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ADVENTURES

OF

A MOUNTED TROOPER.

ADVENTURES
OF
A MOUNTED TROOPER

IN
The Australian Constabulary:

BEING
RECOLLECTIONS OF SEVEN YEARS' EXPERIENCE OF
LIFE IN VICTORIA, AND NEW SOUTH WALES.

BY
WILLIAM BURROWS.

NEW EDITION.

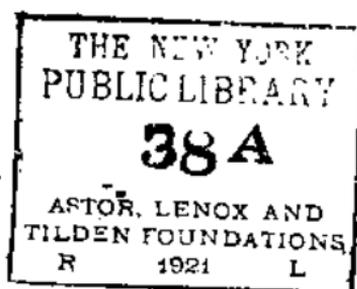
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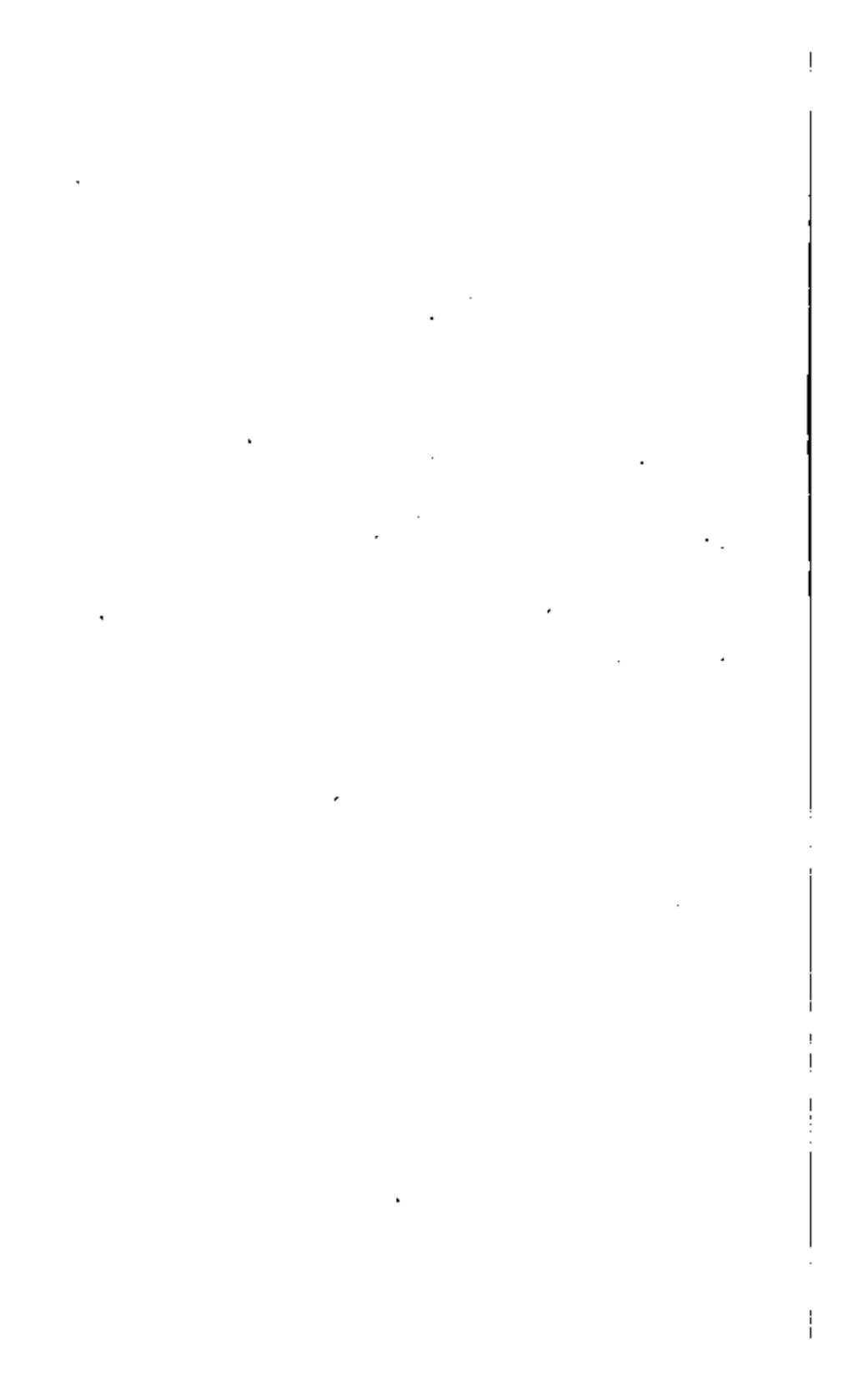
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TO
G. A. LLOYD, Esq., F.R.G.S.
OF LONDON AND SYDNEY,

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF MUCH KINDNESS,

This Volume
IS DEDICATED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

Sydney 13 Oct. 1900



P R E F A C E.

In order to obviate a possible objection, the writer of the following pages thinks it is as well to say, that he is not unaware of the many publications which have already appeared on the subject of the Australian Colonies; nearly all differing from one another in merit, magnitude, and in object. He considers, however, that none of these—superior as the claims of some to public attention may be to his own—occupy the same ground that he has taken up; and that, as what he has to say is the result of his own experience, and the fruit of his attentive observation, during a continuous residence of seven years in Australia, he may, without vanity, claim, on his part, some of the favourable attention that the public has so readily bestowed on the productions of others who have preceded him.

This little work does not pretend to deal with political questions of any kind, nor with details

of the rapid progress of the Colonies—their internal government—their statistics—their trade and commerce—nor even with their social condition, except so far as came under the writer's personal knowledge. It will contain, moreover, little or nothing in the way of information on the great feature of the day at the 'Antipodes—the Gold Fields, and the singular phases of life exhibited by the motley multitudes drawn thither by the same craving—"the unhallowed thirst for gold." Neither does it profess to be a guide to emigrants.

The writer's object is simply to communicate what he knows—to tell a plain, "unvarnished tale"—not deficient in adventurous incident and the display of varied character—and to confine his observations chiefly to facts as they happened to occur in his own case, or were reported to him by those who witnessed them. For reasons that it is unnecessary to state here, the author's real name is not given; and his narrative, which is written in the third person, purports to be that of "WILLIAM BURROWS," a name assumed for the occasion. The only deviation from this form will be found in the special accounts given of Bush Life, Natural History, and the Native

Races of Australia, which are the result of information collected by the author at various times.

For the sake of greater compactness and clearness, he thought it desirable to treat these subjects, under their respective heads, in separate chapters.

His long sojourn in the Bush, and other parts of the interior, under peculiarly favourable circumstances for observation, has enabled him to give rather a full account of many objects of Natural History—in attempting which, however, he has not been aided by the possession of scientific acquirements. His contributions to existing knowledge on such subjects must, therefore, be merely regarded as familiar sketches, drawn in a popular style, and depending upon their strict truth for their chief value. The remarks on the Aborigines are based as well upon his own personal acquaintance with this singular race of people—now fast disappearing—as upon the communications of trustworthy associates.

Like most other young men fond of an adventurous life, the writer went forth with an enthusiastic spirit, buoyed up with high expectation; but the experience of the first twelve months sufficed to sober down these gay illusions, and to reduce objects, which his imagination had exaggerated

PREFACE.

to their natural proportions. Remembering too well the heart-sickness he experienced through this process of disenchantment, he is desirous of saving others, similarly constituted, from a like ordeal. A perusal of his narrative will hardly fail to convince the reader that little or no encouragement awaits the idle, the restless, and the romantic in a newly-settled, half-civilized country. Such persons would do well to stay at home.

Far different, however, is the field opened in such remote regions, for those well-principled, sober, and energetic spirits, who, from competition, or other causes of discouragement, find themselves "cribb'd, cabin'd, and confin'd" in the horns of their youth. Let such, by all means, seek to amend their limited fortunes, by emigrating to a young, thriving colony, where the climate is salubrious, and where there exists a nucleus of society drawn from their native soil, forming a link in the chain of endearing home associations.

To those possessing some means, albeit moderate, the Australian Colonies pre-eminently claim the preference of intending emigrants over other places. Not only is the climate remarkably healthy

—to the temperate especially— but the great majority of the colonists are of British origin, imbued with British feelings, and they seem destined to become eventually the most powerful and prosperous of all the offshoots from the parent tree. Their recent progress, mainly through the agency of the gold discoveries, is really marvellous. But twelve years ago, the chief employment of the Australian settler was sheep-rearing—or squatting—the prime sources of wealth being wool and tallow. This state of affairs has of late years undergone much modification; the squatters, although still an important class, are no longer exclusively the great lords of the soil: their wealth and influence are fully competed with by the opulence and political weight of the magnates of cities and towns, now growing up and extending their limits with startling rapidity.

A further word of encouragement to intending emigrants of the better class, to which allusion has been made, may not be amiss here. The hardships, and even personal risks, which awaited most new arrivals some seven or eight years ago, need no longer be dreaded. A remarkable amelioration has taken place, especially at Melbourne, in the accommodation and security offered to

emigrants on their first landing. Difficulties and slight annoyances are still, no doubt, to be met with by those who are not fortunate enough to possess either friends to receive them, or any kind of previous knowledge of their new home, but these soon vanish before a little energy and cool determination.

It is difficult to foresee what great changes may occur within a few years, through a constantly advancing civilization, in the more general enjoyment of the comforts, and even of the luxuries, of European life in these colonies, leading eventually to the native production of many objects now in but limited demand. But, meanwhile, let those who propose to settle there bear well in mind, that the trades and occupations in most constant demand and employment are those of a comparatively rough, substantial character, administering to the ordinary wants and requirements of life. Most articles of a luxurious kind can be now, and will very probably for a long time continue to be, imported in the colonies at a cheaper rate than they could be there produced for; it is the more necessary to emphasize this caution, as many deserving persons have suffered bitter disappoint-

ment through ignorance of the true state of these matters at the Antipodes.

One important topic remains to be touched upon, and one that we cannot allude to without paying a hearty tribute of commendation to the wisdom and philanthropy of our Australian fellow-subjects.

It is very satisfactory to be able to assure all who look to questions of still greater moment than those of mere worldly advantage, that on the score of religious worship, and education in its fullest sense—religious, moral, and intellectual—the Australian colonies are already so well provided as to leave little to be desired. The energetic spirit of British enterprise, there allowed such ample scope and verge for development, untrammelled too by the counteracting influences of class prejudices and inveterate bigotry, which cumber its progress at home, has triumphantly maintained its pretensions to be regarded as the pioneer of a true civilization in its wide-spread, well-organized institutions, for the furtherance of these great objects.

Well appointed universities and academies of all grades are established in these colonies, inclusive

of ordinary school instruction of a very sound character; while nearly every religious sect will be found to have its place of worship: and some of these sacred temples now in the course of erection, will, when completed, put to shame many of those existing in some of the oldest provincial cities and towns of the mother country.

LONDON, *June*, 1859.

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ADVENTURES OF A MOUNTED TROOPER.

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ARRIVAL IN THE COLONY AND VISIT TO THE DIGGINGS.

Birth and Education of William Burrows.—Starts for Australia.—Arrives in Melbourne.—First Impressions.—Visits a Friend.—Advised to try the Diggings.—Buys a horse and starts for Castlemaine.—Black Forest; its bad character.—Camping out.—Lucky Escape.—Arrival at Forest Creek.—The Horse sold.—Digging Licences.—Campbell's Flat.—Commences Work.—Method of Washing.—Anecdote of Licence Hunting.—Many fined for not having Licences.—Manner of Evading Search.—William is Defrauded.—Starts for Town.

WILLIAM BURROWS was born in the city of London, September 10th, 1830, and after passing through a full course of education at one of the chief foundation schools of the metropolis, it became a matter of serious consideration with his parents how to start him in life. From his earliest youth he had evinced a great liking for the sea, and this predilection had been further increased

by the recitals of some of his acquaintances who had some experience of maritime life. As might naturally be expected, his mind acquired a decidedly roving turn, which nothing could satisfy but a bold start for some distant region.

About this time the gold fields were discovered in Australia, and the newspapers teemed with almost fabulous stories of fortunes rapidly made through this means in that El Dorado. Burrows was easily persuaded that Australia was the very place for him; and he was the more eager to proceed there, as a friend had kindly consented to take charge of him on the voyage out. His parents, with a good deal of reluctance, consented to his departure, and made ample preparation for the occasion. After taking an affectionate leave of them, and being provided with letters of introduction to various people in the colony, William and his friend started full of hope, in the year 1852, for the antipodes. In imagination, he regarded his fortune as already made, and indulged in golden dreams of castle-building during a great part of the voyage.

After a long and tedious passage, the ship which conveyed our voyagers at length arrived in the magnificent harbour of Melbourne. Burrows

forthwith hired a boat at an exorbitant charge, to put him ashore at Sandridge, which at that time presented a picture by no means inviting to a stranger. It was then the month of November, and consequently summer at the antipodes. A hot wind was blowing whirling clouds of sand into the eyes of the unfortunate pedestrian, so that he found his walk of three miles from Sandridge to Melbourne to be anything but pleasant. As he had a letter for an old colonist, who had formerly been a friend of his father's, he determined to present it at once, and at the same time seek for this gentleman's advice as to the advantage of proceeding to the diggings. In his way he crossed over Prince's Bridge, which spans the river Yarra-Yarra, reckoned one of the beauties of Melbourne, and then found himself in the town. The first objects that struck him on entering the streets were the numerous waggons drawn by bullocks and horses, and driven by strange, uncouth, bearded men, swearing and cracking their long whips, as they urged their patient beasts on their road to that great goal of all new arrivals, the diggings. Bewildered by the noise and bustle of the town, after so long a sojourn on the mighty deep, he was glad enough

to reach the more quiet suburbs, and at length found himself before the door of the gentleman for whom he had his father's letter of introduction. Here he was received in the most hospitable manner, and after discussing his plans with his father's old acquaintance, the latter advised him by all means to try the diggings.

Matters now began to assume a practical, business-like appearance, and much of the romance in which our ardent young adventurer had in fancy fondly indulged, faded, like dissolving views, into thin air. Burrows' first transaction was the purchase of a horse, for a small sum, from a man whom he found driving it in a water-cart. With this horse, together with a dray, which one of his acquaintances on board ship had brought out with him, he started with four companions, who had agreed to join him in the venture, for the diggings at Mount Alexander, then in the zenith of their glory and prosperity. Making for the high, bold mountain called Macedon, they came, at the end of their first day's journey, to the notorious Black Forest, at that time the scene of many a midnight robbery and murder, and consequently much dreaded by all travellers to the diggings. It was nearly dark when they

arrived, and therefore not prudent for them to continue their journey until the following morning. They determined accordingly to "camp" on the spot: that is, to take out the horse, tie a long rope round his neck, and tether him to a tree, place a tarpaulin over the cart shafts, and, after taking some refreshment, to sleep underneath on the ground.

After supper, they each took it in turn to watch the horse for about two hours at a time, a precaution essential to safety. Soon after daybreak they had breakfast, and harnessed their horse, resuming the journey through the forest. While on the way they had an impressive illustration of the manner in which robberies, then so frequent, were planned and committed. They had gone about half way through the forest, when they came to a number of roads, branching off in various directions—"tracks," as they are called in the colony—and found themselves at a loss which to take, when a man dressed in the usual digger-costume, consisting of a black wide-awake hat, blue shirt, and moleskin continuations, came up to the dray, and with an air of kindness offered to show them the road out of the forest. Not having any ground for suspecting mischief, they followed him

with confidence, until both the gloom and the brushwood seemed to get deeper and thicker as they advanced, when William, becoming alarmed, remarked to M——, one of the party, "I don't like this; the track is getting faint here; I can hardly see any road at all, and I don't think that chap is up to any good." "So I think, too," said M——; and walking at once up to their guide, they politely requested him to take them out by the same way that he had brought them in, adjuring him to make no noise or signal, or he would have to take the consequences, at the same time holding a double gun in rather unpleasant proximity to his person. The fellow looked quite taken aback, as if he had been suddenly unmasked, and complied immediately with their peremptory order, although very sulkily. As it turned out, it was well for the party that they took this course. On the subsequent morning they obtained the following intelligence, by which it is evident the fellow had a gang not far off, to whose den he meant to conduct our wayfarers.

After going through the forest, Burrows and his party arrived at a small place called Wood End, situated, as its name implies, at the end of the forest; and having "camped" and passed the

night there, they seated themselves round their log fire discussing their morning meal, when another dray came up and also camped on the spot; the party belonging to which told them that while going through the forest the evening before, they had heard some one "cooeing," which is a shrill cry peculiar to the colonies, and on going into the forest, in the direction of the sound, they found three poor fellows tied to trees, who stated that they had been shown the road by a man who led them into the forest, where they were set upon by a gang of no less than seven armed men, robbed of all they possessed, and left in the sad plight in which they were found.

Burrows and his companions congratulated themselves on their providential escape, for which it was readily admitted they were indebted to William's penetration. The party left Wood End, and arrived, without further adventure, at Forest Creek, the entrance to the main diggings of Mount Alexander. On their arrival, they were beset by many applications to dispose of their horse, which they then refused to listen to, and proceeded to pitch their tent on the spot now occupied by the Government offices. After they had camped, and taken their blankets from the

cart and placed them in their tent, they commenced preparations for their evening meal; and purchasing some meat from a very uncivil butcher, they soon raised a fire and cooked it. After they had finished their supper, they were pressingly solicited by another man to sell their horse, but they were still disinclined to part with it; however, as horses were in great demand, their customer, bent upon effecting the purchase, considerably amended his offer. A bargain was ultimately struck for a sum about double that which Burrows had given for the animal in Melbourne. Highly elated with their opening success, they agreed to commence operations on the following morning; and, having procured licences—the price of which was then thirty shillings each—at the tent of the Commissioner of Crown lands, they started for Campbell's Flat, distant about a mile, leaving one of their number with the tent, to cook and take care of the traps—a duty which they agreed should be taken in turn by each of the party.

Having marked out a claim, our adventurers commenced work in good earnest, and in four days managed to reach the bottom of their pit, which consisted of a kind of rotten slate covered with pipeclay; they then set about clearing it of washing

stuff, which was of blue clay, with here and there minute specks of gold. The process of washing, as is now pretty well known, consists in taking the stuff to the nearest water, and putting it into a cradle, the top of which is a kind of sieve, made of sheet iron with holes punched in it, to allow the clay to go through, leaving the stones and large pieces in the sieve. The fine stuff is then taken out and washed in a tin dish, until the sand and clay are cleaned off, leaving the gold in the bottom of the dish. A rather amusing incident, characteristic of the habits of the diggers, occurred one day near the creek; when the police were looking for licences. A sailor who had no licence was carrying a large bag of stuff down to the creek to wash it, when a constable came up and asked him to produce his licence; the sailor promised to give it to him if he would be so obliging as to come with him to the creek, and on arriving there, suddenly threw the bag of stuff at the constable's legs, and floored him; he then took to his heels and escaped. However, the authorities could well afford to lose him, as there were about fifty unfortunate men taken up to the camp and fined for not having any licence on the same day. One favourite dodge to evade taking out

licences used to be, for the man on the top of the hole, only, to be provided with a licence, while his mates who were working below had none; these fellows would then jeeringly invite the constable to do his duty in the following words of a then popular song:—

“ Young man of the Crown,
Why don't you come down ?”

But the police knew better than go down a hole, among such a lawless set of ruffians, and had to give up the pursuit, in many instances, as hopeless.

Burrows being the youngest member of his party, it was generally allotted to him to stay at home; and as they refused to allow him to wash any of the stuff on account of his alleged inexperience, the others washed in turn, and, as might reasonably be expected under such an exclusive system, he never saw much of the gold which they obtained: in all probability it was a good deal, as in many of the surrounding claims they were making half an ounce a day each man. After sinking from nine to ten shafts and finding it all loss, as far as he was concerned in the result, William quitted his associates in disgust, and determined to go back to Melbourne. He started,

accordingly, with a drayman, who conveyed passengers and their "swags," that is, blankets, &c., to town, for three pounds per man.

Bitter experience had now taught him, as it had taught many others, that the diggings were to be regarded as a kind of lottery, which offered on the one hand many prizes, indeed, and some of them of magnitude; but that on the other hand the blanks vastly preponderated. Thus, all the remains of poor William's romantic visions were thoroughly dispelled, and the stern realities of colonial life—its toils and trials—began to force themselves on his attention, and to invoke the energetic exercise of all the better parts of his nature.

CHAPTER II.

ROAD MAKING IN VICTORIA.

Arrival in Town.—A Friend's Boarding-house.—Burrows applies for various Situations.—Answers.—Use of Introductory Letters.—Meets a Schoolmate.—Starts for the Roads.—Description of Tents.—The "Billy."—The Beds.—The Meals.

ON the evening of the fourth day after William's departure from the diggings, he arrived in Melbourne once more, and proceeded to his friend's house before looking for lodgings elsewhere; from him he learned that the party he came out with intended setting up a boarding-house, and wished Burrows to come and take up his abode there for a time until he should get a situation to suit him. He accepted the offer, and remained there upwards of three months, searching meanwhile in vain for employment. When it was ascertained that he had not been engaged in any office before he left England, his application was always met with the same answer:—"We cannot take beginners in a country like this." The friends to whom he had letters, freely invited him to dinner, &c., but never offered to assist him in his endeavours to procure a situation. Some, indeed, hinted that the police

was a good employment to get into, while others gravely urged that many respectable young men were content to take up with stone-breaking!

He found, however, on making further inquiry, that he was then too young for the police force, to which, in Melbourne, none but men of vigour were eligible. At length, walking one day round the town, he met with a schoolfellow who happened to be in the very same predicament as himself, so the two having taken counsel together, packed up their blankets, and started to look for work in the bush. Leaving town one wet, dull, and miserable afternoon, they trudged on until they came to a small cluster of buildings, consisting of barns, stables, and other outhouses on the main road to the Ovens' Diggings, and in front of which might be seen a number of tents occupied by a road party.

The first tent which they observed was standing alone in its glory of green baize lining, straight and lofty ridge pole, and good rope guys, and belonged to the "boss," ganger, or overseer, by all of which names he is known amongst his labourers, and being the habitation of the chief, of course it rejoiced in a table, stretcher, or camp bed, as well as the rare accompaniment of a looking-glass, in

which the boss could see his honest brown face reflected, for, strange to tell, he was an honest contractor. It was tea, or rather supper-time, and on the table—a curious affair which shuts up when not wanted—there was a dish full of potatoes, a plate with a mutton chop on it, a knife, but no fork, a tin pannikin, and on the ground beside the table, a “billy,” which deserves a particular description. A “billy” is a tin vessel, something between a saucepan and a kettle, always black outside from being constantly on the fire, and looking brown inside from the quantity of tea that is generally to be seen in it. Tea-pots were things unknown among road-parties in those days, and the manner in which tea was and is still made, would horrify a thrifty English housewife. First the “billy” was filled with water, and made to boil, a good handful of tea was next put into it, it was then taken off the fire, and a handful of sugar thrown in; the whole being stirred with a clean stick, or a spoon, if there was such a thing to be had, was then allowed to stand a few moments, and poured into pannikins for drinking. However, as the overseer is reckoned to live like a prince, compared with his men, he must be left to finish his supper in solitary state, while with

William and his friend we proceed to take a look at the other tents.

This heap of canvass facing the road, which looks far more like a covering for a quantity of goods, than a place for human beings to live in, from the irregularity of its outlines, is to be our friend William's place of abode, and is somewhat facetiously called a tent. We lift the canvass, and stooping very low, contrive to enter. In the front and across the whole breadth of the tent, is a huge log without bark, and worn smooth by the number of men that have sat upon it from time to time, and upon which are now sitting five young men, and on each side of the door several more are standing. Before we see what they have for supper, we will finish our survey of the accommodation.

On the ridge pole—that being the driest place—is hung a gun, and on the ground underneath are the so-called beds, consisting of materials which would astonish people in England, used as they are, most of them, to soft and warm couches to rest upon. On the ground are laid two hurdles, “shook” as it is termed in bush slang, *stolen*, in plain English, from a neighbouring sheep-yard, and on these were placed a few sheepskins, also stolen from a neighbour's fence,

about a mile-and-a-half away, where they had been hung to dry. A blanket was next placed on the sheepskins, and on this the men lay; for covering they had what blankets they could muster, and all the clothes which they did not sleep in; besides which they frequently woke with a thin coat of frost or dew on the clothes above them.

Let us now look at their supper: first, there was of course our black friend "billy," then the damper, which consists of flour kneaded into a paste or cake, and baked in the ashes, mutton also cooked in the same primitive fashion. However, they all seemed blessed with good appetites, as the inroads made on the huge damper sufficiently showed. So much for the tent, now for the occupants, who well deserve a chapter to themselves.

CHAPTER III.

THE TENTS AND THEIR OCCUPANTS.

Road Makers.—Colin D——, — James B——'s friends.—Frank.—Jack.—O'Leary.—Description of their Fires and Yarns.—The B.A. who worked in Spectacles.—William leaves the Roads, and returns to Town.—Arrives in Town again.—Joins the Police Force.

COMMENCING at one end of the log on which they are sitting, we have first, Colin D——, a tall, black-haired, black-eyed specimen of an Irish gentleman, about twenty-two years of age, and belonging to what he termed the “sweet City of Dublin;” who having made himself somewhat obnoxious during an election, had been fired at twice while in the country districts, and, therefore, thought it high time to look out for other quarters. His father had been a man of good property, and, when he died, left Colin's mother and sisters very well provided for; but for himself there was but the paltry allowance of a hundred a-year, and he found that was merely “a drop in the bucket” on his arrival in Australia, where the necessaries of life were so expensive; and not thinking himself suited for employment in an

office, he preferred, like many others of equal respectability, working for his bread on the roads, until something should turn up better suited to him. With the independent spirit of a man of sense, he did not think it at all derogatory to his dignity to break stones when he was paid for it. He was a great favourite with his companions: a gentlemanly, well-educated young man, and withal a first-rate stone-breaker; so much so, that his "chums" used to tell him, jokingly, that he must have served his time to "the trade," either in a workhouse or a gaol.

The next on the log was a countryman of his from Skibbereen, a younger son of a clergyman, named James B——, who left that famine-stricken town, and came out to Australia to better his fortunes. After his arrival he had to sell fruit in a basket, in the town, to get a living; and some of his friends had seen him in this position, and actually purchased some fruit of him, without offering to assist him to obtain something better suited to his education. In a happy hour he soon after met with Colin, and upon this was induced to throw aside his basket, and the worthy couple joined the road-gang together. James, however, was too tall to make a good "navvy," and was told

by the other hands, that stooping so much would break his long back, as he stood six feet one inch in height; he was consequently employed to drive a cart with stones from the quarry to metal the roads.

The third individual was a young man named Frank —, from Ware, in Hertfordshire, who had been some years an officer, in the employ of a large steam-packet company, and, in a foolish freak, had sent in his resignation, and worked his passage out to the colony, as parser's assistant, his father having refused to encourage what he called his folly; indeed, he himself was afterwards induced to characterize his rash conduct in the same terms. He made a very good stone-breaker, but was a better sailor; and after he left the roads, the last that was seen of him was, that he had become second mate in one of the inter-colonial steamers.

Next came another minister's son, a very young fellow, named Jack M—, who performed his duties very well; he was employed at the quarries in blasting stone, so that his mates saw but little of him, except at meal times.

The next two were brothers, sons of an Irish farmer, named O'Leary, trying to scrape together enough money to take them to the diggings; and

the remaining two of the party assembled were sailors ; hard-working men, but rather ignorant.

After supper, when all the gang were gathered together round an immense fire, made in the open air of logs, raised by general contribution, it was an interesting sight to watch the different expression on the countenances of each, by the blaze of the fire, and hear the various arguments that grew out of their discourse, in which it was easy to see the advantage which education gave the young men, whom we have specially mentioned, over the others ; their language, grounds of argument, and, indeed, everything about them, were calculated to fix the attention of a stranger upon them, despite their brown faces, hard hands, and rough garb. One by one, they would drop off to their sheepskins, and sleep as soundly as on the softest of feather beds, to be awakened by the shrill whistle of the "boss," at half-past five in the morning, calling them to work until eight ; they then came in and got their breakfasts, and went off to work again until one, when they had dinner, and worked on from two until sunset.

William, in his thoughtful moods, was often struck by the ease with which young men, well-born and highly-bred, could brace themselves to

encounter all sorts of difficulties, and even make merry over their apparent misery. The secret lay in their actual position. They were now all on a level, and there were none present who had known them in better times to exult over their lowered position, or to wound them by useless, if not hollow attempts at commiseration. From the elasticity of spirit they exhibited, it would seem as if their real happiness was but little impaired by the loss of the manifold comforts and luxuries they had so recently parted from.

Such was the nature of life on the roads in 1852, and such as we have described were the kind of workmen engaged in that kind of labour. These jolly companions were highly amused at one young gentleman, a bachelor of arts, who, upon joining their gang, used to work in *spectacles!*

As winter was coming on very fast, Burrows thought he had better leave the roads, and try once more to obtain a situation in town; so, leaving the road-party, he started on his walk of twenty-five miles, carrying his blankets on his back, and arrived safely in Melbourne on the same evening, getting a bed at a small hotel in the suburbs. Meeting next day with his boarding-house friend, he went to stay with him for a while,

but not liking the manner in which he was treated, he left the house, and resolved to offer himself as a candidate for admission into the police force. He applied accordingly at the office of the chief commissioner, was introduced to him, and forthwith accepted and enrolled as a mounted cadet; but the account of this new kind of employment, and of his mode of life at the depôt, must be reserved for the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

MOUNTED POLICE AND THEIR OPERATIONS.

The Depot.—Cadets and Troopers.—Daily Routine.—Drill.—Sent to the Diggings.—Captain Brown.—Anti-Licence Meeting.—Arrest of Captain Brown.—Burrows sent to an Out-Station.—The Forgers.—The Chase.—The Capture.—The Escape.—The Trial.—The Court.—The Turnkey and Magistrate.—Amusing Mistake.—The Drunken Carters.—A Discovery.—William's Mishaps.—A Cold Bath.—Resignation and Return to Town.

ABOUT two miles from Melbourne there is a large piece of ground, known by the name of the Government Paddock. It is situated on the north side of the river Yarra-Yarra, the river running at the bottom of the ground, and forming one of its boundaries. Passing up along the road, we come to a large white gate, with a sentry in full uniform of blue cloth, with white facings; he carries a carbine, and is pacing the footpath at the side of the gate. Going down this path we come to another gate, and passing through we reach the barrack square, a large space kept clean, and in excellent order. On the right hand side of this gate are the quarters of the serjeant-major and the lieutenant in charge; on the left is the

office of the inspector, and his residence; in front, right across the square, are the stables for the troop-horses; and on the extreme right, the officers' and commissioners' stable. At the rear of the stable the tents in which the men live are fixed; and on the left is a long wooden building, one end of which is the mess-room of the cadets, and the other is their sleeping room. The cadets are distinguished from the troopers by wearing a silver lace-band on their caps, instead of the ordinary white cloth band.

The usual daily routine is as follows:—At half-past five in the summer, and six in the winter, the men are roused by the sound of the trumpet, and go to the stables, take out the horses and ride to water, a distance of about one mile. On their return, they clean the horses and feed them, which generally takes until eight o'clock, when the trumpet again sounds for breakfast, and at ten it sounds for the whole of the men to fall in on parade with their horses. After they have been inspected, they are ordered to mount, and ride out to the paddock for two hours' drill, they then come in, and after cleaning their horses and accoutrements, go to dinner, and parade again at two, on foot, for two hours' drill, and at four

o'clock take out the horses again to water, clean and feed them ; their labours for the day are then concluded, unless it happens that they are told off for guard, one of them as a sentry remaining on the stables all night.

William had been in the depôt about three months, when he was sent in haste, with twenty more men, to some distant diggings, as there was an outbreak expected to take place there. The first day the party rode thirty-five miles, the next forty-five, and the last thirty, arriving at their destination on the evening of the third day. The rumour of the expected outbreak arose from the fact that numerous meetings had been held on the diggings, at which the diggers were harangued by a man named Brown—who was dignified by the title of " Captain"—on the subject of licences. These meetings, indeed, were the commencement of the disturbances which led to the riots and bloodshed in Ballarat. On the arrival of the detachment, a great deal of patrolling took place, owing to many false alarms ; and on one occasion an immense body of men marched past the camp, shouting and firing guns and pistols, but it all ended in the arrest of the aforesaid Captain Brown ; and as there were more

police on the camp at that time than there was any necessity for, thirteen of the last arrivals, including William Burrows, were sent off to another place where their presence was more needed. On their arrival at their new rendezvous, eight of the men, with William Burrows amongst them, were sent further off to an out-station, that is, a smaller post formed near a head station, as a means of connexion between the more distant points, and as a protection also to the squatters in those remote places.

During his stay at this station, Burrows made the acquaintance of some curious characters; among them, of one who was afflicted with a morbid fancy for imitating bank-notes—in other words, a forger. This rencontre occurred in the following manner:—One evening Fred L—— and William were standing at the stable door, which faced the road, after having made their horses comfortable for the night, and were rather impatiently waiting for the summons of the cook to supper, when they saw a man come galloping up a slight ascent in the road, pressing his horse very hard. “He looks as if some one were after him,” said Fred, and running to the sergeant’s room, asked his opinion on the matter. While they were con-

sulting, up came another horseman, who seemed in as great a hurry as the first. The police all ran out on the road and stopped him, asking him to produce the receipt for his horse, one side of which was wet with blood, from the brutal use he had made of the only spur he had on. "Who are you that want my receipt?" said he. "I'm a constable, and will see it," was the answer. "Oh! I know your game," said he, making an attempt to break away by spurring the poor jaded horse; but finding it of no avail, he tried to slip off and run for it. As he dismounted, however, he was caught in the arms of one of the men who were waiting for him; he resisted vigorously, and commenced "cooeing" for his mate, which made them certain that the man who passed before was his associate. After searching the man they had got, and locking him up, Fred and William started after the other, and, about two miles up the road, they found him dismounted at a refreshment tent, "hobbling" his horse, as it is called: that is, strapping the two fore feet together. On seeing them coming, he started to run, but before he had gone far he was caught and brought back to his horse, which they made him mount and accompany them. On the road Fred noticed that he

was constantly trying to get something out of his waistbelt, and thinking it might be a pistol, he told him that if he did not desist, he would knock him off his horse. When they arrived at the station they found, on searching him, a revolver, loaded and capped, and also the remains of some forged notes, and a receipt for two horses, dated Hobart Town, some twelve hours previously; rather quick travelling, considering that the man said he had ridden eighty miles that day!

They were lodged in the gaol, and when searched by the turnkey—himself an old convict, who knew all the dodges of those gentry—in a thoroughly professional manner, nearly two hundred pounds in forged notes were found in the lining of the fellow's hat. The magistrate before whom they appeared committed them both for trial, and the notes were left in charge of the gaoler; but before the sessions one of the prisoners escaped, and when the other man was brought up for trial, the notes were not to be found, and he was consequently acquitted. It was supposed that the turnkey had been bought over, as most of these old hands have their price. The court exhibited rather an amusing scene at times, in consequence of the behaviour of the magistrate and this gaoler,

when some such conversation as the following might be heard:—the gaoler would bring in a prisoner, and the magistrate, after looking at him, would make a signal to the old convict, who, thereupon, proceeded to spin the prisoner round with his back to the magistrate, his worship observing, after a brief inspection,—“Ha! an old hand;” in saying which he was generally right, though occasionally he was egregiously wrong. It would seem that there was some peculiarity in the formation of the back and legs of the “old hands” or convicts, who had worked at the chain-gangs of Van Dieman’s Land, which the magistrate, from his experience while resident there, had acquired the art of distinguishing at a glance.

A short time after this affair a rather amusing mistake was made, which might have ended in a worse manner than it did. Having heard that several people had been “stuck up”—which, in colonial phraseology, means robbed—near the station, the police thought it advisable to dress in plain clothes, and with blankets rolled up, and strapped in front of their saddles in true bush style, thus patrol the road for five or six miles, looking very like bushrangers themselves. One night, when on their usual beat, they saw at a

short distance in the bush, off the road, a few sparks of fire, similar to the light caused by lighted tobacco in a pipe, and William was sent to see who the smokers might be. On riding up and giving the usual salutation, "Good night!" at the same time mentioning that they were the police patrol, and asking where the two worthy smokers might be going to, to his astonishment the answer received was, "We stop for no man," and putting spurs to their horses, made for the road. Shouting for the rest to close up, he followed, and a smart chase ensued for about a mile, when one of the two supposed bushrangers, in attempting to leap his horse over a huge ditch, formed by the rain, running from the ranges across the soft sandy soil of the road, fell with his horse into it; the horse quickly scrambled out and galloped away. His companion, seeing what had happened, pulled up, and the whole party met at a tent on the road-side; and to the surprise of both parties, the supposed bushrangers were the squatter and his overseer, who lived within three miles of the station. Explanations followed, and the whole affair was laughed at as a good joke. The reason of their flight was, that the settler had once before been stopped in the

same way at Swan Hill by bushrangers, stripped of everything he had, and left to walk home five miles in his shirt: so well were the police disguised, that he thought they were really bushrangers, and started off for fear of a repetition of the misadventure which he had encountered before. Having caught his horse, and seeing him safely on his road to the station, the police went back to look for the genuine bushrangers, but not finding them, returned to the station at daylight.

A day or two after, a man came up to the camp and said that there was a row at a public-house on the road, about three miles off. An officer and three men forthwith started for the spot, and, on arriving there, found two drays loaded with cases of spirits and bottled beer. The men belonging to both were in a state of intoxication bordering on madness, and were fighting together furiously; the police immediately endeavoured to separate them, and, as they were not allowed to carry spirits on their drays in large quantities unless shown in the waybill to be addressed to a wholesale house, and their loads did not come up to that condition, they thought it their duty to arrest them also. One of the the men went quietly, but the other took off all his clothes but his shirt, and

getting into the dray, commenced breaking up cases, and throwing the bottles at the police. A trooper dismounted, and giving his horse to the man who brought information of the row, went up to the dray, had the man taken out and handcuffed, and while he was in charge of others the fellow suddenly broke away, and leaping the fence at the road-side like a deer, started for the bush. The man who handcuffed him followed, and after a smart run, during which the prisoner displayed surprising agility, he was captured.

The next evening, while on patrol, the corporal noticed a shepherd at the side of the creek, gesticulating violently, and on going down they found the body of a man lying in the water, head downwards, and on taking him out found a bullet wound over the right eye. The shepherd said that he had driven his sheep there in the morning and evening of that day; in the evening he had stooped to drink, and on raising his head had noticed the man's face beneath the water. The body was taken out, and covered with boughs, to wait for the coroner, who did not come for two days, and the body was then in such a fearful state, that he had to hold an inquest on the spot. A verdict of wilful murder was returned, and the

body buried. The suspected parties were a bullock-driver and his wife, who had camped at the water-hole the night before. The body was that of a man who had taken a load of flour to the diggings, and sold it, together with three horses and a dray. It was supposed he was killed there, brought to the creek, and thrown in.

Burrows had now been about seven months on this station, when he was sent with a colt in his charge to another station about fifteen miles distant, across the river Loddon. The horse being young was very shy and troublesome; meeting a man on the road carrying a red blanket, the young brute gave a prodigious leap, and William, not expecting it, was pulled out of his saddle and left on the ground, the colt galloping off into the bush. Luckily he had not let go the reins of his own horse, and picking himself up as quickly as possible, he mounted and started in chase of the colt, but the thick timber, and the stony nature of the ground made the attempt rather hopeless, and on losing sight of the horse, which he soon did, he found that he had lost himself. After beating round the bush for some time, he found the road about sun-down, and went on to the station to report his misfortune. On coming to the river,

which, swollen by the rain, was foaming and roaring over its bed, he was rather puzzled to find the crossing place, as he had never crossed it before, but seeing the track of wheels on both sides, he determined to try and follow them; and after a great deal of persuasion, kicking and plunging, his horse took the water, and had gone about one-third of the way across, when he put his foot in a hole and rolled over into deep water. William of course slipped off, but as he had taken the precaution of having his feet clear of the stirrups, he came up from his plunge, and found the horse swimming beside him. Placing one hand on the horse's mane and striking out with the other, the two swam together, and reached the other side in safety, but very wet and uncomfortable, and about half-an-hour after dark, arrived at the station. The run-away colt was found about a fortnight afterwards and brought back.

A month after this, an order came to the district to swear in all the men for three years, that would do so, and those who would not might send in their resignations, to be accepted one month after date. Thinking it probable that some other more eligible situation might be found before the expiration of that period, William determined to

send in his resignation. In a month after doing so, he received his discharge, and started on foot for Melbourne—a distance of one hundred and ten miles—in the month of July, which is one of the winter months in Australia, reaching town safely on the evening of the fourth day after his departure.

CHAPTER V.

GOVERNMENT LAND SURVEYING.

Obtains a Situation.—Geelong Steamers.—Passage to Geelong.—Arrival.—The Survey Camp.—Daily Work.—The Alma.—Description.—Snakes.—The Black's method of Killing.—Enters on a Farm.—Splitting Timber.—Fencing.—Is Superseded.—Leaves the Farm.—Is Offered the Police again.—Accepts, and joins the Depot.

FOR about three months, which Burrows spent in Melbourne after leaving the police-force, he was busily engaged answering advertisements, and in looking about for a berth of some kind; at last he received an answer to one of his numerous applications, offering him a situation as draughtsman to a surveyor in the Geelong district. He at once accepted the offer, and without further loss of time transported himself and baggage on board one of the steamers for Geelong. The "Citizen," for so the steamer was named, may be taken as a good specimen of the boats on the line; she was built on the Clyde, is beautifully fitted up, and is very fast, making the trip to Geelong, a distance of fifty miles, in about four hours. The fares are moderate, considering all things, the saloon pas-

sage being twelve shillings and sixpence, and the fore-cabin eight shillings, with dinner, wines, and spirits, at shore prices.

Passing down the river Yarra, which is fringed on both sides with dense tea-tree scrub, and in some places is so narrow, that two steamers can hardly pass each other, a spot was pointed out, on one side, where the slaughter-houses formerly stood, and at which might be seen a spectacle calculated to make observers very suspicious of the manner in which colonial pork is fed. The "Citizen" emerging from the river, at length reached the bay, and steaming through the fleet of fine vessels, generally at anchor off Williams-town and Sandridge, arrived at Geelong about half-past three in the afternoon. Conspicuous from the sea, on first entering Corio Bay, is the terrace, and most of the streets being wide, and running down to the beach, the visitor can look right up into the town from the wharf. A considerable trade is carried on between Geelong and Ballaarat, the former being much nearer than Melbourne to the diggings, and two or three coaches run to Ballaarat daily, one or two starting at six in the morning, and for the convenience of the people proceeding thither from Melbourne, who

cannot go by the early coach, there is a steamer which starts from the Queen's Wharf at eight o'clock, and reaches Geelong at one, when a coach meets it, to take up passengers for Ballarat, arriving about six in the evening, a distance of nearly sixty miles.

Burrows remained all night in Geelong, and started the following morning for the surveyor's camp, which was situated about seven miles from the town, on a tract of land which he was marking off into small lots, preparatory to the next land sale. On his arrival, he found that the surveyor was out at work with his party, and accordingly waited for his return. The camp consisted of three tents, in one of which the surveyor slept, in the next the cook, and in the third the remainder of the party, which consisted of four men; there was a horse and dray for the purpose of shifting the camp when necessary, and a saddle-horse or two, besides, for the surveyor's own use. On the return of the party to the camp at sunset, William was most cordially welcomed, and speedily initiated into all the mysteries of his new calling. The usual course of the day was this: all hands rose at six, and got breakfast; started about seven for the field, and returned at three or four o'clock in

the afternoon, when they either mapped the day's work, or went out riding or shooting, and in general there was a great temptation to do one or the other, from the wild places in which the party was camped, and the number of ducks, turkeys, and kangaroos, generally found to be met with on such excursions. One part of the tract of land, included in the survey, was situated at the junction of three creeks, and a grander scene than that spot exhibited at sunset could hardly be seen elsewhere. From the descriptions given of the neighbourhood of the Alma, at the time of the Russian war, it was considered to be so similar in appearance, that the spot was afterwards often called by that name. Standing on the summit of the tall cliff, rising from the bank of the creek, with here and there a shrub growing from a cleft in the rock, and looking down on the creeks, bordered with thick tea-tree scrub, tall reeds, and beautiful specimens of lightwood, wattle, cherry and gum trees, growing in the flats formed by the bends in the stream, a light mist rising from the damp grass, and the surface of the water, the sun throwing long lines of light on the face of the opposite cliff; it was, indeed, a splendid picture of Australian scenery. The effect was, moreover,

heightened by contrast when the scene burst upon their view, after coming out of the thick, stringy bark forest.

The gentleman who was in charge of the party, camped about three miles above the junction, on one of the creeks, being desirous to explore the place, asked William to accompany him thither one afternoon. There was one great drawback to the enjoyment of the scene, arising from the abundance of snakes which found refuge in the long grass and brushwood that had, at the rainy season, when the creeks were flooded, been drifted down and lodged against the stems of the trees on the banks. They had shot a duck, and William was about to pick it up, when his friend cried out "Jump!" and it was time to do so, for a snake about five feet in length darted past him through the grass. They pursued the reptile and killed it. Its bite is said to be very venomous, if not mortal, although the blacks eat these creatures, and appear to relish them; but they take good care to use the precaution of killing the snake themselves, which they do in this manner:—they procure a long, slender stick, having a fork at the end, and stealing up to the snake very cautiously, while it is stretched at length, basking in the sun, they quickly place the

fork upon the neck, and press it tightly to the ground, thus preventing it from biting itself. This is precisely the object of their solicitude when destroying the venomous creature; and they take good care to avoid eating a snake killed in any other way, from the dread they entertain that by biting itself it may have poisoned its whole body. When the head is firmly pressed down, the snake twines round the stick, its head is then cut off, the body taken away and skinned, and it is then ready for roasting in the ashes of their fire.

Some time after William had joined the surveying party, he met with a friend who had purchased a large tract of land, and who was willing to entrust the management of it to him. Burrows readily accepted the offer, as the land formed part of a fine district, close to the range known as the Barrabool Hills, and was covered with grain of every description, and here and there a large vineyard. Seen from the Geelong-road at harvest time, it appears one unbroken line of cleared, fenced, and cultivated land, stretching along for six or seven miles. The river Barwon runs at the foot of the hills, and altogether it may be considered as the finest district near Geelong.

Before it was possible to do much with the land,

it required to be fenced in; it was accordingly determined that William and another should take a tent with them and start for the forest, distant about fifteen miles, to split a sufficient number of posts and rails to fence in twenty acres, to begin with. It may be, perhaps, as well to explain for the information of those who are ignorant of such matters, how this very important but simple operation is performed. First, it is requisite to seek for a tall, straight, stringy bark tree of good size, and after cutting a small piece out to see how the grain runs, the next thing is to "ring it," as it is technically called; that is, to cut off a strip of bark all round the tree for about a foot in depth, and applying the saw to the side on which the tree leans, cut in until the saw is jammed; at this point an axe is used to cut underneath the butt, in order to leave the end of the trunk square; after this the other side must be cut, and the tree will presently fall. Sometimes when the tree happens to stand very straight, it will need a wedge to be inserted in the cut made by the saw, and driven in until the tree falls.

When the tree has fallen, the length of the posts and rails must be measured off; six feet and a-half for posts, and nine feet for rails, is the

general length for each ; then it is necessary to ring the trunk again ; when this is done the bark must be stripped off in an unbroken sheet, this is to be charred on the inside and spread out flat to dry, when it is used for roofing huts, stables, &c. The log thus cut is then split in half, and so on into as many posts or rails as it will make. Some venerable denizens of the forest require to be split in the first instance with gunpowder, and many of these tall fellows will yield as many as a hundred good posts.

In a short time William and his mate had accumulated nearly a thousand posts and rails, and that quantity being sufficient for immediate use, it was carted to the farm, and the fence put up, the land being ploughed and sown during the time of its erection.

The first crop having been sown and reaped, Burrows had some disagreement with the person who owned the farm, about the manner in which it was got in, and this ended in a separation. The farmer succeeded in finding a man who, to his farming knowledge, added some carpentering skill, and as he himself wanted to get out of town with his family, he gladly engaged him. The farmer was frugal, and well content to find a man who

combined these qualities at less wages than Burrows received.

Thus William was again thrown out of employment; in spite of all his endeavours he could not succeed in finding a situation which suited him so well as the one he had left, and being invited to rejoin the police, he thought it advisable to accept the proposal.

In order that the reader may be able to form a distinct notion of the service—changed as it had necessarily become during the interval of two years—a long period in colonial reckoning—it will be necessary to visit the dépôt once more to take notice of the new arrangements that had been introduced.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MOUNTED POLICE AGAIN.

Changes in the Dépôt.—Sent up Country again.—Mount Buningyong.—View from the Summit.—The Ranges.—Lakes.—Spring of Water.—Dead Black.—Mode of Disposing of the Body.—Meets with an Accident.—Goes into Head Quarters.

PROCEEDING along the old road, we come to a fence of corrugated iron, and following it we find ourselves in front of the gate at which we entered before; there stands a sentry, but in a different uniform: the blue cloth coat exhibiting black instead of white facings, and as it is summer time the cap has a white cover with a flap for the neck; thus accoutred the sentry has to pace there for two hours under a burning sun. We turn down the footpath as before; but the gate at the bottom has been done away with, and in its place there is a smart-looking wooden building for a guardhouse; the sergeant's quarters are there, and on the left are the officers' quarters, a long row of iron houses with verandahs. The men no longer live in tents, but have also a good row of iron houses. There is likewise an iron stable standing where the old

one for officers' horses used to be. There is a mess-room, a hospital, a riding-school, and a row of iron cells for the confinement of refractories. The cadet system has been done away with, and there has been altogether a great change. Each man now on joining, has to serve six days on probation without wages. Barrows, however, having been in the service before, was indulged with leave for most of the time, and after being there about a week was sent away to a station eighty-four miles from Melbourne, and employed for some time in the escort of gold from a branch station to head quarters, and afterwards moved to a station about eight miles off, where he had an opportunity of ascending the mount from which the township takes its name, and the view from the summit quite repaid him for the trouble caused by the ascent. Looking round there might be seen the vast space of dingy brown foliage, for miles a perfect sea of leaves, and far away in the distance the ranges of the "Grampians" and "Pyrenees;" the diggings, looking at that distance mere heaps of clay of all colours, from white to red; lakes of water of vast extent might there be counted to the number of six or seven, and at the base of the hill was the township with its two or three

hotels, police station, and a few small stores. Here and there a column of smoke rising above the trees told of a shepherd's hut, or the stray camp of some travellers; some half calcined stone, and a few pieces of pumice here and there, told that at some time or other there had been a volcanic eruption; and about half way down there was a small spring of delicious water always cool, even in the height of summer, as it bubbled into a little basin covered with moss, a luxury rarely to be met with in the bush.

While stationed in this place, Burrows had an opportunity of seeing the manner in which the blacks bury their dead. One morning a little boy came up from the township, and said that he had found a dead body, and on going with him to see it, a horrible sight met their gaze. In the hollow of an old tree which had been burnt down, there was placed the body of a gin, or black woman, having the eyes open, the lips cut off, and the whole body singed; the knees drawn up to the chin, and the arms stretched out on each side. Returning to the camp, they were ordered to bury her; a task they accomplished with much repugnance. The poor creature had apparently been dead about three or four days, and in that

hot climate William's repugnance to the task may easily be accounted for.

Meeting with an accident shortly afterwards, which disabled him for a time, but did not prevent him from walking about, he was kept at head quarters, and while there, had an opportunity of attending the sessions, an account of which will be given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SESSIONS AT THE DIGGINGS.

The Sessions.—Description of Camp.—Attempts of Prisoners to Escape.—The Gaol.—Description of its Inmates.—The Court House.—Cattle-stealing.—Description of Prisoners.—Sentence.—Forgery.—Acquittal.—Highway Robbery.—Murder.—Facts of the Case.—Verdict of Jury.—Sentence.

It may be as well to commence this chapter by giving a description of the camp at which the sessions were held. The so-called camp is a collection of buildings, consisting of an office for the superintendent of police, a barrack-room for the mounted and foot police, a mess-room for the mounted men, and one for the officials connected with the treasury, and the officers of police; a treasury, telegraph-office, stables, forage stores, barracks for soldiers, and quarters for the officers in command, canteen, and, lastly, court-house and gaol. The court-house was a tolerably spacious building, with a verandah running along three sides of the structure, against the walls of which were generally posted numerous written notices of the sale of claims, missing friends, &c. The gaol

was built in a very massive style, though entirely of wood. Huge logs were piled one upon the other, the ends being crossed, and mortises cut, so that the cross logs fitted into those running the length of the building, leaving the smallest possible space between them. The flooring and ceiling were framed of the same materials, in such a manner that nothing could by any means burrow its way out, either by the roof, or by digging under the ground logs. In fact, the interior looked just like a huge box of logs, the whole being roofed in the usual manner with shingles. The doors were of thick hard-wood planks, studded with iron bolts, in regular gaol fashion, and in the centre of each was a large staple; so that in addition to the bolts outside, there was a strong chain fastened to one door-post, rove through the staple, and padlocked to the other post. There were two separate cells, one for male, and the other for female prisoners; and on one side of the yard there was a neat wooden building, fitted up for the accommodation of the turnkeys and other officials connected with the gaol. The whole was surrounded by palisades about twenty feet high, consisting of strong posts deeply sunk in the ground, and palings, sharpened

at the top, and about two inches in thickness, fixed on to them by long iron spikes.

The prisoners during the day were guarded by soldiers ; and when let out for exercise in the yard, the sentries walked outside on a platform, which was carried along three sides of the palisade, and access to which was gained by means of ordinary wooden steps from the ground. At night the guard also watched on the platform to prevent any prisoners that might slip out of the gaol from getting over the palisade. Two instances of this kind happened while William was stationed there, one of which occurred in the following manner. The prisoners had by some means possessed themselves of a large knife, and managed to notch the edge of it in such a manner that it served well enough as a saw. One dark, rainy night, they commenced sawing through the uppermost logs ; when a serjeant, who happened to be passing near the gaol, was struck by the unusual merriment of the prisoners, who were singing very vociferously. He paused to listen, and distinctly heard, through the din of their uncouth harmony, the noise of a saw steadily at work. He gave the alarm, and extra sentries were posted ; but it would appear that the prisoners managed to find out this fact,

and suspecting that their notable scheme had been detected, desisted from further pursuing it. The next morning search was made for the knife, and after a great deal of trouble, it was found hidden under the floor logs, the incision having been ingeniously concealed by rubbing over it a composition of soap and dirt.

The other case was a very similar one. A man who had been convicted of murder, and was in gaol waiting to be sent to town, managed also to get a knife, and converted it into a saw in like manner. With this he cut a hole large enough, as he thought, to enable him to slip through; then, *greasing* his skin, tried to slide out; but when he had got about half through, he found that he could neither move forwards or backwards, and thus hopelessly stuck fast, began to roar lustily for help. He obtained the relief he prayed for, and at the same time a pair of irons, which put an effectual stop to any further attempts on his part to escape that night. Early on the following morning he was sent to town, preparatory to his execution, which took place about a week afterwards.

About session time the gaol is generally full of some of the greatest criminals on the face of the

earth ; fellows to whom human life is a mere matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. Some of them have come out under sentence of transportation for life in the first instance, and after serving some time, have obtained a ticket-of-leave, and managed to keep clear of the fangs of the law for a time ; but most of them get retaken at last, and are again sentenced for life for an accumulation of offences. Some amongst them behave tolerably well during their imprisonment, and by some means get another ticket-of-leave ; and in this way have been sentenced for life three or four times over. At the period here treated of there were several cases of cattle-stealing, one of forgery, one for highway robbery, and one for murder. Indeed, the sessions rarely came round without a case of murder.

The judge having arrived, together with many barristers and attorneys, who are going circuit with him, the outside of the court-house presents, from an early hour in the morning, a very busy appearance. Here may be seen a group of men, who, to judge by their countenances, may be set down at once as friends of some of the prisoners about to be tried. There they are, with their close-cropped hair, shaven faces, and well greased thieves'

curls, or, as some of the flash gentry call them, "Newgate knockers," hanging over their temples, with a bull-dog look about them, which bespeaks the thorough blackguard; discussing together the case of their "pal" in all its bearings, and quoting largely from the volume of their own experience on similar occasions. In another place may be seen the female friends, and among them, perhaps, the wife of one of the prisoners, who are also engaged in considering together, or with a lawyer, whether their poor Bill, Tom, or Harry will be "pinched," or "turned up," meaning, convicted or acquitted. Besides these professional groups may be seen, scattered round about, some sitting smoking on the verandah, a few men and women who have come there from motives of curiosity: to see some hardened offender, of whom they have heard a good deal, and, although they may not be able to tell until they see him, by whom they may possibly have been themselves victimized. At last the doors are opened, and then is a cry of "Here they are!" we look round, and see some half-dozen of faces, whom no gaol would refuse to own, coming down under charge of the police; they enter a small side door into the ante-room of the court. Let the reader follow us there, and

see what is doing. The judge takes his seat, and the clerk of the bench having read over the names of the jury, they take their places, and the oath is administered, "that they will well and truly try," &c. The clerk again rises, and reads the names of two prisoners; all eyes are bent on that small door to the right of the judge, as the prisoners are about to walk in, and take their places in the dock. The indictment is read, charging them with having, on a certain day, driven away certain cattle having certain brands upon them. They plead, "Not guilty."

It is, however, worth while to describe them individually. One is a man of about five feet eight inches in height, stout and dark, and, as he stands there in that respectable dress, no one would think that he had been a convict. But he has, nevertheless; and after serving his term of imprisonment, became a steady man, and had amassed considerable property, until, in an evil hour, when driving some cattle down the country from the station where he had purchased them, he saw some more, as he thought, without an owner; mixing these with his own, he drove them down, and offered them for sale, not a mile from the spot where he now stands. The other is a young

German, whom he had engaged as an assistant to drive the cattle down; and the fact that he had been an assistant brought him there, that it might be proved whether it was with a guilty knowledge or not. The gentleman to whom the stolen cattle belonged was then called to appear in the witness-box, and gave his evidence in a plain, straightforward manner. Then followed his overseer, who proved having seen the cattle in the sale-yard, and that they were entered in the prisoner's name. The constable who arrested him proved the same thing, and this closed the case for the prosecution. The counsel for the prisoner then got up, and in a long and able speech, endeavoured to prove the innocence of his client. He touched upon the position in life which the prisoner had held, up to the time of his arrest; and endeavoured to prove that he had no motive whatever for stealing the cattle. He next called witnesses as to his character; and though some of them looked rather doubtful characters themselves, they all agreed in giving him a good one. He was then asked whether he had anything to say: in a manly way, he addressed the jury, to the effect, that though they might convict him, yet the young man, his assistant, was innocent, as he had unwittingly driven

the cattle with him, and acted entirely under his orders. The jury retired; and after about an hour's deliberation, returned a verdict of guilty against the elder prisoner, and acquitted the young German. The judge then spoke of the folly of the prisoner, in not letting well alone; he was thriving in an honest way, and yet could not resist temptation when it was thrown in his path; and, in conclusion, sentenced him to seven years' penal servitude. He then warned the young German of the danger of being found in bad company, and ordered his release.

The next prisoner called up was a foreigner, charged with having in his possession certain presses, metal plates, &c., with intent to commit a forgery on a certain bank. The principal witness in this case was one of the constables, a very zealous young man, who stated that from information he had received, he watched the prisoner's house, which was of rather peculiar construction, inasmuch as it had no windows, and was lighted from the roof by a skylight—a rather unusual thing on the diggings. After much close observation, he at last saw a man, whom he believed to be the prisoner, busily engaged in engraving the plates produced before the court. From want of

evidence that the notes had actually been produced and put into circulation, and from the prisoner alleging that the plates, &c., were only left with him by some countryman of his whom he did not know, he was acquitted, and the plates, &c., forfeited to the Crown.

The next two prisoners were charged with highway robbery, under the following circumstances. About three months before their arrest, the prosecutor, a young man employed in a printing office, was walking home, when he was seized by two men, who threw him down and attempted to rob him; his cries, however, brought a young man to his assistance, and upon finding this the thieves made off. The prosecutor swore positively to the persons of the prisoners, but some doubt appeared to linger on the minds of the jury, as also on the part of the prosecutor's witness, on the question of identity, and as one of the men proved an alibi, they were acquitted, after a great deal of hard swearing on both sides.

The next prisoner was charged with the crime of murder, and under circumstances so atrocious, that every one who heard them detailed looked on him with horror, in spite of his protestations

of innocence. The facts were as follows. He had been for some time out of employment on the diggings, and not having money enough to work on his own account, wanted to obtain a share in a claim with some other party. After trying for some time without success, he met with two men who were what is called "prospecting," at a distance from the main diggings, and being, as they thought, in a good place, offered, more as an act of charity than from any other motive, to take him into partnership; he was very glad to catch at anything, and readily accepted their proposal. After having been some time with them, and seen how the claim was likely to turn out, he made the attempt to murder them and take possession. They had sunk two shafts about eight feet, and agreed that one man should stop above and draw up the stuff, while the other two should remain below and dig separately; on the occasion in question it was his turn to remain on top, and, after having drawn up a few buckets of stuff from one of the shafts, with a revolver he shot the man in the head who was in it: he then went to the other shaft and struck the man in it on the head with a kind of pickaxe having one point

only, called a driving pick, beating him so severely that he subsequently died; he then heaped a quantity of dirt on the man whom he had shot, and leaving the place, went back to the tent. It turned out, however, that the man whom he had shot was not mortally wounded, and the poor fellow had, with the assistance of a stranger, got out of the shaft, and proceeded as well as he could to the diggings; there he saw a doctor, got the ball extracted, and gave information to the police, who arrested the murderer the same night, as he lay fast asleep in the bed of one of his ill-fated mates.

The principal witness against him was a man who, it would seem, through a special act of Providence, lost his way in the bush, and in his wanderings had seen the prisoner filling up the shaft. Thinking it was rather an unusual thing to *fill up* a shaft, he went towards the place, and the prisoner happening to see him, the witness asked him the way to the nearest water, when he pointed to some place in quite an opposite direction from the claim he was so busily filling up. Entertaining some suspicions of the man, both from his eager manner, and the singularity of his employment, he proceeded a short distance into the bush in the direction indicated, then hid him-

self until he saw the prisoner depart. On going up to the claim a little while afterwards, he thought he heard a man groan, and after a time discovered two men, one in each shaft. One, as we have said before, got out with his assistance, and proceeded to the diggings for medical aid; the other, after being helped out, died in a short time. The witness, immediately after this, proceeded to give information to the police of the circumstance. The prosecutor, whose head was bound up with a bandage, and his arm in a sling, as he stood in the court, appeared very weak. The prisoner had his head also bound up, and looked ill too. The trial lasted about seven or eight hours; and the jury having retired, returned a verdict of guilty, after deliberating for an hour and a half. The judge, amidst breathless silence, pronounced the awful sentence of the law, and the prisoner having been removed, the court broke up. After his return to the gaol, the prisoner broke out in the most blasphemous language against the judge, and every one connected with his conviction. It turned out that this wretched man had some years before been a decent member of society, and was once master of a trading schooner on the Californian coast. The next

morning the clank of his irons might be heard as he went across the barrack square to take his seat in the conveyance which was to bear him to town, where his mortal career would speedily be terminated by the hands of the hangman.

CHAPTER VIII.

AUSTRALIAN BIRDS.

Australian Birds.—Parrots.—Lories.—Rosellas.—Blue Mountains.
 —King Parrots.—White Cockatoos.—Black Cockatoos.—Black
 Ducks.—Mountain Ducks.—Black Swans.—Turkeys.—Pigeons.

BURROWS had from his childhood displayed a special affection for all kinds of animals, and was much devoted to the practical study of natural history, a propensity which his long residence in the interior of Australia furnished abundant opportunities of indulging. The following brief summary, will be found to embody the result of his researches and observations.

The most striking feature of the natural history of the antipodes is the great variety of birds to be met with there, which afford, from their gay and even gaudy plumage, a singular contrast to the more sober-hued denizens of our own woods and fields. Conspicuous amongst these bright-hued creatures is the parrot family. In most parts of the bush they are to be met with in endless variety as to colour and size, from the diminutive shell parrot to the cockatoo. The

different kinds are so numerous that we shall only describe the most beautiful, which are, the lories, rosellas, and the king parrot.

The lory is a fair-sized bird, somewhat larger than a thrush, and is of a bluish colour, with crimson head and breast, blue wings and tail. It is generally to be found in the wattle and cherry trees, on the seeds of which it feeds, and also on insects and seeds found in the grass; it builds its nest in hollow trees in the forests.

The rosella is a very common species, and is the easiest tamed of the numerous parrots in Australia. They build in holes in the gum-trees, and we have had as many as five young ones in a cage at one time, which, when placed on a stump near the tree from which they were taken, the old ones will come and feed them until they are full fledged. They are the same size as a lory, with red heads, breast yellow and red, the back and wings spotted with green, blue, and black.

The most gorgeous bird of all is the blue mountain, and it is well worth a walk into the bush to see a flock of these darting amongst the trees, their plumage glittering in the sun, and uttering a sharp shrill cry as they pass like a flash of light close to your head. The back of this bird is of a

beautiful green, the head spotted with blue feathers, the breast of different shades of orange, blue, and scarlet, under the wings bright yellow, and the tail of green and yellow feathers. Their habits and food are similar to the other species.

The king parrot is the largest of the kind seen in Victoria, and is of a dirty green with a few red feathers. Parrots of all kinds will flock to a piece of land which has been newly sown or reaped; at that time they are very fat, and are generally considered very good eating.

The most destructive birds to grain are the cockatoos, or as a friend of ours, a squatter, used to call them, "cock-a-twenties;" and indeed, wherever there is grain on the land, their name is legion. They seem to possess the faculty, considered to be peculiar to crows, of smelling gunpowder; for if any one armed with a gun approaches them, they rise into the air with deafening screams, abominably dissonant. We once managed to shoot six of them in an afternoon, by what was reckoned rather a cunning dodge. We winged one of them and then drove him round the paddock, screaming out all the time, the others flew round to look after him, and by this means we bagged six. If they are shaken when shot, a kind of white powder

comes away from the feathers on the fingers. The most common are the white species with a yellow crest, which they can erect at pleasure. Some have no crest, but a few rose-coloured feathers about the head and wings; these are very clean-looking birds, and in harvest-time are very fat and good, their bodies being a little larger than that of a pigeon.

The most handsome variety is the black cockatoo, which has no crest, the male bird having scarlet feathers on the head and wings, the tail being barred with scarlet, yellow, and black. The female has the tail of black feathers spotted near the tip with red, but not barred, and the head has yellow feathers instead of red. The remainder of their plumage is a sooty black. Where these birds, or the white cockatoo, build their nests, is a puzzle to any one but the natives, as they are the only people likely to see them. Some say in the rocky hills and gullies, others, in the stringy bark forests, but we never met with any one who had either seen their nests or had taken a young bird.

The most edible birds are wild ducks, pigeons, turkeys, quails, and snipes, of each of which a short description shall be given.

The wild ducks are similar to those in England,

and are divided into numerous varieties, the best of which are the black duck, mountain duck, and teal. The black sort is generally found in the lagoons and swamps in various parts of the bush; and in a lagoon near Castlemaine the water was fairly covered with them. In the spring almost all the creeks are more or less frequented by these birds. Some of the blacks, as we have been told by a resident, on the Edward and Billibong rivers, have a peculiar and rather cunning plan for catching them, which they manage in the following manner. A black goes into the stream, above the place where a flock of ducks are feeding, and putting a tuft of grass and reeds on his head, drifts down the stream towards them; the ducks finding only a mass of grass and rushes approaching, see no cause to be frightened, until they become aware that a great many of their friends are disappearing, one after the other, under water; the black being all the time busily engaged pulling them down by the legs, and in this way they often catch great numbers. At the time when the ducks are hatching, it is surprising to see how close they will sit on their nests, which are generally in a hole under the roots of a bush on the side of a river or creek. We have been

shooting close up to a nest, and the duck has not started until the bush was roughly shaken. We came on a nest one day, in which were nine eggs, and the poor hen lying dead close to it, having managed to return to the nest after being wounded. When there are any pools of fresh water near the seashore, great numbers of ducks come off the sea in the evening to feed in them, and a friend of ours once killed, near Swan Bay, as many as two men could carry, in the course of a few hours, and would have killed many more had he not expended his ammunition.

It is very pleasant to walk up some shady creek at noon, when the heat is sometimes so intense that even the birds become silent, and nothing is to be heard except the chirp of the grasshopper, which it seems nothing can stop; noticing on your way the numerous birds which are to be seen on the banks, the stillness unbroken unless by the report of your own gun, which is sure to be brought into requisition pretty frequently, if your sporting propensities are not sufficiently sated to enable you to resist the temptation of shooting a fine duck or two rising at your feet, from some quiet pool, overhung by tea-tree bushes, and fringed by tall reeds and bulrushes.

The mountain duck is a very shy bird, and is generally seen on large lakes, and even on the plains near small pools formed by the rain in the winter season. The male bird is of very beautiful plumage. They are generally seen in pairs, the greatest number together seldom being more than four. Burrows killed one—the only one he ever shot—in the following manner. When camped near the seashore one night, he heard the peculiar cry of the mountain duck near the tent at about three in the morning, and being a keen sportsman, he rose from his bed, and, taking a gun, waited in his shirt, on a bitter cold morning, for nearly half an hour, for the chance of a shot; and when he got it, he killed the female, so that his chief object, that of examining the plumage of the male bird, was defeated.

Teal in Australia are similar to those in England, but, if anything, a trifle smaller.

The subject of waterfowl should not be dismissed without mentioning the black swan, which is no longer, as we were taught at school, "*rara avis in terris.*" They are similar in shape to English swans, only black, with a red bill and feet, and are generally heard at night, near the seashore, when flying inland to some lake in the

interior, and their musical, though mournful note sounds very clear, and is the first notice of their flight on a dark, still night. They are seldom seen except in the far distant lakes of the colony, but have occasionally been shot on Lake Coranimité, near Geelong, and Lake Burrumbet, near Ballarat. There are some tame specimens to be seen in the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne.

Turkeys are generally found in the plains, on stony ground, and where there is long grass, but especially on a patch which has been recently burnt; the reason of this is generally supposed to be that they prefer picking up the burnt grasshoppers—their principal food—to the trouble of catching them alive. Be that as it may, they are almost sure to be found there. They are unapproachable on foot, and are rather shy of a horseman, but from a cart or gig they are easily shot. The manner of getting at them is this:—While one person drives towards the turkey, so as to get within shot, another walks by the side of the wheel farthest from the bird, and when within a proper distance, allows the gig to pass on, and before the bird can get on the wing—for they generally first run some distance—a good

shot seldom misses them. They are sometimes to be met with of great size, with long necks and legs, walking with a slow, stately step, and looking suspiciously from side to side as they proceed. From the peculiar formation of their feet, which have only three toes, it is supposed that they never perch on trees. Their eggs are laid on the bare ground, and are about the size of a goose's egg; the old ones sit on them by turns, and do not, as has been erroneously stated, "bury them in the sand like the ostrich." We conclude, from having once watched a turkey hatching an egg in the hope of securing a young one for the purpose of taming it, and not seeing the chick at all, that it must run as soon as hatched, and that it has then probably a good covering of down.

Pigeons are very plentiful in the neighbourhood of creeks and tea-tree scrub, principally on the banks of the former at evening time, when they come down to drink; they are called bronze-winged, from the beautiful tints of the feathers in the wings. Their colour is dark brown, and when they start from a bush they make a clapping noise with their wings, similar to English pigeons, which they resemble, too, in shape; and their flight is

very strong and swift. They are generally plump and good, but the flesh is dark coloured; they feed on the seeds of plants and grass, and when seen sitting on the ground bear a great resemblance to partridges.

CHAPTER IX.

BIRDS CONTINUED.

Snipes.—Quails.—*Ornithorhynchus Paradoxus*.—Goat-sucker.—
Hawks.—Native Companions.—Emu.—Anecdote of a Tame
Emu.—Hunting Emu.—Death of B——n.

THE Australian snipe is a little larger than the English bird, but without its peculiar zigzag flight, but, if missed at the first shot, they will begin to fly in that manner when again on the wing. Their flight is generally straight for a short distance, and on settling they run through the grass and rushes, so that they are seldom flushed at the same spot in which they were marked down. They are delicate eating, but are rarely to be met with.

Quails are in some places very plentiful, especially in stubbles and the long grass of the swamps on the plains, which are dry in summer. Dogs being seldom used when shooting them, the loud whirring noise which they make when they rise is rather startling to any one accustomed to shooting with dogs; moreover, as they fly only a short distance, and very fast, rather quick shooting

is required; at harvest time they are very fat, although rather small. When only wounded, they are very cunning in getting away; and as they run so far and lie close, there is very little chance of finding a bird without a dog, unless shot dead.

It is now time to say a few words about that anomalous production of nature, the ornithorhynchus paradoxus, or duck-billed platypus, which is neither bird nor beast, having a bill like a duck and a body like a beaver, covered with a beautifully soft fur. It has web feet, and on each hind foot has a long fang, or tusk, a wound from which is said to be poisonous. It is generally to be seen in the evening, swimming with its bill scarcely above the water, and making a small ripple as it swims; it is very quick in ducking at the flash of a gun, and unless shot dead sinks to the bottom. Burrows once shot one in the river Moorabool, near Morison's station, after watching for three evenings, and having killed it, sent a dog in to fetch it out; but, probably, never having seen one before, the dog refused to bring it after looking at it, and left his master to do that work himself. It was a fine specimen, measuring nearly fifteen inches in length. The platypus has been taken alive by draining the hole in which it lived; its

burrow is generally on a level with the water, in some overhanging bank.

The next bird that deserves mention is the goat-sucker, or, as it is called in the colony, the cuckoo, and also the mopoke; the cadence of its cry resembling that of the cuckoo, while it articulates the word "mopoke." It is very like an owl; making itself heard at night, and during the day is to be found asleep on the withered branch of some old gum tree. They are harmless, but are generally covered with vermin; indeed, from the sleepy, dreamy look of live specimens when met with, they appear too lazy to clean their feathers like other birds.

There are numerous hawks in the colonies, the largest of which is the eagle-hawk, a noble bird of a brown colour, with long wings and powerful claws, having a whitish head, with a large beak. They are very destructive at lambing time, and will even attack a sickly sheep which they may find by itself in the bush. One was shot, measuring four feet from tip to tip of its wings, in the act of eating a young lamb which it had killed. When wounded they will show fight to the last. They are generally found in rocky gullies, and may be seen on the plains soaring high in the air,

at which elevated point they will, on perceiving any tempting object, such as lizards, hover round for a moment, and drop like a shot to the ground to seize their prey.

There is another bird found on the plains, called the "native companion." Why it has received that name would be hard to tell, unless it be used in an ironical sense, as it is a bird of remarkably solitary habits. It is of large dimensions, specimens having been met with six feet in height, measuring from the tip of the beak to the toes, and its breadth, with the wings extended, not less than nine feet from tip to tip. Their colour is a bright lavender, the top of the head quite bare and dark brown, the beak long, and under the ear-holes a broad band of red feathers is conspicuous, the under part of the head and throat being covered with fine black hair.

The last, but not by any means least, in the catalogue of Australian birds, is the emu. This is a very large bird similar to an ostrich, some specimens standing nearly six feet high, measuring from the ground to the top of the head; while their long legs and neck make them appear even taller than they are. The plumage of these birds is very peculiar, as it neither resembles hair nor

feathers, but is a curious mixture of both. They have no wings, merely a bunch of feathers where wings are usually placed. They run with incredible speed, their legs being very strong, and are used by them also for the purpose of defence: they have only three toes, the centre one being armed with a strong claw, and their kick is sufficient to stun, if not kill, a dog. When taken young, there is no difficulty in taming them, and one specimen which Burrows saw at the station of a friend of his was so tame that it would come into the room where the family were assembled, and put its neck in a caressing manner on that of its mistress, until it obtained something to eat. It was, however, a great nuisance as it was constantly capering about in front of any horseman who might come to the station, and being a large bird would frighten young horses very much. It disappeared one day, and after being absent about a week—during which period the younger members of the family were in great distress as to its fate—it came back again, bringing with it another emu, a female, and it was very amusing to watch its manoeuvres to entice the stranger up to the station; but it would not come nearer than the fence, and at last went away. The tame one remained, and soon

after was accidentally killed in the following manner. The overseer was busy one day, and the emu was constantly teasing him; in order to check the annoyance he threw a stone at it, without intending at all to hurt the troublesome bird, and, unluckily, broke its leg, which was carefully bandaged up, but the poor emu died. Its fat when melted gave two quarts of oil, which is much prized in the colony as a cure for rheumatism.

Hunting the emu is good sport, but is attended with considerable risk. A young man named B——n was killed while in pursuit of one, and the circumstances under which the accident happened may serve to show the peculiar danger attending the pursuit of these huge birds. He was returning from a place where he had sold some cattle, when, seeing an emu, he gave chase; the bird took, as usual, to the thick timber, and the ground being strewn with the trunks of trees, which had been felled by splitters, rendered it necessary to leap them very often. On coming to a log of rather large size, B——n, who was a splendid horseman, put the horse at it, and noticing that the bough of another tree overhung the log, stooped in the saddle to avoid being swept off, but unfortunately he did not stoop low enough;

the horse rising to the leap, B——n's head struck the bough and he was knocked off, his foot catching in the stirrup, while his face was swung violently by the spring of the horse against the log. The horse stopped, and a friend who was with him laid him on his horse and took him home; he lingered in a state of insensibility for some time and expired. So much was his face bruised, that the poor fellow's brother did not recognise him until he saw the horse that conveyed him. In a lonely grave near the station, marked by a wooden paling surrounding a green mound under a spreading acacia, lie the remains of a fine, active young man, thus cut off in the spring of life.

This is not a solitary instance, for scattered through the bush low mounds are to be seen, marking the last resting-place of some young man who came to a similar untimely end. These mementos of frail mortality, respected even by the blacks, conjure up sad thoughts in the mind of the traveller coming suddenly upon them. Many is the man who has left his home full of joyous anticipations of the future, who has never more been heard of; a few scattered bones, in some wild spot, being the only tokens that will be found of the lost one after the lapse of many

years. Burrows once found a man lying in the bush dead, with his head on the saddle and his whip lying near him. He had lost his horse, and in looking for it had himself lost his way, and with strength utterly exhausted, had in this posture sunk down to die of starvation, remote from all chance of succour. On looking on his face,—and he was not more than twenty-one years of age,—the beholder could not but think of lamenting relations and friends, of sisters, perchance a mother, wondering how their brother or son was going on in the far away land, little imagining that he had perished thus miserably! Another time he found a skeleton in a sitting position, with the fragments of clothes fluttering on the bones, in a cleft in the rock at Mount Beckwith, the bones bleached by many storms of wind and rain—a knife lying by, and an empty pipe, at which the fleshless skull seemed to grin in hideous mockery. These were all the goods and chattels he had with him. After such sights, it was impossible to glance at the column of “Missing Friends” in the *Melbourne Argus*, without thinking how many of those so advertised may have gone the same way.

CHAPTER X.

AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS.

Australian Animals.—Opossums.—The Blacks' Method of Catching them.—Anecdote.—Shooting Opossums.—Ringtailed Species.—Snaring.—Native Cats.—Flying Squirrels.—Wild Dogs.—Kangaroos.—Stalking.—Hunting.—Anecdote of a Kangaroo Dog.

IN giving the result of William Burrows' experience and observations on the animals of Australia, the opossum claims our first attention. These animals, styled "'possums" throughout the Colonies, are of two kinds—the common opossum and the ringtailed opossum. The common 'possum is as large as a domestic cat, and in some cases larger. They inhabit the holes in the trunks of trees, and in some of the venerable gum-trees there is quite a colony of them. They sleep all day, and come out at night to feed; their fur is short and thick, of a greyish colour, and their tails are long, bushy, and black. They carry their young in pouches, and the "joeys," as the young ones are called, seldom come out of the pouch, until their fur is sufficiently thick to resist

the heavy night dew ; and when they do leave it, they sit on the back of the old one, which carries them down to the grass, and up again into the tree on the approach of danger. The manner in which the blacks obtain them for eating, and also for making rugs of their skins, may be interesting to our readers. Coming to a tree of good size, and having a number of holes in it, they look at the bark to see if there be any scratches made in it, and if there are, they can tell if the animal has been only descending or ascending it ; if ascending, they will say, in broken English, "'possum sit down here, I believe ;" then with their tomahawks they proceed to cut a notch in the bark, in which they place their big toe ; and reaching above their heads, cut another notch for their fingers ; then cut another as high as they can reach with their feet : and, in this manner, they will ascend the tallest and most slippery trees, when induced by hunger, or by promises of tobacco or flour. The word flour, or, as they call it, "plour," calls to mind an amusing illustration of native logic, related to Burrows by a friend of his, to whom the blacks told it ; and our readers must pardon this digression for the sake of the anecdote.

At Lake L'Albert—we believe that is the name

—there is a station of the Moravian missionaries, who have to furnish the blacks, by order of Government, with blankets and flour, whenever they think it necessary, and at the same time try to civilize them. Now, the blacks, in commenting upon the practical working of this regulation, say, "That the missionaries yabber plenty daily bread and trippenny pieces, but they only gib it picaninny sifting belonging to plour, like it whits fellow gib it yarraman;" meaning, thereby, that the missionaries talk to them, in the words in the Lord's Prayer, about "forgiving trespasses" and giving "daily bread," but that they only give them, instead of "bread," the siftings of flour, meaning bran, which they see the squatters giving to their horses.

But, to return to our notes on the 'possum; the blacks, as already mentioned, obtain them for eating, although they are very indifferent food. Those colonists who have had the hardihood to taste them, aver that they certainly resemble rabbit in flavour, but are fearfully rank, even after soaking in vinegar for some time, to take away the taste of the leaves on which they feed. When broiled on the coals, even in its natural state, most people would pronounce it

an abominable morsel. It is thought fine sport, on a moonlight night, to go out shooting these animals; and a party of sportsmen one night, on the Little river, brought down sixty, after about four hours' hard work; they were very tired, when each brought his load of game to the fire, and a very imposing pile of 'possums they had collected; these would have been better, however, had they been merely rabbits.

The ringtailed species are much smaller animals, and are called by that name from a peculiar power which they have on being wounded only, when shot at, of curling their tails round a bough, and hanging by that means until they are dead, when the tail stiffens, and they are frequently to be seen hanging in that position until they become perfect skeletons. They are much prettier than the common 'possum, being of a lighter colour, with a very smooth tail, half of which is white. This species are not so numerous as the other 'possums; and both are very easily tamed, and make good pets, but are rather mischievously inclined; and, unless kept in a cage, are a perfect nuisance, as, from their natural habits, they are "wide-awake o' nights." Burrows states that he had two at one time in the tent, and they were

constantly exercising their teeth on anything that took their fancy ; and in the morning were generally found asleep in his boots, from which it took a considerable shake to dislodge them. The best way of obtaining 'possums, without injuring the skin, is by snaring them in the following manner : take a small pole or rail, and place it firmly in a leaning position against a tree where a 'possum has his dwelling-place ; set the snare, which is made of hemp and fine wire, against two small pegs, and in such a position, that when the animal walks on the rail, its head will go through the noose. The 'possum, on coming down the tree, is pretty sure to go on the rail, which, not being wide enough to admit his body on either side of the snare, he tries to get through, and then falling off the rail, the pegs give way, and the unsuspecting victim is thus turned off, and duly hung by the neck. As many as twenty in a night have often been condemned and executed in this manner.

We shall now take a glance at the wild cats ; and our readers must not suppose that it is, as its name implies, anything like the creature so familiar to us as the domestic cat. The animal it most resembles in England is a ferret or weasel. It is small, active, and vicious ; on holding it by

the tail, it is so lithe that it will turn *find and bite* as easily as if on the ground, resembling in that particular a ferret, as it seems to have no bone in its back. It is of a yellowish colour, spotted with white, and sometimes black spotted with white, but the latter species is very rare. It is an inveterate enemy to the hen-roosts of a squatter, and is not particular as to whether it takes eggs or young ones. Nothing with blood in it comes amiss, and it is not uncommon for a hen to be found dragged to the small hole in a fowl-house, with the head and neck eaten close up to the body. It must have tried to drag the hen out, and failing in this, have coolly gone to work to eat her where she was. They live in holes in the ground, and sometimes in trunks of trees which are hollow from fire or decay; and the front of these holes is generally strewed with bones of birds, &c. So full are the coats of these brutes of vermin of every description, that it is often necessary to leave the dead ones for some length of time before skinning them until the bodies grow cold, and the vermin march out of the fur. The yellow species are very prolific; as many as thirteen young ones have been dug out of one hole on the plains. They are principally seen at night, in stony places on

the banks of creeks, and have a peculiar cry something like a 'possum, but with a difference not easily mistaken by those who have heard both, although difficult to define in description. They fight most desperately, and occasionally bite dogs very severely.

The flying squirrel comes next on our list. It is so called from a thin membrane which stretches from the fore leg to the hind one on each side. The term flying is applied to them from their habit of ascending a lofty tree, and then stretching out their legs and jumping from the topmost branches into the lower ones of some adjacent tree. Their fur is beautifully soft, far more so than either wild cat or opossum; they are of a light grey colour with a black streak down the back; the under part of the membrane and of their bodies is a beautiful white, and they have long, soft, bushy tails. They are easily tamed when taken young, but their flying habits make them very troublesome at times, if, as in most cases, they are allowed to be loose. Fancy the astonishment of a stranger one night in a place where one was kept tame, who, while in the act of pouring out some boiling hot tea, felt something alight on his head, and seize hold of his hair with its claws,

which were very long and sharp. These animals feed on leaves and grass in the same manner as 'possums ; indeed, the habits and food of both are very similar.

It is now time we should say a little of the wild dog. The native dog, called by the blacks dingo, and warragal, resembles a fox more than a dog, and, perhaps, a wolf, more than either, from its habits. They are about the size of a greyhound, with a head very like a fox, the ears being small and erect, and the tail bushy. Their colour is a reddish brown, the tail being tipped with white. They are chased in the same manner as the kangaroo ; and in some parts of the country, Bendigo for instance, there are packs of hounds which meet once or twice a month for a day's hunting of this animal. The speed of a wild dog varies ; some will run four or five miles, and others, if fat or old, not more than half-a-mile, but they always die game ; and the zest with which the tame species worry them is astonishing. In some of the remote districts they are the curse of the sheep-owner, as they will frequently mangle twenty or thirty sheep in a night. They do not kill a sheep outright, but two or three will fasten on one, and keep their grip until the blood is

exhausted and the animal dies. The usual method of destroying these ferocious dogs is by strychnine, which is placed in a piece of meat, care being taken not to touch the meat with the hand during its preparation, as their sense of smell is very acute; the meat is then placed on the ground a little way from the fold, and the entrails of a sheep are dragged round the fold at a distance of about fifty yards; the dogs on crossing the trail follow it, and coming to the meat, devour it, and a short time after die from the poison. These animals do not, as may be supposed from their name, bark, but howl most dismally. The noise they make is unearthly; and on a still night produces an inconceivably dreary effect, more especially as every dog, tame or wild, that is within hearing, joins in chorus, and the reader may imagine the din thus created. They generally make their lair in long grass and in rocky gullies. The white swans which were brought from England for the Melbourne Botanical Gardens were destroyed by one of these "desperate dogs," which had the audacity to come into the town from the country; it was very soon after killed by one of the gardeners, who found it asleep in the rushes near the ornamental water in the gardens.

As the emu was the last described among the birds, so the kangaroo shall conclude our account of the beasts. It is the largest of all the wild animals: some full grown "old men" or "boomers," by both of which names these creatures are known in the colonies, standing in some cases more than five feet high; they have a head like a deer, and are of a dirty grey colour. Their method of progression is a matter of dispute, some say that their tail is used to spring from, others assert that the animals spring from their hind legs; be this as it may, they go over the ground at an astonishing pace, by a series of prodigious leaps. Some "flying does," as they are called, will leave men and dogs far behind in a very short time. It is a good horse indeed that can keep them in sight for the first half mile, and down hill the pace is terrific.

The manner of stalking and hunting these animals is singular, and deserves to be described here. The blacks stalk kangaroo very skilfully and successfully, when employed by a squatter or any one else that will trust them with a gun. Burrows once employed an old black named Dick, and went out with him. Choosing a day on which a high wind was blowing, they started through

the forest for a thick belt of scrub where Dick had seen a kangaroo feeding, looking out sharply for any recent tracks on the way; and at length they saw, at a short distance before them, a group of two old ones and a young one feeding. The hunters had taken care to keep the wind in their faces, as both their sense of smell and hearing are very acute. Cautiously the men approached, taking care when putting down their feet to avoid treading upon any stick, lest the noise made in breaking it should startle the kangaroos, keeping at the same time a bush of saplings between them and the animals. In spite of every caution, now and then a small stick would snap, while Dick with his bare feet sneaked along like an evil spirit. Every time such an accident did occur to Burrows, Dick would look round with an angry gesture, and remain motionless as a black stone, and the kangaroos would raise their heads and stop feeding; but, after looking about for a moment or two, would drop their ears again, raising them once or twice as if not quite sure of their safety. At last they went on feeding as usual, and Dick moved on until within fifty yards of our game, when with a yell he rushed out and ran towards them. The kangaroos stopped a moment, gazed in astonish-

ment, and then bounded off into the forest ; but their hesitation sealed the fate of one of their number, for as they turned to Dick he levelled the gun and shot the old doe in the breast. She staggered, gave a bound, and fell dead. Praising Dick's skilful method, Burrows and his companions proceeded to skin the kangaroo ; and rolling up the hind quarters carried them home, leaving the forepart, as it is so bony that it is counted good for nothing.

Stalking kangaroo, although exciting enough, is much less so than hunting them with dogs, the best time for which sport is when the ground is moist from rain, for the feet of the kangaroo, being very long, sink in the soft ground, and this considerably retards its speed. Burrows thus narrates an adventure of the kind :—

“ Taking three or four kangaroo dogs, which are a species of rough greyhound of great size and power, and used expressly for hunting, with two friends in company, mounted on good horses, I started for the forest, bent on having a good run after something, kangaroo or emu, if possible, or in fact, anything that might turn up, and was worth pursuing. Going leisurely through the forest, H——, who was leading, gave a shout

for the dogs, and away we went at racing speed, every man doing his best to keep the dogs in sight, one moment ducking our heads to avoid being swept out of the saddle, and the next charging some fallen tree, and taking a flying leap. It was rather quick work for the eyes, looking out for dogs, boughs of trees, and logs; but there is something in the air of Australia which is very exhilarating to the feelings, and particularly so while galloping through the bush on a fine morning, while it is yet cool. The spirits seem raised when the first leap is taken, and the chase fairly begun; and we always feel inclined when going over a log to give a shout of triumph, why or wherefore we know not, but used to suppose it necessary to 'let off the spare steam.' After about a mile of such running, we heard the dogs barking furiously; and on getting up to the place whence the noise proceeded, saw the kangaroo at bay, with its back against a tree, watching the dogs narrowly, so that if they attempted to spring at its throat, it would be ready to catch them in its fore-paws, and then with a rapid movement of its hind ones, armed as they are with long and sharp claws, rip their bodies open. A shot from a pistol soon brought the beast down,

when the dogs ran in and soon finished it. It was a fine, full-grown 'old man,' of very large size, and in its last straggle severely wounded one of the dogs in the neck, stripping the skin for about four inches. We bound it up with a handkerchief, sat down and smoked our pipes, and talked over the run. The conversation naturally turned upon dogs, and H—— told us a story of a dog then lying at his feet. He was going through the forest one day, accompanied by his dog, passing on his way numerous kangaroos, but not chasing any, as he could not spare time. He was about half way on his journey when he missed the dog, he calling after him in vain; and for some days could get no tidings of the creature. On the fifth day, being at a shepherd's hut, he saw his dog tied up; and on asking the shepherd's wife how it came there, she said she was alone in the hut one day, when a kangaroo of good size dashed in, followed by the dog; the woman ran out, and after the noise had ceased, went in and found the dog sitting by the dead kangaroo, licking the wounds which it had inflicted upon him in the fight. Her husband tied the dog up, and on making inquiries, could not find out who had lost him. Right glad was H—— to find his faithful

attendant again, and the skill and courage which the dog had shown greatly enhanced its value to him."

The yarn ended, we put the dead kangaroo across the saddle in front of one of the party, and returned home.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ABORIGINAL INHABITANTS.

Native Weapons.—Spears.—The Woomera.—The Waddy.—The Boomerang.—Heeloman or Shield.—Native Women.—Fondness for Spirits.—Their Miamia.—Anecdote.—Their Treachery and Revenge.—Rebbery by them.—Skill in Tracking.—Anecdote.—Child Stealing.—Buckley, the Wild White man.—Infanticide.—Corrobory.—Anecdote.—Portrait of a Black.—Probable Extinction of the Race.

THE present degenerated race of the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia is fast becoming extinct, although from what cause it would be very difficult to say. A straggling band of three or four may occasionally be met on the outskirts of the town, and more often in the vicinity of a sheep-station. The greatest number Burrows tells us he had ever seen, was at Glenorchy, in the Wimmera district, and consisted of ten men, eight women or lubras, and a few children about thirteen years of age. The women are made to carry spears, waddies, rugs, &c., the men thinking it beneath them to carry anything. The following is a description of their weapons:—"They have spears of different kinds, but chiefly two sorts,

the reed spear and the heavy spear. The reed spear is made, as its name implies, of reeds, joined together by the fibres of the bark of trees, and kangaroo sinews, terminating in a point of hard, heavy wood. They can throw this spear a distance of eighty or a hundred yards with surprising force and accuracy. It is used for killing small game. The heavy spear consists entirely of wood, and is about seven or eight feet in length. Both kinds are thrown with a "woomera" or throwing stick, which is a piece of wood about three feet in length, with a barb at the point that fits into a notch in the end of the spear; it is retained in the hand after the spear is thrown, and acts as a lever, enabling them to propel the spear a much greater distance than it could be sent in the ordinary manner. The "waddy" is a kind of club, from two to three feet in length, made of hard wood, about an inch and a half in diameter. Some of them are ornamented with a kind of rude carving, and have a knob at each extremity; others are smooth, with a blunt point at one end, hardened in the fire.

But the most extraordinary of all their weapons is the boomerang. This is a harmless thing to look at, and is peculiar to the natives of Aus-

tralia. It is curved in shape, is about two feet in length, and two inches in breadth, and is used for killing game, and as a war implement, and also for amusement or practice. A war boomerang is the longest sort, and not quite so curved as that used for killing game. It is a formidable weapon in expert hands, as it can inflict a serious wound. It is very eccentric in its flight. When we had a visit from the blacks at the station, on our promising the reward of sixpence to the best thrower, two or three would readily contest for the prize; and then to witness the curious, eccentric motions of these weapons was truly surprising. It is thrown in a contrary direction to that of the object aimed at, and after describing a long curve it will strike the point intended with amazing force. After doing so it will stop, but, if it should not strike, it will continue its flight, describing a circle with gradually diminishing speed, until it stops within a few feet of the thrower; a humming sound accompanies its course, and it revolves with great rapidity in the air. They can throw it so that it shall merely skim the ground in a circle, and also in such a way that an unpractised observer would think it was intended to strike the ground, but

instead of doing so it skims along the surface, and then rises perpendicularly a great height, falling afterwards to the ground at the spot from which it began to rise. Rudely as these weapons seem to be constructed, no European can improve upon them; and the blacks can tell in a moment, on glancing at one of them, whether it will fly truly or not.

The native name for their shield is "heeloman;" this is about three feet in length, and tapered to a point at each end; the handle is merely a hole to admit the hand, with a piece of wood across it, and with this narrow strip of wood a black will defend himself with great skill. It is a remarkable circumstance, that these aborigines seem to have no idea of the bow and arrow like most other savages.

The "lubras," or "gins," as they call their women, are generally to be seen carrying, on their own account, their yam-sticks; these are small sticks with a point at each end, and about three feet in length, used, as their name signifies, for the purpose of digging yams, which are small bulbs growing at the roots of tufts of grass, and tasting very like nuts. They also dig "myrnong," a small species of wild carrot. When quarrelling

amongst themselves they fight furiously with these sticks ; but their tongues, which quite surpass in fluency and fury the most notorious of their prototypes in Billingsgate, are their prime weapons of offence and defence. The best English they know is a few old convict oaths. Their clothing, when living near the town, consists of old coats, &c., given them by the inhabitants ; but in the bush, either a blanket or an opossum cloak, or, indeed, just nothing at all. The "lubras" are very expert in making small baskets of rushes ; and we have seen neat net bags of thread made by them for the squatters. The men are far from being an industrious race, the "lubras" having generally to do all the work ; and, in return, receive all the abuse which their lords and masters think proper to bestow on them. Sometimes a black man gives his opinion that, "white fellow big fellow fool work like it bullock, what for not make it lubra work, like it black fellow?" Rum is their favourite beverage, and to obtain it they will do anything but work. A colonist averred that a grey-headed old vagabond once offered him a young girl, thirteen years of age, for a bottle of rum !

Their "miamis" are formed from a sheet of

bark, placed in a sloping position to windward of a stick, which is fixed horizontally on two forks stuck in the ground: a fire is lighted in front of it, and they sit under the bark, or lie down with their feet to the fire. Their rugs or blankets are full of vermin of all sorts, and they seem to hold water of any kind in perfect abhorrence. On the Murray they make very good huts of rushes, with a hole in the top for the smoke to go out, and another in the side to enable them to crawl in and out: when all the inmates are at home, this hole is closed by the last comer dragging after him a tuft of rushes, and thus making a more comfortable place than a sheet of bark in the open air.

They are very exorbitant in their demands when camped near a hut or station; and it requires a good deal of firmness not to be bullied into compliance, as, if they see that you are afraid of them, they will coolly take what they want. A young colonist, son of a wealthy man in Hampshire, was hut-keeping on a station near the Murray river, and was in the habit of giving the blacks near him a feed of "jump up," as they call it; this stuff consists of flour and water boiled into a paste, and sugar put into it, and from the

bubbles rising to the surface when boiling, they call it "jump up." It is very amusing to see them round a pot of this stuff, watching the process, and burning their fingers, in their haste to commence, before it is cool enough. In return for this feast, the blacks used to cut wood and bring water for him, and sometimes a few wild ducks' eggs. One day, when they would not cut wood as usual, he refused to give them anything to eat, or "tucker," as they call it. A big black came in and demanded food; the answer he got, in his own lingo, was, "suppose you no cut waddy (wood) you bale get tucker." This did not satisfy the sable claimant, especially as he noticed, from the shape of the heap of ashes in the fire-place, that a "damper" was baking; so he rejoined, "You no gib it tucker, I man 'em damper;" meaning that he would seize the damper. The hut-keeper, upon this, seized a long shovel, and filling it with hot ashes, exclaimed, "You man em!" in a tone of defiance; the black then went to the fire-place to do so, when, by the aid of the shovel, the hot ashes were strewed over the earthen floor of the hut. Having boots on himself, the hut-keeper was safe from injury, but the bare feet of the black fellow were terribly burnt;

and in flying jumps he rushed out of the hut yelling threatenings of vengeance, whilst the hut-keeper, convulsed with laughter, rejoiced at the success of his stratagem. The black was not seen for some days; and the remainder of the gang, seeing that their supplies were likely to be stopped, came in a body, and entreated that no notice should be taken of that "cobonn" (meaning rascal), because "color sit down just now," *i. e.* he was in a passion. However, the hut-keeper refused to give them any more "tucker" until the refractory black returned, which he soon did, limping along with some ducks and eggs as conciliatory presents, upon which a grand feast of "jump up" ratified the treaty. He had, however, been lying in wait to spear the hut-keeper, out of revenge, if he should have ventured to the river-side.

Eventually the colonist had promised them so much, and they became so clamorous, that he left the station, taking with him a pair of red blankets, his property, which they had long beheld with very wistful looks, and which nearly cost him his life before he had gone many miles. This incident occurred in the following manner. The hut-keeper had purchased an old hack to take him to the river Darling, and was jogging

along very comfortably for some time, when a spear whizzed by, missing him by a foot or two; he pulled out his revolver, and proceeded on his journey. Another spear was aimed at him, and struck him on the ankle, the thrower appearing from behind a huge gum-tree on the road-side to see what effect it had taken. Levelling his pistol, the horseman fired; the black sprang into the air, and fell dead, shot through the chest. At the report of the pistol, and the yell of the victim, several blacks appeared from different parts of the road, and took to flight, showing that they had laid a regular ambush to surprise and murder the traveller. He went on to the police station at the Darling, and gave information of what had occurred; some men were sent to view the body of the native and bury it. The wounded hut-keeper was confined to his bed for six weeks, and he carries a large scar on his ankle to this day.

The blacks will sometimes, in the remote districts, gather together for the purposes of robbery and murder; and one instance occurred some years back which is still remembered by old stagers. At a shepherd's hut in the bush, between Melbourne and Sydney, there lived a man, his wife, and their son, a boy of thirteen years of age.

The blacks having seen a three months' supply of stores taken into the hut, determined to obtain some of the tobacco, flour, &c., by fair means or foul; they accordingly watched the man, when going out with his sheep one morning, and came up to the hut, thinking that a woman and a boy would offer little or no resistance. The boy, however, saw them coming, and had the presence of mind to fasten the hut-door. The blacks then commenced throwing spears at the small windows of the hut, and one entering the window, mortally wounded the poor woman in the side. The boy at once seized his father's gun, and fired the contents of the two barrels amongst them, wounding one of them severely. They then withdrew, but, a short time after, came back with fire-sticks to throw upon the bark roof of the hut, which being very dry soon caught fire; and the poor boy, rather than be burnt, opened the door to face his enemies. He had hardly reached the threshold, when two spears struck him, one on the arm, and the other in the thigh; he fell, and the blacks rushed in and took off all the bark they could from the roof, for fear of the fire destroying the much coveted luxuries within. They then carried off all they could find, and decamped. The father had seen the smoke

from a distance, and coming home, a horrible sight presented itself to his gaze: there, amidst the smouldering rafters, was his wife lying dead, and his brave young boy dying; but the latter lived long enough to tell his father of the circumstances of the outrage. The poor father buried his wife and son, and started for the home station, told his tale, and soon after departed, none knew whither; but after some few weeks his body was found in the bush, not far from the hut.

There was in the olden times of the colony a police force composed of blacks and officered by white men. They were very useful in tracking delinquents, from the acuteness of their sense of sight and of hearing. In proof of this it may be mentioned, that a black could easily tell if a lost bullock had passed over a certain pile of stones, on which, to other eyes, not the faintest trace would be visible; and this singular accuracy of perception has more than once led to the recovery of the missing animal.

Another instance of their skill in tracking was communicated to Burrows on respectable authority, which, albeit mixed up with a questionable incident of a supernatural kind, is quite entitled to credit, as far as relates to the proof it affords of

the delicate organization of the senses of the natives.

A squatter who had a station between Melbourne and Adelaide, started one day for town, leaving the overseer, a man who had been with him for many years, in charge during his absence. He never came back ; and it was thought that he had been robbed and murdered on his road from town. A will was found, however, by which he had bequeathed the station to the overseer. Such was the general opinion as to his fate, until—and now comes the marvellous part of the story—one night a squatter from a neighbouring station came over in a great state of fright, saying that he had seen the figure of the lost man sitting on a part of the fence round the station, and about a mile from the house. This part of the fence ran near the edge of a lagoon, and the squatter, who was rather superstitious, went next morning and looked at the fence on his road home. The fence had been erected some time, and the rails were bleached by the sun and rain, but the squatter thought he could trace some black stains on the lower rail. He returned home, and took with him, on his next visit to the spot, a black, whom he employed on the station for the purpose of

tracking lost cattle or horses. On arriving at the fence, he asked the black what he thought of it—the stain on the wood. The fellow asked for a knife, then scraped the rail, put some of the scrapings into his mouth, and after sucking them, said it was blood. He then went to the edge of the lagoon, and carefully surveyed the surface of the water. After a few moments, he said to his master, “You make a light?” meaning, do you see? at the same time pointing to a greenish scum floating on the surface of the water. The master said he saw nothing extraordinary. The black then took a small bough from a tree, and carefully stripping off the leaves, with the exception of a small bunch near the top, swept off the scum, and smelling it, said to his alarmed and horrified master, “Dead man’s fat, I b’lieve.” They returned home, and the squatter, mentioning his suspicions to his overseer, they agreed to start together next morning, and make a good search, for the overseer had entertained suspicions of foul play all the time, although he had said nothing about it. Having extemporised some drags, the trio started for the lagoon; and after carefully dragging the spot, they succeeded in finding the body in an advanced state of putrefaction,

hardly any flesh remaining on the bones, and with a large stone tied to the legs. They at once started for the station to arrest the overseer of the missing squatter, on suspicion of murdering his master. On being confronted with the body, he staggered a moment, and then confessed that he had killed him with a loaded whip on the evening of his return from town, and had left the body on the fence while tying the stone to the feet, which accounted for the stains on the lower rails; and that the will was a forgery, planned and executed while his master was in town. They confined him in a storeroom that night, preparatory to taking him to the nearest police-station; but in the morning his lifeless body was found hanging by his neck-handkerchief to a hook in the ceiling.

The blacks used to be charged with child stealing in the olden times of the colonies, but for what purpose it would be hard to conjecture. Burrows became acquainted with a man who had a white skin, and yet possessed all the skill of the blacks in tracking, &c., without their lazy habits. He told the following story of himself.

The blacks had stolen him from his parents who lived near Adelaide, when he was five years old, and

he wandered about with them until he was fifteen. A squatter to whose house he had been taken by an old "lubra," his guardian, then took a fancy to him, and noticing his white skin under his blanket, asked him if he would like to be a stock-rider, and on his answering in the affirmative, took him from the blacks, who, however, would not part with him until they received a ransom in the shape of a good quantity of tea, sugar, tobacco, and flour. As they were all greatly attached to him, and as he said himself, treated him very well, they *valued* him accordingly. It was a long time before he recovered the use of his own language, and when excited he would slip out a word or two of the blacks' lingo. The gentleman who rescued him made inquiries, and at length restored him to his parents. His sight was remarkably keen, and he could track animals very expertly. When Burrows saw him he was about thirty years of age.

That this is not a solitary instance of white men to be found amongst the blacks may be seen from the story of Buckley, or the Wild White Man, as he was called, and whose life,—as much as could be gathered of it—was published some time ago in Victoria. He had been a soldier, and for some

offence was transported, and, in company with three others, escaped from a ship that was to convey him to Sydney, at that time a convict settlement. Landing somewhere near Cape Otway, after wandering for some time they separated; one man named Collins agreeing to go with Buckley, and the other two taking another direction. After a time Buckley and Collins also parted company, the latter intending to give himself up, if he could make his way to the settlement, and Buckley intending to keep away from the settlement as far as possible. Collins was never heard of, and Buckley went on through the bush, subsisting on roots, and whatever wild animals he could manage to catch, until he came to Corio Bay, where Geelong now stands. Skirting the shores of the bay, he came to the plains between Melbourne and Geelong, across which the railway now runs; and seeing a spear stuck in the ground at the end of a mound of earth, he took it, thinking that it would be a good weapon of defence, and would serve him to kill animals for his subsistence. Pursuing his journey he encountered a tribe of blacks near what are now called the Anakie Hills, who would in all probability have killed him, but for the circumstance of the spear being

in his possession ; on that account they received him with joy, and to this day have a tradition thus expressed by them :—“ Black fellow quomby dead, by and by jump up white fellow, plenty tixpence,” meaning, that if a black should “ quomby,” *i.e.*, lie down, and die, they would rise again white, and have plenty of money, sixpence being their name for money, as it is about the largest coin they are acquainted with. The spear had belonged to a chief whom they had buried, and then stuck it up at the foot of his grave. However, as before stated, they received him with joy. He was cunning enough to see through their mistake, and take advantage of it.

He had to be watchful, however, for a time, lest they should come to another conclusion and kill him ; but he gradually acquired their language, and as they continued to treat him very well, he remained with them until the first settlers came to Geelong. When the latter became familiar with the blacks, as they did after a time, they gazed with wonder on the tall, gaunt man, who had been thus adopted by the natives ; he was over six feet in height, and his skin appeared to be white, except where it had been exposed to the sun. He looked at them in an apparently listless manner,

and yet seemed to be trying to call back to his memory something he had been formerly familiar with. They tried to make him understand them; and after some time succeeded; he then left the blacks and received a free pardon, after having been among them nearly twelve years. He seemed studiously to avoid any allusion to his former mode of life; and it was affirmed by those who knew him, that if any attempt was made to draw him into conversation about it, he would leave the room, apparently much distressed in mind. His tall figure and restless look made him a conspicuous object among the people of the town; where he held an appointment in one of the police courts, which he kept up to the time of his death, about five or six years ago.

Infanticide prevails among the natives to a great extent, and when drunk they are capable of the most atrocious crimes. The marks of severe burns are frequently seen upon them, caused by their rolling into the fire in their drunken orgies; the lubras, or women, have often scars of another kind, for the men are sure to beat them if they interfere in their drinking bouts, but in general the women are as fond of rum as the men.

One morning, an old black was found dead at

the crossing place of the river Barwon, in South Geelong, with his throat cut, and stones placed under the flannel shirt he wore to sink the body. The murderers were never discovered, but it was supposed that the rest of the tribe were the guilty parties, as they had a camp there, and were all drunk the night before and fighting furiously. There is a local act which prohibits the sale of liquors to the aborigines, but in spite of that, whenever they get money, they contrive to purchase drink.

When one of their chiefs dies, they have a habit of marking their faces with white clay, in long stripes, as a sign of mourning, forming anything but a pleasing contrast with their black faces and bodies. Most of the men have beards and moustaches, with long black hair, not woolly, but curly; and both men and women have raised marks on their breasts, caused by cutting them and then keeping the wounds open until a large weal is formed. It is believed that some ceremony is observed during the operation; but few, if any, white men have witnessed it. The men at a certain age, moreover, knock out the two front teeth in the upper row.

They have a very remarkable dance at times

called a "corrobory," at which an unlimited number of performers of the male sex are allowed. At night, an enormous wood fire is made on some grassy flat near a creek or river, and this is fed with dry sticks and green leaves, making the crackling flames rise to a great height. Round the fire the blacks form a circle, holding each other's hands,—much in the same manner as English villagers used to dance round a maypole,—and rushing round the fire at a furious rate. They are naked, with the exception of a small piece of cloth round the loins, and some of them are streaked over in a hideous manner with pipeclay; the bones of their faces, and every rib distinctly marked, with stripes down the legs also, in such a manner that they look like skeletons, especially when seen against a dark background: the flickering light of the flames making them appear perfectly diabolical. The women do not dance, but play the part of an orchestra, each of them having an opossum rug folded in a peculiar manner between their knees, on which they drum away with two small sticks, at the same time making a whining noise, which they call singing. As the dancers become excited, they whirl round faster and faster, their yells increasing with their excitement, the

flames glaring on their ghastly white barred black bodies, presenting a spectacle of a truly demoniacal character, never to be forgotten by those who have once beheld it. The rapidity of their movements is too great to last long, and after about a quarter of an hour the circle is broken, each black taking his spear and boomerang, and holding the former in his right hand and the latter in the left, they again surround the fire; standing up with both feet close together, they then suddenly stretch out their legs to their fullest extent, making at the same time a blowing noise with their lips, clashing the spear and boomerang together. Round they go again, faster than before, varying the performance with hideous yells, until orchestra and dancers are fairly tired out, when they stop and come over to where the white spectators are looking on, with their everlasting demand of "tixpence for rum." This is, indeed, fairly earned, if their extraordinary activity in gesticulating and noise-making be duly appreciated.

This wild and exciting kind of dance is generally to be seen in the vicinity of a bush public-house, and the performers are often in a state of beastly intoxication. A surveyor was once marking of

some land on the Naringhal creek, and one of his boundary lines ran near a public-house, when a black, evidently a "corrobory" artiste, came out drunk, and said that, as all that land belonged to him, he might as well mark him off a piece. How he came to know that the land was being surveyed is a puzzle; but he seemed to guess shrewdly enough what the men were doing with the chain. As this individual, although drunk, was a very good specimen of an aboriginal, a description of his person may serve as a type of the race. He was about five feet four inches in height, with a good chest, and long, thin, but muscular arms; his body was rather long, although it appeared shorter from his stomach protruding considerably, which is the case with most natives, even with the youngest of them. His legs were merely bone cases, as they seemed to be quite without calf; his head was of a great size, with coarse luxuriant hair matted over it; his forehead flat or nearly so, with heavy brows, deep-set eyes, and a restless, snake-like, cunning look about them. Add to these peculiarities a flat nose with wide nostrils, a rather large mouth with two of the front teeth out, immense beard and moustache, smeared with dirt and blood from some of the

entrails of a sheep, which he held in his hand, and you have about as ugly and repulsive looking a being before you as ever existed. Up the country, and away from the corrupting influence of the public-houses, they are not quite so disgusting; but seen anywhere they are bad enough, and there cannot possibly be a more degraded race of savages on the earth's surface, unless it be the Digger Indians on the overland route to California, who, from the description given of them, seem pretty much on a par with the Australian blacks.

Whether they will ever be civilized is a very doubtful question; but in their present condition they are drunkards, thieves, and everything that is bad. There are a few, indeed, that are living at some of the stations who can speak very good English, and these make capital stockmen; but the majority seem to prefer their lazy, lazzaroni mode of life, to one which would feed and clothe them better at the cost of a little work.

In all probability, as they are now dying out fast from the combined effects of drunkenness and disease—consumption and pulmonary affections in general being evidently common, to judge by the short cough and the emaciated appearance

of great numbers—they will in a few years be among the things that were. In confirmation of this opinion, the following letter, addressed to the *Melbourne Weekly Argus*, since the above was written, by their correspondent at the Fitzroy diggings, may be quoted. The writer states, “That the ordinary relation between the black and white races in that part of Australia is war to the knife. The atrocities of this warfare are perfectly horrible, and it is said that Government takes no steps to stop the slaughter of the aborigines. The blacks retaliate whenever they can, and never lose a chance of murdering a white man, woman, or child, insomuch that of the first settlers of the district one-fifth fell in two years. The actual number of blacks destroyed it is impossible to estimate. They are killed officially by the police, and non-officially by diggers and settlers every day; nor are the women and children spared when murders are being revenged by the whites. One case of peculiar atrocity occurred not long since. The owner of a station on the Dawson was away from home, when the blacks attacked the house, and killed every soul in it, except one little boy, who managed to conceal himself. There were women,

too, whose murder was preceded by other horrors. The head of the family made a vow to kill every black he encountered on the district, and how many dozen of lives he has to answer for, he best knows. On one occasion he came up with a small party, consisting of women with children in their arms—of women so far civilized as to be able to appeal to him in broken English against the deed he was about to do. He had two revolvers with him, and kept his vow to the letter.”

CHAPTER XII.

SHEEP AND CATTLE STATIONS.

A Sheep Station.—Wool-shed.—Shearing-time.—Shearers' Tricks.—How Shearers spend their Wages.—Intemperance.—Boys in Geelong.—Anecdote.—The Scab.—Foot-rot.—A Cattle Station.—Killing Cattle.—Mustering Cattle.—Stockwhip.—Wild Cattle.—Stockhorses.—B——'s Wild Cattle.—Branding.—Driving Cattle.—Encampment.—The "Blue Bull."—Horses.—Value of a Good Horse.—Buckjumping.—Breaking a Colt.—Difficulty in "Yarding" Horses.—Anecdote of an "Old Hand."

A SHEEP-STATION is generally very far from being an attractive place, and that about to be described may be regarded as a specimen of the more comfortable and better sort. It is situated near the side of a creek, which in winter is so flooded as to resemble a small river, and in summer is nothing but a chain of ponds; and is at the foot of a high hill covered with thick, stringy bark-scrub and trees.

The "improvements," as they are called in auctioneers' bills, consist of a wooden house for the master of the place; and as the one of which we are speaking belongs to a widow-lady, with several daughters, this may possibly account for its

superiority in comfort to the generality of station-houses. It is built, as is customary, on one floor: an upper story, indeed, is rarely found, except on recent buildings, in the bush; and is surrounded by a verandah, which is covered with creeping plants, such as jessamine and French ivy, and in front is a hedge of broom about five feet high, inclosing a garden well stocked with fruit-trees. Admittance to the interior is gained by means of French windows opening from the verandah. The principal room is furnished in a very comfortable manner, with a sofa, ottomans, &c., not forgetting a pianoforte. The kitchen and storehouse are built separately from the chief dwelling-house, and adjoining that of the overseer; and at the bottom of the paddock are the men's huts, made of split slabs of wood, and roofed with bark. The remainder of the "improvements" are the sheep-wash, stock-yard, and wool-shed, the interior of which will be described in the account given below of sheep-shearing—an important event at a squatter's station.

The shearing months are generally the three last of the year; but in some places earlier, according to the state of the weather. As this season is necessarily the most busy on a sheep-

station, it is usual for the proprietor to provide for the occasion by getting up stores previously from town, such as sugar, tea, tobacco, flour, shears, and woolpacks. The shearers are men who travel the country for the purpose of obtaining work in various sheds; some of them going from station to station as the season progresses. Their ordinary remuneration is thirty shillings per hundred sheep: they finding their own provisions and shears, the former being generally purchased from the stores of the master. A story was related to us by an old shearer, which may show their method of obtaining cheap food occasionally. When the lambs and rams are placed in the pens together, in readiness to be shorn, the men watch a chance to put a lamb's leg into the twists of a ram's horn, causing it to break, and then cry out, "A lamb's leg broken, sir," to the overseer. The answer they mostly receive is, "Off with his jacket;" and to the ensuing query, "What shall we do with him?" "Anything you like." The prize so obtained is then killed, and sent to the hut to be cooked for their use.

The number shorn in a day by one man varies from fifty to eighty, although some can shear as many as a hundred a day; but when the average

is exceeded, they are apt to "run them," as it is called; that is, merely to shear the wool near the top, leaving the thick wool at the bottom uncut; and if remonstrated with, they will, in spite, frequently shear so close as to clip the skin itself. Each man has a pen allotted to him, into which he puts the sheep he has fleeced, reporting the number to the overseer as he shears them; and the overseer remains in the shed all day to keep the reckoning, and also to see that the sheep are properly shorn. When a fresh lot of sheep are put into the pens, it is amusing to see how the men will scramble for first pick, choosing always the lightest fleeces in preference to the thick-coated old wethers. There are men employed whose duty it is to stand at the folding-table, which is a frame crossed by thin bars of wood, and set upon uprights. The fleeces are brought to this table, and shaken, to allow the dirt and loose wool to fall through upon the ground underneath; they are then rolled up, and set aside ready for pressing into bales. The press is generally kept going during the whole shearing time.

When the shearing is completed, the men are paid by orders on the agent in town who trans-

acts business for the squatter; and the bush public-houses drive a roaring trade with the shearers, and the men employed to drive the drays upon which the wool is conveyed to town. These men, after being at work for some time, out of the reach of the public-house, will in the most reckless manner go to the nearest of these haunts, and spend every penny of their earnings, generally making over the order to the landlord, and telling him "to let them know when the money is spent." During the time they remain at these places, some of the most frightful scenes of intoxication may be witnessed. One man, who had been carrying on this sort of game at the river Murray, became a victim to delirium tremens; and while labouring under the fearful temporary insanity peculiar to the disorder, had an idea that his stomach had become a rabbit warren, and plunged a pair of shears into his flesh, as he said, "to let the rabbits out," uttering at the time a blasphemous oath. Some men who saw him endeavoured to take the shears from him, but he threw them away, and plunged into the river, on a cold evening, with no other covering than his shirt, swam across, and ran nearly a mile before he was caught. Strange to say, he recovered after

the wound was sewn up; and the medical man who attended him said that this was owing to the cold plunge, which had caused the mouth of the wound to contract.

Intemperance may be said to be the prevailing vice of the colony. Nearly every one drinks, and the first question on meeting generally is, "Are you going to shout?" *i.e.*, stand treat. Nothing is done without the "nobbler;" bargains are made and closed over the everlasting "nobbler," which is about half a glass of raw spirits, generally drunk neat, their palate not relishing "thin potations," and old tipplers always say, "It is a sin to spoil good liquor by putting water in it." To such an extent is this carried, that the rising generation of drinkers seem to be desirous of emulating their elders. In the streets of Geelong may often be seen early in the evening a group of youngsters, the eldest not more than thirteen, sitting on the kerbstone smoking a short, black pipe, which is passed Indian fashion from mouth to mouth, when some such colloquy as the following takes place:—Eldest boy: "Who's got any money?" "Have you Bill?" Bill, who may be about eleven years old, answers, "Yea! I've got a tanner." Eldest boy: "Tip it over, then." The youngster

complies, and others following his example, in this way sufficient is collected to purchase two or three gills of rum, which the big boy forthwith procures in a small bottle from a neighbouring public-house, and it goes the round of the "juvenile party" in the same way as the pipe from mouth to mouth, until empty. Should some benevolent Pickwick witness this scene and blandly remonstrate with the elder boy, and tell him that he ought to know better than lead such youngsters into bad habits, the whole knot will utter a volley of blasphemous abuse that would put the slang fluency of the lowest parlours of St. Giles's completely into the shade. The oaths of these youngsters are something fearful. They swear at everything and everybody in the coolest possible manner; and this is scarcely to be wondered at, when boys like these are found listening to the conversation of old convicts half drunk, every second word an oath of the most horrible kind, and poured forth without the slightest check. Where and how the youngsters of this class get money is a wonder; but money some one or other of them generally has, and it is sure to be spent on rum and tobacco.

The word "shout," before quoted, is a quaint

specimen of Australian slang. New arrivals for the most part attach a literal meaning to it; one on being asked to "shout," naturally inquired, "What shall I shout?" "Grog," is sure to be the reply; and to the amusement and surprise of the bar-keeper, the new comer literally shouts at the top of his voice the word "Grog!" but one lesson usually suffices to make the tyro an adept in the proper application of this term.

The curse of the sheep farmer is the "scab," which is a cutaneous eruption of a very malignant and infectious nature; so much so, that the mere fact of a flock of diseased sheep being driven over a piece of land is sufficient to communicate the mischief to the next clean flock which may traverse the same place. As the stations, or "runs," are not divided from each other by any artificial means, the general boundary being a plough-furrow, or a creek, it requires great watchfulness on the part of the shepherds to prevent sheep from taking it. It can also be communicated by inoculation, thus affording any malicious servant, who may owe his master a grudge, a favourable opportunity of inflicting a very heavy retaliation, as a single unhealthy sheep will infect the whole flock.

There is a colonial law for the prevention of the spread of this disease, which enacts, that any person travelling with a diseased flock can only do so at a certain season of the year, under a heavy penalty. Even when driving sheep at any time, the persons in charge of them must give notice to the squatter on whose run they are about to enter, so that he may come and inspect the flock. Foot-rot is also very prevalent among sheep on damp "runs," and the feet of the poor animals so diseased become such a putrid mass that they cannot put them to the ground. The blowflies, indeed, are so rife in this climate, that any diseased part of an animal is quickly fastened upon by them. But the mischief consequent upon foot-rot is not to be compared with that of scab, as the latter spoils the wool, which the other does not; but sheep with foot-rot get so thin, that the fleece is frequently as heavy as the carcase.

When sheep are affected, they are dressed with a mixture of tobacco, arsenic, and corrosive sublimate, and are penned up until the wool dries: the smell at the time of dipping is very offensive. Care must be taken in mixing the ingredients, as an overdose would kill the animals; a few years ago, the following sad instance of this kind occurred

at a station. It is customary to mix the ingredients in a large copper, used expressly for the purpose, and in this case one of the men was trusted to do the mixing before the overseer came down. Having been drinking, the overseer had a notion that the mixture was not strong enough, and he must needs prepare another dose; the consequence may be guessed at, the poor animals died to the number of about five hundred.

It is scarcely worth while to describe a cattle-station in detail, as it is very similar in its external arrangements to a sheep-station, only that there are a larger number of horses to be seen about the place; and nearly all the men to be met with appear, by their walk, as if they had a horse constantly between their legs, sleeping and waking. The stock-yards, moreover, are generally much higher and stronger, and have the aspect of a perfect Golgotha, from the bones of cattle slaughtered on the premises, beef being the general article of consumption there, as mutton is on a sheep station. The method of killing them is as follows:—A number of cattle fit for slaughter are driven into the yard, and the master or overseer, accompanied by a number of men, walks down there about sunset; then selecting the

fattest, places his rifle on the fence, and brings the beast down by a shot in the forehead. Sometimes this is a difficult job to perform, as the wild brutes will, just as the trigger is pulled, make a mad rush at the fence, the bullet whistling harmlessly over their heads. There is one spot, and one only, where a ball will kill a bullock instantaneously, and that is just above the curl on the forehead. Sometimes the head may be struck, and the animal will fall, only stunned; and when a man goes in to cut its throat, the beast will get up and charge at him, so that he must be pretty nimble in overleaping the fence, or he may feel the horns of the enraged animal helping him over. A bullock has been known to receive five balls in its forehead, and yet stand at bay with its legs wide apart, swaying to and fro, as if loth to salute the earth until a rope was put over its horns, by which it was dragged to the fence, where an axe soon put an end to its misery. When the bullock has fallen, it is hoisted up to the gallows, which is a large beam of wood supported by two upright posts by means of a windlass, and is then skinned. After remaining all night to cool, it is cut up and stowed away, some parts being salted before the sun makes its appearance.

The life of a stock-keeper is a roving one: his home is in the saddle; as he has to give a satisfactory account of all cattle which have been delivered to him, and of any "increase to the family" which may occur, whenever he is required by the master; and he generally mounts his horse for a ride round the run, soon after he turns out, and little more is seen of him until the evening. One or two stock-men are sufficient at a station, on ordinary occasions; but at busy periods, such as mustering, branding, &c., other men are engaged, and assistance is also rendered by the neighbouring settlers, if the cattle are wild and the herd large: mutual help being an acknowledged principle, and indeed indispensable, on emergent occasions. It may be desirable to give a sketch of the scene exhibited at mustering time.

Preparations for this are made beforehand, such as looking to girths, stirrup-leathers, whips, reins, &c., and as many neighbours as possible are invited to assist, and there can scarcely be too many. As soon as the party are all assembled, and the sun is high enough to induce the cattle to leave the thick forest in search of water, they divide into sections of three or four, and search all the hills and gulleys on the run; a spot being

appointed as the rendezvous for gathering together whatever cattle each party may find of the required brands. Skirting the boundaries of the "run," they close in towards the meeting-place, driving the cattle before them with their "stock-whips," which are of very curious construction, and, when wielded by a practised arm, are, as a bullock knows, not to be lightly thought of. They are made of hide, plaited into a heavy thong, from nine to fifteen feet in length, the thickest part being about an inch in diameter, at the end of which is a "tail" or point of green hide, crowned with a cracker of twisted raw silk. But the most remarkable thing is, that the handle is little more than a foot long. Some novices nearly hang themselves in their endeavours to use these whips, but in a practised hand, the hair flies from a bullock's hide in fine style, accompanied by a report like a pistol. When the party are all gathered together, and their small droves of cattle united in one large one, they start for the stock-yards with them, and then the work commences; for as the cattle seem to know what is in store for them, they try to get back to their old haunts, and nothing but great perseverance can prevent them from so doing. Through the clouds of dust raised

by the trampling of so many hoofs, a number of deserters may be seen breaking off for the forest, and close after them the stock-men driving them back to the herd by constant flagellation, which does not improve their temper. Sometimes they will turn on their pursuers, and if within reach of their horns, will inflict ugly wounds. The rate at which these brutes go, and the prodigious leaps they take over prostrate trees, would astonish any one who has only seen cattle in Smithfield, or in some quiet meadow, and who thinks that bullocks are slow and clumsy animals. It is a good horse that can head a half-wild bullock for the first two hundred yards, and they will jump anything up to six feet, either standing or flying, if hotly pursued. The general pace is a good round gallop, and they will sometimes run a horse to a standstill in good ground, especially if it be down a slope, as they run much faster there than on level ground.

Hunting cattle is exciting sport, and requires much skill in the saddle. For this, a good stock horse is invaluable, as they are constantly required to turn at full speed; the greatest recommendation a stock-man can give his horse is, that "he can turn on a cabbage-leaf." Some

old horses who have been "after stock" for several years seem to turn as though on a pivot, appearing only to raise their fore-legs, and spin round on their hind ones. This is particularly exemplified when "cutting out," as it is called, a single bullock, as, once separated from the rest of the herd, a bullock always shows a great desire to get back again, and doubles and twists in the rear of his pursuer in a surprising manner, so that unless the horse can keep between the bullock and the rest of the herd, the rider loses a great deal of ground, and perhaps will not get the animal he wants to keep separated from the rest at all. The wear and tear of horses on a station where the cattle are wild is very considerable, as at ordinary times a stock-keeper, in charge of a large herd, must have three or four good horses during the year; and at other times, such as mustering, &c., more than that number are required, for the work tells upon them in a very short time. From the constant tendency of cattle to take the falling ground, the strain is thrown on the fore-legs, and as the horses must follow them at a gallop wherever they go, turning when they turn, they are consequently very much shaken, and a horse seldom remains perfectly sound, after any length

of time at this kind of work ; but they must stick to it as long as they can run faster than a bullock, and do not stumble. The bush horses are seldom shod ; but that is of very little consequence, as their work is not on hard roads.

Stock-riders in the Australian colonies are about the best horsemen in the world ; not for equestrian style, certainly, but for their knack of sticking on. Native boys, who are accustomed to the saddle from their childhood, will perform astonishing feats in the way of jumping, galloping down steep hills, &c., when after cattle ; and many who have never been in a saddle before their arrival in the colony, become expert riders after a little practice. Some cattle have a very bad habit of "splitting,"—that is, scattering in different directions,—and if one animal starts away singly and gets clear off, the rest are pretty sure to follow ; moreover, if they have once succeeded in the attempt, they are almost sure to try the old dodge on succeeding occasions. How wild some herds are, may be gathered from the answer given by a squatter, who on being asked how many head he had got, drily replied, "that they would not let him come near enough to count them, but he supposed he had a thousand, more

or less." In fact, no one would buy them of him; and it became a by-word amongst the surrounding squatters, in speaking of horses or bullocks, to say, "as wild as B——'s cattle."

The most dangerous work is branding the initial letters of the owner's name, or some private mark, upon the skin of the animal with a hot iron. For this purpose they require to be caught with a noose of hide rope, and when firmly secured the hot brand is pressed against the side of the animal until sufficiently deep, when the rope is loosened, and the beast let go, looking, in colonial parlance, "as if he could not believe it." It requires considerable nerve to go into a yard full of these half-wild brutes, and with a forked stick to place the noose on the horns of a bullock, for the animals sometimes charge at the man, who has then to run for the fence and jump upon the top rail; or, if he cannot reach the fence, he must fall down and let the enraged brute go over or past him. On one of these occasions a man was tossed over a fence seven feet high, and alighted on his feet outside more frightened than hurt. Large herds are sometimes sent down from the country to the Melbourne and Sydney markets, and often from the Sydney districts to

Melbourne, a distance of nearly seven hundred miles.

A camp of a large herd is a picturesque sight, as at night they have to enclose the animals in such a way that they shall not stray, and this is accomplished in the following manner. Shortly before it gets dark, the cattle are stopped in some advantageous spot—a level grassy place, with a range on one side, or a wide creek, so that the cattle have one side blocked up, and their drivers have only three sides to protect. After the cattle are stopped, some of the men keep them together, while the others light large fires all round the spot, at the distance of about twenty yards apart, and then go into the spaces between the fires and get their suppers, leaving some of their number to replenish the fires, as, if they were allowed to get low, the cattle would break through. The rest of the men then take their 'possum rugs, or blankets, from the place where they are strapped during the day, in front of their saddles, and turning them with their flaps uppermost, ensconce their heads therein, and go off into the land of dreams. Waking at daybreak, the stock-man takes a bath in some creek near at hand, and then boils his tin-pot full of tea at the log-fire, and spreading his salt-beef

and "damper" on the grass, enjoys his meal with a good appetite, straps his rug and tin-pot to the saddle-bow, lights his pipe, and amidst the crackling of whips, loud shouts, and clouds of dust, gets under way again with his herd for the next camping place, ten or fifteen miles distant. This primitive and rather vagabond mode of life has its charms, from the sense of freedom which accompanies it; and there are few who, after pursuing it for some time, feel inclined to settle down to a town life, or to the jog-trot labours of a farm; and if they do attempt such a change, a craving for their former roving, careless life is sure to return with irresistible force.

It may not be out of place here to introduce an anecdote of a bull, belonging to the gentleman before alluded to, whose cattle were so wild that they would not be "told." This bull was about four years old, of a bluish slate colour, perfectly wild, without a brand of any kind, and had never "seen the inside of a stock-yard." The owner determined to drive this bull in and kill it, or, failing that, to try and shoot it on the "run," as it was of a very worthless breed, always annoying the herds of cattle with which it associated, and teaching them bad habits. Taking a

gun, he started one day on this errand, and after chasing the vicious brute for nearly three miles, it stood at bay: its head lowered, its eyes flashing fire, and tossing the foam from its mouth, ready to charge either horse or man. The horse stood fire well, and his rider taking aim at the fore-legs of the bull, so as to disable him, that he might dismount and finish him at his leisure, fired, and the ball entered the shoulder of the bull, who forthwith vented his rage in a roar like that of a lion; the infuriated beast then charged, but the horse promptly turned and galloped out of harm's way. Thinking the bull must soon die, the squatter proceeded homewards, glad enough in having so far accomplished his object. However, in a few months, the bull again turned up, as sound and as wild as ever. The owner again started to drive it in, and finding it in a "mob" of young cattle, drove the whole herd, consisting of nearly two hundred, into the stock-yard of a friend, and borrowing a gun, went down to the yard to make another attempt to shoot the bull. The gun, which had been loaded some time, hung fire, and when it did explode, the ball entered the animal's neck. The brute then rushed at a weak part of the fence, knocked out the two

top rails, and jumped the remainder; all the herd followed its leader, and the owner never had a sight of the bull afterwards, though others declare they have seen this notorious rascal—who goes by the name of “the blue bull”—taking care to give him on all occasions a very wide berth.

It is now time to say something about the horses of Australia. The greater part of these are half-wild, never having seen the interior of a stable; such as are broken in are dismissed, after the day's work, into the bush, to have a roll, and look for their food. As the grass is tolerably good, during both winter and summer, they are not so badly off as might be supposed, keeping their condition wonderfully, particularly in spring time, and when they can get a patch of “burnt feed,” as the young shoots are called, which spring up on a piece of land that has been on fire. When wanted for use, they are driven in by the stock-keeper, who has his own horse generally in a paddock, with a few favoured ones belonging to the master and overseer. They may be seen at noon, in some shady spot, brushing the flies off their backs with their long tails, some lying down, and others feeding; and by the creek-side in the evening, where they go for water before seeking

some sheltered spot in which to pass the night. They become very shy if seldom driven in, and on the approach of a man, especially if mounted, will stop feeding, and close up in a body, ready for a start. It is a fine sight to see a number of them, old and young, of every size and colour, standing on some gentle slope on the plains, tossing their manes, and saluting the horse you may be riding, with a joyous, half-ironical sort of neigh, as if in contempt for his captivity, as contrasted with their own freedom. As you approach, they will trot off for a little while, then stop, and look again ; and if they see that you mean to follow them, off they go in earnest. In the group may be remarked a young colt of about four years old, unscathed by whip or spur, oddly associated with some old broken-kneed, saddle-galled stock-horse, which has been turned out as a last resource, to recover, or more probably to die. The colt, with his free, elastic gallop, fine clean legs, slender as those of a deer, with his mane and tail streaming in the wind, and the stiff, cramped motion of the old horse, left far behind and not hurrying, as if knowing that no one would be anxious to get him into a stock-yard—form a spectacle striking from

contrast, and not unimpressive from the moral it conveys.

Like an Arab, the settler loves his horse; and well he may, for he is his companion and good friend on many a weary journey; and by his sagacity he has been saved many a long mile at night, for the horses brought up on a station will find their way home by the most direct route, on the darkest night, if they are but allowed to go their own way. And there are many horses which, for intelligence, on some occasions, almost surpass their rider; a motion of his hand on the rein, and the animal slackens or quickens his pace, as may be necessary; and more than one instance has been known of a horse, whose rider, in a state of intoxication, having fallen from his saddle, has stood still, and steadily remained on the spot, until his master had recovered his reason. In one case of this kind, the inebriated rider's foot stuck fast in the stirrup, and if the horse had gone on, he would inevitably have been killed; but the faithful and sagacious creature stood still, until his owner became sufficiently sober to take proper care of himself. On another occasion, a mounted trooper, riding in a night of utter darkness, his

steed picked its way between the holes on the diggings, some of them forty feet deep, and carried its rider through in safety.

Young horses often have an ugly habit called "buck-jumping," the motion of which resembles that of a young kid when playing. This habit is peculiar to Australian horses; and is usually practised at a time when the brute thinks its rider is unprepared for it; it begins by arching its back until the saddle appears to be perched on a regular hump, and throwing its head between its fore-legs, gives a series of short, quick jumps, sometimes all four feet off the ground at once, turning round and round at the same time. There are not many men who can sit a "buck-jumper," although the chief qualification of a good horsebreaker is to be able to stand this test. They manage this by taking a firm grip of the saddle with their knees, and by endeavouring to prevent the animal from getting his head down; once let him do this, and you may as well jump off at once, because the longer you sit, the greater probably will be the fall you get when you do come off, as you surely will. Some confirmed old "buckers" will stop in the middle of a gallop, and deposit their rider on the ground; their "foregone cou-

clusion" having been to take him unawares. Among the many anecdotes told about these vicious brutes, is that of a man, who on being taken in this way by one of them, let go the reins, and took hold of the saddle before and behind to keep his seat; but the horse, by dint of swelling himself, as all "buck-jumpers" do, actually burst the girths, three in number, and the man came to the ground with the saddle between his knees, hurting himself rather severely. This habit is generally made worse by the careless breaking-in which they get when young. As an efficacious method of taming such brutes, the following case may be cited. A colt was brought into a yard, haltered and half-throttled, with a long rope fastened to the halter, and then driven round with a stock-whip in a muddy, soft place, until fairly tired out. A saddle was then put on; he was mounted, and after a few attempts at "bucking," he started off, was whipped and spurred for five miles, and fairly "licked into shape and discipline." A week afterwards he was safely ridden by a youngster fifteen years old, "after stock." Some of these horses are allowed to be so long at liberty, that they become untameable; and many of this description are shot, as utterly irreclaimable and worthless.

Hunting a "mob" of half wild horses is very exciting sport; the horse on which you are riding becoming quite as animated as its rider, straining every muscle in the pursuit. Dashing along up hill and down dale at racing speed on a fine morning is just the thing to raise the spirits to a high pitch. If the horses have been driven in pretty often before, they only need guiding; if not, it is then who can go fastest, and generally a horse with a rider can head one without, however strange it may seem. They generally keep together in a body until the most critical time, which is just as they reach the stock-yard, when they are almost sure to break off in various directions; and perhaps after being driven up to the yard two or three times, there will not be a single horse got in for two or three hours.

Such is a brief description of out-door life on a cattle-station. At these places, as also at sheep-stations, Saturday is about the busiest day in the week, except at certain periods, as we have before mentioned: the day on which the stores are weighed out, and on the occasion now and then of a bullock being killed.

Sunday is observed even at these stations, although far from the sound of the "church-going

bell;" and in some places if the men are emigrants, and not "old hands," as convicts are called, they may be seen poring over the letters they have received from home during their absence, while some old stager, sitting moodily in a corner, watches them with his pipe between his teeth, giving no sign of animation, except by the smoke which he pours forth in clouds from his mouth. What the thoughts of these old staggers generally are on such occasions may be judged from the fact, that one of these once asked a companion of his to *sell him a letter*, that he might read it and fancy himself at home again. As he had not received a letter from home for nearly twenty years, he supposed his friends there were dead; this man had been twelve years in Van Dieman's Land, and eight in Victoria and New South Wales.

CHAPTER XIII.

CLIMATE AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTIONS OF
AUSTRALIA.

Beauty and Salubrity of the Climate.—Rarity of Disease.—Inconvenience at times of the Heat and Dust.—Eye-blight arising therefrom.—Singular Sand-storms.—Vegetable Productions flourish for the most part; especially Grapes and Gourds of all kinds.—Peculiar Grasses.—Lack of Verdure.—Grain; enormous Growth of Stalk.—Potatoes.—Indigenous Trees.

THE majority of persons who have visited Australia maintain that its climate is the finest in the world. One of the best it is, without doubt, and there is hardly any other place known in which there are so many fine days to be met with in the course of the year. The greatest invalid, or the most confirmed grumbler, could hardly find fault with the climate during the three winter months, forming as they do such a contrast to the same months in England. The clear blue sky, pure and exhilarating, and the sun warm, but not unpleasantly so, combine to make the weather more like a fine English spring than winter, even of the mildest kind. Disease is comparatively rare; and if a man loses his health, it is generally the result

of some excess or accident. Spring, there is hardly any; snow is almost unknown, and the transition from spring to summer is hardly perceptible. Certainly the sun's heat increases in intensity, and when a hot wind happens to be blowing, the dust, and the annoyances occasioned by it, are such as to render the summer season rather trying to English people not acclimatized.

These hot winds are very destructive to vegetation, completely withering up gardens in a short time, and giving a dirty, dusty, dried-up appearance to everything. The dust, hot and sandy, compels every one to wear a veil, which is doubly useful in defending the eyes from the glare of the sun, and in protecting them from the dust, which frequently causes them to be affected by what is called "blight." This disorder is attended with a peculiar redness of the eyelids, and an irritation causing the eyes to water considerably, accompanied with a smarting sensation. There are, moreover, two kinds of this complaint, commonly known as "sandy" and "swelling" blight. The symptoms of the "sandy blight" are those we have just described, and are caused by the dust entering the eye and producing inflammation. The usual remedy is a preparation of zinc, and

this "eye-water" was sold everywhere at the diggings in 1852. The "swelling blight" is, as its name implies, a swelling of the eye, and is supposed to be caused by the bite of an insect of the gnat kind. There is not so much pain with this as the other disorder, but it is very unsightly, as it gives the sufferer the appearance of a pugilist. The dust storms are at times so violent, that most people are glad to turn their backs to the blast and allow it to sweep past them.

These winds invariably blow from the interior, and have given rise to the supposition that the hitherto unexplored centre of Australia is a vast sandy desert; and that the wind becomes heated and charged with dust in its course over the arid hot soil. In Sydney the name by which these winds are known, is "a brickfielder." Why they are so called it is difficult to say, unless it be that the dust is of a dull reddish hue, and more like pulverized bricks there, than it appears anywhere else. On one occasion a ship while lying at the wharf there had been fresh painted, and "a brickfielder" sweeping past just after, changed the hue of the ship from a bright black to dirty brown.

The vegetable productions of Australia are many and varied, almost every kind known at home growing there with great luxuriance, although, from the much greater heat and consequent forcing tendency of the climate, they are very liable to ripen too fast, and to degenerate in size and quality from those of more temperate latitudes. The gourd species, in every variety, seem to flourish best, melons and cucumbers growing to a great size in the open air. The most abundant and cheapest fruits are grapes and melons. Peaches in Sydney are sold for three-pence per dozen, but they are inferior in size to English peaches. Indian corn or maize is cultivated with great success in some parts of the colony. Many squatters, too, grow sufficient tobacco for the purpose of sheep-dipping, on their own land. The grasses for the most part are rich and nourishing, although from want of moisture there is not that variety of colour and that freshness of verdure to be seen as in England, the grass generally presenting a dry parched appearance, except near the rivers and in low, moist situations. There is one kind called kangaroo grass, which is very much sought after by sheep, who will bite it as close to the roots as it is pos-

sible for them to reach with their teeth. In some of the valleys in which there have been but few sheep, this grass runs to a great height, but, except in these places, a patch of really good turf is rarely to be met with, either in winter or summer; yet, notwithstanding this, the sheep on some "runs" thrive astonishingly, their carcasses when killed often weighing from sixty to eighty pounds each.

Grain of all kinds grows luxuriantly, although from the small extent of land under tillage, it still keeps at rather a high price. In the year 1854 wheat was twenty-five shillings per bushel, and oats twelve-and-sixpence; while, two years before, horses were fed upon oatmeal imported from England, which was cheaper than their proper food. Wheat has been known to grow in Australia to the height of six feet, with a stem like a small cane, in fact, sometimes with hardly any head at all, the rich soil having apparently exhausted its power on the stem. Oats are cut for hay, and the horses seem to prefer it to the compressed hay which comes from other places. Potatoes also grow well, and in the Geelong district they have been known to weigh three pounds each. The blight has not yet made its appear-

ance at the antipodes ; and as seed potatoes in 1856 were 11*l.* per ton, it is to be hoped that the evil day of its advent there may be still far distant. Great quantities of these vegetables come from Adelaide, Tasmania, and even California, and, together with wheat, form an important feature of the intercolonial trade of Melbourne with the adjacent colonies.

The different species of trees are very numerous. Conspicuous amongst them are the gum, red and blue, iron bark, stringy bark, cherry, wattle, she-oak, black-wood, and numerous others. The appearance of the gum trees is very singular, as they shed their bark and not their leaves : the bark hanging from them in long strips has a very slatternly appearance. The stems of nearly all are blackened by the action of fire, which is generally attributed to the great conflagration that devastated the colony, and which sadly memorable event is universally designated as Black Thursday. The leaves never fall, and are called by courtesy *evergreen*, but the prevailing colour is a dirty brown. They give little or no shade, from the fact that the edges, instead of the surface of the leaves, turn to the sun ; and, moreover, the head of the tree is not nearly so large and spreading as

might be expected from the height and size of the stem. The stringy bark is so called from its exterior, which a good deal resembles the outer husk of a cocoa-nut; the tree appears to be marked by a series of perpendicular scores, to the depth of two or three inches. Iron-bark is a very hard and useful wood, and is generally employed for wheel-spokes, &c.; it greatly resembles the stringy bark in its external appearance. The cherry is a tolerably large tree, with a reddish stem, and bright green leaves; it bears a small berry of peculiar taste. The wattle is another reddish-looking tree, and is of two kinds, the broad-leafed and the feathery-leafed, distinguishable by the peculiarity implied in these terms. A very pure, clear gum exudes from the tree, and adheres to the bark in large lumps. The bark is used medicinally up the country, and is an excellent tonic, possessing very astringent properties; both this and the gum are articles of export. The she-oak is a species of fir, having cones very similar to the ordinary pine, with leaves like bunches of string. The wind blowing through a large forest of these trees makes a very peculiar sound, not unlike the whistling noise produced by a squall at sea upon the rigging of a ship.

CHAPTER XIV

MELBOURNE AND ITS SUBURBS.

Its first aspect.—Rapid Extension of the Town.—Increased facility of Approach from the Beach.—Striking Improvements in the Appearance of the Town.—Principal Streets.—Public Buildings.—Hotels.—Coach Offices.—Coach Racing.—Places of Amusement.—Suburbs, &c.

THE appearance of the city of Melbourne, as seen from the bay when there is a high wind, is not the most inviting picture that could be presented to a new arrival, as the whole town is enveloped in a cloud of reddish dust, and the houses, with the exception of a few near the beach at Sandridge, are perfectly undistinguishable. It is built on two hills, so that, as the greater part of the town is in the hollow, it is invisible from the harbour.

The city is now extending itself with great rapidity; but at the time of Burrows's arrival, the whole space from Sandridge to Melbourne was without a vestige of habitation: on a green hill to the right of the road there was a tent or two, but the remainder of the scenery was made

up of low sandy ground and marshes, extending from the lagoon at St. Kilda to the banks of the Yarra-Yarra river. Now, there is a good turnpike road, planted on each side, from the Prince's Bridge to the gate, with trees, which avenue, in time, will form a welcome contrast to the hot, dusty road.

Sandridge is a very fair-sized village, and on the hill before-mentioned, now known by the name of Emerald Hill, there is another village, so that instead of a walk of three miles on a dreary road, the new comer finds himself in a suburban district as soon as he lands. Seven years ago, he must have walked from the beach to the town, and have sent his baggage up the river in a lighter—a very tedious process, weeks often elapsing before he obtained his clothing. Now, for the sum of one shilling, he can ride in any of the numerous conveyances, which are to be obtained up to nine o'clock in the evening in Sandridge, right into the heart of the city; or he can land at the railway pier, and go by the train to the station in Flinders-street.

The aspect and character of the town are also greatly changed. Formerly, the very name of Melbourne conveyed the notion of a dirty, ill-

paved, badly-lighted place, where the softer sex used to wear Wellington boots in order to wade through the mud ; and where robberies were perpetrated with impunity on any unlucky wight whose business might take him out after dark, or even outside his own door. One of the dodges then practised was, to get up a disturbance in the street, accompanied by cries of "Murder !" and "Thieves !" and as soon as the unfortunate householder came out to the rescue, he found, to his astonishment, that the thieves and their supposed victim were unanimously agreed to attack him, and rob him of all he had, often leaving him senseless at his own door by a blow from the lethal weapon ironically called a "life-preserver."

The streets are well planned, and are now tolerably well lighted, running at right angles through the town, and dividing it into square blocks. They are paved and macadamized also, and for the most part are twenty yards wide. Collins'-street, which is the Regent-street of Melbourne, contains many fine shops and buildings of all kinds, of which the Criterion Hotel is not the least imposing ; and, at about three o'clock on a fine afternoon, this thoroughfare presents quite a gay appearance from the number of well-dressed people of both sexes to be seen there. The next

in importance is "Big Bourke-street," as it is called, to distinguish it from its dirty neighbour, "Little Bourke-street;" at one end of this street is the horse-market, almost entirely made up of sale-yards for horses and cattle. In the centre of it are situated the numerous coach offices, of which the "Bull and Mouth," having for its sign a facsimile of the monstrous bovine mouth of its London namesake, is the principal one, whence the coaches start for Bendigo, distant 110 miles; Castlemaine, 85 miles; Beechworth, 208 miles; and Ballarat, 84 miles, respectively, from the capital. The "Albion Hotel," situated just opposite, has also its coaches, and a little before the hour of six in the morning the street exhibits a very lively appearance. Numerous coaches, some of them with six horses, are drawn up before the hotels, and as the drivers are for the most part Americans, the pace, as may be supposed, partakes rather of the go-a-head style. The clock strikes, and with their usual starting salute, a tremendous yell, and a savage cut at the leaders, off they start, rattling down the street at a rapid pace; and as they have all, excepting the Beechworth coach, to go as far as Flemington together, a distance of about three miles, the steam is put on to get to the turnpike-gate first.

Accidents seldom happen, although from the reckless manner of driving, it is almost a miracle that they do not occur. If, however, any should befall, they are generally caused by some bibulous passenger, with a weak head, getting top-heavy at one of the baiting places, and tumbling over the side, a feat that is not very difficult to accomplish, as these coaches have no inside seats, but are built open and low in the body, in order to pass safely through the bush, and are swung on long leather springs.

In this street, also, is situated the Post-office, now a well-regulated establishment, forming a pleasing contrast to the old place dignified by that name, where, by dint of hard pushing through the crowd usually found there, two hours generally would elapse before you could reach the window to receive the usual disheartening answer, "None for that name, sir!" Melbourne also boasts of its Town Hall—a fine structure; of its Crystal Palace, too, used as a ball-room; and of a University; as well as a good hospital. Nor are places of amusement wanting. Theatres are plentiful; and bills, setting forth the novelties to be seen at "Coppin's Olympic," "Astley's," and even "Cremorne," are displayed in the windows of public-houses in the town. Those who like cheap entertainments have

abundant opportunity to gratify their taste in the numerous public-houses, which announce in alluring notices that "A Free and Easy" is held there every evening; so free and easy, indeed, that the wind-up is generally anything but harmonious.

The villages of Richmond, Prahran, and St. Kilda, which were formerly considered quite rural, are now close to the town, although still preserving their original names. The village of Brighton, however, still keeps its distance; and there are farms and neat villa residences scattered at intervals on the road between it and the town. So rapid has been the progress made, and so striking the change effected by the improvement of the town, that after an absence of eighteen months, some of the streets were scarcely recognisable. There are, however, some portions which seem at a stand-still, and will probably never improve very much; such as Flinders-lane and Little Bourke-street, two dirty, narrow places, running parallel with the main streets of those names, and haunted by some of the worst characters of the town. Most of the yards and houses of the latter would be considerably improved by a periodical visit from the sanitary commissioners, accompanied by a few detectives.

CHAPTER XV.

TALES OF ADVENTURE BY A LOG-FIRE.

Tales by a Log-fire.—Fred W——'s Yarn.—The Shepherd's Wife.—Capture of the Murderer.—Tom's Tale of a Snake.—B——'s Chase of a Bushranger.—R——'s Tale of Bradley and Connor.—C——'s Tale of the River Darling.—Jack L——'s Story of "Sydney Bill, the Native."—Melville.—"Gipsy Smith," his Escapes, his Capture, Sentence.

At a station not far from the Sandhurst Diggings, in the month of July, 185—, might have been seen a group of young men, wearing the uniform of the mounted police, seated in a log hut,—used as a cooking-house for the station,—round a large comfortable wood fire. It was a miserable rainy night, but as they were under orders to turn out as soon as required, and could not do what most of them would gladly have done, namely, go to their beds, they proposed to while away the time by communicating their experience of colonial life to one another. Fred W——, the oldest of the party, who had been in Sturt's black police, and used to talk of the good old times, was unanimously called upon to commence, which he did in the following manner:—"As you have called upon me,

boys, to spin a yarn, I'll do my best." Upon which, Bill H——, a merry little Irishman who had elected himself president, said: "Now, then! silence for Mr. Fred's yarn; the first disturber goes out in the rain." Those who smoked lit their pipes, Fred himself among the number, as he was an inveterate patron of the weed, and between the puffs he emitted, spun the following yarn:—

"About ten years ago, when no gold had been discovered or even thought of, I was stationed at Horsham, a small place in the Wimmera District, and one day a report was made at the station that a shepherd's wife had been criminally assaulted, and then murdered by a man who was, or had been, employed on the station to which the shepherd belonged. It was the husband himself who brought us the tidings, and I never saw a man in such an excited state. His account was, that he had been out as usual with his sheep, and on coming home found his wife lying dead, her skull fractured by the blow of an axe, and his child, an infant of six months old, lying on the door-step, its little head dashed to pieces, while marks of blood appeared on the door-step and post. The man to whom his suspicions pointed as the perpetrator of the horrid deed had called there the

night before, on his way to the head-station to look for work, as he said; he had his supper, and after sleeping in the hut that night, took his breakfast in the morning before the shepherd went out, and he was still in the hut when the latter left it. When he came back, the traveller, as may be supposed, was nowhere to be seen. Leaving the description of his person with us, the poor bereaved shepherd went away. Now as I had seen the man he described only two days before, I was directed to dress in plain clothes, saddle my horse, and start, with orders to find him if possible, and not to mind how long I stopped away if I could get any traces of him. I accordingly rode from station to station, but could get no tidings of him anywhere; until on the fifth day of my search, I heard from a road-side hut that a man, answering the description of the one I was in search of, had passed there on his road to the Glenelg river. On the middle of the sixth day I thought I would try to get across a piece of scrub, near that place, to a station at which I knew I could pass the night, and as the bush was too thick to ride through fast with any degree of comfort, I walked my horse leisurely along until I drew near the river, and on the open

ground my attention was drawn to a "miami" composed of leaves and boughs ; thinking it strange such a thing should be there—for it was evidently not made by the blacks—I tied up my horse to a stump, and cautiously approached. As I drew near I saw the colour of some clothes, and thinking my man might be the owner of them, I drew out a pistol, looked to the cap, and went up to the "miami" very quietly, and sure enough there was the man himself asleep, with a pistol lying beside him. I immediately possessed myself of it, and then kicked his foot ; he sprung up as if shot, and feeling in his coat for the pistol, found it gone. Holding out his hands he said, ' Put on the darbies, I'm done for once ; but if I had the pistol I would have shot you. I might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb.' I handcuffed him, and took him to the squatter's place for the night. I started next morning, and two days afterwards he was safe in gaol. He was hung, after confessing that he had killed the woman and beat the child's head against the door-post ; that he had gone through the bush the whole time after, and had only taken the road at the place I first heard of him."

Fred having ended his narrative, called on Tom,

an old stock-keeper, for his yarn, which he gave in, as nearly as possible, the following words:—

“ I was employed on a station about fifty miles from Swan Hill, and during the time I was there, had an opportunity of seeing how the bite of a venomous snake acts upon the human frame. One of the men had been asleep on his rug under a tree near the river, and was awakened by feeling something sharp run into his foot; on examining it, he saw two or three small punctures surrounded by a red ring. The foot feeling numbed, he took out his knife and made a number of scratches over the wounds until the blood came, and putting some gunpowder, which he luckily had with him, into the scratches, he set fire to it, having heard that burning the poison out in this manner was a good remedy. After doing this he started for the station, and a medical man, who fortunately happened to be on a visit to the place, came and prescribed suitable medicine, leaving orders with the men in the hut, that they should not allow him to sleep, as that was generally one of the effects the poison produced. After the doctor left, the man wanted to sleep, sure enough, but the others forced him to walk about the floor of the hut; towards morning he said that he felt all right, but they would not

believe him ; and, in spite of his protestations, they made him walk about until the doctor came again, who said that he might go to sleep now, and that there was no longer any danger. It was some time before he got well, and the place where he had been bitten festered, and discharged a great deal of matter, and a scar remains there to this day, of the size of a shilling." Here Tom pulled off his boot, and showed a scar on his foot, saying, "The man was myself, and I hope it will be a long time before a snake catches me asleep again."

Another of the party named B——, next followed, and the remainder of the anecdotes were chiefly of notorious criminals. B—— had been concerned in this exploit himself. A bushranger had been for some months the terror of all travellers, keeping the road as systematically as a turnpikeman, and levying his black mail far and near ; and the detachment of police to which B—— belonged had been for some days in search of him, and came up to him near a coffee tent, on the road to the diggings. He was mounted on a fine horse, which he had taken on loan, without leave, from some squatter. They immediately gave chase, and for some distance the bushranger kept the lead, until B——, who had the

best horse of the party, came up pretty close to him, when, turning in the saddle, the fellow fired at B——; the ball whizzed very close to his head, cutting away a curl of hair, of which he was very proud, off his right temple. Seeing that his shot had not taken effect, he turned again; but this time B—— stooped in the saddle, and heard the cap snap, but the pistol missed fire; before he could pull out another, B—— was upon him, and pulling him off his horse by the coat-collar, gave him a fearful fall in the road. They caught his horse, and took him on it to the gaol; he shared the same fate as the man in the last story, as the first offence, for which they were in pursuit of him, was a capital one, and the shooting at the police made it far worse.

Every one seemed by this time anxious to relate an adventure; and B——, being next called upon, thus proceeded:—“There were two notorious convicts, named Bradley and Connor, who had escaped from Norfolk Island, or, as it was called, the ‘Ocean Hell,’ from the horrible characters who were sent there; they had made the master of a small coaster give them a passage to Port Philip, and landing near Mr. Bateman’s station, at Cape Shamok, they commenced their depredations, rob-

bing a number of people, and stealing two horses and firearms. They killed one man at Brighton, about six miles from Melbourne, and set the police at defiance for some time, perpetrating their outrages with apparent impunity. The whole of the police in the town and bush districts, after scouring the country far and wide, at length came up with them at Kane's station, near the Mc Ivor diggings. The rascals fired at a cadet named Thompson, wounding him severely; and several shots having been exchanged, they were at length captured, brought to Melbourne, and exalted to their proper position in, or rather out of, society."

C—— was now summoned, and after a great many calls for silence by the self-made president, thus commenced his narrative:—"When I was stationed not far from here, word was brought in that a fight had taken place, the scene of which was the river Darling, and the combatants the blacks and police. The blacks had for some time been very troublesome, spearing the cattle and annoying the squatters on that river, so much so that it was determined to form a police-station at the house of a squatter named J——, and four men, an officer, and a sergeant, were told off, and started, with a good deal of unnecessary bragging,

On the part of at least one of them, as to what they would do in the event of a fight. They arrived safely; and one night shortly after, loud yells were heard near the station. They turned out, and went to the place whence the noise proceeded. On their arrival they found a number of blacks collected together. On asking their business there, they received very insulting replies and gestures in return, accompanied with sundry agreeable promises of 'waddying,' 'spearing,' and the like. The end of this was that a black, in attempting to perform one of his threats, was shot, and the whole mob commenced fighting. Away rode the braggart when the row commenced, for the purpose, as he said, of bringing assistance. The blacks rushed on the officer, and the men charged amongst the blacks, and laid into them manfully, rescuing the officer, after he had been speared in the thigh, and dragged off his horse, after being 'waddied' pretty severely, so that his life was for some time despaired of. Several of the blacks also received severe wounds, and one was killed outright."

When the comments on this adventure were finished, and they were rather numerous, as one or two knew the parties concerned, and had heard the

story before, Jack L.— proceeded so spin his yarn, the hero of which was a man called “Sydney Bill, the native,” who was, as his name implies, a “corn-stalk,” or native of Sydney, though of English parents. After a good schooling at the “Rocks,” which are the Seven Dials of the antipodes, and a place where vice of every kind flourishes with tropical luxuriance, he made a short sojourn in the back slums of Melbourne to finish his education, and then turned out on his own account as bushranger, horse-stealer, &c., in all of which he was an adept, and used to boast that there was not a gaol in the country that he had not seen the inside of. The police were after him for a series of capital offences, and at length they came up with him at a deserted hut near Lexton. They ordered him to surrender, but Bill had no idea of that; and thinking, as he said, “that he might as well be shot as hung,” he stood with his back against the wall, and, with a pistol in each hand, defied them to come and take him. Not wishing to cheat the hangman, they did not shoot him, as they might have done; but, while holding a parley, one of the constables suddenly rushed in upon him, and, seizing him by the legs, tossed him clean over his head. The

pistols fell from his hands, exploding harmlessly, and the redoubtable Bill was soon on his way to visit another gaol. He met his richly-merited fate in the same manner as he met the police, daring to the last.

Tales of adventure now began to flow fast, and amongst them was narrated an anecdote of the notorious Melville, better known as the "Captain," who received a sentence of nearly thirty-two years for stealing a number of horses, or as a prisoner in a chain-gang once compendiously phrased it, on being asked what brought him there, "for stealing only a piece of rope?" "Only a piece of rope," exclaimed his interrogator, "ah, sir, but there was a horse at the end of it, you must know!" But to return to Melville. After he had been for some time in fine, airy lodgings in the "yellow frigates," as the hulks are called from their being painted yellow, he fancied he should like to get out; and he tried twice very hard to effect this. The first time he pretended to be suddenly inspired with very religious feelings, and wished to see the chaplain; and on the worthy gentleman coming into the cell to see this sinner, he politely requested his reverence to change clothes with him. The chaplain refused,

gave the alarm, and Melville's religious feelings and the chaplain vanished together! The next time he tried to cut a hole in the side of the ship with a saw, which he had obtained by some means, but he cut at the wrong place, and let the water in. He stood it very well until the water reached his knees, when he made an outcry for assistance, and was removed to safer quarters.

The next story related to a notorious rascal named "Gipsy Smith," so called from his appearance somewhat resembling that of a gipsy. This villain had been in custody several times, but always managed to escape; and one of these escapes is worth mentioning. He had been given in charge to one of the police to be taken to Ballarat and forwarded to town; after going some distance very quietly, they came to a public-house, and the worthy gipsy asked the constable to let him have "a drink;" this was contrary to all rules, but the constable, good-naturedly, gave his consent, and tying his horse up outside the hotel they went in for their "nobblers," when the cunning vagabond induced the constable to remove his handcuffs for a few moments on the plea that they hurt him. Having gained this point, he made a snatch at the sword of the constable and

cut at him ; but he forgot that the constable had hold of the heavy steel scabbard, and the two had a regular stand-up fight for some minutes. Gipsy had met his match, and throwing down the sword, ran off ; the horse broke his reins and did the same, taking with him the evidence of his rider's folly, by the handcuffs being in the holster. The prisoner escaped, and the constable was severely punished ; but Gipsy admitted on his trial that "he never received such a thrashing as he did with the scabbard." His last escape was in this way. At the police station at Mount Ararat there was a very active sergeant named Mc Nalty, who, having obtained information of Gipsy's whereabouts, started with a constable named Moore, to apprehend him. Meeting him at a tent by the road-side, he took him prisoner, and when about to handcuff him, he showed fight. The sergeant and he were struggling on the ground outside, and Moore was trying to get him clear of his opponent, when a shot was fired from the tent, which took effect on poor Mc Nalty, killing him outright, a charge of slugs entering his chest, and Moore was wounded in the arm. Gipsy and his mate escaped, and 500*l.* was offered by Government for his apprehension. A few weeks after-

wards he was taken at Daisy Hill in the following manner:—A digger had seen a man who was well known to be one of Gipsy's mates, at a store purchasing some provisions, and, on recognising him, he watched where he took the provisions to, and succeeded in tracing him to an old hut on the outskirts of the diggings. He immediately gave information, and an officer with a number of men, armed, and with orders to fire in case of resistance, went down to the hut. On their arrival they quietly surrounded it, and, looking through the chinks of the slabs, saw the men they wanted, asleep, with their arms, saddles, &c., in the hut beside them. Placing the police so that they could fire through the openings in case of resistance, he went in; and the ruffians, seeing that resistance was hopeless, allowed themselves to be ironed, and taken to the camp. It was a great satisfaction to know that the mate, being the man who fired the shot, was hung, and Gipsy himself sentenced to a long term of imprisonment in the hulks; so long, that if he survives it, he will be too old for any active mischief.

At the conclusion of this narrative, the sergeant's voice was heard, crying—"Turn out, lads!" and there was a general rush to the stables. The rain

had ceased, and the stars were shining clear and bright when they mounted their horses, and departed to watch a back line of road to the diggings, for some horse-stealers who were to pass that way with their ill-gotten animals.

CHAPTER XVI.

A VOYAGE TO CHINA.

William leaves the Police Force.—Goes to Melbourne.—Ships for England *via* China.—Leaves Hobson's Bay with 150 Chinese Passengers.—Observations on the Passengers.—Opium Smoking.—Dirty habits of the Chinese.—The Island.—The Scotchman among Savages.—Fruit from the Island.—The Storm.—Arrival in Hong-Kong.

BURROWS having determined to leave the force, sent in his resignation, and received his discharge. He thereupon started for town in order to obtain a ship bound to England, and succeeded so far as to meet with one bound to China, and from thence to England, if a cargo were procurable. On this vessel he took passage, and we shall now give an account of his voyage to Hong-Kong.

On the 8th of June, 18—, William went on board the ship *Boomer*, lying in Hobson's Bay, Melbourne, which vessel had recently arrived from England. The crew were anxiously waiting for their next move, which they all thought would be for home; but they were doomed to disappointment. Rumours began to be current on board, that they were first to take back some lucky Chinese diggers

to their native land; and these reports gathered strength from the number of civilized-looking Celestials that came on board to inspect the ship. At length, on one rainy morning, the *Boomer* moved out to the black buoy, off Williamstown, with 150 passengers, and 3000 ounces of gold belonging to them, dropped anchor, and remained there, waiting for a change of wind. Taking on board a pilot, and a fair wind with him, the following afternoon the ship soon passed out through the narrow channel between the Heads, once more into the long swell of the Southern Ocean; and leaving the pilot on board the cutter which cruises outside, started fairly on her voyage.

For the first week, very few of the Chinese passengers showed themselves on deck, being all more or less afflicted with sea-sickness; and those who were not, sought comfort in their opium pipes; and to such an extent did some of them carry this practice, that they never left their beds or mats except to eat or drink; and they did very little in that line—quite the reverse of the non-smokers, who ate most voraciously, eight or ten basins of rice being the common allowance amongst them for one man. But as they have in general only two meals a-day, that may account

for it. At length they began to come on deck, and look about, at least between ninety and a hundred of them; they seemed always to leave some of their number down below to look after their baggage. The decks soon presented the appearance of a dingy street in London, as dirty water, grease, and every description of filth were thrown about freely by them, in spite of the remonstrances of the crew, or explanations given by signs, that they should throw their refuse overboard; and in consequence of their inability to understand, or their love of dirt, the crew had plenty of work to keep the decks clean.

After about a month of fine weather, varied by occasional storms of wind and rain, the *Boomer* was becalmed off a small group of islands, of coral formation, called Raven Islands by the natives, but marked by some other name on the chart. The chief officer, and an English passenger on board, being desirous of going ashore, the captain, after much persuasion, allowed them to take the gig, with four hands, for that purpose, giving them instructions, if the natives should appear hostile, not to land. They had been gone about three hours, and every one on board was becoming anxious about them, when a nondescript-

looking affair was observed coming off under sail, and the gig following. As they neared the ship, the dark faces of several natives were easily discernible, and amongst them what appeared to be a shipwrecked seaman; but when they came alongside, he seemed to be as one having some authority among them, from the manner in which they obeyed him. When they gained the deck, to the surprise of all on board, the natives began to speak, or rather to try to speak, English, looking with great contempt apparently on the Chinese by whom they were surrounded. The seaman who accompanied them stated that he had left a whaler at one of the neighbouring islands, and having had a quarrel with some white men who were settled there, he cleared out one night in a canoe, taking with him some of the natives, and founded a little colony for himself. He had been there sixteen years, and had two fine boys, about the ages of fourteen and fifteen respectively, whom he called his sons. He had been king, but as a rule had been made that each male on the island should rule for a year, he had abdicated some months previously in favour of a fine-looking native, about six feet in height, and was now content to act as his prime minister.

The astonishment of the chief officer and boat's crew may be imagined on meeting, instead of savages, with a townsman, for such he was to at least four who were in the boat. When the captain asked the man if he would like to leave the island, he refused, adding, "that he was quite comfortable, as he had been there so long, had mastered the language, and erected a small school-house in which he was trying to teach the natives to read and write English. He wished the captain to report the island on his arrival in Hong-Kong, as he could freight a small schooner every year with cocoa-nut oil, tortoise and turtle shell, coral and *bêche-de-mer* for the China markets. The boats brought off a quantity of breadfruit, bananas, plantains, cocoa-nuts, pine-apples, and some pumpkins of immense size. The king promised to send off, next morning, a supply of pigs, fowls, &c., but a heavy squall being seen approaching, they took their departure, and the ship drove before the breeze until next morning, when, after losing sight of the island, she was again becalmed.

After rolling and pitching for about a day, a good breeze sprung up; as it was fair, the spars were soon covered with canvas, and the ship was bowling along in good style very soon; a great

number of small islands were sighted during the next week, the wind drawing gradually ahead until it became a stiff gale, with every appearance of an increase. One evening about sunset, the dangerous reef, known by the name of the Prata Shoal, appeared far away on the ship's lee, the sea driving against it, sending sheets of spray high in the air; the captain wishing to get out of such a dangerous neighbourhood as soon as possible, carried on a press of sail, and the ship flew before it, driving the water from her bows for yards round her in a white sheet of foam. Towards midnight the wind increased, and the watch on deck were standing under the lee of the weather bulwarks, looking aloft to see how the spars stood, when a tearing noise was heard, and it was then found that the mainsail had split up the weather leech. "Haul the mainsail up!" shouted the captain, and at the same time the look-out on the fore-castle sung out that the jib and stay-sail had split. All hands were soon on deck to shorten sail; and the second mate went out with some men to pick up what they could of the head sails, while the remainder did the same to the mainsail. The gale had by this time done its worst; and towards morning it somewhat abated, when other

sails were bent in place of those that had been lost. Two days after, land was sighted about day-break, and the *Boomer*, with a fair wind, stood in for the anchorage at Hong-Kong; on entering the channel between Green Island and the main land, a large number of men-of-war appeared gaily dressed out with flags, and amongst them the flagship *Calcutta* was the most conspicuous. It being the birthday of Prince Albert, she commenced saluting, the other ships following her example, until the air became filled with dense clouds of smoke, completely spoiling the view of the town, and rendering the captain's work of picking out a berth amongst the numerous merchant ships and men-of-war in the harbour rather hazardous; however, he at last managed to get in safely, dropped anchor, and furled sails, after a passage of about six weeks, not unusually long, but quite long enough for the Europeans on board to get tired of the dirty Chinese passengers.

CHAPTER XVII.

THREE MONTHS IN CHINA AND RETURN TO SYDNEY.

A Chin-chin, or Feast.—Eatables.—Procession.—Departure for the Shore.—Discharge Cargo.—Commence Repairs.—Opium Clippers.—Thieving Habits of the Chinese.—Instance of Theft and its Punishment.—Typhoon.—The Salt Junks.—Take in Cargo and 380 Passengers for Sydney.—Death of one of the Passengers.—Scene on Deck in fine Weather.—Riot on Board.—Kindness of the Captain to the Sick.—Presentation of a Flag to the Captain.—Arrival in Sydney.—Chinese Gratitude.—Their Departure for the Diggings.

THE first boat that came alongside was speedily filled with a mob of the Chinese passengers sent ashore by the rest, for the purpose of obtaining fruit and vegetables, with sundry other suspicious looking edibles in which Chinamen delight, in order that they might have a grand "chin-chin," or feast, to return thanks for their safe arrival to "Joss," as they call their deity. In about two hours the deputation returned, bringing the much coveted pigs, onions, &c., with them. The pigs were roasted whole, but as the Chinese did not choose to show the process, it is not easy to imagine how they managed to roast them in the nice looking manner in which those sent on board

appeared to be done. They looked as if they had been painted brown, so evenly was the colour distributed over the surface of their skins, not a burnt patch visible anywhere. One leg of a fine large pig was sent into the fore-castle, but the crew being suspicious of the way in which it had been cooked, and on what it had fed, would not eat it, so when the Chinamen were down below at their grand feast, the crew quietly dropped the pork overboard, and when they were asked how they liked it, said it was very good, or as a Chinaman would say, "velly goot," which is the highest praise that a Chinaman in trying to talk English bestows on anything, it being apparently beyond their capability to get their tongues round the letter "r." Their devotions were conducted in the following manner: one man called a priest, walked first, and following him were others carrying dishes, in which were placed the pigs, fruit, rice, sweetmeats, &c., before any had been cut off or eaten. Forming a procession they came up from below, and walked aft on to the poop; and arriving at the taffrail put their offerings on a hen-coop; the priest took some coloured paper on which was written a prayer in Chinese characters, and setting it on fire threw it overboard; after which

the others fired crackers and threw rice into the water, and while some more paper was burning came up to the offerings, salaamed three times by bowing to the deck with their arms extended over their heads, and retired. But it was noticed that they did not throw anything overboard which had cost money ashore, such as pork, sugar-candy, fruit, &c.

The feast over, they commenced preparations for going on shore, and boats having been called, they went over the side into them, about twenty in each boat; but when the turn came to the two most inveterate opium-smokers, it was found necessary to lower them over with ropes; one of these, when he came on board, was a slight, but healthy man, but when he left the ship, had become a living skeleton, staring about him with an air of abject helplessness, approaching to idiotcy. The crew were not sorry to see the last boat-load take their departure, which they did with cries of "chin-chin," which means "good-bye" and "thank you." As soon as they had left, the sailors proceeded to wash decks and clean the ship fore and aft, knock down the berths, &c., and found that it was not before it was necessary.

Having cleaned the ship, the crew commenced

discharging, preparatory to moving farther up the harbour for repairs; and in about a month, all the cargo having been landed, sails unbent, &c., on a fine, warm morning, the anchor was lifted, and the *Boomer* sailed into Jardine's Bight, a small bay, so named after a gentleman whose residence is close by. Here the ship was moored, and two days after the carpenters came on board, under the superintendence of Mr. Cooper, whose father was kidnapped in the harbour, and has never since been heard of. The bulwarks having been carried away on the voyage from England, the captain wanted them replaced, and also a new house built on deck. The Chinese carpenters were brought off in a boat at about seven in the morning; and the boat, which was managed by an old woman and a girl, returned to the shore, and brought them their dinners at noon. They were allowed one hour for dinner, and were then turned to 'until six at night, when they went ashore.

Their tools were of Chinese manufacture, and they affected to look with contempt on English ones; but if they obtained the chance of stealing some of the ship carpenter's copper nails, bolts, or tools, they would do so without scruple. They

have no Sabbath-day, but work on every day of the week. Their temples, or, as they call them, Joss-houses, are small places, profusely ornamented inside with gilding; and it was a common thing enough for English seamen to go into one of these *shops*, as they call the Joss-houses, and get up a disturbance, when the priest would give them oranges, and other fruit, in order to get them to leave the place without doing mischief; for occasionally Jack would not scruple to pull down the deity, or, indeed, the house itself. If any of the seamen belonging to the ships in the harbour, or even residents there, went out after eight o'clock at night, and walked along the Queen's Road, they were sure to be challenged by the numerous sentries, and from the number of them, and the scarcity of Chinese about after that hour, the town was probably at that time under martial law, at least the Chinese portion of it, as it was war time.

The opium traders form a numerous fleet; and, when about sunset, it was a fine sight to see one of those small but fast clipper vessels coming into the harbour under a cloud of canvas. Suddenly, as if by magic, the canvas would be furled, the anchor let go, and a boat with its white awning,

and white-jacketed crew of coolies, would pull off from the side to the town, carrying her captain on a visit to the owners, possibly Messrs. Dent or Jardine. The effect was, however, somewhat spoiled by the horrible din which is heard from the town, at sunset and sunrise, of gongs, crackers, and what the people call singing. The Chinese are a crafty, thieving race; and an incident occurred which will suffice to show how little they are to be trusted. One of the opium schooners was discharging tea into a ship for Sydney, and had on board a large quantity of copper "cash," a small coin, 100 of which equal fourpence English money, as dead weight from Foo-chow; her crew of coolies having been paid off on arrival, a number of Chinamen were employed in unloading the tea; and the Lascar and English portion of the crew having been sent to breakfast, the Chinese in the schooner were sent about also. The captain and mate went below, leaving the second mate in the hold, to look after the tea and "cash." As he was lying on the chests, waiting to be relieved for his breakfast, he saw a Chinaman come out from amongst them, go to one of the small bags, cut it open, and commence stowing away the "cash" in his clothing; he waited

until he had taken a few handfuls, and then went out and caught him, took him on deck, and handcuffed him to a rope on the quarter-deck. When the mate and captain came up from breakfast, they sent ashore, and obtained permission to punish him, which they did in this manner:— After handing him over to the serang, he was made fast to the windlass, and the tindal got a piece of rope six feet in length, and gave him about four dozen lashes, he was then turned ashore without any wages. If the mate had had his own way, he would have coal-tarred his face and cut off his tail; that being the greatest punishment that can be inflicted. Some of the Chinese passengers said that they could not go to Canton, or any city, except Hong-Kong, without a tail, or they would lose their heads.

Before the repairs had been completed, the ship was visited by the harbour-master's boat, the crew of which brought word that the barometer ashore was falling, and there was every sign of a coming typhoon. The captain accordingly sent down top-gallant-yards, paid out more chain, and made all snug for the night. Meanwhile all the small craft belonging to the water population were making for shelter, and a dull gloom seemed

to hang over everything. It came on to blow about sunset; and after supper, the watch being set, all hands turned in. The ship being light, she began to swing and roll as the wind gained strength, and at last the chain was heard to surge over the windlass with a jerk that roughly shook the ship. Then came the order, "Pay out chain," and all ran on deck. It was raining hard, and blowing a whole gale. A small steamer alongside had her steam up, trying to keep head to wind, but she was dragging her anchors, and in the morning was about a quarter of a mile astern. It was lucky that the *Boomer* fared no worse, as two days after a ship came in dismasted and leaky, having been caught in a typhoon coming from Shanghai, so that it was only the edge of the storm that was felt at Hong-Kong: Lord Elgin arrived in the *Ava* whilst the *Boomer* was lying there, and used often to pass her in the evening on an excursion in his boat. There was about this time a funeral of some officers from Canton, and thirteen boats followed from the different ships. Sometimes there were as many as two or three deaths in a week on board the *Calcutta*. A steamer was seen coming in with two prizes, and on inquiring whence they came, it turned out

that they were two junks laden with salt, which had attempted to run the blockade, and get up to Canton, but they had been caught and brought back. A short time after, bills were posted up in the town, notifying that they would be sold by auction; but it seems they had been bought by the original owner, were sent up again, and re-taken.

Having finished the repairs, and no freight being obtainable for England, the captain was induced once more to charter the ship to convey Chinese passengers to Sydney, as they were not allowed to land in Melbourne, off Guichen Bay. So taking on board about 3000 chests of tea, some bales of mats, samshee, or Chinese rum, and other articles, the ship moved out farther towards the mouth of the harbour, to take on board stores, firewood, water, &c. The stores consisted of pork, rice, salt-fish, pickles, &c., all of Chinese salting and preserving; but, to say the truth, they smelt most abominably. Berths had been fitted up for 400 passengers, but only 380 were obtained; and a dirtier lot never set foot on a ship. One half of them had never seen the sea before, but some were old stagers, who had been to California. After getting them all on board, the *Boomer* set sail in the month of

November for Sydney. About a fortnight after leaving Hong-Kong, one of the Chinese was taken sick. When they had bled and physicked him after their own fashion, they covered him with mats, rugs, jackets, &c., on a rainy night, and left him lying on deck exposed to the elements. Even his own brother would not go near him. As might be expected, the next morning he was found dead, and as they would not bury him, the crew rolled him in his bedding, and committed him to the deep, the Chinamen throwing after him his pipe, hat, shoes, and a pack of cards. Some time after this, they all took what appeared to be a shaving mania, and groups of three or four might be seen about the decks busily employed in shaving each other's heads. One of the old stagers said that they shaved their heads, all but the precious tail, every new moon. Gambling seemed to be their chief amusement; and the decks presented a picture, on a fine day, that was rather amusing. Here there might be seen a group squatted in every imaginable posture round a man with a song book, applauding vigorously any part of the song that tickled their fancy. There a quartette of gamblers, throwing dice into a basin, and whoever turned up most spots took the stakes,

generally consisting of copper cash, glass beads, or some insignificant trifle, to them a great deal. Throwing dice is not their only way of gambling, as they play the game called in England Fox and Geese with great skill; also draughts, with this difference, that they have a board shaped like a cross, with letters on the squares.

At breakfast time one morning, a most unusual noise was heard, which caused all to run on deck to see what had occasioned it. On getting there, pieces of firewood, earthen pots, and other missiles, were seen flying about in every direction, while some of the rioters had got the ship's handspikes, and some large blocks of wood on top of the long-boat, and were throwing them down on the heads of the combatants. The riot was speedily quelled, and the ringleaders handcuffed to the mizen rigging until the afternoon. The cause of the disturbance was very simple; the Chinese passengers on board belonged to two different villages, between which some feud existed, and one of the red-tails striking one of the black—for so they were distinguished by the colour of the silk plaited into their tails—the fight became general; however, there were only a few broken heads, and the matter ended there. One of the

Chinese had a broken swelling of a cancerous kind on his neck, and what with his neglect and dirty habits, it had become a mass of corruption. The captain examined it, and making him sit down he washed and cleansed it, and then applied some caustic, and in about three weeks it was nearly well. When the rest of them saw this, every one that had a cut or bruise of any kind came to the captain, in preference to their own doctor, who did nothing but smoke and sleep the whole time he was on board. Altogether, Captain Holmes acted indeed in a manner which few men would have done had they been in the same situation. The man whom he had cured, together with a few more, raised a subscription amongst them for a flag made of flowered silk crape, to be presented to him as a token of gratitude for his kind treatment. On Christmas Day the ship made Australian land, about twenty miles to the westward of Adelaide; in a strong gale from the northward, and she stood off the coast until it abated, which it did in about two days. The next place sighted was Wilson's Promontory, a high, bold mass of rock, and as it was a fine day with light breezes, the Chinamen wanted their flag hoisted, and to gratify them the captain did so.

At the time of its hoisting they fired a salute of crackers tied on a stick, about five hundred in a string. Shortly after leaving Bass's Straits, the ship *Wave of the Sea* was spoken, the captain of which stated that several wrecks had taken place in Sydney; and as it came on to blow that night off the land, Captain Holmes did not make the attempt to get into the harbour until the wind shifted, which it did a few days after; a pilot was then taken on board, who took the ship safely through those tremendous cliffs forming Sydney Heads, and brought up off Pinchgut Battery about three in the afternoon.

By the end of the week, the passengers were all ashore, and the first thing one of the old stagers, whom the captain had cured of a dangerous sickness, did, was to buy a gold ring and present to him, to mark his sense of obligation for that act of kindness. Going on shore, they hired a large empty house at one shilling per man for a week, and the last that was seen of them was four days after, when they started with their bamboos and bundles for the diggings, followed by a crowd of young scamps, whose chief delight seemed to consist in pulling their tails. The ship being ordered to return to China, Burrows determined to leave

her, and obtain a berth in a vessel bound for London, and accordingly shipped in a clipper, and after a long and tedious voyage of one hundred and three days, during which nothing worthy of remark occurred, arrived in England after an absence of seven years.

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