on which Sydney is built the ground is very steep and lofty in the middle; and this, together with a concurrent tendency in the flats presented in places by the freestone strata, has led to ranging the houses in this part of the town in a series of terraces rather than streets. Anchoring just under the *south* side of this acclivity, off the King's Wharf, you observe most of the rows of houses looking down upon you from above one another's roofs. A moderately wide street is left in front of each row, but so full of shelves and jump-ups as to be of little use except to foot-passengers; and even to require for their accommodation, in many places, sets of steps cut in the rock or laid more regularly by the mason.

It was just as twilight darkened into the night of an evening in early summer of the year 182—,* that the good ship ——, in which I had made my passage from London, dropped anchor in the very spot I have indicated, a few fathoms off shore abreast of the King's Wharf. My apprenticeship to a ——, in the city of London, had just terminated, and I had a very good knowledge of house-carpentering beside. Of course my reason for emigrating to New South Wales was the hope of bettering my condition. I had been informed, and I found it correct, that very much higher wages than those given in England were earned by mechanics in this colony: consequently I had no occasion, upon arrival, to regret on this account the step I had taken. My last near relative had died a few months before my indentures expired, and had left me something more than 130*l.* in cash, to be paid on my reaching the age of twenty-one: this was only three months after my apprenticeship expired. After laying out about 40*l.* in clothing, a few standard books to read on the voyage, and such sea-necessaries of the eatable and drinkable sort as were not supplied by the ship, I thought myself very fortunate in obtaining a good passage in the steerage for 25*l.* By the advice of the person who negotiated my passage, I took a letter of credit for the remainder of my money on a gentleman who was represented to me as being one of the most respectable settlers in the colony. My disappointment and inquietude may be easily imagined when, on going on shore the evening of my arrival in Sydney, and making inquiries at the Australian Hotel for the address of this individual, I was informed that he was an insolvent, and that, from what was as yet publicly known of his affairs, it was expected he would pay but a very small dividend. If I had not the reflectiveness of age, however, I had the hopefulness of youth; and as I happened to have made inquiries about the condition and remuneration of my trade in the colony, previously to those which met so discouraging an answer, the blow from one source was, to a certain extent, compensated by the support derived from the other. Partly also I was a little ashamed to show all I felt, for I had a companion ashore with me

who was rather more fond of laughing at people's misfortunes than of consoling the sufferers under them. After smoking a couple of cigars and being initiated into that frightfully pernicious but common habit of the colony, drinking rum neat out of wine-glasses, we went out, dark as it was, for a stroll down the town. My companion was the second mate of the vessel, and had visited Sydney twice before; and as ships generally stopped five or six weeks there, he had had every opportunity of becoming well acquainted with the place. At this period Sydney was but ill lighted: only a few lamps were scattered throughout the whole length of George Street (the main thoroughfare), which, from the King's Wharf to the end of the houses at the foot of the Brickfield Hill, can scarcely be less than a mile and three-quarters.

As we walked down George Street we found Sydney, according to custom during the first hour of a summer's night, all alive, enjoying the cool air. The street was clear of vehicles, and parties of the inhabitants, escaped from desk and shop, were passing briskly to and fro, in full merriment and converse. At the main barrack-gate the drums and fifes of the garrison were sounding out the last notes of the tattoo. In Sydney the barracks occupy a noble sweep of ground in the very centre of the town; the best spot, in fact, for general commercial purposes that it a spot that really ought, without further delay, to be resigned to the corporation for those many important uses to which it could under their direction be applied. Leaving the long line of barrack-wall behind us we at length reached the market-place. The fine building that now occupies the spot under the same name, was then not even in projected existence; but the settlers drove their drays into the open area amidst the old shed-like stalls that here and there stood for the occupation of dealers; and the whole was surrounded by the remains of a three-rail fence. As we wandered through the rows of drays and carts I could not but remark a striking difference between them and the contents of the carts of any general market for the produce of the land at home. There was no hay, but its place was abundantly supplied by bundles of green grass, much of it almost as coarse as reeds, and evidently produced by a very wet, rank soil. In other carts we found loads of such vegetables as the country and the season yielded; some of these, we were given to understand, were grown in the Curryjong Mountains, no less a distance from Sydney than forty miles. In several carts we found sacks of last year's maize; and in a very few, some sacks of last year's wheat. Two drays only were loaded with new wheat, and these, we were told, were the property of rich settlers. It was very much the custom of the poorer settlers at this time, and indeed is so still, to sell all or the greater part of the wheat they grow, and live upon their Indian corn. This I was much surprised at before necessity, at a future period, had compelled my palate to reconcile itself to the peculiar flavour of maize-flour, cooked in its various modes; but

once used to it, I have always since eaten it with much relish, and have consequently ceased to wonder at its common use by others. It is a common assertion, that the poor Australian settler (or, according to colonial phraseology, the *Dungaree*-settler; so called from their frequently clothing themselves, their wives, and children in that blue Indian manufacture of cotton known as *Dungaree*) sells his wheat crop from pure love of rum; and having drunk the proceeds, then of necessity lives the rest of the year on maize. But this seems to be only partially true. The fact appears rather, that wheat being the most costly grain, many eat maize from economy, selling the wheat to procure meat, tea, sugar, tobacco, and clothing; and few persons who have tasted the deliciousness of a corn-doughboy eaten with the salt pork which constitutes so large a portion of their animal diet, will consider their taste altogether perverted.

After our cursory look at the market — if look it could be called which was performed in the dark — we went into “The Market-house.” I really forget whether this was its name by licence or whether it was merely so called on account of being the principal rendezvous of the market-people. It, however, was a regular licensed public-house; but I should suppose at this time there were nearly twice as many unlicensed grog-shops as licensed public-houses in the town of Sydney, in despite of the constables and a heavy fine. In the large tap-room of the Market-house (which we entered more for the purposes of curiosity than anything else) we found a strange assemblage; and stranger still were their dialect and their notions. Most had been convicts: there were a good many Englishmen and Irishmen, an odd Scotchman, and several foreigners, besides some youngish men, natives of the colony. Amongst them was present here and there a woman, apparently the wife of a settler. The few women were all sober and quiet, but many of the men were either quite intoxicated or much elevated by liquor. The chief conversation consisted of vaunts of the goodness of their bullocks, the productiveness of their farms, or the quantity of work they could perform. Almost everybody was drinking rum in drams, or very slightly qualified with water; nor were they niggard of it, for we had several invitations from those around us to drink. I could not however, even at this early period of my acquaintance with this class of people, help observing one remarkable peculiarity common to them all — there was no offensive intrusiveness about their civility; every man seemed to consider himself just on a level with all the rest, and so quite content either to be sociable or not, as the circumstance of the moment indicated as most proper. The whole company was divided into minor groups of twos, threes, and fours, and the *dudeen* (a pipe with stem reduced to three, two, one, or half an inch) was in everybody's mouth. I think there was not an individual in the room, but one female, who did not smoke more or less, during the brief

time we sat there. Their dresses were of all sorts: the blue jacket and trousers of the English lagger, the short blue cotton smock-frock and trousers, the short woollen frock and trousers, fustian jacket and trousers, and so forth, beyond my utmost power of recollection. Some wore neck-handkerchiefs; some none. Some wore straw hats, some beavers, some caps of untanned kangaroo-skin. And not a shin in the room that displayed itself to my eyes had on either stocking or sock. Of course I speak here only of the very lowest class; such as were derived from the lowest rank at home, and who, whatever advantages they had had in the colony, still continued unexalted by improved opportunities, unstimulated by hope, and making no efforts beyond what were necessary to supply their mere animal wants. To the same mart came down others in various degrees superior; many, particularly among the young natives, of plain but solid worth: but this was not the place to meet with them.

In traversing George Street to this point we had, to speak without very great exactness, run down the middle of the neck of land on which I have (for want of a better term) described Sydney as being built. Having started with the vessel on our left hand, my friend proposed that we should now strike right across from George Street to the other principal wharf, the market wharf. For as the King's wharf lies toward the seaward end of the promontory on the one side, so the market wharf lies nearly at the landward end on the opposite; just below the higher ground where the market is held, and within good bow-shot of it. To it come great numbers of market boats to unload the various produce of the settlers' farms on the Paramatta and Lane Cove rivers, and the circumjacent country. The boats also that come from up and down the coast, outside the harbour, unload here. Amongst the chief cargoes to this wharf is timber, of which great quantities always lie stacked upon the quay. It may be said generally, that it is the wharf for articles of home produce, and, therefore, clear of duty; whilst to the King's wharf more usually comes foreign merchandise. One of the excellences of the site of Sydney is that either deep water washes the rock on which it is built, or, where it does not, a good depth can with very little difficulty be artificially obtained by a short jetty. And as the circumference of the promontory, without going minutely into bays and inlets, must be at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, this really amounts to the town having a wharf of that length; at the same time the vessels are sheltered very nearly as entirely as if in dock, and there is good anchorage. All this, however, I knew not then; but it gave me no little delight at the time, to find that I had come across the land to what seemed another sea. There was not a creature on the wharf but ourselves, and the continual melancholy plash of the flooding tide, among the boats that lay moored in numbers close together, made the hour and the scene appear more lonesome still. The moon was just glinting over the dark wooded hills, so

that I could plainly enough see the masses of forest on the opposite shore. What a wonderful advance had this same locality experienced when, a few years afterwards, I bade adieu to it for England! This solitary landing-place had become a street, and busy steamers at the same hour came roaring past with their teeming cargoes from the northern and southern settlements. The British Government cannot understand the value of the Australian colonies, or it would never treat them as it does.

My guide and self now pursued our way, in a retrograde direction, along the side of the waters of Darling Harbour, then called Cockle Bay, until we reached a position parallel to which, on the opposite side, our vessel lay anchored. We then struck right up across the ridge toward it, or rather, as nearly straight across as crags and quarries, and rows of houses would allow. My guide had brought me this way, to point out to me another of the low-life sections of Sydney; in fact, its St. Giles's and Wapping in one. From the earliest times of the settlement there congregated on the steep ridge above the King's wharf all the worst characters of this penal colony — the felon, whose ill-directed punishment had only rendered him more obdurate, cunning, and slothful; the prostitute, who (if such a thing can be) had sunk yet lower; the *fence*, watching for a livelihood by plundering the plunderer; many who, without great positive vices, a sort of brutelike ignorance and uncouthness had rendered it impossible for more orderly and rational society to amalgamate with itself; and many drawn into the vortex of ruin through their mere want of direction, or energetic resolve for either good or evil. To these it is painful to be compelled to add British sailors, who, admitted into no respectable company in the ports where they land, naturally seek female society, where only they can find it, in the brothel. Such were the inhabitants of the section of the town we here passed through. We went into two houses, the one called "The Black Dog," a licensed house, the other close beside it, an old dilapidated place, properly enough called "The Sheer Hulk," which had been deprived of its licence on account of the practices and characters admitted by its landlord; it was, however, still occupied, and as the occupier was no longer under the apprehension of losing his licence, the scenes displayed nightly were of tenfold worse character than ever. So that detection and legal evidence were evaded, all that was cared for by the scoundrel who held it was attained. At the present time I shall not enter into further description of this den, than by remarking that we found it full to suffocation of the lowest women, sailors, and ruffians, who supported themselves by waylaying and robbing and often murderously wounding any intoxicated sea officer, newly-arrived emigrant, or up-country settler, who might chance to wander into their infernal precinct; and as part of the occupation of the women was to act as lures, of course this was no rare occurrence. The door was kept barred, and there was an outlet

behind up the rocks. Hereafter, an incident in the course of my narrative will render it necessary for me to give a more particular account of the forlorn and infamous abodes of this part of the town. This night we soon left them, and passed down into George Street: here we parted — my companion to his duties on board the ship, as he had only obtained leave for four hours; I to the bed I had engaged at the Australian hotel, a few yards from the wharf.

* In order to avoid giving any personal offence, blanks are left in this and all similar cases, so as to avoid any identification. The *facts* are all with which the public are interested.

Chapter II. Convict Discipline.

Magistrates' law in former times — Dark doings at iron-gangs — Military justices — A flogging-scene at Bathurst Gaol — Flogging to extort confession — A prosecutor and judge all in one

BEFORE proceeding with the account of my personal adventures, it is necessary that I should inform the reader of a circumstance which gave me my first and ineradicable impression of the system of convict discipline maintained in the Australian colonies at this time. A gentleman, through misfortunes reduced to the inferior condition of a farm overseer, who had originally come to the colony in possession of a very good property, breakfasted in the same room with me at the Australian hotel. As I was looking over the police reports in 'The Sydney Gazette,' our conversation was led to the subject of convict discipline, and then took in substance the following turn. This gentleman is still alive, though very aged. His character for perseverance and integrity obtained for him, about three years subsequently, a lucrative situation, and finally extensive credit, from his employer, a Sydney merchant. These advantages he so well husbanded that he will in all probability leave his family in independence. My knowledge of the man therefore would put it out of my power to doubt the trustworthiness of his statements, if even I had met no confirmation of them from my own observations.

"You may wonder, my lad," he said, "at what you read about the treatment of prisoners: most people do when they first come. But you'll see things yet up the country that these Sydney doings are only child's play by the side of."

"You don't mean to say," I replied, "that I shall meet with anything worse than this case I have just read? Here is an offence called by three different names; three several charges are made upon it; three several trials, three several sentences, and three several punishments following! A man gets drunk, has his clothes stolen, and is afraid to go home to his master: he is tried first for drunkenness, a second time for making away with his clothing, and a third time for absconding. His sentence is in sum total one hundred lashes, which with the cat-o'-nine-tails is really nine hundred lashes."

“Why, I have known the same act to be called by *five* different names, and *five* sentences passed upon the prisoner for it. It was in the case of a government servant belonging to a magistrate near me. The man, as in the case you read, had got a drop of liquor from a travelling dealer; his master's son, a very pert young fellow, began to curse at and threaten him; the man retorted; a constable was sent for, whom he knocked down and escaped from. He then ran off into the bush, taking with him, as he passed his own hut, about three parts of a cake he had by him ready baked. The young fellow prosecuted him for drunkenness, insolence, theft (the piece of bread, for rations are considered the master's till used), and bushranging; and then the magistrate made the constable swear the assault against him. He got twenty-five lashes for drunkenness, twenty-five for insolence, fifty for bushranging, six months to an iron-gang* for stealing the cake, and three months for assaulting a peace-officer in the execution of his duty. The flogging he got before going to the iron-gang frightened him; and on receiving sentence for some trivial offence at the iron-gang, he escaped before the punishment was inflicted, took the bush, joined a gang of bushrangers who had arms, committed several robberies with them, was taken with arms in his hands, and hanged. The man was a quiet, hardworking, honest fellow; but he could not stand flogging, and he was fond of liquor. The crime he was sent here for he committed when drunk, and it was perhaps the only one he had to answer for. That man was murdered! And so hundreds upon hundreds have been, and are being, every year in this cursed country. But the system is not now so bad as it used to be. Since Dr. Wardle and young Mr. Wentworth came out, and began to look after the government and the magistrates, there are not such dreadful doings as there used to be in former times.”

“How long have you been here then, Sir?” I inquired.

“Nearly a score years. I have seen a good deal with my own eyes, and that makes me believe other things that I have only been told. And then, again, I have often heard men, after they became free, throw into the teeth of overseers the usage they had received at their hands. I recollect once, in coming over the Blue Mountains, it set in to rain very hard, and by the time we got to the punt at Richmond the Hawkesbury River was up, and there was no getting over. Nearly a hundred of us were gathered together about the public-house at the ferry. And here one of the labouring men recognised an overseer who had been over him at the lime-burners' gang at Newcastle. The overseer stoutly contended that he was not the person; but it was of no use. I made sure he'd have got his brains knocked out, and no doubt he would, had not the landlord shut him up in his room.”

“What had he done?”

“Oh, nothing more than the other overseers, so far as I heard; but certainly that was enough, when we come to consider; for men are men,

and not beasts, let'em be ever such thieves. From all accounts there were some dark doings at that lime-burners' gang. I have heard from twenty sources that Red——, the overseer, was known to have killed a man with a handspike, and was never tried for it. The commandant was as big a brute as he was, and so was not likely to bring him to justice; and the men were all afraid to say anything. It is a well-known fact that they used to ronse up the poor half-starved skeletons of fellows at midnight to load lime, when the boats happened to come in with a night's tide. They used to have to carry the baskets of unslacked lime a great way into the water in loading the boats; by which means many of their backs were raw, and eaten into holes. But that made no difference. The work they must do. The shed they had to sleep in was close by the water-side; and the slabs were so wide apart that you might almost have galloped a horse through. Many of them, at one time, had scarcely a rag of clothes; nothing more indeed than some piece of an old red shirt that they tied round their middle, and neither bed nor blanket. A man who worked for me told me that such was his case for a long time; and that for warmth they used to gather sea-weed off the beach, and spread it some inches thick on the floor of the hut; and numbers of them would turn in together, covering themselves over with it, and getting warmth from the fermentation of the sea-weed: you may say, in short, they buried themselves in a dunghill to keep warm."

"Still, even this was better than so much flogging."

"Ha! but you must understand that the flogging went on full swing along with all this. But the fact is, flogging in this country is such a common thing that nobody thinks anything of it. I have seen young children practising on a tree, as children in England play at horses. I have now got a man under me who received 2600 lashes with the cat in about five years, and his worst crime was insolence to his overseer. The fact is, the man is a red-hot Tipperary man; and when his blood gets up, you could not make him hold his tongue if you were to threaten to hang him. Since I have had him he has never had a lash, just because I take no notice of what he says. The consequence is, there is nothing in the world that man would not do for me if he could. Some years ago, a little way up the country, a man actually died under the eat: of course it was all quietly hushed up."

"But do you really think such things can be true?"

"Why, of course, when I see the very like of them under my own eyes. For instance, there is a lieutenant (a mere boy), who is now magistrate over a gang that are making a road not three miles from the farm where I stop. Whenever this lad means to send a man to the lock-up for the night, he makes the lock-up keeper start three or four buckets of water over the floor, under pretence of keeping it free from vermin, but really for the purpose of tormenting the culprit by compelling him to walk about all

night; and then he will have the poor wretch tied up to the triangles the first thing in the morning, before breakfast. This I know to be true, because I have it from the lock-up keeper himself. The fact is that officers, and especially young officers, when made magistrates, get irritated at the hardihood of a class of men whom they have made up their minds to despise; and the cat being a soldier's natural revenge, they fly to it directly. It is as common, you know, for one soldier to revenge himself upon another by getting him flogged, as it is for women, when they fight, to pull one another's hair."

"One can hardly conceive such things possible."

"Ah! you must not judge of this country by England. What I tell you now, I tell you on the authority of my own eyes. I was sent for to Bathurst Court-house to identify a man supposed to have taken the bush from the farm I have charge of. I had to go past the triangles, where they had been flogging incessantly for hours. I saw a man walk across the yard with the blood that had run from his lacerated flesh squashing out of his shoes at every step he took. A dog was licking the blood off the triangles, and the ants were carrying away great pieces of human flesh that the lash had scattered about the ground. The scourger's foot had worn a deep hole in the ground by the violence with which he whirled himself round on it to strike the quivering and wealed back, out of which stuck the sinews, white, ragged, and swollen. The infliction was a hundred lashes, at about half-minute time, so as to extend the punishment through nearly an hour. The day was hot enough to overcome a man merely standing that length of time in the sun; and this was going on in the full blaze of it. However, they had a pair of scourgers, who gave one another spell and spell about; and they were bespattered with blood like a couple of butchers. I tell you this on the authority of my own eyes. It brought my heart into my mouth."

"Well, I can only say that, for disgusting brutality, it exceeds anything I ever yet heard of as practised under the sanction of British law."

"It is nevertheless true; and many much worse things than any I have yet enumerated are true. For instance, there are some magistrates who habitually flog to compel men to confess anything of which they suppose them guilty. I heard of a case only the other day where a man had several 'fifties,' on several consecutive days, to compel him to confess a robbery. No doubt in many such instances there is a sort of certainty of the man's guilt; but then again there have been very many cases where it turned out that the suspicion was totally unfounded. I know of several poor creatures who have been entirely crippled for life by these merciless floggings; and, which is worst of all, oftentimes for offences which no considerate and right-thinking person would dream of considering heinous and unpardonable. I will give one instance more of the summary jurisdiction of magistrates. The commandant at —— — , a police station

near my hut, was walking out one summer-evening about twelve months ago with his lady; he was in plain clothes, all but his military foraging cap, an article of dress that many private gentlemen wear. Two men accosted him, and asked the way to a farm in the vicinity, to whose owner they had been assigned. Considering they did not address him quite respectfully enough, he gave them some sharp language, which they returned: here-upon, but still without telling them that he was a magistrate, he laid hands on one of them, who immediately tripped him up. On this his lady began to shout out most lustily, which brought the soldiers of the party under his command out of their hut close by. The men were presently seized and confined. The next day the worshipful peace-breaker deposed against them himself, before himself, pronounced them guilty himself, and sentenced them himself to twelve months at an iron-gang.”

At the present stage of my narrative I shall make no remarks of my own upon this subject: proper opportunities for such remarks will, I am sorry to say, but too frequently present themselves to allow the subject to be forgotten.

* Prisoners working in irons.

Chapter III. My First Job in the Colony.

Account of the Five Islands, the Eden of New South Wales — Terms of agreement — Journey up the country — Conflagration of the Bush — A working-man's hut — Musktree — Descent of the Illawarra range — A settler's hut, with travellers lodged for the night — Romantic scenery — Awkward bridge — A stock-station hut — A sample of the population

IMAGINE the delight with which, after being unsuccessful for about three weeks, I got my first job in the colony. At the period of my debarkation most of the large settlers were up the country on their farms, it being the season for important farm operations, such as sheep washing, sheep shearing, wool pressing for exportation, reaping, cattle muster, &c.; and besides, I had no acquaintance in Sydney from whom I could hear of employment, or to whom I could make myself known. My engagement at last was more a matter of accident than the result of my own endeavours. The landlord of the public house, where I went every morning to look over the advertisements in hope of finding something that would suit me, had been brought up to the same trade as myself; knowing what kind of work I was seeking, he recommended me to a customer of his who had come up from the Five Islands with a boat load of cedar, and wanted a snug little hut put up for his family; they had been there some time, but had been living, hitherto, under a few sheets of bark.

The Five Islands (by the aborigines much more euphoniously called Illa Warra) is a tract of New South Wales, a short distance south of Sydney, on the sea-coast, and so called from five small islands which lie a short distance off, immediately abreast of it. It may be described loosely as a plot of the richest soil, bounded on one side by the sea, and on the other by enormous masses of mountain, confusedly heaped together. These are covered either with dense dark forests, or low bushy scrub, knee high or higher, with flats of swampy table-land, and gloomy ravines, into whose depths the eye cannot reach. The soil is excellent. I have heard some of the settlers say, that they could dig down 40 feet through the soil of their farms on this seaside tract without finding a stone as large as a pea. Little crystal brooks of the coldest and purest

water, making their way out of the mountain reservoirs above, traverse the ground at all seasons of the year, in their passage to the sea. It was therefore one of the most amiable features of the policy of the best Governor this colony ever had, to give out in this district farms to a number of little settlers; for a poor man's use of land is of course first agricultural, and a fertile soil must be an immense advantage. Amidst the wild dark gullies of the mountain, and along the solitary course of the cool shadowy streams, grew at that time great numbers of rich and massive cedars, the price of the timber of which was so high as to counterbalance in the minds of the hardy working men of the colony the difficulties, toils, and perils of procuring it for the Sydney market.

My agreement with Mr. —— (the settler who now wanted a hut put up) was soon made, for I knew so very little of the customs of the colony that I saw no objections to any thing he proposed. It was stated in the agreement, which was a written one, that I was to proceed to Illa Warra and erect for Mr. —— a house of such or such timber, of so many feet length, so many breadth, and so many height, &c. &c.; in consideration whereof, Mr. —— was to pay me the sum of 75*l.*; supply me with rations at a rate specified for each article; lend me one of his convict servants to assist in cutting down and splitting the timber, and other work requiring two hands; and draw out of the bush the split stuff, &c. as soon as it was ready. The bargain thus far concluded, he told me I could have if I chose an advance of 5*l.* before leaving Sydney, to buy any extra tools I wanted. I then found I should need to buy a cross-cut saw and some other small articles, which however I did with my own money, still having sufficient by me for that purpose; and having seen the tools, my own tool chest, and clothes, &c. aboard the boat, started along with one of Mr. ——'s men by land for the Five Islands.

This man was the convict who was to be my mate. In New South Wales it is not thought any derogation to travel with convict servants; in fact it is often unavoidable. It was a very hot morning, and as we had each a small bundle, our jackets were off before we were two miles over the red dusty hills just out of Sydney. At one or two creeks where we attempted to drink, the water was so dreadfully brackish as to be too nauseous to swallow; and into one of them, from a little branch just above my head, as I was tasting, dropped a yellow snake about a foot long, and as soon as he had accomplished this feat swam over to a hole in the opposite bank, apparently as well pleased to have escaped me as I certainly was to have escaped him. Finding so little relief from the creeks, we resolved to push on to the half-way house and have some refreshment and a smoke. A good heart soon gets through its task; so in little more than a couple of hours we reached our destination. But here, instead of the refreshing beer of Old England, I found I must put up with rum and water; the rum most execrable Bengal. After stopping about half

an hour we lighted our short pipes (for such is the usual travellers' pipe in New South Wales, where every body smokes except ladies) and started again, when less than three hours' walking brought us to Liverpool, beyond which, however, we had still thirteen miles to go to complete our first day's stage. I never wish to have such another walk; by the time we reached Liverpool I had actually ceased to perspire, and was in a high fever; moreover, as is mostly the case, long confinement on shipboard had so unfitted my feet for walking, that they had swelled even to above the ankles so much that at night I could hardly get my half-boots off.

At the suggestion of my companion, we deferred our further journey till the cool of the evening. After dinner, tired and jaded as I was, I could not help taking a stroll round the township, as it was then called. Thirst after knowledge I have always through life found to be one of the most self-rewarding tendencies of our nature; it is one which I would recommend the young to subordinate to nothing but the moral and religious attributes of their minds: but let all who value their virtue, their worth, and the inborn rewards of the mind, take no less care, on the other part, that not the desire of knowledge only, but knowledge itself, be held in watchful and perpetual subservience to the interests of men, and the honour of our Divine Creator. My reader will doubtless say that these are the ruminations of a later day; and he will say aright: they are so — would they were not. But to return: Liverpool was at this time a straggling and pretty little country town, built, one might say, on a green, and with a cool stream gliding along between deep-sloping banks at its side.

Before our departure from the township, about seven in the evening, I heard the people talking of the fire that was burning in the bush, and saw numbers of them assembled in groups, pointing out to each other its progress across the adjacent country. In New South Wales, as the winter days are much longer than they are in high latitudes, so the summer days are much shorter: thus when we were two hours on the road it had become quite dark, and as we were intersecting by that time a tract of bush that the fire had already swept through, I had a full opportunity of examining this, one of the finest sights which tropical countries display. Our road was about the width of an English second-rate turnpike road. Above us the sky was gloomy and still; all round us the far-stretching forests exposed a strange and varied pageant of darkness and fire, accompanied by the crackling of flames and the crash of falling trees. Here was a bridge over a deep creek, now empty with summer drought, with all its huge sleepers glowing in red charcoal and tumbling together into heaps in the channel, and carrying down with them the top layer of slabs that, covered with earth, had been the roadway; over these we had to leap and clamber as we could, unless there was some track down across the creek-bed, by the side of the bridge. Once my companion was

very nearly in a furnace of red charcoal up to his middle, or rather he was in; for the ground sank beneath his feet, and with that admirable presence of mind which a rough life so generally engenders, he flung himself, while sinking, forward on his hands on to a solid spot, and instantaneously drew his legs up after him and sprang forward. Here, again, some huge old tree came thundering down right across the road, and its boughs kindling from the opposite side were in full roaring blaze, lighting up every thing nigh with ruddy brilliance, and throwing into the dense volume of smoke above a red semi-transparency. Farther on again, where the bush was thinner and the materials for ravage more scanty, the fire had nearly subsided; all was obscure and silent, except some single trunk, off in the bush, hollow and old, and headless, through whose chimney-like barrel went upwards with fierce steady roar a volume of flame and crowds of sparks into the blackness of night; and then, all on a sudden, the fire would reach a cluster of tree-heads as yet untouched, and go blazing and crackling and leaping through them until nothing was left for it to devour. The heat was in many places intense, and the smoke in others suffocating; whilst snakes, guanas, bandicoots, opossums, &c. were crossing the road in every direction, each in its natural dumbness or with its wild weak cry of fear. In one place we saw a very large opossum (in the language of the country an old man 'possum) on the edge of a lofty hollow tree trunk, that had been no doubt his home, out of which and alongside him, as he moved to and fro to avoid it, the increasing fire kept ever and anon shooting up its pointed tongues: we stood watching him until the poor animal, no longer able to endure the torture, leaped to the ground, a height of full 40 feet, where to my astonishment, after lying an instant motionless, he picked himself up suddenly, then fell again and rolled over and over three or four times, and finally went off like mad across the bush. I have since found that the gift of these animals in this way is perfectly wonderful; certainly if there is in this world an unconquerable dare-devil animal, it is the old man 'possum, and indeed all his family, mother, sons, and daughters, after their sucking days are over: until then you may tame them. Before we got into Campbell Town, our destination for the night, we met with another and different exemplification of the effects of the fire on dumb animals. One of the commissaries of the colony had ridden his horse out from Campbell Town towards Liverpool, where he resided, as far as where the fire was pretty fierce on each side of the road, and to some distance onward through it; but here the horse became frightened, then restive, and then unmanageable; and when we came up, horse and rider were literally pirouetting together in circles about the road, the commissary on foot, holding the bridle with both hands, and the horse for the most part on two legs also, leading the dance. With a good deal of exertion we succeeded in driving the terrified animal in the same direction as his rider

wished to lead him in, until quite clear of the fire, and then left them.

At nearly twelve o'clock at night we reached our journey's end, a little hut by the road-side just entering the township. Here my fellow-traveller had a brother living, whose lagging (transportation) having occurred some years before his own, he was now free; and had a job of splitting and fencing from the settler to whom the ground belonged. My companion's well-known voice soon aroused the sleeper, who came to the door in his shirt: in his shirt lit the fire; in his shirt got us supper; in his shirt joined us in a feed and a smoke; and in his shirt made our bed, and tumbled into it with us.

But here I must remember that the mysteries of an Australian bedmaking demand somewhat explicit description. I shall not generalise, but speak here of the particular instance alone. The hut itself, which was merely a few sheets of bark stripped from trees, and each varying from the size of a common door to that of double that width by the same length, was but a single area of about 9 feet one way by 6 the other: the roof too was of bark, and of the usual shape. One of the 6-foot ends was a chimney, throughout its whole width, in which the fire was made by logs of any length and thickness available; on the earthen hearth, at the other 6-foot end, was a sort of berth, also of bark, like the bunks on board ship, fixed at about 3 feet from the ground; whilst at the 9-foot side next the road was the door, which likewise was of bark; and at the opposite parallel side was a little table, and that too was of bark, to wit, a sheet about 3 feet one way by 2 the other, nailed on to four little posts driven into the ground, and having of course its inner or smooth side upwards. The architect of the building had used all his materials whilst they were green, so that in seasoning they had twisted into all manner of forms except planes; and as is usually the case the worst example came from the most responsible quarter; the table was the crookedest thing in the whole hut, not excepting the dog's hind leg. Standing about the floor were sundry square-ended round blocks of wood, just as they were first sawn off the tree transversely: they were each about eighteen inches long, and their official rank in the domestic system was equivalent to that of the civilized chair. After a good supper of hot fried beefsteaks, damper bread and tea, which our host, who was a free-hearted, hardworking bush-man, gave with many a "Come, eat, lad, don't be afraid; there is plenty more where this came from," &c., &c., &c. according to the custom of the colony and especially of his class, we betook ourselves to a smoke of good old Brazil, over the latter part of our quart pots of tea; and then at nearly two o'clock my companion reminded his brother that it was "time to pig down." Accordingly our entertainer clearing the floor by making us stand in the chimney, putting the blocks under the table, and giving his dog a kick, which I thought the thing least to his credit that I had seen him do, began to "make the dab." This was accomplished by

stretching his own bed, which was only adapted for a single person, lengthwise across the hut, at about 6 or 7 feet from the fire-place; then laying down across the hut in the same manner between the bed and the fire-place all the old clothes he could muster of his own; and finally over these he spread about half a dozen good sized dried sheepskins with the wool on. These, with a blanket spread over the whole, really made a very tolerable bed. Certainly towards morning I began to feel a good deal as if I were lying with my body in a field and my legs in the ditch beside: however, I have had many a worse lodging between that night and this. For pillow we each had one of the wooden blocks. The blankets were the most patrician class of the accommodations; of these we had three very good ones for covering, but it was not long before the heat of the night compelled us to throw them off, nor much longer before the mosquitoes compelled us to draw one of them on again. Small as these insects are, their sting is so annoying that I do not think either of us would have slept till daylight had not our host at length gone out, in his shirt as ever, and brought in a piece of dried cowdung, which being lit and laid at the further end of the hut kept smouldering on and throwing out a dull peculiar scented smoke for hours. This proved a complete remedy, and one which I never afterwards forgot. I do not know what is the reason, but mosquitoes are proof against strong wood smoke, yet not against this; while at the same time it is not at all seriously offensive to man, but wood smoke is. By about four o'clock in the morning we were fast asleep.

I was awakened by our host coming in from his work to breakfast. It was about eight o'clock, and his brother, who had also been up some time, had lit the fire, boiled a piece of salted beef, baked a cake on the hot hearth, and made the tea. This sort of readiness and activity is a remarkable feature in the character of the working population of the Australian colonies.

After breakfast we lit our pipes, and bidding our hospitable acquaintance good bye, started once more. To his hospitality was added a pressing invitation to me to stop at his hut at any time I might be coming by that way. Our next stage was to Appin, which, the excessively hot day before being succeeded as is often the case in this country by a cloudy and rather bleak one, we accomplished easily by noon: our way still lay between forests in some places, and in others over fine, lofty, cleared, and cultivated hills, along a good turnpike road. After dinner, which we took at the little inn of the settlement, we struck off along a wild bush track, direct for the coast mountains; for it should be stated, although our journey was from one sea-side place to another, we had made it by a wide sweep inland, and not in a direction parallel to the coast; the country immediately behind which, in this part of New South Wales, being so broken and mountainous as to afford no practicable track.

Indeed, I could not but wonder how the road we were now pursuing from Appin towards the coast had been discovered. I was not then aware that the aborigines are so well acquainted with the bush as to be able to point out the most practicable tracks in any direction. After travelling through dense and lofty forests on rich soil, over dwarf brush and scrub on stony hills and sandy plains, bare rocks and rushy swamps, in fact after traversing a line of country as varied in character as can be imagined, we came toward sundown to the entrance of the thick brush of the Illa Warra mountain above Bullie. I recollect one incident that struck me very forcibly as we made our way to the brink of the descent: I suddenly became sensible of a most delicious scent of musk, and on calling my companion's attention to it he stopped and plucked a leaf from a beautiful slender shrub, whose long shoots overhung our path, and gave it me to smell. It was a tree musk-scented, and to such a degree that the leaves I put in my pocket-book and carried away with me retained their agreeable odour when I examined them many months afterwards. We now soon came to the edge of the mountain. At one spot we stood on the brink of a precipice of vast depth, and saw down below us the mighty sea diminished into insignificance, most like the waters of a lower world. The mountain, at the spot where we went down, is pretty closely timbered, and the trees are lofty: no grass grows beneath them, as is usually the case where the forest is sufficiently dense to keep the ground under continual shadow. In the midst of our descent, which was so steep as to compel us in some places to stop ourselves against the trees, I was surprised to recognise the tracks of dray-wheels (drays being the common luggage conveyance of the colony); for it was evidently impossible that any beast could back a dray-load down such a steep. My fellow-traveller however informed me that it had been let down by ropes fixed to the dray, and passed round the trees; the shaft bullock (for oxen are the draught beasts in common use) merely holding up the shafts. I was glad at length to find myself at the foot of the mountain. I think I never felt anything more difficult to bear than the strain on the knee joints, occasioned by this descent; it was not exactly pain, but something worse.

The Australian twilight is short; and it was now become almost dark. Happily we had but a short way to travel before reaching our resting-place for the night. We were now on that flat bordered on the one side by the sea, and on the other limited by the mountain, which I have already mentioned as being the Illa Warra district; and at this particular point it is scarcely a gunshot across. We consequently could hear the measured wash of the sea distinctly through the solemn stillness of the evening forest. A feeling of breathless awe steals over the spirit in traversing these grand and solitary forests amidst the thickening obscurity of evening: and buoyant as my spirits then were, I could not help being

sensible of this influence. Suddenly the quick, cheerful bark of a dog startled the echoes; and in another instant a voice of Irish accent called him back as he came bounding towards us from round the corner of a square low building that was just discernible in the dark. A few more steps and turning the corner of this building we stood at the door of the settler's hut, where we were to stop for the night. It was one of those huts which must be ranked among the remarkable objects of Australian life. Situated on some main track and alone in the midst of the wilderness, one of these little "cribs" necessarily becomes the nightly rendezvous of numbers of travellers. If the traveller have no food with him, a share of what there is is always freely offered him; whether any remuneration is given, depends entirely upon the circumstances and disposition of the parties. If it be a poor man whose hut the wayfaring public has thus invested with the dignity of an inn, persons in good circumstances always make him some present for the accommodation: if it be a settler in tolerably good circumstances who is thus situated, remuneration is not thought so imperative; but in either case if the traveller be a poor man, he is welcomed to whatever there may be, and nothing is expected from him in return. The same hospitality is maintained in accommodations for rest. Those who have a blanket with them contribute it to the general stock; those who have none have equal share with those who have. These customs lead very naturally to a great degree of frankness and cordiality among the persons, most of whom are thus meeting for the first time, and the evenings consequently are for the most part spent in cheerful conversation and merriment. This species of arrangement extends throughout the colony; with this difference, that off the main lines of road, and still more so the farther you advance into the bush, the usual run of travellers are not only not expected to make any recompense, but in many places it would be treated as an insult to offer it. As full two-thirds of the labouring population of the country are in perpetual migration, the custom is a very proper one. It probably originated in the first place from the smallness of the community, almost every one knowing almost every other; and there is no doubt that the great scarcity of cash in the up country parts has principally maintained it.

Meantime such in this respect were our night's quarters. The hut was well built of slabs split out of fine straight-grained timber, with hardly a splinter upon them; and consisted of several compartments, all on the ground floor. The only windows were square holes in the sides of the hut, and a good log fire was blazing in the chimney. On stools, and benches, and blocks about the hut sat a host of wayfarers like ourselves; and several lay at their ease in corners on their saddlecloths or blankets, whilst saddles and packs of luggage were heaped up on all sides. Supper was over, and the short pipes were fuming away in all directions. Our hosts were two Irishmen, brothers, who had got a little bit of good land

cleared here in the wilderness, and refused nobody a feed and shelter for the night. They soon put down a couple of quart pots of water before the blazing fire, made us some tea, and set before us the usual fare, a piece of fine corned beef, and a wheaten cake baked on the hearth. And here I should inform the reader how a damper is made. Flour is mixed up merely with water, and kneaded for about a couple of minutes; the dough is then flattened out into a cake, which should never be more than an inch and a half or two inches thick, and may be of any diameter required; the ashes of the wood, which is burnt almost everywhere in great profusion, owing to its plentifulness, are then drawn off the hearth (for the fire is on the ground, not in a grate) by a shovel; and on the glowing smooth surface thus exposed the cake is lightly deposited, by being held over it on the open hands, and the hands suddenly drawn from under it. The red ashes are then lightly turned back over the cake with the shovel. In the course of twenty minutes or half an hour, on removing the ashes, the cake is found excellently baked; and with a light duster, or the tuft of a bullock's tail, every vestige of the ashes is switched off, and the cake, if the operations have been well conducted, comes to table as clean as a captain's biscuit from a pastry-cook's shop. Merrily sped the couple of hours betwixt our arrival and going to bed. One sang a song, another told some tale of the olden time, when but few white men were in the colony, another repeated the news he had just heard of the bushrangers, another described a new tract of land he had just found out for a cattle-run, and others contented themselves with that endless subject of dissertation among the colonists, the relative excellences of their working bullocks. My share was to answer all the questions (rather all that were answerable) which any and all thought proper to put to me on the subject of affairs in England; and to pocket with the best grace I could (for most of these men had been convicts) the jokes they not very sparingly, but I must say with very good humour, cut on me for having come to the colony "to make a fortune," or for being "a free object" (subject), or for having "lagged myself for fear the king should do it for me." All these little matters notwithstanding, the evening passed away very pleasantly; if there were many things in these men which I could not approve, there was much more that I could not but admire. There was a sort of manly independence of disposition, which secured truthfulness and sincerity at least among themselves. If the penalty for the practice of that truthfulness toward the superior classes had been fixed too high, I felt that allowance ought to be made for it in estimating their character. Some time before midnight a general collection of bedding took place, as usual; the customary belt of bed was constructed all across the hut in front of the fire; and as in this instance the hut happened to be about 12 or 15 feet across, and we mustered nearly a man to each foot of the diameter, a very pretty row of capless heads and bare feet soon displayed themselves

beyond the opposite ends of the blanketing. On blazed the merry fire made up for the night; loud snored those who were so disposed; and louder grumbled ever and anon those who were not; hither and thither bounded and barked the dog around the hut, till he thought his master was asleep, and could no longer take notice of his vigilance; and dreams came and realities went; and memory had no more added to her task of the day.

With the dawn all was bustle, for Jem and Pat Geraghty were early risers and hard workers. The latter of them, poor fellow, was killed two or three years afterwards by a pistol going off in his pocket. Many a kind word has there been uttered over his memory by the traveller when passing the hut where his good-natured voice is heard no more! Bad habits are easy to learn; and here it was I recollect the following example: I first lit my pipe as I dressed myself. The horsemen were not long in finding their horses, for it is usual for every horseman to carry his hobbles slung on his horse's neck, and putting them on the beast's forelegs at night turn him out in the open forest to shift for himself. Most horses live on grass in this way for months together, and it is almost incredible what work they can perform. For instance, I have known a stockman ride his horse sixty or seventy miles a-day, and with little abatement continue this for five or six days together; the horse all the time feeding only on grass and stabling in the bush. Of course I do not mean to state this as the average; I merely cite it as a single case that came within my knowledge to show what a horse *can* do without artificial food and housing. It is however nothing at all uncommon for a stockman to jog fifty miles a day for several days together. When turned out for the night the horses seldom stray far; they are hungry and tired, and like to make the most of their time on any patch of good grass they come to. But if a young horse does happen to walk off, he is easily tracked by the experienced eye of the bushman; and hobbled as he is, as easily overtaken. It sometimes, however, happens that a horse breaks his hobble chain, and then good-bye. It may be months before he is heard of again; by which time he has got hardly recognizable with good looks, sleek and pousy, and retires into some snug gully of the mountains, enjoying his leisure with dignity.

Breakfast over, first one and then another started. Most were going up the mountain we had come down. A few hundred paces brought us out on to the sea beach; and here my fellow-traveller taking off his boots (for the labouring class wear neither stockings nor socks), began to pace lightly along the wet sand from which the tide was retreating, and observing how much more easily he seemed to walk thus than in his half boots, I followed his example, which proved to be a very good one. Our walk was now for some miles a most delightful one; here we kept the tide-washed sand; there, where a long point shot out into the sea, we

struck through the grassy bush across it to the next beach. At length we struck entirely into the bush, and passing through the most novel and beautiful scenery made our way toward the Yalla-Lake. In one spot I recollect we came suddenly on the most beautiful little natural meadow in the midst of the tall gloomy forest. So green was the sward and so level the surface that I could not for a long time yield belief to the assurance that it was not of artificial construction. It had obtained the name of "*Fairy Meadow.*"* In other places we passed along avenues overarched with the boughs of trees and vines, so dense that no sunbeam penetrated; the soil was damp as in winter, and bare of all herbage. Here for the first time I saw the lofty cabbage tree, shooting up its slender barrel, seldom more than a foot in diameter at the height of three feet from the ground, to a height of 100 or 150 feet, and spreading out its umbrella-shaped top, swayed to and fro by every breeze. Some of the creeks we had to pass were rather queer-looking places to be crossed by such bridges as alone offered themselves. The Mullet creek where we passed it must have been nearly five and thirty feet wide; and the bridge was one of these slender cabbage trees grown on the bank and flung by some bushman or black across the creek with his axe, either with a view to using it as a bridge or for the sake of the interior part of the head, which is very similar when dressed to cabbage, and is a favourite article of food with many. I confess that it was with no slight trepidation that I made my first attempt to walk betwixt 30 and 40 feet upon a small round surface, the middle of which was curved down nearly to the very water's edge, with its own weight merely, and with the weight of the passenger was actually under water two or three inches; and which all the while kept springing and plashing the water at every step that was taken. But as my guide, who was used to these feats, as I also soon became, made his way across without expressing any doubt about my nerve, I scarcely had any alternative but to follow him. Again pulling off my boots and stockings, I began to edge myself slowly across sideways, but I quickly found that would never do; I was nearly gone, when the thought struck me to imagine myself walking along the joist of an unboarded house, which I was pretty well used to, and following the thought by the practice I turned face forward and stepped carelessly and firmly on. I found I could do it this way very well, only the spot that was under water in the middle rather balked me. However, it was but a single step, and that over I felt myself so bold that I did the remainder with the utmost assurance. The agility and ease with which the blacks trot across these cabbage tree bridges is quite astonishing; even the gins (women) with their pickaninnies on their backs seem to cross quite at their ease.

We now betook ourselves to a narrow path or track, and following it at length arrived at a cattle station on the border of the lake, where a good dinner of hot beef-steaks, bread, and tea was soon set before us. Here I

saw, for the first time, a man (whom I saw many times afterwards), one of those whose melancholy end is narrated in the number of Chambers's Tracts upon the subject of Norfolk Island. He was a merry, free-hearted fellow, still a prisoner of the crown, and employed by his master in taking care of stock (horned cattle). And here it may not be out of place to make a few remarks upon this occupation and the class of men engaged in it. In New South Wales large settlers possess some thousands of horned cattle; these are divided into convenient numbers, and stationed in various parts as their owner may happen to possess land. Each is branded, generally before six months old; and is then suffered to ramble at large over the pasture or technically the run assigned to the herd it belongs to: and these runs are unenclosed. Where, therefore, there are several of these runs adjoining, the various herds often mingle; but as one part of the stockman's duty is continually to search up and restore his cattle to their own run, and as these men always assist each other, the different herds are kept tolerably distinct. It however is an unavoidable incident of the system that some get lost. Either they wander away into the mountains, or die in some unfrequented creek, or, without design on any one's part, attach themselves to some passing herd that is shifting its station, &c. Hence it is impossible to make stockmen accountable for every beast; especially in some of the mountainous or mountain-bordered runs; one of which last was that we had arrived at. It will readily be understood what strong temptation was thus put in the way of men whose honesty had been subverted by a thief's life from infancy upwards, to sell an odd beast or two when they considered they could do so without detection; and it would be a very imperfect notion of the population of New South Wales that should fail to include the fact that there are scores of the free to be met with who are just as ready for a good purchase on the cross as the bond for a sale. For a beast that would fetch 8*l.* or 10*l.* of the butchers in Sydney (who, by the bye, were at this time not very particular in buying every head they killed from the right owner), for such a beast the cross-dealer would give the stockman 3*l.* or 4*l.* in ready dollars. Common sense could not expect the convict stockman, kept by his master without wages and often most miserably fed and clad, to remain true to his trust under such temptation. Thus sometimes a bullock was turned over to the travelling cattle-jobber: sometimes three or four young calves were driven away before branding into a snug bight of the mountain and never brought to light till they were branded with a false brand and would no longer follow their mothers, and so lead to detection. Sometimes the brands of beasts, not very remarkable otherwise, were obliterated by branding with fresh brands; and in latter days it has been found that sometimes the beast has been thrown and the branded section of the hide actually flayed off. Let the reader in short imagine what was likely to take place on a run of perhaps ten miles each way, inhabited

only by ten or twelve convicts in charge of five or six herds of cattle. This game, it was afterwards known, was going on pretty smartly at the stations on the Yalla Lake, where we had arrived; and one of the most active hands in it was the unhappy fellow I have referred to, who, however, was only temporarily engaged there. Not knowing all this at the time, I took a great liking to the man: I may also say that I did not even suspect him to be a prisoner of the crown. He was well dressed, had plenty of money, had a good horse at the door, and seemed quite his own master. As we came in sight of the hut the dogs gave the alarm, and the stockman belonging to the station came out and kept the dogs off while we got into the hut. It appeared in the course of a few minutes that we had disturbed them at a game at cards for *a shilling a game a head*. They were all, as I learned afterwards, still prisoners. On my mate telling them, with reference to me, that it was "all right," the cards were brought to light again, and the game went on. Little did I imagine, as that good-natured, thoughtless gambler joined the stockman belonging to the hut in pressing me to eat heartily, and cut his jokes upon the plenitude of beef they enjoyed in that part of the country, — little did I imagine that he would very nearly involve me in the meshes of the law at a future period; or that I should, many years afterwards, when hard labour had placed me in independence, read the tale of his melancholy end in an English periodical, or write these remarks upon one of the earliest scenes of his fatal career.

The last stage of my journey (the third day's from Sydney) it is not my intention to describe minutely, as it would lead to too exact an identification of the spot where it terminated; and that again would indicate the individual whose job I had undertaken much too exactly. Suffice it, that that evening we supped in safety at our journey's destined end.

* Originally, I believe, Faro's Meadow.

Chapter IV. Bushrangers as They Are.

A splitter's hut and timber — The face of the mountain — Rainy weather in a bark-hut — Cedar-sawyers in the gullies — A scene from our hut — Bushrangers — Plunder of the settler's stores — Conversation on their return — Their departure — Futile attempt to track them

IN two days' time I had found a fall of timber (as a group of trees is termed), which, with due information from my quondam guide, now my mate, I had no doubt would suit my purpose. They were fine tall black butts, even as a gun-barrel, and as straight in the grain as a skein of thread. We "tumbled" two or three for trial, taking off and splitting up a cut the required length of the slabs: these were to be let into ground-plates below and wall-plates above, all round, to form the sides of the hut. The slabs all ran out beautifully; you could scarcely tell them from sawed stuff; there was hardly a splinter on half a dozen of them. When work goes like this it is rather a pleasure than a toil, and for about another week or so we went rattling on like sticks a cracking. It was a new kind of work to me, certainly, but still so similar to what I had been used to, that I understood *how* to do every part of it directly I saw it before me. This is generally the case in a variation of work where the same tools are still used. We were up by day-break, worked for about two hours, and then had our breakfast, which was of damper, salt pork fried, and good tea, — for tea and sugar are used among bushmen very prodigally. My mate and myself often used a pound of tea and six pounds of sugar between us in a week. The same is the case with tobacco. I mostly used close on half a pound weekly, till I found its undermining effect on my constitution, and began to try to leave it off. After breakfast we pelted away again till twelve o'clock, and then had dinner, which was damper, pork, and tea again, and laid down till the heat of the day was over, which was about three o'clock where we were: we then worked for another hour, had a lunch of damper, and tea, and pork, and knocked along till night. About 8 P.M. we had our supper, pork, tea, and damper, and soon after 9 were under the blankets.

My mate quickly slept; I did not. It soon became quite a custom to lie and ruminat. Everything was so new and so strange, and I seemed so

independent. These ruminations originated in me habits of reflection which never left me, and have been serviceable in all my subsequent life. The spot where we had pitched our tent was a small grassy forest on the hill side; and everywhere around it, down below in the endless ravines, and up above towards the insurmountable heights of the range, was thick tangled brush growing amidst lofty trees, so thick set that beneath them was perpetual shadow, or rather something more gloomy still. The ground was covered with decaying leaves and old water-logged windfall trees, so rotten that the foot could break its way deep into the substance of that gnarled wood which at one time would have stopped a cannon-ball. Wherever you went, creeks of crystal ice-like water, plunging down the mountain side, each in its stony bed, kept up a murmur day and night; never changing save when increased by rains into the roar of a torrent. This mountain, or, more properly, heap of mountains, ran down, where we were at work, nearly into the sea, and for many miles every way the character of the vegetation was as I have described. Here and there certainly a little patch of grassy forest would assert a place for itself on the shoulder of a hill, and partly down the side; but generally the entire surface of this mountain, for many miles up and down the coast every way, was clothed with this thick brush; besides which so irregular and broken and confused was the surface of the range itself that even the best bushmen felt timid of committing themselves to it. Thus, in one of these little grassy forests in the midst of the bush, on the shoulder of an easy ridge about two miles back from the sea, and so far up that we could see the sea like a broadish sheet of water below us, was pitched our little hut. It was no more than a few sheets of the bark that we had stripped off our black butts, leaned together, top to top, tent like, with one end stopped by another sheet, and the fire a few feet in front on the ground at the other. Here we had been, say ten days, when it began to rain; and, as is the case generally at this season of the year in Australia, when it sets in for a week's rain, it rained with a will. I began to be initiated into the disasters of a bush life. The rain came through the roof of the hut as if we had been making arrangements in its favour; and no sooner had we stopped it there than, coming down the hill, it began to run through the bottom of the hut like a mill-stream; and as we had, in our confidence of fine weather, laid our beds on the ground, they got thoroughly soaked. Scarcely had we in the pouring rain dug a trench round the back of our hut, to turn the water, when we found the rain had put the fire out; and as we happened to have come out without tinder-box, flint and steel (an omission for which, when a more practised bushman, I should never have forgiven myself), Dick had to go to the farm to get one. When he came back it was dark and still raining, and I, in my inexperience, had not been mindful to get any dry wood; which he had then to take his axe and get as well as he could in the dark. Had I been left to seek it, I

suppose my search would have been a long one, but Dick went straight to a tree whose butt the bush-fires had hollowed out, and soon knocked off a lot of dry splinters from the inside. Nobody but he who has experienced it has any comprehension of the enjoyment of supper when it does come after these bush troubles throughout some dismal rainy day, and of that nerve-tuning smoke, when supper is over, that puts an end to even the bare recollection of them.

And here I must tell the reader that we were not altogether alone in these savage solitudes. As I have already hinted, the costly and fragrant cedar was at this time a common forest tree in the shady recesses and beside the cool stony creeks of this vast old mountain. When I add that at the time of which I write, nearly a hundred pair of sawyers had gradually come down from Sydney and gathered into this mountain, and were (as they also continued to be for years afterwards) slaughtering away in all directions, it will not be wondered at that the pride of the Five Island Cedar Brush is long since gone; and especially when it is considered that no more is done by the brush-sawyer than just to break the logs down into planks, many of which contain four, five, six hundred square feet. These logs being then freighted to Sydney and on to England are cut up in timber-yards as they are wanted. It is far from unlikely, reader, that the very table thou art now reading on is a part of the thewes and sinews of one of these stately gallants of my old mountain woods. Meantime imagine that, scattered at various distances from us all over the seaward side of the range where the cedar grows, were these hundred pairs of sawyers, each pair (usually) having its one or two labourers or axe-men, whose business was to save the sawyers' time by falling the trees, cross-cutting them into logs, building scaffold-pits, making roads and bridges, and helping at any heavy lifts. Some of these gangs were within less distance of us than the farm was, but there was no road from their huts to ours, and to travel the cedar-brush in the twilight of a rainy day is next to impossible. So my mate had gone to the farm. Another point was, that Dick was nearly due for his ticket of leave (a permission given by government to well-behaved convicts to work for themselves several years before their sentence expires); and as at this period great numbers of the labourers employed by these sawyers were bushrangers, and to have been known to have had any communication with such would have caused the forfeiture of his ticket, poor Dick was very cautious of going where any of them were. He had seen a deal of trouble, and, I firmly believe, would rather have gone twenty miles another way for a firestick than half a mile to where there was a bushranger.

The reader may suppose this first wet day over, and may imagine it going on patter, patter, patter all night, as we lay not very comfortably on our wet beds, with, however, the dry side turned upwards, and all the old clothes and blankets we could spare laid on the top to keep the damp

from soaking up to us: and he may suppose the next day passing and passed; our fire kept good; our pipes filled and emptied again, and again, and again; several extra pots of tea drank out of a sheer want of occupation; and ourselves venturing out two or three times in the course of the day to look if it were likely to clear up, but discerning nothing with our eyes but trees upon trees below, around, above, with an occasional little column of smoke curling slowly up from where they were freshening the fire at some sawyer's gunyah in a gully; and feeling no breath of air, but only the constant sprinkle of the rain; and hearing nothing but the sudden dead crash down of the big limb of some fast decaying tree breaking off soddened and overweighted by the wet; or it might be at distant intervals a something like the low harsh sound of the sea rattling the pebbles of a pebbly beach a little down in the woody depth to the left, but as faint and soon gone as the sigh of the dying. And, furthermore, let the reader suppose the day closed, supper over, a good pile of logs on the fire for the night (over which by this time we had got a couple of sheets of bark placed so as to turn the rain), a cheerful blaze mounting silently upwards, and us in bed.

Arrived at this stage, let me caution my reader not to expect from the title of this chapter some dismal record of a night of horrors. My object in this publication is to convey an idea of facts as they occur in Australian every-day life; in short, to correct the erroneous statements that are abroad, not to add to them. I spent nearly twenty years of a bush-life in New South Wales, during the whole of which time I never sustained the slightest bodily injury from a bushranger; nor did I ever suffer from aggression of higher enormity than some slight theft. So that when, since my return to England, I have met with the tales that are so prevalent respecting their sanguinary acts, I have always felt them to be virtually exaggerations. The insulated facts might be true enough, but then they are the exceptions, not the usual custom; and this should have been stated in the narration of them, otherwise that impression comes to be attached to every-day life which really and properly belongs only to its rarest and merest exceptions.

It might be about half-past ten, but was not more than eleven o'clock, my mate snoring as usual, I thinking over the novel world around me, when I suddenly heard, first the clatter of horses' feet on a stony corner of the hill just above us, and then the voices of men talking; and the dog, which was a rare old fellow of the bull breed, rushed off almost without stopping to open his eyes in the direction the sound came from; the next instant I heard him at bay, and then came a volley of oaths that if we did not call off the dog, the speaker would shoot him. Of course I jumped out of bed and ran out in front of the hut and called the dog in; but Bully knew his customers better than I did, and not a foot would he come away; and I could hear him plunging about in the brush trying to get an

opportunity to lay hold. By this time Dick was awake and out with me, and snatching up a fire-stick he went directly to where the dog was barking, and I followed him. We found him darting round four men and two pack-horses, who had got within about a hundred yards of the hut before Bully checked them, but had ever since halted, having quite as much as they could do to take care of the calves of their legs. On our reaching them, one of the men, a little short fellow as broad as he was long, said, "Now, my lads, call off your dog unless you want him shot; we don't want to do you any harm, but we want a guide, and one we mean to have:" at the same time that he said this, however, he covered me with his piece, and one of his pals (companions), seeing this, did the same by my mate. Necessity, wherever it shows its head, is your only lawgiver, so we complied without the least hesitation; and Bully once called off and ordered away to the hut fire, took no further active part in the affair beyond every now and then manifesting a quite uncontrollable inclination to sneak up towards one or other of our visitors' legs.

The custom of the bush led to our immediately putting down three quart pots of water (we had not a fourth) to make tea for them, and they filled and lit their pipes, but nothing particular was said on either side; for I had come to the conclusion that they were bushrangers from their arms and the meanness of their dress, and their unshaven beards, whilst they on their part seemed to think it quite unnecessary to give us any explanation whatever. At length the short man who was the former spokesman said, "How far is it to your cove's?" (master's.) "About a mile and a half," my mate answered; "but the road is very bad of a night — there is no beaten track, only a marked tree line;" (it is the custom in new countries to take a good-sized chip, say as large as a sheet of note paper, out of both sides of trees within easy sight of each other, and that range true along the shortest line to any place whither it is desired to make a road:) "we just marked the line the day we came out here to split, but there's no beaten track."

"Well, one of you knows it well enough to find it in the dark; we have been told so by them that know in the mountains."

"My mate," said Dick, "is hardly a month in the country."

"Oh! we know that; he's one of the free objects — bad luck to 'em! what business have they here in the prisoners' country? But after all, it's prisoners that's worse to one another than these emigrants are to them."

"To be sure," said another; "there's bad and good of all sorts, mate. I never think a bit worse of a man for being of one country than for being of another; there's bad and good of all sorts as there is of all religions. If you act as a man, lad (addressing me), you will be respected by every man that knows himself, let you be free or bond."

"Well," continued the first spokesman to Dick, "if you are ——'s government man, we are told you know every inch of this bush, and you

must go with us and show us your cove's farm; we want to see what he's got in his stores. There was a boat load for him at the boat-harbour last week, for I saw it landed; has he got any of the grog left?"

These few words supplied a link in my mind. I thought from the first I had seen this short sailor-looking man before, and now I recollected to have noticed him among the sawyers at the boat-harbour a few days previously. At this period the little horse-shoe bay that constituted —— boat-harbour often presented a scene more like what may be imagined to belong to a pirate's isle than anything else. It was a little bay with a sandy beach, backed by a flat covered with grass, flags, and herbs, which again gave way to thick brush, and not very far off began the rise of the range. On this green sward might be seen, sometimes, half a dozen groups, each gathered round a keg of rum, often of ten, seldom of less than five gallons; for the boats which came for the cedar plank generally brought for the various pairs of sawyers, who supplied the freights, kegs to order. A more unlicensed and reckless mob than was thus sometimes gathered on that else lonely beach, prolonging day and night their carousal until all the liquor was gone, it would be impossible to find anywhere. The bushrangers often mingled with the boisterous assembly, and took their tithes of the revel; the police at this time rarely penetrated hither in search of them, and if they had done so it would have been with but small success, for nobody was inclined to aid them. Partly this was because the bushrangers laboured for the sawyers at a lower rate than other men could, partly because a bush-working man is always from his solitary situation quite at the mercy of the bushranger, and partly because, having mostly been prisoners themselves, it was a point of honour among the sawyers to help them as much as they could. In the lawless scene of Bacchanalianism that I had witnessed a few evenings before, when I had run down to the boat-harbour to ascertain if some things I expected from Sydney had come in Mr. ——'s boat, I now recollected that I had seen our present guest, and truly enough, as he said, by the same boat (schooners and sloops chiefly carry on this trade) had come down from Sydney for my employer a large keg of rum, another of wine, a basket of tobacco, a couple of chests of tea, and some bags of sugar, besides blankets and clothing; and this was the luggage for their share of which our visitors had brought the two pack-horses.

It was with great reluctance that poor Dick submitted to make the inevitable acknowledgment that there was indeed safe lodged in the stores at the farm this object of their marauding journey. He, however, endeavoured to make the best of his predicament by bargaining that he should not be taken within sight of the house, promising to wait faithfully at the corner of the fence until their end was attained, to conduct them back again the same way; and it appeared they had another guide a little way off in the bush, behind our hut, who would not come

forward, and who was to take them back to a spot they were better acquainted with in the mountain. Probably this was some free man, working near, who was in league with them; such things are too often known in this colony.

The tea was some time boiling, so one of them proposed to have it in coming back, and the others agreeing, they left one in charge of me, which was quite unnecessary, for I could not have found my way from our hut to another by myself at that time of night. They then set off. From my mate's account afterwards, I learned that on arriving at the farm they left him according to promise at the corner of the paddock fence, but with his hands tied to a rail, in the midst of the pouring rain, and went on to the master's hut by themselves. They got close up to it before the dogs barked, and when they did bark that was all, for they were mostly young dogs and sound sleepers, and not much good as watch dogs. A knock at the door summoned Mr. —, who was told some travellers who had lost their way were in want of shelter. But the improbability of travellers being lost at that time of a pouring rainy night, in a part where it was almost impossible to get off the high road for the thickness of the brush on each side, with the peremptory tone in which the demand was made, raised his suspicions, and he civilly declined to let them in. This at once provoked them to throw off the mask, and he was told to open the door in such terms as left him no further prudent plea for refusal. Attempting resistance no longer, he unbarred the door, and the marauders then despatched one of their number to the government men's hut to keep guard over them with a loaded piece, whilst the remaining two helped themselves to whatever they pleased from the stores. They conducted their operations like men of business; went straight about what they had determined to do; and when it was done, lingered not a minute on the premises. On going away they told the cove they should leave a man on the look-out, in the bush at the edge of the farm; and if he offered to stir a step himself, or send any of his men for help until eight o'clock in the morning, it would be a bad job for him. This, however, was all bounce. About two o'clock, or a little after, the man who had been left at our hut with me, on hearing our dog bark, ordered me to call him off, giving at the same time that shrill clear coo-eeh which the whites have learnt from the blacks, and which conveys the human voice to so great a distance. I think I have made myself heard with it, of a still night, nearly a mile off. This bushranger's, however, was purposely restrained, and modulated so as to be barely audible at the little distance he supposed his pals to be off; in another minute the short sailor-looking man came lightly and sharply up, into the light of the fire, as a sort of advanced guard, and finding all square, he repeated the coo-eeh in a more careless manner, and presently the other two with Dick and the pack-horses came up. Without the smallest appearance of trepidation or want of composure, the tall man

walked up to the fire, put a coal on the top of his pipe, and began to draw away, saying to me, "Come, lad, now let's have this tea; I'm sure we've earned it." I said nothing, for I really did not know what to say; but I sweetened the three pots of tea for them, and put down, on the little stool we used for a table, our damper and a piece of corned pork, which, for a change, we had boiled before going to bed; and after they had had a short whiff of the pipe apiece, they pulled out their knives and helped themselves to a good junk of bread and meat each. During their meal, the man who was left with me, and who, I should have mentioned, had employed himself for a very busy half-hour of his watch in stowing away some of our eatables and drinkables, inquired what luck they had had.

"Luck, lad," said my long friend, "why, the very best of luck; there's a couple of five gallon kegs full of the right stuff slung across Old Bobby, and half a dozen pair of blankets spread over all to keep any water from getting to it; besides a coil of Brazil tobacco between the kegs, as long as all the running rigging of a schooner: and on the mare we've got about sixty weight of sugar and twenty pounds of tea, a nice little bag of flour, I dare say eighty pounds or more, and a few slops."

"Any boots?"

"Yes, lad. I didn't forget you. There's a pair tucked into the mouth of the flour-bag. They're just your fit. I saw them just as I was putting the flour on the horse, and I looked every way for some more, but it was no go. The fat fellow's got a pair for himself, though," he said; at the same time that the individual whom I have described before as having been at the boat harbour, held out one of his feet, displaying a snug Wellington boot of Mr. —— — 's.

"I don't believe," he said, "the poor beggar's got another pair to put on to go to court in: he'll have to ride down to Wollongong to fetch the lobsters (soldiers) in his stockings' feet."

"Well, be alive, mates," said he who had remained with me; "we shall be none too soon into the mountain. It'll soon be daylight, and if we don't give the rain time to wash out the horsetracks we shall be done like a dinner. I shall get out these boots and ding (throw away) mine, for I can't walk any farther in them."

The speaker accordingly proceeded, after shaking the logs together so as to make a stronger blaze, to where the mare was quietly picking a few mouthfuls of grass; and, leading her to the fire, he undid the fastenings, and lifting off the bag of flour, brought to light the coveted boots, a pair of common lace-ups. Knocking the flour out of them, he soon had them on his feet, evidently esteeming them a treasure, as they no doubt must have been on those stony ranges, and among so much broken wood, in the dark. After a minute's experiment of their fit and feel, he broke out into a torrent of burlesque gratitude to Mr. —— — , for having brought him the "fine boots all the way from Sydney." It was perfectly

impossible to resist the current of drollery with which the scamp carried on this farcical exhibition for several minutes. His companions laughed, and then I laughed, and at last poor Dick, shivering as he was with the cold and wet, joined the irresistible peal till the tears came in our eyes all round.

It is, I suppose, a property of laughter to reconcile people, for I found after this was over that much of my ill-feeling towards these fellows was gone; and when they drew out a bottle that they had taken care to provide for the night, because the kegs would be difficult to get at, and poured out about a couple of glasses for each in turn, I could not help drinking with them, wishing them at the same time "some better kind of life."

At length they packed all up snug again, lit their pipes, gave us very particular injunctions, and struck off into the bush, the rain still falling in torrents. Before they were long gone we heard their suppressed *coo-eeh*, which we supposed to be the signal for the guide they had boasted they had in waiting for them at a few hundred yards off in the brush. Dick had come off worst of the lot. He had been tied by the wrists to a rail of the fence, and left there during the whole time the bushrangers were ransacking the master's hut, a full hour and a half. It was a southerly gale that was blowing, and the spot where he stood was exposed to its full sweep from the sea. I wondered how he could stand it so long. He told me that, after standing still for about a quarter of an hour, watching the lights moving about at the hut as the bushrangers carried on their search, his teeth began to chatter, and the cold, as he expressed it, began to get to his heart; whereupon he set to dancing to keep himself warm, which he did very industriously, with short intervals, for more than an hour, till he was untied. And surely enough so we found the next day that he had, which indeed was the means of preventing the poor fellow getting flogged and losing his long-expected ticket of leave; for the horses were tracked to and from our hut, notwithstanding the rain; and Mr. ——'s rage at his loss, which was about twenty pounds, was such that I really believe he would have given another twenty to have criminated either the unfortunate fellow who had already been so ill used or myself. The commandant, who was a magistrate also, came up from Wollongong the next day, and he soon saw that we were both entirely guiltless. Mr. —— would not so much as listen to Dick's protestations and defence of himself; but the shrewdness and tact of the commandant (who, however, was one out of a thousand of his cloth) very soon extricated us from all difficulty and suspicion. He said, "Mr. ——, if they tied up the government man, it is not likely they left the free man at liberty: and whether they did tie up the government man, as he says, we can soon ascertain; for a man could not caper about in a pair of heavy boots, as your man says he did, on one spot for a good hour on such a night without making a pretty good puddle." Examination at once affirmed

poor Dick's veracity; there was a hole full of water there six inches deep; so the matter, as far as we were concerned, dropped. Our great error was, forgetting in our confusion that the bushrangers' passing our hut, both in going and coming, was likely to fix suspicion of participation on us, we had neglected to go in and report the whole affair just as it happened, before the tracks were run down. This was Mr. ——'s grand problem. "If we were not in league with them," he said, "why had we not come in directly they were gone, or at least at daybreak, and reported all about it?" We, on our part, who did not know that the bushrangers had given him such forcible directions not to move out of his hut till eight o'clock, continued expecting him out at our hut every minute till breakfast-time, cautiously adhering ourselves to the no less stringent instructions left us. At the same time we might, no doubt, have gone in without incurring any risk; for they would scarcely have left one of their party behind to watch us in a part of the bush they all knew so little of as to require a guide.

Their *ruse* was altogether a very complete one, if indeed it did not partake as much of fortunate accident as of able intention. In coming and going their track varied little up to a certain creek; but this creek they had both come out of and gone into again at an identical spot. It was a fine level-channelled creek, generally not above six inches deep and perhaps twelve feet wide, and very clear of fallen timber for a brush-creek. With these rains, however, it was running about eighteen inches deep; nevertheless they had kept its channel, so far as we could judge, for a full half-mile to where a main cedar-road crossed it; for nowhere could we find anything that looked like tracks up the bank out of it, either before reaching this road or afterwards; and if they took this main road, all their tracks on it must have been completely obliterated by nine o'clock in the morning; for not only was it, as most cedar brush-roads are, from the richness of the soil, one long ditchlike line of sludge and water, but by nine o'clock six or seven cedar-drays, each drawn by two or three yoke of bullocks, had passed along it; and as there were no blacks nigh at hand to search the bush for the continuance of the tracks, and the rain still kept falling in torrents all next day, every trace of their point of departure from the main cedar-road, which they had in all probability taken at the creek, was no doubt entirely obliterated before the next morning.

Chapter V. A Glimpse of the Cedar-Brush.

The site for a settler's hut — How to erect a good hut — Settlers' shop-keeping — Termination of job — Fresh journey in search of work — Beginning to saw in the Cedar-brush — Cedar-wood — Cedar-cutting — Cedar-sawyers described — Dangerous trip by sea

THE adventure related in the last chapter was the only one of the kind we met with while we were getting our stuff, which was about two months. The succeeding three months again were taken up in erecting the building, which, as it may be an object of some curiosity to the English reader, I shall briefly describe. Mr. — — 's farm was close to a salt-water inlet lying between two low flats, in their natural state covered with a perfectly impervious brush. The soil was of the richest description. On each side of this low tract the country was very mountainous, and in some places timbered with fine tall forest trees; in others, clad with brush and scrub. Where the foot of one of these ranges ran down with an easy slope into the flat, Mr. — — had fixed his first huts; and, as the point of the hill altogether contained three or four acres, there was plenty of room for the new buildings as well as the old. At the most elevated spot he had had about an acre and a half cleared and stumped for the erection of his new house. Thus it stood in a little hollow square, backed and flanked on each side by the forest, and looking down from the front on the old farm buildings and the cultivated land. It was some thirty-five feet in length by twenty in depth. Like all bush-houses it was only one story high, and, like almost all, had a verandah in front of about six feet deep. The first step of its erection was digging post-holes, of about two feet deep, at various distances round the circumference, and along the interior divisions, in which were placed posts ten feet high, squared on the four sides with the axe, excepting the two feet let into the ground, where the whole strength of the timber was left. Along the ground between these, as well as along the tops, wherever there was to be a wall, were laid ground-plates and wall-plates, of about the same size, and squared on the sides facing each other, and having a groove of about an inch and a half wide and two inches deep mortised into the flat sides their whole length. Into these grooves were fitted the two ends of the eight-foot slabs we had split with the maul and wedges. The roof was

made much in the usual way, only, being for some time to come to continue covered with bark, the battens were not put so close together as they would have been if the roof had had to be shingled. The flooring-boards, according to the custom of the country, were six inches wide and one thick; timber being used so green, and the heat being so great, boards of any greater width turn up at the edges, so as in time to look like a row of spouts. The rooms were all joisted at top, and on the joists was spread a floor of bark, so as to form, over the whole top of the house, the settler's usual first rude granary. Squares of a couple of feet each way were left open in the wall in various places for windows; at present, however, they were only fitted with shutters. The chimneys were large, like those of old farm-houses, and, for security, had a little wall of rough stone and mortar run up inside about three feet; and in the middle of the fire-place was a large flag-stone, of a sort capable of resisting the fire, which constituted the hearth and baking-place. This, of course, is only a general outline, and that portion of the work which really consumed the smallest portion of the time.

Many things occurred during the performance of my contract to make me very much dissatisfied with my employer; but I should not be acting fairly if I were to omit adding that the experience and reflection of later years have led me to consider them rather the faults of a particular class of Australian institutions than of the man. The Australian settler undertakes, as a matter of course, to supply his labourers with rations; but he never thinks there is the slightest obligation on himself to make that supply a constant one. Sometimes there is no tea, sometimes no sugar, sometimes no tobacco. When it suits his convenience to look after a fresh supply, he does so; otherwise all the free men on the farm may leave their work and lose their time in going ten or twenty miles to get it for themselves; and on men who are very much the slaves of tobacco or tea or sugar this bears in some cases very heavily.

But the work was at length completed; and after some days of what I considered very unnecessary delay, the chief of which Mr. —— spent in walking round and round, and in and out his new habitation, and looking at it from all mentionable distances and at all possible angles, I got a cheque for the balance due to me, 43*l*.

I now, for the first time, found myself up the country without a job. The immediate question was, what to do next. At length it struck me that if I did as others did, whatever they got I should get. It was now near winter, and having disposed of such of my tools as I could not well carry with me, I set off one morning after breakfast for the more settled parts of the country. My route lay partly along the sea beach, and partly through the tangled and gloomy masses of the cedar-brush. I felt very forlorn at starting; but the load of tools, and clothes, and provisions, was really so serious a matter that it presently outbalanced the weight within.

I felt that if I meant to get to —— — to supper, I must betake myself to my heels instead of my head: so after settling my load as comfortably as I could, I walked off in good earnest for my destination. About noon I got to a sawyer's hut in the very middle of the brush, where I had been told it would be best for me to stop and have my dinner. No work was going on; only the dog greeted me with some lusty growls as I came up. It was a tent hut, thatched with the fanlike leaves of the cabbage tree; open at one end, with the fire in front. On coming up to the fire, I could see the only occupant of the hut for the time was the dog who stood in the entrance, and very plainly told me I must come no farther. I therefore contented myself with unslinging my load, filling my quart pot at the creek below, freshening up the fire, and taking possession of the back of it for my kitchen; to which arrangement my four-legged friend offered no further resistance. When I had had my dinner and was just about to shoulder my load and start again, two little boys came, barefooted, along a track out of the bush. These were the sons of the sawyer that the hut and pit belonged to. They told me their father was gone round among the other pits to look for a mate; after which, dismissing Ponto very summarily with something not much short of a broken back, they made me come in. By this time I was quite cool, and felt so stiff with having overweighted myself, that I was inwardly consulting whether I had not better make three days' stage of my journey, stopping where I was for the night; which, always feeling much more at home in the company of children than in any other, I was not long in determining to do. The shadows of evening take possession of the cedar-brush an hour and a half earlier than they do of the open country; especially in the deep, winding, hollow ways of the ravines of the coast mountain; a little within the entrance of one of which was the hut. The lads' father came home between three and four o'clock, by which time it was getting very dusk. He was a merry, strong Lancashire man: his wife had been dead some years; and he had brought up these two little boys in the wild brush all by himself, except that he always had a mate for his work. The consequence was, that the little chaps at nine and ten years of age could take their axe and fall a moderate sized tree as well as any sawyer's labourer in the brush. In the course of the evening when he found out that I was tolerably handy with timber tools of one sort and another, he made an offer of taking me for a mate, which offer I immediately accepted: the next day saw us at work. He was in the midst of a very good fall of timber; but the ground was so rough and thickly wooded that we had to build a fresh pit to almost every tree. These pits were merely scaffold side-strikes lodged on posts against trees, with long easy skids leading up to them for pitting the log. Sometimes six inches or even a foot of earth might be excavated; but to have dug regular ground pits would have been much too tedious a job; besides which in many places it was so rocky

that it would have been impossible. Usually the pits were made very solid; but at other times I felt, I must acknowledge, not quite easy while working under a log of two or three tons weight lodged on side-strikes so small and limber that they sprang up and down two or three inches at every stroke of the saw. Some of these trees were noble-looking objects, with their great spurs running out at the butt like the buttresses of a castle; and when one of them fell before the axe, what a body of timber it crushed down before it, and what an opening it made in the brush! It was seldom we cross-cut the logs off longer than ten or twelve feet, but our planks were sometimes a couple of feet square on the end, or three and four feet in depth, by six, eight, or ten inches in thickness. These planks were always taken out on either one side or the other of the heart, that part of the log being too porous and spongy for use. As the various planks came off the pit, they were rolled over into one large stack in some convenient spot a few feet off; and when the whole tree was cut up, this heap was covered over with cabbage tree leaves, on the outside, to protect the timber from the weather. The wood of the trees generally where we were cutting was very flowery and variegated, and the colour very good: when first cut, nothing could exceed the splendid crimson of some of the planks. There is a very fragrant scent from it, of which, however, a person working among it soon ceases to be sensible. Another singular and beautiful peculiarity is, the flame it yields in burning. Laying on the fire of a night sometimes a heavy outside slab in its green state, I used to observe it, as it were, melt gradually away in an almost imperceptible flame of indescribably beautiful pink; the flame itself looking more like mere light than fire.

We used to get up in the winter and have our breakfast before going to work, on account of the day being so short in the cedar-brush. But when we did begin to work it was pretty solid eye-balling. A cedar-sawyer's cuts are very deep, and a deep cut makes the saw move stiff. Again the lifts in a cedar-brush are very heavy. I have often worked for half a day together with a lever that I could barely lift into its place. Besides this, the only intermission through the day is one hour at noon for dinner, and perhaps twenty minutes towards the latter part of the afternoon, fifteen of which the topman employs in brightening up his saw, and the pitman in boiling a couple of pots of tea, and throwing the dust out of his pit; the other five are occupied in a very active lunch. Both men, if they are smokers, just light their short pipes and turn to with them in their mouths. If any man can without exaggeration at night say he is as tired as a dog after a hard day's run, it is the cedar-sawyer. A striking peculiarity of the class is their colour, or rather deficiency of all colour. A few months' residence and hard work in the brush leaves most men as pallid as corpses. Probably this is chiefly the effect of shade, but promoted further by excessive perspiration; for it is not necessarily attended by any

sensation of illness.

It is during the three or four evening hours that elapse after his work that the sawyer enjoys himself. The success of the day, the prospect of a good cutting or an advantageously shaped log on the morrow, the pleasant perfume of the pipe, the cheering pot of tea again and again repeated, with each new yarn, or joke, or laugh, the busy and pompous excursions and barkings of the dog, the pattering shower, the clouds of fireflies that dance along in their countless angular courses where the cold stream tumbles among great stones in the bed of the creek — such are the objects which occupy his senses and his thoughts; and it were well that all things that can occupy our attention and our thoughts had as little in them to excite unwise desires or fears.

In much about the same time that I had been occupied about my last job, this also came to a close, by my mate having finished up cutting the quantity of timber he had contracted for with a Sydney timber merchant. All the time we were cutting, our employer had bullocks and teams drawing the plank down to the boat harbour, and boats conveying it to Sydney; so that we had no more to do than go aboard after our last boat load was shipped, and proceed with it to Sydney. Our voyage was not one of the most agreeable possible; but the unpleasant circumstance of it is such a very common one with these little coasting boats (sloops and schooners), that common consent among the parties usually concerned seems to have decreed that it is not to be at all gravely treated. When we were some considerable distance on our voyage, it came on to blow a perfect hurricane off shore, and it was not until it had done so for two days and two nights that we could again venture to steer for Port Jackson. According to the custom of these reckless men they had no compass on board, and had started without refilling their water-keg, and with no more in it than remained from the last trip. To the boatmen, I suppose, use had become a second nature; but both my mate and I agreed, that as it was our first, so it should be our last treat of the sort. I never went on board one of these small craft again for a coast trip, however short, without seeing that there was both compass and water-keg aboard. My sufferings during a portion of the four days we were at sea, although what water we had was carefully apportioned out both as to quantity and time, were such as I cannot describe.

Chapter VI. The Rocks.

A sly grog-seller's den — Dennis M'Carthy — Gamblers — Ruffianism in its glory — An unfortunate's tale, and death — Black scorpions — The Sand-hills, or the grave yard of Sydney — A word on prostitution, and its remedy — Desperadoes of the Rocks — A narrow escape

To our unspeakable joy at dawn of the second day after we had headed our boat toward land, and the fourth after the breeze came on, a darker and more uneven margin line was described from our deck for some length along the western horizon, through the thin grey air of the morning. It was plainly enough land, and was just where we expected it; but it turned out that we had got down much farther to the southward than we had reckoned we were — so we had to run the same track of coast up again. It was not till past midnight that we made our way good into Port Jackson and dropped anchor off the market wharf (of Sydney), where the timber and fire-wood boats unload. Thirsty as we were, we were not long in putting our dingy out and going ashore to where a little spring oozed out of the rock that walls the back of the wharf platform. There each man slaked his thirst with not a whit less haste than good fellowship demanded; for only one at a time could drink. Our next movement was to a house on the rocks much frequented by boatmen, and known as "The Sheer Hulk," already mentioned. It was kept at this time by a man of the name of D——, a convict free by servitude (so convicts are designated whose term of sentence has expired), as a lodging house for sailors. He had a partner in the speculation who still further cloaked the character of the house by putting up a barber's pole at the door. There is no doubt nevertheless that such a nest would have been rooted out long before but for the handsome "sweeteners" (bribes) which old D——'s profits enabled him to give the constables. At this time almost every constable in Sydney and indeed in the colony had been a prisoner of the crown; I believe there were two or three old soldiers in the force, but their principles were not a whit superior, so far as I heard and observed, to those of the convict class. These sly grog shops sold rum only, or rather grog; though, adulterated as it was, it hardly deserved even that name. The trade of the Sheer Hulk was often a couple of gallons a night

at 1s. 3d. per half pint, or by gross receipts about 2l. Of this 2l. it possibly cost old D—— 10s. or 12s. for rum, a few pence for burnt sugar, the same for tobacco, which together with the water (and some said a dash of vitriol) made up the beverage. At this period in Sydney a sly grog seller could always afford to pay the fine, heavy as it was, out of his profits for three months; and the police then were, and I suppose are, always pretty considerate on these points; they know they cannot skin a flint, and avoid expending their exertions and the magistrate's time on fine cases where the grand element of the case, the cash, is wanting. Thus sly grog sellers at the period I describe used quite to reckon how long the police would let them alone before laying an information. It struck two as we crossed the high bare green by the windmill above St. Philip's church, and walked or rather tumbled and climbed alternately along Gloucester Street to our destination. At this time there could hardly be said to be a street; it was merely the space between two straggling lines of houses ranged along the side of a very rough rocky declivity, and these were turning their backs or their sides or their faces toward each other, as one would say houses could do only in a convict colony.

The noise of the carousal we began to hear when we were within about a hundred yards of the Sheer Hulk might fairly have led to the belief that there was nothing there to be concealed from the police, particularly as one old constable in his blue coat and red collar stood bâton under arm at the corner of Frazer's Lane listening to it in all the appearance of serene reflectiveness. Full a score of voices were singing each its own song in its own tune and its own time. Now there was a bellowing volley of men's voices, then sounds such as the voices of women can make only from the stimulus of intoxicating drink. It was a perfect frenzy of drunken vociferation. From the lofty terraced ledge of rock along which we walked we could see the dark blue waters of the harbour, all life, as a strong tide came flooding, dancing, glittering in under the beams of the full moon. At times in Australia the moon may be seen to look perfectly globular to the naked eye, and so it was to-night. No two things ever were in greater contrast than the sounds within and the scene without. My companions were less curious in such contrasts than myself, I suppose; for while I was standing with my back to the door, half determining not to go in, the preliminary of "giving the office" (token) had been gone through; we had been scrutinized through the slightly open door, and my companions being recognised as "old hands," it was thrown open, and without further ado in we went. Slap went to the door, and down went the heavy bar; and there we stood in an atmosphere of tobacco smoke within a large, low, dilapidated, half-lit room, with benches affixed to the walls all round except where there was a door or chimney; in front of these benches were long narrow greasy dark tables covered with glasses and pipes; and on the outside of these again, rude

wooden forms. In the farthest corner sat old Dennis M'Carthy in his old red soldier's jacket and one-eyed spectacles. Industrious as if he had had to live some three score years to come, this singular old man used to mend shoes all day long, and as industriously employ his evenings and his nights at his favourite game of "all fours." As my curiosity led me to acquaint myself more particularly with the habits of this strange and lawless class on the rocks, it became to me a perfectly unresolvable problem whether Dennis M'Carthy ever slept. Along with him were several of the noted Sydney gamblers; men who one day had a couple of hundred pounds and the next no dinner, and who not very long afterwards were transported under a colonial sentence "to the nor'ard" settlements additionally punitive, to the north of Sydney. All these except old Dennis were at this very time prisoners of the Crown, but got out of barracks by "tipping" (bribing) the watchman and constables. This night their "job" was easing a couple of sailors of the proceeds of a sealing voyage. Dennis was not playing a hand himself, but he was playing both the sailors' hands for them: he was seated more unsuspected than innocent where he could give his "pals" "the office" what cards the sailors held; both of whom were so much in liquor as not to have the slightest notion what was going on. Before the morning light began to show through the shutters about 40*l.* had changed hands.

The remainder of the company was broken into larger or smaller groups, from one or other of which every few minutes came the shout of "Another half-pint here;" which was no sooner delivered in a tumbler than it was dealt out into wine glasses and drunk neat. Our little party, whose entrance neither attracted the attention nor disturbed the current of carousal of the general body for a second, was speedily supplied with some cold meat and bread, of which we were glad enough.

The reader will, I doubt not, permit the introduction here of a little episode, or I should rather say of its beginning. It has reference to a subject which I have all my life since this time felt that I should like to say half a dozen words about to the community at large. The topic is generally, perhaps, a difficult and delicate one; but in the present case its events were of far too painful and melancholy a character to be deemed offensive. When our meal was over, I, who had no inclination to join in the frightful doses of raw spirit which those who came in with me were swallowing, fell into conversation with a young woman who was sitting beside me. She was quite sober, and on my coming in had made room for me beside her, by an act of natural and unobtrusive courtesy; and when several times I offered her the glass during supper, merely sipped and put it down. She was sallow and thin, and coughed almost incessantly. She told me she was given over by the doctor; and when I asked her how she could think of coming to such a place under such circumstances, she said she knew it was not right, but she could not sleep of a night, and wanted

company: when “her sister” (so they usually speak in the *sisterhood of sorrow*) came here, she came too; her breath was very bad, and she was afraid some night or other she should die while she was alone. She was a native of London; and had been here nearly seven years, *but should not be here much longer*. How long had I been here? Was not I a Towny too? — “An emigrant: here about twelve months, and a Londoner.” Indeed. Where was I working? “Come to Sydney with a load of cedar from the Islands.” Did I mean to stay in Sydney? I must mind what I drank in that house, for old George was always hoccussing some poor lagger (sailor) or another, and leaving him without a feather to fly with when he waked in the morning. My attention became wholly abstracted from the fierce riot around; I heard nothing but the broken voice that was answering my questions; I saw nothing but my own mental visions of the woes it told, till some one threw open the window shutters and said it was sunrise.

Sunrise seemed the signal for a general dissolution of the assemblage. The sailors went to their ships; the convicts sneaked off to their gangs; and the wretched half-frantic women that had completed the groups staggered away to any doghole where they could find a temporary lurking-place to sleep off the effects of the drink. When old D—— and his partner found that I had come up from the Islands with a quantity of plank for sale, nothing was too good for me. Among other attentions was that of installing me into their own sleeping room till the town was up; but here, as I was fully convinced I was only brought in to be robbed, I took care not to sleep at all. I had not indeed much cash about me to lose, and I might have recollected that they were sure not to try for such a paltry stake as that, but wait till I sold the cedar. But that not occurring to me at the time, I contented myself with a mere rest on the bed; and after a couple of hours went down to the wharf.

In the course of the morning I made a tolerably good bargain for my share of the cedar. I found I had cleared, after paying all expenses, fifty-seven pounds. Here I must digress a moment to remark upon the enormous extent to which government was cheated of the duty it imposed on this article. Valuable as the timber was, the duty of one halfpenny per foot on all cut on Crown land could by no means be considered an extortionate impost; and yet some of the first “nobs” in the colony used to “swallow bobby” (make false affidavits) to an enormous extent. The cedar being exempted from duty by an affidavit that it was cut on a private estate and not on Crown land, some of the police courts continued for years to be scenes of the most barefaced perjury in this particular; and the magistrates knew it very well, but would not interfere because some of their own rank were among the principal culprits. I could point out one person from actual knowledge of his cedar grounds and his trade, who must have cleared some thousands of pounds in this

nefarious way.

Having sold my cedar for ready money, I lodged this fresh sum with Mr. —, a very substantial and well-respected publican, who I have already mentioned as having interested himself to get me work on my first coming to the colony. In the afternoon I wandered round the town in search of a lodging, which at last I found in York Street. In the middle of the night I was roused out of my sleep by a violent smarting sensation on the outside of the thigh; and putting my hand to the spot the same pain struck me in the forefinger, inflicted I could feel at several distinct strokes. My instantaneous impression was, that I was bitten by a snake; but I could feel nothing of such size. Throwing the clothes in a heap on the spot, to retain whatever might be there, I got a light. On removing the bedclothes, I found one of the small black scorpions of the colony. My leg and arm became quite numb for a short time, but no further ill effect followed.

The Rocks, being so elevated and almost surrounded by the waters of the harbour, are the pleasantest part of Sydney. When George Street (the main business street) is like an oven, a fine soft breeze may generally be felt moving on that high ground. Having nothing to do, I often strolled up there; and whenever I happened to meet with Jane, the poor invalid I have mentioned, I went into the Sheer Hulk and sat down with her; for she was generally, if out at all, sitting in the shade somewhere about that spot. She would never drink anything but tea, so I used to make old D—— provide us with some. A remarkable and admirable religious instinct had led her companions of her own sex to insist on her living at their charge for some time before. The cost might not be great, but still it was human nature standing forward in its heroism between its kind and the enemy. Their expression was, “She should not die in her sin.” I thought it very beautiful. It had not occurred to me, who had plenty of money, and strength and right to earn more; but these outcasts, whose earnings were a crime, and whom men trampled upon as the worthless ones of the earth, were steady in their reckless kindness, never forgetful, and often giving half of all they possessed beyond mere clothing to her, who would not be long able to give even the simple remuneration of her thanks. At last I insisted on her taking a rupee or a dollar from me every few days. Some days passed, at length, without my seeing her. I made no inquiries, expecting every day to meet her. But the fourth or fifth afternoon her particular associate met me, and asked me to go with her to “her sister,” for she was very ill. She conducted me to one of the worst parts of the Rocks, and then up the steps of an old house, with the window-shutters nailed up, and a shattered door without fastening. The joists were still ranged along the ground-floor, but the boards were all torn off, probably to burn. Stepping from one joist to another through the front and back rooms, which were both in the same condition, we went

into a little weather-boarded shed, not much bigger than a large chest of drawers, built up to the back of the house for a sort of washhouse. Here the two occupied one small bed on the bare ground. They had some time before been turned out of doors to make room for a better lodger, because they were too poor to pay their rent regularly; and the sad impulse of necessity had conducted them to this empty house, where the bare joists preventing their using the rooms, and the staircase being too broken to go up and down at night, they had taken possession of the shed. It had an earthen floor, and the sun being on that side all the middle of the day, the heat beat through the low roof of wood, only half an inch or so thick, with an intolerable force. What a feat for man to triumph in — to have brought simple confiding woman to such a doom as this! The poor sufferer was too hoarse to speak, or rather could make no sound. She had caught the influenza, which was then about, and is the only fatal epidemic of the colony. Added to her previous complaint, it had made perfect havoc of her little remaining strength. Her eye was lustrous and wild, her face clammy all over with the heat, and her breathing one protracted struggle. If my Lord —— — , who took her from her father and mother and brothers ten years ago, at sixteen years of age, could have looked from amidst his luxury into this shed, he must have hated his mocking escutcheon. As I could not understand what she was trying to say, I went out and got a pencil and paper, for she had had a first-rate education. An old Italian, who had been a prisoner, but was now boating on the river, told me she understood his language as well as he did himself, and “talked it like a lady.” She must also have had a good knowledge of music, for she knew the names of almost all the pieces played by the military band. She wrote on the paper that she should like to have a doctor, that she thought she should get better, and would I come and see her every day? From the instant I went in, as soon as I saw the piece of buttered bread that lay untouched beside her, quite crisped with the heat, and the butter melted right through it, I had quite settled that point. I said that I would fetch a doctor directly. Off I went down the Rocks, across George Street, past the Tanks, to Dr. Bland's — the first medical practitioner in the colony. I met him at his own door. Like himself, when I described the case, that good man turned and went with me at once. After seeing Jane he told me there was no hope of her living more than six or seven weeks, and he urged her being sent up to the hospital. But this she would not hear of. She informed me that she had once been a patient there, but was so terrified by seeing the scarcely dead dragged off their beds whilst yet warm, and, covered with some scant rag, borne off to the cold and solitary dead-house, that she had come out half cured, and would sooner die than go there again. The next thought was what ought to have been the first. I went out and took a large first-floor room that looked down on the water for her, a nice cool shady

place, on the side of the house not exposed to the mid-day sun; and as soon as it grew a little cool we removed her, the companion of her poverty, who had given her half her narrow bed, going with her as volunteer nurse. That night, when the moon got up, I had the happiest, and yet the saddest, walk I have ever had in my life. Its sensations remain to this hour. I had left *her* in a quiet house, nursed tenderly, medicated wisely, fanned by the sweet sea breeze, and, more than all the rest, confiding in, depending on, *me*. But this was the end of all, that it was to be but for a few days. So thinking and feeling, I rambled on to near Paramatta and back before morning. At this distance of time it seems to me very strange; but I felt then as if I had never been in such perfect tranquil enjoyment of all the highest faculties of my being. Perhaps it was so. Perhaps this first downright outburst of my soul set me thenceforth thinking, and feeling, and knowing, and willing, and enjoying, and daring, and gaining, and desiring, as I never had done before. Forgetfulness of self is surely the gate into the divine places of the universe; and thus this night, for a little while, I was allowed to walk with God.

In about ten days the influenza, which Jane had been labouring under, was subdued; but she was very weak. She however did get up, and for some days walked about; but her weakness became greater, and she again took to her bed. She rose no more. I sat up with her the chief part of the nights myself. Oh, how tending the dying makes us love them! During these hours I read to her nearly the whole of the Testament, of which she became more and more fond. About a week before she died she gave me directions to take from her pocket a packet of letters, which as soon as she was dead I was to sink in the middle of the harbour, I could have been better pleased than with my commission; I imagined they were the letters of her destroyer, and I abhorred their contact. Sitting the same night in the old arm-chair by the bedhead reading as usual, I fell asleep about two or three o'clock in the morning. When I awoke it was broad daylight. My right hand had fallen over on to the pillow: she had clasped it in both hers, pressed it to her lips, and fallen asleep. Tear spots were still damp upon the pillow. A few days after this she died. I did not see her die, but they said it was the mere change of a minute — a gentle wandering of thought into bewilderment — bewilderment becoming unconsciousness — unconsciousness settling into death.

Just outside Sydney, south, there is a large uneven tract of sand, the Sand-Hills. Every body in New South Wales knows the import of the phrase *the Sand-Hills*. It is one of the still trophy yards of death — one of the stillest — one of the saddest. Here in a cloudy winter day, a chiller and more waillike breeze goes stealing along each little knoll that breasts up along the barren hollow; and here too in the summer's prime the sand, gathering the solar heat, glows upward again into the descending beams,

intensifying them till it is faintness and blindness and something near suffocation to stand still anywhere within the dread precinct. If the world were searched from end to end, nowhere could you find such another volume of unutterable woe as is bound up in this little spot. In yonder corner lie the Jews, in this the Protestants; here the Presbyterian, there the Catholic: but *all* wanders far from home and kin. Take any group of those masses and analyze it. What elements! — Misfortunes wonderful — incredible delusions — pure suffering — and direst criminality. To such a home they carried the woebegone creature whose truest friend had met her all too late. I could not properly follow her to the grave, but some of her own sort did; and when all was over, and the town still, I went out alone and paid my last melancholy tribute to her remains.

I have often thought I should like to ask the better portion of society, especially the female sex, whether they ever considered the frightful retribution that attends their neglect of this miserable class of women. The betrayed, driven from society, has become the betrayer from the sheer necessities of hunger and thirst, weariness and cold. “In the twilight, in the evening, in the silent and dark night, she lieth in wait at every corner.” Man's very immunities are his snare; no necessary exposure follows his transgression. And thousands — tens of thousands — hundreds of thousands, from the greybeard to the stripling, follow the steps of “the strange woman” to her “chamber of death.” Night and solitariness and the interests of the class are a triple cloak of concealment. No one warns the mother where the son has been; no one hints to the sister the first downward steps of a beloved brother; no one solves the dark enigma of unrequited affection to the wonderstruck ear of the wife. The mighty mischief ramifies through all society. The fountains of a nation's life are envenomed; and pure and spotless as are the mothers, the poison of a fiery taint is in the blood of the children from age to age renewed. All undetected does the deadliest monster that ranks among our foes pursue his fatal ravages. Conscience only — the conscience of one half the race — is the only volume of his statistics. For all this there is but a single remedy. You can add nothing to it; you can take nothing from it. — *Women! extirpate this foe-class by your love.* And it must be *your* love — *your own* love. Man's will not do. He only sinks himself in his attempt to save. Every section of society has its own philanthropic function. Here is yours. Shall it alone remain undone? — undone to your own undoing?

It was an amusement to me for a little while after Jane's death to ramble now and then up the Rocks, for I liked to hear one and another talking about the deceased; and I saw and heard every day things in the lives of this lawless race, which I should have had great difficulty in believing except on the evidence of my own senses As I have gone in

and out among them, I have heard conversations passing which literally foreshadowed deeds of dishonesty and violence, not then indeed acted, but acted eventually. I knew too that some of these men were runaway convicts, who were in strict "hiding" in the day-time, and only "showed out" by stealth at night, creeping through the darkness up and down those intricate streets to the place of assignation for some desperate deed, or thence to the place of its fulfilment. I believe, from what I have learned in subsequent years, that almost every house of the lower sort in this district of the town partook at this period more or less of the same lawless character. It is astonishing what numbers of them still sell grog on the sly; what numbers again of these sly grog shops are kept by "fences," or receivers of stolen property; and what numbers again of these either harbour and conceal bushrangers on the premises, or receive them and purchase their plunder at night. Instances have occurred of men being householders for several years, maintaining an excellent outward repute, being extensively trusted by merchants with goods, and shunning no publicity whatever; and yet being finally discovered to be convicts illegally at large. So that this whole field of society may be said to be as it were an undermined and hollow tract, where the superficial and visible life, bad as it is, conceals another unspeakably worse. The very constabulary themselves are of a piece with the rest; for it is quite undoubted that numbers of them consider their only business with any drunken man they may find lying about, to be to empty his pockets and leave him. Perhaps, however, I should not speak in the present tense; my knowledge has only reference to the past. Of late years the Sydney police is said to be of a much more reputable character.

Moored at a considerable distance out in the waters of the harbour is the old ship used as a hulk for some classes of convicts. One fierce, rainy, windy night while I was there, about eleven o'clock, a well-known frequenter of D——'s knocked at the door, and being recognised by his voice, immediately procured admission. A fine, ruddy, rawboned fellow, six feet high, followed him closely in. He seemed very little daunted, but it appeared that he had jumped overboard and swam ashore from the hulk during the evening, having had three shots fired at him by the sentries, none of which took effect. Old D—— was afraid of the police if he kept him in the house; and he was no less afraid to tell the man himself personally that he must go. The consequence was that he stayed; the lights, however, were all put out, and everything hushed for the night. The new comer was put into a back room to sleep, from which there was a method of escape up the rock behind. I, who had lingered to see the upshot of the matter, was filling my last pipe when loud voices on all sides of the house were heard demanding entrance. Old D——, after making as much delay as he could under pretence of getting a light, at length opened the door: a whole host of constables came crowding in,

while at the same time those who had been stationed at the back jumping into the yard and trying the latch of the back-door (which the runaway had purposely left open for his own escape, never thinking of that entrance being used against him), and finding it yield, had walked in and taken him. And now another scene commenced: the chief constable, who was present, directed his subordinates to take into custody everybody in the house as confederates. Not supposing myself at all concerned in the affair, I had hitherto kept quietly aloof, but the prospect of such an adventure soon altered my mood. I could not get past them and get away by the door; and what was worse, I knew that two if not three of them knew and had recognised me. Once more my good fortune befriended me. In old D——'s room was another small window, and long before the scuffle in the front room had terminated (for the lights were knocked out, and there was a regular pell-mell in the dark, the constables dragging one and another into the street as they could find them), I was out of the window and away up the Rocks and in safety. I made the best of my way into the thick scrubby bush of the Government domain, where I stopped shivering till the morning, but quite content to be where I was rather than where I might have been. I should have gone home, but thought the "traps" might know my residence, and follow me. As soon as I knew the people in Sydney were stirring in the morning and the houses open, I ventured, not without most cautious glances and hasty steps, to my old friend Mr. ——, the publican. As he told me that I was perfectly correct in thinking that it might turn out a rather serious adventure if I should be identified as one of the company, I got a couple of pounds from him, bade him secure my box and pay my lodgings, and was full four miles out of Sydney on the road to the Hawkesbury River before I even stopped to breakfast.

Chapter VII. The Hawkesbury River and Its Settlers.

First purchase of cattle — Parramatta — Magistrate's interpretation of the law — The Factory, or females' prison — A drunkard's home and family — Windsor — Richmond — The banks of the Hawkesbury — Garden and field produce — Convicts at work — Love-matches — An emancipist's career — Various modes of controlling the convict-population — Another flogging-scene — Vast wealth acquired by a convict — Hospitality of the country at large — Rural life in the lowlands — Tommy Parnell's — Arrangement about depasturage of cattle — A job of fencing — Settlers' mode of paying wages — More cattle purchased

BY the time I reached the top of the hill where the Great Western and Southern roads diverge from each other, I was ready for my breakfast: so, going into the public-house, I joined a party of travellers to whom that meal was just being served up. These travellers were principally Hawkesbury settlers who had attended Sydney market on the previous day; and, not having disposed of their loads till late, had stayed in town all night. After breakfast, while the pipes were being filled and lighted, one of them read aloud from the paper an advertisement of the sale of a lot of impounded cattle, to take place at a pound near the township, or, more correctly, town, of Windsor on the next day. Just at this time a very severe drought of many months' duration was at its height, without any prospect of termination. Cattle were dying in all directions throughout the colony for want of "feed," the pasture being eaten quite down to the roots, and the whole country, for hundreds of miles, presenting nothing but a surface of bare grassless earth. Stock consequently had fallen ruinously in price; so that beasts which formerly had sold at 8*l.* and 10*l.* per head were now worth not above 2*l.* 10*s.* or 3*l.*, and people whose cattle had got into pound often cared not to release them. The poor beasts were thus left to depend for subsistence, and for the *personal appearance* that goes along with it, on the tender mercies of the poundkeeper. As these men's interest in the matter extended no further than keeping up the beasts in order just so far as to ensure the disbursement of their own claims, the result may be imagined. They very often sold for the worth of

their hide. That, in Sydney, at this time varied from 5s. to 10s. Of course beasts which got impounded whilst in good order suffered less: some of these would sell at 30s., 40s., or even 60s.; very few fetched more.

Up to this time I had no settled intention which way to travel. My determination was now formed by the influence of one of those outward circumstances which so commonly, and oftentimes so unexpectedly, control the inward mind. One of the company made the remark, that the lot of cattle advertised, to his knowledge, comprised several head of the best-bred beasts; and that they were so low in condition, but without any serious injury, that they could “hardly crawl, and were sure to go dirt cheap.” Here was a “fine chance,” he said, for anybody that had a little “ready blunt.” It instantly struck me, that without any job in hand, and nearly 80*l.* in the hands of my acquaintance in Sydney, I might as well have the chance myself. I did not think a second time about it: my conviction was quite perfect at once. So I told the man I had been talking with, a young Australian, that I thought I should go up the road with him, if he would have my company: this he assented to willingly, we having become quite intimate in the single hour we had known each other.

After partaking of the usual starting glass (a half-pint of rum) between us, we set off. A single fine old shaft bullock was all my fellow-traveller was driving, and our pace was pretty good. I dare say the “old Trojan” walked off at the rate of nearly 3½ miles an hour. I got a good deal of information from this young “Native,” — as the white Australian-born race are called. He told me, — and I saw plenty of evidences of it as we went along, — that the heat on the previous market-day had been so great that between twenty and thirty head of draught-cattle, of one sort or another, had sunk under it between Sydney and Windsor, a distance of 35 miles; and he had been informed during the week since, that birds had been found, by several persons, dead on the ground in the bush, from no other cause that could be thought of but the heat of that day. I certainly recollected the intense heat of the day very well when he mentioned it; but it had no violent effect on me beyond causing the most profuse perspiration. Three or four times since I have noticed similar days, and must say that each time I have felt them more severely, no doubt on account of gradually decreasing vigour. It should at the same time be carefully stated, that these occasional hot days are not by any means feared or considered dangerous to health by the colonists generally. Peculiar constitutions only, I think, suffer from them.

I inquired what means I must take, if I were to buy the cattle we had been hearing of, to procure pasture for them. Any large settler, he said, would in general take charge of another person's cattle on the terms of receiving in remuneration one third of the increase; but at present “the feed” was so bad that scarcely anybody had enough for his own. But he knew of one settler, a magistrate, who had a fine run over the

Hawkesbury River among the mountains, who had very few cattle on it, and was taking any he could get to graze on the thirds. This determined me to make the purchase if everything beside should seem to make it advisable. One further difficulty struck me: I hardly fancied giving my cattle up into the hands of a stranger, and going away to perhaps a twelvemonth's job in a distant part of the colony. But on mentioning that point I was told I should get plenty of jobs about the Hawkesbury, for that there were not many sawyers about that part, and sawed timber was coming into demand more and more every day. He could not inform me of any settler needing a pair of sawyers; but thought if I walked about among them on the banks of the Hawkesbury for a few days, I was sure of meeting with what I wanted. My course seemed so clear, that on reaching Paramatta, 15 miles from Sydney, I determined to go back to Sydney by the evening coach, and draw some money from my banker; returning by any conveyance I could get.

The remainder of the day, till coach-time, I spent in surveying Paramatta. I found it a large straggling town on each side a small river, over which is a common bridge, remarkable, so far as I know, for only one circumstance: viz. that some years before, when the people rose in the morning, there was found on it, and killed, a diamond snake of 27 feet length. There is a very good church: a court-house also, chiefly famous for the illegal conduct of some members of its bench about this period. One of their practices was the infliction of torture on convict malefactors to compel confession where they suspected crime, but were without evidence. In the investigations instituted by the government it turned out that one or two of these justices in particular had been in the habit of ordering a given number of lashes to be inflicted on prisoners morning after morning, till they confessed what was required. No doubt many a poor wretch has since died at some penal settlement who was sent there on the strength of his own confession, thus obtained by the insupportable torture of "the cats" morning after morning on his lacerated and ulcerated back. This is the same bench which also put that astounding construction on the 'Hired Servants Act' in the case of the Rev. Mr. Walker, which the Supreme Court of the colony eventually expressed itself so severely about. The case was this: — The Archdeacon, then the chief ecclesiastic of the colony, engaged the Rev. Mr. Walker, a most respectable man, as master of the Female Orphan School, together with his wife. In course of time Mr. W. found himself compelled, by his feelings as a gentleman, suddenly to decline, on Mrs. W.'s account, any further connexion with the institution. Hereupon the Archdeacon brought both Mr. and Mrs. W. before the Paramatta Bench, under *The Hired Servants Act*; and under that Act the magistrates tried and sentenced them. The Supreme Court decided that the Act had no reference to the case, and public opinion added that, even if it had, Mr.

W., under the circumstances, *could not have acted otherwise*. This will be to the reader another token of what sort of materials the Australian magistracy at the period in question were composed.

Among the other buildings that attracted my observation was the Female Factory, a splendid edifice of white squared stone, standing a little way off from the town in a low sandy flat of short under-wood: it is in the middle of a yard, walled round to the height of some twelve feet; in it are confined all the female convicts in the colony not actually assigned out to private service, together with such as are under imprisonment, &c. &c. for bad conduct. These last are generally punished by having their hair cut very short, by being confined in solitary cells, inferior rations, &c. Another building which struck me very much was the Darling Steam Mills, just completed about this time. They are of fine cut stone, on the bank of a creek about a mile from the heart of the town. The townsfolk seemed busy in various occupations, and generally well dressed. The little mobs of dogs that were to be seen gathering instantly whenever a bark was heard, were quite amusing: I several times counted above twelve, little and big. I was told that it was quite impossible for a nervous person to go to sleep till long past midnight through their incessant yelping till the middle of the night.

Evening at length came, and I retraced my course back to Sydney. I got off the coach a couple of miles out of town, and walked in after dark. Mr. ——— was at home, but had not the money I wanted in the house. He however made it up by bed-time. All attempts to find anybody going toward Windsor next morning at a sufficiently speedy pace for my purpose were unavailing: so I had at last to engage a horse and gig, which Mr. ——— sent his government man with me to bring back. The expense was 10s. We got off by about four in the morning, and were at our journey's end, at ——— Pound, by breakfast time; which, as it came on a very sultry day, I was by no means sorry for.

The sale began soon after 11 in the forenoon. I had previously examined the cattle, and had taken the opinion about them of my friend the young native with whom I had travelled the day before, and who had stopped at the adjacent public house all night. Some of them were in a dreadful state of "poverty" as graziers call it, with their bones literally forcing their way through the skin, and so weak that they could not walk, but only stagger and stop and stagger along again like a drunken man. Others were in pretty fair condition. Some were quite young cattle, some old. There were working bullocks, unbroken-in steers, and cows and calves. I bought thirteen head of one sort and another; for which I gave 10*l.* 15*s.* Several, indeed most of them, were very well bred cattle, so that my bargain, as they all lived and thrive when they got on good grass except one, was a very good one. The landlord of the house where I put up agreed to take charge of them for me, find a boy to herd them, keep

them on good grass, and yard them in his own stock-yard every night till I got "a run" for them, at 1*s.* a head per week. Everybody said I had made a good speculation; so that I really began to think myself quite a shrewd cattle jobber. On consideration too it seemed to me that the trouble of making arrangements for these thirteen head would be nearly as great as that of making those required for several score. Thus prepared I was induced in the evening to answer to the offer made by one of the guests who was drinking very freely to sell a lot of all sizes at 2*l.* a head. He had nearly sixty head, and was selling them as I heard to get ready money, having once been very well off, but now being quite impoverished by habits of intoxication, the great moral disease of the colony. The reader may judge for himself of the force of this habit in this hot climate when he has been informed, that during my residence in Australia I knew scores and scores of men who, reformed for a time by the moneyless condition of a prisoner, had gone on, after they became free, gradually accumulating wealth for many years, till once more getting to make free with this deluding luxury they fell back into their old habits, became inveterate habitual drunkards, and died, some in the most miserable destitution, and others still possessed of wealth, but bankrupt in all moral respectability. I have known instances where these wretched men have accustomed themselves to lie in bed and drink brandy all day for weeks before the awful process of self-destruction was completed. The unfortunate fellow I now refer to, after spending everything, went to one of the South Sea Islands in some very subordinate capacity, and I never met with any one who knew anything about him afterwards. Not liking to deal with a drunken man, I said nothing to him that night, but next morning when he was tolerably sober I asked him if he remembered his offer the night before. As I found he had come to the determination to part with the cattle to the first purchaser he could find on the terms he stated, I agreed to go over to breakfast with him at his farm and look at them. We had a walk of about six miles thither, and by the time it was performed he was got pretty well round. He had a wife and five young children, and it was quite shocking to see the shy, downcast looks with which they received us; even the baby in arms seemed infected with the blank, hopeless look of the family. The cattle were all standing in the yard, and had been there for two days before. He had got them in out of the bush, and swore they should never go out again till he got the money for them. I made a bargain with him to take twenty at his own price, cows, calves, and young bullocks. I could have got them at a lower rate if I had beat him down; but I really had not the heart. He made me stop to dinner with him; and I prevailed on him to let the eldest boy take the whole herd out to feed for a few hours. But he was intoxicated and quite unreasonable again long before evening. When the cattle came home we drafted off my lot, and he sent his boy with me

to help drive them to where my previous purchase were yarded. During the night I recollected for the first time that with these three and thirty head I was standing at a grazing rent of 1*l.* 13*s.* per week; much too large a sum for me to feel easy about. I therefore resolved to set off in the morning along the Hawkesbury River, as I had been advised, and endeavour to make some arrangement for the care of my little herd on the thirds, and at the same time get a job to support myself.

Morning came, shining brightly, as the morning can shine in New South Wales. I set off about 9 A.M. on my new expedition. Traversing the long viaduct that conducts the road across the low land bordering the creek on the Sydney side of Windsor Township, and over the bridge across the creek, and up the hill and past the barracks and across the main street, I for the first time looked down on the celebrated Australian river the Hawkesbury as it rolled smooth and deep at the other side of the eminence on which the settlement stands. Wide, and deep down between its sloping grassy banks, it was a very different spectacle from the crag-bound torrents I had been used to in the Cedar Brush, and at once prepared me for a pastoral and agricultural country. I believe (but am not sure to a few miles) that at Windsor this river has yet a hundred miles to travel to the sea; and the whole of the distance is navigable for sailing-boats. One was quietly gliding up to the wharf beneath where I stood, filled with shells for burning into lime. As this was not the part of the river which I had been directed to traverse, I turned along the main street, and following it past the church, a fine large brick edifice, bent my steps toward the little township of Richmond, three quarters of an hour's walk distant. Here there is a punt ferry across in the direction of the Blue and Curryjong Mountains, immense masses of lofty country, intersected by vast gullies and chasms in all directions — so much so indeed that the chief impression on one's mind in travelling through the region is wonder how a road was ever found across it. When I reached the edge of the high lands at Richmond, and looked across the alluvial tract, which, in the language of the settlers, is called the lowlands, and saw the fine expanse of rich cultivated ground with the river on the farther side and the dark blue misty mountain outline beyond, I felt at once that I was in the land of the husbandman. Whichever way I looked I could see fields of the tall green Indian corn (maize), with its tassel tops, bending and waving under the fresh breeze that was sweeping over it. Here again a square of orchard loaded with splendid peaches broke the uniformity of the surface; there a piece of ground new ploughed or with the teams at work upon it, and here a square of wheat stubble on which a boy tended a herd of pigs as they picked up the scattered grain, still further varied the prospect — and every few fields apart some more or less simple edifice marked the homestead. In some places it was no more than the bark hut of a few feet area, with its own dungheap and stack; in others it was the

capacious and costly mansion surrounded by farm buildings of all sorts, and abundance of grain. My way to the farm of the first settler I had been advised to go to, a miller, lay along the lowlands ascending the river. On making my way down into this tract I found all sorts of vegetables and fruit trees flourishing; at least all the settlers troubled themselves to plant. There were excellent figs, gooseberries, currants, lemons, oranges, melons, peaches as large as a good sized breakfast cup and of the most exquisite flavour; potatoes, pumpkins as big as a large bucket, cabbages, radishes, onions, beans, pease; in short everything of the kind profusely produced and of the most superior quality. In one place I saw a whole cart-load of the most delicious peaches going along the road; and on asking the driver where he was taking them to market, he told me they were for the pigs, and that all the season through they gathered a similar load every other day from under the trees in the orchard for the same purpose. In another place I found a large tract planted with what at first glance seemed to be a species of cabbage; but on inquiring of some men who were working among the plants hilling them up, I found it to be tobacco. They said there would be about twelve hundredweight to the acre, and that, if well cured, it would be worth 150*l.* per acre; and that really well cured Australian tobacco would sell about that part as well as American; but few people could succeed, from want of a knowledge of the true process, in effecting a good cure of their leaf. These men I discovered were all convicts, lent by the government to the settler on whose land they were at work. There was no restraint on their personal liberty beyond that of fear of consequences if they left the farm or neglected the work; their huts were at the edge of the piece of tobacco ground, and were merely a few upright sheets of bark with interstices of many inches, and only part of a roof — in short many a countryman in England provides his pig a snugger shelter. In fine weather this would matter but little, but in wet it must have been the source of much discomfort. They received no wages, but were provided with a scanty suit of slop clothing at certain seasons specified by law; and also every Saturday afternoon with as much coarse beef and flour as would just keep them till the same period of the succeeding week. Occasionally their master opened his heart so far as to give them a little tobacco, tea, and sugar beyond the allowance ordered by law. Altogether their cost might be about half that of free labourers; whilst between fear of being flogged and hope of getting a little indulgence in the matter of ration, their labour was nearly or quite equal — so that the master's clear gain was just the wages a free servant would have been paid over and above his ration at the same kind of work. Travelling on I found very few free labourers in this district; almost all the work seemed done by the settlers, their sons, and their convict servants. Of course there were a few free men, but the proportion was much less than in the non-agricultural parts.

As I have not yet mentioned it, it may be as well to notice here a peculiar characteristic of the free labouring population of Australia: it is in a state of constant migration. The man who has a contract job or is a hired servant here this year, probably spends the next at the other end of the colony. It is less so about the Hawkesbury than elsewhere, occasioned, I have always had a strong surmise, by so many of the little settlers having daughters. Some stalwart young Briton transported at fifteen weathers his seven years, and at two and twenty gets his certificate of freedom and goes off to seek his fortune. The Hawkesbury arrests his weary footsteps; some crabbed old emancipist offers him a job, which, too new in liberty to be fastidious, he takes; there is but one hut, and man and master eat together; a few days domesticates the stranger; and every night when the "laughing jackass," the settler's clock, a common bush bird, calls him home from the field, the pleasant piano-voice of Nance or Nelly sends him unresisting to the river for a bucket of water or to the bush for a log; till joke gets transformed into serious earnest, and the wandering servant owns the heiress of the soil.

The first settler to whom, as advised, I made application for a job was a miller. He was an old man, who had come to the colony a prisoner in early life, but by probity and industry had gradually assumed a much better position in society than he could have attained if he had never become obnoxious to the penal laws of his country. He had a fine farm, and a fine family, chiefly sons. At the extremity of his farm, bounded by the river, and worked by it, he had also a very fair mill. When I got there it was just dinner-time, and his lads were just coming in out of the adjacent bush from felling and cutting up into fire-logs a noble iron-bark tree. They brought me in with them as soon as they heard what my errand was. It appeared, however, that the old man had given the order for the sawed stuff he wanted to a neighbour's son a few days before, and that it was already partly executed. But my disappointment was qualified by being made to sit down with them and partake of a hearty dinner of excellent bacon and greens. In the afternoon, before I set forward again, the old man took me round his garden and farm-yard, and through his cultivated ground to the mill; and all the way we went, as if he had a mind to encourage me by showing what patient industry and uprightness could do, he kept detailing to me the hardships and privations and perils of his early career in the colony — the oppression he had had to put up with without daring to demur, the toil he had had perseveringly to sustain for many years in possessing himself of the first seeds of his present wealth, and the many heart-sinkings he had struggled through before anything like a continuous tide of prosperity set in. When I was about to leave him he recommended me to go over to another miller in the vicinity, who was about to extend his buildings, and try for a job. This led me back partly in the same direction I had come. The journey took

me till late in the evening, and was equally unsuccessful. As this person, in addition to his mill business, kept a public-house, I stopped there for the night. He also was an old man, and was said to be pretty well off, although a few years before in quite straitened circumstances. Like the individual last mentioned, and indeed like most of those who have risen from the ranks of the prison population by their own efforts, there was a sort of open sturdy manliness about his character which was very agreeable. He had several convict-servants, who I could see were governed in quite a different manner from those I had met with in my Illa Warra jobs under free settlers. The free settlers governed their men with capriciousness and by terror, and so could never trust them beyond their sight; whilst these settlers, who had once been prisoners themselves, seemed rather to obtain a willing obedience, founded on respect for their judgment and fairness; and consequently they could trust their men as well out of their sight as in. In the morning I set off again, once more retracing my steps in the former direction, and pursuing the same course as far as the Nepean River. This time my application was to an officer connected with the government establishment at Emu Plains, who I was told was about to build a cottage. The information was founded on mistake: he received me politely, but said he had never had any such intention. It was at the Court-house I found him; and there was thus afforded me an opportunity of becoming acquainted, by personal observation and inquiry, with the real character of our British penal institutions in New South Wales. There was one man being flogged for theft, whose crime it was acknowledged was the consequence of the hunger of a three days' fast. His miserable pittance had been stolen, and, after enduring his hunger as long as he could, he had swum the river in the night, and broken into an adjacent settler's granary. Another poor wretch had a sentence of twenty-five lashes for laziness in not doing his task. The fact was, it would not have been laziness in the same man, in the condition he was in, to have lain abed for a month. Beside these, a number of men received twenty-five lashes each, on the charge of disobedience of orders. That disobedience was, that, their rations not having come by the proper time, they had refused to go to work till they got them, under the very natural impression that they could not be compelled to work when they were not fed. It would be in vain to try to depict the looks of mingled astonishment, indignation, and dogged sullenness that they exchanged as they came out of the Court-house door after hearing their sentence, and as they filed off into the prison-yard to be tied up to receive it. The constable who went in last left the gate partly open. I heard the flogger say, "Well, who's the first?"

After an instant or two I heard the answer; it seemed to be the voice of a Scotch lad: "Here, I'm the first, you ——; but —— my eyes if I don't have satisfaction one way or another, if I get hanged for it." I heard,

awhile after, the dull, heavy fall of the cat on the flesh, and the constable's count — ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, &c., mingling with the flogger's *hiss* each time, as he sent the blows home, dallying between each to spin out the punishment to the utmost. But there was no cry, no groan, no prayer for mercy. It was not long I listened. My heart began to beat chokingly, and I got away from the legalised abomination as fast as I could. I often heard people in Sydney afterwards expressing their astonishment and horror when some of these iron-gang overseers were killed by the men; but from this time I never found any difficulty in comprehending the how and why.

Before I had collected myself I was a good way past the public-house. I had been hungry a few minutes before, but my hunger was as completely gone off as if I had been at a lord mayor's dinner; so I turned off into the bush the way I came, meaning to go back to Windsor. But when I had got some distance on the road it began to rain. On the right, at a little distance, situated on a hill among some paddocks, I saw a farm-house and buildings of a superior order. The rain came faster and faster, and it had become so cloudy as to appear much later than it was. The wind, too, as is often the case in these sudden changes in New South Wales, was excessively chilly. The hospitality which I found everywhere prevailing, even among the poorest, assured me that I should not be denied a night's entertainment if I went across to this farm; so I settled it with myself that I would go no further that night. My expectation did not mislead me. To my surprise I found I had got to *one* of the farms (for how many he had in all I believe few people know) of the celebrated Mr. Samuel Terry. This individual had once been a convict, but at the time in question was become one of the principal merchants in Sydney, and I believe no one who knew him well personally grudged him his good fortune. At this farm he had merely an overseer and a few men. The overseer received me very civilly, made me have my supper with himself, and gave me a very snug bed. I knew the part of the country he came from in England, and we had a long yarn about *home*, that ever ready theme by day and dream by night of all, emigrant and outlaw alike. We were in a more weather-tight room than any I had been used to since coming to the colony; and, as the wind ruffled and moaned about among the buildings scattered on the hill, and the rain pattered against the door, or fell hissing into the fire through the chimney, and the bright flickering wood-fire burnt steadily on, I could have fancied myself back in old England again, in some farmer's kitchen, far away in a quiet country village.

In the morning after breakfast, declining the invitation to stop and rest all that day and proceed on the next, I directed my steps back again toward the punt ferry, at that part of the Hawkesbury where I had come down on to the lowlands. Wandering leisurely along I could not but feel my disappointment considerably ameliorated by the pleasurable feelings

that attended what I saw of the general condition and character of the population. A beautiful river covered on its farther bank with mighty woods, backed by majestic ranges of mountain, and bordered on this side by wide alluvial flats parcelled out by the earlier governors into little useful farms, not calculated for fortune-making, but for affording necessary sustenance to the families of deserving individuals of the class of convicts; one wide expanse of cleared and generally cultivated land; every quarter of a mile or less a homestead alone at the river's edge, or embosomed in a rich orchard; here cattle standing sheltering themselves from the sun under a tree, there horses steadily dragging on the well-guided plough; then a group of children more carefully or rudely clad as the parents were less or more removed from habits of sloth and dissipation; each individual and each farm busy in itself, but nothing of that general intercommunication we meet with in the motion of tangled cities, where each part is perpetually threading the intricate mazes of the whole: — such was the scene through which I passed. Every house and hut had its wheaten or maize cake, its joint of pork or beef, and its fragrant pot of tea ready for the traveller. Occasionally a niggard or a helpless spendthrift was found; but such were the exceptions to the rule. The chief vegetable was the pumpkin, which I preferred to any vegetable we use in England; and the chief fruit was watermelons, the size, colour, and delicious refreshing coolness of which, eaten during the three hours of mid day heat when most farming people pause for a time from their field labour, it would be impossible for me to describe by mere words. The very general prettiness of the native white girls struck me very forcibly. I do not know how to account for it, but there is common to them, in all points, a singularly marked feminine character; a gentle, simple womanliness that is peculiarly agreeable. You do not feel afraid of their sneering at you or suspecting you. You feel that if you need help they will help you if they can. In a society where the prime law of life is suspicion and vigilance this is quite a little oasis. The best feelings of the heart and the noblest sentiments of the mind bound fearlessly forth to rest upon it. Perhaps this is just what woman tends to in proportion as she is made less amenable to the artificial standards of society and left to subside into the impersonation of her own intrinsic qualities.

I got to “Tommy Parnell's,” the public-house at the ferry, just at dinner time; and soon made myself quite at home. Mr. Parnell is a native, and, like all his caste, a free-hearted fellow, very easy to scrape acquaintance with. Here I stopped several days, for I really knew not which way to turn. I could not go into the interior, leaving my cattle at such a rent; they would soon, to use a common phrase of the country, have “eaten their heads off.” Being told, after the lapse of about a week, that Mr. ——— — , a settler and one of the magistrates of the colony, would be very likely to give me work, I went over to him. To my great satisfaction I was

successful; and before I came away, signed an agreement with him for a large quantity of split stuff; for as much indeed as, together with the setting it up as a fence, occupied me for twelve months. At the same time I made a bargain with him to take my cattle on the thirds.

I then gave Mr.—— — 's stockman, who was going to Sydney, an order to the man who had my little herd to deliver them to him as he came back; and in the course of another week they were on their way over the Blue Mountains, on the opposite side of the Hawkesbury river, to the cattle station in the interior, where they were to “run.” Their “spell” on better grass had improved them so that they travelled very well; and I had a message by a man who came down from the station after they got up, that not even one of the calves “dropped” by the way. The magistrate I was now employed by was an old gentleman very much respected and very well off. Like almost all the old settlers he had a great many farms, as well as cattle and sheep stations, in various parts of the colony, hundreds of miles apart from each other; he also, as usual, had at the home farm his smithy, flour-mill, tailors', shoemakers', harness-makers' and carpenters' shops, tannery, cloth-factory, tobacco sheds; beside stables, dairy, barn, wool-sheds, brick-kilns, saw-pits, &c., &c., and all the necessary tradesmen for these various occupations. Probably on his establishments there were altogether nearly or quite 200 men; some free, some bond. My work went on much as usual. It was some days before I got a mate. He had no prisoner that he could spare; otherwise, it being a very general custom at that time for a master to find a free tradesman a prisoner for a mate, charging a dollar a-day for him and finding his ration, I should probably have had one of his own men. I at last met with a free man who was walking about in search of a job; and as he was a willing agreeable chap I had no occasion for any change afterwards throughout the job. We met with a fall of excellent box and iron-bark trees. In splitting the tree is sawn off the stump at about two feet above ground; a length of the barrel, answering to the length of the posts or rails, is then sawn off. When the tree is alive the bark will often come off all round in a single sheet, which is spread out and flattened for covering huts, &c., if of a species sufficiently pliable. The log, thus barked, is split lengthwise with wedges and maul into quarters, these again into billets, and the billets into rails or posts or slabs. By the time we had got all our stuff split it was nearly the middle of the following winter; so that when we came to dig the post-holes the ground was so well saturated with rain that the digging was very easy, and we got on fast. It had, however, this disadvantage, that we could not ram the earth as hard round them as if the temper of the clay had been stiffer; and as it is the practice of the overseers, before giving the order for the payment for a fence, to do all that their utmost strength can do to shake it down in various places and thus test its solidity and permanence, there is very

great danger of having a fence, put up in either very wet or very dry weather, loosened and objected to; for if once a single post moves, they shake on till down go half a dozen panels. With the overseer, however, we got on very well. The entire length of the fence was something more than two miles, and we had to set on a couple of hands in addition to ourselves at the putting up; but there were only found three panels seriously faulty. These three we renewed, and went in to the head farm for our money. I had 87*l.* coming to me; but my mate, who was very much addicted to drinking whenever he could get it, and never went in to the farm without drawing out of the stores a bottle and sometimes two of rum, had only 53*l.* due to him. The clerk whose business it was to settle with us we found, as we had always heard him represented, a perfect scoundrel. He was a prisoner of the Crown, but had been brought up to one of the liberal professions. Self was his god, and every act of his life self-service. Without any strong mental faculties there was such an entire self-possession and uniformity of aim and feeling about him that his every act was instinctively in perfect keeping with the whole. He cheated the men for the master, and then he cheated the master for himself; and he did it so well that the master when informed of it, and with proof positive offered him, would not believe it. To look in his face one would doubt whether he believed it himself: he is now free, and comparatively a rich man. The first point he contended for was to sink the charge for all above the two miles (about 8*l.*); but when I showed him the overseer's ration bill, containing the charge for rations for the *whole* job, he gave that up. The next was neither more nor less than making a mistake of 1*d.* per pound, on his own side, on all the meat we had drawn during the twelve months for ourselves and part of that time for the other two men; but, as I had already made my own calculation of the items, he was again disappointed. He next insisted that we must, he was sure, want to renew our stock of clothing after being twelve months in the bush; which clothing would have been charged at least double the Sydney price. My mate was easy enough to take about 10*l.* worth. I wanted none, and none I would have. On the last point, and that, after all, the most serious one, the clerk was perfectly immovable, and I had to give way — it was no less than insisting that I should take one-half of what was coming to me in cash and the other in cattle; of course at their own prices. I stood out for three days, but it was of no use. Not a penny would he give me till I came to his terms. I had therefore at last to take four cows for 40*l.* The same four beasts I could certainly have bought anywhere else, with the ready money, for half that sum. He therefore cheated me out of full 20*l.* I had no resource but going to law; and I was told that if I did that in such a matter in New South Wales, where everybody knows everything that occurs in the Sydney courts through the papers, I need never look for another job from a settler. I was very glad in after years that I took

advice, and put up with this robbery quietly, for I found what I was told true. The representation of a single settler that some free man *will* have his rights is always enough to throw that man out of all chance of work along a whole river. The four head of cattle that I got (I was allowed to choose from the whole herd, a few particular ones excepted) were fine beasts: in fact, at any other time than that, when cattle were so cheap, they would have been worth the money. As soon as I had got them branded I took the earliest opportunity of sending them on up the country to where the others were, together with the branding iron and directions to the stock-overseer there to brand all the rest as soon as he could. My mate left his cattle still with Mr. —— 's herd; and took the check for his money over to the adjacent public-house to get it cashed, and then came back to pay a few small debts he owed among the men. But after he got to the public-house he never left it till he had spent every penny, and then in a state of half-intoxication he came back with another man, whom he had picked up to help him; took the cattle, drove them over to the township, and sold them for 3*l.*10*s.* a-head. Thus he got in the long run 7*l.* for 20*l.* worth of work. Surely of all men living the drunkard is the most unfortunate. Others have to contend against the inimical forces around them, but he superadds to this that he is perpetually inimical to himself.

Chapter VIII. Arrest of Free Emigrants on Suspicion of Being Bushrangers.

A case met with on the road — Sydney Police Office — Vexatious conduct of a settler-magistrate — Concealment of these things by authors on Australia — A night in the lock-up of an iron-gang — Imprisonment at Wallis's Plains on suspicion of being a convict illegally at large — Another case of illegal arrest by the military of two working people — Private lock-ups on large settlerse farms now coming into Convict farm-constables — Dragoons arresting travellers on suspicion, and hand-cuffing them to the stirrup-iron — A man's brains dashed out thus by a young horse — The Bushranging Act — Remarks

IT was now above twelve months since I had been to Sydney; and although I had frequently heard from travellers who stopped at our hut of the landlord of the ——, whom I had entrusted to be my banker, and had really no reason for altering my opinion of him, I yet began to be anxious to know whether the remainder of the money I had left with him was safe. Since seeing him I had had my notions of men much modified by what I had seen and heard of various individuals in the colony: in short, I was become much more cautious and suspicious. Meeting with another man belonging to the farm whose work was done a day or two before my business was so far arranged as to enable me to leave, I agreed to go down the country with him. We set off early, intending to make but one day's stage, but the weather was so sultry that we made two. The first day, soon after we were through Windsor, a transaction presented itself to me which, to give the English reader a correct notion of New South Wales, I must connect with a series of others of its own class, and shall therefore give this chapter up to that purpose; leaving my narrative to recommence in the next.

About three miles beyond Windsor, towards Sydney, we came up to a group of constables, all armed and gathered round a young man, who evidently by his English dress had not been long in the colony. This of course they could see as well as I could, and as there was not the slightest indication in any other point of his being a bushranger, there was in

fairness and common sense no ground for supposing him anything else than a free emigrant. They however insisted that, as he had “no protection,” they would take him into custody to be sent to Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, the head convict office, “for identification.” It was in vain that he remonstrated: their resolution remained unshaken. The chief constable of the Windsor bench was at the head of the party, and as he knew me well by often seeing me at Mr. ——’s, he asked me no questions; otherwise I suppose I should have shared the same fate. They marched the poor fellow to Paramatta gaol that night, and next morning, as my fellow-traveller and myself walked leisurely on between Paramatta and Sydney, one of the constables of the former town overtook us, having him in charge for lodgment at the Sydney police-office. As we walked on together I had a long conversation with him; and with my little discrimination in such matters, was soon quite sure that his tale was a true one. He had come out to the colony to an old friend of his family, who had emigrated some years before to hold a respectable public situation, but on arrival found him to be dead. After trying to get employment till everything was gone but the clothing he stood in, he had wandered on up the road toward the interior, more from the impulse of hope than of any precise expectation; and had had his journey cut short in the way described. I felt curious to know how the magistrates would deal with the case, for to me it seemed a most flagrant outrage, whilst the constables maintained it was quite legal, and in the common course of things. I had heard of such things before, but did not quite credit them. I also felt interested in the poor fellow, for I recollected how my own heart had often sunk on my first arrival, when I tried day after day to get a job without succeeding. The magistrate, Captain Rossi, long the chief superintendent of the Sydney police, sent him first to the prisoners’ barracks, where the documents descriptive of all individuals transported are kept, but he was returned from thence as unknown. He was next sent to where he himself said he was known in the town, and where it seemed to me he might have been better sent first; from thence he was brought back by the constable, with the merchant’s certificate that he had come out a free emigrant to the colony a few months previously, in a ship consigned to his house. Captain Rossi then informed him that he was discharged. The young man asked what he must do if he were again taken into custody. Captain Rossi said he should then know him again himself, and would at once liberate him. The young man said this was not what he meant; suppose he were arrested again, many miles from Sydney, what was he to do? Could not Captain Rossi give him “a pass” to protect him, as he now knew him to be free? Captain Rossi said, No, that was beyond his province: he would recommend the young man to apply to the colonial secretary. The poor fellow was about to reply, when a couple of constables had him turned round, marched off, and set at

liberty at the court-house door, before one could count half-a-dozen. I confess I was puzzled to credit the honesty of referring a man in immediate necessity of such an urgent kind to an official whose aid it would certainly require several weeks to obtain, especially as the poor fellow had no home for the communications to be addressed to; and I was equally puzzled to detect the difference between the manner in which this son of misfortune had been treated under the magistrate's eyes with his tacit consent, and a common assault, that it was the magistrate's duty to take cognizance of judicially.

After this affair I began to think myself very fortunate in having never yet met with the like treatment; which was no doubt owing partly to accident, and partly to my having always gone well dressed. Previously to this I had seen portions of such cases, but this was the first I had had an opportunity of observing throughout. As I am very careful on so serious a point to state only what I am positive of, I shall pass over plenty more where again I merely saw portions of the affair, to go on to such as I can speak positively to throughout.

The next was in my journey, hereafter detailed, up the New Country. In passing through Stone-quarry I went into a hut, which turned out to be a constable's to rest. A few minutes afterwards a middle-aged man stopped at the door and asked the way toward Bargo Brush, which was shown him; and he went on. About a quarter of an hour afterwards a gentleman rode up to the door, and calling the constable out, inquired if he knew the man who had just passed. The constable replied very deferentially that he did not; the horseman I found afterwards was one of the magistrates of the New Country travelling to Sydney. After designating the poor constable by several rather singular names, Mr.—— ordered him to “be off after the fellow and bring him back.” Without any further directions as to what was to be done with the man, Mr. —— pulled his horse's head round and cantered off toward Sydney. The man was accordingly brought back and lodged in the gaol, where, as it was Saturday, and the court of the district over for the day, he would certainly have to remain till Monday. Some years afterwards I happened to meet with this old constable in a distant part of the colony, and on calling to mind with some difficulty where I had known him before, I asked him what the man had turned out to be; he said, a free emigrant. He had been brought before the Stone-quarry bench on the Monday, and after being detained several days for the reply of a gentleman in Campbell Town whom he referred to as knowing him and able to recognise him by his handwriting, he was discharged; but just as in the other case I have related, without anything to protect him against the repetition of a similar outrage by some other constable the very next day.

The next case is one of my own personal experience, and I relate it here rather than in the order of its occurrence, because of the remarks I wish

to offer on the subject at large at the close of this chapter.

I cannot conceive how writers on New South Wales reconcile it with common honesty *invariably* to conceal this great fact. If their object were different from what it is, one might think it an oversight; but when we know that their grand aim is the promotion of emigration, it appears a piece of cunning at once base and puerile. Surely no honourable man could make such an omission, revealing, as the act does, a consciousness that if emigrant labourers were aware of what awaits them, they would never make one step toward the country. If the practice cannot be given up, at all events let men be told what they are to expect.

I was travelling, at a future period of my colonial life, towards Sydney from Wallis's Plains by the Great Northern Road, then being cut by the iron gangs, &c. It was excessively hot weather, and one of the Hawkesbury natives, whom I knew, was going thither with a team of bullocks in their harness, but without a dray; and as I was walking he took every thing I did not want, of clothes, &c., and slung them with his own things across the cartsaddle of his shafter. Thus we were both travelling dressed merely in our boots, hats, shirts, and trousers. After dinner the second day, I went off the road to an adjacent farm, to a person I had some business with, and my fellow-traveller went on toward where we were to camp for the night. My business detained me so much longer than I had expected, that it was nearly nightfall when I came off the bush track into the high road again. I looked round and saw, with astonishment, the nearly setting sun; and, of course, began to walk as fast as I could after my friend. At this instant I heard the clatter of horses' hoofs and the rattle of arms, and looking back saw a couple of mounted dragoons, headed by their officer, galloping after me. The officer shouted to me to stop; which I did. He came up, and in a most offensive way asked who and what I was. I told him, a free emigrant. "Had I any pass? anything to show?" It happened that I had, and moreover had it with me; for some time before, feeling rather in danger of being one time or other placed in this predicament, I had requested a gentleman in the commission of the peace, who knew me at the Hawkesbury, and had farms in this part of the colony, to give me "a pass." I took out "the pass," and gave it to the officer. He glanced at it quite cursorily, told me he knew Mr. ——'s signature very well, and was sure this was a forgery. Nothing I said in reply was of the slightest avail: indeed, both he and his men seemed to regard this proceeding as a sort of joke that passed away the time mighty pleasantly. I was compelled, on pain of being handcuffed to one of their stirrup-irons and dragged along, to walk before them about five miles forward till they met a constable; into whose custody they put me to be taken thirty-five miles back to Wallis's Plains, where I had the day before come from. The first night we stopped at an iron-gang camp. Here I was put into the lock-up, a little roofed

enclosure of a few feet square, very strong, but having the slabs in many places half an inch apart. The ground was quite wet, though there were men confined there almost every night. During the night it set in to rain and blow hard; the water running off the higher ground outside to the floor inside, it having been lowered by occasional sweeping. Some time in the week before an old working bullock of one of the teams at the gang had died, and his hide in a half putrified and stinking state was my only furniture. But bad as it was, I was glad at last to spread it on the floor of the hut with the hair side next me, sit on one end and draw the other up over my shoulders to keep the wind off. Here I sat till morning, whistling, shivering, and vowing vengeance. I had nothing given me to eat (such is the law) till the next morning, when they gave me a pound of "tommy;" but its colour and scent were enough. That day I was marched on to Wallis's Plains, and lodged in the lock-up with a man charged with murder. Here I was kept four days without ever being examined further; when to my astonishment, just at dusk in the evening of the fourth dreary day, I heard the military officer who had arrested me, and who was the justice at the head of the police at the adjoining Court-house, ordering the gaoler to open the door and bring out "that emigrant young man there had been a mistake about." Indignantly enough I walked out into the yard. Captain —— informed me, "That he was very sorry he made such a mistake: he had been over to-day to one of Mr. ——'s farms and taken 'the pass' with him; and he had been assured by one of Mr. ——'s overseers, that it was that gentleman's writing." I suppose some of the officials had told Captain —— of my expressed determination to seek legal redress; for a course of more cringing apology no man could utter. My first impulse was to threaten him with proceedings; my next to ask him what amends he intended to make me; but my last was to go away without a word. The fawning, cringing meanness of the apology was in such striking contrast with the red jacket and gold epaulettes, that it so completely took me aback, that I really did not know what to say or do in reply. My anger had lost all its violence in my contempt by the time I got home; and I thought no more about it. It remained in my memory only, as one of the many proofs I have met with how exceedingly unfit a military education renders even gentlemen for posts of judicial trust; and how particularly so for any office where laws of great latitude of interpretation are to be administered. But when the governors of colonies are military men, how can anything else be expected than that they will extend their own leaven through the whole lump, wherever there is a delegate to be empowered or a salary to be absorbed?

Another case of similar, or even worse character, fell under my notice at that period when General Darling sent parties of troops to scour the whole country, on the ground that an unusual number of bushrangers were out. I saw a lieutenant of one of the regiments accost and arrest two

men, one of whom was an emigrant, the other a prisoner free by servitude. The chief constable of the district was with the military party, and I heard him tell the officer that he knew both men to be free: the man free by servitude had long been a settler; and the free man had originally come to the district as the previous magistrate's free servant, so that there was not the slightest reason for suspicion in either case. However, the officer maintained that he had, according to the requirement of the law, "reasonable cause of suspicion," and after keeping them all night in custody in a blacksmith's outhouse on the roadside, sent them on the next morning to the adjacent police office for examination, where on arrival they were, of course, immediately discharged; with some rather strong intimations from the presiding magistrate to the corporal who took them, that a little more discretion on the part of his superior was desirable. The emigrant was a hardworking quiet man, and the freed man was both poor and ignorant; so the matter blew quietly over. Such, however, are the daily and hourly adventures of the labouring class.

I come to a much later period of my residence in the colony for a case: not that no intermediate ones present themselves, but to show that only so lately within the last four or five years matters were becoming much worse on this point, instead of better, as one would suppose should be the case as the free population came to outnumber in immense proportion the bond. In travelling through the upper part of the Hunter, I stopped a few days at one of the principal farms. During dinner the first day, the farm-constable arrested a traveller on suspicion of being a bushranger, and put him in confinement in a private lock-up built on the farm. The man was kept there several days before any magistrate sat at the adjacent court to hear cases; and it then turned out that the man had worked for that gentleman some years before, who recognised and discharged him. The poor fellow said, he had come free to the colony twelve or thirteen years before; and was generally arrested twice every year, under the Bushranging Act. He had made application in one quarter and another for some protective document, till he was quite tired and had given it up. He had now made up his mind to it, and it did not affect him as it did at first. He slept the time away as well as he could, and was all the readier for work when he got out.

A native lad once told me he had some time before passed seven weeks out of three months marching in handcuffs under the Bushranging Act. Having been born in the colony he had no protective document whatever. Some busy farm constable (a branch of the police I shall describe directly) arrested him, on suspicion of being a bush-ranger, at one of the farthest stations of Hunter's River, where he was looking for work. After being taken in handcuffs to Sydney, full 250 miles, and discharged, he went to the Morrumbidgee on the same errand, where he was again taken into custody by a soldier and forwarded in handcuffs to head quarters

under the same law.

As to the practice of the mounted police (dragoons employed on the roads under the magistracy) of handcuffing men to their stirrup-iron and so making them march or rather run, it was at one time quite common. I have several times heard it stated that it was at last discontinued through a trooper leaving his prisoner thus confined at a public house door, while he went in to drink, and the horse, startled by something, dashing off and killing the man. This however I state not from knowledge, but from report. On the other hand it is quite certain that I have not related one hundredth part of the shameful things that take place under authority of this enactment — for an authority it quite unquestionably is. There is no need of overstraining the act to make it most oppressive; its most lenient operation is flagrant enough. Under it a general authority is given to arrest on “reasonable” grounds of suspicion. Now it is certain that the settler magistrate and the chief justice decide very differently as to what “reasonable” cause of suspicion means. The settler magistrate takes it to be the “reasonable” of *his* reason, and that too very likely whilst under the influence of some strong bias of feeling or interest, and perhaps half drunk; on the contrary the chief justice holds it to be the “reasonable” of fair common sense. There is scarcely one case out of ten but would be decided against the captors in a civil suit. But then the injured is almost invariably a poor labouring man, and generally far from legal advice. Besides which, it has really become such an established custom of the colony, that men do not even think about going to law, be the case as gross as it may. Whole shoals of men, both emigrant and freed, are daily passing to and fro from one police office to another “for identification.” Yet I have never seen one syllable on the subject in any “tour,” or “statistical account,” or “journal of residence,” or “history” of New South Wales that I ever yet met with, and I have had the curiosity to examine many on this very point.

The farm-constables I have promised to describe are prisoners of the crown actually serving their sentence, who have been authorised to act ostensibly for the purposes of convict restraint on the farm. But no one ever questions (so that I suppose it cannot be questioned) their right to arrest under the Bushranging Act; and now that the settlers have commenced building private lock-ups on their own farms this really becomes a very serious matter. I could point out plenty of estates which are always short of free labour for no other reason than that free men travelling for work are afraid to go to them, on account of the intolerable conduct of their farm-constable; indeed this is one of the reasons why some of the settlers who have been examined before public committees have been able to give such very explicit evidence of their own want of labourers. Free men do not like being continually called upon by prisoner constables to “show their freedom;” and emigrants very often have

nothing to show, while at the same time their bare word will not go for a straw; and thus, after going a couple of hundred miles up the country for work, they may be marched back in handcuffs, and eventually turned adrift in Sydney with not a penny in their pockets. At the same time, if it has all been regularly done under "The Bushranging Act," there is no redress.

One of the worst points of the system still remains to be told: diminution of sentence is held out to prisoners as an incentive to the capture of bushrangers. Thus there is a direct premium to the convict farm-constable to arrest all individuals he can affix any suspicion to by the most active ingenuity; for it will be hard if out of ten or a dozen cards there does not turn up one trump. Hence some of these fellows' entire occupation is going about peering after every labouring man they can get sight of, and demanding his name, business, and pass; in short, putting him through as rigid and often as lengthened an examination as would a justice of peace if he were charged with theft. And as they often do this, whether by government authority or not I cannot say, on some unfrequented bushroad with a horse pistol in hand, there is nothing can be done but putting up with it.

Altogether the system must be altered, if New South Wales is to be the scene of emigrant settlement. Those who made and have maintained such a law as the Bushranging Act must have ill understood their science. The master, who enjoys the benefits of convict labour, is the party to be made answerable for the convict's safe custody; not the free labourer, who is already so seriously disadvantaged by the competition. The true principle of the case would be to fine the convict master for the convict's escape; as an animal's owner is fined for its trespass. Certainly nothing could be at once more unjust and more absurd than to make it penal not to be in a penal condition: — to make the free emigrant (especially) liable to arrest, because he cannot produce, as freed men can, a document to prove that he was once a prisoner: under the Bushranging Act it is in positive effect penal to have come free to the colony. If the reader reflects upon what has been just described — the Act itself, the farm-constable system, the extraordinary institution of private lock-ups — he will more easily conceive than I could describe the extensive and galling inconvenience to which the labouring class is subjected in this colony. Should any amendment of the system have been effected since my return to England, I would be the first to give it its due weight, and to the class subject to such long-continued and serious maltreatment my hearty congratulation.

Chapter IX. Agreeable Acquaintance Found.

Labour in a hot climate — Trip up Lane Cove
The Lane Cove bushmen — Return towards Sydney by
land — A mate and job met with — Billy Blue
— Purchase of books at a sale — A home found — My
mate's family and hut — Indications of the future
— Going to work — Some pleasant scenes
— Reading — Proceeds of job

MY narrative proceeds from the period of my journey to Sydney after completing my twelvemonth's job in the Hawkesbury district. I continued several weeks in Sydney without feeling much inclined to go to work; for fifty or sixty weeks of unremitting exertion of the most laborious kind in a warm climate exhausts the system in a way scarcely to be conceived from the experience of a cold climate. An invincible lassitude takes possession of the whole frame; and without anything like illness one feels destitute of all that alacrity that is usually associated with health. One evening about sunset I was loitering at the edge of the market wharf, when a lad standing in one of the wood boats that had discharged its load hailed me and asked me to cast off the painter of his boat from a log of wood it was fastened to on shore. As I did this, and flung it into the boat, he said, if I was going up the river, he would give me a passage. The thought directly struck me that I would do so; and the whole course of my future life was I may say immediately marked out by a single step. This little event was the first of the particular train of circumstances which has constituted my whole subsequent adventures and settled my character. It led, in the first place, to my becoming passionately fond of books; and again to my meeting with perhaps the only woman I should ever have fallen in with whose character could have permanently attached me. We pushed off from the wharf, and in five minutes were in the middle of the bay and cracking along with a pretty fresh breeze under all the sail (and rather more) that the boat would carry. She was one of those snug little 2 1/2 or 3 ton boats that the Lane Cove settlers manage to stow with top-heavy loads of wood, and yet bring safely down the stream to Sydney. She had about 3 cwt. of beef together with a couple of bags of flour weighing perhaps 4 cwt. in the bottom; and this ballasted her so that we could afford to carry on sail pretty well. We had the tide with us. A

whole fleet of the Lane Cove and Paramatta River boats were a-head of us; some of which had got a large bough stuck up to catch the wind and help the oars; others we noticed where the boatmen for want of a sail had set up their blankets; one chap had his jacket with a stick passed through the arms for a sail. It must have done about as much good as his hat would, for his boat was full three tons burden. As we neared the flats, by which time it was pretty nearly dark and had begun to rain quite hard, we discovered a couple of lime boat men in their boat aground, half intoxicated; they had rowed themselves on a shoal, and before they had gathered their wits about them enough to shove the boat off again (and it was heavily loaded with rations), the tide had run down so much farther that there was no getting afloat till its return. So there they had to sit and exercise themselves in the virtue of patience for about three of four hours; which was a tolerably appropriate substitute for the stocks.

Until then I was not aware how thickly the bush around Sydney was at the time peopled by sawyers and splitters. The lad who was giving me a passage up the river in his boat told me he was a convict servant belonging to one of the many timber merchants who have establishments up these rivers, and that if I wanted employment as a bushman I could not miss it here; as there were sawyers, splitters, squarers, firewood getters scattered through the bush hereabouts in all directions. I landed at Tom Small's, a native of the colony, who had very large timber concerns in the bush and a good public-house on the river bank. The evening was so far advanced and so dark that I could see no farther than the landing place where I got ashore; but the sounds that came from some little distance quite clearly indicated in what direction I must look for the public-house. I should have remarked that it was Saturday night, a general gathering time for all thirsty souls in the locality. On Saturday afternoon and evening all bushmen come in to the head stations for their next week's rations; and when this happens to be also a place where liquor is sold, it may easily be imagined that many of them do not go out again without those excesses to which bushmen are so universally prone. It is a saying among themselves that they "earn their money like horses and spend it like asses." Reaching the little snug homestead I found a company of about twenty men of all sorts, sizes, aspects, and degrees of sobriety in the taproom; as usual almost everybody was smoking, only leaving off to shout and sing and beat the table with the quart pots, and get up a "scrimmage." It soon got spread abroad that I was a free emigrant, and looking for work; neither one nor the other of which pieces of news made me, as I could both see and hear, any the more welcome. Nothing, however, passed beyond a few sharp jokes. By degrees one and another individual or pair took up their ration bags and started for their hut, Only myself and a few too much intoxicated to find their way home were at length left. The mistress found me a very good bed (of course, it

being a licensed house) for payment; and the remnants of the party went some to beds, and others less tractable to whatsoever parts of the floor they found most convenient. I was shown one old boatman who had never slept in any other way than in his day clothes for years. Of a rainy night like this he did not object to stow himself by the fire-side of any house or hut he might be near, or under the "gibbers" (overhanging rocks) of the river; but more frequently he slept in his open boat without even a blanket. During my residence in the colony I met with several such individuals. I recollect in particular one, an old stockman near Maitland, who used to go out with his dogs, a tomahawk, and a tinder-box, for weeks together. The dogs provided him animals for food; with his tinder-box he made a fire, and the tomahawk was probably a sort of protective weapon. He took no blanket, but slept in his clothes on the ground, mostly having one old favourite dog for a pillow. The journeys he used to make into the uninhabited interior were quite surprising, and many a pound did he get from fresh settlers for showing them a good new farm, or a well-watered run.

To return: on the Sunday morning, I did what I now would not do; I walked round among the huts in the bush after breakfast with the view of meeting some one to set in to work with. It is quite a common saying among these men, "That there's no luck attends Sunday work." I certainly found it so; for a day of more cheerless, unmingled disappointment I never experienced. The whole bush in this part of the country was then thronged, as indeed it was also almost all round Sydney, with men who get their living by various kinds of bush work; some felling and squaring whole trees with the squaring axe for girders, &c., &c., to use in the colony or export, some splitting out of wood the slatelike shingles with which the houses are here covered in; some splitting posts, rails, paling, for fences; some sawing the various sorts of building stuff, and some cutting and splitting firewood for domestic purposes at Sydney, or for the use of the various steam-engines that were already in operation on water and on land. Each of these pairs of bushmen (for owing to the nature of the work it is best to work in pairs) knocks up a little temporary hut on setting in to work; shifting only as the job is finished or as it becomes necessary to move on for fresh timber. But sawyers who have their logs drawn by timber-carriages to their pits often remain a long time at the same hut. Indeed in many places you come across "camps," as they are termed, of sawyers: these are where some large timber-dealer holds his head station; and comprise the huts and pits of three, five, six, or more pairs of sawyers. Some of these men have wives, some have not. It is generally considered that "a woman keeps a hut more comfortable." But really a sawyer's life is one of such incessant labour out of doors that the difference to him must lie chiefly in the carrying of the idea in his mind that his hut is so provided. He is so

little in the hut except at meals that the actual difference of comforts can be but small. My own sense was never so much that of absence of comforts and conveniences when living where there was no individual of the female sex, as that I was living an unnatural and incomplete life — that work which robbed me of female society was work which defeated its own end — that the positive loss was far beyond the gain. Still while I could not help myself I was fain to put up with it like the rest.

In many of the huts I found the men washing their shirts; some few, but very few, had had them washed by their mates' wives the week before and had them on. Many were sharpening their saws; a pit saw wanting an extra running down &c. once a week. In other places, little knots were sitting on their piles of timber or under the shade of a tree, smoking. Some again I met wandering twos and threes together through the bush looking for "good trees" for the coming week. The general style of dress was lace-up boots, duck trousers, check shirt, coloured silk neckerchief, and straw hat. One or two had got so far as whity brown socks and pumps, with a stylish blue jacket and waistcoat and black hat for Sundays. They all behaved very civilly and hospitably to me: but there was unmistakeably a general disinclination to work with a free emigrant. I suppose there is no class of tradesmen or indeed of any men who entertain such a brotherly feeling toward one another as sawyers, yet so strong was the spirit of caste at this period among these that they could not forget that I was a free emigrant. The galling sense of my superiority in this particular was not to be neutralized even by the strong law of fellowship inherent in the trade.

With this conviction on my mind and a good deal mortified by it, I on Monday morning bent my steps back again toward Sydney. For curiosity's sake I went by land to where a ferry leads from the north shore across the waters of the harbour to Sydney. In travelling thither I could not but take notice of the immense numbers of tree stumps. Each one of these had supplied its barrel to the splitter or sawyer or squarer: and altogether the number seemed countless. Several times I was induced to wander off the road down a grassy slope overshadowed by oak or gum or ironbark, to where I saw the form of a hut, in the hope of getting a light for my pipe: but found only some deserted pit or falling hut, with docks and other such plants growing all around, as is usually the case when the grass has been destroyed to the very roots; the spot where the fire had been, and in the pit where the earth is covered with sawdust, are the only exceptions. They are always bare.

When I had nearly reached the old ferryman's (Billy Blue; so called, I suppose, because he was a very black black) a traveller overtook me. I saw in an instant, from his tall slender make, fair, colourless complexion, and light hair, that he was an Australian. We soon freely entered into

conversation; he informing me that he was going into Sydney to try to meet with a mate and to buy a saw. As I had by no means recovered from the mortification that my late ill success had given me, I did not directly offer myself. I knew I could easily get a mate in Sydney and go to the cedar grounds. And as I always cut a first-rate week's work (in hard wood never less than 1000 feet), I did not consider myself at all in need to be under a compliment to anybody for working with me. We soon got into conversation. Young R—— no sooner heard how I had been running the gauntlet through Lane Cove and Pennant Hills, and to what reason I attributed it, than he asked me to go and work with him. It was a good job, good price, good timber: and he wanted a topman for a mate rather than a pitman, as he was not yet a good hand at the file and set (tools used in keeping the saw in order), which is really the grand point of the workmanship. He ended by telling me that one of his parents came free to the colony quite in its early stage; the other had been a prisoner. The fall of timber he was going to set into was about three miles from their farm; he had one brother much older than himself, a stockman up the country, and one sister at home: and we could either go backward and forward every day to our work or knock up a temporary hut and go home only once a week. The offer was made in that free-hearted way that so agreeably distinguishes the Australian in social life. I told R——at once that I accepted his offer, and felt obliged to him for it. By this time we had reached Billy Blue's. The old man — who had a little grant of land at the water's edge opposite Sydney, given him, I believe, by one of the governors in those early days when it was considered that a poor man was as much entitled to his small grant as the rich one to his proportionably larger — was just come over from the Sydney side with a passenger. He told us, with quite a fatherly sort of authority, that he had been across a good many times that day; that we must pull him over to the other side, and he would take the boat back. The “Old Commodore” being considered to possess a sort of universal freedom of speech to everybody, no demur was made. We pulled him across in his own boat, and paid him our fares for pulling himself back again.

With my new mate I spent a very pleasant day in Sydney. I found him, as all the young Australians are, shrewd and good-natured. We selected a seven-feet plate pit saw, which turned out a real good one. After taking it to where we meant to sleep that night, Humphreys's, by the market-place, we strolled down to the King's Wharf. The great quantities of sales by auction, both of new and second-hand property, at this time in Sydney was to a new-comer not the least remarkable circumstance that presented itself. There had been one this day at the rooms of one of the principal auctioneers: and an old superannuated sawyer, with whom my mate had worked with some years before, was helping to carry home the lots. We stopped to talk with him at the door of the sale-room. Some young

gentleman had had a lot knocked down to him, but had failed to comply with some point or other of the terms of sale, nor could he be heard of at the address he gave. The lot therefore was returned. As R—— and his acquaintance “yarned,” I took up one of the books to amuse myself. Its title was “A Chemical Catechism, by —— Parkes.” Happening to open upon the experiments, my attention became engaged to such a degree that in the next five minutes a new world lay expanded before me. Of course I now know that the facts I met with in this volume were novel and wonderful to me only because I was ignorant. But at the time the curiosity and interest they awakened in me were such that I think I should have given 5*l.* for the book if I could not have secured it for less. However, I was much more fortunate than that. The auctioneer asked me the same for the whole lot as it had been knocked down for, but would not sell the single volume. The sum required was a few shillings short of 8*l.*, and there were nearly a hundred volumes, large and small, old and new. Though it was my first deal in books it seemed clear to me that it was a very good one; and again, I felt sure I could always sell them again for the same money after reading them. I saw too that this was the very thing I had always wanted to make a bush life pleasant. I always liked my work so much that the day passed before I was aware: but the evenings, especially in winter, were the same dull thing over and over and over again, smoking, talking about good or bad trees, making and drinking tea we did not want, “chaffing,” playing at cards for inches of tobacco; such were our recreations for hours in the long evenings, or on days when there was no work going on. I must own, however, that I felt a little intimidated at attempting this innovation on the manners of my class. I was quite sure I should get laughed at, and very likely get some not very soothing nickname for it. But the temptation was irresistible. I went and fetched the money, and R—— and our new comrade helped me to take them to the Bull's Head. I read till past twelve o'clock at night: and well remember that I got my brain into such a state of excitement by it that till nearly daybreak images of crucibles, alembics, furnaces, &c., mingled with the sound of the words salt, acid, alkali, nitrate, sulphate, muriate, and innumerable more, were hurrying through what seemed a vast dark blank all instinct with sensation within my head. Nothing was amiss with me in the morning.

By evening the next day we were at ——, having left the books packed in an old tea-chest to come by one of the neighbour's drays on the following market-day: R——'s new saw we carried with us, along with a few other small articles we knew we should need. Before going on to describe my new home, and my reception by its occupants, I ought perhaps to give the reader a list of the principal books I got in my purchase: the book on Chemistry already named; Volney's Ruins of Empires; a number of the Oxford Encyclopaedia, containing

“Astronomy;” Hume's Essays; several volumes of Byron's and Scott's works; Sibylline Leaves by Coleridge; a large volume of lectures on Metaphysics by Professor Browne of one of the Scotch universities; Euclid; a number of odd volumes of history by Robertson, Hume and Smollett, and others; and lastly, a quantity of little volumes with and without title-pages, among which were a Latin Grammar and a very incomplete Latin Dictionary with the mark of a red-hot poker nearly half through it.

The reader will probably smile when my first remark mark about my new abode is, that I was no sooner in it and seated and had looked about me, than I felt I was at last *at home*. I have come fully to the conclusion, and especially do so the older I am and the more I *feel* what mind is, that there are certain presentiments derived from reason, yet in themselves far above what we conceive of the nature and province of reason. I think we may at times detect within us the faint tremblings of a power stupendous in understanding and volition alike, far beyond anything we yet see in the positive and acknowledged developments of the mind; — an instinct, dormant only by force of some unnatural accident of our present state; that, if it should awaken and come into play, would reach the future from the present at a single glance, by means of essential correspondences between the object and the subject, the thing perceived and the perceiver; as if the secret of its own nature ultimately realized were a key to the necessary processes of all things whose qualities were fitted to act upon, and be acted upon, by its own. However this may be, such as I have described were my feelings on this occasion. It was an oldish weather-boarded house at the edge of a thick and lofty forest. The twilight or rather the night had set in. A whole pack of dogs, little and big, came yelping at us as we drew near the door, but one after another, as they found out their master, began to leap up and fawn upon him. Half-a-dozen steps after we got over the fence — for we had jumped over at the spot nearest the hut instead of going round to the slip rails — and we were on the stone step, which was the half of an old grindstone. All the apartments were on one floor — a sittingroom, and a bedroom of the same size as the sittingroom, occupied by the old couple; and two shed bedrooms, built against the back as their family had grown up. My mate and his father spoke to each other quite on terms of equality, but still with the utmost good feeling. It was a simple consequence of the son having been always free and the father once a prisoner, and is quite customary. The old dame was gone to bed, for she was very decrepit. Few remarks were interchanged; most of the young natives do their business with as few words as possible. The damper and a piece of cold corned beef were still on the table, and to them we betook ourselves: and sundry tin panikins of tea from the iron pot that was slung at the fire completed our repast. The old man smoked another pipe, we lit ours; and

my mate freshened the fire, for that was the only light we had, with another log. Still it was evident, strikingly evident, that there was something wanting. At length R——got out the inquiry that partly solved the problem; it came, as the reader may suppose, in the most Spartan fashion: “Where's M——?” M—— was gone to Paramatta with Helen ——. Another quarter of an hour, and R——got up, and without recognising the least obligation to give any account of his intentions, put on his straw hat and walked off; the old man laughed within himself in his quiet way, and filled his pipe again. As the door shut after my mate, the voice of his mother came from the inner room: “Is that the girls, John?” “No, it's R——gone to meet them.” It was quite clear to me that my mate was either one of the best of brothers or else in love. Among us sawyers it is such a common thing to deprecate having a mate that is in love, that, notwithstanding my first good impression, I really began to feel quite out of heart with my prospects. You never know when you have these fellows: if you only stop to sharpen your saw, or go into the hut to light your pipe, provided their “flower of the forest” is within anything of reasonable distance, they are off, and you may “cooeb” till you are hoarse without getting any answer. Presently, the period of twenty minutes, or such other as they calculate your particular genius will stand, elapsed, back they come, smiling and looking in all directions except *at you*, and pretending to be as full of alacrity for work as if they were just up; and they jump into the pit and box the saw with a flourish, and with a throw up of it that goes near knocking two or three of your teeth out with the tiller, it's “Now, mate!” as if they had been waiting for you all the time instead of you for them. Often it has cost me half an hour's jabbing and jolting, and miswooding the saw, till my shoulders were almost shaken out of joint, before I could get into a good temper after one of these nuisances. Little did I think, as I despairingly pictured such forthcoming scenes to myself, that my own turn was at hand.

During the interval I sat waiting for R——, I have since been given to understand I was the subject matter of a very lively conversation; but I have never been able to ascertain its exact particulars; and as things have turned out, perhaps it is of no great consequence. Meantime the old man got so tired that he was for going to bed, and he advised me to do the same; this I did, for I was quite sleepy after my night of reading in Sydney. I was soon asleep, and heard or saw no more of my mate till morning, though he came and lay down beside me. We both waked together and got up. Our first conversation of course was about the pit, but it was too far to go and come back before breakfast, so M—— was roused to provide for us, whilst we had a turn round their little farm, a small part only of which was cultivated, the rest being kept in bush for grazing the cattle. The pit was on a neighbour's land, to whom we were to pay a small sum for each tree we used: this I did not object to, for

when I came to see it I found there was some splendid timber. After half an hour's stroll we went in to breakfast. I found there the very person I had always wanted — this was clear to me directly I saw her. When it is said that matches are made in heaven, it must be meant that there is a natural and intrinsic qualification of certain persons for each other; and that there is a clear certainty that they are in the greatly preponderating number of cases brought together under this law, and that as the grounds of all such arrangements could only be taken in by the understanding of the Universal Governor, so only by his power could the intervening obstacles be overcome. I imagine there is really much more truth in this axiom than in our jocular use of it we give it credit for. After this remark, the reader will not be surprised by my acknowledging that I daily became more *charmed* by my new acquaintance, and that I found myself before long fully in a position to pay my mate with whatever amount of interest he might think agreeable for any such performances as I had been in the habit of deprecating. So far as regarded the progress of our work, one point was lucky for us both; the farms were too far from the pit to allow of many visits. Many a merry half hour we used to pass “chaffing” each other about it. One advantage however he certainly had over me, for which I had to endure many an expression of provoking sympathy: the pitman can always “plant” (hide) the portion of the tools which are considered under his charge, as they are small and not valuable; but the topman, when working anywhere near the road, as we were, can never venture to leave the saw. So he was washed and at Helen's while I was trudging under the jading swingswong of the heavy 7 feet saw to our home. Still I was always glad to see him off, for I then knew I should have all the cool of the evening to walk about among the rows of tall over-shadowing Indian corn with his most agreeable sister; and thus form an acquaintance, and ascertain a community of feelings and of interests, whose period it has now become beyond even the capacity of time itself to circumscribe. Thus we went on for nearly a whole year. I have always been a very early riser, and require a remarkably small amount of sleep; thus I used to read for two and sometimes three hours of a morning before R—— got up. He had a particularly hard way of working, labouring upon his saw much more than was necessary, and thus was usually very tired. In the summer too, during the heat of the day, it is customary to rest a couple of hours; in this interval I used to take the volume I was going through and stretch myself in the shade of a tree; and by the time it was cool enough to begin work again, my whole nature felt renovated. By the time our job was done, I had read all the books through: several of them several times. M—— too found in them an occupation to which her naturally observant and reflective mind affixed itself with a hitherto unexperienced delight. Never before had she met with any connected dissertations or histories; her books, besides school-

books, were part of a volume of Cook's Voyages, and an old Gentleman's Magazine, which had been in the family from time immemorial, and of which I believe every member of the family, and several of the neighbours, knew half the pages by heart.

At the conclusion of our contract (which was for all large plank), my mate and I had 51*l.* coming to us after paying the ration bill. We had never had an angry word through all this long job: after men have worked together this length of time, it is rarely that they do not get tired of one another and separate. But though the business that brought us together was finished, no thought was farther from both our minds than that of parting.

Chapter X. Trips to the Nor'Ard.

Yahoos — A half-crazy settler — False alarm — Ruin and death of a settler — Destruction of a flock at sheep-washing by a flood — The flood in the brush — Boating on a plank in the night — Expedient for crossing the river — Rafting cedar down on the flood — Self and mate turning dealers — Drinking-scene — Failure of timber and return to the “home” farm — More books bought — A coasting-craft bought — Universality of nicknames — Capital fall of timber — Our mode of life in the brush — Dangers and hardships of the occupation — Bird's-eye view of our hut and work — Death of my mate's mother, and return to the “home” farm

SAWYERS are unavoidably a wandering race in new countries. When the lot of timber required by the settler for his buildings is furnished, or when the local bush where the contract with a timber merchant is cut becomes exhausted of sound profitable trees, the sawyer must shift his camp. Ours was the former predicament: no further order for the sort of stuff it suited us to cut could be obtained just there; and house-stuff we neither of us liked working on.

At this time the cedar-getting was going on at a great rate to “the Nor'ard” of Sydney, on ———— river, one of the tributaries of the Hunter. Thither at length we resolved to proceed, taking with us, by one of the boats that went as far up the stream as it was navigable, our own provisions; and so to set in on the best fall of cedar we could find on government ground near the river bank, and cut away till our stock of provisions was exhausted; then bring the plank we had got up to Sydney and sell it on our own account. And this, after certain leave takings, we accordingly did; taking with us, moreover, a free man whom we knew to be a hard-working chap as a labourer, to fall trees with the axe, build the pits, clear the roads through the brush, bring out the plank, give us help at heavy lifts, and afford us the needful assistance in all those other difficulties which render cedar-cutting too heavy for only a pair of men. We found a good many pair on the river before us: still we got a very good fall of timber; for it was a capital brush: the trees plentiful, of the

best size, of an excellent species for the cabinet-maker, and very good cutters. Some kinds of this timber cut so woolly, that working in deep cuts is most laborious; the saw clinging in the cut through the woolliness of the inside, so that it is impossible to move it up or down with any impetus. As the loss of impetus in the descending stroke renders necessary the application of much more personal strength, such timber is quite the dread of sawyers. Ours this time were fine crisp-cutting trees; and our work went off from the first as light and cheerful as it could do.

The—— — river, on the banks of which we now were, rises and for a long distance winds to and fro among the mountains of the country of Durham: at length it falls into the Hunter, not a great way from the mouth of that stream. It is now well settled; but at the time we were there spoiling it of its cedar, only here and there amidst the lonely wilderness was there to be found a settler's farm or stockman's hut. The blacks were occasionally, but not often, troublesome. The stories they used to tell us about the brush thereabouts being haunted by a great tall animal like a man with his feet turned backwards, of much greater, however, than the human stature, and covered with hair, and perpetually making a frightful noise as he wandered about alone, made me sometimes doubt whether they were themselves really terrified, or were merely endeavouring to scare us away; but I very strongly incline to the latter opinion. Be it as it may, there was no such consequence. We were too well used to that lonely tree-guarded silence, broken only by the clink of the rising saw, and to the damp unsunned ground, with its thick brown covering of thousandfold rotting rustling leaves, to have any very important new sensations to acquire hereabouts. Tree after tree went crashing down before our labourer's axe, and breaking a broad opening to the sky around its stump; and pile after pile of square red plank arose in welcome transformation on the spot, as our saw did its duty; and road after road stretched straight away from the piles of cedar to the river's edge, which as yet ran shallow and full of shoals and falls. Our nearest neighbour of the settler genus was a strange eccentric old sea captain. Apparently when he first commenced settler he had plenty of money, with part of which he had bought a herd of cattle. Wherever he went his sword was his inseparable companion — he walked about flourishing it at the trees all day long. He had, however, more reason for guarding himself from his own people than from any one else; for his overseer was all the time branding lots of his young cattle in his own name, whilst the old gentleman gave him credit for being one of the most honest, trustworthy fellows on the earth. The finale may be supposed — he was soon without a feather to fly with. On the other side we had an old major of the army, who, I believe, had a family, and was very poor. I heard that when he first took possession of his land he was very well off; but had impoverished himself greatly, as gentlemen settlers so very often do, by

expending their capital on everything but that which really wants doing. They wish to make a complete farm at once, and spare no cost to do so: consequently great paddocks are fenced in before there is any stock that needs them; large pieces are cleared, and next to nothing cropped; cottages with verandahs are built, and the barn and the dairy neglected; and even carriage walks are laid out for carriages, whose mere existence is among the most improbable of dreams. A more melancholy lesson than that furnished by the abovementioned two gentlemen and their next neighbour down the river could not be formed by imagination itself.

At length we had exhausted all our provisions, and were obliged to buy of our better supplied companions, whilst we got down to the water's edge, whence it was to be rafted, all the plank we had cut. But the flood which was necessary to float our raft over the falls and shallows came not: so with no little reluctance we took another month's provisions into the brush and set to again. This time our pit was close to the river's side, on a slightly elevated space of perhaps half an acre. For a few days more nothing of any moment occurred, until at length the flood came. Those who have not witnessed one of them can form but an inadequate idea of it from description. The Australian rivers often rise twelve, twenty, and, I think I have heard, some even thirty feet in a few hours. When this happens in the night, a place may be surrounded, perhaps with deep water, before any one is aware of his danger. A little while before I came to England, I heard of a gentleman who had taken up one of the streams beyond Liverpool Plains a large purchase of sheep, and setting himself down on a slightly rising ground on the bank, got up his buildings and went on for some time quite unconscious of the imminent danger he was in. At length a sudden and heavy flood came on, and he was surrounded by the backwater in the hollows before he was aware. Gradually the vast deluge closed in upon him: he got up into a tree, whence, after passing many hours without food, under alternate rain and violent sunshine, he was rescued, as the waters subsided, only to die bereft of reason. These overwhelming floods are looked for annually or half-yearly, and in some seasons come even oftener still. Though they do not do so much damage to life as might be expected, the injury they do to property is immense. Not long since, in the sheep-washing time, I witnessed the destruction of a flock of sheep worth full 500*l.* in this way. They were camped for the night after washing, and until they should get dry, on the large clean pebbles of a dry part of the bed of the creek where they had been washed. In the night it thundered heavily, and the storm burst in the mountains; down came the flood without an instant's warning, and was eight or ten feet deep in as many minutes, sweeping sheep and hurdles away together and scattering them over the inundated plains below.

Similar in kind, though not so deeply disastrous, was the adventure that next awaited us in the brush. When we went to bed at night in our little

tent hut, we left the fire in front cheerfully blazing with the pink lambent flame that so beautifully flickers from the green cedar in combustion. Our tools and cooking utensils lay strewed as usual within and just without the hut, or hung on the lower branches of the saplings close about the fire. Our bed, if indeed a sawyer's accommodations in that respect can be called a bed, extended across the inner end of the hut, on four or five of our outside slabs laid on a cross head log and another foot log, each about six inches thick; where, by the bye, it may not be quite inappropriate to remark, that they used to get so damp, or, more correctly, wet, from the moisture of the perfectly soddened ground, not 10 inches off, that if held to the fire they would steam like a copper for a good half hour. I always imagined that after an attempt to dry them at the fire, they felt thrice as wet as otherwise. Every thing was just as usual when we went to bed; the book I had been reading by the light of the fire after I had lain down, I had deposited on the edge of the planks at my side; I went to sleep with my eyes fixed on the fire, to a lullaby I had got pretty well used to, — R——'s composed bass snore. The day had been sunny, and the night was temperate and still; there was, in short, no indication whatever where we were of falling weather. Some such, however, there must have been somewhere, for about an hour after midnight I was disturbed by R—— shaking me, and felt on the instant of waking a most *unforgettable* sensation — I felt as if I were lying stretched on a cold dunghheap. Wide awake in a moment, I could see by the light of a small flame that was still playing about an elevated part of the wood at the fire, water in the hut and out of the hut. Before I could take a second look, my mate jumped over me and was in it nearly knee-deep and wading out of the hut. No sooner was he there than he put his head in again, shouting, "Be alive, mate; it's coming down as hard as it can come; it'll be over our heads in half an hour." Out I sprang; my shoes were gone; I had left them at the front of the hut, and probably they had floated off among the very first things, my straw hat also bearing them company. My clothes were safe, for I had put them under my head — they are the bushman's pillow; but they were so wet that putting them on was like getting in among the clothes in a washing tub. By this time our little remnant of fire was nearly gone: R——, who was more used to such adventures than I, had floated up to the hut a very large flat plank of cedar, which, green as it may be, always swims well; and on it he placed the little live charcoal that remained, freshening and feeding it with some dry stuff from the roof of the hut. By his direction I waded across to the pit, and drawing the saw, which the torrent was already sweeping against and bending, out of the cut, I hung it up, and the cross-cut saw with it, as high in a tree as I could reach, to be fetched at our leisure. Our remaining provisions being on the ground were all spoiled, we knew; but the blankets we got out; the bed we left, for it was of wool, and wet as it was

would have sunk us. Drawing our plank up to a tree we got on it, sitting with the fire between us; the current was so strong, even amidst the thick brush where we were, that it was all we could do together to hold on to a sapling apiece and to keep our plank from being swept away. Where we were no dead timber of any size could be swept against us; but we could hear it striking together, and grinding and crashing in the river a few yards off. The little light we had dazzled our eyes so that the sky seemed a vast dark void. The rats swam boldly up and got on the plank with us, and numbers of spiders and centipedes, guided no doubt by the fire, were crawling in all directions over both us and it. In this state we had to continue at least three good hours; then day began to dawn. We knew we were rising by getting more and more near the branches, but we had no notion how deep the water had become around us. Our fire was out for want of fuel; and as the deep obscurity of the brush began to be dissolved by the dawn, we could discern no vestige of our hut; and presently, when the light so far increased that we could see as far as the pit, we discovered that the water was up to the bottom of the log that was on, so that there was about 6 1/2 feet depth. Although it was now light we were nearly as bad off as ever. The sounds of such a deluge in the night, in the midst of the brush, are certainly cowering to the spirits; but one knows so well that the danger, except from actual drowning, is next to nothing, and there are such plentiful means for escaping by getting up the trees, that after all it makes no very serious impression. The loneliness and fear of starving were what most affected me: we could not tell but it might last for many days; and as long as it lasted there seemed no hope of getting across the river. On this side we were so surrounded by brush, that any attempt to get our plank through to the high ground was out of the question, and it was much too deep to wade. The raw chilly air of the morning and the water together made me shiver until I was quite sick, and my mate was not much better. We both of us felt that to continue exposed thus, without food, would soon wear us out, so that we should not be able to make an effort to save ourselves by swimming the river. In this undecided and helpless state we passed the time until nearly noon, the water rising higher and higher. A thought struck me at last, that the overhanging boughs of the trees on opposite sides of the river meeting in the middle, we might, by holding on to them, prevent ourselves from being swept away whilst we floated our plank across; and then about 100 yards would bring us across the flat on the other side, which was of forest timber, not brush, to the foot of the range. This, as my mate suggested, was all very well until we came to be across the river, but then we should be worse than ever. The stream was so strong on the forest land, and the trees so far apart, that we should neither be able to paddle across nor pull ourselves on by hand from tree to tree. All this was clearly but too true; what to do we knew not; but we concluded the

chance was better on the other side than where we were, so, as far as we could, we put our plan into execution, which was a matter of very little difficulty. What followed has been a memento to me ever since never to despair. The inundated flat at the part where we reached it was several hundred feet wide, but we immediately noticed that about a quarter of a mile farther down there was a creek with trees all along it running from a gap in the range to the river. Letting ourselves down the edge of the river from tree to tree, we then made our way up the creek in the same manner, and reached the high land as heartily pleased with our escape as men could be; but so tired of the uneasy saddle on which we had now been for many hours, and our legs so benumbed that we actually could not stand on them, but crawled up the range to the high road on our knees. I was not well for years afterwards; indeed, I attribute to the wet and cold of this night an illness I had long subsequently. If I were to say I have never been entirely well since, I should not misstate the fact, and I know of no other cause which I could suppose to have brought about so suddenly this change for the worse in a constitution hitherto uninjured.

As soon as we got to rights we set off down the river to where our cedar was stacked for rafting. In the brush we knew all was flooded away but the saws and the iron tools which would not swim. But we had no apprehensions of any further loss. To our great vexation we found that the man who had drawn the plank had stacked it so that nearly one-half of it was carried away. A few planks only which had got jammed close at hand we recovered; these with what remained at the stack we got down into the water as soon as it was sufficiently abated, and forming it into a raft sent it down the stream to the boat by a good hand at the work, who lost only a single plank by the way. Knowing nobody would meddle with our saws, and having nothing else of value in the brush, we did not go back to the pit, but proceeded to Sydney with our stuff. We could only take about a third part by the first boat, but gave authority to the skippers of two other crafts to bring the rest. The whole arrived in Port Jackson about a fortnight after ourselves. Our total gain was a little over 30*l.* a-piece.

With that elasticity of spirit which attends a labouring life, we soon forgot our loss; and nothing else more profitable offering, we prepared for our return. It is no rare thing for a sawyer to abandon his tools under such circumstances as ours were if some more advantageous job presents itself to him whilst away. Our "spell" meantime was spent very pleasantly with our friends at ——. It was now as much my home as R——'s, and I have often thought since we were if possible even more like brothers than we have been since. Whilst I was at ——, M——'s elder brother came down the country with cattle; and although nearly twenty years older than my mate, and therefore much older than myself, I liked him very well. There are very few Australians that one can dislike.

A general manly spirit and fairness of feeling characterize all except a few bullies of the very lowest class, and a few pampered half idiots of the very highest. In my new and increasingly esteemed friend M—— a great and evident improvement had taken place; and it is but fair and reasonable to suppose a similar improvement would take place under similar circumstances in the whole body of the Australian females. She had read all the books I left behind to such purpose that there was no part of any of them that I happened to mention on reading them subsequently but she immediately recollected. In a country where no letters pass to and fro, at least in the rank of life in which we were, such a change in a friend's mind and general character is very observable. I must say I felt a little mortified to find myself so much less benefited. Certainly I had had less leisure, and that which I had had was generally in hours of weariness and exhaustion. Among the incomplete volumes was a small 12mo. book of Algebra. This had greatly excited my curiosity — perhaps I should give the feeling some more respectable name. It was not merely the desire to know what the book was about, but to know that about which the book treated. A gentleman settler near —— had a schoolmaster for his children who had the reputation of being a very good scholar. He was a prisoner moreover. To him I applied, and for a little remuneration the poor fellow came every evening and gave me instruction in the science in question. He took so much pains with me, and explained everything initiatory so clearly, that by the time we set off to the north again I was advanced sufficiently to go on by myself. Not to forestall my narrative in any other respect, I cannot but remark that I found it a never-failing field for the most exalted exercise of the mind. It also gave me habits of steady attention, self-possession in thought, and voluntary consciousness, that have been of great service to me since in surmounting difficulties in business, as well as in steadily adhering to the line of the necessary and useful in carrying out my purposes at large.

Matters of this kind will interest the reader of course but little in comparison with the transactions and manners of Australian life. I therefore return to my history. R—— and I resolved to take on this second trip a large quantity of provisions beyond what we anticipated using ourselves, and exchange them with the sawyers near us for plank. I think our invoice from Messrs. —— and Co., to whom we gave the order, was some little over 100*l*. Our stock consisted of rum, tobacco, tea, sugar, various kinds of ready-made clothing, and clothing material unmade, together with a few files, knives, razors, &c.; we got them all in safety by water and by land to the brush; and after one of those wretched, senseless jollifications at the edge of the brush which sawyers will have whenever they can get rum, we moved into the brush, collected our tools and the wreck of our cooking utensils, built a fresh and better but of cedar slabs, stowed our goods, and went to work again. Our goods sold

very well, and we again fell upon a very fair cluster of trees. The work went on as usual, and we this time got the whole of the plank safe to Sydney. We made 69*l.* odd a-piece by the lot of cedar, and cleared about 40*l.* a-piece by the goods. All this was in about five months, which we considered very good work. One incident only of a much more unpleasant than unusual character marks this period: a lot of sawyers from various pits had met at the old sea captain's farm, where a large cask of brandy had arrived. After letting them drink very freely he took it into his head not to let them have any more. This at first they would not submit to; but the old gentleman, who by the bye was not at all behindhand with them in their own way, showed such very strong symptoms of using his sword such very strong symptoms of using his sword and pistols that they thought best to decamp. A council of war was then held, and some one suggesting that I and my mate had a lot of rum still left, down they came in a body to the amount of about twelve or fifteen. At first we did not much heed the shouting and shrieking in every tone and dialect from that of cockneyism to that of the Irish province which is commonly said to be a mile beyond his Satanic majesty's residence; but it came nearer and nearer and nearer. At last it crossed the river, and came up our road through the brush; and by the time we were out at the fire in our shirts the whole corps debouched before us: some wore check shirts, some wore woolen; some were in red ones, and some in blue, and some in none at all; some had straw hats, some Scotch caps, some old working skull-caps, some nothing but their own shock heads of hair; some had sticks in their hands, some the ration-bags they had been to get filled, some the axe they had been sharpening at the grindstone, and some three or four ribs of salted beef for to-morrow's dinner; some sung; some yelled, some said nothing, but the one unanimous demand was the remainder of our stock of rum. All my remonstrances were ineffectual. I was told at last that if I did not give it they would take it, and put me on the fire for a back-log. Of course further parley was useless; I brought it out, and they set to at it with all the panikins they could muster. R——, whose habituation to such emergencies from his infancy rendered him much more a match for them than I was, employed himself in getting hold of every vessel full that he could and pouring it out unobserved on the ground; and as they were filling only pint and quart pots this proceeding soon lowered their stock; and by sunrise it was all gone. They then gradually began to disperse: a couple, however, took possession of our bed and slept all day; and after having their supper with us at night went home. Such affairs are pretty well understood to be only jokes, and no ill will is allowed to be borne about them afterwards. We took nothing for the liquor, though several offered to pay their "whack." I could not reconcile it to my conscience to take any payment for it, for it would not do to tell them how it had been disposed of; and

unless we had let them pay for what they had not had, that seemed unavoidable. There was likewise another reason of a more serious and painful character. One of the topmen was a sad brutal fellow when intoxicated; and in going home he quarrelled with his pitman and gave him a blow from which he never recovered. The poor fellow had first to leave off work, then to go to the settlement and put himself under the doctor's hands, and at last, after lingering a few weeks, died. I almost felt as if his blood was on my head, and from that day forth have never either sold or given to anybody spirituous liquors of any kind. My own consolation was that they had taken it by force; and that they had done so while in a state in which I would never have furnished them with it of my own free will. Such unhappy events will happen to the most guarded. If, when they do occur, we take them up heartily as cautions, we do all that it can fairly be said we could do.

As long as the trees continued tolerably plentiful in this brush we continued in it, sending freights to Sydney and getting back goods of various sorts for sale; but when good timber began to grow scarce, and we found ourselves obliged to make a fresh pit to almost each tree we cut, and even these few were very small, we resolved to shift at once. Many of the more restless spirits were off before us to the Manning river, still farther north, and fresh accounts came daily to those who remained of the richness of the brushes in that part of the country. Stray hands wandering back were already dropping in every now and then at some of our pits for a few days' "bange" (rest) on their way to Sydney, or back again from Sydney to the Manning brushes, after selling their loads and spending their money. During the period that had elapsed from our return to the brush and our leaving it finally, we cleared about 69*l.* a-piece by the sale of goods after paying freight and allowing for losses, and, as may be supposed, bad debts — not scarce among such customers any more than in other parts of this our habitable globe. Several ran away without paying us: from most we had to take cedar in payment. But this latter circumstance was advantageous rather than otherwise, as we made a timber-merchant's profit on the cedar also. Barter properly conducted is always the most beneficial species of commerce, as you get a gain both on the article you sell originally, and a second in the commodity you have received in payment. Besides our gain in these transactions we cleared about 40*l.* a-piece by our second lot of timber. This was very little comparatively with what it would have been but for the increasing scarcity of trees for the last three months of the time. I heard of one pair of sawyers in this brush during its best days, who cut 35*l.* worth of plank in a fortnight — this was nearly 9*l.* a-week each man. But they were both first-rate workmen and very strong; one an Irishman, and the other of American negro descent; and I believe there was a sort of rivalry of strength and hardihood between them, and they were trying which could

knock up the other: these feats are the chief ambition of sawyers. A few miles below us on the river were a great many little settlers: we used to stop at their farms in going to Sydney or Maitland; and strange as our habits in the brush were, some of theirs, I used to think, were stranger still. At least we had neither wife nor children to care for; but they not unfrequently had large families. Several times I have known a dealing boat come up to a farm on the bank of the stream just after the new wheat was threshed out, and before it left have the whole on board in exchange for rum. I have sometimes seen attempts to represent the majority of the small settlers of New South Wales as of this character. Such, however, is decidedly the reverse of the truth, and must have been the representation of either some superficial tourist, or of one of those individuals (a much larger number than is usually supposed) who have published accounts of this colony to subserve the designs of their party on public and legislative opinion in England.

We were not long in Sydney before we were again out of it on our way to ————. Our friends received us joyfully; but my mate's father and mother were evidently both of them breaking fast. The old man still worked on the ground, but Mrs. ———— was become quite bedridden and nearly blind. M ———— attended her with a ceaseless, quiet watchfulness. It was as if the mother and the child had changed places: the parent was all unconsciousness, weakness, want; the daughter vigilance, activity, and love. I have often thought that I perceived that the roughest men have the gentlest hearts: my mate furnished me with another fact. When R ————, who by the bye was the favourite, being the youngest, saw what his sister was become to his mother, he seemed for some time unable to comprehend it; but at last, after some time, he quite understood it, and, in singular variation of his usual custom, he took her in his arms and hugged her. The power of love is very wonderful. Here was a man nearly six feet high, and as strong as a young ox, with the tears running down his cheeks over an old woman and a girl. If, a little while before, as he went through the town of ————, any acquaintance had proposed it to him by way of recreation, he would have pulled off his jacket and fought for a couple of hours. Goodness has certainly more tendency to beautify the countenance than we give it credit for in our daily scheme of cause and effect. Though I do not easily go in ecstasies, I could not help loving M ———— more than ever. The books, too, seemed to have done wonders for her; so I resolved, after we had been at home a few days, to go to Sydney and buy a good collection. My former purchase I had read till I knew them almost by heart. It never struck me, however, at this time that there was any one course in acquiring knowledge better than another, so that my selection could not be expected to be a very wise one. My notion was simply this: for myself, more books of history, sufficient to give me a clear and connected view of the progress of mankind from the earliest

period; a treatise on the more advanced branches of algebra; a new Euclid, my first being among the books lost in the flood at the brush; and Watts's Logic, of which a few leaves only had come into my possession among the fragments in the former lot: for M —, chiefly poetry; it seemed to me her favourite reading; and probably I was not much wrong in considering that the actualities of life are so forced on women in new countries, that they acquire inevitably from them their education in matters of common sense, and so may properly enough indulge in book studies of an almost exclusively imaginative cast. It turned out, however, that I became relieved from the responsibility of the selection. She got a friend to take charge of her mother for a day, and went to Sydney with me, and chose quite a different lot from what I should have chosen for her, and fewer by far. I bought just what I had laid it down to myself that I would buy, and, additionally, about fifteen numbers of the Edinburgh Review. This latter part of my selection was from this time for some years forward my favourite reading; I find it to be the authority which directed more or less my views on most subjects.

After spending between five and six weeks at home, R—— and I went to work; it was the last job we cut together, making our third year. A friend of R——'s proposed to him to take a share in a coasting craft, and run it in the cedar trade. R—— again proposed that I should be taken into the concern, dividing it into three shares. I had my misgivings; but the profits were very tempting. We joined in the boat, and in a lot of provisions and other goods for sale. Our first trip happened at a very opportune juncture. The whole of the parties cutting on the river had run short of flour, tobacco, and tea, three most profitable articles. We bought our tea at 2*s.* 6*d.* and sold it at 6*s.*; our tobacco (good Hawkesbury) at 1*s.* and sold it at 3*s.*; our flour we made about sixty per cent. on. As there are always idle men about these brushes where sawing is going on, either sawyers without mates, or bullock-drivers out of work, or labourers, we soon succeeded in getting a good fall of timber pointed out to us. We had, however, to give our guide 3*l.* for his information, and take him on as our faller; but we found him such an unsettled fellow that we were glad, after a couple of weeks, to give him 2*l.*, beside his wages of 1*l.* a week, to go away. Being paid by the piece, men acquire a habit of working so eagerly that a great proportion are either working on day after day in the utmost suffering, if they are what are called “good men;” or else they give in every second or third day, and stroll about till the covetous fit comes on again. Of this last class was our lad. He was called J—— *the Liar*. Descriptive titles of a similar kind are very common, indeed almost universal.

The fall of timber that J —— the Liar (I am delicate about giving the baptismal name of the individual in full. The fact is there are several sawyers who enjoy the latter part of this graceful appellative, but their

individual names differ. I should be sorry to wound the feelings of my former friends, or of such of them as may be yet alive, by too pointed a description); the fall of timber that *The Liar* (it is quite a common and inoffensive abbreviation, dear reader, among ourselves) showed us, turned out a capital one. Numbers of the trees were 60 feet in the barrel without a limb, and so thick that as they lay on the hill side after they were down, I could barely lay my hand on the top of them at 10 and 15 feet from the butt. They were very generally sound, and many of them as round as stone pillars, and they lay for the most part on the hill sides, so that rolling them to the pit was effected by merely slackening chocks away from them in front, instead of heaving them along by handspikes and levers as is done on level ground; though, be it observed, letting logs down hill in this way is much the most dangerous work; lastly, they lay so grouped that numbers of logs came to the same pit. There was one drawback, however, which to civilised ears may seem a serious one; we had to make most of the pits in creeks, and if it came on to rain ever so little, the brush ground already saturated turned off the whole of the falling water into the creeks; thus my mate often had to work up to his knees in water for several days together. We kept to one hut all the time, having fixed ourselves deep down the descent of one of the hill points in a sort of basin, where five creeks met, so as to be near the water and the work. It was a lonely place, where you heard nothing but the perpetual plashing of the creeks, and once or twice a day the thunder of a falling tree, or sometimes in the still warm noon the startling note of the coachman-bird, or the no less wonderful mimicry of the mocking-bird imitating the shrill grating of our files in sharpening the saw so exactly, that we often could not believe but that some other pair had come and set in close to us. Countless, and motionless, and gigantic stood the forest army, up and down all the hill sides around us; in strong contrast to this, stood the great red piles of plank, squared with mathematical exactness, which spoke of *man and labour*. How simple the lesson that contrast read, and yet how grave! This toil-bearer must have a motive; he must want something that he has not; — he must be unhappy.

In this wilderness we passed more than twelve months, and before this time my mate too had become a great reader; so between the work, and the obstacles to be overcome in getting the plank dragged out of such a hole (which had to be done by spare-chaining it along the ground, a plank at a time), and the books, we got through the twelve months pretty well. Near us we found another little group of trees, which we should probably have stayed to cut, but that a messenger came to tell my mate (there being no post) that his mother had died at last rather suddenly. As I could see, though he could not himself, that he had but little design of coming back, I took care, after shipping the last of our cedar, to accompany it, with all our tools and other possessions. Our trip to

Sydney was a pleasant one; and our cedar sold better than any lot we had had: and nothing but the sorrowful cause of our sudden journey to Sydney impaired the cheerfulness of our feelings and of our prospects.

Chapter XI. A Lucky Hit.

Projects — Ruin of a little family — Every man has got his price — Anecdote — Another — A bullock-driver's courtesy — History of Mrs. D — and her husband — A good bargain — Wild journey through the mountains — Skeletons of men lost in the bush and starved — The stock-station — A night's bivouac — Stock-horses — Completion of bargain — Rencontre with the police

SOME months glided away, and found me still at ——, Mrs. —— was gone, but not forgotten. In the solitary bush she had never had to drill her children into the many unnatural habits of old societies, and they had loved her all the more. Her companion too through many years and various fortunes walked about among us like an absent man. He was more affectionate to his children, and more friendly to me; yet there was something in his manner like that of a man among strangers. As I expected, my mate had no inclination to go back to the Manning; and no longer there to look after our interests in the cedar-boat, we considered it best to part with our shares. For some time we employed ourselves in helping the old man through the heaviest of the farm business; afterwards we went all round the farm, mending the fences. Then I went up the country with R——, to look at a piece of land he had had offered him for purchase by another native. And lastly, after several weeks of idleness, I went to Sydney and ripped cedar plank into boards in a timber merchant's yard. At this I made very poor wages, and was far from contented. Our last year's work in the Manning River brash had yielded us about 2*l.* each a-week all through. The profit on the goods we disposed of was about 70*l.* each; and the net gain by freights and by the cedar we took in exchange, and in payment for freight, was rather above 100*l.* each. The utmost I could clear by cedar ripping for the timber merchants was about 1*l.* a-week after paying rations and lodging, and wear and tear, and all those innumerable gills of rum that a sawyer is called upon for in Sydney, when he is known to be pretty well off, by his less thrifty brethren. So circumstanced, I was beginning to plan no less a thing than the purchase of a piece of land in the township of ——; to cut some stuff in the adjacent bush, and run up two or three snug little weather-boarded

cottages, and rent them out. I often wonder whether others observe it, but I certainly have, that whenever I have concocted some well-promising plan, and even when everything has been finally determined in my mind, some circumstance, either unforeseen or under estimated, has presented itself and rendered advisable the relinquishment of my laboured scheme, and the adoption of another at an hour's notice. This was the case now.

As I proceed more minutely to describe the circumstances which thus suddenly changed my plans, it will readily be conjectured that similar events are by no means uncommon in a great stock country like New South Wales. Cattle were at this period the staple article of internal traffic; and that traffic proceeded under all forms, and between all parties, and in every place where men meet. Sometimes it was simple barter; sometimes a sale; sometimes it was in the regular course of business; at others a mere capricious chaffer; sometimes it was with due inspection of the beasts in the yard or on the run; and occasionally even on bare description, or to use the common phrase, "unsight, unseen." But the chief of this dealing went on as may be supposed among the stockmen or those whose particular business is the herding and driving of cattle. Great numbers of these men at the time I speak of, though more particularly in still earlier times, held cattle; many indeed became large stock-masters. Sometimes for years they took their wages in cattle; every odd pound they could muster was laid by to add to the little herd thus accumulating by some good bargain for cash: and I do think it was by no means an uncommon occurrence for some kindly beast to stray of a dark night into the little herd, without any such common-place reasons as rank under the head of exchange, and never find his way out again. Poor men do many things by the example of their betters; it would not always be easy to say which they are. Nor does the question now remain one of much importance: legislation has well-nigh done its work; almost every facility for such a process is done away. Where once twenty poor men rose gradually into substance, I should think scarce one rises now. At the time referred to, however, almost every third person in the enjoyment of freedom had a few head of cattle; and the perpetual system of exchange I have referred to was its grand concomitant. Of course in such a country and under such circumstances, plenty of sales were effected that jeopardized alike the seller and the buyer. Doubtless in many instances the buyer was fully aware of the illegal character of the transaction; but in hundreds more he fell into the snare merely through a blind cupidity, or even was led into it by the unsuspecting uprightness of his own nature. In the instance more particularly in hand I believe there was a commixture of the two cases. The victim was a hard-striving and perhaps greedy man; but in him along with this worse were mingled (no rare case) the better inclinations of a strong and unequivocal uprightness of natural character. With these premises, the reader will be fully prepared

to understand what I am now to give — the history of such a case.

A messenger came to me in Sydney and called me off the pit, and told me I was particularly and instantly wanted at —, and a note from M—— accompanied the message, urging me not to lose a minute. I washed, and telling the man I was working with to get a mate and go on till I came back, I hired a horse and was at — within a couple of hours. There I found M——, amusing a fine little boy eighteen months old, and with her was a very pretty young woman, its mother. The night before, as they were going to supper, she came up to the house door and asked for M——, who knew her immediately as an old schoolfellow. She and the baby were wet through to the skin, for she had travelled from — in a settler's cart without a tilt, and it had been raining almost the whole afternoon. As soon as she could communicate with M——, she told her that her husband, whom I had often heard of by the name of Tom —, was to meet her in the bush at the corner of our paddock that night; that there was a warrant out against him from the bench nearest which they lived; that was between 100 and 150 miles from Sydney; and that he had only had just time to escape before the constables reached their hut to execute it. He had sent her word by a man he could trust to meet him here on this evening at eleven o'clock; and it was the utmost she could do through an unexpected hindrance to arrive by the time. It appeared they had but one child, and were very fond of one another. He had possessed himself of a good herd of cattle by his economy and industry, but one false step had ruined all; and now no chance remained of retaining his liberty and family but getting away unknown from the colony. He had come to the corner of the fence according to appointment the night before, and was now “in plant” (hiding) in the creek till night again. His journey down the country had been a sore one, as he had had to keep off the road all day and only take it by night.

Mrs. D—— was the only child of a small settler, and had had cattle worth about 150*l.* left her by her father. Her husband, who had been for many years a stockman at one of the far out stations after he became free, married her when he was about thirty-three, only three years before, possessed of about 200*l.* worth of stock of his own of various kinds. This, which was a very good beginning, he had improved considerably. From all I could learn of his character, I am sure D—— had not the most distant design of a dishonest deal in the purchase of the beast which he was now charged with buying, knowing it to be stolen. One of the Government hands of a large and influential settler close to where D—— had settled, had been allowed by his master to accumulate a lot of cattle, and depasture them on his run; and when his sentence was expired, not having any other place to take them to, and his master ordering him to take them off his run, he asked D—— to buy them. D—— for a long time refused, and when at last he did buy them, it was because the man

could not get them in off the run for want of a horse; and of course only somebody who already knew them in the bush would buy them there. Buying them under these circumstances, D—— gave only about two-thirds of their market price for them; considering that he did the man a favour to buy them at all. Among them was a cow which D—— knew the man had been in possession of for above two years, and which he had no more reason for suspecting to be a stolen beast than any of the others. As soon as the money was paid, the man left that part of the country, and D—— heard no more of him till a stockman from quite a distant county, in passing through the run in search of strayed horses, claimed the cow as belonging to his master; and D—— then on inquiry found the seller was gone out of the country, leaving him to “stand the racket.”

This man's master had long wanted D——'s run, which separated his own from a fine tract in the mountains that was never likely to be bought by anybody, on account of its being deficient in water; and according to all I heard upon the subject afterwards, he now did all he could to get the owner of the beast to prosecute D——, that by getting him out of the way he might have his run, and secure the free run on government ground attached to it. I am sorry to say that it is too common a thing for the great settlers in New South Wales to endeavour to get rid of the small settlers near them, for similar reasons, by any means that offer themselves. If I recollect right, the jury that tried the criminal cases at —— sessions at this time was constituted of military officers chosen for the occasion from the regiments in the colony; and these gentlemen dining with D——'s neighbour the magistrate, whose government man had sold the cow, would naturally hear of the cause beforehand, and, prejudiced by Mr. ——'s account of D——, would come to the court fully prepared to look at the evidence against him in a very serious light. In short he had no reasonable ground for hoping for an acquittal.

M——'s object in sending for me from Sydney was twofold: she knew the cattle would be a great bargain, as they must be sold for ready money; and she also knew that I had enough in the —— — bank for the whole purchase; and was looking for some mode of laying it out. She also wished me to undertake the negotiation for ——'s passage away from the colony and to see him off.

——'s offer when I saw him, which was not till after dark in the evening, was a very good one. He offered me four capital brood mares, two of which had foals at their sides, for 100*l.* and the whole of his cattle, large and small, at 2*l.* a-head. I closed with the offer directly, provided both horses and horned cattle turned out on inspection as he had represented them.

Purchasing his stock was far from an entire removal of all the poor fellow's difficulties and dangers. He had still to go up the country to the very place where it was most dangerous for him to muster the cattle and

deliver them to me. His wife's being here again was almost sure to become known to the police; and then he would be watched for here. But the greatest difficulty was that of getting clear out of the colony; for accounts are sent to the Sydney police-office of defaulters from all parts of the colony, and the constables search every ship that goes out of the Heads.

As we were to start the very next morning up the country, this was perhaps the last time he might see his wife and child for many months, even if successful in escaping. After she had put her child to sleep, nothing could keep the poor trembling wife away from her husband. I carried them two large sheets of bark into the thick scrub beside the creek where —— was concealed; for about midnight it began to rain quite fast. One sheet of bark was leaned against a tree on the windward side to turn the rain; the other made a sort of dry flooring for them to sit on. They could not have any fire on account of the danger of its attracting notice. But —— provided them with some blankets and a large overcoat, and then sat up all night taking care of her friend's child. Its plaintive cries were most heart-moving as it waked at times through the long hours and missed its customary nurse.

Directly it was light —— and I started, leaving —— to arrange whilst we were absent for a passage by a vessel that was to sail in about twelve days. The poor fellow seemed as if he could never drag himself away from his wife and child. When we did set off it rained as if it would blind us; no comfortable commencement of such a trip. But it had one good consequence — it kept the people indoors; so that we arrived at the Hawkesbury punt almost without meeting an individual. Once over the river we considered ourselves safe, for we immediately struck off into the Curryjong Mountains, a vast pile of hills heaped on hills, and covered with forests and brushes so thickly, that you walk beneath and amidst them in perpetual shadow, and can only get along in some places by main force. Here we were past the police of the thickly settled districts, and off the track they take from the large interior settlements to Sydney. The Curryjong mountains have the appearance rather of a multitude of hills piled confusedly together than of what is more strictly considered mountain. At this time a few very poor settlers had opened just on one little patch of country, the faces of the hills, and their fields of yellow grain were bending, and in some places were already quite flattened by the torrents of rain that kept pouring down. Here and there a boy minding some pigs on the road side and with the utmost difficulty keeping them out of the corn; and once or twice a settler driving a cow home for the evening milking; and the old miller with his arms folded and his shoulder against the door-post, standing looking out of the door of the water-mill that clacks and rumbles on in the dark hollow, were all the human life we saw. I knew my guide was a good bushman, and also what reasons he

had for doing his part well, or I should not have followed him very readily. We went on, on, on up the slippery hill (for the soil is of the finest description) till it seemed as if we were getting above the world. Below us on every side was a vast rolling ocean of vapour. On us still poured the ceaseless rain till we had not a dry thread about us. At length we came to an abrupt fall of the ground, down the precipitous declivity of which our descent was effected with great caution and labour. Here we stood at the commencement of a long thicket of brushwood, through which the track was in some places so intricate and bewildering, and so toilsome to travel, that on hearing its character from —— I coincided in his opinion that it would be best for us to camp for the night in one of the ghibber-gunyahs. These are the hollows under overhanging rocks, and afford a most welcome shelter where they are met with in wet weather. Their aspect is at first rather terrific: of course no rain penetrates through their roof; but a space equal sometimes to the area of a very large room is offered to the drenched traveller to kindle his fire and shelter himself for the night. My fellow-traveller, who well knew the bush hereabouts, soon led the way to a capacious and snug retreat of this kind; and lighting a fire and betaking ourselves to our provisions we soon felt ourselves quite snug for the night. The rest of the evening was fully occupied in talking over our business, and in consulting that ever faithful counsellor the pipe. At length, outworn by travel and the previous night's watching, we slept. The next morning the rising sun was slanting in upon us when we awoke. After a hearty breakfast on we went again. To tell what thickets tangled, thorny, endless (as it seemed) we went through that day, what damp and sombre chasms we crossed, what wet and mossy crags we climbed, and what leaf-strewn solitary woods we made our way through, might weary the reader, but could give him no adequate notion of the scenes themselves. ——'s acquaintance with the bush here arose from his having been employed under a surveyor in the Curryjong and adjacent country before he was assigned to private service. He pointed out to me one creek accompanied with this tale: — “I found two dead men's bones on that creek when I was here with the surveyor; he sent me and another man to run that creek up as far as we could, to see what it led to; and after we had gone about seven miles we came to a lot of bones scattered about on a little flat. On looking at them we found they were the bones of two men. They were quite bare, and the native dogs had dragged them limb from limb, except the ribs, which were still fast to the backbone. Bits of their woollen garments were still about, but nothing more except their irons. One man's irons were still on one of his leg bones, but the other pair of irons were lying apart. The bones were as white as chalk with the sun and rain. It was the most shocking sight I ever saw. They were, no doubt, two poor fellows who had run away from a gang, lost themselves, and had wandered about till they were starved.” Much like

this was our travelling for four whole days. Once only we emerged on to the regular mountain road at a public house; and after a little variation of our fare, by a single meal of fresh pork and a couple of glasses of rum, took to the bush again.

On the afternoon of the fifth day we drew near our journey's end. It was a pleasant sunny day till toward night, when the weather again grew stormy and wild. We came into the creek on which D——'s hut was situated several miles below it. Following the channel up among the hills, we turned at length an elbow whence we obtained an uninterrupted view up a reach of about half a mile, at the end of which was the hut and stockyard. These were built on a little flat, back from the steep edge of the creek; and the only thing belonging to the station that we could descry was a very small tent hut on the brink of the lofty bank on the opposite side, or rather at the end of the vista where the creek again swept suddenly round to the right. This was the man's hut who looked after the cattle, and had been built there for the sake of seeing a long way down the creek, so as to have the milking cattle in his eye as much as possible. It was now a matter of some concern whether any unwelcome visitor was staying at the large hut which D—— and his wife usually occupied, or whether any such was lurking on the watch in the surrounding bush. To ascertain this I went on alone, D—— keeping out of sight among the wattles of the creek: if the stockman told me all was right, I was to float my pocket handkerchief in the wind, standing on the edge of the creek; otherwise I was merely to stand there without doing so. With beating heart I made my way up to the station; for I had found D——, though rather too fond of himself in matters of business, such a free-hearted, manly fellow as a companion that I felt the greatest interest in his success. On reaching the stockman's hut I found it empty of inhabitants: but there was a newly baked cake, indeed not yet cold; the fire also was not covered over with ashes, which is the usual way of keeping wood smouldering a long time without burning out. It was therefore clear that the stockman had lately been here, and would not be long away. I was therefore obliged to give D—— the signal to remain where he was for the present. In an hour or so Jerry the stockman came back; and after cautiously effecting an understanding with him, and ascertaining that all was safe, I told him where his master was, and he “cooeed” for him and gave the signal for him to come on. All was certainly safe enough; for one or other of the —— police came every day or two, pretending to be passing from the settlement to some station farther out; and one had called “to light his pipe” only an hour before, and Jerry had walked with him a couple of miles to show him a short cut, which was the reason of his absence when we arrived. As there was no fear of any further intrusion that night we congratulated ourselves on our good fortune, and with more easy minds than we had had for some hours,

took our supper. There was a lot of capital dogs, kangaroo, bull, mastiff, terrier, and mongrel. These when I reached the hut were along with Jerry, or I should not have made my entrance as I did; for when they came back a little in advance of him, and found me sitting in the tent hut, they ranged themselves across the entrance and growled most surlily, and seemed well inclined to come in and pull me out. But now they did us good service, rushing off every now and then, especially as the night became darker and darker, in the direction of the slightest noise. Late in the evening a light mizzling rain came on again; but we still kept to the little tent hut for the sake of D——'s readier escape, should escape become necessary. The large hut was surrounded by a level flat cleared of timber, and might have been easily surrounded; but the tent hut being on the brink of the creek afforded a certain means of flight down the bank. D—— tied a couple of his sharpest dogs, one about two hundred yards up the channel of the creek from the hut, and the other about two hundred yards down. If any one approached up or down the creek, the dogs that were tied would give notice before they were within a quarter of a mile of us; if any one drew near in the bush on the level of the hut on either bank, the dogs at the fire would be sure to hear or see or scent them a long way off and give the alarm. Thus there was always a safe point to fly to where the dogs were quiet. If any thing could have made our arrangement ineffectual, it was the complete gale into which the wind blew itself by about eleven o'clock. These high winds of the colony always produced in me a state of nervous excitement almost like slight intoxication. I believe it is the case also with many persons of highly nervous temperament. During the time they prevail, the blacks consider they can approach and spear the kangaroo or catch them with their dogs much more easily than at other times. They seem to have a bewildering effect on the animal. I thus felt no inclination to sleep: D—— also was more restless to-night than I had yet seen him. The man finding he could do no good turned in and was soon fast asleep. Hour after hour we sat by the fire, and smoked, and listened, and made tea; then walked about, and stood and strained our eyes to pierce the darkness, and our ears to collect every sound. The small rain fell spraylike, cool, refreshing, and with the open breast and bare neck habitual to the working class in the colony, this is quite a luxury when the skin is fevered with over-exertion. The sky was starless, black, and still. The bush kept up that long indefinite sound that it makes beneath the passage of a mighty wind; something between a roar and a deep hiss, mingled strangely, and one could fancy, awfully with sudden passing intonations like a fitful music. The gale ruffled and howled, and swept away from the fire far across the grass a long train of sparks, which, viewed from the distance as we walked to and fro, looked like the tail of some monstrous comet that had fallen and lay blazing away amidst the darkness on the side of the great slope of

country down which the creek coursed.

At length day dawned, as it seemed, down in a world below us; for the descent of the country was great. But it soon spread up over the whole sky. The man was up with the first sensible light; but instead of going for the milkers, D—— despatched him for the two stockhorses. These are generally good hardy geldings; and the performances of some of them are really surprising. Never stabled or stall-fed they seem capable of much more exertion than most horses that are. It is no uncommon thing, for instance, for a stockman to ride his horse fifty or sixty miles a day for several days together; the only food the animal gets all the time being the native grass, and his only bed the same. D——'s two stockhorses, however, were old ones. As he let me have them as cheap as I could have procured them anywhere else, and as I was sure to need at least one, whatever I concluded to do with the herd, I bought them, giving 17*l.* for the two, bridles, saddles, &c. &c. in. While the man was looking for them in the bush, we had some breakfast preparatory to beginning to run the herd in. Meantime it struck me that seeing them in the bush would be fully as satisfactory, provided we took his stock book (a book which every stock-holder keeps, with a full and minute description of every head of horned cattle he possesses entered in it) and ticked them off as we saw them. Certainly some would be almost sure not to be found the first or even second day. But I was to have them at a price that would allow of the loss of one in every five or six at least; and it seemed cruel to keep the poor fellow here any longer than was actually inevitable. Moreover, as the man suggested, the cattle being in the yard would lead to suspicion that his master was there; and in that case he would be likely to be taken, and so our whole engagement come to nought. Beside, it seemed to me that having kept this stock book without any view of using it for such a purpose, it was very good evidence what cattle there were. I could trace head after head from muster to muster along with the calves of each succeeding season. My only uncertainty was whether any had been *sold* lately. At length, it was settled that we should ride round the *outside* of the run, and the man in the mean time drive down whatever he could find *on* the run into the creek. By six o'clock in the evening we had seen the four mares, the two foals, and every head but nineteen of the horned cattle; and many of these were beasts which were the most unlikely of all to have been made away with, heifer calves, old bullocks, and cows whose calves we had. I had no further hesitation in taking them as they were: and we concluded our bargain in due form; D—— — delivering up to me the brands and stockbook, &c. &c., and I giving him a check payable to R—— or bearer.

Without waiting for a night's rest, D—— — set off by the same dreary road we had come; what few things he thought it worth while to take, he packed up before he started; paid the man a few shillings of wages that

were coming to him (he had already given him a cow and calf), and told me to consider everything else mine. The land he had no further claim to, having merely occupied it temporarily.

As soon as he was gone I took possession of the big hut, lit my fire, and endeavoured to get some rest. R—— was to present D——'s check for him and see him off, and Mrs. D—— was to remain for a couple of months to prevent suspicion of her husband's departure till he was in safety. R—— meantime, as soon as he had executed his part of the undertaking, was to come up the country to me. All this while it never struck me that *I* should be honoured by a visit from the constables as soon as they found me in possession of D——'s hut; for hitherto they had been led by the man to expect D——'s return every day. About noon (the constables' usual time of visiting in New South Wales at any station where they think they may get a dinner), probably from some information that had reached the —— — police-office that D—— had been seen in the neighbourhood, no less a personage than the chief constable of the district himself rode up to the door, and hanging his horse's bridle on the nail, walked in. The dogs were all away with Jerry in the bush, or he would have been obliged to use a little more ceremony. One of the very greatest annoyances of New South Wales is, the freedom with which the police and military walk into one's dwelling-house. The worthy functionary had a pair of handcuffs slung on his belt, and a horse pistol in his hand, but he seemed rather surprised as I threw myself off the settle and confronted him. From the description I had heard of him, I immediately guessed who he was. After stammering out some sort of apology and saying he was the chief constable, he pointed to the yard, into which about a dozen head had been driven that morning, and our dialogue went on as follows: —

“What cattle are those?” — “Mine.”

“What brand is that?” pointing to the brand that had been D——'s, and which hung up in the hut. — “Mine.”

“How long has it been yours?” — “Ever since I paid for it.”

“How long is that?” — “Am I paid to tell you, or you to find it out?”

“Humph. You mean to say these cattle are yours?” — “I do.”

“Well, I shall see that.” — “I've no doubt you will, and a little plainer than you expect.”

“Those cattle belong to the man I've got a warrant for; I shall turn them into the bush.” — “Bullee, bullee, bullee, go and lie down at the yard gate, old man.” Up jumped my old grey-coated friend and follower nearly ever since I had been in the colony, and without an instant's delay there he lay crouching under the bottom bar of the stockyard-gate with his hind quarters in and his great square head on the ground between his forepaws without. As soon as things had got thus far, I began to feel rather “jerran,” as the blacks say, (*i.e.* timorous). Not being anything of a

lawyer, I began to have misgivings that I might in some point or other have committed myself, for among the least of the threats with which my baffled new acquaintance assailed me, was that of indictment for impeding him in the execution of his duty. However, he took himself off; and when I came to recollect that I neither had done anything illegal, nor had he even evidence of anything I had done, I was convinced his “bounce” could come to nothing. I thought it best, however, till I could take legal advice in Sydney, to hide both the brand and stockbook; and having warned Jerry to answer no questions, I knew it would cost these busy and mischievous people some trouble to prove whether I bought the cattle the day before or the year before, and previously to the date of the warrant against D——. Still I felt that I had been very incautious in not taking advice before the purchase, when, being near Sydney, I might have done it so easily. Knowing the tyrannical modes of procedure of the upcountry benches, and their very frequent mistakes of the law, when even they intend to administer it aright, I thought it safest, on reflection, to write to R—— without an hour's delay to take advice. Jerry found me a man in about three hours, and I sent him off on one of the stock horses directly. After some days' delay in Sydney, from the horse being knocked up, he returned, bringing me a letter, intimating that D—— was off; and that the lawyer who had been consulted said I was in no danger, either personally or of the loss of my purchase. When I got this news I felt like a man that had a patent of immunity from all care for the rest of his days.

Chapter XII. Looking for a Station.

Equipment — The heat — Dray capsized — Bathurst township — Crossing the country without roads — How to get rid of fleas — A miserable station — Aborigines killed in fight — Natural scenery — A dairy-station — Scene at a public-house — Animosity between settlers and convicts — Wild cattle — Men lost in the Shoalhaven gullies and starved — Accounts of others lost and starved in various other parts — Blacks' camp in the wilderness — A rainy day at a stock-station at the outskirts of the colony — A dealer and his dray encamped — Manna-trees — Bush horsemanship — A female convict going to the Factory — A station heard of

ON preparing to write this chapter, it struck me that the best form in which to cast it would be that of a journal. I cannot indeed remember the dates, but the course of incident as occurring on the first day, or second day, or third day, I recollect with the utmost precision. Remembering our stages and the period we stopped at the various stations, I can, of course, refer each circumstance to the particular day of our journey on which it occurred. By laying before the reader the train of facts themselves, which came under my notice, as we traversed a very extensive portion of the territory, he will form a much more accurate and faithful notion of the natural aspects of the country and of the various features of society than he would be furnished by a mere general account of my own impressions and deductions.

The journey I am to describe took place on the arrival of R—— from Sydney. Our object in taking it was to find a good run to which we could send the whole of our cattle, his and mine; employing a stockman of our own to look after them. Besides what I had just bought, my former purchases and their increase were now about eighty head, after deduction of thirds for the grazing. R—— also had a snug little herd, which had been accumulating for years. His father had about seventy head of his own, and M—— had a few; so that altogether there were upwards of 500 head, plenty to form a herd, beside four mares of mine and one of R——'s.

The reader will suppose us leaving the creek-hut on horseback, with

our blankets strapped on the saddle before us in long rolls like dragoons' cloaks; our saddle bags well supplied with tea, sugar, and tobacco, and quart pot, tomahawks, and tinder-box, constituting the remainder of our equipment; not forgetting, however, our horses' hobbles, and a couple of kangaroo dogs of R——'s, and my old Bullee, who insisted upon keeping us company.

First day. — Roasting hot; almost intolerable in fact after about eleven A.M. until four P.M. Rode right across into the settlement of Bathurst; the latter part of the way along the high road from Bathurst to Sydney. The roads excessively dusty, and all the water-holes where the bullocks usually drink dried up. Many of the poor animals that we passed in teams of 4, 6, and 8, yoked in pairs, were panting and hanging their tongues out in a manner most painful to behold, whilst their drivers flogged, and shouted, and swore unremittingly. One wretch we passed had stuffed up with grass the nostrils of a bullock which had lain down, and then kindled a wisp of dry stringy bark, which blazes like flax, under his belly. The beast's hide was cut through in all directions with the green-hide lash of the heavy bullock whip as if by a knife. The dexterity with which some of these men use the whip is quite astonishing; the report when it strikes is like a rifle's crack, and the macerated hair and flesh fly up from the spot in a little white cloud like spray. In another place a whole team had started off the road into the bush among the trees, smashed off the dray-wheel against a tree, and scattered the load in all directions. Here were the remains of a case of liqueurs; there a tea-chest, crushed and disgorging a heap of tea among the grass; here a sugar mat burst open, and what should have been a hat-box and new beaver hat forced in among the sugar; here were a lot of ladies' dresses coming out of the broken end of a large slate-coloured trunk; and meeting them, from the mouth of the bullock driver's harness cask, a lot of salt junk in a flood of pickle. We dismounted and helped to release the shaft bullock, who was partly jammed under the load, and then went on. The bullock driver was bewailing his hard fortune most bitterly; he said he had only about seven months more to serve before he was due for a ticket of leave (to work for himself), but his master had promised to do all he could to keep him from obtaining it, and this would be just the very chance he wanted. He was a transport for life. I could not discover that he was to blame for the accident; it seemed to have originated solely in the viciousness of a young bullock running his horn into the one he was yoked to. Very likely this man would become desperate through the loss of his ticket, take the bush, be driven by hunger to depredations on the roads, and be finally hanged — this has been the course of thousands since the formation of the colony as a penal settlement. The settlement of Bathurst stands in the midst of wide levels or plains, totally untimbered; this causes it to have a dreary, sterile aspect, though in reality it is not so.

A stream, sometimes small, sometimes quite a deluge, holds its course along beside the township, and on its banks are some noble tracts of cultivable ground. The houses are very good in the township; those in the fields are mostly turf huts, for here in winter there are heavy frosts and snow, and the wind is so cutting across this bare and elevated tract, that it is important to stop up every chink and cranny where it can enter. We stopped for the night at Mr. ——'s stock-station, and were kindly entertained; R—— being acquainted with the stock-keeper, wanted to ask him if he knew of a run, but he knew of none suitable.

Second day. — Rode on to a sheep-station a few miles south of the township, and on the direct track to what is called the New Country: *i.e.* the interior S. W. of Sydney. Our way lay chiefly through open level country, very scantily watered. Here and there, however, there was a splendid water-hole, like a little lake amidst the arid waste. We had heard of a piece of unoccupied ground some distance off the road to the eastward, and rode across to examine it. Our directions to it (there being no roads across the country, except the two or three great ones to the principal points) were up a certain hollow, through a gap in the range, and then across to a mountain on the distant horizon, by riding over which at the easiest acclivity we could find, a creek would be reached, and this creek followed down would lead to the run. Travellers in England would probably think such directions as these poor guidance for a distance of many miles; however, we were successful in our search. Practice in bush travelling gives great address in tracing such natural land-marks. A good hand at making his way in the bush is called a good bushman; as is also a good workman in timber. A man is not entitled to this appellation until he has acquired a sort of tact of going right instinctively. The infallible accuracy with which some men will hit a point several miles off in a dark night, and all the way through thick forest, is quite astonishing.

The station we reached for the night was merely an enclosure of branches of trees, just to keep the sheep together. There was but one flock, and the hut was only a few sheets of bark set up round an area of about 6 feet square, with a roof of the same, through which the stars shone down upon us as we lay wrapped in our blankets on the floor. But we were not many minutes down before we were obliged to rise and take the ground outside some way off, for our pallet for the rest of the night. The sandy hut floor was literally alive with fleas. After a martyr's sufferings, as soon as the sun rose, I went to the water to wash, and when I took my shirt off, these terrible persecutors covered it as if scattered by the hand as the gardener sows seed. One of the men was hut-keeper, the other shepherd; the shepherd tends the sheep by day, and the hut-keeper has charge of them by night. Where there are good paling yards or strong hurdles, the hut-keepers generally venture to sleep, depending on their

dogs, of which there are generally half a dozen of one sort or another about a station, for keeping off the warregal or bush dog, an animal very much resembling the fox, but much more ravenous. The hut-keeper at this station was obliged to watch all night, for his yard would in many places have suffered the dog to crawl through; and if one does get in, he bites and worries sometimes thirty or forty sheep before he is discovered. When the shepherd turned out his flock in the morning, the hut-keeper having first cleared the floor of the hut, he drove them in a mass up to it, and they soon crowded in and filled it. On my asking them why they did this, they told me that by doing so the fleas all got into the sheep and were carried away into the bush, and that they often cleared the hut thus.

Third day. — This day we had the track for the New Country all day under our horses' feet, and made a good journey; but our fortune at night was not so good. We stopped at a half-starved station; it was a cattle station, and the stockman being out, only the hut-keeper was there. He seemed to make lying on his berth his sole occupation. He was a great low-lived looking ruffian, not long "lagged" (transported); he had been too lazy even to wash his wheat, which was smutty before he ground it at the steel handmill with which most of these huts are supplied, and it was as black as the back of the chimney. After a supper of bread without beef, and tea without sugar, we smoked our pipes and went to bed. After we were all laid down, the lazy scoundrel told us all on a sudden, that there were a couple of good milkers down the creek, and if we liked to drive them up with our horses in the morning, we might milk them for breakfast; but he did not care for milk himself, and so never milked them, except when the stockman was at home. In short he was just that one man in twenty that one finds among prisoners whom you may be sure will eventually be sent to a penal settlement for life, if not hanged; "too lazy," to use a common phrase, "to live;" incorrigibly idle until everybody's hand is against him, and then, rather than amend and work, turning his hand against everybody; not to be roused except by severity, and then only into crime. Happily there are few such.

Our night's quarters were rendered still more memorable and comfortless by the blacks having had a battle here that afternoon. Three dead bodies were lying on the flat, with the ghastly grin of those who have died *the hater's death*. Two of them had been killed by body wounds with jagged spears, that had torn their way out frightfully; the other's was a head-wound with a tomahawk. The weapon had gone right through his mat of woolly black hair into the brain; very little blood had flowed, but the "gins" (black women) told us he died almost instantly. As I came in from looking after my horse, I passed them as they lay cold and prone in the thin misty moonlight, each on the spot where he had fallen. The wife of one of them, a fine, but small Hercules-like figure, sat or rather reclined by him, sobbing as if her heart would break. Another was

quite a lad, and the other an old grey-bearded man, who had been a great warrior in his day. Nobody was near either of them. The reflection struck me very strongly, how strange an instinct is war! And yet may it not be necessary for the good and even the safety of the peaceful, that the fierce and bloodthirsty should be thus attracted toward each other; the mutual destruction of the destructive leaving the peaceful to their peace?

Fourth day. — Got to a stock-station this evening, where the plenty was as remarkable as the dearth where we stopped last night. It was Sunday, but nobody here keeps the day as anything more than a holiday. Men wash their shirts, and grind their week's wheat, and visit, where the huts are not too far apart. Here, however, this last occupation was pretty well precluded, as the stations are miles asunder, and there is seldom above one hut on each station. At the same time it is a saying as common as possible, that no work done on the sabbath-day prospers. I never travel on this day if I can help it; but in this case it was almost unavoidable, for we had got the night before into the very den of hunger and sloth. The country we passed through to-day was a very fine stock-country, beautiful flats of open meadow on river banks, and fine gentle grassy hills. Perhaps it was a little too thickly timbered. We met with a very welcome reception, and the people wanted us to stop a day or two with them for a rest, but we did not.

Fifth day. — Reached a station belonging to a son of one of the earliest settlers; a singularly wild looking spot. During the day's ride we crossed some fine high grassy runs, coming at length to the bank of the Abercrombie river, or rather to the descent to the bank. Standing at the brink, we looked down a declivity of I should think nearly half a mile; and along the bottom there ran the small line of trees that shade the banks of this wild torrent stream. When we had made the descent, a short distance upwards to our left was an elbow of the river, occasioned by its shooting against the base of a vast and almost perpendicular mountain. As I stood gazing up at it from the river's edge, I felt my own insignificance in a way I cannot describe; the physical comparison was perfectly extinguishing. Crossing easily — for at this time the drought had nearly emptied the bed of the river — we set forward up the opposite acclivity; and here again my astonishment was not a little excited. It was a long ascent, of, as nearly as I can remember, three quarters of a mile, and so steep that a person coming down could not have stayed himself from running without great difficulty; yet there were dray tracks down it. I could not have believed, had I not seen it, that a team of bullocks could have got down in any other way than tumbling or sliding. The station at which, as I have said, we stopped for the night is, as you come on it along the road, as if it were down in a mere hole of the earth. Part of our journey to-day was along the top of an immense ridge of mountain, with another similar ridge running parallel to it for some length of way; and

between them the gully was so deep, that though the crowns of the two ridges must have been miles apart, it really looked as if you could have thrown a stone across from one to the other. The sight of one immense hill side on which the sun is shining from another height opposite, is a magnificent spectacle; especially when the face of it is finely timbered, as this was. We still heard of no run that could be recommended for water. At the same time it must be remarked, that stockmen are very shy of telling of runs even when they know of them; they of course for their own cattle's sake like to keep unallotted as much land as they can.

Sixth day. — Cottlewolly Creek. Some of the stations about this part of the country are perfect natural Edens. Far apart, each in its peaceful nook, surrounded by parklike tracts of bush, with here and there a group of lazy beeves at the creekside; or a flock of sheep “camping,” us the shepherds call it, under the shade of a tree from the noontide heat; the thin wreath of wood smoke curling up at meal times from the hut-roof; men who sometimes see no faces but each other's for weeks together, slowly sauntering to and fro, and getting all their work done by ten in the morning and so for years together living on this still and unmolested kind of life, till the convict nature is mixed with so much of the simple, harmless herdsman's, that it is no longer recognised: — such is the picture of a remote stock-station — of three in every five. And yet, alas! they have their own crimes. No one unacquainted with them would believe how much cattle and sheep-stealing they are the scenes of; whilst often the lowest class of human vices passes but for a jest. Inanimate nature is universally lovely amidst these wildernesses, and a cheerful unprejudiced eye may often observe strong assimilation going forward, in the human character, to the faultless still-life around, which God has retained under His own more immediate control.

Seventh day. — Stopped for the night at a station at Breadalbane Plains. We went there something out of our direct road, to see a mutual friend of ours, who was there for a few days, looking after some stray cattle, that he had heard had wandered to this part of the country. The people of the station received us as usual with the greatest hospitality. We could not eat beef and damper enough and drink milk and tea enough for them. The first sound on waking in the morning was the numerous herd of milkers lowing in the yard, and the first sight we saw was the new milk going by to the dairy, to be set for cream by buckets full.

Eighth day. — Goulburn Plains. We stopped to-night at one of the grog houses. I do not recollect whether or not the proprietor had a licence at this time: several of the police, however, were assisting in the spree that was going on. A party of free men had come here in their way down the country after taking pretty large sums at the sheepshearing with the full intention (as free men under such circumstances always have) of having “only one halfpint” of rum and then going on. Meantime (as ever) that

one led to a second; the second to a third; the third to a fourth, and so on till the count was lost in the unfathomable obscurities of a publican's conscience. They were drinking, singing, smoking, dancing, swearing, yelling, fighting; in short, to use the expressive simile of the class, after "earning their money like horses they were spending it like asses." One fellow had hardly trowsers enough to retain a legal right to walk about; and he spent there a seventeen pounds check in two days and a half without purchasing anything. As fast as one batch of the police got thoroughly soaked at the expense of these foolish fellows and went out, another batch walked in. The man who had spent so much had been many years in the colony, and had been free chief part of the time, most of his sentence being expired before he was sent from the hulks. On an average he must have earned clear of rations 30s a week all the time. Probably he had earned in wages alone not less than 700*l.*, which laid out in cattle as he got it would have enabled him by this time to keep his carriage. But here he was so debased that, as I looked at his antics and his aspect, I felt mortified to have to acknowledge that he was a man.

Ninth day. — Rode over to Bulla Melita and back, and about the bush on the coast side of the road from Inverary to Lake Bathurst; but wherever I went I saw nothing but dried up waterholes and bare runs. In some places the grass was eaten off so short that whole tracts looked like the high road. There was not so much as the root of the grass visible. R—— went off in another direction, but came back with no better success than I had had. Even the deep water-holes on the runs already taken up were very much reduced. The blacks say, "Plenty water before white man come, plenty pish (fish), plenty kangaroo, plenty' possum, plenty everything: now all gone. Poor fellow now, black fellow! By and bye that got nothing at all to patter. Then *that* tumble down" (then *he* will die).

Tenth day. — Gave the horses a day's spell, still continuing at Goulburn Plains. In the afternoon I walked round some of the farms at the edge of the plains. These plains, I should inform the reader, are the Australian prairies. These of Goulburn are many miles across every way; but some farther up the country are several days' journey across. Travelling on them is very monotonous; and the appearance of things very deceptive as to distance. I have set out to walk to a house which I supposed about four miles distance, and at the end of eight still found myself not there. The masters hereabout seem generally in very bad odour with their men, excepting only the young natives who have land here. At one of the farms I went to, the government men told me they were almost starved; and indeed they looked so. What else can be expected under this system of white slavery? The master's interest is to get as much as possible for as little as possible. Thus when the thing to be done is a fixed amount, not liable to increase or decrease, as

shepherding or hut-keeping, the master naturally says, "Well, the very lowest amount of strength a man can walk about with will suffice for this work: consequently if I only give this man a diet that keeps him alive, I get all I want." This leads to bitter, ineradicable animosity in the men, which year by year gets deeper and stronger; until at last the magistrate, himself a settler too, and equally a party in the iniquitous system, is appealed to by the master. Of course he orders the man a flogging, and I am sorry to say generally with much such nonchalance as the housewife sends for a pound of candles. Then come bushranging — robbery — murder — and capture and execution.

Eleventh day. — Sabbath. A day's spell for ourselves and our horses. I went off into the bush after breakfast, and lying under a thick shady tree read all day till three o'clock in the afternoon; then had my dinner; and in the cool of the evening had a "bogie" (bathe) in the river.

Twelfth day. — Rode to Parramarrago, an incipient township east of Goulburn Plains, and consequently coastward. In the evening we saddled our horses again and took a turn about the bush in the direction of the Shoalhaven gullies. These are the steep and tremendous ravines that run down to the Shoalhaven River. Never-ending forest, with here and there a little meadow-like spot covered with the coarse grass called "blade of grass;" a geographical surface so varied, wild, and wonderful, that you seem to be in another land; great unfathomable gulfs of woody valley, irregular and bewildering ridges, a flock of kangaroo, or a scarcely less wild flock of bush-cattle galloping down upon you at a charge pace to within a few feet, and there standing, encircling and staring at you, and then at the first motion of an arm or sound of a voice wheeling and tossing their heads and snorting and bursting away like a living hurricane through the crashing bush; such was the scenery. The incidents were more of narrative than of present fact. We were told of an old gentleman belonging to a settler's family who used often to wander reading about the bush near the farm which borders on these intricate wilds. One day when he had done so he returned not. Search was made in all directions, but nothing was ever heard of him again. It is supposed that he lost his way; and still with the flurried speed of fear rushed farther and farther from his home and familiar places till exhaustion and death overtook him in some lonely hollow, where the foot of even the scanty black population of the wilderness is not accustomed to penetrate for years together. Some years afterwards I was told of a poor bark-stripper getting mimosa bark, being lost among these same labyrinths. This man's feelings must have been most painful, as he could not have been above half a mile from well-known ground and the spot whence his line of bundles of bark would have led him almost to his hut door, when he found himself at fault. To those not acquainted with country of this description I know such facts will hardly be credible. I can however

assure the reader that on this very occasion it was nearly my own lot; for only by riding round a single small hill whilst my fellow-horsemen went over it, I got so bewildered, and so much more bewildered as I made more efforts to extricate myself, that but for “coo-eeing” loudly from a hill-top, which was answered by R—— and the stockman with him, I should probably never have found my way; unless perhaps by the sagacity of my horse on my giving up all other hope and letting him have his head. In this respect the horseman is much better off than the footman. A vast many fatal adventures of this class occur in the colony. Some time afterwards I heard of a new hand lost on Manaroo Plains merely through their monotonousness. He went with one of the old hands to the plain to look for bullocks, and getting out of his sight and out of sight of the hut was found no more. Again, quite an old hand was lost near the same place in a snow storm. The snow had covered the road; he got off it, and could not find it again; but when discovered he was only a few yards from it. The last case I heard of was somewhere behind Bathurst. It was that of a bullock driver going with his team from one bush station to another. It appeared it was a very sultry day; and he left his mate and team to go down a hollow, thinking it would lead to a creek and afford him a drink. It was nine days afterwards before he was found; whether dead or alive I forget. But I have some faint recollection, either in this case or some other, about the same part, of a man being found after many days' search lying dead across a large log, with his legs eaten away by the native dogs. A very melancholy case I was told of near Jambecombène; it was that of a poor government man, a tailor, who went from one farm to another to get cloth and take measure for a garment, and in coming back lost himself in the deep brushy Budawong gullies; and when at last the blacks found him, he was down in a deep creek-bed in the mountain, where only few and faint fragments of sunshine ever reach the ground; he too was lying across a log; and it was discovered that he had cut up his cloth into innumerable little snips and dropped them as he went as a sort of clue. But what exactly he thought to gain by this expedient when already lost it would not perhaps be easy to divine. In short, the multitudes of similar sad accidents that reach one's ear in a few years' residence in the interior is hardly credible; at the same time the slightest caution would prevent it. A new hand should carefully observe objects wherever he goes, and he should take care never to go too far away from places he is familiar with. The whole character of the country here was objectionable for our purpose. The good flats with creeks in them were already occupied; and the rest of the bush was very deficient of water.

Thirteenth day. — Yarralla Creek. Occupied. The circumjacent country broken, and we could see no good water-holes.

Fourteenth day. — Lake Bathurst. This is a fine plot of water of several

miles in circumference; and there is some good open and flat forest around it; but it seemed to be pretty well fed off by one kind of stock and another in all directions.

Fifteenth day. — Boro Creek. Stockmen evidently unwilling to give us any information of unoccupied ground.

Sixteenth day. — Jambecombène. The choicest of the country again occupied before us; we were, however, afforded very liberal and welcome entertainment. The face of the district is generally flattish, and there stands at one part a huge round mountain, called Jellamatong Mountain, which is a most conspicuous landmark far round. Dry flats and swamps, creeks and ranges, here alternate in perpetually varying combination. I rode off alone in the evening to a range of mountains about four miles distant. At parts, along the foot of the ridge, lay scattered an army of boulders, great and small; grey with age, mossy, rounded by the wear of ages, they seemed almost objects of reverence. As the melancholy wind of evening fanned the red flame of the fires at the camp of the black, unclad, stalwart men of the wilderness, who had settled themselves for the night at the edge of this field of natural ruins, I felt strongly the primitive simplicity of the scene; I could not help feeling a sort of astonishment from its contrast with “the busy hum” of “crowded cities,” venting the instinctive query, “Can these two opposite things, productive as they are of such opposite effects on the human spirits and feelings, be both true parts of the creation of the same God? Must they not rather be the abuses of the true at opposite points? And then how mysterious and how humiliating this tendency of man to deteriorate! The terrible fatality follows him, which way soever he progresses; downwards it is into barbarism, upwards into luxury; either he must have nothing to enjoy, or he must enjoy nothing that he has. Truly God's greatest gift, as it was his last, was his model-man, sole dispenser of that celestial instinct which is the only thing we cannot possess too much of; whose image voluntarily welcomed to dwell within the soul, imposes upon it a perfective law as complete as infallible — as infallible as complete.

Getting back to the station a little before dark, I unsaddled my horse, hobbled him, and sent him off to pick up his evening meal where he could find one. And, by the bye, animals with a bush education are not bad judges which way to direct their steps. As we were having our supper it came on to rain fast, and then faster; so we sat all the evening smoking our pipes and drinking the delicious tea, and yarning, and now and then treating ourselves to a lounge on one of the berths, whilst the rest talked on for our amusement and their own.

Seventeenth day. — The stockman would not hear of our going away, as the rain still kept on. Smoking and padding saddles, and tailoring rents in clothes, and calculating how much longer boots would last, ehopping

knives for handkerchiefs and handkerchiefs for knives, awarding the palm for straw-hat making to this or that shepherd or hut-keeper, playing at all-fours for "gombenes" of tobacco, telling wonderful tales of the goodness of working bullocks, and the bottom of stock-horses, and the sagacity of dogs, and the ferociousness of the bush cattle, along with frying and eating pancakes plentiful of eggs, and the whole class of similar occupations of body and mind passed away the hours till night. Who has not felt how agreeable it is sometimes to be thoughtless?

Eighteenth day. — This was Sunday. Being so well quartered, we invited ourselves, much to our entertainer's satisfaction, to stop another day. After finding our horses and heading them back near to the hut, I got away as usual under a shady tree in the creek, for it turned out a very warm day, and read till I was so hungry that I could not stay away from the hut any longer.

Nineteenth day. — Before we started this morning some of the blacks that I saw encamped a few evenings ago at the foot of the mountains came up to the station. They seemed spiritless and fast verging to the usual fate of the tribes — extinction. The stock-keeper told us that when he first came here to live, and there were as yet no white men about within miles, they were so savage that on the occasion of one of the tribe being killed in an affray, they kept his body unburied for months, till they could take revenge for his death.

The weather delightful. We retraced our course by the way of the Long Swamp, a splendid cattle run in the neighbourhood: here we came upon a dealer with three teams of goods, encamped on the edge of the swamp. He was a merry, free-hearted fellow, and made us have a drop of capital brandy with him; and our tobacco being nearly out, we supplied ourselves with a pound of negro-head a-piece; but his profits were exorbitant, viz., from 100 to 200 and even 300 per cent. on what the goods cost him. However, in these shopless wastes there is no help for it; one must either give what they ask or go without the article, for the supply is so much less than the demand, that it is rarely they take anything of consequence back to Sydney. We stopped at the dealer's fire all night; he was a merry fellow, and kept everybody about him in excellent humour. He was a Jew.

Twentieth day. — Rode over to Bungando as it is called on the spot, or the Bungandon of the maps. Here I saw the finest specimen of mannashedding trees I had ever met with; the tree is a species of gum, and the ground beneath the clumps was literally strewed with pieces as large as pigeons' eggs and downwards, and as white as the whitest loaf-sugar. A little of it is very nice, but much nauseates; and I have a notion, though I cannot vouch for its accuracy, that its properties are rather the reverse of the manna that is used medicinally. When they are short of sugar, the men sometimes gather and use it in their tea. It is most

palatable in tea made of the pennyroyal, which shepherds are so fond of.

Twenty-first day. — Limestone Plains. The ground all occupied. On each side of the plains meanders in the most serpentine course a fine river. Being close to the high road to the great interior districts of Manaroo Plains or Brisbane Downs, and Omio, and the White Mountains, it will doubtless become in time a first-rate settlement.

Twenty-second day. — Kurraducbidgee. The reader will easily distinguish the native names of places from English names. I give them as much as possible, to convey an idea of the language. It will be perceived that it is, for the most part, exceedingly soft and euphonious.

Twenty-third day. — Inverary. This is virtually the same settlement as the one some time back called Parramarrago. Nothing of any importance occurs to me respecting it. It may not still be unworthy of remark, as showing how unnecessary it is that an administrator of the laws should be disliked here any more than elsewhere, that one of the magistrates, an old medical gentleman, was very much beloved by all classes. A like prodigious phenomenon I believe also existed at Goulburn Plains: there, however, it was the case of an old military gentleman. There are some grievous contrasts in the neighbourhood: meantime the ladies of these two gentlemen have the credit, in common opinion, of no little agency in prompting the action of the benevolent feelings of their husbands, and counterpoising the unmerciful counsels of their coadjutors in office. Such facts can never be told too widely; goodness can never be too well rewarded; active beneficence can never be too highly honoured; good deeds, done for the saving of the soul, may be well enough; but the good deeds that flow from the *saved* soul are far beyond them. To endow a church they say is pious; and granting the data of certain modes of religion, so it must be; but to save some shivering wretch from the triangles is the piety of a religion of far more illustrious conception: the votaries of such a faith ought to be spoken of and honoured like the woman in the Gospel, “this that they have done” “going forth” far and wide “as a memorial” of them.

Twenty-fourth day. — Barber's Creek. This creek is named after the gentleman whose station is situated at the crossing-place. It is quite a sight to see the hosts of travellers that sometimes invade this homestead, where nobody is charged anything.

Twenty-fifth day. — Sunday. Stopped all day at the farm which we reached yesterday. We were both of us glad of a day's spell; R——— did not feel this incessant riding as much as I did, as he has been used to it, off and on, from his infancy. When one comes to be in the saddle for many days together all day long, riding is really hard work; but especially is this the case where much of the way is bush. Some horses are better than others, but all want watching, when going pretty sharp: here a great fallen tree lies in your way, which you must go over; there a

bough stretches down, and you must take care it does not sweep you off your horse: here your horse wheels suddenly, there he has to descend a hill plentifully scattered over with loose stones; everywhere and always both legs and arms and thoughts must be in active exertion.

Twenty-sixth day, Bong-Bong. — As we neared this settlement we passed a female prisoner on foot going down, in charge of a constable, to the Female Factory (Penitentiary) of Paramatta. She had been giving her mistress what they here technically term “cheek,” and was sentenced to some months' confinement and to be returned to Government. She was a rough brutal creature, but the cutting off of her hair, which would be one of the consequences of her return to Government in this way, she seemed to feel very acutely.

Twenty-seventh day. — A stockman who came in this morning as we were about to mount for the road, told us of a fine run which he had looked out for his master in the county of Georgiana. As he appeared to be a man who could be depended on, had not told us for the sake of gain, and bore a good character at the place where we met him, and as he assured us that his master had decided on taking his herd farther into the interior, we determined to ride back and look at it. After two days' hard riding, after dark on the second evening we reached the nearest station to it, and put up there for the night.

Chapter XIII. Twelve Months at a Stock Station.

Good cattle-run discovered — A knot of gully-rakers — Driving cattle across the country — Prodigality of working-men — A cattle-branding — Narrow escape — Snakes generally — Beginning a dairy-farm — Melancholy results of dishonesty

THE station we had reached was situated in one of the most solitary parts of the extreme verge of colonization. It was occupied by one miserable man herding as miserable a flock of sheep. The man himself seemed one of those beings sometimes met with in these situations who delight in being quite alone in the wilderness, without heart and without hope, obliged to do something for a livelihood, but grudging to do even that little; with scarcely enough life left in them to die, and yet, strange paradox, hoarding what they do get hold of with a miser's tenacity. If he had any food in the hut he took care not to let us see it, but suffered us to go to bed supperless, or rather to lie down so; for though we gave him some broad hints, he did not offer us so much as an old sheepskin to lay under us on the ground before the hut fire, where we stretched ourselves. As we had only a blanket apiece, and the hut floor was none of the driest, and our pipes had to serve us for both supper and breakfast, we were off by daylight for the horses, and in the saddle again by sun-rise. As a parting courtesy he gave us such a blundering direction to the next nearest station as led us full a dozen miles out of our way in finding it; and then we should not have succeeded but for giving up his directions and falling back on our own judgment by the lay of the country and the cattle tracks.

After a couple of hours' ride, however, we first made out the run we were in search of. It was all that the stockman who told us about it at Bong-Bong had described, — a fine tract of flats of good grass, open timbered, and stretching a good mile and a half along a creek side, with fine clear downs on the left backing the flats, and a steep stony ridge rising immediately from the farther bank of the creek to thick forest land, so peculiarly desirable for cattle in either very hot or very cold weather. About the middle there was an excellent broad easy hill for the hut and stock-yard; and just opposite, on the hilly side of the creek, a gap in the range leading up another tract of flat, with plenty of water and open

ground for a considerable distance.

After riding about for three-quarters of an hour, and satisfying ourselves that it was not in possession of any other herd, we made up our minds to occupy it. This decided on, we began to feel our hunger, for we had had nothing since noon on the previous day. It was, however; not till noon again that we succeeded in finding the nearest stock-station. Here we found a young Australian with his herd, and a few men, and were welcomed to the best his store afforded. Once more we turned our stock horses into the bush and set ourselves down for a couple of days' rest. Our entertainer appeared to have plenty of visitors of the stock-keeping class; and we could soon perceive that his doctrines on the point of cattle were of the most liberal complexion. As names are withheld, the description I shall give can injure no one's lawful interests, but may be a caution to new settlers; on that ground I shall not hesitate in giving it. — was very respectably connected, but having lived chiefly among stockmen he had imbibed the principles and habits so common among them; and, if he could find an unbranded beast in the bush, had no qualms about making it his own by clapping his brand on it. In this way, by a process technically called “gully-raking,” he had quadrupled the little herd his father gave him. He had an overseer after his own heart, a jolly daring fellow, for whom nothing in the shape of a horned beast was too heavy or too hot. And, besides this, he was surrounded on all sides with elements of a similar character. Besides himself and his overseer, there were a couple of Scotchmen, an Irishman, and several Englishmen located with stock around the spot, but occupying altogether a very extensive tract; and, as all these were only either overseers or merely stockmen, he reigned a sort of little king of lacklaw among them. His hut was the general rendezvous, and his keg always contained a glass of good rum. If any of the fraternity made a passing call they were treated to a half-pint: if they came and set in for a spree it was booked against them, and they paid for it when it amounted to the price of a good beast, — sometimes by one of their own, but generally by one of somebody else's. This was the single speck in his character: in every other point he was as trustworthy as most men. Evidently he did not want us to take up our run, preferring not to be intruded on; but as he came to be better acquainted with us his stiffness wore away. He saw we understood these things as well as he did himself; and concluded that, as we could not be “choked off,” it would be better to have us for friends than enemies. We however gave him to understand that we did not deal in his way; but that at the same time we did not feel it concerned us how he chose to act: that “live and let live” was our principle; and that as long as our own cattle were safe we should not trouble ourselves about other people's. And, indeed, this is the sort of tacit understanding that every stockholder in New South Wales has to adopt. If he do otherwise, his horses will be

lost, his cattle will disperse, his farm affairs generally will miscarry, and whatever he may suspect to be the agency, he will find no one hardy enough to come forward to assist him with any explicit information on the subject. But it is worth while to observe that an individual placed in the midst of such a gang, and keeping himself free alike from meddling on the one part against them, and from participation on the other, is in one of the securest of positions; for, in consideration of his forbearance, they will generally do him any service in their power, heading homeward his stray beasts, giving tidings of any lost ones, and a hundred other little offices of like kind.

Our run fixed on we rode straight across to the Bathurst country for our herd. It took us about a fortnight to gather them; but as we made no great show, merely heading them all up to a central place in the run daily, and not bringing them home to the stock-yard, we had only the customary calls of the various constables at our hut kept up. The Bathurst police did not as yet know of D——'s escape from the colony, and could not make sure of anything about the sale; and were not in a position legally to touch the herd, whether sold or unsold, from any sworn evidence yet in their possession. The man we had at the station was a trusty fellow, but we did not tell him any more than that we were endeavouring to see what cattle could be gathered; nothing in fact about our intention to move them. At length when we had got all the herd pretty well together, one evening after the usual call of the constable "to get a light of the pipe," we told our man we were going to move them next day, gave him all the things in the hut which we could not take away on two pack-bullocks that were among the cattle, and took him out with us to get the whole herd into the yard; which we did not do, however, till three hours after night-fall. But as it was moonlight, and we left the quiet cattle till the last, we succeeded to within five head. Another hour was employed in helping our man to "plant" (hide), for the sake of entire security, the things we had given him. We then made up a good fire, and passed the night at our ease. At the first glimpse of day the horses and pack-bullocks were saddled and the cattle turned out; and off we went, padlocking the door after us: so that if a constable came he would be no wiser, but only suppose us all out in the bush for the day. The only possibility of his making out that we were gone for good was from his looking at the stock-yard and observing the tracks; and if such had been the case we really cared very little about it. The worst the police could have done was by some arbitrary and illegal stretch of power to have given us a little trouble. Though really these arbitrary and illegal exercises of power by the police in New South Wales are so very common, and measures of redress are so very expensive and inconvenient, that one likes rather to avoid than give occasion for them. We had fine weather, and drove our "mob" wide of the settlement (Bathurst township): the man went three

days' stage with us and returned: we would gladly have taken him forward with us as our stockman, but he preferred sticking to the beds, blankets, cooking utensils, &c., which we had given him. Besides, though a good man in other respects, he was a great "Lushington;" and when these fellows once get disturbed from their regular work, and the notion of a "spree" gets into their head, they are never easy till they have their "break out" over, and take the road again to look for some other service, without a penny in their pockets, or, to use their own phrase, "without a feather to fly with;" or, again, "without a mag to bless themselves with." What this blessing themselves is unless it be getting another glass of rum, I never could divine. I have known scores of them spend 20*l.*, 30*l.*, 50*l.*, 70*l.* in Sydney in the course of a few days, and then, as in a sort of desperation, take to one of the great roads up the country, on which there is none of that hospitable entertainment that there is in the bush, and walk for two or three days right ahead without a bit to eat or a drop to drink except the water on the road side; sleeping at night a little way off in the bush, by a fire that some more fortunate traveller had left or themselves had kindled, for every working man carries his tinder-box for lighting his pipe. Such, it is very likely, was our stockman's next adventure. I never saw him again.

We took the cattle on by easy stages; and when we reached our new friend's station, he made us welcome, as is usual, to his yard; and lent us a man to herd them whilst we knocked up a rough bush-yard of our own, and got a stock-keeper. When cattle are driven from one part to another they generally try to make back to their old run; if not all, there are always some that do. Thus it becomes necessary to keep a man after them all day in the bush, till they settle, which is called "tailing them;" and also to yard them every night for some time. On coming into the yard they are counted as they go through the gate, which to do without mistakes, rushing in as they often do in a perfect *mêlée*, is considered one of the highest accomplishments of an expert stockman; as turning cattle in and out of a yard several times is a good deal of trouble. There are generally two to count, and if they differ, out must come the cattle again; it is therefore a very ticklish post to occupy; for the correct counter and the other hands never fail to pay the blunderer some very Flemish compliments: and if he do it often, though he be the master himself, he soon gets cashiered. After a few days I rode across (about forty miles) to a blacksmith, and got a brand with my initials made; and we had a regular gathering to rebrand the whole herd. All neighbouring stockmen, unless otherwise much occupied, assist at these times; both because the quantity of help can only be got thus, and because all want the same assistance in turn; and because it secures none of their own herd being branded by mistake; and lastly, because thus becoming acquainted with their neighbours' cattle, they can assist to keep them to their own proper

run, and head them home if they meet them going away. At these cattle musters, the cattle are first got into the stockyard, which is a large square enclosure of very strong posts properly half a rod apart, and 5, 6, 7, or even 8 feet high out of ground, and 2 or 3 feet in ground; connected by strong rails a couple or three inches thick, and from 4 to 12 inches broad. Some have three of these rails, some six, and a round cap rail over all, according to the various height of the posts. Outside the yard a strong wood fire is kindled, into which are put the iron brands, each having a handle long enough to diminish the heat, so that it can be held in the hand when red-hot at the letter end. These letter ends have generally the owner's initials; but some use circles, or squares, or triangles, or crosses, &c., &c., to brand with. One man, the best that can be found, then goes into the yard with a noose rope on the end of a long forked pole, the plain part of the rope running through his hand and trailing along the ground; the end, however, if long enough, being held outside the yard. This noose is then dexterously thrown over the beast's horns or round his neck, and a turn being taken round one of the round corner posts of the yard, the herd is driven toward that corner, and the slack of the rope taken in till the beast that is noosed is drawn taught up to the post. Then sometimes the animal is branded standing, his legs merely being confined by a leg rope held by men or fastened to another post; or else, if very wild and powerful, he is legged, and thrown, and tied fast, and then branded. When some of them get up, everybody must be off out of the yard. Some degree of nerve is required to untie a beast; the best way is to keep behind it, and out of the way. Some men will stand their ground, and some always nip up over the fence as speedily as they can. Generally the danger is more in appearance than in reality. Only now and then, when a real "Russian" happens to be among the mob, circumspection must positively be practised as well as bravery. I have known beasts break three strong ropes one after the other, charge everybody out of the yard, and then go over a six-rail fence at a flying leap, and get away unconquered to their wilds again. Outside the yard at these times is also set a table with the stock book, pens, and ink, and in that the cattle are registered, with their descriptions, as the brands are affixed.

When our branding was over, my mate and I set to and cut down a sufficient lot of saplings about twelve feet long, and of posts with a fork on the top and another in the middle for lodging the sapling rails on, to make a good large yard, on our own run. We made it on the hill side that I have already described as fit for that purpose. To this we added a snug little slab hut with a sod chimney. And thus in three months' time we were regular settlers; R—— adding his own, his father's, and his sister's cattle to mine. On driving them up the country, he brought with him a stockman, into whose charge the whole herd was now formally counted, at wages of 25*l.* per annum, and what rations he chose to use. In general

he was a very good stock-keeper, but, like our neighbours, very much given to gully-raking when he could get the opportunity; and it was not till he found we were in downright earnest with him, that he could be persuaded to keep from it whilst with us. This practice derives its name from the circumstance of cattle straying away from their own herds into the bush, and forming wild herds which chiefly congregate down in the wild grassy gullies of the mountains, where there are no farms; partly for the sake of the grass itself, and partly for the sake of the fine water there; and from their breeding there sometimes to a great extent, the gully-rakers eventually driving them out and branding all the young ones, and any others they can manage, with their own brands.

In the summer R—— had a very narrow escape of being bitten by a snake. As a caution, it may be worth relating, though as an incident it is of such common character that we did not think much of it. We had a hen sitting, and on the morning R—— considered the chickens ought to be coming out, he went to the old hollow log in which the hen had made her nest. Here at the mouth he found her running about, and cackling, and ruffling her feathers; and supposed she was calling out one or more of the chickens who had broken the shell, with her as she went to her morning meal. After waiting some time, as they did not come out, he stooped down and put his hand in, to bring them out of the nest; but the instant he began to feel over the top of the eggs, his hand touched what by the cold smooth velvet-like feeling he knew to be a large snake. Probably it was asleep, for it did not move. We got the mortising axe, and mortised a hole through the barrel of the log above the nest; and after some trouble got the reptile out. One of the dogs seized him, as he shot out, by the back of the neck, and flung him yards up into the air. He was a black snake, better than five feet long. The bite of this species is fatal, except under very prompt measures of abscission and good medical treatment. Considering the great number of snakes in all parts of the bush, it is quite astonishing so few persons meet their death by them. My own escapes have been almost innumerable, and so I suppose have been most other bushmen's. Now and then one hears of some very melancholy case of fatal effects. I do not know whether naturalists have collected specimens of all the species to be found in this country; but when collected they must form a singularly striking and disgusting spectacle. I have seen a snake which seemed full grown, not more than 8 inches long, and about the thickness of a stout tobacco pipe, of the most glittering silver gray, and a head like an oblong glass bead flattened. Then again there is that genus of the diamond snake which frequents the water, running to extreme length: on Paramatta bridge, many years ago, one was found 27 feet long. Between these range the black snake, which runs from 3 to 7 feet, and whose bite is deadly; the brown snake, commonly found from 3 to 4 feet, said to be even more venomous than the black;

the copper-coloured snake, a very long, thin, and beautifully coppered species, whether venomous or not in a high degree, I cannot say; it is not very common. I saw no more than two of them in the whole period of my residence. Besides these there are gray, yellow, green, and carpet snakes; indeed you scarcely pass a summer without seeing several new sorts. The reader perhaps will feel it difficult of belief, but I should certainly not withhold the fact — that I have known settlers plough up as many snakes in ploughing ten acres of ground as would fill a peck measure; and I was once shown a tract of bush road by a fellow-traveller, in travelling along which some time previously he assured me he had seen upwards of twenty snakes of various species. It is a circumstance which elicits a universal expression of surprise among the colonists that, snakes being so common as they are, so few persons should be bitten. Sometimes they make away when they are disturbed, at others again they do not; so that it is difficult to determine whether there is in them a general and natural dread of man. Taking all I have observed together I should incline to say there is, but that it is modified by circumstances, at times so much as entirely to disappear. For instance, a snake may be provoked by blows to fly at his assailant; again, a friend once told me that a black snake hunted him away from her nest a considerable distance along the road, and he believed would have overtaken and bitten him if he had not had a charge of shot in his gun with which he turned and blew her all to pieces as she came on. This I can state as certain, because I have experienced it — that the human eye, if once it can catch the snake's, has the power of fixing it and so holding the animal till it is withdrawn.

To return. One of our next occupations was that of putting up or rather down a good-sized dairy. To ward off the excessive heat it is customary to dig out a large hole in the ground, one of the sides being aslant instead of perpendicular for the entrance. This hole is covered over with planks, and this again still further by sheets of bark, to keep any dust or dirt from falling through on the cream; and the whole roof is then covered over with the earth that has been dug out, and is rendered thoroughly solid by beating. At the entrance is placed a door which is padlocked, and all round inside the milk is ranged in the keelers on benches of wood or embankments of earth left for that purpose in the original construction. We dug ours horizontally into the steep part of the hill. We soon found we could milk about 40 head; and as they were very good cows, it became necessary to take on another man, for one man cannot milk more than about 10 or 12 cows, and get done in anything like good time for the cattle to go out again; it quite destroys cattle to keep them in the milking-yard till the heat of the day. The man we took on was a good dairyman: his wages 30*l.* per annum. In the after part of the day R—— and I worked at getting the stuff for a proper stock yard of split stringy bark; having our own arrangement for the proportions each was to take of the

expense correspondently with the proportions of our cattle to each other. Amusingly enough I recollect that, as if by a tacit understanding, the old man's share and M——'s were alike forgotten to be mentioned. R—— took, I suppose, the old man's share of the business, and I M——'s share. Nor do I recollect till some years afterwards ever hearing anything about the share of the cost equivalent to these two good people's share in the cattle; yet they got their share of the gain. The fact was that, in my own case, I had so identified M——'s interests with mine by this time, that it was an actual oversight; but I rather think my mate's was a tacit voluntary acquiescence in my oversight than any positive oversight of his own. However, be that as it may, we sent in a few months about 17 cwt. of butter to Sydney; and the *gross* proceeds were divided among us all in exact proportion to each individual's lot of cows milked. I do not think I could have been much in pocket by the speculation. But I never calculate minutely in each separate transaction — I rather like to look at the total aspect of things. And here I had nothing to dissatisfy me. Through M——'s good feeling toward me and her ability, I had made a bargain which I considered fully doubled in value the capital I laid out. The great step of giving up sawing was taken; and certainly none too soon, for my constitution was breaking under its incessant and severe toils. We had made ourselves a little homestead from which we were not likely to be disturbed by the advancing tide of settlement for some years to come; and might even then, if we chose, buy it ourselves. And lastly it left me full leisure for planning the application of the amount of capital still at my command.

At this period we had a pretty practical proof how much the best policy is honesty. One of the Scotchmen I have already named as being concerned in cross transactions with cattle, was detected in driving a whole herd of cattle, branded and unbranded, from a run betwixt Hunter's River and Bathurst. He had actually got them past Bathurst settlement when the brother of the owner, having a farm between the New Country and Bathurst, met him, and knew the cattle instantly. There was a magistrate's farm not half a mile distant, to whom he went, and unhesitatingly made affidavit that they were stolen, which he could safely do, as he knew the state of his brother's affairs did not admit of his selling anything at the time. The Scotchman and his drove were followed and taken back; the beasts to the pound and the man to the gaol. He was committed and tried at Sydney, but by some flaw in the proceedings acquitted. But the affair was his death. He had married a young native girl a couple of years before, and they had one child. He was much attached to them both; in fact, but for these wild habits, was a good husband and father. So much indeed was he beloved by his wife, that she went to Sydney with him when he was committed for trial, and went every day to the gaol to attend him. But anxiety about the issue of the

trial, and the cold of the gaol and close confinement instead of horse exercise, aided no doubt by his own former free habits of life, brought on consumption; or rather aggravated a cough he had had for some months previously from sleeping out in the wet when intoxicated, into more rapid consumption. And he was scarcely up the country again when, to our great astonishment, the news came one day that he was dead. He died sitting on the ground at play with the child. He had no idea that he was even in danger, and had left off taking medicine directly he got out of gaol, saying, he was sure he should quickly be well; and his wife had so little idea of it that she was gone for a bucket of water at the time. We made him a rude coffin, and buried him on the side of the hill where he had lived. His wife went down the country to her friends; and for a time there was a little check on the nefarious system which all agreed had brought him to his grave, and of which his comrades could not ride past his lonely burial-place without being reminded.

Chapter XIV. The New Settler.

His arrival; character; history; equipment — Great mistakes — Eventual ruin — Directions and cautions for new settlers — Account of best method of commencing a new farm — Rates of wages — Stock and stores necessary to be purchased and taken to the spot on first settling

TOWARD the end of the summer the tedium of one of the long, bright, cloudless days was broken, about three o'clock in the afternoon, by the arrival of a dray and party; and one of the first acts of the party was the informing us that they had arrived with the purpose of becoming our next-door neighbours. On a splendid blood-horse sat ———, late of the ——— regiment of foot; he was the new settler. Originally of large fortune, he had spent above thirty years in the army, during which period most of his property had melted from his grasp, through a mere thoughtless indifference to everything except amusement. Having married at an advanced period of life a lady of habits if possible even more thriftless than his own, he had come to the resolution, a few months before the time of which I write, to sell his commission, and with his remaining funds to become a settler. We understood that he had a little family rising around him; and it must no doubt have been very painful to a man of his benevolent temperament to see them growing up with prospects so much narrower than his own education had taught him to look upon as desirable. But of all the men I ever met with who should have become settlers, ——— — was certainly the last. It is from the errors and mishaps of such individuals that an ill name has been often bestowed on the colony at large; their incapacity has been transformed into defects of the country. Now, while I feel bound on the one part to point out most faithfully any circumstances in the past conduct of affairs in New South Wales that render these colonies objectionable as places of emigration to free British people, I cannot but acknowledge myself equally bound, on the other, to show the large and unquestionable natural capacities of these countries, and so rescue them from a disrepute they do not deserve. In furtherance of this object, I shall on the present occasion give the reader a sketch of what Mr. ——— — and his party did, and then another of what they ought to have done, from the day of their arrival till the final

ruin and renunciation of the undertaking.

Mr. —— — was a perfectly well-bred man, in short a gentleman in every sense of the word, in manners, feelings, and opinions; but he was entirely lacking in independence of character. Whatever you proposed to him he did directly. Directly he was invited to come in, he dismounted, left his horse standing at the door, and entered. When the only chair we had was placed for him he sat down in it; and when the rum-bottle and a tin pot were set on the table beside him, he poured out and drank; and just what he did this first ten minutes he did all the next ten months. If a brother settler advised him to do this thing or that thing in the morning, he did it; and if a government man advised him in the afternoon to undo it, he undid it.

With his dray there was a party of no less than eleven men, and all those who were doing anything at all were giving orders; the rest had lit their pipes at the black gin's fire that was smouldering a few yards away from our hut-door, or were dispersed into one or other of our men's huts. He had also been persuaded to hire an overseer; for which office, with his usual tact, he had selected an old broken-down constable, of whom the men made all manner of game for his imbecility, and no less heartily hated for his former occupation; whilst he, on his part, let them do just as they liked, on the principle of making as few enemies as he could, and so retaining his situation by force of the men's good will instead of the master's. At the station they camped at the night before, Mr. —— — had purchased for his party a fine hindquarter of fresh beef; this had been thrown on the top of the other stores in the dray under a blazing sun, and there it lay till the sun went down; the consequence was, that by noon next day it was fit only for the dogs. It must have weighed somewhere about 160 or 170 lbs., and of this about 30 or 40 lbs. were probably used by the party; the rest fell to the share of the blacks and the dogs. The same havoc took place with all the other stores. The men asked, or rather demanded, whatever their prodigality suggested; and whatever they asked the overseer gave. If one of them fixed a covetous eye upon a black fellow's opossum-skin cloak, he gave his whole week's tea, sugar, and tobacco for it; and if that were not enough to secure his wish, then the week's beef and flour were added. "What odds? there was plenty more where that came from;" and "Our cove never allowances his men, lad!" When bed-time came it appeared that our new neighbour had neither bed nor blanket. A first-rate palliasse had been supplied to the dray for him by his agent who made up his order for stores in Sydney, and with it blankets befitting; but on the road they had camped one night at a water-hole in a flat, where there was a sly grog-seller squatted. Here some of the knowing ones of the party agreed to "kick the governor" for "his footing up the country." Of course "the governor" acceded; and while he was in the hut paying for "a gallon of rum among all hands," his

bed and blankets vanished. Every individual of the party agreed in assuring him it must be the blacks who had stolen it; but every individual of the party who knew anything at all was fully aware that the sly grog man had had it; and most of them, but particularly the bullock-driver's own private friends, had an equally clear notion that, if the sly grog man was the purchaser, their own bullock-driver was the seller. The rest of the journey Mr. —— had to content himself with a dirty bed and blanket which one of the party gave up to him. It should in fairness be remarked, that where there is one man base enough to commit such a theft under such circumstances there are scores that would scorn to do so.

Next morning Mr. —— went to inspect his land. In front of our hut ran the creek that constituted one of our side lines; his adjacent side line was the opposite bank of the same creek: upward and downward along his side of the creek, and almost close to it, extended a small ridge, and in this ridge immediately facing our hut was a gap; and standing in that gap and looking forward, the eye was directed up a long flat tract with higher ground on each side, and divided down the middle by a chain of fine water-holes. In fact it was one of the adjuncts of our run which we had hoped would remain for years undiscovered and unappropriated. Travellers in search of land naturally supposed it to be part of our run, being so near our hut and stockyard. It had become the choice of the present owner through the information and advice of a young friend he had in the surveyor's department, who had observed it when charting in this part of the colony, and had taken notice that although so near to our farm it was still not a part of it.

In the course of the day they crossed the creek and moved up through the gap (ours no more) to the foot of one of the hills on their own run, at about a quarter of a mile from us. It was a beautiful spot, in fact just such a one as, with good judgment and persevering energy, would have made a perfect homestead. The water-hole that just there occupied the centre must have had a superficies of nearly half an acre, and was proportionately deep; and the water itself was excellent. At the same place the hills on one side (the side on which they had camped) fell back in a large semicircle, making a flat of 35 or 40 acres; the land being of the very best quality, a dark, almost impalpable loam. The timber was both small and far apart. The party now got out a new tent they had in the dray, and no sooner was it up, than in crowded master, men, strangers, blacks, dogs and all; but it was not till we urged it upon Mr. —— that he thought of having his stores brought in and stowed in safety under his own eye. For several days there was not the slightest attempt at work. The individual at whose cost all this waste of time was taking place was really the prime exemplar of it; very fond of fowling, and a remarkably fine shot, he used to take himself off among the hills for the whole day, with a couple of the men and his dogs; nor when he came back at night

was he heard even so much as to inquire what had been going forward. The eleven men were, the overseer, a pair of fencers, a rough carpenter, a stockman, a hut-keeper, a sort of private servant or groom, a bullock driver and his mate, and a couple of hands for general work; and it really was astonishing how imperceptible, after the lapse of some weeks, was the aggregate labour of all these men. The overseer, next to the master, was the leading spirit of the confusion which reigned paramount at —— ville; for the pitiable scene had no less imposing a name before it was three weeks old. He had one of those geniuses which roll in perpetual change from one object to another without the least order or connexion; his acts were arranged according to no course or purpose; they were the simple offspring of a mind busy without having laid down to itself what to be busy about. The old man was in perpetual motion; perpetually talking, here, there, everywhere; but he had never got further at night than he was in the morning. The pair of fencers had been met with and hired coming up the country, and were a couple of lazy scoundrels, who it turned out, on their going to work, did not even know how to keep their own saw; indeed, from the way they went about falling their timber, I much doubt whether they had ever done a month's work at splitting in their lives. A real bushman may be always known by the instinctive exactitude with which he hits the true fall of his trees: these chaps, so far as I happened to see their stumps, never set their saw in with regard to the true fall of their tree in half-a-dozen instances, but either got their saw pinched, or let their tree split up the whole length of the barrel before they could get it cut through. After I saw a few of their performances in this way, I was in constant expectation, till the time they bolted, of hearing that some tree had come down and crushed them. Falling with the saw, and especially on a hill-side as they were, is an art requiring at once so much judgment, and coolness, and activity, as not to admit of trifling. The number of men that are killed by trees in this way is almost incredible. Such, however, was not the lot of either of this worthy couple, at least as long as they remained at —— ville. Mr. —— let them get about 45*l.* in his debt, between ready money, rations, and tools. Their work, on being gathered up and drawn in from the bush, was not worth above 5*l.* or 6*l.* altogether. If they had been workmen they should have been out of debt, and have had about another 45*l.* to take in the same time. The reader will think it a singular class to have an existence, but I can assure him that it is a real though not common one, viz., men who go about the country taking jobs of various kinds without any knowledge of the work, and then, when they have had a good rest and got all they can, running away. I became acquainted with several of these fellows who, so far as could be ascertained, there was every reason to believe, made regular circuits of the country; just keeping away from this or that part for a period proportionate to the scandalousness of what

they had done: and when they thought all was blown over, visiting it again. The next on the list is the carpenter. He was an oldish man, of whom not much could be expected, but he had succeeded in striking a bargain with Mr. — for 2*l.* a-week; 30*s.* would have been plenty for him: however, he was after all by far the most efficient man, and with the help of the hut-keeper, who was also a tolerably industrious man, succeeded in putting up for Mr. — a very fair hut; but he took nearly three months about it: three months which should have been very differently employed. The two hands engaged for general work were sent off soon after the arrival of the party for a flock of sheep about a thousand strong, which Mr. — had bought of a settler in the Bathurst country; or rather which had been bought for him by his Sydney agent. The price given was most exorbitant: such indeed as it is impossible to believe that a shrewd man of business like Mr. Auctioneer — would or could give, unless under force of some understanding of particular personal aptitude. When the sheep arrived they did not turn out to be any great things as to either fleece or frame, and upwards of forty dropped on the road; besides which they had had a rush by native dogs one night, and so lost by the slaughter or otherwise nearly fifty more. Lastly, there was a lot of old ewes among them which it was evident to any experienced eye could not weather the coming winter; so that really for his thousand sheep Mr. — got home only a little more than eight hundred and fifty. The men who were sent for them too were neither of them shepherds, but only common working hands; which was another great mistake. Probably if the flock had been in charge of a good shepherd, the rush would have been guarded against and avoided; and such a man, when he found his flock dropping with over driving, would have slackened the rate he was travelling at, to one at which all the sheep could keep up. The dead loss here alone, *i.e.* by the native dogs and over-driving, may be reckoned at least at 100*l.* or 120*l.* Again, the whole flock was bought at full 5*s.* a-head too high, making 250*l.* more. Lastly, for the price reduced thus by '5*s.* there ought to have been no old sheep at all, whereas there were nearly a hundred; so that altogether in this one item Mr. — threw away about 400*l.* 1 So much for the sheep and the shepherds. When I say of the stockman, the groom, the bullock-driver, and his mate, that their duties are such in themselves as make no show in a new farm, I shall have noticed the whole stock of labour, and what does it amount to? In ten months' time from their occupying the farm, there was one of the sides of a paddock fence put up, a tolerable hut for Mr. — erected, all the bullocks but one lost, great quantities of stores borrowed from neighbouring settlers, which had to be paid for eventually by cash, 400*l.* had been thrown away in the sheep speculation; between the original hands and subsequent ones, there was above 250*l.* of bad debts on the books; and Mr. — had purchased and actually paid for a

herd of cattle to the extent of 1500*l.* which he never saw mustered, and of which the greatest part were so wild that their original owner had never been able to get them into a stockyard for seven years before, and which he was now selling because they were so wild. In fact they were running into all herds, where the unbranded ones were more frequently retained and appropriated than separated and restored. This part of the bargain might almost be set down as dead loss. And thus, in ten months' time, was there an end to the sum of nearly 2000*l.*

I now proceed to place in contrast with this dismal tale a statement of the course which a new settler should pursue; and I am confident no man of ordinary talents, possessing a few hundred pounds, and guiding himself in its outlay and management as I suggest, could fail to realize in a few years the return of a handsome fortune.

1. I know of nothing in which the axiom of "More haste worse speed" is so true as in the approach of a new settler to his undertaking. My advice to him would be on no account to neglect, in the first place, a tour of inspection. He should put his knapsack on his back and penetrate to the farthest limit of colonization. He should travel as unpretendingly as possible; up the country every hut door is open to the traveller. If he likes to make the lower orders any little present of tobacco, &c., it will generally be accepted; but if not offered it will not be asked for — indeed it is seldom looked for. By thus stopping a good deal at the labouring men's huts he will hear the prices of labour, of stock, of land, and of goods, from individuals not interested in deceiving him; whereas I am afraid, if he trust for his information on those points to landowners, he will often be misled. I cannot deny that it is much too common a practice with old stockholders to try to sell refuse or other stock to new-comers on very unfair terms. However, on the other hand, it will be well enough to correct the men's views by afterwards hearing the masters'. But the conversation that passes in the labouring men's huts, when the pipes are lit, after tea in the evening, is certainly both the most varied and the soundest as to facts. They have no pecuniary interest in the matters they talk about, but each relating his observation and experience in different parts of the colony, incites others to do the same. If anything is exaggerated, there never wants some one able and ready to correct it. On such a journey the new settler will often be disgusted by the conduct and expressions of individuals; but the general tone of what he hears will amply repay him. In short, he will *learn* more in one three months thus occupied than in seven years spent in the usual routine of life among those of his own station. That three months I would earnestly urge him, as he values his subsequent success, not to omit taking advantage of.

2. The next general principle I would lay down is this: — To make his undertaking, whenever it does commence, as much as possible *a series of experiments*, rather than *one experiment*. Let him go on by degrees,

feeling his way. The banks will give him very high interest for his ready money — at least double what he would get in England; and up-country living really costs next to nothing. After he is well settled in a hut on his land, his personal charges for food can hardly be above 15*l.* or 18*l.*, per year; and, having no rent to pay, clothing need be his only other fixed expense; and on that again a bushman seldom spends more than 10*l.* a year. Well then, so situated, he should lay out, in the first place, a third or so of his capital. As that seems to prosper, he may go on to a second fraction, correcting any error and supplying any deficiencies in his second experiment, which he may by this time have detected in his first. By and bye, with added experience and security, he may complete his purchases.

3. Another advantage the new settler should by no means set light by, his credit. For there is really not any such difference between the prices he must give in ready cash and those he may give on credit when purchasing his stock as to warrant the nervousness which some persons feel about taking credit. In fact, there is a perfectly definite feeling in the minds of large stockholders, that they would not think of turning away a good bill for 500*l.* at twelve months for a flock of sheep or herd of cattle, though for the same flock or herd they would “rather of the two” have the 500*l.* in cash. But when the new settler, by merely pressing the point firmly, can turn the 40*l.* interest of the sum into his own concern, he would be very ill fitted for business if he neglected to do so. Such a man had better not begin business in New South Wales.

Again, another and very important advantage is this: any man that has 1000*l.* in one of the Sydney banks will readily get credit for 3000*l.* worth of stock; and, if he have become sufficiently versed in the customs of the colony, he may get his stock on terms by which he really clears the purchase money as it becomes due. Now, although I should be backward to advise the adoption of such a course of speculation to its fullest extent, and in all cases I think it may very properly be suggested for adoption according to circumstances and capacities, in general it would be a dangerous course: few men are cool headed and firm minded enough to resist the exciting solicitude of such a position: fewer still, at the time they become settlers, are sufficiently sound judges of the chances of the case to make a safe bargain in it; and fewer still meet with a vender into whose hands, in making such an arrangement, it would be desirable to fall. Therefore, on the whole, I do not give this 3rd item of directions for general use. They who use it will consider that they do so on their own responsibility.

4. On settling, and always afterwards, till your circumstances and arrangements have become such as to place you beyond all danger, look after every thing yourself; join in all the farm operations yourself; it both ensures their being well done, and makes you so acquainted with them

that you can instruct others.

5. If your concerns are extensive enough to permit your having an overseer, take care to have a good one; if not, get a better sort of working hand, and give him 5*l.* or 10*l.* a year higher wages. An adviser of some sort you must have, or you will fall into mistakes, often of a very expensive and pernicious character: and to have an ignorant, weak-minded man in such a capacity is worse than to have none; for your own mistakes alone will be preferable to your own and his together.

6. Treat your hands rather better than worse than your neighbours. The damage to a settler's concerns that arises from the neglect of his people (the intentional, revengeful neglect) is beyond all estimate.

So much for matters of general conduct. To them may be added these directions upon the more immediate business of settling a farm: —

1. The outskirts of the colony are the best tracts for occupation; the land is less picked; the expenses of fencing, &c. do not come so suddenly on you; and there is much more unoccupied land adjacent to you which you get the benefit of for some years. In making your selection, see to it that you combine high and low lands; the high for wet seasons, the low for times of drought. Take care to have a constant supply of water. It should be either a creek or river, or holes that never dry in any season. I have known persons sit down at what seemed good water-holes even in a dry time, and put up extensive buildings and fence in paddocks; and then when a herd of cattle and a couple of flocks of sheep came to drink out of the reservoirs for a few months, find that it was a supply formed entirely by superficial water-courses without any subterranean increase; and be compelled, after submitting to drink mud for some weeks and to see scores of their stock die, to abandon all their erections and move away in search of a site for a new homestead. Lastly, take care that adjacent, at least if not on your own land best, as no subsequent comer can then take it; but if not on your land, at least let it be in the mountains where nobody is likely to purchase. You may venture to draw your split stuff and sawn stuff five or six miles, but farther would be inconvenient.

2. Having chosen your farm, buy a dray and team (say five or six bullocks) near Sydney and load it with necessaries. But for any future lot of stores you need from Sydney, pay for the carriage by one of the public carriers. Your own dray will be for several years in full occupation at home. Besides, not one bullock-driver in ten is fit to be trusted with your team by himself in a three months' trip. The carriers barely get a living, looking after their own teams; the loss of bullocks and wear and tear of drays, and delay by floods and one thing and another, being very heavy. Of course your not looking after your own team must do the work at a great disadvantage.

3. Hire in Sydney to go up with your dray, a bullock-driver; a night watchman of the bullocks, who is called the bullock-driver's mate; an

overseer, who is to take charge from the beginning of the stores and the conduct of things generally under yourself; a hutkeeper; a pair of splitters; and a single hand for general work — seven hands in all. If you are not going far out, you need take only the bullock-driver and his mate, the overseer, and a single hand for general work, and get the rest on your arrival. But whatever men you take out of Sydney, have references as to character: on no account hire the overseer, the bullock-driver, and his mate without the closest and most satisfactory examination.

4. Buy your sheep and cattle if possible of your neighbours; if not, of some other person of known probity. An individual who is to meet you face to face for years will not be nearly so likely to take you in as a settler of some distant part. The same may be said about the purchase of your horse and working bullocks. There is also this additional reason — the less distance your stock have to be driven to your farm the fewer of them will be left on the road.

To complete this little set of maxims for the new settler, there needs now merely, first, a list in their order of the various operations that are to be proceeded with on arrival at the farm, and second, a list of the articles with which the settler should load his team on leaving Sydney for the interior.

1. Order of operations: —

Immediately you reach your land, traverse it and select the site for your homestead; and let that be a spot a little elevated.

Set your spare hands or any blacks there may be about to strip you forty or fifty sheets of bark. Of these have two tent huts made; the one for yourself and servant, the other for the men. One or at the utmost two days should suffice to construct two good snug weather-tight tent huts.

Next get up a moderate sized stockyard, say five rods by six. Let it be very strong; and let it contain milking bales. On a new farm nothing is more indispensable than the stockyard; without it there is great difficulty in yoking the bullocks; there is no place to confine a beast till wanted, and it is necessary for milking bush cows. Another convenience it must contain is what is called “the gallows” for hauling up a beast that has been slaughtered, to take the hide off. After the stockyard, you should get a small paddock of ten acres fenced in, and while the fencing is going on other hands should be employed in clearing the timber. Plough it as speedily as possible; let it lie for a couple of months, if time permits; and then cross plough it and put in seven or eight acres of wheat, one of maize for your horse, and another of potatoes and garden seeds.

Next have a couple of yards of good 6 feet paling erected for your sheep (if you have sheep); and if you begin with more than two flocks, have ready also, before purchasing them, a lot of hurdles. But on no account buy the sheep till you have hurdles or yards sufficient for their safe keeping. I have known the most lamentable losses to accrue from

the use of insecure bough yards. Sheep ought never to be brought to a station till there is a secure defence for them from the native dogs. In the same manner if you buy horned cattle, have your stockyard first ready; and yard them every night till they get thoroughly reconciled to the run, sending out with them all day a couple of men.

Having got thus far you may leave your splitters to put you up a better, permanent, roofed hut while you go away to make your purchases of live stock. This hut should be strong; as you will have to appropriate one room of it to the purpose of a store. You must determine its construction according to the locality. In some mountainous districts, the winter is severe enough to require that every interstice be stopped; whereas in other parts you might live out of doors all the year round.

The next thing will be a shearing shed and a wool press. It will be best not to go to great expense with these at first. A common barked shed, of sufficient dimensions, boarded along one side for the line of shearers, will suffice. The next erection should be a small barn; and the next a dairy of a size according as to whether you at once commence a dairy farm or not.

With these accommodations you may consider yourself snug — without them your business will be one round of mishap, vexation, and loss. Rough buildings of split stuff sides and bark roof are paid for at the rate of 10*s.* per foot, measuring one side and one end.

A good three-rail fence may be paid for at the rate of 2*s.* 3*d.* a rod; if more rails, the price increases.

Felling and burning off vary according to the closeness, size, and species of the timber.

Ploughing you ought to get done at 20*s.* an acre.

Reaping varies according to the crop.

Shearing also varies according to the size, fleece, &c., and the locality.

An overseer of any value cannot be got under 40*l.* or 50*l.* a year.

A good bullock-driver will cost you 30*l.* to 35*l.*, and you had better give such a one 5*l.* or even 10*l.* extra than have a man whose bad management will kill two or three bullocks at 10*l.* a head in his twelvemonth's driving.

Shepherds also of any value are not easily met with under 25*l.* or 30*l.* per year. If they are to go far out they will require more.

Hutkeepers' wages are 5*l.* a year less than the wages of shepherds.

Common working hands in the well-settled parts of the colony vary from 20*l.* to 25*l.* per annum; at the out-stations they get about 5*l.* a year more.

The Blacks should be kindly treated, as they are of great service in stripping bark, showing new runs, tracking lost bullocks and sheep, &c. &c.; moreover kind treatment will be found the great secret of restraining their tendency to furtive and vindictive depredations. At the same time,

with kindness must be mingled a manifestation of the most perfect fearlessness, but it should not be mere parade and bravado. They are very quick at detecting the true feeling that dictates an action. Arms should always be ready, and securely kept, and they should know it too.

I subjoin finally a list of the articles with which it will be advisable to load the dray on proceeding to take possession of a new farm: —

1 ton flour.

* Enough meat for the journey: on arrival beasts for slaughter can be purchased of neighbours.

4 or 5 cwt. salt.

1 cwt. soap (or 1/2 cwt.)

*2 chests tea (1 chest).

*7 or 8 cwt. sugar (4 cwt.).

*3 cwt. tobacco (1 cwt.).

2 frying-pans.

1 doz. tin quart pots.

1 doz. „, pint „,

Several iron pots.

1 doz. pocket knives.

1 doz. tin plates.

1/2 doz. tin dishes.

1 doz. blankets.

Bed-ticking.

3 or 4 doz. check shirts.

2 or 3 doz. woollen ditto.

2 or 3 doz. pair of boots.

Jackets, of sorts,

Trousers „,

Needles, thread, pipes.

3 cross-cut saws: a 6-ft., a 6 1/2, a 7-ft.

1 pit saw, fine space, 7-ft. plate.

Tiller and box for ditto.

Cross-cut and pit saw files.

1/2 doz. best falling axes.

2 lopping axes.

2 mortising axes.

1 broad axe.

1 heavy adze.

1 light ditto.

Chest of carpenter's tools.

Grindstone and frame.

1/2 doz. padlocks, hasps, and staples.

* Several bags of nails of sizes (100 lbs., of sorts).
Fire-arms, powder and ball.
4 or 5 buckets.
30 or 40 fathoms of good 1/2 in. rope.
A small churn.
1/2 doz. spades.
1/2 doz. heavy breaking-up hoes.
* A small but very strong plough and tackle (may be left till second load).
* 1/2 doz. reaping hooks (ditto).
* 1 doz. sheep-shears (ditto).
Wool-bagging, and packing needles and twine (ditto).
A good tarpaulin.
Paper, pens, ink, &c.

This may be taken as a general guide to the articles necessary. Possibly an odd necessary or two may have escaped me. But the eye of any practised person on the spot will detect the omission for you. The prices that should be given for the various articles may be immediately ascertained by reference to the 'Price Current' daily published in the Sydney papers. If the team should not be equal to the draught of the load (which may be ascertained by estimating the weights, and inquiring of the driver what he considers the strength of the bullocks equal to), the items marked thus * may be reduced, and the deduction left for future carriage. Meat can always be purchased on the road. Tobacco is an article in great request, so that the quantity stated should be as little diminished as possible.

Thus furnished, the new settler may commence with a confidence of having the entire machinery of his undertaking in his own hands.

Here, as in all else, he will find it most advantageous to cultivate the goodwill of both servants and neighbours. He will for years find himself occasionally at a loss for both counsel and assistance. But equity, liberality, and kindness to others, will in almost all cases ensure him a similar return from them — so that no man who will observe, inquire, and reflect, can fail. And such being the case, it seems very much to be deprecated that this fine colony should have its reputation injured by the sloth or craziness of individuals who carried the elements of their ruin within themselves.

Chapter XV. A Cattle-Racket.

Explanation of the term — Objectionable and mischievous conduct of the settlers towards the working-classes — Iniquity of the land-regulations — Arrest of the author on a charge of cattle-stealing — Escape — Two nights' journey through the bush — Magnificent tract of country — Routine of life at the far-out stock-stations — Author lost, and nearly starved in the Kindness of the blacks — Rendezvous reached

THE term at the head of this chapter was originally applied in New South Wales to the agitation of society which took place when some wholesale system of plunder in cattle was brought to light. It is now commonly applied to any circumstance of this sort, whether greater or less, and whether really springing from a felonious intent or accidental. About the middle of winter it came to my turn to play a part in one of these affairs. I must admit that I write, as indeed I always think, of this business with no little indignation and disgust. Had I been really guilty in the matter, or could the gentleman (a magistrate of the territory) to whom I owe this piece of ill treatment be supposed to have thought me so, or were mine a single case, the exception to the general rule, I admit that it would be both unreasonable and unjust for me to lay such stress upon it. But when, on the contrary, it is certain that this is only the common treatment which the labouring and lower class in New South Wales sustain at the hands of the upper, and when not only, as the reader will perceive, I must have been entirely guiltless of any dishonest intention, but that Mr. —, my prosecutor (a magistrate — and there are many such), must have felt convinced of it in his own mind, I am sure every right-minded person will say that too much notice cannot be attracted to a state of society where such things take place, if its scene is indeed to become the arena for British emigration on any extensive scale. The fact is, the upper classes of New South Wales settlers have so long been used to deal with the poor wretched convicts, and to tell them they have no rights, and to taunt and mock them if they talk about seeking redress for any ill treatment, that the habit and the feeling at the bottom of it have become rooted in their very nature; and they would wish to treat free people in the same way. “Is not the free labourer here for our

convenience — as a substitute for convicts who can no longer be found in sufficient numbers to supply us? What more profit is one to us than the other? Why should we treat one better than the other?” Such is positively the feeling. And peculiarly suited as these colonies are for the settlement of the surplus labouring population of the British Islands, this feeling has become an effectual bar to both the welfare of the class that might be benefited and the advancement of the colony. For this same feeling extends itself to the land question, and has poisoned all the information and the counsel which the higher settlers and the council of the colony and the governors have given to the British government at home. Thousands of pounds are now spent in drinking, &c., in New South Wales, by the labouring class, which, if small portions of land were to be had, they would lay out in its purchase. But such a practice the upper class of settlers universally regard as detrimental to their interests, and therefore an infringement of their rights; as if no man had a right to land but themselves. However, as I mean to notice this point more particularly hereafter, I shall here merely remark that the same supercilious intolerance pervades the whole feeling with which the upper class in New South Wales generally regard the lower, and is the cause of such grievous injuries to the free labourer as often entirely to counterbalance the advantages which emigration otherwise offers.

My own case was exactly this: — the inspection that I made of D——'s cattle in buying them was of course very cursory; many of them, in riding about the run, we met with but once; and there were some which I was obliged to take unseen and by the stock-book, and trusting entirely to the stockman for making them good. In gathering them to drive away to our own run, two beasts, a cow and a steer, belonging to Mr. ——, were mistaken for two of those I had bought. They were beasts exactly answering the description in the stockbook I received with my purchase, and the brands had partly grown out and partly run. Under some circumstances, when the hair is not only burnt off by the brand, but the skin much injured, the brand, as it is called, “runs together.” The cicatrix, instead of being of the form of the letter of the brand, is perhaps nothing more than a large indiscriminate scar of which you can make nothing. And when beasts are branded very young, as these two had been, there is added to this the still further obliteration of growth, and partial reformation of skin and hair; and thus a brand often becomes entirely unintelligible. So it was here; the stockman had allowed these two beasts of Mr. ——'s to get among mine, leaving my corresponding two behind. If anything, I had the best of it, for my two head were not as good beasts as Mr. ——'s by at least a pound. I am fully aware that every person who understands cattle and is acquainted with the customs of New South Wales will acquit me of design in the matter, and shall therefore take no further trouble to vindicate myself. The fact was that I made the mistake

in fetching them in, through the brands being run, and their being so like the two I took them for; whilst the stockman passed them through the hurry in which we started, leaving him time only to inspect the cattle by their marks and not their brands. However, it seems that Mr. —— no sooner heard from his own stockman that two of his own cattle were missing, and two of mine corresponding to them were on the run, than it instantly struck him where his own were gone, and he as instantly set about finding where I had taken my cattle to, and having done so, procured a warrant and sent it after me.

Night had set in, and we were all sitting round the hut fire smoking after tea. It had rained hard all day, and we were enjoying the change from working out in the wet to a warm hut and blazing fire. The rain still continued, and the wind came blustering through every cranny that was left unstopped. All of a sudden our whole tribe of dogs flew barking and yelling toward one end of the hut, where we directly perceived they had somebody at bay. Some voices shouted to us to come and take the dogs off or they would be shot. On going out and bringing the parties in, we found them to be an officer of the mounted police with his men and an old constable. This officer we knew as a perfect tyrant wherever he dared to exercise his power. He had been long notorious as a bushranger hunter, and it is said that he was not very particular whether he took his prey dead or alive. He asked for me by name, and told the constable to take me into custody. I knew I had done nothing illegal, intentionally, and did not feel a great deal of uneasiness; still I saw much unpleasantness in being in gaol several months, until the trials came on. It took me very little reflection to resolve to get away if I could, as I knew I could surrender and take my trial, if necessary, when the time came. There seems to be in some minds an opinion that it is wrong for a person in custody to try to get away; I did not think so, nor do I now. It was might against right, and as it was their business to keep me, it was as clearly mine to get away. Nor was I long about it. As soon as the constable had laid his hand on me, and arrested me in the King's name, the dragoons began to go out to unsaddle their horses. One of them called out to inquire where the best place to tether them would be. I told the constable to tell them where the best grass was, and as he went to the door to tell them, I followed, and rushing past him ran down the hill and across the flat toward the creek, the whole party following me. It was well they had got their saddles and accoutrements off and all in a heap, with their cloaks thrown confusedly among them; otherwise I should probably have had a shot after me. Perhaps they made sure they could catch me; it turned out otherwise. I went full drive across the creek at a flying leap, whilst they, not knowing of it, ran off the bank into it. It was running high and very strong with the day's hard rain, but it was so narrow (not above 10 feet) that they could hardly be drowned in it when

there were so many together to help one another. I made good my way up the range on the other side the creek, and in a couple of minutes afterwards was quite safe from pursuit. R——, with a spirit I cannot too much commend, immediately told the officer, that being now master of that hut, he should feel obliged to him to saddle and ride on. The officer had certainly brought it on himself; had he merely done his duty in an inoffensive manner, no notice would have been taken of him, and he would have had shelter and something offered him to eat, the same as any other traveller; but he was Mr. ——, my prosecutor's friend, and could not help mingling his ill-natured jokes with his official duty. I knew the bush so well about our hut that I found no difficulty in making my way in the direction of Goulburn Plains. It was necessary that I should get as far away as possible before daylight, and even thus my escape was doubtful; for there were some strange blacks in the neighbourhood, and I conjectured that the military party would stay at the hut till the morning, and then get a black and track me; as the aborigines will follow man or beast by the foot-track, sometimes, days after they have passed. Our own blacks I was sure would only mislead them, for they were very fond of me; but if they happened to have seen the other camp, and were to get a black from it, I had every reason to believe my escape would be much more difficult. The rain too had now quite ceased, and any tracks made would remain. As I knew I had no time to lose, I made across to the road, about a couple of miles from the hut toward Goulburn, and went off, as soon as I reached it, at a swinging trot. When I had got on about five miles, I heard the clatter of horses following me, and supposing at first that it was travellers, stood for them to come up; but in another instant the rattle of the military accoutrements made me aware of who was coming, and I got as quickly as possible some distance off the road. It was too dark for them to see me, and they had no dogs to scent me, so they went sweeping past full trot. I could hear them swearing, the officer as loudly and as vulgarly as any one of the party. I was fully aware they had no expectation of finding me on the high road; they would, I knew, give me credit for being too good a bushman to need the road to travel by: and not knowing that R—— had turned them out of the hut, I could not make out why they were travelling at that speed in that direction, at that time. The fact, however, was, as I afterwards found, that they were merely making their way to a farm where they thought they were sure of good quarters for the night; and had intended to come back with the first light and put a black on my track. On the other hand, I was keeping the road that I might pass a sheep-station where there were two heavy flocks of sheep, and get the shepherds to turn their flocks out at the first peep of day and one of them drive up the road and the other down, and so obliterate my tracks up to the station; whilst I struck off again into the bush, after retracing my

ground back some little distance. I now hardly knew what to do. Were they in search of me now? Would they return in the morning to track? Had they left any of the party at the hut? Such were the queries that alternately presented themselves. The sheep-station was only one mile farther, so I resolved to go on quietly, and creep up as near as their dogs would let me without raising an alarm, and listen. I approached so close as to hear their conversation; and could gather from it, that the military party had given them a call, and after a few bullying words, gone on ahead. Upon this I went up to the fire. The shepherds were government-men, and as they were always well treated when they came to my station they promised to do what I requested; as it was not yet so late that their doing so would create suspicion if any of the party still remained at the hut, (for they could not tell exactly how many had passed, as all did not ride right up to their fire.) One of the shepherds set off to my hut with a straw hat he had been making, to offer for sale to some of our people; really, however, to bring me word how matters stood. He pulled foot and was back about midnight; R—— came back with him. Of course I could not but laugh heartily when I heard what had taken place. Before our trip to the Manning, we had been down to the neighbourhood of Jervis's Bay looking for a fall of cedar, and there, in one of the most wild and lonely gullies grown up with a perfect mat of vegetation, we had encountered a forsaken hut and stock-yard. Even when we were there, it had been so long abandoned that the hoof-beaten yard was covered with the richest crop of mallows I ever saw; they over-topped the fence itself; and all round the cattle-tracks bore testimony that even the wild cattle themselves very rarely approached. We had no doubt at the time from various indications, that it had been the quarters of a gang of gully-rakers. At this time there were still great mobs of wild cattle about these gullies and ranges; indeed so labyrinthine and puzzling are the ranges and ravines hereabouts, that whoever pursued the illicit occupation here, earned, as much as it could be said to be earned under such circumstances, the booty they gained. Traversing the upper level of the country, the gullies here seem like enormous channels cut in the earth, meeting each other from various directions, and then intermingling and crossing in ways without end. Often as you walk along through the brush and scrub, you are within a yard of some vast hollow that would parade a hundred thousand horse, before you observe it; sometimes the fall is gradual, but generally it is sudden; and the depth beneath is a wilderness of shrubs and trees, betwixt which you cannot see the ground. To this old hut it was arranged (between R—— and myself only, of course) that I should make my way, and that he should follow me as speedily as possible with some money in coin. We were talking till about five o'clock in the morning, during which time the men at the sheep-station boiled me a piece of beef and baked me a damper, for the journey. I then

started, knowing it would soon be broad day. Leaving the road at the most advisable point, I struck straight across the bush for Goulburn Plains. My satisfaction was complete when, before I had gone a hundred yards from the hut, flakes of snow began to fall; and in half an hour's time it was coming down so thickly, that I was obliged to stop and shelter myself in a hollow tree till broad daylight, for fear of losing my way. It was well I did so, for with the light I could hardly make good my course, so blinding was the storm, and so impossible was it to ascertain which was east, west, north, or south. All I could do was to keep the wind steadily on the same shoulder as it was when I started. Late in the afternoon I made the river that borders the plains, but five or six miles from where I expected. At the township the police had a station; and as I knew my escape would be made known, and my description circulated by this time among all the corps in that quarter, so I was of course obliged to keep out of sight for fear of meeting some one or other of them riding round among the farms. I therefore did not venture out of the bush before it was quite dark; but sat down in a hollow of the river bank, and made a good supper off my damper and beef. I could not venture on making a fire, excepting so far as the striking a light into the tinder to kindle my pipe. To have made a fire sufficient to warm me would have endangered detection; but it was bitterly cold. As soon as it became quite dark I pushed on across the plain, having first had, however, to wade the river nearly up to my arm-pits. Such a job after dark, when the snow is on the ground, and after being used to the more genial parts of the country for so many years, is no joke. When I got out of the water, I was so benumbed and helpless, that I thought I should have been frozen before I could get my clothes on. It was no easy thing at that time of night when at length I started, and with every thing so confused by the fall of snow, to make my way across those wide plains with anything like exactitude. The roads were all covered, so that when I crossed even the main one I did not perceive it. I hoped to make the gap for Bulla Melita, but went a great deal above it; when finding I had done so, I took across the ranges at once. It was, as everybody who knows that part of the country will be aware, a rough journey before I got out on the Lake Bathurst road about five miles on the Sydney side of the lake. I now knew exactly where I was, and struck straight across to a station where I knew I should be "all right" in one of the creeks on the coast side of the road, and soon had the pleasure of rousing old —— out of bed to let me in. He stared with all the eyes he had to see me, but soon comprehended the case. Nothing, however, could convince him but that I had stolen the beasts in question; such is the tendency of man to judge others by himself. For here and indeed all up that tract of country by the coast mountain the gully-raking system, as well as other *cross* practices with cattle, was at this time prevailing to a great extent. I stopped and rested

here for eight and forty hours; as I knew the snow had covered up my tracks as fast as I made them, and I was sure the police would not guess among all the stations the exact one I had reached. The third morning the stockman having a spare horse we started together, I leaving my own clothes to him and wearing some of his. He was to ride with me to Broughton's Creek, and then return with the horses. Once there I should be past all the police except the party in Illawarra, and in that district the brush is so thick that if a fugitive come in sight of a policeman it must be either by meeting him full butt in coming round a corner or topping a ridge, or else by walking with his eyes shut. We made a hasty but pleasant journey. I had never gone exactly the track we followed before, so that some of the scenery of this part was really as wonderful to me as it was strange. No description can convey an idea of the savage grandeur of the district of the Shoalhaven River and its gullies. Blocks of country many miles in extent stand up square and wall sided from the level around, their bleak flat table-tops among the clouds, and you wander among their bases as if along the streets of some forsaken giants' city. In other places the descent from the higher land into the gullies is so far, so wood shadowed and obscure, so steep, that it seems, as you go down, down, down, as if you were travelling to the darksome depths of a nether world. But then again this descent once effected you find yourself among romantic flats of the richest soil covered with ferns and rank grass, amidst which meander fine broad streams of crystal water, icy cold, over-hung and bordered by magnificent trees; the vast gum-tree ages old, and hollowed at the butt by the bush fires of centuries long past, so that a whole party might camp within. At the foot of this mountain near Boulli there is an old stringy-bark tree into whose trunk it is a common report that nine horsemen once rode together; nor do I see any reason for disbelieving it; its head is broken off some height up, and it looks like some huge factory chimney struck off half way down. Here and there amidst these solemn fastnesses, but many miles apart, you meet with the solitary stock-station, amidst some scope of park-like forest that a nobleman might envy for the site of mansion or castle. The sleek and lordly beeves and the more quiet milking cattle with their calves graze or rest in the shadow of the trees; the dogs lie basking in the sun outside the hut; within you find the hut-keeper quietly plaiting straw or sewing together opossum skins to serve as a blanket, or smoking his pipe and reading some worn old fragment of a book, his whole library. At times home rides the stockman with three or four of his neighbours in charge of herds at other stations, and then up blazes the wood fire on the hearth with a fresh supply of logs; down go the quart pots in front for tea, one for each man; and as one after another the "Irish boil" perfects into a good sound "English boil," in goes into each a whole handful of tea, and the bright tin pint pot for drinking out of is placed on the top of each as it

is removed back from the fire to draw, Presently out come the damper and beef; and after a hearty meal, the pipes are filled, and the world and all its woes are forgotten in the jest and tale. Such is life at these stations often for years together; its monotony only broken by the yearly muster and branding, or by the stockman's journey to Sydney with a drove of fat beasts for the butcher; and occasionally to some new station with a draught of cattle when they have become too numerous for their native run.

As had been arranged, my fellow-traveller left me the second day when we reached Broughton's Creek and returned, while I proceeded on foot. A sawyer's hut in the cedar brush, which is here very productive, was my quarters for the night. The next day I hastened on for the but in the Jervis's Bay gullies: but it turned out that I did not know the lay of the brush here so well as I thought I did; for, trying to make a short cut, I got away down by St. George's Basin and found myself at sundown so completely bewildered that I saw it would be best to strike up a fire and camp for the night. I had brought no food with me, and was both hungry and weak. However, there was no help; soon after midnight it began to blow and rain very hard with a thick mist. I soon got up a bit of a gunyah with the dry bark off a wind-fall tree, sufficient to turn the worst of the rain off from me and my fire, but when day dawned I found myself worse off than ever as to any certainty which way to travel. The mist was so thick that I could form not the slightest notion which way I was heading except by a sound that seemed to me to be that of the surf on the rocks. I turned my back to that, supposing that by so doing I should be going inland, as I must do to reach the road. But that sound at length died away, probably by the tide going out, and to my sore vexation and discomfort I again found myself as night set in on the edge of St. George's Basin. Through the twilight I saw a great open space before me, and making sure it was one of the big swamps near the river rushed joyfully forward; the fog was too thick to allow me to perceive the glitter of the vast sheet of water till I came within a few feet; and then in an instant all my hopes were gone. With downcast heart I travelled on round the edge to my last night's camping place. Again I lighted my fire, and again I passed the long, long hours of the bleak and wearisome night without any refreshment but that of my pipe. As it happened I was not short of tobacco. This was the only alleviation of my suffering; for my hunger and weakness were really both very great. The fog still continued on the third day, but the rain only fell in occasional showers. As there was now scarcely a breath of air stirring, I could not again make out the roar of the surf. I now resolved to take the broadest of the cattle tracks up from the low grounds, in the hope that it would lead me out into the open forest. Over and over again that day did I go off from the edge of the basin on one of these tracks, and as regularly did I come back down

some other to the water's brink again. They were nothing more than the summer paths of the wild cattle down to the cool pasture by the waterside. I was now getting thoroughly exhausted, and had torn my clothing all to pieces in forcing my way through the scrubs. Whenever I tried to lull my hunger with a smoke, the pipe produced only an excessive nausea; and even the mouthfuls of water which a craving stomach prompted me to take had the same effect. But that which gave me the most painful feeling of all was the recollection that the time for R—— reaching the hut in the gullies was just up; and the consideration what would be his astonishment and fears on not finding me there, or any sign of my having been there. I was now in that stage of exhaustion which is attended in some (in me always) by violent excitement. My natural strength was gone, but a sort of unnatural energy was come in its place. I had tried running up the watercourses, but the ground was so mountainous that all I had tried soon ended abruptly. Still I knew that now this was the only probable resource; I therefore set off in as direct a line as I could imagine parallel to the coast, determined to go on thus till I made out some main watercourse, and then steadily run that up as long as my strength lasted. For nearly three hours I must have been following out this resolve without meeting with any creek of sufficient importance to justify my fixing upon it; probably I did not go very far, for I neither could sufficiently command my powers to keep a true direction in the darkness (it was after sundown a considerable time), nor could I do more than crawl very slowly along; and I was so feeble and nervous that blind creeks of which I should have run down and up the farther bank in half a minute at other times, now took me five or six minutes to cross; and these are plentiful enough in this vicinity. Far in the night as I rose out of one of these on to the hip of a scrubby hill, there gleamed out bright before me, not half a quarter of a mile off, the fires of a blacks' camp; and the dogs at the same instant, attracted by the cracking of the bush, sprang forward yelping by scores. I knew there were none but quiet tribes here, and, filled with new strength, was in a few minutes more among them, as heartily pleased as ever I had been at any thing in my whole life. They gave me plenty of baked fish and cabbage-tree, and a "bangola" of "sugar-bag" (water sweetened with native honey), for which I rewarded them with nearly the remainder of my tobacco — about half a pound. There were about a hundred of them; several of them I knew well from their coming to my hut some years before, when in the Long-Brush, behind Kiama. They put me in one of their best gunyahs (a sort of hut of bark, shaped much like those of the English gypsies), and gave me two very large opossum cloaks for the night, with many an exclamation of "*Poor fellow you, binghi (brother); most dead you, I believe: what for you stupid like that? what for you not fetch 'em gun and shoot 'em parrot, and patter (eat)? bail boos got it chop (the*

bush has got no shops).” For an hour the camp was all astir with the white fellow's adventure; the young men shouted and laughed, triumphing in their superior faculties; the old men talked gravely and shook their heads; and the gins, true to their sex, passed to and fro among themselves, from fire to fire, their exclamations of pity with each new bit of information about my mishap, as one or other of the black fellows, by some fresh question, extracted it from me. Human nature is the same from the throne to the gunyah. At length all slept except myself. It was long before I could forget myself, though I was very careful to take only a few mouthfuls of food. When I did shut my eyes it was only to pass into a state of delirious consciousness; my mind was even more awake than before I slept. I walked, I ran, I flew, I swam in the air; now I was an old man toiling along with a stick round strange corners; now I was a black fellow springing lithely along with boomarang and wommerah and spear; now I was hunting a whole host of mounted police headlong through the bush and over precipices, and now they were chasing me; now I heard the sounds of the camp around me; and now again sweet (ay, the sweetest) voices came to me from the placid depths of infancy. In a word, that night's sleep was one boundless, fathomless phantasm of the most vivid realities cast into the form of the most inconceivable fictions. For months, indeed for years afterwards, in a minor degree, it recurred whenever my stomach was much out of order.

In the morning, though dreadfully tired, stiff, and weak, I set off under the guidance of two of the old men for the rendezvous. I easily made them understand where I wanted to go. You can scarcely name any particular tree in the bush but the blacks know it. This hut they recognised immediately I described it; and I found that my opinion of its original use was perfectly correct. They told even the stockman's name who used to “sit down” (live) there. He had been dead some time, or they probably would not have done so. Instead of going all round by the road, the blacks took me a short cut; and on my arrival I had the gratification of finding R—— was behind his time, and not yet there. As I made full sure it would not be much longer before he made his appearance, we knocked up a fire in the hut, and I passed the remainder of the time in explaining to my guides that I wished them not to say anything to other white men of my being here. This they promised, and they are a people with whom a promise made under such circumstances is very rarely, if ever, broken. In my many years' dealings with them I never knew an instance.

Chapter XVI. Life among the Shepherds.

Opossum-cloaks — Arrival of my mate at the hut in the gully — My prosecutor and the facts — Hurdle-making in the mountains — Sketch of a sheep-station — How shepherds and hutkeepers live — Injustices towards them — Secret and severe retaliation by them on the masters' property — Universality of sheep-stealing; often winked at by the masters — An instance — Carrion-sheep killed for rations — A manoeuvre for stealing sheep — Hutkeeper flogged three times in five months — How to pay a master out — General remarks on the claims of this large body of men to religious instruction — My prosecutor's acknowledgment of my innocence, and destruction of the warrant

THE two blacks left me about a couple of hours before sundown, giving me one of their tomahawks in case R—— failed to come; also a good bundle of cabbage-tree for my supper, and an opossum's skin cloak: these cloaks are a rare possession in the bush. An opossum's skin is about as large as that of a cat, and when stretched out and dried, cuts to about 15 in. by 8 or 10. Thus dried, and with all the hair on, the blacks sew them together to the number of from 30 to 60; white men also have learned the art; so manufactured they make a capital protection from the weather, either by day or night. By day they are worn as a shawl, by night the wearer wraps them all round him, and lies down completely enveloped. The damp of the ground penetrates them very slowly and very slightly. I have worn one doubled through a whole day's pouring rain without becoming wet.

As the sun sank behind the range I began to have misgivings whether R—— would come, and what could have detained him: for the blacks told me, when we reached the hut, that there was not the slightest track of a white man's foot anywhere about: so that it was clear he had not already been and gone away again. At length I heard his "coo-eh" from the point of the ridge where he would descend, and answered him by mine. He knew that as I answered him it was because all was right, and by his coo-ehing I knew he brought no danger with him; as the first coo-eh is always a demand for an answer, and not a caution. In five minutes

he came, cracking the bushes before him, with a pack at his back, like a donkey — a sight I was by no means sorry to see. “Well, old fellow, I 'spose you're pretty peckish? Down with some more wood.” “The smoke” — I said. “Oh! Devil a fear! There's not a sign of the track of man or beast the only way they could come. By the bye, how did you get here? I didn't see your track.” “With the blacks, across from St. George's Basin. It was very nearly ‘a go’ with me. I got down into such a tangle of scrubs and creeks and gullies as I should never have got clear of but for reaching a camp of blacks; I was three days and two nights without anything to eat.” “You don't say that?” “I do, indeed.” “Well, I think you're not the first that's lost his life in that very spot. However, cheer up, my lad! — I have some good news for you. I've been to Bathurst since you went away. We'll have our supper first, and then I'll tell you. You'll soon be out of this Sit down; I'll cook: you must be pretty nigh done up. By the Lord Harry, you look as if you'd been boarding with — (the Sydney jailer) for three months. Be-dad, *I* could almost eat a jackass raw.” Well enough he might be hungry, for the good-hearted fellow had knocked his horse up the night before, full forty miles away, and had come on foot, with nearly fifty pounds weight of one thing and another on his back, all over the mountains; and it must have been so sludgy and wet under foot best part of the way, that an unincumbered foot-man could have hardly taken two steps together without slipping. Looked at in an abstract point of view, it is quite surprising what exertions bushmen of new countries, especially mates, will make for one another, beyond people of the old countries. I suppose want prevailing less in the new countries makes men less selfish, and difficulties prevailing more make them more social and mutually helpful. R—— brought me a good blanket, tobacco, tea, sugar, flour, beef, quart pot, and tomahawk; besides some money in coin. Coin is very scarce in the bush, and when I was taken I had but a few shillings about me. I.O.U.s, and cheques, and orders are the chief current money in the bush; and to get cash for these to any extent it is necessary to go to some public store or licensed house of entertainment, and presenting the paper-money in payment of the debt contracted, obtain the balance in as much coin as the vender will give. The four pounds in cash which he brought me, therefore, were necessary: in case my provisions fell short, I should have to go to some hut to try to purchase further supplies; people on farms do not like taking orders unless they know the party presenting them, and can make sure they are “all right.” Storekeepers and publicans make but little objection: they have so many pass through their hands that they can hardly be much mistaken; and they are also obliged to run some risk knowingly, for if they were not to take the current money they would not sell their goods.

And now, supposing our meal to be finished, the pipe alight, and a good fire blazing, I shall proceed to put the reader in possession of

R——'s "good news," as nearly in his own words as I can. The but felt very damp, but could not long remain so with the fire we made up. I had indeed my misgivings about keeping a large fire, as I knew both the light by night, and the smoke curling up over the bush and resting in a cloud on a still day over the spot, will often betray the fugitive's camping-place; but as R—— assured me there was not the slightest chance of anybody being about, I gave way. R——'s communication was as follows: — "The day after you were gone, young —— (naming another white native whom we both knew) came by with a herd of cattle. I was not at home when he came, but he sent his man on with the cattle and waited. When I came back, he told me he had a message for either me or you from —— — , Mr. —— — 's stockman (this was my prosecutor's own convict-servant). He was to tell us that Mr. —— — was about to take out a warrant on account of the cattle, and that till he got his own cow he was milking yours. The stockman said it was not his fault if the warrant was taken out, for that he had tried to persuade his master it was a mistake, and all the answer he got was, '*Well, then, till we get our own cattle back again WE'LL make such another mistake; one cow's milk for another's is a fair exchange.*' Accordingly, though he received no more express orders about it, he had run your cow into the milking-yard every morning since, and she had been milked, and her calf was in the pen with the other calves all night. Further, he said, Mr. —— — knew it well enough, and so did the people that milked; and though he might gammon that he knew nothing about it, that was the truth. As soon as I heard this," R—— said, "I asked young —— — (the bearer of the message) to drive Mr. —— — 's cow and calf, with his herd, up to Manaroo Plains, and keep her there till we sent for her; for I thought that would give us a chance of catching your cow in —— — 's milking-yard. I have no doubt, from what I know of the man, that he'll go on milking her till either his own is returned, or till she is dry. As young —— — was agreeable to let his herd pick up Mr. —— — 's cow in going across the run, if it could be done so that his man would think it was an accident, we settled it so. He rode on after his man, and told him he should turn back and yard the cattle in our yard for the night; and I saddled the black mare, and cut round the run like mad till I found the cursed old brute of a cow, and kept her near hand all night, and in the morning put her close by the road-side a little before they turned out. They picked her up safe enough. The man that was driving the Bathurst herd was a regular muff (booby), and never dropped down what o'clock it was (did not detect the scheme). However, she's now t'other side of Manaroo Plains, and you may go and catch your cow in Mr. —— —'s yard, and your milk in his pail, magistrate as he is." This may perhaps sound almost incredible to English ears; it was by no means so to mine, who had now been observing Australian settlers for some years. In the very ship in which I went out there was a quarter-deck

passenger, whom the vessel had to lay-to off Dover to take on board. We heard that he was flying from his creditors under a large amount of debt. However, he was not long landed before he was one of the most topping men of business in the colony; and he certainly had no friend but the one he brought in his pocket. He must have brought with him in this fraudulent manner a much larger sum than he owed in England. I soon found that half the wealth in the colony stood upon the same or similar foundations.

At this period the wool-trade was being cultivated very eagerly. Hurdle-making was becoming a very common branch of labour, and was also one of the best for a bushman. It occurred to me that it would be easy for me to fall in with some free man who had a job of hurdle-making near Mr. ——'s farm, and get him to take me for a mate, and thus situated I could learn all I wanted to know at my leisure. We immediately put this plan in force. We left the gullies next morning, as soon as R—— had had a sufficient rest after his heavy day's journey the day before. At Kiâma boat-harbour we got on board one of the cedar-boats, not without carefully ascertaining that there was both water and provision enough, and a compass on board. I had not forgotten what I suffered in my last trip from this place. We paid a short visit to M —— and my mate's father; but as we considered the police might be watching the farm in expectation of my being there, we did not venture to stop beyond a couple of hours, for all information of this kind is circulated among the police officers of New South Wales. Everybody (as the saying is) knows everybody; and my whole connexions and affairs were probably as well known to the police as if I had furnished them with the report myself. It is one of the commonest sayings, in relation to eluding the police, that the colony is but one large gaol-yard. We went to the Bathurst country again by the Curryjong Mountain, instead of by the public government road. The way we went we had the solitude of the bush to protect us from observation nearly all the way. Had we gone by Emu Plains and Mount York, we must have mingled in the whole stream of traffic betwixt Bathurst and Sydney. The public roads in New South Wales are at first mere dray-tracks through the forest, winding among the trees, often varying into fresh courses to escape some fallen tree or quagmire that has made the road impassable. Then some of the trees which are most in the way are cut down, and sundry bridges made where the creeks are worst, though they think nothing here of driving a dray down into what in England we should call a deep ditch, and making the bullocks drag it up, by force of flogging, on the other side. But at last, when the line of communication is considered of sufficient importance, government takes the matter into its own hands, and makes what is called "a government road." Surveyors lay down the best course for the line, and gangs then occupy it, felling in one unbroken line a space of bush of many fathoms

wide, and burning off the timber as they go. Finally, where the ground needs it, it is levelled; and where bridges are wanted they are made. The effect of these vast avenues, particularly before the grass is worn away, and all but the mere opening remains in its primitive and natural state, is singularly fine and striking; perhaps the term sublime would not be too strong to apply to the effect. In some places you may see miles along these magnificent openings; the timber on each side is sometimes of gigantic growth; tall regal-looking gums; black, gnarled, grim iron-barks, or stringy-barks swathed in their soot-mantles from the bush-fires: there, if the air be clear, and you catch sight of some other traveller a mile away, the sense of his *conspicuous littleness* is irresistible; and this the next act of reflection can scarcely fail to transfer to yourself.

On reaching the Bathurst country, I went to a station near the plains belonging to an Australian, a friend of R——'s. After spending a couple of days in Bathurst township he returned to me, having succeeded in finding a hurdle-maker who already had a job. He had heard of several, and had selected the one nearest to Mr. —— — 's sheep stations. These were situated in the —— — mountains. As yet this tract of country, although so near Bathurst, was very little settled. Indeed it remains so to this day. A wilderness of vast rocky ranges, scantily watered, almost impervious to the common modes of conveyance, and to be penetrated for the purposes of carriage in most places only by pack-bullocks or horses, it is generally considered unfit for anything but pastoral purposes. To the pencil of the artist, I imagine, it would afford some of the richest scenery in the world. I recollect, at one spot where a road had been made, standing and looking down the appalling and precipitous descent. Where I stood, if a dray had slipped sideways only three feet it must have gone down the sidelong declivity, which became steeper every foot, till it drew the bullocks after it, and all have gone "by the run" together. I felt as if I were as near to the sky as to the earth, or rather the world below seemed more unattainable than the world above. In a corner of these mountains where the river rushes point blank against a precipice and there checked turns off at a right angle along the foot of the range that has impeded it, all the way travelling under the perpetual shadows of immense river oaks that overhang it on either side, green and profuse and impenetrable by the sun in winter and in summer alike, my new mate the hurdle-maker had fixed himself. He was a sturdy, gray-headed, old man from the north of Ireland; a convict, but still a Presbyterian; combining a singular sternness with an unconquerable cheerfulness; a man who did a great deal of work, more by long hours than by speed, who never seemed tired, and never was an instant behind time at his meals; he had been an overseer, but lost the office because he would not have men flogged, and had invariably for many years past drank all his earnings every fifteen or eighteen months: then on coming out of his spree, and finding himself

penniless, and suffering from the blue devils almost to madness, he would resolve again, and again lay by his hoard to be in like manner subjected to the periodical fit of dissipation. Although I was now only second in command, and one does not very easily fall into the whims and put up with the blunders of an inferior workman, I must say I liked the old man very much. There was a natural conscientiousness about him which commanded my confidence. There is a great deal of this mutual regard and trust engendered by two men working thus together in the otherwise solitary bush; habits of mutual helpfulness arise, and these elicit gratitude, and that leads on to regard. Men under these circumstances often stand by one another through thick and thin; in fact it is a universal feeling that a man ought to be able to trust his own mate in anything. Our hut was in the little stony flat in the angle of the river; behind us rose rough stony ranges, before us rolled the river, and along the banks grew the fine oak timber he was splitting for the hurdle bars, heads, and braces. Not above two miles from us, up one of the creeks that run from the surrounding hills into the river, at a spot close to us, was a sheep station where Mr. —— had two flocks of sheep. And here it will be best to explain why I did not take a job in the vicinity myself, but struck in with another man as his mate. Had I taken a job myself I must have given my own name, and possibly should have been by this means recognised as the individual who bought D——'s cattle; Mr. —— would have been put in possession of the information, and instead of getting the evidence I wanted, I should have been immediately arrested. Again, I have heretofore mentioned how almost impossible it is to travel in New South Wales without a passport of some kind or other; that which I was depending on was a mere certificate from a gentleman in the commission of the peace who knew me, that I had come free to the colony. From the constant practice among settlers of ill-using free men in point of rations, it often happens that men run away leaving jobs half finished; in other cases it is the consequence of a dishonest endeavour on the part of the labourer, after having largely overdrawn his account, to get rid of the debt; they call working out such a debt, *riding the dead horse*. The upshot has been that settlers, especially about Bathurst and Hunter's River, where the usage of men is worst, have got into the habit of requiring men with whom they agree for work to leave these documents in their hands, as they know they cannot travel without them. Now it was because it did not suit me at this time to be fettered in this manner, that I would not take work in such a way as would virtually fix me to one spot till my employer would give me up my *pass*. As it was some months before I thought fit to leave this quarter, a body of facts arrange themselves into this period of my narrative which have given occasion to the title of the present chapter, and which I shall now endeavour to set forth as succinctly as possible, and yet fully, because I am sure they are

not generally known in Sydney itself, much less in the parent country.

Up a creek which fell into the river close to our hut, on a fine swelling bare hill amidst a tract of forest which had here become almost table-land, stood the sheep station of Mr. ——— which I have already mentioned. He had many others in various parts of these mountains, and others again in other parts of the colony. It consisted of two yards side by side, made of heavy boughs piled and interwoven, or rather of one large enclosure (say 120 ft. by 40) divided by a cross-fence of the same sort into two smaller ones of 60 by 40 each: the two gates at the two farthest ends being each an old hurdle. The interstices at all quarters were such that a warregal (bush-dog) not only could have crept through, but might have run and jumped through. On the upper side of this yard stood the hut, an enclosure of about 10 feet by 14, made with split slabs, and having a roof of bark. This hut was one large apartment, and had ground for the floor: at one end was the fire-place on the hearth, at the other the shepherds used to sleep, spreading their beds on sheets of bark just lifted off the ground by having logs of wood about 8 inches thick and 3 feet long laid underneath, one at the head, the other at the feet. This hut stood at about 12 or 14 feet distance from the upper side of the yard. On the lower side of the yard, heaped against the fence and extending a good way downward from it, was the mass of sheep-dung which had been by degrees thrown out in cleaning the yard, for it is part of the hut-keeper's duty to sweep the yards every morning immediately the sheep are out. At the station were two shepherds who took out the sheep over the adjacent hills by day, and a hut-keeper was responsible for them by night. The flocks themselves were each about 800 strong, fully twice as many as a shepherd can manage in a thickly timbered and mountainous country. The master grumbles if the flock is not allowed to spread; he says the shepherd must be keeping them together by severe dogging, and that running so close they cannot fill their bellies; for this, if the shepherd is a free man, he will often refuse to pay him his wages; if he is a prisoner, he takes him before some other sheep-holding settler in the commission of the peace and flogs him. On the other hand, if the shepherd suffers the flock to spread, in these mountainous runs especially, they get into creeks and hollows; and he loses sight of them and leaves them behind; or a native dog sneaks in among them, and, as it is the habit of these animals to bite as many as they can before beginning to prey, 20, 30, 50 get bitten, most of them mortally, before the shepherd sees or hears the stir and comes to their rescue. By this time the whole flock perhaps is scattered in all directions by the panic to which sheep are so liable. For these mishaps again, if the shepherd is free, the master refuses to pay his wages, and tells him to go to law and get them if he can; which he knows, in nine cases out of ten, the man will not do from want of confidence in the administration of justice: if he is a prisoner he flogs

him. And this flogging answers two purposes, he supposes (though, as I am to show, he is sorely mistaken): he imagines that it spurs the man to a sort of nervous and extra-natural watchfulness from terror of the lash; and then again he knows (for in this particular he is by no means mistaken) that this intimation of ill demeanor will impede the man with the authorities in getting his ticket of leave to work for himself; and so he shall retain for some time longer than he otherwise could a servant whose cost is not half what he must give a free man. But though he can in this arbitrary manner stop a free man's balance of wages when his term of service is up, the free man still has this point on his side — that he can keep on drawing goods level with his earnings through the whole period, and so leave no balance to be cheated of. Yet again, on the other hand, the settler charges just double the Sydney cash prices; so that in this way the man really gives his master half his earnings to get the other half. And thus after all, as the settlers say in their representations to the legislature, free and bond labour do really stand on about level terms. The convict is only allowed necessaries equal to half what the free man demands; but the extra amount payable to the free man can either be stopped by a simple refusal to pay it if left to accumulate, or if the man, in fear of being cheated, draws it in goods from the settler's store, the total will still be reduced to one half by selling to him at double the prices (and often more than treble) which the goods cost in Sydney. So that the gist of the case is just this: — The New South Wales sheep-master throws the grand and insuperable risk (in such a country) of his trade on his labourer's shoulders: if bond, the man pays for it by having right only to half wages; if free, by being cheated out of half what he agrees for. And let the point I started from be here recollected, that all this wrong is mainly founded on another — that of making each man do two men's work; of giving men 800 sheep where 400 would be a full flock to give fair play to. It may be replied — How can masters be so blind to their own interests? That I cannot say. I am merely relating facts, and how they tell on the labourer. I have heard large flock-holders who were of liberal character laugh at the folly of the thing as regards the masters' interests, and condemn it as regards the men's rights; but I never heard one illiberal, avaricious man, which certainly two thirds of the sheep-masters are, say one word about it. When I came to have flocks of my own, if ever I hinted at the subject to such persons they always silenced it directly. I never could yet procure an explicit sentence out of them respecting it, excepting some such as these: “Oh, the d——d scoundrel! he can mind them all if he likes.” “D — n him, he'll want a donkey next to *ride* after his flock.” “Do not Mr. —— and Mr. —— run as large flocks on as close a run, and are not they magistrates?”

With this insight into the connexion between shepherds and sheepmasters in New South Wales, it will be no matter for astonishment

to the reader that it should be my next duty to describe this class of the rural population as miserable and degraded to an extreme. Besides the two shepherds there was at this station of Mr. — — 's also a hut keeper or watchman. To him it belonged to watch the sheep by night and the hut by day. He was a prisoner, and if he had either suffered the hut to be robbed by day or the sheep to be attacked by the native dogs at night, he would have been flogged. I say he *would have been*, because his predecessor, a prisoner also, *had been*. Perhaps it is a peculiarity of the office to enable a man to do without sleep, — perhaps there is something in being a convict that deprives him of the right to any, as it does of many other rights; perhaps there is some grand reformatory experiment carrying on of which this is a particular, and of which we are not permitted to know anything publicly. This fellow (for really I have not the impression on my mind of his being a man) had been flogged over and over and over again; and, I verily believe, for nothing else than that naturally he was remarkably stupid and gruff. He was in short just a type of a class of individuals you may meet with in New South Wales at every step; men perfectly crushed by being flogged month after month and year after year for a natural stupidity and abruptness which continually betrays them into blunders, and then by the manner they reply to reproof making them seem insolent and their blunders wilful. At the same time let me be well understood — no person of any discrimination, or whose penetration of character passes beneath the surface, would fall into such a misconception; yet, superintended as they generally are by overseers who have crept up from their own ranks by cunning and sycophancy, and because they would do any dirty work rather than submit to bodily toil, it is only just such a result as might be looked for. The effect of this monstrous and irrational treatment of this convict had been that an almost maniac spitefulness at times took possession of him; and I assure the reader (morally frightful as it may seem) that this very kind of feeling, induced and fostered by the atrocious severities to which they have been and to a still serious extent *are* subjected, may be constantly detected among the lower order of the labourers, but especially among the pastoral class. This poor fellow had been fifteen years in bondage, and I suppose had never passed a year of that time without (let me be permitted to use a phrase not thought by any means too expressive to be regularly used at the tables of gentlemen in the colony) — without his master “making him a present of a red shirt” (a scarified back). Obligated to sweep the yards, get wood and water for the hut, and go into the farm on various errands by day, he usually slept by night. To do this, however, he was obliged to keep three large dogs, whose vigilance should serve instead of his own for the protection of the sheep by night; and, as dogs cannot live on air or grass, this involved practices which are next to be described.

At by far the greater proportion of sheep stations in the colony the practice of feloniously killing the owner's sheep goes on to greater or less extent; and plenty of the owners know it and wink at it; others do not, but would prosecute and transport the men if they could adduce proof of it. Those who connive at it reason thus: "Well, the men must be fed and so must the dogs, or the work cannot be done; and it is a bad precedent to give them as much meat as they require, because that will lead to a universal and irresistible custom. I had better let them take it, and seem not to know anything about it." But let it not be forgotten that this often betrays men into practices which ultimately cause them to be retransported. I speak positively on these points, because I have considered them so long, having for years seen the practices I am describing whilst a working-hand and in the secrets of the class. I could now name one of the largest sheepholders in the colony whom I saw come into a hut that I stopped at in travelling, where a newly slaughtered sheep was hanging up, which he well knew had no business there; he nearly ran against before he saw it; but when he saw it, he deliberately turned round before all hands and, with the gravest face imaginable, *would not see it*. If he had, he must have transported some of his best men.

At Mr. ——— 's station this sheep-stealing system was going on; and no wonder. First, the dogs must be fed; and when for many days there was no death in the flock from natural causes, how but by slaughtering could the meat be had? Then again the ration-meat was such as I shall hardly be believed when I describe. The animals for rations were ordered to be taken out of one of the flocks at the station. In killing order they should have weighed from 50lbs. to 60lbs.; they really ran only from 25lbs. to 30lbs. Of course they were nothing but bags of bones. I have seen the lamp put inside one after it was killed and hung up and skinned, and the very form of the flame could be seen as plainly through the skin and flesh betwixt the ribs as through a piece of wet parchment. In short, there was no meat on the bones beyond little scraps filling up angles or sparely spread over the gristly parts of the muscle on the muscular portions of the frame. I think it would not be an exaggeration to say that *to every ten pounds of bone there were not more than two pounds of fleshy integument*. But Mr. ——— still gave the shepherds and hut-keeper only the stated number of pounds of meat which should have been allowed if the animals had been in full condition. In short, instead of a ration of 8lbs. of meat with 2lbs. of bone, they had 8lbs. of bone and 2lbs. of meat. He had been remonstrated with, but not a pound more would he give. Of course the men helped themselves.

I recollect going up to their hut when I had been hurdle-making about three months, and they had come to know me well enough to have no fear of any foul play from me. It was night, and the dogs, who had been

starved for several days, had just got hold of the entrails of a sheep the men had been killing "*on the cross*," so that they did not hear me till I came close up to the hut, and then all rushed barking at me in a mob. In an instant one of the shepherds sprung out of the hut; he had no need to tell me why, for by the light of the fire that blazed in the hut I already saw the naked sheep hanging to one of the rafters. I burst out laughing, saying. "Old chap, you're all to the good yet." The man was a freed man, an old soldier; transported probably for some merely military offence, such as desertion, involving no great moral turpitude, but now quite brutalised by the severities he had endured. His reply was, "I thought it was —— (the overseer), and if it had been, I would have knocked him on the head and put him into a hollow log before he should have *lagged* (transported) me."

Again, some time after this, I knew them to lose some sheep at this station; they had omitted counting the sheep in and out of the yards through rainy weather for some days, and could not tell whether they had been lost by day or night. To supply the loss when discovered, the shepherd used regularly to go every night to a station four miles off, where he was on friendly terms, and fetch home a sheep on his back. I never knew how he procured the sheep; whether he cleverly managed to steal it on coming away, or whether it was a made up concern between him and one of the shepherds at that station thus to betray the hut-keeper. Probably the two shepherds had made it up between them in the bush; and the shepherd who was giving (perhaps selling) the other his sheep, used to keep his fellow shepherd and hut-keeper "in a tow-line" whilst the animal was stolen. However, he made good the count of his flock in this way.

Meantime, however, for one thing or another, this luckless hut-keeper of Mr. ——'s was flogged in the five months I lived near the station no less than three times. The last time but one I was at the station when he found he was a sheep short, and but for my persuasion he would certainly have taken the bush; and dogged as he was, have probably done something for which he would have been hung. But about a month after this, one of the shepherds — the man was still a convict — lost a lot of his sheep. I relate the matter just as I saw it as a caution to masters. The hut-keeper counted in the sheep at the gate, the shepherd and his dog keeping them up. When the last was in, and the shepherd was turning away, the hut-keeper said, "Mikkey, you are twenty-seven short." "Be d——d to it! no?" said Mikkey. "I tell you, you are." "Count 'em again." Again they were counted; again they were short. Again they were put into the yard and the shepherd counted them out himself. "Twenty-seven short!" he said; "I may as well be flogged for a hundred as for these;" and he positively put the dogs of the station on them and sent them scampering in all directions through the bush. "There," he said to the hut-

keeper, "go and tell —— [the overseer,] I've lost my flock. I shall go in and have my supper." And he then really left them ranging the bush till he had had his supper. The messenger to the farm of course did not tell what his hutmate had done, but only reported the flock lost. It was not till next day that the whole of the sheep that remained were got together; the flock was then nearly fifty short. The carcasses of these were lying in all quarters, dead, or yet alive and frightfully mangled by the warregals. I relate this circumstance because I have known the same thing done in several instances, and believe it to be common. I recollect an old shepherd, who had been kept in bondage many years, telling me that he could have saved hundreds of sheep in his time from death in one way and another, but would not, because his master flogged him whether he was right or wrong. He saved them when their death would throw suspicion on him, and let them die when it would not. I was struck at the time with the singular coolness with which the old fellow told me this. Again, I knew a settler near the Hunter River, who flogged for every sheep lost; at last the men took to dogging *the whole flock* out into the bush whenever they lost *one*. It quite quieted the gentleman; some inkling of the plain truth reached him; he changed his system, left off flogging, and became one of the best masters in the colony. Within two years afterwards his people actually risked their lives in an attack of bushrangers on the farm to protect him, his family, and his property. I am sure every person who reflects will, after these statements, perceive that two-thirds of the crimes of the lower classes of the colony are the fruits of seed sown by the masters' own hands. It is quite absurd to expect a change in the one class without the previous change in the other. The gentleman of whom I have related the anecdote on p. 335 is one of the best masters as he is also one of the most prosperous in the colony. Had he belonged to the opposite section, the upshot would have been widely different. Several men would have been transported, and he would have sustained a retribution through his property secret, long, and imperceptible but complete.

It has often struck me that there is no class to which the philanthropy of Britain could be so happily applied as to these isolated shepherds. A very large proportion of them can read, and where they can get books are very fond of reading; whilst the influence that reading exercises upon them is as beneficial as it is evident wherever the experiment is made. Some years after this period I supplied some stations in the way of loan with such books of my own as the men thought fit to come and fetch out of a lot I had selected as fit for them and brought up the country. I did not lose a single volume; and the effect on the men's personal behaviour was markedly beneficial. Indeed there seems something at once iniquitous and hypocritical in taking these culprits out of their native land, and removing them from a state of society where instruction and moral

remonstrance and religious appeal constantly reach the very lowest, only to send them into the far bush, where no holy voice warns them of the awful error of their way; where the soul is left to fester in the concentrated pollution that had already infected it, without a single relieving idea, even from books; and daily exposed to the exciting influence of the unclad woman of the bush, who, alas! has learnt but too well the language, the tone, the caress of the seducer. To me, as an individual, the mission to the aborigines of New South Wales has always seemed a sort of iniquity when it overlooks this great section of most hopeful material. Great numbers of these poor creatures have been hurried on to their degraded condition by the pressure of want in the parent country, and by not having time to reflect: but now amidst the still wilderness they would reflect, if a little stimulus to reflection were supplied. The voice of the religious teacher would often be humbly welcomed; broken hearts will take in Christian consolation, when there is still enough of steel about them to defy the gaol, the manacle, and the cats. On the contrary, all the thanks we get from the black native for attempting to introduce our religion into his tribes is the laugh of derision, or the silence of a yet deeper scorn. "You!" he says, "you who tie one another up, and flog one another within an inch of life, for some little hasty word; you who begrudge one another enough to eat; you who deprive me of my hunting grounds, only to increase possessions for mere possessions' sake; you, a people divided into two classes, the one hateful and the other contemptible, the tyrant and the slave; you who keep, and clothe, and train men to human slaughter as a trade — you teach me to be better! — Me who walk the forest free, who appropriate no more than I need, who never fight but as a deeply injured man, who would not lay your bloody lash upon my dog, much less my brother; who 'in wrath remember mercy,' and give even the public culprit, against whom I am to direct my spear at the command of the tribe, his shield to defend himself with; — YOU convert ME! preposterous!" Oh! that mankind would but have common sense. One of its first undertakings would certainly be to rectify the shameful errors of our own condition of society, and ameliorate the condition of our own countrymen by those plentiful means which present themselves: and in such direction of our benevolent energies, surely one of the first objects reached would be the class I have now described. At present their state is alike awful to themselves and shameful to us. Full two-thirds of all these thousands are in the lamentable condition here represented; a few of the rest are something better off; and the final remainder who have good masters may be said (but for its irreligion) to spend a tolerably pleasant life. With plenty of food, the prospect and experience of generally fair treatment, light labour, and leisure, which they make use of in plaiting and sewing straw hats, or making opossum cloaks, and various other harmless and

profitable occupations; with perhaps a master or superintendent who will lend them books to while away the long sunny hours of the Australian day as they wander on with their flocks from tree-shadow to tree-shadow, their time may be said to pass pleasantly and even in some measure profitably as regards the higher attributes of their being.

I will close the description with a single fact for the consideration of the benevolent and pious. I lent four men Bibles in the space of about twelve months: of those four, in one I saw no change; another brought the book back to me, signifying that it was impossible to conform to its requirements; the two others, both men who were considered "out-and-outers," who had remained untamed by much punishment, after I had observed them for some weeks reading with the deepest attention, appeared to have so far comprehended the grand doctrine of Divine Affection for our race as to have melted beneath it like the rugged glacier beneath the sunbeam. Their manners were altered, their very features seemed humanized, and they seemed to have become elevated by the presence within them of some inscrutable instinct into a common region with myself; and when I left these two men behind me, and especially one of them who had been the worst, I felt as if I were leaving two brothers, not a pair of violent ruffians as they had been but a few months before: one of them wanted to buy the Bible I had lent him, at any rate. It is needless to say that when I found it had become such a spring of comfort, and thus of elevation, and thus again of virtue, I was only too glad to make him a present of the volume.

Five months were at length elapsed, and their period brought the completion of our job. I had obtained some little time earlier all the information I wanted, but delayed to use it till I had a settlement for my work, lest if affairs should take such a turn as I did not wish (or indeed expect), I should have to leave my balance behind me. I had several times gone to Mr. ——'s milking-yard, for I was not personally known at his farm, and had seen my own cow in his bale, and the milk carried into his dairy. My mate, to whom, as soon as I found out his character, I confided the whole affair, had also gone on the same errand with the like success. We had got acquainted with Mr. ——'s stockman (the man who sent me the message to my own station), but without telling him who he was talking to, and had led the conversation in a direction which enabled my mate to ask him one day, "Wasn't that one of D——'s cows, that chap that sold his cattle and run away out of the colony, that I saw among your milking cattle the other day?" "Yes: that cow belongs to a man in the New Country; he bought those cattle of D——, and when he drove them across to the New Country he took one of our cove's and left that; indeed he took two head. When this one calved, the cove told me to pen up the calf and milk her till we got our own. I believe there's a warrant out about it, but I'm not sure." A second and a third time the conversation

was purposely renewed when some freemen at work in the neighbourhood were at our hut. I had, therefore, plenty of evidence both as to the milking of the cow and as to what account the stockman always gave about it; to this was added other intelligence of an equally available and yet more unequivocal character, which it would be too prolix for me to explain here, as it involves a lengthy history of some years' previous date. And lastly, I became acquainted with the fact that there were no less than three among Mr. ——'s convict servants whom he was preventing by sheer intimidation from looking after their tickets of leave.

As soon as my mate had settled for his job and given me the balance coming to me, I dressed myself—it was a bright summer morning—and marched straight to Mr. ——'s farm; it was about nine in the morning when I arrived, and he was at breakfast. The servant came out to inquire who I was and what I wanted. "A person who has some particular business with Mr. ——, and will wait till he is at leisure." After the lapse of half an hour, for he was not a man who hurried himself, out he came.

"Well, my man, is it you that wants to see me?" — "If you are the gentleman to whom that stockyard belongs (pointing), where I see a cow of mine that has just been milked, yes."

"A cow of yours? and pray what cow is that? who are you, sir?" — "Mr. ——, I am not a man to be bamboozled; drop all this sort of thing if you please, though if you prefer my talking loud I'll talk loud enough for your whole farm to hear me."

He looked at me, and whether his "bounce" merely gave way, or whether he only just then recollected and appreciated the actual condition of things, I cannot say; but his whole face twitched spasmodically, every feature seemed pulling a different way, and he was alternately red and pale.

"You know, sir," I said, "very well that *my* milk has been going into your dairy for months back; that your drays have taken *my* cheese to Sydney; that *my* money is now in your pocket. The fact of my cow having been so long milked by you I can prove by half a score of people, your own men, and witnesses I have from time to time brought to the yard purposely to verify the fact; and no one who has a grain of common sense will believe that you could have made such a mistake about just that particular cow of mine that answers to the one you have lost, with this fact to help his judgment, that you have a warrant out for me about it."

It was impossible for a few moments to tell what course he meant to take or what part he meant to play. He was notoriously a man who usually bounced his way through everything; still he was a man of strong penetration and clear understanding. As a magistrate he was liked much beyond the average; and prisoners under other settlers when brought before him used generally to say he gave them fairer play than most of

the other members of the bench. But one vice poisoned all his better qualities on his own farm — his covetousness. I was half in fear that it would still be an awkward job to settle; for he was turning away and getting into an attitude when some other thought seemed to come over him, and he stopped. The facts were too much for him: we had got into a common medium, plain, simple, every-day sense; my position was the best, and he could not shut his eyes to it. Commanding himself as well as he could and putting on one of his most familiar smiles, he said, "Well, there's no great harm done. I suppose you have been milking my cow; it's all been an accident, I suppose; and the exchange is no robbery." I was just about to point out to him that he had inadvertently used the very expression that convicted him, for that he had said this to his stock-man "before the fact," when I happily recollected that it would betray the poor fellow and almost surely get him flogged and persecuted as long as he was on the farm. Of course I checked myself; and the feeling also arose — why should I irritate him? My object was attained, and I ought to let "well enough" alone. I therefore said, "I wish you to understand, Mr. ———, that I no sooner found out that beasts of yours had run into my herd than I drove them out, and I have witnesses to prove it." He now thought he was going to lose his cow and steer really, and inquired eagerly if I did not know where they were. "When I drove them out of my herd," I said, "there was a lot of cattle going to Manaroo, on the road; it's very likely they may be up there; I saw nothing of them afterwards, and if they had not joined that herd, they would most likely have come back; I should think you had better look for them up there." This was murder itself: to have to send a stockman all the way up to Manaroo for his own whilst he was obliged to hand me over mine out of his yard. So that he had lost mine, and could only obtain his own with a great deal of trouble. And I have often observed the same thing: the profoundest cunning turning out in the end to be the perfection of folly. However, he got very cleverly out of the scrape; at the same time his expedient just suited me as well as himself. He said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I see it's been all a mistake; but mine are the best cattle." "Yes," I said, "but you've been milking mine, and that makes the difference again the other way." "Well, say we're level-handed, and I'll make a chop with you." "Very good," I said, "but what about the warrant?" "I'll get it cancelled." "I must see it destroyed myself." "Agreed on; you can go down to my huts and stop till I come back from the settlement."

And now it was my turn to "whip the cat." I never heard of Mr. ——— getting into such a hank before; and I knew his haughty soul would not brook it now very pleasantly. His character was that he always made good his way by ability and decision; and I doubted whether, if he gave the matter a second thought, he would not find some means of turning the tables on me. All the while he was gone, therefore, I was in alternate

expectation of seeing him bring a constable back with him; and attempts to reason myself into the conviction that he was snared too tight in his own net to venture such a step. The latter was the case: he came back about three o'clock in the afternoon, brought the warrant with him half-worn to ribbons (by the chief constable in his cherished hope, I have no doubt, of one day meeting with and paying me out for the scene at the stockyard, making it his pocket companion ever since it came back from the Goulburn Plains office), and cut off the signature and destroyed it in my presence. Five minutes more sufficed for us to interchange documents transferring the cattle; and I walked out of his parlour and straight off his farm as well pleased as ever I was in my life. He however took care, in writing out the one for me to sign and himself to keep, to word it so as to make it supposable that he had been retaining my cattle accidentally; but when he wrote one and signed it for me to keep, he left that part entirely out. I could not help myself, as he got his before he gave me mine. If he should ever see this and still be keeping the document, much good may it do him. Of course, this public history of the transaction will much detract from its value, and he will accept my permission to make such further use of it as he may conceive desirable. When I got back to my mate, he was so overjoyed that he made me stand a bottle of rum in celebration of it. However, we said nothing about it to the men at the station or on Mr.—'s farm; and as the old man now went with me, I suppose nothing further was ever said about it in that part of the country; though as long as he stopped with me (some years) we often had a yarn about it ourselves.

Chapter XVII. The Convict's Hut.

Description of night passed in one of the worst class while travelling — Unsuccessful attempt to rob me — Magistrates' farms — Flogging before the missionary's house at Wellington Valley

IN making my way across the country between Bathurst and my own station an incident occurred which, displaying as it does another section of Australian life, it will not be inappropriate to describe. In making a short cut, I had to cross a tract of country very sterile and very little occupied. Part of the directions given me at the station I started from were, to go over a certain ridge, through an ironbark forest on the other side, and so till I came to a main creek; and then either up or down the creek as the sheep tracks and water holes might indicate, until I came to a station: stop at that station for the night, and next day finish the distance, which was too much for one day. But I was to take care of anything I did not want to lose, for it was one of ——'s stations (a justice of the peace for the territory); and his men were one combined gang of robbers. And here I would carefully state that such directions as these are very uncommon in the colony, as is the need of them. Where they occur they may be traced with the clearness of cause and effect to the master's character. The men are stinted to a point at which their powers of endurance fail, and they then become thieves of the most reckless sort. The common laws of hospitality and fair play that so very strongly control the class are renounced professedly by them. "We don't want to steal," they say, "but we will not starve: if there is to be no alternative for us but either to starve or steal — well then, we'll steal from our own brother." And accordingly they carry out their principle to the fullest extent. The whole body steal from strangers; and the strongest among themselves from the weaker; till the final clique is a knot of some three, or four, or five ruffians who terminate their course by being sent to a penal settlement, or hanged, or shot by the police in the bush. This was just the sort of gang among whom I had here to run the ordeal. And it happened that I had something which I did not want to lose. I had in my pocket a number of the current checks and orders of the country of considerable amount, and about half-a-crown in silver and copper. This latter I did not mind losing; it was only a fair set off against the night's

entertainment if all came to all; but my pieces of paper I did not feel inclined to part with. Still I should have settled the matter otherwise altogether, by camping in the bush a couple of miles before I got to the station, though without water, had I known to what a length the risk extended. This station was about midway from the head-station where the rations are served out every Saturday afternoon; so that in going and coming the hut was a sort of house-of-call for all hands; and this was the very day, Saturday. About sundown I came upon the creek, and on looking about judged that the hut would be found below that spot, which was right; for it is singular what tact the bush-traveller acquires in his judgments in points of this sort. My first thought was now to secure my orders; this I did by taking them all out of a small tin box in which they were, excepting only one that I knew was bad; and then taking off my jacket and laying them on the wristband of my shirt, and rolling the shirt sleeve with them in it thus, close up to the shoulder. The other shirt sleeve I rolled up in like manner, slung my jacket over my shoulder, left the coin to rattle in my trowsers' pocket, and went on. There was not a human creature about the station. The shepherds had not yet returned with their flocks; and the hut-keeper was gone in for the messes. I wandered about and examined the place, as indicative of its occupants; and indicative it was to a considerable degree. There were two mangy emaciated skeleton puppies smothering themselves in the embers and ashes of the fire-place. The clothing lying on the berths was but a lot of the most squalid rags. There was not the sign of even a crust of bread; but there appeared no lack of bones outside. The cooking utensils were all over the floor, which seemed never to have been swept. And there was neither door nor shutter. First came home one shepherd, with his flock, then the other; both looking as sulky as hungry men generally look. The one of them bade me good evening, the other did not. By and bye a considerable time after dark the hut-keeper came with the rations; it was a fortnight's mess, and would weigh, salt and all, about ninety-four or ninety-six pounds; he had carried it nearly eleven miles. His first occupation was to curse the two old men for not having a good fire; such is the spirit which too pinching misery mostly engenders. He was a smart chap, but as ruffianly-looking as could be desired. However, he bade me good evening; in a few minutes he had a blazing fire, and put down the quart pots with water in, for they were allowed *an ounce of tea* each per week. When this is the case men make a couple of good pots of tea and have done with it for the rest of the week. Some mutton chops were soon in the pan; and these done, cakes were fried in the fat they yielded. They then set to and had their tea, inviting me. Not needing to carry my own stock beyond the hut, as I should be where I was welcome for a week by next day noon, I put it on the piece of bark which was put down on the floor for a table and joined them; it was at least three times the quantity

of each article that I was using of theirs. I mention this only because there is a general and very proper feeling among bushmen that one ought not, where stations are so miserably stinted, to use any of their provision without leaving a complete equivalent. Long before we were done, in came a couple more hut-keepers of stations further out, and these also made tea and cooked; then came a lot of four or five more; and still another and another, until there were thirteen or fourteen of us. Among others came two free men, mates, who were splitting stuff for a new station a few miles farther along the creek. These brought with them two half-gallon bottles of rum; of course it soon began to be served out. Next came out the cards, for there is hardly a station where these are not to be found; some men carry a pack in their pocket wherever they go, and amuse themselves with them whenever they can. Singing followed: songs they were, such as the reader would not thank me for transcribing. As the evening wore on, the tide of carousal deepened, and truly as it deepened it darkened. One man told how, some years before, when he was at Port Macquarie, a penal settlement of the most severe sort, he and two others had taken the bush and tried to make their way along the coast to Sydney, had got lost among the intricacies of that broken coast, exhausted their provisions, and were on the point of starving, when they met with a solitary black, whom they killed with his own tomahawk; and after their cannibal "feed," each cut off a limb and brought it on his shoulder for future supply. But all died in the mountains except this man, who at length, preferring any punishment to such sufferings as he had been enduring, gave himself up at the Coal River. It is impossible to determine whether this story was true or false; but I heard it told with my own ears, and if it shows nothing else, it shows how depraved men must have become who can relate or listen to such things as very good jokes, and as the ground of a claim to the admiration of those around them. Another, quite a young lad, related that he had that day seen at the farm one of the last new hands that had been sent up from Sydney convict barracks; that this new hand, also quite a youngster, was at the Euryalus hulk, in England, along with him, and had almost made "a stiff 'un" of him. For that he (this new hand), and three or four more of the biggest and strongest boys, used to "keep pigs," as it was there called; that is to say, they used to take away all their food from the little boys, and using the best, throw them back the offal (potato peelings, gristle, crusts), which they called feeding their pigs: and this had gone on without his daring to say a word about it, until medical skill could scarcely recover him. Another told, that when he was in an iron gang, employed in making the road over the Blue Mountains, at one period the work was so severe and the rations given by government so short, that hardly a man in the gang had a bit after Wednesday night; so that there were Thursday, Friday, and half of Saturday to be passed without food: and that the work

must be done, food or no food, or there was the triangles for it. Their only resource was to elude the camp sentries whenever they could, and go on the forage. Sometimes they managed to rob a dray; sometimes he had gone 12 miles and back before daylight to steal a little bag of growing maize; and once the whole gang had been superbly feasted from the carcass of a working bullock, which had died on the road side, and was so putrescent when those who went had cut their lots of flesh off it, that they could hardly carry it home. I imagine this was the secret of "the whole gang" coming in for a share. The prize owners found a small share sufficed for their appetites, and they gave the rest to their less enterprising comrades. But I pass from these hearsays to a few of the final facts of the night. When the rum was drunk a proposal was made to get more. It was overruled; but I could not fully understand that the method by which the rum was to be procured had been practised before, and that it was now only relinquished because of the darkness of the night, and the consequent difficulty of the messenger who should be sent making his way good to and from the point where it was to be obtained. But I check my pen. It is possible I may have misunderstood what was only intended, but not done, and of which the intention itself was only expressed in obscure hints, by disconnected phrases, and with the purest "slang" of the class. Quite far in the night all hands who meant to return to their huts had departed. A sheet of bark was laid down on the ground before the fire for me and one of the visitors — one of the flashest. I had noticed him all along bestowing particular observation on me; I even remarked his calling out one of the hands belonging to the hut after a species of scrutiny which I perfectly conceived. In about ten minutes they came in; again there was the same looking at me, and a few slang sentences passed, — I could not shut my eyes to what it meant. I took out, before I lay down, my little tin box and opened it, as if to see whether all was safe; put it in again, and jingled it against the coin. At length we lay down, after I had put on my jacket, as it was rather chilly, and we had but a single rag of blanket over us both, and a few dried sheepskins under us. My tin box and coin I left in the trowsers pocket, whilst my orders were in the sleeve as I have described. I knew he would never think of feeling there when there was the tin box in my pocket. I kept awake a long time to see if he would try for it, but not a finger did he move, snoring as if he would never wake again. At last, outwearied, I went to sleep, and then it could not be more than an hour before daybreak. With the first beams of the sun the shepherds began to bestir themselves. I awaked; my bedfellow was gone; all the contents of my upper pocket had melted into thin air. Nervously I clapped my hand up to the shoulder I had been so carefully lying on all night. All was safe: I had been too many for a professed hand; and, to tell the truth, I did feel not a little vain of my exploit. I did not say anything about my loss; for I have

no doubt it was a common concern, in which all belonging to the hut expected to get their “whack.” However, when they came to try to pass the order, whoever was agent would find himself in an awkward position. To me it was useless, as I was never likely to see the man again from whom I took it.

Such scenes as these might be multiplied till the reader's patience would be exhausted. But one suffices to depict the general truth as well as a thousand. It seems quite a maxim by prescription in New South Wales that “magistrates' men are generally the worst men.” If the term “severe” be added in qualification of the term “magistrates” I have no hesitation in adding my own most explicit affirmation. In fact by pointing out the severest magistrate at the head of the Hunter, and the severest again in the middle part of the river, and the severest again on the lower, you have expressly indicated the exact theatre of the three worst gangs of bushrangers which I remember to have infested that river during my whole long residence in the colony. In two of these cases I know also that the materials of the gangs were almost wholly men from the two farms relatively indicated. Of the other case I am not prepared to make this particular statement; though I have no doubt if it should be examined it would turn out the same. But one circumstance which I do happen to know about this latter magistrate, I think I ought not to leave unrecorded. It was notorious that he used habitually to sit and curse the poor wretches of convicts, nay even free men brought before him; used, I say, to sit and curse them from the bench in the most unmeasured cadences of profanity. I could tell of another magistrate, a military gentleman in charge of one of the iron gangs, who used to be intoxicated three-fourths of his time; and in that state preside in court, try, and sentence the helpless slaves over whom his power extended. The very man who sold him the rum used to lift up his hands in dismay and disgust at the work of his own poisonous merchandise. If any one should doubt these facts, he may convince himself on a large scale at once. Let him refer to the whole current of judgments which the Supreme Court of New South Wales has during the last twenty years given in the cases of magistrates; and again to the Indemnity Act, and the magisterial aggressions on the liberty of the subject which gave occasion for it. Indeed when the late lamented Dr. Wardle and W. C. Wentworth, Esq., commenced their professional practice in Sydney and dragged two or three serious cases to light, it was found necessary by the whole commission of the peace to turn over a new leaf; though much wrong of the most enormous character remained for years afterwards, and much still remains. I close with one further fact. When I passed through Wellington some years ago, the police authorities were flogging a man in front of the missionary's (the Rev. Mr. Watson's) house, *under his very windows*. I understood afterwards that that gentleman had lodged a

complaint about it, and that the police magistrates denied it. Now the thing itself is just as certain as the daily presence of the sun above us. It was the talk of the whole country side for months afterwards; with this additional particular, that the female part of Mr. Watson's family had been thrown into such a state of agonized excitement at the protracted yells that he knew not what to do to compose them; flying in vain from one room to another to avoid the frightful and intolerable offence; and furthermore that it was done to drive that gentleman away from the settlement, he and the police authorities being at variance. All parties are living, I believe. I purposely refrain from comments, unless it should be necessary for me hereafter to come to proofs. *'Parliamentary Papers relative to the Aborigines of the Australian Colonies, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 9th August, 1844,'* will give my voucher for the publicity of the report itself at p. 42. The rest that can be supplied remains for the present in abeyance.

Chapter XVIII. Up-Country Storekeeping.

Some account of beginning — List of articles and prices of purchase and of sale — Instructions to persons undertaking similar concerns — Occupation of another station in the interior

I NOW come to a period of my history which contains but little incident likely to interest the reader. All had gone on well enough at my own station during my absence under R——'s superintendence. He shortly afterwards married; and as the farm down the country where the old man and M—— lived had now, in the proper sense, a mistress of its own, M—— became my wife. Her residence henceforth was of course up the country. On removing to my station for a permanency our joint efforts soon put its business into a train which left us almost nothing to do daily. I particularly began to feel the time drag on very heavily. My wife's good genius again befriended me. She suggested that I should take the team to Sydney and buy a lot of goods of various kinds for sale: that she could always look to the sale of one lot whilst I went to town for another; and that great numbers of men who had checks to spend would find our station nearer than any other store. What money we could raise was immediately disposed in this way; and I took credit of a still further sum: the total was nearly 300*l*. But let me here remark that in the hands of a person unskilled in the habits of the bush this sum would have gone no great way. It was my perfect familiarity with the proportional demand for the various articles which rendered it amply sufficient for a very good beginning. Many persons even of long standing in bush life would have laid in a stock of which not more than one third in value would turn itself in twelve months. Of the lot of goods I selected we had not twenty pounds' worth (cost price) in the house by the end of eight months from the time we began to sell, or nine from my loading the dray with it in Sydney. The profits throughout were generally very good; the chief drawback on them was through bad debts and bad orders. Both these are disadvantages which in the up-country trade of New South Wales no caution or discrimination seems capable of entirely obviating. You must give credit or be content with less than half the trade; and you must take paper money when presented or lose your sale, though taking it thus you lie under the constant risk of putting some worthless scrap of paper, a

mere forgery, into your cashbox in return for six or seven pounds' worth of goods. The dealer who should refuse orders till he knew the names of all the various drawers would never make a trade.

It will not be a piece of valueless information to many of my readers, if I give them some notion of prices in an up-country store. This will be done most definitely and precisely, I think, by giving a description of our own little concern. At first we kept the goods in our sleeping room of a larger hut, which R—— had had run up whilst I was away; but when we had sold three loads, we had another compartment added for them, as the stock began to get too large for the space. The stock consisted of the following articles, of which the lowest sums stated were the cost price, as per invoice delivered with them in Sydney; the larger sums are the selling price up the country.

Tea	2s. per lb. cost price,	5s. per lb. retail price.
Sugar	3d. per lb. cost price,	8d. per lb. retail price.
Tobacco	1s. 6d. per lb. cost price,	6s. (excellent Australian.)
Soap	4d. per lb. cost price,	8d. (excellent Australian.)
Plums	4d. per lb. cost price,	1s. (excellent Australian.)
Currants	(account lost)	1s. 6d. (excellent Australian.)
Pocket-knives,	9d. each, by the dozen,	3s. each singly.
Trowsers	3s. 6d. to 15s. per pair,	7s. to 25s. per pair.
Jackets	5s. upwards .	11s. upwards.
Lace-up boots,	6s. per pair .	11s. 12s. 14s. according to size.
Shirts	15s. per dozen	30s. to 36s. per doz. 2s. 6d. to 3s. each.
Calico	4d. per yd, upwards to	7d. 8d. upwards to 1s. 6d.
Prints	4d. 5d. 6d. per yard	8d. 10d. 1s. per yard.
Blankets (good),	15s. per pair.	30s. per pair.
Silk handkerchiefs,	3s. 6d. each .	8s. each.

From the above list it will be perceived how great are the profits on some articles. On the bulk of articles, however, the profit is not more than 100 per cent. Still, on account of the much larger per centage on the goods that sell in greatest quantities, as tea, tobacco, sugar, pocket-knives, &c., the average advance on the invoice prices in a retail store is considerably over 100, perhaps even over 200 per cent. On the other hand, the expenses are heavy. The carriage of the goods so many miles of road by drays, which are often delayed several days, and even weeks, by the loss of their bullocks, or breaking an axle, or by floods, is very expensive. Taking the whole of our little trade together, we cleared rather above 100 per cent. during the first twelve months; and afterwards more than that, nearer I should say to 150. A large proportion of our sales, however, it must be remembered, were to settlers, and therefore wholesale: these were of course effected at much inferior rates.

In conformity with the resolution I have mentioned in a former part of

my history, we declined dealing in wine and spirits. This, however, is the source of the dealer's chief profit in general. But it is difficult to conceive how any man, who has a wife and rising family, can submit to having such scenes and language brought under their notice as invariably attend the locality of this species of trade. Our sale went steadily on for some years; other dealers, however, after some time sat down in the neighbourhood, and then it declined. Still, with both a reduced sale and reduced profits, we made, up to the time we ceased to have any connexion with it, 300*l.* per annum, one year with another. Altogether this species of speculation may be set down as one of the most profitable in New South Wales. The points to be attended to are these: — 1st. A good situation. There should be no other store near; and there should be a good labouring population at least ten miles round every way. 2nd. A well-assorted stock. I know of no available directions to give on this point; unless it be to get hold of some clerk who has been in an up-country store, and get an idea of the proportional sale of the various articles from him; or to get an opportunity of closely observing the proportions in a well-supplied store itself. 3rd. As speedy and sound a judgment upon the point of the trust-worthiness of individuals, high and low, as possible. Many settlers who could pay 10,000*l.* if they were compelled, will not pay one penny if they can help it. I have been to men who own land all over the country, half a dozen times, with an I. O. U. for 10*s.* Indeed the amount of capital thus fraudulently retained throughout the colony is quite incredible to persons unused to its customs. I am not aware of any test for discriminating “good marks” from bad ones, but careful and close study of the population with immediate regard to this specific question. My wife was the almost sole manager of this portion of our affairs, from the beginning to the end, which was better than seven years. My occupation consisted in bringing the goods from Sydney, looking after our cattle, and getting in every year such a crop of one thing and another as quite covered our own consumption; wheat, maize, potatoes, and tobacco being the staple. Our family consisted of two sons, both of them, like the whole white-native population, blessed with very good health. I should suppose there are few races, if indeed there is any race of men, in the habitual enjoyment of such sound health as the white Australians. Most of the young men are of very good stature; a great number quite extraordinarily so. The most obvious characteristic of the Australian white women is a peculiar and striking womanliness; a strongly feminine aspect and tone of voice; and I think I may add that the same quality runs no less distinctly into their style of thought and general mental character.

The last step of consequence in the way of business which I took, was the removal of my cattle and of a quantity of sheep which I had bought to some distance farther out. I should have observed, however, that I had

some time before become the purchaser of the ground on which my buildings stood, but I had to pay pretty well for it. My remarks on this head I reserve to a subsequent chapter, merely observing here that the cost of the whole tract on which my herd ran, and with less than which I could not have managed, was between 900*l.* and 1000*l.* On buying the sheep I was necessitated to take them a good way farther into the interior; and the cattle run being very much eaten down, I drafted off two-thirds of the herd and drove them out along with the sheep. As one of my objects was the construction of a second homestead for my second son, I chose for my headquarters a spot within the boundary of location, abutting on a large and fine grazing and depasturing tract as yet unoccupied, immediately without the boundary. Had I gone beyond the boundary I could not have made sure of purchasing; and really to build without purchasing (especially under Governor Gipps) was a very hazardous experiment for any person desiring the continued possession of his own property. Nearly two years wore away before we got everything snug. R——had had my horses running with his nearly from the first, much closer to Sydney than my station, for the sake of keeping near the opportunity of the best stock; but I now moved them up to the out-station. They were increased in number to thirty-seven, and several had been sold; and these things went on much in the same kind of progress till the events I am about to describe in the next chapters.

Chapter XIX. Attack by the Aborigines.

The necessity of arming the working-men at out-stations — News of attack brought by the hutkeeper — Journey to the station — Sheep found scattered in all directions — Both shepherds found murdered — Bodies removed to the hut — A night's watch — Reinforcement and pursuit — Recovery of the remnant of the flock — Extensive depredations of the blacks — Poison resorted to instead of fire-arms by the men for self-protection

ONE of our huts, with its two boughyards for the sheep, was on the very edge of the high bank of the ——— River. The river-bed was dry except for two large water-holes, one above and one below the hut; and the further bank is covered with dense forest and scrub: but all round the sheepyards for a mile every way on the near bank, a beautiful plain stretches almost without a hillock. The men employed at this station were all men purposely picked from the rest, as possessing most steadiness and courage; two of them had been for several years off and on at the out-stations about these parts, and one of them in particular was well acquainted with the principal blacks, and, to some extent, conversant with their language. They were told, if the blacks became troublesome, to come in to the head station (about seventeen miles) and fire-arms should be given them, but none were kept customarily at the station. We had no reason to apprehend any collision, and therefore did not prepare for it. And this indeed, just opposite to the theory of the colonial Government on the point, is the settlers' standing error: all men at out-stations ought to be armed; for the consciousness of power, whilst on the one hand it intimidates the aborigines, on the other placing the white man out of fear, keeps his mind clear of that bitter enmity to the blacks which otherwise takes possession of it, when, to use a common phrase, "he lives in hourly fear of his life from them." It is certainly much better that some little of the haughtiness of power should be manifested on that side where the power exists along with civilization, than that the balance should be cast the other way, and the savage be armed whilst the white man is left defenceless, giving the facility of aggression where it is least controlled by internal impulse and the habit of conformity to social rule.

At the station I have just described, which I had settled seven or eight months before and therefore supposed now to be quite safe, there was a flock of old ewes and a flock of wethers getting into condition for the butcher, about five hundred in each flock. The pasturage was very good, and altogether it was a station where I did not need to go above once in two or three weeks; and as the rations were' always sent out on a pack-bullock once a fortnight, and the station out of the direct line of travellers, it was seldom we heard anything of them beyond once every second week: and thus, in this case, the men were left without the protection which otherwise they should have had.

It was about a fortnight before Christmas, 184—, and very hot weather, and I was just come back from one of the other stations where I had been to count the sheep, when the hut-keeper from the ——— River station came hurrying across the square made by our buildings at the head station, bare-headed and barefooted, and covered with sweat and dust. I first saw him as I got off my horse, and directly knew something was wrong. He could hardly speak, having run, he said, almost the whole 17 miles. His story when told was, that that morning, after they had had their breakfast, the two shepherds had gone off with their flocks in the same direction, and he had taken his broom and shovel and gone into the yards to sweep them. Presently a whole mob of blacks, from a camp in the scrub on the opposite side of the river, came to the hut. Expecting they would steal something or other, he left his work and went into the hut to them. They soon began to ask for bread and “bullock” (beef), in a way which showed they did not mean to be denied; and then for tobacco. When they had all the provisions that were in the hut cooked, and all his tobacco, they then followed the shepherds. One of these was a very quiet, but a very obstinate old man. As the sheep had not begun to spread, the two shepherds were together in the space between the flocks, and the blacks soon came up to them. At this time one of the flocks started, and then the other shepherd set his flock in motion, and the blacks went on along with the shepherds to the edge of the plain. Thinking nothing would now happen, the hut-keeper went to his work again, doubting whether he should not come in and report that the blacks were getting more daring every day, as soon as he had done the yards. But he was not suffered to wait for that. He heard the yells of the blacks, and he thought a white man's coo-eh, and then he saw a party of them separate from that one of the shepherds they had followed and rush across to the other; and he could see several of these who were left behind beating something on the ground. On this, he jumped over the fence without waiting to get his boots out of the hut, and ran off across the plain for the track into the station as fast as he could. Before he got into the bush, some of the blacks had turned back toward the hut, but had most probably not observed him cross the plain, as there was a line of swamp with high

reeds in it nearly from the river to the bush, betwixt him and them, as soon as he got about a furlong from the hut.

Leaving this man behind, the overseer, who had now come up from the ploughed ground (for such news spreads like wild-fire) and myself started for the scene of this sudden tragedy, taking five men from different stations on the road with us — some our own men, some our neighbours'. It was nearly seven o'clock in the evening, through one delay and another, before we reached the spot. Little would it avail to tell persons in the quiet walks of civilized life what stern words break out of men's bosoms at such a time — how little one cares for food — how resistless swells the torrent of mingling anxiety and wrath, making every mile seem to the impatient soul a league, and the whole course of nature out of order till retribution be achieved. When we got out of the bush on to the plain, the first thing we noticed was that there was no smoke from the chimney. Then we caught sight as we rode on of about fifty of the old ewes huddled together down in the swamp among the reeds, and holding up their heads every now and then with that peculiar look which sheep have when there is anything seriously amiss. There seemed to be no blacks about the hut, so we drove them on with us and put them in the yard; there were a number more there which had strayed home as evening came on, gone into the yard, and lain down. As we were all armed, and seven in number, with a whole pack of first-rate bull-dogs and heavy lurcher-bred kangaroo-dogs, we needed no caution had there been a hundred of the blacks, for they are as cowardly as they are ferocious, but rode straight up to the hut door. All was in confusion; it had been ransacked, and everything of food and wearing apparel carried off. On going across to the spot where the shepherds were last seen, we found them lying about 200 yards apart, both quite dead. They were stripped of their clothing; both of them had been tomahawked, as the square-sided wounds answering to the pole of one of these weapons showed. Some more of the old ewes came past us as we stood by the murdered shepherd, but ran on seeing us to the yard as hard as they could. The other flock seemed gone altogether. So it turned out; the blacks, who want no "Protectors" to teach them to choose fat young mutton instead of old and lean, having driven them off bodily.

Our melancholy duty of bringing the two poor fellows to the hut was next performed: to have left them where they lay would have been to expose them to be devoured by the bush dogs in the night, unless some one could be found to watch them; and really we did not any of us care to do so much in deference to the mere forms of a law from which we well knew we were to obtain neither satisfaction for the past nor security for the future. It was quite dark when we got the two mangled bodies to the hut. Some of the men reported that they had tracked the wether flock across the river, in the direction of the blacks' camp, with the tracks of

the blacks over the sheep-tracks. It was thus evident they had driven off the whole flock in mass. I now sent the overseer to the farm for more hands and for provisions. The men that did not belong to us went back with him to their stations. Two of my own men and myself alone remained. We were not afraid of the aborigines attacking us before morning; they fear to move away from their camp fires after dark. But it was a melancholy, oppressive night nevertheless. It was very dark, and we did not like to stay in the hut where the dead lay, nor did we wish to light a fire, lest some of the aborigines more daring than the rest, should send a shot across the river at us; for we knew the tribe had fire-arms. The wind sighed and whispered and wailed among a lot of large river oaks which grew on a stony platform in the midst of the river; and the sheep kept rushing about in the yard, startled by the strangeness; and perhaps by a sense of the truth stronger than we commonly give dumb animals credit for perceiving. At length it occurred to us that if we made our fire on the off-side of the yards we should be secure enough from the aim of the blacks; especially as during the greatest silence we could hear nothing of them, their dogs, or the sheep; so that it was probable they were gone away with their booty.

About five o'clock in the morning the overseer returned with some bread and meat and tea and sugar, when we had breakfast. All the hands that could be spared (eight) followed, reaching about seven o'clock, by which time we had had our own breakfast and prepared for them. As soon as possible we got on the track, an old sheep-dog leading. He trotted on so fast when his master put him on the track and gave him the word "find 'em," that it gave the footmen sharp work to keep up with him. We came on their last night's camping place at about seven miles from the river; skins and half-picked bones were lying in all directions; even their dogs had been so overgorged that they had left heaps of offal untouched all about. They had not been gone above an hour: in less than another we came in sight of them; but capturing any of them was out of the question, for they saw us before we were within two miles of them. They were just heading into a ravine of the ——— ranges, and had between them and us full two miles of level plain. Making the best of our way up to the sheep we found nothing left that could give indication that a black had ever been there except a gin's water-couliman (a sort of bucket chopped out of the knot of a tree, in which they fetch water). We searched the bush in all directions, but not a gin or a pickaninny was to be found, much less a man. The sheep were nearly fifty short, — a loss I was very glad to be taxed with as the price of securing the rest. We drove them, of course, direct for home, but did not reach till late, as the sheep were so tired they were scarcely able to travel.

Information having at first been sent from the farm to the nearest police authorities, we of course expected the formality of a visit; but the

evening of the third day having come and no one arrived, we dug a grave on the other side of the river and buried the bodies. It was a measure indeed of necessity, for the climate does not admit of the dead being kept many days at this season of the year. We buried them on the opposite side of the river in case of the hut and yards coming into use again at some future time. I was obliged to move the sheep, for I could not get any men to stop at this station; less, however, from fear of the aborigines, if they were supplied with arms, than from repugnance to having the late melancholy catastrophe perpetually before their minds.

This affair, meantime, was but the beginning of some months of aggression. Both sheep and cattle, and even horses, were speared by these savages; and numbers of men's lives were lost through their fidelity to their masters' interests. I was, however, so fortunate as not to lose any more of my own men; but it was because I supplied them with arms and ammunition, and told them to take care of themselves. On the other hand, several of my neighbours were intimidated by the extraordinary delusion that had possessed the government on the point of "Protection of the Aborigines;" and took the arms away from their men. The consequence was, in several instances the lives of the poor fellows were either taken or attempted; whole flocks were driven away and dispersed; the cattle were speared, and the stations driven right in. I state one further fact here, but not on my own authority; the authority, however, is no less than the rumour of the whole country side: — the fact, that when the men at the farthest out-station found they were deprived of the use of fire-arms, they used poison, mixing a quantity of the corrosive sublimate used in compounding sheepwash into a damper, and giving it to the most troublesome of a tribe.

Chapter XX. Lamentable Public Transaction.

Entire misunderstanding of the subject of aboriginal protection in Great Britain — Incitement of the blacks to aggression by the establishment of a protectorate — The same result consequent upon some of our judicial proceedings in the Courts — The short-sighted partisanship of the protectors — Authentic state-document descriptive of the wholesale murders and robberies of settlers at the boundaries by the aborigines — Execution of seven white men for retaliation on a tribe who were destroying all before them — Awful increase of the murder and plunder of settlers by the blacks immediately consequent; and continuous till the virtual renegation of its Act by the Government

THE aggressions of the aborigines along the whole border of civilization grew worse and worse daily; and they involved generally the loss of life as well as the loss of property. I think I need not have the slightest hesitation in saying that no such state of things in this respect as now existed had ever happened before since the settlement of the colony. There had been often enough local and transitory outbreaks of the retaliatory disposition of the blacks; but there was never before an entire line of active hostility circumscribing the territory along its whole boundary. So perfect and so simultaneous was this “rising,” as it may be properly enough called; so coincident was it, both in character and in occurrence, that no one at all used to the classification of causes and effects, and to observing their inseparable relation, could fail to call it one effect, proceeding from one and a common cause. That cause can alone be found in a mutual understanding of the point by the whole line of native tribes from north to south. Nor is there any ground on which this understanding could have proceeded except a general knowledge, spread along the whole line of native tribes, of the fact that the highest public authorities were every day manifesting a more mature determination to carry out the protection of the native tribes without a corresponding regard to the protection of the settlers.

I am not at all inclined to deny, I fully believe, that the acts in which

the protection of the blacks was carried out had their origin in a most proper aim and most praiseworthy feelings; but that these feelings gradually became morbid, and that the blacks, partly by listening to conversation in the huts of the stockmen along the boundary, and partly by repeating among themselves what they heard, detected its morbid and one-sided character, is apparently not less undeniable — hence their simultaneous and unanimous system of aggression. Accounts of the disposition of the authorities travelled from Sydney to the out-stations; at the out-stations the extra-colonial blacks got hold of it; and presently, along the whole boundary-line of the colony, the sheep are driven away, the cattle and horses speared, the men killed, and the stations driven in. Not a day passed for many months without tidings coming to our head station of somebody's hut robbed by the blacks, or cattle met with in the bush speared, or shepherds, terrified at the bloodthirsty demeanour of tribes which hitherto had been quite quiet, driving in their flocks, and refusing to go out again with them. Remonstrance after remonstrance was made to the authorities by the settlers, but all to no purpose. Indeed it was with worse than no advantage that these remonstrances were made; for they actually provoked only reiterated assurances from the authorities that the blacks should be protected; and this state of things again communicated to the blacks, they were led on step by step to a clear conviction that, for some mysterious reason or another, “King George” had quite changed his mind, and had now become their protector and partisan, as he had hitherto been the white man's.

Much of this evil arose from the absurdity of some of our legal proceedings in the courts. Naturally it must give these ignorant savages feelings of no very great awe toward our criminal tribunals to find one and another of their number, after being caught and taken to Sydney, and tried for a horrible murder which they knew he had committed, come back liberated and loaded with presents, on the strength of some informality: especially when this occurred often. But the final mischief, and indeed infinitely the worst, was done by the “Protectorate of the Aborigines,” as it was called, and by the indiscreet confidence with which the “Protectors” and their mission were treated by the governor. Nothing can be more true than that the various “Protectors” were gentlemen of highly humane and conscientious principle; but they came to the colony expressly as advocates of one party, and therefore antagonists of another, and as such should have been all along regarded; whereas it cannot but be clear now to every one that an almost unlimited confidence was placed in their representations, and an almost unlimited play given to their designs, by him who should have stood as an arbiter between the two parties. When these gentlemen went out among the blacks first their title was explained: that was at once a foundation for future misconception. Then they gave presents to the blacks without

requiring any work in return: here was plain proof that they were the authorised emissaries of “King George.” Again, they told their business at length — told it to the native tribes with all that excited sympathy which might be expected from the men who would seek such an office. Then followed promises of protection, uttered in all the warmth of earnestness, with all the force of that broad figurative phraseology which a person uses who, being unacquainted with a language, is yet determined to convey his meaning in it as well as he can. They could make none of the nice distinctions of conditional protection understood by the savages: they were infinitely too much in earnest in their one-sided humanity to say too little; all that remained for them was to say too much; all that they could effect was this impression on the mind of the savage — *‘that, whatever became of the white man, he (the Aborigine) was to be protected.* Only those who know the Australian Aborigines can conceive how shrewd they are in direct and simple perceptions, and how perfectly infantile in judgments where compass of thought is required, and where one leading principle lies under extensive modifications from others. Thus the “Protectors” had no notion of the mischief they were doing; whilst it was none the less real. To give some faint general notion of what was now going on, I shall extract from ‘Parliamentary Papers, Aborigines of Australian Colony, 9th August, 1844,’ pp. 213, 214, a representation of their losses in a few weeks made by the settlers of Port Fairy only. It is a little out of order in course of time, bearing date in the early part of 1842; but is still just a fair counterpart of what took place in my own locality at the time I speak of.

List of outrages recently committed by natives in the neighbourhood of Port Fairy.

Man killed, 100 sheep taken, and hut robbed of everything it contained, including a double-barrelled gun, with ammunition.

300 sheep and 100 tons of potatoes.

Five horses taken, and seven head of cattle killed; 56 calves; also 33 driven off; and two men wounded. The station has been attacked four times.

600 sheep taken, of which 130 were recovered; hut robbed, and two double-barrelled guns taken; 10 cows and 40 calves killed; hut attacked several times, and man severely wounded.

Three flocks attacked simultaneously, one of which was taken away, and the shepherd desperately wounded. The major part was eventually recovered; one man taken, but recovered.

200 sheep taken, and man speared.

Shepherd fired at.

Two horses taken, station attacked, and flock of sheep carried off, and

shepherd dreadfully wounded.

Two horses killed, hut robbed, and men driven off the station.

Shepherd killed; found with a spear through his heart.

One horse taken.

30 sheep.

50 sheep.

250 sheep, and *man wounded.*

50 sheep.

260 sheep, and *man killed.*

300 sheep.

700 sheep taken, but mostly recovered.

180 sheep, station attacked and robbed, and *hut-keeper severely wounded.*

A very valuable bull killed, and a number of calves.

Six cows, three bullocks, 20 calves, *man killed*, and cattle driven off.

200 ewes, and 150 lambs.

450 ewes and lambs.

These losses have principally occurred within the last TWO MONTHS.”

Making 12 white men either killed, or wounded severely, in about *two months in one small district.*

At length the settlers were compelled to take the law into their own hands, and defend themselves. From mere passive resistance, the mind is soon provoked to retaliation. Stockmen who were held responsible for cattle had no alternative but to defend them; and that defence was only possible by the extermination of the aggressive party. At length a catastrophe, terrible in all its phases alike, took place. Some stockmen, whose cattle had been extensively destroyed, and who had been kept for months in continual fear of being themselves murdered, seized almost a whole tribe, whom they had reason to suspect were variously implicated in the outrages, and marched them out to a formal execution. Some magistrate, on the Hunter's River, got wind of it, arrested the parties, and sent them for trial to Sydney, where they were convicted of the act, after being tried twice: the plea of *autrefois acquit* being over-ruled, it was called murder; and they, seven in number, were executed. The following account was given on the first trial, which took place in November, 1839.

“GEORGE ANDERSON, *examined.* — I am assigned servant to Mr. Dangar; I was at his station at Myall Creek, as hutkeeper, for five months, in June. Mr. Hobbs lives there as superintendent; he left home, to go to the Big River, in the beginning of June; when he left, there were some native blacks there; I have said there were twenty, but I am sure there were that number, and upwards; I would not swear there were not forty. While master was away, some men came on a Saturday, about ten;

I cannot say how many days after master left; they came on horseback, armed with muskets and swords and pistols; all were armed; I was at home when they came, and the stock-keeper; I was sitting with Kilmeister, the stock-keeper, in the hut; I saw them coming up; they came up galloping, with guns and pistols pointing towards the hut; I did not attend to what they said; they were talking to Kilmeister outside. I know Russel, Tolouse, Foley, Johnstone, Hawkins, Kilmeister, Palliser, Lamb, and Oates; Blake and Parry I do not know. About ten came up to the hut, as near as I could tell; I will not swear Parry was not of the number, but I did not see him; I never saw any of them before then, except Kilmeister; I cannot say which came up first; they were all spread about; the blacks were all encamped ready for the night; they were not more than two yards from the hut; this was about an hour and a half before sundown; there were plenty of women and children amongst them. The blacks, when they saw the men coming, ran into our hut, and the men then, all of them, got off their horses; and Russel had a rope, which goes round a horse's neck, and began to undo it whilst the blacks were in the hut. While he was undoing it, I asked what they were going to do with the blacks, and Russel said, 'We are going to take them over the back of the range, to frighten them.' Russel and some one or two went in; I only took notice of Russel going in while the blacks were in; I remained outside; one of them remained in; I heard the crying of the blacks for relief or assistance to me and Kilmeister; they were moaning the same as a mother and children would cry; there were small things that could not walk; there were a good many small boys and girls. After they were tied, I saw Russel bring the end of the rope out they were tied with, and gave it one of the men on one of the horses, I cannot say which. The party then went away with the blacks; the man who took the rope from Russel went in front, and the others behind; all the blacks were tied together, and this rope tied them all fast; they were tied with their hands; one black fellow had on a pair of handcuffs; they were all fastened with one rope; it was a tether rope for horses in a field; it is a very long rope; they brought out the whole except two, that made their escape as the men were coming up; they were two little boys, and they jumped into the creek close to the hut; there was no water in it; they escaped at a dry part; one black gin they left with me in the hut; they left her because she was goodlooking; they said so; I forget which; another black gin they left that was with Davy, another black fellow, who was with me; there was a little child at the back of the hut when they were tying this party, and when the blacks and party were going away, this little child, as I thought, was going to follow the party with its mother, but I took hold of it and put it into the hut, and stopped it from going. I had two little boys, the small child, two gins, and Davy and Billy; they all went away except these; the child was going after its mother. There

was an old man, named Daddy, the oldest of the lot; he was called Old Daddy; he was an old, big, tall man; this Daddy and another old man, named Joey, they never tied along with the rest; they were crying, and did not want to go; they made no resistance. Some of the children were not tied, others were; they followed the rest that were tied; the small ones, two or three, were not able to walk; the women carried them on their backs in opossum skins; the small children were not tied that followed the mob; they were crying, in and out of the hut, till they got out of my hearing. They went up towards the west from the hut, the road way; Kilmeister got his horse ready, after he had done talking to them, and just before they were going to start; he went with them on horseback, and took the pistol with him; he was talking to them five or ten minutes; I did not take notice what he said; I was frightened; I did not pay any attention to what they were talking about. Hall's Jemmy (Oates) had a pistol. I know Foley; he had a pistol in his hand, standing at the door while the blacks were inside. I did not take any notice of swords at first; at a distance, when they were galloping up, I saw swords and pistols. Kilmeister went with them when they started; they were not in sight above a minute or so after they went away; about a quarter of an hour, or twenty minutes at the outside, I heard the report of two pieces, one after the other; the reports came from the same direction they went; the second was quite plain for any one to hear; I only heard two; I did not hear anything else but those two. It was just before sundown, next night after, the same men came back to the hut where they took the blacks from; they were all together of a lump, except Kilmeister, who was left behind; one of the party gave Kilmeister's saddle off his horse, and I asked him where Kilmeister was; he came in about twenty minutes after; they stopped all night. I and Kilmeister slept together in one berth; the rest all slept in the hut; they were talking; I cannot recollect what they said. Next morning, three of them, after they had breakfast, took firesticks out of the hut, Russel, Fleming another, and Kilmeister another; and before they took the firesticks, Fleming told Kilmeister to bring the leg-rope with him that ropes the cows; Kilmeister asked me for the leg-rope, and I gave it to him, and they went in the same direction as they took the blacks and that I heard the two pieces. One of the men was left behind, and all the rest went with those who had the firesticks; one was left with me as guard, named Foley. While they were away, Foley and I were in the hut together, and the rest away; during the time they were away, I asked Foley if any of the blacks had made their escape; he said none, that he saw; he said all were killed except one black gin. Before the party came back, Foley drew one of the swords out of the case, and showed it to me; it was all over blood. During that time Davy and Billy came to the hut; in about an hour the other men came back to the hut; I saw smoke in the same direction they went; this was soon after they went with the

firesticks; when they came back, I do not recollect what they said; they got upon their horses, and Fleming told Kilmeister to go up by and bye and put the logs of wood together, and be sure that all was consumed; I do not recollect his saying anything; some of them were in the hut, and must have heard it. Kilmeister, directly after the party went from the station, went in the same direction and brought back the horse he left behind; he said in the morning he was going after his horse down the creek; the smoke was up from the creek, up the ranges; I never went to the place; I did not like to go; Davy went, and he came back. Kilmeister was away in the middle of the day; he said the horse was knocked up, and not able to walk; I saw him; he could catch him anywhere. I saw the smoke pretty well all day; at the first beginning there was a great smoke; in the after part of the day there was not much. I was there when Mr. Day came; Kilmeister was at home when the police were coming; in the morning after they went away a piece of a broken sword was found; it was a broad piece, all dirty; I saw no blood on it; it was in the hut; I gave it to Mr. Hobbs when the police went away from the station; it did not belong to my station; it came with the party; it looked like a piece of a handle, as a guard; I gave it to him one night as he was in bed; he returned it; this was after the police went away. When the police came, Kilmeister was at home; he said, 'For God's sake, mind what you say, and not to say I went with them, but in a quarter of an hour after them:' this was not true; he went with them at the same time. They brought back no black gin they saved; the gins they left, and the two boys, and the child I sent away with ten black fellows that went away in the morning. The same evening, in the night, the ten black fellows came back, which Forster had taken away in the morning, and I turned them (five) away along with those ten; it was moonlight; I sent them away as I did not like to keep them, as the men might come back and kill them.

“Cross-examined. — They came back in the night; I was in bed at the time. I did not ask to have that gin left behind; I did not ask for one; it was when they were going away when they undid one gin for me. They left Davy; he had been there a good while; he was more naturalized than the others; the others were as quiet as he; I did not dream they would take Davy. There was a gin left for me; I did not ask them to leave a gin; I did not ask for the gin they left; I asked for one I had had before; she was a black fellow's gin. I swear I stayed in the hut after they left; I stayed there all night, except I wanted a bit of wood. Davy slept on the station in the overseer's hut; I never went to the place after Davy came. I saw smoke in the direction they went; there was no smoke the same day or day before; there was no bush on fire. I heard the shots distinctly, quite plain. I told Hobbs they took the blacks away, and I could not help it. I do not recollect his asking me who they were; I told him I did not know who they were; I never knew them before. I never said I was sorry

I did not make it stronger or worse against Kilmeister; I do not swear I did not say it to Burrowes. At first I identified only one man before Mr. Day by name: I recollect since, the night after they came back, who they were by name; I only identified one or two by name. I swore to all the others by their faces, not by their names. I knew them to be the same men, and only knew the faces of others; the two names were Russel and Fleming; the rest I knew by face; I knew Russel. I said before Mr. Day, and I told Hobbs, that I did not know them by name; I did not say that I could not tell them; I did not swear to all by name. I had two examinations, as I wanted to speak the whole of the truth; I recollected more than I stated at the first examination. I have been here five years and better; I came for life. I never said this would get me my liberty; I neither expect nor hope for my liberty; I do not ask for anything, only for protection. I do not know what made it worse for Kilmeister, as he was as bad as the rest; I forgot it before. I do not recollect the magistrate saying I should be committed: he said I might be committed for thinking; I said I did not think I should know them again; I began to think all that happened; it was after I began to recollect the whole of what was said and done that I spoke. I have been punished twice since I have been in the colony: once for neglect of duty, and the second time for being absent; I was helping a man with his cattle, to assist him in driving cattle, with his horse and dray. I was never punished at that station; I was at New England; I did not deserve it on that occasion. I was brought from New England to Patrick's Plains; I was eight days coming down, and I walked hard there and back. It was for not shifting the sheepfolds every day. There were two charges against me; one for being away; I was away from the morning till the afternoon; I went five or six miles; I got two fifties. I came here for life, for robbing my master; I was ignorant and foolish, and misled by different people; I am no thief. I was guilty of telling another one to do it, and being concerned I was transported. I was an apprentice; I was never out of streets in my life at nights for five or six years. Foley was left behind as a guard; they said, 'Let him stop in case the blacks should come.' This was as a guard over the arms left with me; I thought it was done to make me believe there was danger. I have been frightened by blacks; I saw a black fellow come one night; he never spoke, but ran away when I spoke; that was not Mr. Hobbs's station. I knew Old Joey at the station; he was a stout old man, but not so stout as Daddy. There was King Sandy, and his wife and child; Sandy was taken away, and his wife and child; Hippeta was the one I wanted; I am sure Sandy was taken away, Joey and Daddy, and Tommey; I could name a good many by what they called one another. Those that went away with the rope, they had been there a good while. I did not know the names of all the men; I knew Daddy, and Joey, and little Charley, and Sandy. King Sandy was the father of Charley.

“Re-examined. — Davy never belonged to the tribe; he belonged to the Peele; he came with Charley Neeve, with cattle to the station. The blacks were there when Davy came; Davy was among Dangar's people as long as I knew them, backwards and forwards, and other places. When I told Hobbs I did not know the prisoners, I answered that I did not know them before. Before Mr. Day examined me Kilmeister was given in custody; I was then examined. I did not identify only one by name. I was in bed when I was called, and all of a tremble. One of the servants came, and called me up; when I saw them all I knew them by sight; there were two not there; as soon as I saw them I identified them as the persons who came to the hut. It was over the arms Foley was left to guard; they left two swords, pistols, and muskets; I counted myself fifteen pistols. The roof of the spout where the water ran off the hut was full of pistols. There were two Sandys; King and the other went down. King Sandy went with Forster, and left two of his gins behind.”

To enable the reader to estimate truly this chapter of our penal justice, a few remarks will be valuable; for as I have observed, notwithstanding the loud and earnest remonstrances of the settlers, the authorities persisted in the execution of the prisoners.

1. The execution took place in spite of a protest from eleven of the jurymen on the first trial, and a recommendation to mercy signed by ten of the jurymen on the second.

2. From time immemorial it had been the custom for influential settlers to head parties like this, against the blacks. All former governors had sanctioned this method of proceeding, by immediate reprisals; and some of these men had thus been initiated into it. They were hanged for doing what they had been taught was perfectly lawful by the masters; and some of those masters magistrates of the territory. Some less punishment than deprivation of life should have been resorted to, to indicate positively to these ignorant men the change in the law, or rather of the interpretation put upon the old law by its new administrators.

3. The law was in effect punishing men for remedying its own neglect. It was morally certain no stop would be put to the outrages of the aborigines by the law; no stop was put to them by the authorities, so long as the causes remained. Were parties then to bear or to repress them? If to repress them, then the law, which declined to direct the character of the proceeding, should not have interfered to judge it. Surely where law does not pretend to reach for the protection of a party, it should not extend for his punishment in protecting himself. If, on the other hand, parties were expected to bear with the outrages of the aborigines beyond the boundaries, it was just saying — “If your cattle increase faster than it suits us to survey, you must put up either with their dying of starvation within the colony, or by the spears of the blacks without:” — a novel method, one would say, of advancing our colonial interests.

4. The sacrifice of these seven men's lives to the protection theory, it was all along enforced upon the authorities, by those who knew the habits and character of the aborigines, would make matters worse instead of better. It did so. The blacks became more outrageous; and great numbers of them fell victims to the vindictive spirit which this ruthless proceeding kindled in the breasts of the stockmen.

From this time forward (*i. e.* from the execution of the seven stockmen) the mischief increased. The blacks were driven out of huts where hitherto they had always found countenance and kindness. They in retaliation either did, or incited the wilder blacks to do, violence to the settler's property and to his men's lives. Then again, in return, the men and many of the masters shot them, with no more compunction that they would so many bush-dogs, in the secrecy of the bush, and left them there. From what I heard at several stations far out, I think there can be no doubt but that some of the more ruffianly and ferocious among the whites got rid of those they most dreaded of the wilder tribes by poison. Nor was it till the perfect futility of the Protectorate project as originally promulgated became so self-evident that its most chivalric disciples abandoned it as of much too Quixotic a cast for common taste; and thus the government began again to tolerate or quietly to connive at the system it had lately denounced with such a horrible emphasis, that matters came to rights. At length, when the nature of our position at those distant and unguarded out-stations came to be better understood, together with the necessity of submitting to either vast loss of stock or else of continuing this system of migration over the boundary; and especially when the incorrigibleness of the blacks, by anything contained in the Protectorate scheme, was made evident, the original and customary course of things was permitted to return. The matter fell into its true and old form, from which it should never have been disturbed: a simple question of *intimidation* (nothing more) between the musket and the spear. And every black's common sense solves this question so readily and correctly and uniformly, that the simple consciousness of its being the true and only question is sufficient at any time to bring them into a state of submission. And if we want more than that, if we want a league of peace on equal grounds, really there is no road to it but that we give up their land and forsake their country: for this and this only is the true source of aggravation. It is the white man at large, not the individual, upon whom their enmity is pointed. The miserable rebuff which our philanthropy has met with is only a new enforcement of the old axiom — that men should be just before they are generous. The blacks cannot be conciliated unless by giving up their country. If they are to be intimidated, it must be by something that is more prompt and effective than their own spear, and less dilatory than our law.

Chapter XXI. Remarks at Large.

Determination to revisit England — Remarks on the iniquity and inexpediency of the present land-regulations — Remarks on the indiscriminate arrest of the person without a warrant permitted throughout the colony — Remarks on the Hired Servants Act, and on the treatment of free emigrant labourers by the Magistrates' Courts — Remarks on the awful state of the ultra-penal settlements — Remarks on the moral and religious necessities of the population at large — Remarks on the proper treatment of the aborigines

NOTHING but the common occurrences of agricultural and pastoral life presents itself among my personal recollections after the period treated of in the last chapter for a considerable time. My two sons, as they grew up, took kindly, as almost all the Australians do, to rural occupations. The eldest I left chiefly at the out-station, and the youngest was mostly with myself and his mother at the farm I first settled on. My own health at last took such a serious turn for the worse that the doctor advised a return to my native clime. The hardships I had endured in the early part of my career in New South Wales, along with too great activity afterwards, were the only probable causes for it. I may say that, for years, I slept in wet bedding. The damp is so great in the perpetual shadow of the cedar-brush that when, during a more than usually long stretch of wet weather, our blankets have become palpably wet, and we have attempted to dry them at the fire before going to bed, the steam would reek up from them as if from a boiling copper. And I really always fancied I felt their damp coldness on lying down strike more chill to me than when we turned into them just as they were. Perhaps this was because of the warmth just felt at the fire in drying them. Again, on the roads, it is usual, when travelling with a dray, to sleep underneath it, with a good tarpaulin spread over all right down to the ground on every side except at the tail of the dray, before which the fire is made for the night. Every bed should have a sheet of dry bark first laid down for it to be spread on. But this precaution is often neglected, or perhaps the bark, through lying on very wet ground for many nights, becomes saturated so that one side is almost as wet as the other; or a shower comes unexpectedly when the

bedding is exposed. Again, in the bustle of such an active life as mine, one has not time to be ill by instalments, and so I suppose the whole debt of this kind which nature claims of us has to be paid at once. The excitement of strong purpose probably keeps off the sense of exhaustion till this becomes downright illness and will not be any longer neglected. Suffice it that there appeared no alternative. When I first arrived in New South Wales the perspiration used to flow profusely during the hot days; it now was substituted by a constant burning heat without the slightest moisture; and at times by a sense, for hours, of icy coldness, while to the eye the whole atmosphere was, as it were, in a blaze, and the surface of the earth too hot for the feet to stand for more than a few seconds bare on the sand. It may be of advantage to some in the colony who have begun to experience similar symptoms to learn that, though the voyage was trying and the cold very painful in England when I first arrived, I am now obtaining the most sensible benefit, and consider myself in the direct road to completely renovated health.

Before I proceed to the closing chapter of my narrative it will, I think, be felt desirable that I should return to a few points, and complete my statements about them by some general remarks, comprising my own view of each subject in its practical light.

First, the Land Regulations. — That these are the most excellent things in theory that statesmanship ever imagined, I am not prepared to dispute. That they suit pretty well the highest class, those who legislate in the colony, those from whom the legislators of the colony are drawn, those from whom emanate the representations which by one means and another are rendered so influential in the Imperial legislature, may also be true. But they suit nobody else. Their effect is principally two-fold. They entirely prevent persons of small property from becoming landholders and agriculturists; by which again they coercively construct an immensely larger labouring class than otherwise would exist in the colony. Consequently the rich landholder both keeps the produce market to himself; and again procures labourers at a vastly lower rate of wages. He diminishes the competition with himself in the produce market, and just so much increases the competition among the labourers in the labour market. The minor consequences are these: — a very bitter and continually deepening feeling of disaffection to the British Government and its Australian employés in the minds of the colonial youth. There is a settled sense among them that they are debarred of their rights. I was told some time ago of this remarkable fact, — that there were not half a dozen of the Australian youth in the British army; and I am persuaded that unless this feeling be looked after and allayed, it will eventually result in the separation of the colony from British jurisdiction: for, when it comes to the point to save their possessions, the rich will go with the poor. At present, and nothing can be more certain, the whole rising and mature

race of Australians of the middle and lower class look on our dominion as an usurpation, and as one of the most selfish character. They say, and truly enough, — Great Britain sends out two classes here: one of these, as being rich, originally obtained vast grants of land for nothing, and is still allowed to buy on terms to which it can conform; the other, as being poor, is not even allowed to buy, because the very condition of purchase is that the purchaser be rich. The rich have delivered their right with their riches to their offspring, — he who has already too much can get more. The poor, with their poverty, have delivered to their children a list of rights deficient in the grandest particular, the right to hold land; thus, right to land is the birthright of a certain class, whilst to all others it is denied. Another effect of this large farm system is this, — Australia is liable to periodical famines; the rich find labour so scarce and stock-holding so profitable that they naturally throw all their force of labour into the latter, and have none comparatively left for agriculture; on the contrary, the poor man, having no stock or but little, would naturally betake himself to the agricultural use of the soil; but the land being put up for sale only in such large tracts he cannot buy. Thus the very class whose labour would naturally direct itself against that periodical scourge of Australia, famine, is denied the means of doing so, and a whole population every three or five or seven years is subjected to this sore penalty for the undue advancement of a class, and that the smallest. The hoe crops in Australia very commonly succeed when the plough crops fail: the rich settler works his land with the plough, the poor with the hoe; a still further token of the intrinsic error of the present arrangements. Finally, the monetary condition of the country and the moral condition of the labouring class are most injuriously affected by the present system. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent by the labouring population in the public-house which would have been spent in the purchase of little farms, if such were purchaseable. The Australian labourer is naturally improvident. He cannot keep money by him till he has several hundreds of pounds; and unless he can purchase his ten or twelve acres of land when he receives his wages, he will never possess it at all. And this the great people well know. *I feel confident that if small farms of 10, 20, 50, 100 acres could be purchased, a new and most useful class would be immediately constructed, which would gradually and speedily increase; all the British exports which a family needs would be thus brought into increasing demand; money, which would otherwise be assuredly spent in public-houses, would be turned into a useful channel; and the strong feeling of political disaffection which is establishing itself in the native-born population, which will soon infinitely out-number all the rest, would be met on the very ground it grows on, and be checked.* At present he who wants to buy a farm must first get rich. Australia is no place for any poor man who wants to settle

his little farm and gradually go on as his own master from little things to greater. If any one wish to be a servant for twenty years first, and then begin to farm, Australia is his ground. My own case was a peculiar one. I had an excellent trade, and a first-rate constitution for labour. I have often worked eighteen hours a day, which under a burning sun few can do. The opportunities of large gains, which the cedar trade once offered, are now at an end, and can never be renewed. The occupation of land now is not permitted to go on as it did when first I bought my cattle. Had things been then as they are now, my success would probably have been very different. Besides, I had what is commonly called "very good luck;" such perhaps as not above one in fifty would meet with. But if, on the other hand, any one can be satisfied with common farming or grazing employments for years, at 20*l.* and 25*l.* per annum, I may give him this assurance, he will never want for a job in Australia. One settler will no sooner have done with him than he will find the next ready to employ him.

Second — The arrest of free persons on suspicion of being bushrangers. If the state of things on this point could be clearly represented to the British labourer before he starts from home, not one in twenty would subject himself to it. The emigration agents never tell anything against their case: this matter among others is never hinted at. Yet surely people ought to be told. For a free person cannot even come out of the colony without great trouble. In the vessel I returned by, I saw, on a cold wet morning, all the fore cabin passengers compelled to turn out, and come on deck and show "their liberty," as it is called. The captain answered for all of us in the after-cabins; but everybody forward, even to women with infants at the breast, were turned out on the deck in the rain, to parade before two dirty constables with cutlasses in their hands. It happened that every person could give satisfactory evidence of being free; but it just as often happens that constables drag on shore some party they are not satisfied with. And this the colonial law expressly authorizes; whilst at the same time nothing is more difficult than to get from the authorities a proper protective document. Now, either people should be frankly told what they are going to subject themselves to before they emigrate, or else some satisfactory change should be immediately made in the law and custom of the colony. Clearly nothing can be more outrageously unjust than to make it penal to have been always free. Again, that vague term of the law "reasonable" cause of suspicion should be defined. As it stands, the law itself can only give redress for outrages so gross as are rarely likely to occur; the great body of wrong arrests passes with impunity. Here, also, I may properly advert to the "Farm Constable" and "Private Lock-up" systems. I know it to be a common thing for the larger settlers to send their men to the lock-up on their farms, ostensibly and orally to be kept secure to go to court;

then after having inflicted such a period of confinement on them as they think fit, to let them out to their work. In plenty of cases, the master knows very well that he has no charge against the man for which he is legally liable, and sends him to the lock-up for that very reason. All this arbitrary and injurious authority should be done away with. A proper protective document should always be handed to emigrants on arrival; and afterwards, if lost by accident, or worn out, or stolen, there should be a facility for its immediate renewal. Every person entitled to such a protection, throughout the colony, should be furnished with one at the outset; and some particular official should be appointed at every court, whose duty it should be to attend to the claims which would be made under this provision. Nothing, I repeat once more, can be more absurd and more heinously unjust than to lay a penalty, to all British men so severe, upon the free labourer, for the master's neglect to keep in safe custody the convict labourer which the public bounty has assigned him. The convict's safe custody by the master is part of the compact of assignment. What person in possession of his moral senses would think of laying the penalty of the neglect of the party benefited by the arrangement (the master) upon the party injured by it (the free labourer)? Surely it is bad enough for him that the bondman should be brought into competition with him in the labour market: to saddle him still further with the safe custody of his competitor is too barefaced.

Third — The Hired Servants' Act. This is another of those statutes under which the benches of New South Wales develop the most surprising conceptions of law and equity. Some years ago a member of one of the highest mercantile firms in England, who has a farm in New South Wales, engaged and sent out a lot of free labourers. Among these was a shoemaker, who, on hiring, never supposed himself hiring as anything else than a shoemaker. When he had been some months up the country (far in the interior), the superintendent of the farm came home on Sunday afternoon, and found all the men away but this man; he was in his hut. The superintendent ordered him to go down to the river and cut some grass for his horse. The man refused, saying "it was Sunday." Next day the superintendent brought him before the adjacent bench, *every member of which was his own intimate acquaintance*: he was convicted, under the Hired Servants' Act, of refusal to work; and sent for SIX MONTHS TO GAOL. This passed under my own observation, and indeed was one of the very incidents which determined me to write this book. If such cases as these occurred rarely, one would think but little of them; but they take place continually, in every quarter of the country, except Sydney and two or three of the larger towns, where there are lawyers continually in and out of the courts, witnessing the proceedings. The very presence of gentlemen learned in the law seems to invest the magistracy with a faculty of correct interpretation quite admirable, when

looked at comparatively with what they possess in the converse case. I am not prepared to suggest any remedy in this case. The appointment of paid magistrates was considered some time ago to be an attempt to remedy evils in the administration of the law at the inferior courts, of which this was one; but I do not believe it did any good. The police magistrate gets acquainted with his settler neighbours who are honorary members of the bench; and the same system goes on, only with this difference, that it is at second-hand. I incline to fear that for this particular evil there is no remedy except the dread of public opinion in England, and fear of its effects on the various colonial interests.

Fourth — The horrid iniquities of the ultra-penal settlements. — This point I have entirely omitted in the body of my book. For first I could state nothing from observation; and secondly, I knew that the subject could not be handled descriptively without rendering the volume inadmissible into families where a proper store is set upon a decorous style of feeling and sentiment. Let the following general particulars suffice. At these places of banishment, great numbers of the most depraved, obscene, and desperate men are brought together. No females are allowed within the limits of these atrocious dens. It is not enough for government to concentrate into one mass all that earth by her last worst processes sublimes of hell, but the alleviating element must be carefully distilled off and kept away. The fiend of pure solitary physical selfishness then stands incarnated in all his aptitude for violence and lust. A discipline to match such a case can as well be conceived without description as by it. Nor are emissaries to carry out such a discipline found wanting. Continually, under the intolerable treatment they are subject to, murders are committed by these poor wretches on their own comrades, that they may get to Sydney and be hanged. The enjoyment of a few weeks of intermission of their sufferings in Sydney Gaol is considered a full equivalent for the ultimate penalty of execution. But the desperation engendered by these awful and iniquitous establishments is the bright side of the picture. Another remains: but what pen shall delineate it? What eye would desire to look into scenes which even the recording angel must blush to transcribe for the final judgment? But if any desire to certify themselves of the reality of the facts, something divested of their grosser horrors, let them refer to the 'Report of the Select Committee on Transportation, 1837, ordered to be printed by the House of Commons.' There they will meet with the evidence of the Colonial judges — of military officers who have been in command of these places — and of the chaplains, Roman Catholic and Anglican, who have done duty there. The only further remark I will make is this: that Captain Maconochie did more for the reformation of these unhappy wretches and in amelioration of their physical circumstances than the most sanguine practical mind could beforehand have ventured even to

hope. It is greatly to be regretted that his views were not carried out to their fullest extent, in the most cordial spirit. My knowledge of the convict's character warrants my saying expressly that they offer the only approximation that has ever yet been made to a correct penal theory. The Imperial government, with the results of the experiment already made of these principles in their hands, are ill executing the trust which the nation and which God has reposed in them so long as Captain Maconochie shall continue uninvested with full power to repeat his process on a scale of extent equal to the materials themselves.

Fifth — The moral and religious necessities of the population. It is difficult to deal with a subject so extensive as this in a few lines. Still, as I may hope, by giving the conclusions to which so many years of study have led, at least to add to the data sought of more competent judgments, I will attempt it. When I speak of the population, I mean all, free and bond, white and black. It will be evident, consequently, that the means must be as varied as are the exigencies to which they are to apply. The upper and middle classes of the population must be at once confided to the press and the pulpit. I am sorry to say laxity of life is no less rife in these sections than in the others. It is very true it assumes not quite such gross and disgusting forms. But unquestionably its existence is as positive and its quality as specific. I should say that hundreds of the upcountry settlers have almost lost the sense of *moral* obligation; i.e. using that term in its precise sense: nor is the religious sense any more perfect. Again, the labouring population are universally lost to all sense of moral duty and religious obedience. Their only law of self-restraint is founded on the fear of the courts and dread of the displeasure of their associates. Where all unite in a crime, and where the risk of detection is thus almost done away with, there is not one in ten who would hesitate at its commission. Drunkenness, profanity, dishonesty, and unchastity are the prevalent habits which the class has acquired. What else indeed could be expected? The original stock is the very lowest: the blood-stained hand and ruthless heart from the most barbarian parts of Ireland; the professional depredator from the vilest haunts of London; the lowest slaves of profligacy, inebriation, violence, and lust; men who have sought and found the very abysses of crime. These are herded together, or scattered among wildernesses whither the sound of holy counsel and spiritual caution never reached. For three-quarters of a century they are left to fester each in his own rankness of soul, or by contact with others to ferment into yet more horrible conditions of pollution and iniquity. And I am sure I may with a clear conscience say that malific as are these and other influences which space will not admit of naming, yet infinitely worse than all is the sense of the iron dominion exercised over them by the masters. The free are becoming infected by the bond. I knew of a number of young Scotch lads who on their arrival were quite horrified at

the thought of joining in the illicit slaughter of sheep; but they did it freely enough before they were there twelve months. Of the female emigrants by one ship which took out a large number, I was told on good authority that there were certainly not one seventh of the whole but what became prostitutes in some form or other. The consequences of this, to which I cannot more particularly allude, are direful, and its ultimate result must be sweeping the aborigines off the face of the country where it is settled. To delineate the other and minor points of the picture would be useless. Suffice it to say further, that thousands never see a bible, or hear one word of spiritual counsel from the day they come up the country till they go down again (often many years), or till death removes them from the scene. Now, I am convinced that the government need but to think of this fact to perceive how very wrong it is to take these poor creatures away from reformatory influences and place them in such a condition as is here described under the very pretext itself of reformation. Good men, men of sound judgment, should be employed to go about among them, supply them with the word of God, and with instructive and amusing publications, converse with and advise them. Such an arrangement would greatly restrain the inclination in the masters to be oppressive; and it seems the only substitute which offers for those religious means and that opportunity of observing the better portion of society, that they are deprived of on the plea of reformatory exile. I would say one word to the upper class on this point. *There is among working men a strong and ineradicable and very correct sense of what is fair. Unless you act fairly to them, they will assuredly endeavour to right themselves.* The sense of the risk they encounter in so doing embitters them against you; and instead of being surrounded by faithful servants, you are in the midst of enemies. But if you give them fair play, allow them what nature requires to eat, pay them honestly and without shuffling what they earn, they will necessarily look to you as their friend and protector. You will obtain unlimited influence over their minds, and your property and interests will be guarded in a way far more efficient than is in your own power. Of course there will be some less readily won by these means than others; but such is the constitution of the human soul that finally even the most obtuse and obdurate must succumb. These three means constitute the only course through which a better state of things in this depraved portion of society is to be hoped. The last section of the population, the aborigines, I omit here, as it more properly constitutes a head of remark in itself.

Fifth — The Aborigines. — Missionary efforts I for one feel inclined to put aside, as quite useless at present; indeed there seems something so intrinsically absurd in the nation which is robbing another of its land and its means of subsistence soliciting that other to adopt its religion, that the yet more revolting concomitant of the horrible scourgings which are

inflicted on our prisoners is scarcely needed to make the Aborigines despise and revolt from us, and to put such a case out of court. At the same time it is quite clear to me that it is rather the mode in which we seize and hold the soil that does the mischief than the act in itself. The Aborigines could understand a ten or twenty or even fifty acre settler saying, "I need this; my own country starves me: I have come here to grow my grain, and to support life!" But he cannot understand the 20,000 acre man with his countless flocks and herds, and white slaves — he has no sympathy whatever with him. Avarice and covetousness are vices unknown to the savage; and he can only regard the man labouring under them as one infected with some shocking and mysterious disease. How near this is to the truth it is not for me to say. We see the matter differently; and we suppose that in the workings and necessities of civilized society we see at once the reason and the vindication of its form. I believe it is so; and that the force of contrariety in extrinsic things is the secret law of subjective intelligent progress and so of social progress at large. Consequently I am as much opposed to checking the advance of the wealthy stockholder to a still further pitch of prosperity, as, on the other hand, to debarring the poor from whatever advance is possible to him. I look at both as conditional elements in the progress of the race; and feel sure that, if one be disallowed, the other must eventually suffer. A short leg and a long leg would only walk round and round. Just so, the more unequally common rights are apportioned the more stationary the society will become in which this misapportionment exists. The rich and the poor I believe to be equally necessary; but that one of these should be deprived utterly of a common right and the other enjoy it unrestrictedly is a great and perilous error. The end of human existence is happiness; and the most profoundly miserable man we know is he who is most selfish. But when, in so great and valuable a matter as the right to purchase land at the very offset of society, there exists such a misapportionment among classes whose claim, to say the least, is in nature common, there must necessarily be a rivalry induced which leads to enmity, the sense of danger, and selfishness, if not also to an aggressive bias. Personally I incline to think the poor has more right to land than the rich in a new country; that his right is the true and more fundamental right. If his own country have borne him, but cannot find him food, he has the greatest right that there is below divine right to go elsewhere and seek it. And it is better for many reasons that he should go to barbarian lands and seize a portion of the soil, sufficient for his wants, than that he should claim any on the mere ground of birthright in his own. Surely if any section of the people can have a right to dispossess another people of its land, it is the starving section. In short, unless new lands are taken possession of on the mere strength of superior brute force, and all equitable allegations be abandoned, the right to do so must

be allowed to be founded on the necessity in the point of sustenance. Can anything be more absurd as well as unjust, then, than to deprive the very party in virtue of whose necessity alone you exercise this right, of the chief benefit accruing from it? Indeed the more the case is analyzed the more glaring will the injustice appear. But now it will be asked, how does this tell upon the condition of the Aborigines? The following fact will connect the two branches of the subject: Wherever there are these little farms where the owner cannot afford to pay white labourers, he invariably maintains the most amicable relations with any Aborigines about him, for the sake of obtaining their assistance in his agricultural operations. Were this course pursued, not only would all the advantages which I have specified accrue to the civilized man, individually and commonly, but the black would be benefited every way. If, in short, there is anything to be done for the civilization of the *blacks* and to prevent *their* utter extermination, it will be found in the encouragement of the amicable relations which so easily establish themselves between them and the small settler. Missionary efforts I am afraid will long, if not always, be the “voice, and no more.” Hitherto they have been as futile as they appear to have been zealous. If this must be ascribed partly to the deficiency of every sense of moral obligation of the Aborigines of Australia save to their own form of human law and custom, it must certainly also be equally imputed as an effect to the abominations of the white man's character, and to his conduct towards the members of his own race; and to the bitter feeling which the blacks all experience, though they very generally veil it, against us as a nation of robbers, robbing out of mere wantonness, and not from the pressure of necessity. They understand no theories about capital and labour, and pauperism and emigration: all they feel is that they are wronged; all they see, the fact that it is done by those who are rich already, and do not want the soil for subsistence; not by the poor, who might be justified.

Chapter XXII. Last Journey down the Country.

Hail-storm — Broken Dray — Camping by the roadside — Man drowned — Stuck fast on Razorback Mountain — Visit from a mock bushranger — The mounted police — Arrival in Sydney for embarkation to England

MY desire to see my native land was certainly very strong; yet I hardly knew how to turn my back on scenes which had become so familiar, and so inseparable from the most delightful associations. But the greatest difficulty, after all, was to reconcile the boys to the separation. We could see the advantages of their remaining behind, but they could not. None but a parent can understand the sufferings attendant on separation from beloved children. Where it is the act of one parent at the expense of the other, no sophism can conceal, as no logic can extenuate the enormity of the act. And the measure of guilt at that tribunal there is no trifling with, will assuredly be — *the anguish imposed on the one party taken along with the audacity and ignorance of right principles manifested by the other*. Nor is there any thing in the universe that can stay the utterance of the Divine decree against the wrong-doer, saving only the “intercessions of the Spirit” with the great Judge from the bosom of the wronged.

We set off on our coastward journey at about 4 P. M., intending to stop for the night at my brother-in-law's station. We arrived there about half-past five. Next morning the heat was excessive, and clearly enough portended a thunder-storm. This, however, is a circumstance too common in the colony to be allowed to interrupt a journey; and as we were travelling in the dray with a good stout canvas tilt over it, the prospect did not much disturb us. Toward evening it got very cloudy, and the wind chopping round more to the southward, the air cooled. As we were making pretty good stages (20 to 30 miles a day), we got to the other side of Bong-Bong before the weather again became so intensely hot. But the thunder-storm came at last, and (of course) caught us in just the wrong place. We were in one of those narrow flats that intersect the hilly road on the Sydney side of the Mittagong range. The cattle had been turned out to feed for a couple of hours, and the bullock driver had just brought them up to be yoked, when a few heavy drops of rain sprinkling down warned us not to be in too much of a hurry to start. Then came the

usual gust of cold wind, and then a lull; and then, before we could huddle the few clothes and cooking things that were scattered about the grass into the dray, down came a pretty thick shower of hail-stones. These were not very large at first, but the reinforcement that followed was of others a little larger; then came another gust and a thicker fall of heavier lumps, until in about four minutes' time they were pouring down all around us in one compact torrent as large as bantams' eggs, and seemingly to the eye not more than the distance of their diameters from each other. Driven by a roaring squall, their direction was much nearer horizontal than perpendicular; and I am sure that I saw some of them, where they fell under trees whose boughs protected them from the fall of others, bounce full ten feet up from the ground. One struck me on the back of the hand, as I sat inside the dray holding together the front of the tilt, and left a bruise that was visible for several weeks. The dogs all ran to shelter, but not without several of them receiving knocks that set them yelping for two or three minutes. In less than ten minutes, when the violence of the squall subsided, the ground was covered with hail-stones to a depth of full eight inches; and, as the heated surface melted them very fast, torrents of mingled water and hail-stones were soon sweeping down from the hills into the flats on every side. Yoking the bullocks as speedily as possible, we succeeded in getting the dray off the grassy flat on to the side of the hill, before the ground became so saturated as to bog us, for where we had unyoked to rest was really only a dried swamp, and became in a few minutes so rotten that the short team of bullocks we were travelling with would have been unable to move us off it.

By this time the mizzling rain that succeeded the hail-storm was changed to a steady fall. We had determined to make the best of our way on to —— — Inn, and there house ourselves until finer weather; the bullock driver on one side the team, and I on the other, were urging the shivering and restive animals to a good pull up the pinch, when the leader turned himself short round and ran off down the hill; the middle bullocks followed, whilst the old shafter stood firm. The consequence was the shaft gave way and broke off short at the body of the dray. And there we stood, half-way up the hill in the very middle of the road, with a dray quite useless, in the midst of a pouring rain nearly at nightfall. Vexed as one may be on these occasions, there is really often something so absurd about them that to help laughing would be quite impossible. Such was the case here. An instant ago and we were sure of a blazing fire and dry beds for the night; and now here we were fixed, perhaps for a day or two; the bullocks meanwhile, as if well aware of their success, turned round and placidly looking at the broken dray, and only waiting to be unyoked to march off and enjoy themselves. My wife, in spite of the nonchalance of her Australian blood, looked dumb-founded.

Ordering the man to take out the shafter, I hitched the other bullocks on

to the back of the dray, and dragged it back wards across the road to the edge of the bush; and then propping it up as well as we could, we unyoked them, put the hobbles on those that needed them, and turned them off along the edge of the hill to feed. The only plan for ourselves, which seemed at once practicable and prudent, was to send the bullock driver on to the —— — Inn for a light cart; and if such a thing could be got, then take what things we could with us, and go there and wait until the dray was mended. This plan was executed without loss of time. Meantime I managed to hunt, from out of one hollow log and another, dry wood sufficient to make a good blaze in the sheltered side of a big tree, so that we had a pretty comfortable cup of tea.

By the time tea was over and I had taken a turn into the bush and headed the bullocks all into one mob, it was quite dark. Not another dray came along the road that night, and only one person on foot going the opposite way from ourselves; so that I had no opportunity of sending any messages after the man to urge him to make haste. After sitting up till past twelve o'clock at night expecting his return, we determined to make a virtue of necessity, and making as much space as we could in the dray, we spread out the bedding and went to sleep. Nothing disturbed us till the next morning, when soon after breakfast our man came with a small dray from the proprietor of the —— Inn, and a wheelwright with his tools to mend the broken shaft: but the rain was still pelting away at such a rate, and by the account of the new comers a couple of the creeks were up to such a height, that I did not feel any longer inclined to leave the dray, especially as the wheelwright had brought a bit of seasoned wood with him for a shaft, and could not be more than a few hours in completing his job. The poor fellow was a government servant of the innkeeper's, and for the sake of half-a-crown willingly went on with it in the rain. We, however, made him as snug as we could, by raising one side of the tilt and stretching it out on stakes for him to work under.

In vain we looked for a change in the weather hour after hour. Between dinner time and tea time a horseman came by from the Sydney side, and told us the —— — Creek was no longer passable without great danger: and I had really had so many narrow escapes in these creeks and in the rivers when they were up, that it seemed like over-trying Providence to venture this last time I was likely ever to have the opportunity without an urgent necessity; besides, I knew it would take us several hours to reach the worst of the creeks, and by that time it might be so much higher as to render crossing entirely impracticable for anybody but a horseman or a swimmer. As I could not have got Mrs. —— across, in that case I should have been as had off as I was here, after all the additional trouble.

It took the wheelwright till nearly evening to mend the dray; and by that time our bullock-driver had found out that the bullocks had recrossed the Mittagong Range, and had headed back for their own run in

a direct line through the bush. So night-fall again found us without any company. The wheelwright having finished his job was gone home, intending to cross the flooded creeks by fallen trees which he was acquainted with some little distance off the high road, and which, as I have before mentioned, often serve in the bush for bridges. Our bullock-driver was off up the road again to the nearest point where he thought he could intercept the bullocks. A little after dark we were startled as we sat drinking our solitary cup of tea beneath the tilt by the sounds of a dray-wheel and human voices coming up the country. Presently they stopped close to us, and the overseer of the party, which was going up into the interior with the stores and implements of a new settler, came to our fire for a firestick; he told us they had the body of a dead man on their dray, and did not know whether to bury it or to carry it on to Bong-Bong. The foolish fellow had volunteered, although no horseman, to ride across — — creek before their dray on the overseer's horse, and show that the ford was practicable. He was one of the men belonging to the party, all of whom had been drinking too freely; the consequence was, that when the horse got into deep water and began to swim, he became so frightened that he tried to throw himself from its back and reach the shore, in doing which his foot became entangled in the stirrup, and the horse, impeded by his weight all on one side, was swept ever so far down the stream, and at length stood still on the first spot where he had foothold, with deep water all round him; and none of the party had dared to venture to the man's assistance till it was too late. One so rarely meets with death in New South Wales, partly on account of its extreme salubrity, and partly on account of the thinness of the population, that it may always be perceived to produce a much stronger impression than is usual in old countries. At another time the merriment of such a party as this would have been heard ringing every now and then loud and clear through the forest till twelve o'clock at night. But this evening nothing disturbed the silence but the bark of their and our dogs, and the few words of question and reply that business required. I know of few things more solemn than thus to have death suddenly attach himself to one's company in the bush: the necessity of guarding the body from the bush dogs and birds of prey, its uncoffined state, its late inhabitation by one whose voice the ear will not even yet give up, the rarity and seeming inaptitude of death at such a time and place, all conspire to invest it with a singular and painful impressiveness.

Next day the weather was still worse; the wind was higher, and the rain fell without the intermission of a minute. But the succeeding day was, if possible, worse still; so that it took all our ingenuity and all our vigilance to keep our fires in. I got so tired of the confinement by noon, that I had no sooner lit my pipe after dinner than I put on a very thick pair of boots and a monkey jacket, and started for a regular stroll. Taking a leading

ridge from the road, I ran it up for about a couple of miles. Wherever I went there was water; and the grass already, in these few hours since the rain began, seemed to have got the green of three weeks' spring growth. I never experienced, from anything I have met with throughout life, such a tendency to seriousness and religious reflection as I derive from being in the dim and lonely woods on a rainy day; and this, combined with the novelty of the scene, after many months of severe drought, renders such a stroll at times by no means an unpleasant one. I got back to tea about five o'clock, and about an hour before me the bullock-driver brought back the cattle, which he had not done, however, without swimming. Once more we went to bed, still listening to the wind and rain, prognosticating a similar morrow. Great was my joy, on waking in the night, to hear by the cheery roar of the fire that a wind unaccompanied by rain was at last blowing; and still greater when, on looking from out of our temporary house, I could see here and there a star glimmering through the boughs overhead. Morning brought with it a warm, bright sun; and by evening the creeks were so much abated that we felt sure of being able to pursue our journey on the morrow. One more night of confinement, and we were again on our way.

Everything went on with us just in the usual course of travel till we came to Stonequarry, where an incident occurred which, little as it would command notice in the colony, may yet be considered worthy of narration to the English reader, as affording him another picture of Australian manners. About two days' stage from Sydney is the Razor-back Mountain, a very high and broken range, over which the road is led. Thinking we could get our bullocks over it if we gave them a good long spell in the afternoon, we began its ascent about five P.M. They knocked up, however, before we got above two-thirds of the way up, and neither flogging nor coaxing could get them any farther. The consequence was, that we were obliged to unyoke, and the bullock-driver took them off down the range again to water. By the time this was done it was quite dark. We had plenty of water for our own consumption in the water-keg (which most drays carry when on the road); and whilst I put down at the wood-fire a couple of quart-pots for tea, my wife made some fat-cakes in the frying-pan. Just as we were sitting down to our meal, a man, having the look of a traveller, and one of the poorest, walked up to the fire and asked leave to light his pipe, and then inquired how far it was to such a place. Thinking that probably he was some free man who had been to Sydney to drink the few pounds he had saved out of a year's wages, and was now travelling penniless and hungry up the country again in search of work, I told him to sit down with us and have his tea. This, with a show of much awkward bashfulness, he did. When supper was over, he took out a very short pipe, in which it was evident there was no tobacco, and went through the form of lighting it. Still supposing him some

hapless spendthrift, I took a whole fig of negro-head tobacco out of my pocket and gave it him. Upon this he whispered me that he wished to speak with me in private. Following him off a little way into the bush, he told me that he was a bushranger; and, mentioning several of a gang whose names just at that time were notorious enough in the vicinity of Razor-back and the Nepean River, he inquired very anxiously whether I had met or heard of them anywhere on the road; then who the female was that was travelling with me; and lastly, saying that he had a companion a short distance below, hiding in the creek, who had had nothing to eat that day, he begged most earnestly for a little flour to make a cake, as we had no bread ready baked. I must confess that, during my whole sojourn in the colony, it had seemed to me impossible to deny the starving outlaw a bit of bread. There is, indeed, a very severe colonial enactment against it. But I always found my betters so readily breaking the laws of the land when they imagined them to run counter to their own "law of honour," that I never found the slightest difficulty in my own particular case about making the same exception in favour of the law of nature; and most unquestionably it is much more unnatural to let the man starve, than to let the thief go unpunished. As long, therefore, as Members of the Council fought duels, I conceived myself at liberty to relieve the starving outlaw; of course not unnecessarily, or forwardly, but only in extreme and unsought cases. And as this seemed to be such a case, I told the unknown that I should give him a bit, and bade him wait a little way down the road for it. Quickly filling a little bag, I walked off with it to where I had told him to wait; but on my way bethought myself that it would be best, lest he should be taken with it in his possession, not to let him have the bag, but the flour only. For I knew that if he were taken and terrified into informing against me, nobody could swear to the flour, but they might to the bag. Under this impression, on reaching him I insisted, much against his inclination, that he should take the flour away in something else than my bag; which at last he consented to do, by taking off his shirt and making a bag by tying up one of the sleeves at the wristband. Feeling I had done all that humanity dictated, I was in a few minutes back at the fire, and heard or saw no more of my visitor that night. To conclude this adventure I must carry the reader on about three weeks. A day or two before I sailed for Europe, I had occasion to ride out one morning to Paramatta. Jogging leisurely along the high road in the light of a fine clear sunny day, I met riding towards Sydney, at about the same pace, three mounted policemen. As we rode up within a few feet of each other there sat my bushranger in full uniform, on the middle horse. He had recognised me before I recognised him. His face was the colour of crimson, and he kept his eyes fixed on the pommel of his saddle; whilst his comrades, I saw, could with difficulty restrain their laughter. Moustaches are universally worn by the mounted police; but he was

shaved. I had therefore bestowed my charity on a spy. I heard on mentioning it that this practice of policemen going to huts and drays in disguise is becoming much more common than it is creditable. It is by no means agreeable to have the most unguarded sayings and doings of one's own fireside carried, even if they be legally faultless, to a police magistrate. It is one of those practices which the administration of British law can certainly do without.

To conclude: — The morning after the earlier portion of this incident, we made good our passage over the mountain; reached within eight miles of Liverpool that night; and next day made a long stage into the city of Sydney. Thenceforward there occurred nothing so novel or so entertaining as to merit description.
