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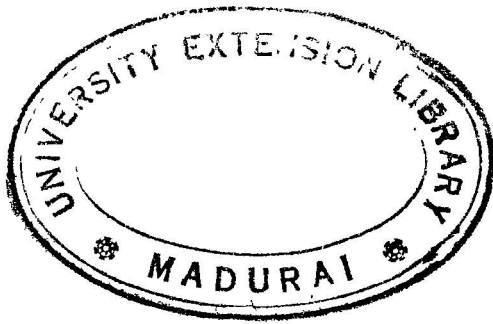
THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN COLLECTION

**THE SELECTED WORKS OF
HENRY LAWSON**

THE SELECTED WORKS OF

Henry Lawson

Edited and Introduced by
LYLE BLAIR



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For my parents

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L.B.



Courtesy of James Tyrrell, Esquire

HENRY LAWSON

BY DAVID LOW

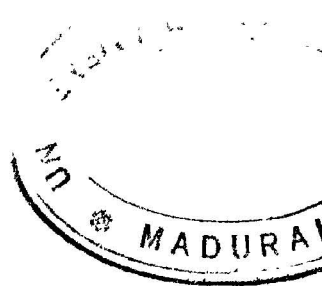


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Introduction

IF ENGLAND be the mother of Australia, then the United States may claim to be the father. In 1770, Captain James Cook, R. N., made his notable voyage to the east coast of Australia and laid claim to that territory, which he named New South Wales, in the name of the Crown. The Crown was singularly uninterested in the new land and gave all evidence of forgetting about it until the American War of Independence.

The success of the American colonists in this war meant that England was unable to ship further cargoes of convicts to the North American colonies. Soon her prisons were bursting and it became obvious that if the written law were to be upheld deportation must recommence. Consequently, the British government, with a certain amount of judicious prodding, remembered the voyage of Captain Cook and sent an expedition to colonize the east coast of Australia. Therefore, out of the American Revolutionary War and a miserable penal system was born Australia.

The founding of Australia, in 1788, took place in harshness and sorrow. Not only were the convicts and their rulers unhappy, but they found they had come to conquer a dry and lonely land. From the beginning the lot of the Australian colonist was far harder than that of the American colonist, far harder than even that of the Jamestown settlers.

As the years passed and exploration took place, the Americans had the hopes of the western plains; the Australians discovered their central core of the desert. Where the Americans

found the Mississippi River and all the wonders of the Mississippi Valley, the Australians found nothing. When the Americans bored into the earth, they found oil—the Australians, salt water.

But slowly, in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century and in the face of odds unknown to other colonial peoples, the Australians explored and settled their harsh and lonely continent.

In the middle of the nineteenth century gold was found in abundance, and with gold came a great immigration of people, not only from Europe but also from California. The Californians and other Americans brought certain American characteristics to the Australian scene. American writers became well known in Australia and the American Constitution became the dream of those Australians who hoped to unite the Australian colonies into a Federated Commonwealth.

On the other hand, not all of the idealism of the two countries sprang from the United States. Certainly Australia was at the beginning of the twentieth century to adopt, to all intents and purposes, the American Constitution with the exception of the presidential system. But in other matters politic Australia was to export her ideas of political liberty to the United States.

Looking back on the history of the two countries, this seems natural enough. America's history since the Revolutionary War has been one of imperialistic expansion, or of "manifest destiny," to use a somewhat more polite term. But Australia had no hostile Indians or competing powers around her. All the early settlers had was a miserable society made up of convicts and all too often corrupt army and

governmental officials. It was natural enough then that the early Australians should turn their thoughts to the remedying of social injustices and the protection of the everyday citizen against political abuses.

Within fifty years after the founding of the colony, trade unions were being organized. Soon thereafter the secret ballot was established in Australia and exported to England and America. And not long thereafter the air was full of talk about women's suffrage.

Whilst this social pattern was developing in Australia, America was, of course, expanding and fighting in the heroic fashion. There was nothing comparable to the Indian wars in Australia, still less the suicidal fury of the Civil War. Of course, there was the usual troublesome riffraff in the gold fields; escaped convicts (and at least one Anglican priest) became robbers with the romanticized name of "bush-rangers." And early in the 1850's there was a minor affair known as the Eureka Stockade (see Appendix A). The Eureka Stockade did result in certain political reforms, but it has bedeviled Australian writers to this day. For many is the Australian writer who has tried to give it an importance comparable to the American Civil War. And, indeed, one of the defects of many Australian writers has been that they have tried to transplant the heroes, both imagined and real, of the American West and the suffering of the Civil War into the Australian scene rather than paint their cruel country in its true perspective.

It was into this brief history of a social, rather than a racial, melting pot that Henry Lawson was born on the 17th of June, 1867. It was perhaps symbolic that he was born in a tent near the gold diggings of Grenfell, New South Wales, of

an immigrant Norwegian father and an Australian mother. From that day forward his life was to be as harsh as the country of which he wrote. His father found no success in the diggings and decided to take up farming. Again he met with failure, and the family raked out a miserably unhappy existence.

Young Lawson entered school on the 2nd of October, 1876, and from all accounts he was a shy and sensitive boy who had already begun to turn deaf. For one who was to become a sensitive writer, he was a miserable scholar, but an avaricious reader. So far as can be ascertained, he left school when he was fourteen and the only aspect of formal education which was to remain with him was his ability to read and write, although not to spell. It was about this time that he started reading the stories of Bret Harte. And, as the reader will see, they had a profound influence on his later style.

On leaving school, he started to give his father a hand. The Lawsons' family life was so miserable his parents decided to separate, and he went to Sydney with his mother. At the age of seventeen, he was slaving as a house painter. Nevertheless, he was haunted by his lack of education and desperately unhappy with his deafness. He tried to do something about his education but without success. Then, at the age of twenty he journeyed some five hundred miles to Melbourne, Victoria, to see if anything could be done at the Melbourne Hospital for his hearing. The specialists were unable to help him, and he had no option but to return to Sydney and resume his work as a painter. It was at this time that he started writing the ballads which were to earn him the hideous and inaccurate title of Australia's National Poet.

With his first effort, Lawson turned to the Sydney *Bul-*

letin. The *Bulletin*, a weekly journal, was, at this time, the natural outlet for every Australian writer and in the 1880's was the indisputable voice of Australia, both culturally and politically. It spoke up for all things Australian and was perhaps the catalyst of Australian nationalism. Everything about it was appealing to the young Lawson. In keeping with the spirit of his times, he despised the newcomer Englishman, was socialistic in his outlook and, by Victorian standards, a revolutionary.

His first published piece was "The Song of the Republic," which appeared in the *Bulletin* in October, 1887. Shortly thereafter two other ballads appeared in the *Bulletin*, together with an editorial note which read, "In publishing the subjoined verses we take pleasure in stating that the writer is . . . a young Australian who has as yet an imperfect education and is earning his living under some difficulties as a house painter, a youth whose poetic genius here speaks eloquently for itself." Thus started the legend of Henry Lawson the Poet. Mercifully, he did not devote himself entirely to his ballads and in December, 1888, the *Bulletin* published his first story, obviously autobiographical, entitled *His Father's Mate*.

Lawson was a natural wanderer. For the next four years he crisscrossed the continent, working at various jobs for what money he could pick up, writing for various newspapers, and for one period of six months carried on the life of a swagman.

In 1893 he crossed the Tasman Sea to New Zealand but soon returned to Sydney. In 1894 his mother published a slim volume of his entitled *Short Stories in Prose and Verse*. And in 1896 other collected works of his appeared—*In the Days When the World Was Wide* and *While the Billy Boils*. This

was a notable year for Lawson, for not only was he receiving some recognition from the local intelligentsia in Sydney, but he decided to marry. No sooner married than his restlessness took hold of him again, and he and his wife went back and forth across the continent and thence to New Zealand. But his stay there was short and he returned to Sydney.

On his return he became friendly with the Earl Beauchamp, the then governor of New South Wales. This was an odd friendship for the socialist Lawson, but then Beauchamp was an odd man and, although an English aristocrat, immensely popular with all levels of Australian society. Beauchamp probably was not meaning to be patronizing when he suggested to Lawson that he would achieve greater success in London than amongst his own fellow countrymen and either gave or lent Lawson sufficient money for him to leave for England in April, 1900.

It is possible that Beauchamp was influenced by the fact that, although Australia was a hundred years old by this time, no true *book* publishers had been established there; and this sorry state of affairs has continued, in part, down through the years. Even today one could count the number of native Australian book publishers, publishing in the traditional manner, on the fingers of one hand. Of course, there are reasons for this, and the reasons are not the fault of the Australians. Many brave efforts have been made to establish a book publishing business in Australia. Some, such as the well-known house of Angus and Robertson and the scholarly Press at the University of Melbourne, have been singularly successful, but few have been able to outlive the harsh competition from English publishing houses. Traditionally, English publishers have used the Australian and New Zealand

book markets as dumping grounds for their colonial editions. They do this by selling to the local distributors at a discount of fifty percent from the published price. They are able to do this by paying their authors a maximum ten percent royalty on the price received from export sales rather than the usual ten percent royalty on the published price. To make matters worse, from the Australian point of view, they have banded together and signed an agreement that no English publisher will publish a book of American origin if the Australasian rights have been sold to an Australian publisher.

In all fairness, it must be doubted if American authors realize how they have helped to castrate Australian publishing by allowing the English publishers such unlimited rights to their works. If Australian publishing is to grow, the publishers must have the rich additions to their lists which only America can contribute. In consequence of the stand taken by English publishers, Australia has not only lost the intellectual advantages of a healthy and vigorous publishing trade, such as that enjoyed by Sweden and Denmark—although she has the book buyers to support it—but she has also lost a training ground for editors who could take, develop, and comfort the young writer. Thus, many a young Australian writer or editor has been forced to emigrate, and the export of brains has become a notable Australian characteristic.

England was not for Lawson. Although he had minor successes, having three books published in England during this period and having certain discerning critics note the quality of his work as a short-story writer, the very atmosphere of London drove him to distraction. The fact that he was a

compulsive drinker who suffered all the contriteness of an alcoholic conscience did not add to his enjoyment of London and could not, of course, mitigate his homesickness.

By 1902 he was back in Sydney, and his life as a creative artist was nearly over. But home did not bring peace. He and his wife parted and he continued on his way—a lean, deaf, sensitive, lonely alcoholic. He knew more about himself when he said to David Low, “Beer makes you feel as you ought to feel without beer,” than some of his friends have ever exhibited in writing about him.

After parting from his wife he did not cease to write, but what he produced was mainly second-rate. As he grew older he softened in his political views and, in fact, during World War I produced some patriotic verse, some of it even praised the English, which hardly stands the test of time. The creative zest was gone, and his life became slipshod. Had it not been for the help of his friends, it is probable that nothing could have saved him. In 1917 these friends, led by Bertram Stevens, arranged with the Government of New South Wales to grant him a charity position in the Government’s service in upcountry New South Wales. However, still restless, he was unable to remain rooted and returned to Sydney. There the self-righteous took delight in pointing out his drunken figure, while his friends grieved at his degradation. He was not entirely penniless, for his Australian publisher and the *Bulletin* granted him many a ninety-nine year loan and he had a small pension from the Government.

Spiritually dead, it was obvious that he had not long to live, and he finally died on the 2nd of September, 1922. His death caused a national stir and the proud and the puritanical (or the wowsers, as Lawson would have called them), together with his friends and devotees, accorded him a State

Funeral. One cannot help but imagine what a magnificently humorous short story the young Lawson would have written about this event.

With Lawson dead, the adulation started. A public subscription was started, an artist commissioned, and a hideously unlikelike statue was erected in Hyde Park, Sydney, to the memory of Australia's National Poet. In the years that followed, eulogies were written about the man, mainly saccharine in content and uncritical in intent. Luckily, time has taken care of much of this. The legend of Lawson is now almost dead. Indeed, the *Oxford Book of Australian Verse* contains but one poem by Lawson. At last, uncluttered by sentiment, Lawson is being appraised as the artist he was.

There can be no doubt that Lawson was the finest short-story writer that Australia has produced, a writer of international stature. No other Australian has yet, either in the novel or the short-story form, approached him as an interpreter of both the humor and the harshness of the young country. He wrote as an Australian, using the Australian idiom (see Appendix B) without the constraint that makes so many Australian writers appear weak imitations of overseas stylists.

It is extraordinary that Australian scholars have left him neglected. There is no fitting biography of the man, and soon many of those who knew him will be dead. To be sure, there is an unpublished autobiography in the Mitchell Library in Sydney which cannot be published until these people are dead. But we have seen the birth of Australian letters, albeit a difficult birth, and Australian scholars should see to it that the story of this man, perhaps their first major artist, is preserved.

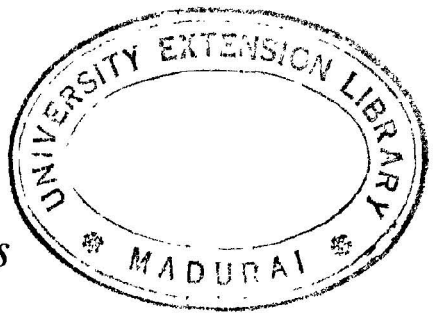
No doubt an Australian writer will appear who will preserve the Australia of the twentieth century as Lawson has preserved the Australia of the nineteenth. When that man comes, he will, like Lawson, have fire in his belly and compassion in his heart.

L. B.

East Lansing

September, 1957

**THE SELECTED WORKS OF
HENRY LAWSON**



The Roaring Days

The night too quickly passes
And we are growing old,
So let us fill our glasses
And toast the Days of Gold;
When finds of wondrous treasure
Set all the South ablaze,
And you and I were faithful
 mates
All through the roaring days!

Then stately ships came sailing
From every harbour's mouth,
And sought the Land of Promise
That beaconed in the South;
Then southward streamed their
 steamers
And swelled their canvas full
To speed the wildest dreamers
E'er borne in vessel's hull.

Their shining Eldorado
Beneath the southern skies
Was day and night for ever
Before their eager eyes
The brooding bush, awakened,
Was stirred in wild unrest,
And all the year a human stream
Went pouring to the West.

The rough bush roads re-echoed
The bar-room's noisy din,
When troops of stalwart
 horsemen
Dismounted at the inn.
And oft the hearty greetings
And hearty clasp of hands
Would tell of sudden meetings
Of friends from other lands.

And when the cheery camp-fire
Explored the bush with gleams,
The camping-grounds were
 crowded
With caravans of teams;
Then home the jests were driven,
And good old songs were sung,
And choruses were given
The strength of heart and lung.

Oft when the camps were
 dreaming,
And fires began to pale,
Through rugged ranges gleaming
Swept on the Royal Mail.
Behind six foaming horses,
And lit by flashing lamps,
Old Cobb and Co., in' royal
 state,
Went dashing past the camps.

Oh, who would paint a
 gold-field,
And paint the picture right,
As old Adventure saw it
In early morning's light?
The yellow mounds of mullock
With spots of red and white,
The scattered quartz that
 glistened
Like diamonds in light;

The azure line of ridges,
The bush of darkest green,
The little homes of calico
That dotted all the scene.
The flat straw hats, with ribands
That old engravings show—
The dress that still reminds us
Of sailors, long ago.

I hear the fall of timber
From distant flats and fells,
The pealing of the anvils
As clear as little bells,
The rattle of the cradle,
The clack of windlass-boles,
The flutter of the crimson flags
Above the golden holes.

Ah, then their hearts were
bolder,
And if Dame Fortune frowned,
Their swags they'd lightly
shoulder
And tramp to other ground.
Oh, they were lion-hearted
Who gave our country birth!
Stout sons, of stoutest fathers
born,
From all the lands on earth!

Those golden days are vanished,
And altered is the scene;
The diggings are deserted,
The camping-grounds are green;
The flaunting flag of progress
Is in the West unfurled,
The mighty Bush with iron rails
Is tethered to the world.

The Drover's Wife

THE two-roomed house is built of round timber, slabs, and stringy-bark, and floored with split slabs. A big bark kitchen standing at one end is larger than the house itself, veranda included.

Bush all round—bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. No ranges in the distance. The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple-trees. No undergrowth. Nothing to relieve the eye save the darker green of a few she-oaks which are sighing above the narrow, almost waterless creek. Nineteen miles to the nearest sign of civilization—a shanty on the main road.

The drover, an ex-squatter, is away with sheep. His wife and children are left here alone.

Four ragged, dried-up-looking children are playing about the house. Suddenly one of them yells: "Snake! Mother, here's a snake!"

The gaunt, sun-browned bushwoman dashes from the kitchen, snatches her baby from the ground, holds it on her left hip, and reaches for a stick.

"Where is it?"

"Here! gone into the wood-heap!" yells the eldest boy—a sharp-faced urchin of eleven. "Stop there, mother! I'll have him. Stand back! I'll have the beggar!"

"Tommy, come here, or you'll be bit. Come here at once when I tell you, you little wretch!"

The youngster comes reluctantly, carrying a stick bigger than himself. Then he yells, triumphantly:

“There it goes—under the house!” and darts away with club uplifted. At the same time the big, black, yellow-eyed dog-of-all-breeds, who has shown the wildest interest in the proceedings, breaks his chain and rushes after that snake. He is a moment late, however, and his nose reaches the crack in the slabs just as the end of its tail disappears. Almost at the same moment the boy’s club comes down and skins the aforesaid nose. Alligator takes small notice of this, and proceeds to undermine the building; but he is subdued after a struggle and chained up. They cannot afford to lose him.

The drover’s wife makes the children stand together near the doghouse while she watches for the snake. She gets two small dishes of milk and sets them down near the wall to tempt it to come out; but an hour goes by and it does not show itself.

It is near sunset, and a thunderstorm is coming. The children must be brought inside. She will not take them into the house, for she knows the snake is there, and may at any moment come up through a crack in the rough slab floor; so she carries several armfuls of firewood into the kitchen, and then takes the children there. The kitchen has no floor—or, rather, an earthen one—called a “ground floor” in this part of the bush. There is a large, roughly-made table in the centre of the place. She brings the children in, and makes them get on this table. They are two boys and two girls—mere babies. She gives them some supper, and then, before it gets dark, she goes into the house, and snatches up some pillows and bedclothes—expecting to see or lay her hand on the snake any minute. She makes a bed on the kitchen table for the children, and sits down beside it to watch all night.

She has an eye on the corner, and a green sapling club laid in readiness on the dresser by her side; also her sewing basket

and a copy of the *Young Ladies' Journal*. She has brought the dog into the room.

Tommy turns in, under protest, but says he'll lie awake all night and smash that blinded snake.

His mother asks him how many times she has told him not to swear.

He has his club with him under the bedclothes, and Jacky protests:

"Mummy! Tommy's skinnin' me alive wif his club. Make him take it out."

Tommy: "Shet up, you little——! D'yer want to be bit with the snake?"

Jacky shuts up.

"If yer bit," says Tommy, after a pause, "you'll swell up, an' smell, an' turn red an' green an' blue all over till yer bust. Won't he, mother?"

"Now then, don't frighten the child. Go to sleep," she says.

The two younger children go to sleep, and now and then Jacky complains of being "skeezed." More room is made for him. Presently Tommy says: "Mother! listen to them (adjective) little possums. I'd like to screw their blanky necks."

And Jacky protests drowsily.

"But they don't hurt us, the little blanks!"

Mother: "There, I told you you'd teach Jacky to swear." But the remark makes her smile. Jacky goes to sleep.

Presently Tommy asks:

"Mother! Do you think they'll ever extricate the (adjective) kangaroo?"

"Lord! How am I to know, child? Go to sleep."

"Will you wake me if the snake comes out?"

"Yes. Go to sleep."

Near midnight. The children are all asleep and she sits

there still, sewing and reading by turns. From time to time she glances round the floor and wall-plate, and, whenever she hears a noise, she reaches for the stick. The thunderstorm comes on, and the wind, rushing through the cracks in the slab wall, threatens to blow out her candle. She places it on a sheltered part of the dresser and fixes up a newspaper to protect it. At every flash of lightning, the cracks between the slabs gleam like polished silver. The thunder rolls, and the rain comes down in torrents.

Alligator lies at full length on the floor, with his eyes turned towards the partition. She knows by this that the snake is there. There are large cracks in the wall opening under the floor of the dwelling-house.

She is not a coward, but recent events have shaken her nerves. A little son of her brother-in-law was lately bitten by a snake, and died. Besides, she has not heard from her husband for six months, and is anxious about him.

He was a drover, and started squatting here when they were married. The drought of 18— ruined him. He had to sacrifice the remnant of his flock and go droving again. He intends to move his family into the nearest town when he comes back, and, in the meantime, his brother, who keeps a shanty on the main road, comes over about once a month with provisions. The wife has still a couple of cows, one horse, and a few sheep. The brother-in-law kills one of the latter occasionally, gives her what she needs of it, and takes the rest in return for other provisions.

She is used to being left alone. She once lived like this for eighteen months. As a girl she built the usual castles in the air; but all her girlish hopes and aspirations have long been dead. She finds all the excitement and recreation she needs in the *Young Ladies' Journal*, and Heaven help her! takes a pleasure in the fashion-plates.

Her husband is an Australian, and so is she. He is careless, but a good enough husband. If he had the means he would take her to the city and keep her there like a princess. They are used to being apart, or at least she is. "No use fretting," she says. He may forget sometimes that he is married; but if he has a good cheque when he comes back he will give most of it to her. When he had money he took her to the city several times—hired a railway sleeping compartment, and put up at the best hotels. He also bought her a buggy, but they had to sacrifice that along with the rest.

The last two children were born in the bush—one while her husband was bringing a drunken doctor, by force, to attend to her. She was alone on this occasion, and very weak. She had been ill with a fever. She prayed to God to send her assistance. God sent Black Mary—the "whitest" gin in all the land. Or, at least, God sent King Jimmy first, and he sent Black Mary. He put his black face round the door post, took in the situation at a glance, and said cheerfully: "All right, missus—I bring my old woman, she down alonga creek."

One of the children died while she was here alone. She rode nineteen miles for assistance, carrying the dead child.

It must be near one or two o'clock. The fire is burning low. Alligator lies with his head resting on his paws, and watches the wall. He is not a very beautiful dog, and the light shows numerous old wounds where the hair will not grow. He is afraid of nothing on the face of the earth or under it. He will tackle a bullock as readily as he will tackle a flea. He hates all other dogs—except kangaroo-dogs—and has a marked dislike to friends or relations of the family. They seldom call, however. He sometimes makes friends with strangers. He hates snakes and has killed many, but he will be bitten some day and die; most snake-dogs end that way.

Now and then the bushwoman lays down her work and watches, and listens, and thinks. She thinks of things in her own life, for there is little else to think about.

The rain will make the grass grow, and this reminds her how she fought a bush-fire once while her husband was away. The grass was long, and very dry, and the fire threatened to burn her out. She put on an old pair of her husband's trousers and beat out the flames with a green bough, till great drops of sooty perspiration stood out on her forehead and ran in streaks down her blackened arms. The sight of his mother in trousers greatly amused Tommy, who worked like a little hero by her side, but the terrified baby howled lustily for his "mummy." The fire would have mastered her but for four excited bushmen who arrived in the nick of time. It was a mixed-up affair all round; when she went to take up the baby he screamed and struggled convulsively, thinking it was a "blackman"; and Alligator, trusting more to the child's sense than his own instinct, charged furiously, and (being old and slightly deaf) did not in his excitement at first recognize his mistress's voice, but continued to hang on to the moleskins until choked off by Tommy with a saddle-strap. The dog's sorrow for his blunder, and his anxiety to let it be known that it was all a mistake, was as evident as his ragged tail and a twelve-inch grin could make it. It was a glorious time for the boys; a day to look back to, and talk about, and laugh over for many years.

She thinks how she fought a flood during her husband's absence. She stood for hours in the drenching downpour, and dug an overflow gutter to save the dam across the creek. But she could not save it. There are things that a bushwoman cannot do. Next morning the dam was broken, and her heart was nearly broken too, for she thought how her husband

would feel when he came home and saw the result of years of labour swept away. She cried then.

She also fought the pleuro-pneumonia—dosed and bled the few remaining cattle, and wept again when her two best cows died.

Again, she fought a mad bullock that besieged the house for a day. She made bullets and fired at him through cracks in the slabs with an old shot-gun. He was dead in the morning. She skinned him and got seventeen-and-sixpence for the hide.

She also fights the crows and eagles that have designs on her chickens. Her plan of campaign is very original. The children cry "Crows, mother!" and she rushes out and aims a broomstick at the birds as though it were a gun, and says "Bung!" The crows leave in a hurry; they are cunning, but a woman's cunning is greater.

Occasionally a bushman in the horrors, or a villainous-looking sundowner, comes and nearly scares the life out of her. She generally tells the suspicious-looking stranger that her husband and two sons are at work below the dam, or over at the yard, for he always cunningly inquires for the boss.

Only last week a gallows-faced swagman—having satisfied himself that there were no men on the place—threw his swag down on the veranda, and demanded tucker. She gave him something to eat; then he expressed his intention of staying for the night. It was sundown then. She got a batten from the sofa, loosened the dog, and confronted the stranger, holding the batten in one hand and the dog's collar with the other. "Now you go!" she said. He looked at her and at the dog, said "All right, mum," in a cringing tone, and left. She was a determined-looking woman, and Alligator's yellow eyes glared unpleasantly—besides, the dog's chawing-up apparatus greatly resembled that of the reptile he was named after.

She has few pleasures to think of as she sits here alone by the fire, on guard against a snake. All days are much the same to her; but on Sunday afternoon she dresses herself, tidies the children, smartens up baby, and goes for a lonely walk along the bush-track, pushing an old perambulator in front of her. She does this every Sunday. She takes as much care to make herself and the children look smart as she would if she were going to do the block in the city. There is nothing to see, however, and not a soul to meet. You might walk for twenty miles along this track without being able to fix a point in your mind, unless you are a bushman. This is because of the everlasting, maddening sameness of the stunted trees—that monotony which makes a man long to break away and travel as far as trains can go, and sail as far as ship can sail—and farther.

But this bushwoman is used to the loneliness of it. As a girl-wife she hated it, but now she would feel strange away from it.

She is glad when her husband returns, but she does not gush or make a fuss about it. She gets him something good to eat, and tidies up the children.

She seems contented with her lot. She loves her children, but has no time to show it. She seems harsh to them. Her surroundings are not favourable to the development of the “womanly” or sentimental side of nature.

It must be near morning now; but the clock is in the dwelling-house. Her candle is nearly done; she forgot that she was out of candles. Some more wood must be got to keep the fire up, and so she shuts the dog inside and hurries round to the wood-heap. The rain has cleared off. She seizes a stick, pulls it out, and—crash! the whole pile collapses.

Yesterday she bargained with a stray blackfellow to bring

her some wood, and while he was at work she went in search of a missing cow. She was absent an hour or so, and the native black made good use of his time. On her return she was so astonished to see a good heap of wood by the chimney, that she gave him an extra fig of tobacco, and praised him for not being lazy. He thanked her, and left with head erect and chest well out. He was the last of his tribe and a King; but he had built that wood-heap hollow.

She is hurt now, and tears spring to her eyes as she sits down again by the table. She takes up a handkerchief to wipe the tears away, but pokes her eyes with her bare fingers instead. The handkerchief is full of holes, and she finds that she has put her thumb through one, and her forefinger through another.

This makes her laugh, to the surprise of the dog. She has a keen, very keen, sense of the ridiculous; and some time or other she will amuse bushmen with the story.

She had been amused before like that. One day she sat down "to have a good cry," as she said—and the old cat rubbed against her dress and "cried too." Then she had to laugh.

It must be near daylight now. The room is very close and hot because of the fire. Alligator still watches the wall from time to time. Suddenly he becomes greatly interested; he draws himself a few inches nearer the partition, and a thrill runs through his body. The hair on the back of his neck begins to bristle, and the battle-light is in his yellow eyes. She knows what this means, and lays her hand on the stick. The lower end of one of the partition slabs has a large crack on both sides. An evil pair of small, bright bead-like eyes glisten at one of these holes. The snake—a black one—comes slowly out, about a foot, and moves its head up and down.

The dog lies still, and the woman sits as one fascinated. The snake comes out a foot farther. She lifts her stick, and the reptile, as though suddenly aware of danger, sticks his head in through the crack on the other side of the slab, and hurries to get his tail round after him. Alligator springs, and his jaws come together with a snap. He misses, for his nose is large, and the snake's body close down in the angle formed by the slabs and the floor. He snaps again as the tail comes round. He has the snake now, and tugs it out eighteen inches. Thud, thud comes the woman's club on the ground. Alligator pulls again. Thud, thud. Alligator gives another pull and he has the snake out—a black brute, five feet long. The head rises to dart about, but the dog has the enemy close to the neck. He is a big, heavy dog, but quick as a terrier. He shakes the snake as though he felt the original curse in common with mankind. The eldest boy wakes up, seizes his stick, and tries to get out of bed, but his mother forces him back with a grip of iron. Thud, thud—the snake's back is broken in several places. Thud, thud—its head is crushed, and Alligator's nose skinned again.

She lifts the mangled reptile on the point of her stick, carries it to the fire, and throws it in; then piles on the wood and watches the snake burn. The boy and dog watch, too. She lays her hand on the dog's head, and all the fierce, angry light dies out of his yellow eyes. The younger children are quieted, and presently go to sleep. The dirty-legged boy stands for a moment in his shirt, watching the fire. Presently he looks up at her, sees the tears in her eyes, and, throwing his arms round her neck exclaims:

“Mother, I won't never go drovin'; blarst me if I do!”

And she hugs him to her worn-out breast and kisses him; and they sit thus together while the sickly daylight breaks over the bush.

A Double Buggy at Lahep's Creek

I

SPUDS, AND A WOMAN'S OBSTINACY

EVER since we were married it had been Mary's great ambition to have a buggy. The house or furniture didn't matter so much—out there in the bush where we were—but, where there were no railways or coaches, and the roads were long and mostly hot and dusty, a buggy was the great thing. I had a few pounds when we were married, and was going to get one then; but new buggies went high, and another party got hold of a second-hand one that I'd had my eye on, so Mary thought it over and at last she said, "Never mind the buggy, Joe; get a sewing-machine and I'll be satisfied. I'll want the machine more than the buggy, for a while. Wait till we're better off."

After that, whenever I took a contract—to put up a fence or wool-shed, or sink a dam or something—Mary would say, "You ought to knock a buggy out of this job, Joe"; but something always turned up—bad weather or sickness. Once I cut my foot with the adze and was laid up; and another time, a dam I was making was washed away by a flood before I finished it. Then Mary would say, "Ah, well—never mind, Joe. Wait till we are better off." But she felt it hard the time I built a wool-shed and didn't get paid for it, for we'd as good as settled about another second-hand buggy then.

I always had a fancy for carpentering, and was handy with tools. I made a spring-cart—body and wheels—in spare time, out of colonial hardwood, and got Little the blacksmith to

do the ironwork: I painted the cart myself. It wasn't much lighter than one of the tip-drays I had, but it *was* a spring-cart, and Mary pretended to be satisfied with it: anyway, I didn't hear any more of the buggy for a while.

I sold that cart for fourteen pounds, to a Chinese gardener who wanted a strong cart to carry his vegetables round through the bush. It was just before our first youngster came: I told Mary that I wanted the money in case of extra expense—and she didn't fret much at losing the cart. But the fact was that I was going to make another try for a buggy, as a present for Mary when the child was born. I thought of getting the turnout while she was laid up, keeping it dark from her till she was on her feet again, and then showing her the buggy standing in the shed. But she had a bad time, and I had to have the doctor regularly, and get a proper nurse, and a lot of things extra; so the buggy idea was knocked on the head. I was set on it, too; I'd thought of how, when Mary was up and getting strong, I'd say one morning, "Go round and have a look in the shed, Mary: I've got a few fowls for you," or something like that—and follow her round to watch her eyes when she saw the buggy. I never told Mary about that—it wouldn't have done any good.

Later on I got some good timber—mostly scraps that were given to me—and made a light body for a spring-cart. Galletly, the coach-builder at Cudgegong, had got a dozen pairs of American hickory wheels up from Sydney, for light spring-carts, and he let me have a pair for cost price and carriage. I got him to iron the cart, and he put it through the paint-shop for nothing. He sent it out, too, at the tail of Tom Tarrant's big van—to increase the surprise. We were swells then for a while; I heard no more of a buggy until after we'd been settled at Lahey's Creek for a couple of years.

I told you how I went into the carrying line, and took up a selection at Lahey's Creek—for a run for the horses and to grow a bit of feed—and shifted Mary and little Jim out there from Gulgong, with Mary's young scamp of a brother James to keep them company while I was on the road. The first year I did well enough carrying, but I never cared for it—it was too slow; and, besides, I was always anxious when I was away from home. The game was right enough for a single man—or a married one whose wife had got the nagging habit (as many bushwomen have—God help 'em), and who wanted peace and quietness sometimes. Besides, other small carriers started (seeing me getting on); Tom Tarrant, the coach-builder at Cudgegong, had another heavy spring-van built, and put it on the road, and he took a lot of the light stuff.

The second year I made a rise—out of “spuds,” of all the things in the world. It was Mary's idea. Down at the lower end of our selection—Mary called it “the run”—was a shallow watercourse called Snake's Creek, dry most of the year, except for a muddy waterhole or two; and, just above the junction, where it ran into Lahey's Creek, was a low piece of good black-soil flat, on our side—about three acres. The flat was fairly clear when I came to the selection—save for a few logs that had been washed up there in some big “old man” flood, way back in blackfellows' times: and one day when I had a spell at home, I got the horses and trace-chains and dragged the logs together—those that wouldn't split for fencing timber—and burnt them off. I had a notion to get the flat ploughed and make a lucerne-paddock of it. There was a good waterhole, under a clump of she-oak in the bend, and Mary used to take her stools and tubs and boiler down there in the spring-cart in hot weather, and wash the clothes under the shade of the trees—it was cooler, and saved carrying water

to the house. And one evening after she'd done the washing she said to me:

"Look here, Joe; the farmers out here never seem to get a new idea: they don't seem to me ever to try and find out beforehand what the market is going to be like—they just go on farming the same old way, and putting in the same old crops year after year. They sow wheat, and, if it comes on anything like the thing, they reap and thresh it; if it doesn't they mow it for hay—and some of 'em don't have the brains to do that in time. Now I was looking at that bit of flat you cleared, and it struck me that it wouldn't be a half-bad idea to get a bag of seed potatoes, and have the land ploughed—old Corny George would do it cheap—and get them put in at once. Potatoes have been dear all round for the last couple of years."

I told her she was talking nonsense, that the ground was no good for potatoes, and the whole district was too dry. "Everybody I know has tried it, one time or another, and made nothing of it," I said.

"All the more reason why you should try it, Joe," said Mary. "Just try one crop. It might rain for weeks, and then you'll be sorry you didn't take my advice."

"But I tell you the ground is not potato-ground," I said.

"How do you know? You haven't sown any there yet."

"But I've turned up the surface and looked at it. It's not rich enough, and too dry, I tell you. You need swampy, boggy ground for potatoes. Do you think I don't know land when I see it?"

"But you haven't tried to grow potatoes there yet, Joe. How do you know——"

I didn't listen to any more. Mary was obstinate when she got an idea into her head. It was no use arguing with her. All

the time I'd be talking she'd just knit her forehead and go on thinking straight ahead, on the track she'd started—just as if I wasn't there—and it used to make me mad. She'd keep driving at me till I took her advice or lost my temper—I did both at the same time mostly.

I took my pipe and went out to smoke and cool down.

A couple of days after the potato breeze, I started with the team down to Cudgegong for a load of fencing-wire I had to bring out; and after I'd kissed Mary good-bye, she said:

“Look here, Joe, if you bring out a bag of seed potatoes, James and I will slice them, and old Corny George down the creek would bring his plough up in the dray, and plough the ground for very little. We could put the potatoes in ourselves if the ground were only ploughed.”

I thought she'd forgotten all about it. There was no time to argue—I'd be sure to lose my temper, and then I'd either have to waste an hour comforting Mary, or go off in a “huff,” as the women call it, and be miserable for the trip. So I said I'd see about it. She gave me another hug and a kiss. “Don't forget, Joe,” she said as I started. “Think it over on the road.” I reckon she had the best of it that time.

About five miles along, just as I turned into the main road, I heard someone galloping after me, and I saw young James on his hack. I got a start, for I thought that something had gone wrong at home. I remember the first day I left Mary on the creek, for the first five or six miles I was half a dozen times on the point of turning back—only I thought she'd laugh at me.

“What is it, James?” I shouted, before he came up—but I saw he was grinning.

“Mary says to tell you not to forget to bring a hoe out with you.”

"You clear off home!" I said, "or I'll lay the whip about your young hide; and don't come riding after me again as if the run was on fire."

"Well, you needn't get shirty with me!" he said. "*I* don't want to have anything to do with a hoe." And he rode off.

I *did* get thinking about those potatoes, though I hadn't meant to. I knew of an independent man in that district who'd made his money out of a crop of potatoes; but that was away back in the roaring fifties—fifty-four—when spuds went up to twenty-eight shillings a hundredweight (in Sydney), on account of the gold rush. We might get good rain now, and, anyway, it wouldn't cost much to put the potatoes in. If they came on well, it would be a few pounds in my pocket; if the crop was a failure, I'd have a better show with Mary next time she was struck by an idea outside house-keeping, and have something to grumble about when I felt grumpy.

I got a couple of bags of potatoes—we could use those that were left over; and I got a small iron plough and harrow that Little the blacksmith had lying in his yard and let me have cheap—only about a pound more than I told Mary I gave for them. When I took advice I generally made the mistake of taking more than was offered, or adding notions of my own. It was vanity, I suppose. If the crop came on well I could claim the plough-and-harrow part of the idea, anyway. (It didn't strike me that if the crop failed Mary would have the plough and harrow against me, for old Corny would plough the ground for ten or fifteen shillings.) Anyway, I'd want a plough and harrow later on, and I might as well get it now; it would give James something to do.

I came out by the western road, by Guntawang, and up the creek home; and the first thing I saw was old Corny George

ploughing the flat. And Mary was down on the bank superintending. She'd got James with the trace-chains and the spare horses, and had made him clear off every stick and bush where another furrow might be squeezed in. Old Corny looked pretty grumpy on it—he'd broken all his ploughshares but one, in the roots; and James didn't look much brighter. Mary had an old felt hat and a new pair of 'lastic-side boots of mine on, and the boots were covered with clay, for she'd been down hustling James to get a rotten old stump out of the way by the time old Corny came round with his next furrow.

"I thought I'd make the boots easy for you, Joe," said Mary.

"It's all right, Mary," I said, "I'm not going to growl." Those boots were a bone of contention between us; but she generally got them off before I got home.

Her face fell when she saw the plough and harrow in the wagon, but I said that would be all right—we'd want a plough anyway.

"I thought you wanted old Corny to plough the ground," she said.

"I never said so."

"But when I sent Jim after you about the hoe to put the spuds in, you didn't say you would bring it," she said.

I had a few days at home, and entered into the spirit of the thing. When Corny was done, James and I cross-ploughed the land, and got a stump or two, a big log, and some scrub out of the way at the upper end and added nearly an acre, and ploughed that. James was all right at most bushwork: he'd bullock so long as the novelty lasted; he liked ploughing or fencing, or any graft he could make a show at. He didn't care for grubbing out stumps, or splitting posts and rails. We

sliced the potatoes of an evening—and there was trouble between Mary and James over cutting through the “eyes.” There was no time for the hoe—and besides it wasn’t a novelty to James—so I just ran furrows and they dropped the spuds in behind me, and I turned another furrow over them, and ran the harrow over the ground. I think I hilled those spuds, too, with furrows—or a crop of Indian corn I put in later on.

It rained heavens-hard for over a week: we had regular showers all through, and it was the finest crop of potatoes ever seen in the district. I believe at first Mary used to slip down at daybreak to see if the potatoes were up; and she’d write to me about them, on the road. I forget how many bags I got but the few who had grown potatoes in the district sent theirs to Sydney, and spuds went up to twelve and fifteen shillings a hundredweight in that district. I made a few quid out of mine—and saved carriage too, for I could take them out on the wagon. Then Mary began to hear (through James) of a buggy that someone had for sale cheap, or a dogcart that somebody else wanted to get rid of—and let me know about it, in an off-hand way.

II

JOE WILSON’S LUCK

There was good grass on the selection all the year. I’d picked up a small lot—about twenty head—of half-starved steers for next to nothing, and turned them on the run; they came on wonderfully, and my brother-in-law (Mary’s sister’s husband), who was running a butchery at Gulgong, gave me a good price for them. His carts ran out twenty or thirty miles, to little bits of gold rushes that were going on at th’ Home Rule, Happy Valley, Guntawang, Tallawang, and

Cooyal, and those places round there, and he was doing well.

Mary had heard of a light American wagonette, when the steers went—a tray-body arrangement, and she thought she'd do with that. "It would be better than the buggy, Joe," she said. "There'd be more room for the children, and besides, I could take butter and eggs to Gulgong, or Cobborah, when we get a few more cows." Then James heard of a small flock of sheep that a selector—who was about starved off his selection out Talbragar way—wanted to get rid of. James reckoned he could get them for less than half a crown a head. We'd had a heavy shower of rain, that came over the ranges and didn't seem to go beyond our boundaries. Mary said, "It's a pity to see all that grass going to waste, Joe. Better get those sheep and try your luck with them. Leave some money with me, and I'll send James over for them. Never mind about the buggy—we'll get that when we're on our feet."

So James rode across to Talbragar and drove a hard bargain with that unfortunate selector, and brought the sheep home. There were about two hundred, wethers and ewes, and they were young and looked a good breed too, but so poor they could scarcely travel; they soon picked up, though. The drought was blazing all round and out back, and I think that my corner of the ridges was the only place where there was any grass to speak of. We had another shower or two, and the grass held out. Chaps began to talk of "Joe Wilson's luck."

I would have liked to shear those sheep; but I hadn't time to get a shed or anything ready—along towards Christmas there was a bit of a boom in the carrying line. Wethers in wool were going as high as thirteen to fifteen shillings at the Homebush yards at Sydney, so I arranged to truck the sheep

down from the river by rail, with another small lot that was going, and I started James off with them. He took the west road, and down Guntawang way a big farmer who saw James with the sheep (and who was speculating, or adding to his stock, or took a fancy to the wool) offered James as much for them as he reckoned I'd get in Sydney, after paying the carriage and the agents and the auctioneer. James put the sheep in a paddock and rode back to me. He was all there where riding was concerned. I told him to let the sheep go. James made a Greener shot-gun, and got his saddle done up, out of that job.

I took up a couple more forty-acre blocks—one in James's name, to encourage him with the fencing. There was a good slice of land in an angle between the range and the creek, farther down, which everybody thought belonged to Wall, the squatter, but Mary got an idea, and went to the local land office, and found out that it was unoccupied Crown land, and so I took it up on pastoral lease, and got a few more sheep—I'd saved some of the best-looking ewes from the last lot.

One evening—I was going down next day for a load of fencing-wire for myself—Mary said:

“Joe! do you know that the Matthews have got a new double buggy?”

The Matthews were a big family of cockatoos, along up the main road, and I didn't think much of them. The sons were all “bad-eggs,” though the old woman and girls were right enough.

“Well, what of that?” I said. “They're up to their neck in debt, and camping like blackfellows in a big bark humpy. They do well to go flashing round in a double buggy.”

“But that isn't what I was going to say,” says Mary. “They want to sell their old single buggy, James says. I'm sure you

could get it for six or seven pounds; and you could have it done up."

"I wish James to the devil!" I said. "Can't he find anything better to do than ride round after cock-and-bull yarns about buggies?"

"Well," said Mary, "it was James who got the steers and the sheep."

Well, one word led to another, and we said things we didn't mean—but couldn't forget in a hurry. I remember I said something about Mary always dragging me back just when I was getting my head above water and struggling to make a home for her and the children; and that hurt her, and she spoke of the "homes" she'd had since she was married. And that cut me deep.

It was about the worst quarrel we had. When she began to cry I got my hat and went out and walked up and down by the creek. I hated anything that looked like injustice—I was so sensitive about it that it made me unjust sometimes. I tried to think I was right, but I couldn't—it wouldn't have made me feel any better if I could have thought so. I got thinking of Mary's first year on the selection and the life she'd had since we were married.

When I went in she'd cried herself to sleep. I bent over and, "Mary," I whispered.

She seemed to wake up.

"Joe—Joe!" she said.

"What is it, Mary?" I said.

"I'm pretty sure that old Spot's calf isn't in the pen. Make James go at once!"

Old Spot's last calf was two years old now; so Mary was talking in her sleep, and dreaming she was back in her first year.

We both laughed when I told her about it afterwards; but I didn't feel like laughing just then.

Later on in the night she called out in her sleep:

"Joe—Joe! Put that buggy in the shed, or the sun will blister the varnish!"

I wish I could say that that was the last time I ever spoke unkindly to Mary.

Next morning I got up early and fried the bacon and made the tea, and took Mary's breakfast in to her—like I used to do, sometimes, when we were first married. She didn't say anything—just pulled my head down and kissed me.

When I was ready to start, Mary said:

"You'd better take the spring-cart in behind the dray, and get the tyres cut and set. They're ready to drop off, and James has been wedging them up till he's tired of it. The last time I was out with the children I had to knock one of them back with a stone: there'll be an accident yet."

So I lashed the shafts of the cart under the tail of the wagon, and mean and ridiculous enough the cart looked, going along that way. It suggested a man stooping along handcuffed, with his arms held out and down in front of him.

It was dull weather, and the scrubs looked extra dreary and endless—and I got thinking of old things. Everything was going all right with me, but that didn't keep me from brooding sometimes—trying to hatch out stones, like an old hen we had at home. I think, taking it all round, I used to be happier when I was mostly hard up—and more generous. When I had ten pounds I was more likely to listen to a chap who said, "Lend me a pound note, Joe," than when I had fifty; *then* I fought shy of careless chaps—and lost mates that I wanted afterwards—and got the name of being mean. When I got a

good cheque I'd be as miserable as a miser over the first ten pounds I spent; but when I got down to the last I'd buy things for the house. And now that I was getting on, I hated to spend a pound on anything. But then, the farther I got away from poverty the greater the fear I had of it—and, besides, there was always before us all the thought of the terrible drought, with blazing runs as bare and dusty as the road, and dead stock rotting every yard, all along the barren creeks.

I had a long yarn with Mary's sister and her husband that night in Gulgong, and it brightened me up. I had a fancy that sort of a brother-in-law made a better mate than a nearer one; Tom Tarrant had one, and he said it was sympathy. But while we were yarning I couldn't help thinking of Mary, out there in the hut on the creek, with no one to talk to but the children, or James, who was sulky at home, or Black Mary or Black Jimmy (our black boy's father and mother), who weren't over-sentimental. Or, maybe, a selector's wife (the nearest was five miles away) who could talk only of two or three things—"lambin' " and "shearin' " and "cookin' for the men," and what she said to her old man, and what he said to her—and her own ailments over and over again.

It's a wonder it didn't drive Mary mad!—I know I could never listen to that woman more than an hour. Mary's sister said:

"Now if Mary had a comfortable buggy, she could drive in with the children oftener. Then she wouldn't feel the loneliness so much."

I said "Good night" then and turned in. There was no getting away from that buggy. Whenever Mary's sister started hinting about a buggy, I reckoned it was a put-up job between them.

III

THE GHOST OF MARY'S SACRIFICE

When I got to Cudgegong I stopped at Galletly's coach-shop to leave the cart. The Galletlys were good fellows: there were two brothers—one was a saddler and harness-maker. Big brown-bearded men—the biggest in the district, 'twas said.

Their old man had died lately and left them some money; they had men, and only worked in their shops when they felt inclined, or there was a special work to do; they were both first-class tradesmen. I went into the painter's shop to have a look at a double buggy that Galletly had built for a man who couldn't pay cash for it when it was finished—and Galletly wouldn't trust him.

There it stood, behind a calico screen that the coach-painters used to keep out the dust when they were varnishing. It was a first-class piece of work—pole, shafts, cushions, whip, lamps, and all complete. If you only wanted to drive one horse you could take out the pole and put in the shafts, and there you were. There was a tilt over the front seat; if you only wanted the buggy to carry two, you could fold down the back seat, and there you had a handsome, roomy, single buggy. It would go near fifty pounds.

While I was looking at it, Bill Galletly came in and slapped me on the back.

"Now, there's a chance for you, Joel," he said. "I saw you rubbing your head round that buggy the last time you were in. You wouldn't get a better one in the colonies, and you won't see another like it in the district again in a hurry—for it doesn't pay to build 'em. Now you're a full-blown squatter, and it's time you took little Mary for a fly round in her own buggy now and then, instead of having her stuck out there

in the scrub, or jolting through the dust in a cart like some old Mother Flourbag."

He called her "Little Mary" because the Galletly family had known her when she was a girl.

I rubbed my head and looked at the buggy again. It was a great temptation.

"Look here, Joe," said Bill Galletly in a quieter tone. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll let *you* have the buggy. You can take it out and send along a bit of a cheque when you feel you can manage it, and the rest later on—a year will do, or even two years. You've had a hard pull, and I'm not likely to be hard up for money in a hurry."

They were good fellows, the Galletlys, but they knew their men. I happened to know that Bill Galletly wouldn't let the man he built the buggy for take it out of the shop without cash down, though he was a big-bug round there. But that didn't make it easier for me.

Just then Robert Galletly came into the shop. He was rather quieter than his brother, but the two were very much alike.

"Look here, Bob," said Bill; "here's a chance for you to get rid of your harness. Joe Wilson's going to take that buggy off my hands."

Bob Galletly put his foot up on a saw-stool, took one hand out of his pocket, rested his elbow on his knee and his chin on the palm of his hand, and bunched up his big beard with his fingers, as he always did when he was thinking. Presently he took his foot down, put his hand back in his pocket, and said to me, "Well, Joe, I've got a double set of harness made for the man who ordered that damned buggy, and if you like I'll let you have it. I suppose when Bill there has squeezed all he can out of you I'll stand a show of getting something. He's a regular Shylock, he is."

I pushed my hat forward and rubbed the back of my head and stared at the buggy.

“Come across to the Royal, Joe,” said Bob.

But I knew that a beer would settle the business, so I said I’d get the wool up to the station first and think it over, and have a drink when I came back.

I thought it over on the way to the station, but it didn’t seem good enough. I wanted to get some more sheep, and there was the new run to be fenced in, and the instalments on the selections. I wanted lots of things that I couldn’t well do without. Then, again, the farther I got away from debt and hard-upedness the greater the horror I had of it. I had two horses that would do; but I’d have to get another later on, and altogether the buggy would run me nearer a hundred than fifty pounds. Supposing a dry season threw me back with that buggy on my hands. Besides, I wanted a spell. If I got the buggy it would only mean an extra turn of hard graft for me. No, I’d take Mary for a trip to Sydney, and she’d have to be satisfied with that.

I’d got it settled, and was just turning in through the big white gates to the goods-shed when young Black, the squatter, dashed past to the station in his big new wagonette, with his wife and a driver and a lot of portmanteaux and rugs and things. They were going to do the grand in Sydney over Christmas. Now it was young Black who was so shook after Mary when she was in service with the Blacks before the old man died, and if I hadn’t come along—and if girls never cared for vagabonds—Mary would have been mistress of Haviland homestead, with servants to wait on her; and she was far better fitted for it than the one that was there. She would have been going to Sydney every holiday and putting up at the old Royal, with every comfort that a woman could ask for, and

seeing a play every night. And I'd have been knocking around amongst the big stations out back, or maybe drinking myself to death at the shanties.

The Blacks didn't see me as I went by, ragged and dusty, and with an old, nearly black, cabbage-tree hat drawn over my eyes. I didn't care a damn for them, or anyone else, at most times, but I had moods when I felt things.

One of Black's big wool-teams was just coming away from the shed, and the driver, a big, dark, rough fellow, with some foreign blood in him, didn't seem inclined to wheel his team an inch out of the middle of the road. I stopped my horses and waited. He looked at me and I looked at him—hard. Then he wheeled off, scowling, and swearing at his horses. I'd given him a hiding, six or seven years before, and he hadn't forgotten it. And I felt then as if I wouldn't mind trying to give someone a hiding.

The goods clerk must have thought that Joe Wilson was pretty grumpy that day. I was thinking of Mary, out there in the lonely hut on a barren creek in the bush—for it was little better—with no one to speak to except a haggard, worn-out bushwoman or two, that came to see her on Sunday. I thought of the hardships she went through in the first year—that I haven't told you about yet; of the time she was ill, and I away, and no one to understand; of the time she was alone with James and Jim sick; and of the loneliness she fought through out there. I thought of Mary, outside in the blazing heat, with an old print dress and a felt hat, and a pair of 'lastic-siders of mine on, doing the work of a station manager as well as that of a housewife and mother. And her cheeks were getting thin, and the colour was going: I thought of the gaunt, brick-brown, saw-file voiced, hopeless and spiritless bushwomen I knew—and some of them not much older than Mary.

When I went back into the town, I had a drink with Bill Galletly at the Royal, and that settled the buggy; then Bob shouted, and I took the harness. Then I shouted, to wet the bargain. When I was going, Bob said, "Send in that young scamp of a brother of Mary's with the horses: if the collars don't fit I'll fix up a pair of make-shifts, and alter the others." I thought they both gripped my hand harder than usual, but that might have been the beer.

IV

THE BUGGY COMES HOME

I "whipped the cat" a bit, the first twenty miles or so, but then, I thought, what did it matter? What was the use of grinding to save money until we were too old to enjoy it. If we had to go down in the world again, we might as well fall out of a buggy as out of a dray—there'd be some talk about it, anyway, and perhaps a little sympathy. When Mary had the buggy she wouldn't be tied down so much to that wretched hole in the bush; and the Sydney trips needn't be off either. I could drive down to Wallerawang on the main line, where Mary had some people, and leave the buggy and horses there, and take the train to Sydney, or go right on, by the old coach road, over the Blue Mountains: it would be a grand drive. I thought best to tell Mary's sister at Gulgong about the buggy; I told her I'd keep it dark from Mary till the buggy came home. She entered into the spirit of the thing, and said she'd give the world to be able to go out with the buggy, if only to see Mary open her eyes when she saw it; but she couldn't go, on account of a new baby she had. I was rather glad she couldn't, for it would spoil the surprise a little, I thought. I wanted that all to myself.

I got home about sunset next day, and, after tea, when I'd finished telling Mary all the news, and a few lies as to why I didn't bring the cart back, and one or two other things, I sat with James, out on a log of the wood-heap, where we generally had our smokes and interviews, and told him all about the buggy. He whistled, then he said:

"But what do you want to make it such a bushranging business for? Why can't you tell Mary now? It will cheer her up. She's been pretty miserable since you've been away this trip."

"I want it to be a surprise," I said.

"Well, I've got nothing to say against a surprise, out in a hole like this; but it 'ud take a lot to surprise me. What am I to say to Mary about taking the two horses in? I'll only want one to bring the cart out, and she's sure to ask."

"Tell her you're going to get yours shod."

"But he had a set of slippers only the other day. She knows as much about horses as we do. I don't mind telling a lie as long as a chap has only got to tell a straight lie and be done with it. But Mary asks so many questions."

"Well, drive the other horse up the creek early, and pick him up as you go."

"Yes. And she'll want to know what I want with two bridles. But I'll fix her—you needn't worry."

"And, James," I said, "get a chamois leather and sponge—we'll want 'em anyway—and you might give the buggy a wash down in the creek, coming home. It's sure to be covered with dust."

"Oh!—orlight."

"And if you can, time yourself to get here in the cool of the evening, or just about sunset."

"What for?"

I'd thought it would be better to have the buggy there in the cool of the evening, when Mary would have time to get excited and get over it—better than in the blazing hot morning, when the sun rose as hot as at noon, and we'd have the long broiling day before us.

"What do you want me to come at sunset for?" asked James. "Do you want me to camp out in the scrub and turn up like a blooming sundowner?"

"Oh well," I said, "get here at midnight if you like."

We didn't say anything for a while—just sat and puffed at our pipes. Then I said:

"Well, what are you thinking about?"

"I'm thinking it's time you got a new hat; the sun seems to get in through your old one too much," and he got out of my reach and went to see about penning the calves. Before we turned in he said:

"Well, what am I to get out of the job, Joe?"

He had his eye on a double-barrel gun that Franca the gunsmith in Cudgegong had—one barrel shot, and the other rifle; so I said:

"How much does Franca want for that gun?"

"Five-ten; but I think he'd take my single barrel off it. Anyway, I can squeeze a couple of quid out of Phil Lambert for the single barrel." (Phil was his bosom chum.)

"All right," I said. "Make the best bargain you can."

He got his own breakfast and made an early start next morning, to get clear of any instructions or messages that Mary might have forgotten to give him overnight. He took his gun with him.

I'd always thought that a man was a fool who couldn't keep a secret from his wife—that there was something womanish about him. I found out. Those three days waiting for the

buggy were about the longest I ever spent in my life. It made me scotty with everyone and everything; and poor Mary had to suffer for it. I put in the time patching up the harness and mending the stockyard and the roof, and, the third morning, I rode up the ridges to look for trees for fencing timber. I remember I hurried home that afternoon because I thought the buggy might get there before me.

At tea-time I got Mary on to the buggy business.

"What's the good of a single buggy to you, Mary?" I asked. "There's only room for two, and what are you going to do with the children when we go out together?"

"We can put them on the floor at our feet, like other people do. I can always fold up a blanket or possum rug for them to sit on."

But she didn't take half so much interest in buggy talk as she would have taken at any other time, when I didn't want her to. Women are aggravating that way. But the poor girl was tired and not very well, and both the children were cross. She did look knocked up.

"We'll give the buggy a rest, Joe," she said. (I thought I heard it coming then.) "It seems as far off as ever. I don't know why you want to harp on it today. Now, don't look so cross, Joe—I didn't mean to hurt you. We'll wait until we can get a double buggy, since you're so set on it. There'll be plenty of time when we're better off."

After tea, when the youngsters were in bed, and she'd washed up, we sat on the edge of the veranda floor, Mary sewing, and I smoking and watching the track up the creek.

"Why don't you talk, Joe?" asked Mary. "You scarcely ever speak to me now: it's like drawing blood out of a stone to get a word from you. What makes you so cross, Joe?"

"Well, I've got nothing to say."

"But you should find something. Think of me—it's very miserable for me. Have you anything on your mind? Is there any new trouble? Better tell me, no matter what it is, and not go worrying and brooding and making both our lives miserable. If you never tell me anything, how can you expect me to understand?"

I said there was nothing the matter.

"But there must be, to make you so unbearable. Have you been drinking, Joe—or gambling?"

I asked her what she'd accuse me of next.

"And another thing I want to speak to you about," she went on. "Now, don't knit up your forehead like that, Joe, and get impatient—"

"Well, what is it?"

"I wish you wouldn't swear in the hearing of the children. Now, little Jim today, he was trying to fix his little go-cart, and it wouldn't run right, and—and——"

"Well, what did he say?"

"He—he" (she seemed a little hysterical, trying not to laugh)—"he said, 'Damn it!'"

I had to laugh. Mary tried to keep serious but it was no use.

"Never mind, old woman," I said, putting an arm round her, for her mouth was trembling, and she was crying more than laughing. "It won't be always like this. Just wait till we're a bit better off."

Just then a black boy we had (I must tell you about him some other time) came sidling along by the wall, as if he were afraid somebody was going to hit him—poor little devil! I never did.

"What is it, Harry?" said Mary.

"Buggy comin', I bin thinkit."

"Where?"

He pointed up the creek.

"Sure it's a buggy?"

"Yes, missus."

"How many horses?"

"One—two."

We knew that he could hear and see things long before we could. Mary went and perched on the wood-heap, and shaded her eyes—though the sun had gone—and peered through between the eternal grey trunks of the stunted trees on the flat across the creek. Presently she jumped down and came running in.

"There's someone coming in a buggy, Joe!" she cried, excitedly. "And both my white table-cloths are rough dry. Harry! put two flat-irons down to the fire, quick, and put on some more wood. It's lucky I kept those new sheets packed away. Get up out of that, Joe! What are you sitting grinning like that for? Go and get on another shirt. Hurry—Why, it's only James—by himself."

She stared at me, and I sat there, grinning like a fool.

"Joe!" she said. "Whose buggy is that?"

"Well, I suppose it's yours," I said.

She caught her breath, and stared at the buggy, and then at me again. James drove down out of sight into the crossing, and came up close to the house.

"Oh, Joe! what have you done?" cried Mary. "Why, it's a new double buggy!" Then she rushed at me and hugged my head. "Why didn't you tell me, Joe? You poor old boy!—and I've been nagging at you all day!" And she hugged me again.

James got down and started taking the horses out—as if it was an everyday occurrence. I saw the double-barrel gun sticking out from under the seat. He'd stopped to wash the buggy, and I suppose that's what made him grumpy. Mary

stood on the veranda, with her eyes twice as big as usual, and breathing hard—taking the buggy in.

James skimmed the harness off, and the horses shook themselves and went down to the dam for a drink. "You'd better look under the seats," growled James, as he took his gun out with great care.

Mary dived for the buggy. There was a dozen of lemonade and ginger-beer in a candle-box from Galletly—James said that Galletly's men had a gallon of beer, and they cheered him, James (I suppose he meant they cheered the buggy), as he drove off; there was a "little bit of a ham" from Pat Murphy, the storekeeper at Home Rule, that he'd "cured himself"—it was the biggest I ever saw; there were three loaves of baker's bread, a cake, and a dozen yards of something "to make up for the children," from Aunt Gertrude at Gulgong; there was a fresh-water cod, that long Dave Regan had caught the night before in the Macquarie River, and sent out packed in salt in a box; there was a holland suit for the black boy, with red braid to trim it; and there was a jar of preserved ginger, and some lollies (sweets) ("for the lil' boy"), and a rum-looking Chinese doll and a rattle ("for lil' girl") from Sun Tong Lee, our storekeeper at Gulgong—James was chummy with Sun Tong Lee, and got his powder and shot and caps there on tick when he was short of money. And James said that the people would have loaded the buggy with "rubbish" if he'd waited. They all seemed glad to see Joe Wilson getting on—and these things did me good.

We got the things inside, and I don't think either of us knew what we were saying or doing for the next half-hour. Then James put his head in and said, in a very injured tone: "What about my tea? I ain't had anything to speak of since I left Cudgegong. I want some grub."

Then Mary pulled herself together.

"You'll have your tea directly," she said. "Pick up that harness at once, and hang it on the pegs in the skillion; and you, Joe, back that buggy under the end of the veranda, the dew will be on it presently—and we'll put wet bags up in front of it to-morrow, to keep the sun off. And James will have to go back to Cudgegong for the cart—we can't have that buggy to knock about in."

"All right," said James—"anything! Only get me some grub."

Mary fried the fish, in case it wouldn't keep till the morning, and rubbed over the table-cloths, now the irons were hot—James growling all the time—and got out some crockery she had packed away that had belonged to her mother, and set the table in a style that made James uncomfortable.

"I want some grub—not a blooming banquet!" he said. And he growled a lot because Mary wanted him to eat his fish without a knife, "and that sort of tommy-rot." When he'd finished he took his gun, and the black boy, and the dogs, and went out possum-shooting.

When we were alone Mary climbed into the buggy to try the seat, and made me get up alongside her. We hadn't had such a comfortable seat for years; but we soon got down, in case anyone came by, for we began to feel like a pair of fools up there.

Then we sat, side by side, on the edge of the veranda, and talked more than we'd done for years—and there was a good deal of "Do you remember?" in it—and I think we got to understand each other better that night.

And at last Mary said, "Do you know, Joe, why, I feel to-night just—just like I did the day we were married."

And somehow I had that strange, shy sort of feeling too.

His Father's Mate

IT WAS Golden Gully still, but golden in name only, unless indeed the yellow mullock heaps or the bloom of the wattle-trees on the hillside gave it a claim to the title. But the gold was gone from the gully, and the diggers were gone, too, after the manner of Timon's friends when his wealth deserted him. Golden Gully was a dreary place, dreary even for an abandoned goldfield. The poor, tortured earth, with its wounds all bare, seemed to make a mute appeal to the surrounding bush to come up and hide it, and, as if in answer to its appeal, the shrub and saplings were beginning to close in from the foot of the range. The wilderness was reclaiming its own again.

The two dark, sullen hills that stood on each side were clothed from tip to hollow with dark scrub and scraggy box-trees; but above the highest row of shafts on one side ran a line of wattle-trees in full bloom.

The top of the western hill was shaped somewhat like a saddle, and standing high above the eucalypti on the point corresponding with the pommel were three tall pines. These lonely trees, seen for many miles around, had caught the yellow rays of many a setting sun long before the white man wandered over the ranges.

The predominant note of the scene was a painful sense of listening, that never seemed to lose its tension—a listening as though for the sounds of digger life, sounds that had gone and left a void that was accentuated by the signs of a former presence. The main army of diggers had long ago vanished

to new rushes, leaving only its stragglers and deserters behind. These were men who were too poor to drag families about, men who were old and feeble, and men who had lost their faith in fortune. They had dropped unnoticed out of the ranks, and remained to scratch out a living among the abandoned claims.

Golden Gully had its little community of fossickers who lived in a clearing called Spencer's Flat on one side and Pounding Flat on the other, but they lent no life to the scene; they only haunted it. A stranger might have thought the field entirely deserted until he came on a coat and a billy at the foot of saplings amongst the holes, and heard, in the shallow ground underneath, the thud of a pick, which told of some fossicker below rooting out what little wash remained.

One afternoon towards Christmas, a windlass was erected over an old shaft of considerable depth at the foot of the gully. A greenhide bucket attached to a rope on the windlass was lying next morning near the mouth of the shaft, and beside it, on a clear-swept patch, was a little mound of cool wet wash-dirt.

A clump of saplings near at hand threw a shade over part of the mullock heap, and in this shade, seated on an old coat, was a small boy of eleven or twelve years, writing on a slate.

He had fair hair, blue eyes, and a thin old-fashioned face—a face that would scarcely alter as he grew to manhood. His costume consisted of a pair of moleskin trousers, a cotton shirt, and one suspender. He held the slate rigidly with a corner of its frame pressed close against his ribs, whilst his head hung to one side, so close to the slate that his straggling hair almost touched it. He was regarding his work fixedly out of the corners of his eyes, whilst he painfully copied down the head line, spelling it in a different way each time. In this

laborious task he appeared to be greatly assisted by a tongue that lolled out of the corner of his mouth and made an occasional revolution round it, leaving a circle of temporarily clean face. His small clay-covered toes also entered into the spirit of the thing, and helped him not a little by their energetic wriggling. He paused occasionally to draw the back of his small brown arm across his mouth.

Little Isley Mason, or, as he was called, "His Father's Mate," had always been a favourite with the diggers and fossickers from the days when he used to slip out first thing in the morning and take a run across the frosty flat in his shirt. Long Bob Sawkins would often tell how Isley came home one morning from his run in the long, wet grass as naked as he was born, with the information that he had lost his shirt.

Later on, when most of the diggers had gone, and Isley's mother was dead, he was to be seen about the place with bare, sunbrowned arms and legs, a pick and shovel, and a gold dish about two-thirds of his height in diameter, with which he used to go "a-speekin'," and "fossickin'" amongst the old mullock heaps. Long Bob was Isley's special crony, and he would often go out of his way to lay the boy onter bits o' wash and likely spots, lamely excusing his long yarns with the child by the explanation that it was "amusin' to draw Isley out."

Isley had been sitting writing for some time when a deep voice called out from below:

"Isley!"

"Yes, father."

"Send down the bucket."

"Right."

Isley put down his slate, and going to the shaft dropped the bucket down as far as the clack rope reached; then, placing one hand on the bole of the windlass and holding the other

against it underneath, he let it slip round between his palms until the bucket reached bottom. A sound of shovelling was heard for a few moments and presently the voice cried, "Wind away, sonny."

"Thet ain't half enough," said the boy, peering down. "Don't be frightened to pile it in, father. I kin wind up a lot more'n thet."

A little more scraping, and the boy braced his feet well upon the little mound of clay which he had raised under the handle of the windlass to make up for his deficiency in stature.

"Now then, Isley!"

Isley wound slowly but sturdily, and soon the bucket of "wash" appeared above the surface; then he took it in short lifts and deposited it with the rest of the wash-dirt.

"Isley!" called his father again.

"Yes, father."

"Have you done that writing lesson yet?"

"Very near."

"Then send down the slate next time for some sums."

"All right."

The boy resumed his seat, fixed the corner of the slate well into his ribs, humped his back, and commenced another wavering line.

Tom Mason was known on the place as a silent, hard worker. He was a man of about sixty, tall, and dark-bearded. There was nothing uncommon about his face, except, perhaps, that it had hardened, as the face of a man might harden who had suffered a long succession of griefs and disappointments. He lived in a little hut under a peppermint tree at the far edge of Pounding Flat. His wife had died there about six years before, and though new rushes broke out and he was well able to go, he never left Golden Gully.

Mason was kneeling in front of the "face" digging away by the light of a tallow candle stuck in the side. The floor of the drive was very wet, and his trousers were heavy and cold with clay and water; but the old digger was used to this sort of thing. His pick was not bringing out much today, however, for he seemed abstracted and would occasionally pause in his work, while his thoughts wandered far away from the narrow streak of wash-dirt in the "face."

He was digging out pictures from a past life. They were not pleasant ones, for his face was stony and white in the dim glow of the candle.

Thud, thud, thud—the blows became slower and more irregular as the fossicker's mind wandered off into the past. The sides of the drive seemed to vanish slowly away, and the "face" retreated far out beyond a horizon that was hazy in the glow of the southern ocean. He was standing on the deck of a ship and by his side stood a brother. They were sailing southward to the Land of Promise that was shining there in all its golden glory! The sails pressed forward in the bracing wind, and the clipper ship raced along with its burden of the wildest dreamers ever borne in a vessel's hull! Up over long blue ocean ridges, down into long blue ocean gullies; on to lands so new, and yet so old, where above the sunny glow of the southern skies blazed the shining names of Ballarat! and Bendigo! The deck seemed to lurch, and the fossicker fell forward against the face of the drive. The shock recalled him, and he lifted his pick once more.

But the blows slacken again as another vision rises before him. It is Ballarat now. He is working in a shallow claim at Eureka, his brother by his side. The brother looks pale and ill, for he has been up all night dancing and drinking. Out

behind them is the line of blue hills; in front is the famous Bakery Hill, and down to the left Golden Point. Two mounted troopers are riding up over Specimen Hill. What do they want?

They take the brother away, handcuffed. Manslaughter last night. Cause—drink and jealousy.

The vision is gone again. Thud, thud, goes the pick; it counts the years that follow—one, two, three, four, up to twenty, and then it stops for the next scene—a selection on the banks of a bright river in New South Wales. The little homestead is surrounded by vines and fruit-trees. Many swarms of bees work under the shade of the trees, and a crop of wheat is nearly ripe on the hillside.

A man and a boy are engaged in clearing a paddock just below the homestead. They are father and son; the son, a boy of about seventeen, is the image of his father.

Horses' feet again! Here comes Nemesis in mounted troopers' uniform.

The mail was stuck up last night about five miles away, and a refractory passenger shot. The son had been out "possum shooting" all night with some friends.

The troopers take the son away handcuffed: "Robbery under Arms."

The father was taking out a stump when the troopers came. His foot is still resting on the spade, which is half driven home. He watches the troopers take the boy up to the house, and then, driving the spade to its full depth, he turns up another sod. The troopers reach the door of the homestead; but still he digs steadily, and does not seem to hear his wife's cry of despair. The troopers search the boy's room and bring out some clothing in two bundles; but still the father digs. They have saddled up one of the farm horses and made the boy

mount. The father digs. They ride off along the ridge with the boy between them. The father never lifts his eyes; the hole widens round the stump; he digs away till the brave little wife comes and takes him gently by the arm. He half rouses himself and follows her to the house like an obedient dog.

Trial and disgrace follow, and then other misfortunes, pleuro among the cattle, drought, and poverty.

Thud, thud, thud again! But it is not the sound of the fossicker's pick—it is the fall of sods on his wife's coffin.

It is a little bush cemetery, and he stands stonily watching them fill up her grave. She died of a broken heart and shame. "I can't bear disgrace! I can't bear disgrace!" she had moaned all these six weary years—for the poor are often proud.

But *he* lives on, for it takes a lot to break a man's heart. He holds up his head and toils on for the sake of a child that is left, and that child is—Isley.

And now the fossicker seems to see a vision of the future. He seems to be standing somewhere, an old, old man, with a younger one at his side; the younger one has Isley's face. Horses' feet again! Ah, God! Nemesis once more in troopers' uniform!

The fossicker falls on his knees in the mud and clay at the bottom of the drive, and prays Heaven to take his last child ere Nemesis comes for him.

Long Bob Sawkins had been known on the diggings as "Bob the Devil." His profile, at least from one side, certainly did recall that of the sarcastic Mephistopheles; but the other side, like his true character, was by no means a devil's. His physiognomy had been much damaged, and one eye removed by the premature explosion of a blast in some old Ballarat mine. The blind eye was covered with a green patch,

which gave a sardonic appearance to the remaining features.

He was a stupid, heavy, good-natured Englishman. He stuttered a little, and had a peculiar habit of wedging the monosyllable "why" into his conversation at times when it served no other purpose than to fill up the pauses caused by his stuttering; but this by no means assisted him in his speech, for he often stuttered over the "why" itself.

The sun was getting low down, and its yellow rays reached far up among the saplings of Golden Gully when Bob appeared coming down by the path that ran under the western hill. He was dressed in the usual costume—cotton shirt, mole-skin trousers, faded hat and waistcoat, and blucher boots. He carried a pick over his shoulder, the handle of which was run through the haft of a short shovel that hung down behind, and he had a big dish under his arm. He paused opposite the shaft with the windlass, and hailed the boy in his usual form of salutation.

"Look, see here, Isley!"

"What is it, Bob?"

"I seed a young—why—magpie up in the scrub, and yer oughter be able to catch it."

"Can't leave the shaft; father's b'low."

"How did yer father know there was any—why—wash in the old shaft?"

"Seed old Corney in town Saturday, 'n he said thur was enough to make it worth while bailin' out. Bin bailin' all the mornin'."

Bob came over, and letting his tools down with a clatter he hitched up the knees of his moleskins and sat down on one heel.

"What are yer—why—doin' on the slate, Isley?" said he, taking out an old clay pipe and lighting it.

"Sums," said Isley.

Bob puffed away at his pipe a moment.

"'Tain't no use!" he said, sitting down on the clay and drawing his knees up. "Edication's a failyer."

"Listen at 'im!" exclaimed the boy. "D'yer mean ter say it ain't no use learnin' readin' and writin' and sums?"

"Isley!"

"Right, father."

The boy went to the windlass and let the bucket down. Bob offered to help him wind up, but Isley, proud of showing his strength to his friend, insisted on winding by himself.

"You'll be—why—a strong man some day, Isley," said Bob, landing the bucket.

"Oh, I could wind up a lot more'n father puts in. Look how I greased the handles! It works like butter now," and the boy sent the handles spinning round with a jerk to illustrate his meaning.

"Why did they call yer Isley for?" queried Bob, as they resumed their seats. "It ain't yer real name, is it?"

"No, my name's Harry. A digger useter say I was a isle in the ocean to father 'n mother, 'n then I was nicknamed Isle, 'n then Isley."

"You had a—why—brother once, didn't yer?"

"Yes, but thet was afore I was borned. He died, at least mother used ter say she didn't know if he was dead; but father says he's dead as fur's he's concerned."

"And your father hed a brother, too. Did yer ever—why—hear of him?"

"Yes, I heard father talkin' about it wonst to mother. I think father's brother got into some row in a bar where a man was killed."

"And was yer—why—father—why—fond of him?"

"I heard father say that he was wonst, but thet was all past."

Bob smoked in silence for a while, and seemed to look at some dark clouds that were drifting along like a funeral out in the west. Presently he said half aloud something that sounded like "All, all—why—past."

"Eh?" said Isley.

"Oh, it's—why, why—nothin'," answered Bob, rousing himself. "Is that a paper in yer father's coat-pocket, Isley?"

"Yes," said the boy, taking it out.

Bob took the paper and stared hard at it for a moment or so.

"There's something about the new goldfields there," said Bob, putting his finger on a tailor's advertisement. "I wish you'd—why—read it to me, Isley; I can't see the small print they uses nowadays."

"No, thet's not it," said the boy, taking the paper, "it's something about ——"

"Isley!"

"'Old on, Bob, father wants me."

The boy ran to the shaft, rested his hands and forehead against the bole of the windlass, and leant over to hear what his father was saying.

Without a moment's warning the treacherous bole slipped round; a small body bounded a couple of times against the sides of the shaft and fell at Mason's feet, where it lay motionless!

"Mason!"

"Ay?"

"Put him in the bucket and lash him to the rope with your belt!"

A few moments, and—

"Now, Bob!"

Bob's trembling hands would scarcely grasp the handle, but he managed to wind somehow.

Presently the form of the child appeared, motionless and covered with clay and water. Mason was climbing up by the steps in the side of the shaft.

Bob tenderly unlashed the boy and laid him under the saplings on the grass; then he wiped some of the clay and blood away from the child's forehead, and dashed over him some muddy water.

Presently Isley gave a gasp and opened his eyes.

"Are yer—why—hurt much, Isley?" asked Bob.

"Ba-back's bruk, Bob!"

"Not so bad as that, old man."

"Where's father?"

"Coming up."

Silence awhile, and then—

"Father! father! be quick, father!"

Mason reached the surface and came and knelt by the other side of the boy.

"I'll, I'll—why—run fur some brandy," said Bob.

"No use, Bob," said Isley. "I'm all bruk up."

"Don't yer feel better, sonny?"

"No—I'm—goin' to—die, Bob."

"Don't say it, Isley," groaned Bob.

A short silence, and then the boy's body suddenly twisted with pain. But it was soon over. He lay still awhile, and then said quietly:

"Good-bye, Bob!"

Bob made a vain attempt to speak. "Isley!" he said, "—"

The child turned and stretched out his hands to the silent, stony-faced man on the other side.

"Father—father, I'm goin'!"

A shuddering groan broke from Mason's lips, and then all was quiet.

Bob had taken off his hat to wipe his forehead, and his face, in spite of its disfigurement, was strangely like the face of the stone-like man opposite.

For a moment they looked at one another across the body of the child, and then Bob said quietly:

"He never knowed."

"What does it matter?" said Mason gruffly; and, taking up the dead child, he walked towards the hut.

It was a very sad little group that gathered outside Mason's hut next morning. Martin's wife had been there all the morning cleaning up and doing what she could. One of the women had torn up her husband's only white shirt for a shroud, and they had made the little body look clean and even beautiful in the wretched little hut.

One after another the fossickers took off their hats and entered, stooping through the low door. Mason sat silently at the foot of the bunk with his head supported by his hand, and watched the men with a strange, abstracted air.

Bob had ransacked the camp in search for some boards for a coffin.

"It will be the last I'll be able to—why—do for him," he said.

At last he came to Mrs. Martin in despair. That lady took him into the dining-room, and pointed to a large pine table, of which she was very proud.

"Knock that table to pieces," she said.

Taking off the few things that were lying on it, Bob turned it over and began to knock the top off.

When he had finished the coffin one of the fossickers' wives

said it looked too bare, and she ripped up her black riding-skirt, and made Bob tack the cloth over the coffin.

There was only one vehicle available in the place, and that was Martin's old dray; so about two o'clock Pat Martin attached his old horse Dublin to the shafts with sundry bits of harness and plenty of old rope, and dragged Dublin, dray and all, across to Mason's hut.

The little coffin was carried out, and two gin-cases were placed by its side in the dray to serve as seats for Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Grimshaw, who mounted in tearful silence.

Pat Martin felt for his pipe, but remembered himself and mounted on the shaft. Mason fastened up the door of the hut with a padlock. A couple of blows on one of his sharp points roused Dublin from his reverie. With a lurch to the right and another to the left he started, and presently the little funeral disappeared down the road that led to the "town" and its cemetery.

About six months afterwards Bob Sawkins went on a short journey, and returned with a tall, bearded young man. He and Bob arrived after dark, and went straight to Mason's hut. There was a light inside, but when Bob knocked there was no answer.

"Go in; don't be afraid," he said to his companion.

The stranger pushed open the creaking door, and stood bareheaded just inside the doorway.

A billy was boiling unheeded on the fire. Mason sat at the table with his face buried in his arms.

"Father!"

There was no answer, but the flickering of the firelight made the stranger think he could detect an impatient shrug in Mason's shoulders.

For a moment the stranger paused irresolute, and then stepping up to the table he laid his hand on Mason's arm, and said gently:

“Father! Do you want another mate?”

But the sleeper did not—at least, not in this world.

After All

The brooding ghosts of Australian night have gone from
the bush and town;
My spirit revives in the morning breeze, though it died
when the sun went down;
The river is high and the stream is strong, and the grass
is green and tall,
And I fain would think that this world of ours is a good
world after all.

The light of passion in dreamy eyes, and a page of truth
well read,
The glorious thrill, in a heart grown cold, of the spirit I
thought was dead,
A song that goes to a comrade's heart, and a tear of pride
let fall—
And my soul is strong! and the world to me is a grand
world after all!

Let our enemies go by their old dull tracks, and theirs be
the fault or shame
(The man is bitter against the world who has only him-
self to blame);
Let the darkest side of the past be dark, and only the
good recall;
For I must believe that the world, my dear, is a kind
world after all.

It well may be that I saw too plain, or it may be I was
blind;

But I'll keep my face to the dawning light, though the
devil may stand behind!

Though the devil may stand behind my back, shall I see
his shadow fall?

I'll read in the light of the morning stars—a good world
after all.

Rest, for your eyes are weary, girl—you have driven the
worst away—

The ghost of the man that I might have been is gone from
my heart today;

We'll live for life and the best it brings till our twilight
shadows fall;

My heart grows brave, and the world, my girl, is a good
world after all.

His Country — After All

THE Blenheim coach was descending into the valley of the Avetere River—pronounced Aveterry—from the saddle of Taylor's Pass. Across the river to the right, the grey slopes and flats stretched away to the distant sea from a range of tussock hills. There was no native bush there; but there were several groves of imported timber standing wide apart—sentinel-like—seeming lonely and striking in their isolation.

“Grand country, New Zealand, eh?” said a stout man with a brown face, grey beard, and grey eyes, who sat between the driver and another passenger on the box.

“You don't call this grand country!” exclaimed the other passenger, who claimed to be, and looked like, a commercial traveller, and might have been a professional spieler—quite possibly both. “Why, it's about the poorest country in New Zealand! You ought to see some of the country in the North Island—Wairarapa and Napier districts, round about Pahiatua. I call this damn poor country.”

“Well, I reckon you wouldn't, if you'd ever been in Australia—back in New South Wales. The people here don't seem to know what a grand country they've got. You say this is the worst, eh? Well, this would make an Australian cockatoo's mouth water—the worst of New Zealand would.”

“I always thought Australia was all good country,” mused the driver—a flax-stick. “I always thought——”

“Good country!” exclaimed the man with the grey beard, in a tone of disgust. “Why, it's only a mongrel desert, except some bits round the coast. The worst dried-up and God-forsaken country I was ever in.”

There was a silence, thoughtful on the driver's part, and aggressive on that of the stranger.

"I always thought," said the driver, reflectively, after the pause—"I always thought Australia was a good country," and he placed his foot on the brake.

They let him think. The coach descended the natural terraces above the river bank, and pulled up at the pub.

"So you're a native of Australia?" said the bagman to the grey-beard, as the coach went on again.

"Well, I suppose I am. Anyway, I was born there. That's the main thing I've got against the darned country."

"How long did you stay there?"

"Till I got away," said the stranger. Then, after a think, he added, "I went away first when I was thirty-five—went to the islands. I swore I'd never go back to Australia again; but I did. I thought I had a kind of affection for old Sydney. I knocked about the blasted country for five or six years, and then I cleared out to Frisco. I swore I'd never go back again, and I never will."

"But surely you'll take a run over and have a look at old Sydney and those places, before you go back to America, after getting so near?"

"What the blazes do I want to have a look at the blamed country for?" snapped the stranger, who had refreshed considerably. "I've got nothing to thank Australia for—except getting out of it. It's the best country to get out of that I was ever in."

"Oh, well, I only thought you might have had some friends over there," interposed the traveller in an injured tone.

"Friends! That's another reason. I wouldn't go back there for all the friends and relations since Adam. I had more than quite enough of it while I was there. The worst and hardest

years of my life were spent in Australia. I might have starved there, and did do it half my time. I worked harder and got less in my own country in five years than I ever did in any other in fifteen"—he was getting mixed—"and I've been in a few since then. No, Australia is the worst country that ever the Lord had the sense to forget. I mean to stick to the country that stuck to me, when I was starved out of my own dear native land—and that country is the United States of America. What's Australia? A big, thirsty, hungry wilderness, with one or two cities for the convenience of foreign speculators, and a few collections of humpies, called towns—also for the convenience of foreign speculators; and populated mostly by mongrel sheep, and partly by fools, who live like European slaves in the towns, and like dingoes in the bush—who drivell about 'democracy,' and yet haven't any more spunk than to graft for a few Cockney dudes that razzle-dazzle most of the time in Paris. Why, the Australians haven't even got the grit to claim enough of their own money to throw a few dams across their watercourses, and so make some of the interior fit to live in. America's bad enough, but it was never so small as that. . . . Bah! The curse of Australia is sheep, and the Australian war cry is Baa!"

"Well, you're the first man I ever heard talk as you've been doing about his own country," said the bagman, getting tired and impatient of being sat on all the time. "'Lives there a man with a soul so dead, who never said—to—to himself' . . . I forget the darned thing."

He tried to remember it. The man whose soul was dead cleared his throat for action, and the driver—for whom the bagman had shouted twice as against the stranger's once—took the opportunity to observe that he always thought a man ought to stick up for his own country.

The stranger ignored him and opened fire on the bagman. He proceeded to prove that that was all rot—that patriotism was the greatest curse on earth; that it had been the cause of all war; that it was the false, ignorant sentiment which moved men to slave, starve, and fight for the comfort of their sluggish masters; that it was the enemy of universal brotherhood, the mother of hatred, murder, and slavery, and that the world would never be any better until the deadly poison, called the sentiment of patriotism, had been “educated” out of the stomachs of the people. “Patriotism!” he exclaimed scornfully. “My country! The darned fools; the country never belonged to them, but to the speculators, the absentees, land-boomers, swindlers, gangs of thieves—the men the patriotic fools starve and fight for—their masters. Ba-a!”

The opposition collapsed.

The coach had climbed the terraces on the south side of the river, and was bowling along on a level stretch of road across the elevated flat.

“What trees are those?” asked the stranger, breaking the aggressive silence which followed his unpatriotic argument, and pointing to a grove ahead by the roadside. “They look as if they’ve been planted there. There ain’t been a forest here surely?”

“Oh, they’re some trees the government imported,” said the bagman, whose knowledge on the subject was limited. “Our own bush won’t grow in this soil.”

“But it looks as if anything else would—”

Here the stranger sniffed once by accident, and then several times with interest. It was a warm morning after rain. He fixed his eyes on those trees.

They didn’t look like Australian gums; they tapered to the tops, the branches were pretty regular, and the boughs hung

in shipshape fashion. There was not the Australian heat to twist the branches and turn the leaves.

"Why!" exclaimed the stranger, still staring and sniffing hard. "Why, dang me if they ain't (sniff) Australian gums!"

"Yes," said the driver, flicking his horses, "they are."

"Blanky (sniff) blanky old Australian gums!" exclaimed the ex-Australian, with strange enthusiasm.

"They're not old," said the driver; "they're only young trees. But they say they don't grow like that in Australia—'count of the difference in the climate. I always thought——"

But the other did not appear to hear him; he kept staring hard at the trees they were passing. They had been planted in rows and cross-rows, and were coming on grandly.

There was a rabbit-trapper's camp amongst those trees; he had made a fire to boil his billy with gum-leaves and twigs, and it was the scent of that fire which interested the exile's nose, and brought a wave of memories with it.

"Good day, mate!" he shouted suddenly to the rabbit trapper, and to the astonishment of his fellow passengers.

"Good day, mate!" The answer came back like an echo—it seemed to him—from the past.

Presently he caught sight of a few trees which had evidently been planted before the others—as an experiment, perhaps—and, somehow, one of them had grown after its own erratic native fashion—gnarled and twisted and ragged, and could not be mistaken for anything else but an Australian gum.

"A thunderin' old blue-gum!" ejaculated the traveller, regarding the tree with great interest.

He screwed his neck to get a last glimpse, and then sat silently smoking and gazing straight ahead, as if the past lay before him—and it *was* before him.

"Ah, well!" he said, in explanation of a long meditative

silence on his part; “ah, well—them saplings—the smell of them gum-leaves set me thinking.” And he thought some more.

“Well, for my part,” said a tourist in the coach, presently, in a condescending tone, “I can’t see much in Australia. The bally colonies are——”

“Oh, that be damned!” snarled the Australian-born—they had finished the second flask of whisky. “What do you Britishers know about Australia? She’s as good as England, anyway.”

“Well, I suppose you’ll go straight back to the States as soon as you’ve done your business in Christchurch,” said the bagman, when near their journey’s end they had become confidential.

“Well, I dunno. I reckon I’ll just take a run over to Australia first. There’s an old mate of mine in business in Sydney, and I’d like to have a yarn with him.”

The Bush Undertaker

“FIVE BOB!”

The old man shaded his eyes and peered through the dazzling glow of that broiling Christmas Day. He stood just within the door of a slab-and-bark hut situated upon the bank of a barren creek; sheep-yards lay to the right, and a low line of bare, brown ridges formed a suitable background to the scene.

“Five Bob!” shouted he again; and a dusty sheep-dog rose wearily from the shaded side of the hut and looked inquiringly at his master, who pointed towards some sheep which were straggling from the flock.

“Fetch ’em back,” he said confidently.

The dog went off, and his master returned to the interior of the hut.

“We’ll yard ’em early,” he said to himself; “the super won’t know. We’ll yard ’em early, and have the arternoon to ourselves.”

“We’ll get dinner,” he added, glancing at some pots on the fire. “I cud do a bit of doughboy, an’ that theer boggabri’ll eat like tater-marrer along of the salt meat.” He moved one of the black buckets from the blaze. “I likes to keep it jist on the sizzle,” he said in explanation to himself; “hard bilin’ makes it tough—I’ll keep it jist a-simmerin’.”

Here his soliloquy was interrupted by the return of the dog.

“All right, Five Bob,” said the hatter, “dinner’ll be ready dreckly. Jist keep yer eye on the sheep till I calls yer; keep ’em

well rounded up, an' we'll yard 'em afterwards and have a holiday."

This speech was accompanied by a gesture evidently intelligible, for the dog retired as though he understood English, and the cooking proceeded.

"I'll take a pick an' shovel with me an' root up that old blackfellow," mused the shepherd, evidently following up a recent train of thought; "I reckon it'll do now. I'll put in the spuds."

The last sentence referred to the cooking, the first to a blackfellow's grave about which he was curious.

"The sheep's a-campin'," said the soliloquizer, glancing through the door. "So me an' Five Bob'll be able to get our dinner in peace. I wish I had just enough fat to make the pan siss; I'd treat myself to a leather-jacket; but it took three weeks' skimmin' to get enough for them theer dough-boys."

In due time the dinner was dished up; and the old man seated himself on a block, with the lid of a gin-case across his knees for a table. Five Bob squatted opposite with the liveliest interest and appreciation depicted on his intelligent countenance.

Dinner proceeded very quietly, except when the carver paused to ask the dog how some tasty morsel went with him, and Five Bob's tail declared that it went very well indeed.

"Here y'are, try this," cried the old man, tossing him a large piece of doughboy. A click of Five Bob's jaws and the dough was gone.

"Clean into his liver!" said the old man with a faint smile.

He washed up the tinware in the water the duff had been boiled in, and then, with the assistance of the dog, yarded the sheep.

This accomplished, he took a pick and shovel and an old sack, and started out over the ridge, followed, of course, by his four-legged mate. After tramping some three miles he reached a spur, running out from the main ridge. At the extreme end of this, under some gum-trees, was a little mound of earth, barely defined in the grass, and indented in the centre as all blackfellows' graves were.

He set to work to dig it up, and sure enough, in about half an hour he bottomed on payable dirt.

When he had raked up all the bones, he amused himself by putting them together on the grass and by speculating as to whether they had belonged to black or white, male or female. Failing, however, to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, he dusted them with great care, put them in the bag, and started for home.

He took a short cut this time over the ridge and down a gully which was full of ring-barked trees and long white grass. He had nearly reached its mouth when a great greasy black goanna clambered up a sapling from under his feet and looked fightable.

"Dang the jump-up thing!" cried the old man. "It gin me a start!"

At the foot of the sapling he espied an object which he at first thought was the blackened carcass of a sheep, but on closer examination discovered to be the body of a man; it lay with its forehead resting on its hands, dried to a mummy by the intense heat of the western summer.

"Me luck's in for the day and no mistake!" said the shepherd, scratching the back of his head, while he took stock of the remains. He picked up a stick and tapped the body on the shoulder; the flesh sounded like leather. He turned it over on its side; it fell flat on its back like a board, and the

shrivelled eyes seemed to peer up at him from under the blackened wrists.

He stepped back involuntarily, but, recovering himself, leant on his stick and took in all the ghastly details.

There was nothing in the blackened features to tell aught of name or race, but the dress proclaimed the remains to be those of a European. The old man caught sight of a black bottle in the grass, close beside the corpse. This set him thinking. Presently he knelt down and examined the soles of the dead man's blucher boots, and then, rising with an air of conviction, exclaimed: "Brummy! by gosh!—busted up at last!

"I tole yer so, Brummy," he said impressively, addressing the corpse. "I allers told yer as how it 'ud be—an' here y'are, you thundering jumpt-up cuss-o'-God fool. Yer cud earn more'n any man in the colony, but yer'd lush it all away. I allers sed as how it 'ud end, an' now yer kin see fur y'self.

"I spect yer was a-comin' t' me t' get fixt up an' set straight agin; then yer was a-goin' to swear off, same as yer allers did; an' here y'are, an' now I expect I'll have t' fix yer up for the last time an' make yer decent, for 'twon't do t' leave yer a-lyin' out here like a dead sheep."

He picked up the corked bottle and examined it. To his great surprise it was nearly full of rum.

"Well, this gits me," exclaimed the old man; "me luck's in, this Christmas, an' no mistake. He must 'a' got the jams early in his spree, or he wouldn't be a-making for me with near a bottleful left. Howsomenever, here goes."

Looking round, his eyes lit up with satisfaction as he saw some bits of bark which had been left by a party of strippers who had been getting bark there for the stations. He picked up two pieces, one about four and the other six feet long,

and each about two feet wide, and brought them over to the body. He laid the longest strip by the side of the corpse, which he proceeded to lift on to it.

"Come on, Brummy," he said, in a softer tone than usual, "ye ain't as bad as yer might be, considerin' as it must be three good months since yer slipped yer wind. I spects it was the rum as preserved yer. It was the death of yer when yer was alive, an' now yer dead, it preserves yer like—like a mummy."

Then he placed the other strip on top, with the hollow side downwards—thus sandwiching the defunct between the two pieces—removed the saddle-strap, which he wore for a belt, and buckled it round one end, while he tried to think of something with which to tie up the other.

"I can't take any more strips off my shirt," he said, critically examining the skirts of the old blue overshirt he wore. "I might get a strip or two more off, but it's short enough already. Let's see; how long have I been a-wearin' of that shirt; oh, I remember, I bought it jist two days afore Five Bob was pupped. I can't afford a new shirt jist yet; howsomever, seein' it's Brummy, I'll jist borrow a couple more strips and sew 'em on agen when I git home."

He up-ended Brummy, and placing his shoulder against the middle of the lower sheet of bark, lifted the corpse to a horizontal position; then, taking the bag of bones in his hand, he started for home.

"I ain't a-spendin' sech a dull Christmas arter all," he reflected, as he plodded on; but he had not walked above a hundred yards when he saw a black goanna sidling into the grass.

"That's another of them theer dang things!" he exclaimed. "That's two I've seed this mornin'."

Presently he remarked: "Yer don't smell none too sweet,

Brummy. It must 'a' been jist about the middle of shearin' when yer pegged out. I wonder who got yer last cheque. Shoo! theer's another black goanner—theer must be a flock of 'em."

He rested Brummy on the ground while he had another pull at the bottle, and, before going on, packed the bag of bones on his shoulder under the body, and he soon stopped again.

"The thunderin' jump-t-up bones is all skew-whift," he said. "'Ole on, Brummy, an' I'll fix 'em"—and he leaned the dead man against a tree while he settled the bones on his shoulder, and took another pull at the bottle.

About a mile further on he heard a rustling in the grass to the right, and, looking round, saw another goanna gliding off sideways, with its long snaky neck turned towards him.

This puzzled the shepherd considerably, the strangest part of it being that Five Bob wouldn't touch the reptile, but slunk off with his tail down when ordered to "sick 'em."

"Theer's sothin' comic about them theer goanners," said the old man at last. "I've seed swarms of grasshoppers an' big mobs of kangaroos, but dang me if ever I seed a flock of black goanners afore!"

On reaching the hut the old man dumped the corpse against the wall, wrong end up, and stood scratching his head while he endeavoured to collect his muddled thoughts; but he had not placed Brummy at the correct angle, and, consequently, that individual fell forward and struck him a violent blow on the shoulder with the iron toes of his blucher boots.

The shock sobered him. He sprang a good yard, instinctively hitching up his moleskins in preparation for flight; but a backward glance revealed to him the true cause of this supposed attack from the rear. Then he lifted the body, stood it on its feet against the chimney, and ruminated as to where

he should lodge his mate for the night, not noticing that the shorter sheet of bark had slipped down on the boots and left the face exposed.

"I spect I'll have ter put yer into the chimney-trough for the night, Brummy," said he, turning round to confront the corpse. "Yer can't expect me to take yer into the hut, though I did it when yer was in a worse state than—Lord!"

The shepherd was not prepared for the awful scrutiny that gleamed on him from those empty sockets; his nerves received a shock, and it was some time before he recovered himself sufficiently to speak.

"Now, look a-here, Brummy," said he, shaking his finger severely at the delinquent, "I don't want to pick a row with yer; I'd do as much for yer an' more than any other man, an' well yer knows it; but if yer starts playin' any of yer jumpt-up pranktical jokes on me, and a-scarin' of me after a-humpin' of yer 'ome, by the 'oly frost I'll kick yer to jim-rags, so I will."

This admonition delivered, he hoisted Brummy into the chimney-trough, and with a last glance towards the sheep-yards, he retired to his bunk to have, as he said, a snooze.

He had more than a snooze, however, for when he woke it was dark, and the bushman's instinct told him it must be nearly nine o'clock.

He lit a slush-lamp and poured the remainder of the rum into a pannikin; but, just as he was about to lift the draught to his lips, he heard a peculiar rustling sound overhead, and put the pot down on the table with a slam that spilled some of the precious liquor.

Five Bob whimpered, and the old shepherd, though used to the weird and dismal, as one living alone in the bush must necessarily be, felt the icy breath of fear at his heart.

He reached hastily for his old shot-gun, and went out to investigate. He walked round the hut several times and examined the roof on all sides, but saw nothing. Brummy appeared to be in the same position.

At last, persuading himself that the noise was caused by possums or the wind, the old man went inside, boiled his billy, and, after composing his nerves somewhat with a light supper and a meditative smoke, retired for the night. He was aroused several times before midnight by the same mysterious sound overhead, but, though he rose and examined the roof on each occasion by the light of the rising moon, he discovered nothing.

At last he determined to sit up and watch until daybreak, and for this purpose took up a position on a log a short distance from the hut, with his gun laid in readiness across his knee.

After watching for about an hour, he saw a black object coming over the ridge-pole. He grabbed his gun and fired. The thing disappeared. He ran round to the other side of the hut, and there was a great black goanna in violent convulsions on the ground.

Then the old man saw it all. "The thunderin' jumpt-up thing has been a-havin' o' me," he exclaimed. "The same cuss-o'-God wretch has a-follered me 'ome, an' has been a-havin' its Christmas dinner off of Brummy, an' a-hauntin' o' me into the bargain, the jumpt-up tinker!"

As there was no one by whom he could send a message to the station, and the old man dared not leave the sheep and go himself, he determined to bury the body the next afternoon, reflecting that the authorities could disinter it for inquest if they pleased.

So he brought the sheep home early and made arrange-

ments for the burial by measuring the outer casing of Brummy and digging a hole according to those dimensions.

"That 'minds me," he said. "I never rightly knowed Brummy's religion, blest if ever I did. Howsomenever, there's one thing sartin—none o' them theer pianer-fingered parsons is a-goin' ter take the trouble ter travel out inter this God-forgotten part to hold sarvice over him, seein' as how his last cheque's blued. But, as I've got the fun'ral arrangements all in me own hands, I'll do jestice to it, and see that Brummy has a good comfortable buryin'—and more's impossible."

"It's time yer turned in, Brum," he said, lifting the body down.

He carried it to the grave and dropped it into one corner like a post. He arranged the bark so as to cover the face, and, by means of a piece of clothes-line, lowered the body to a horizontal position. Then he threw in an armful of gum-leaves, and then, very reluctantly, took the shovel and dropped in a few shovelfuls of earth.

"An' this is the last of Brummy," he said, leaning on his spade and looking away over the tops of the ragged gums on the distant range.

This reflection seemed to engender a flood of memories, in which the old man became absorbed. He leaned heavily upon his spade and thought.

"Arter all," he murmured sadly, "arter all—it were Brummy.

"Brummy," he said at last. "It's all over now; nothin' matters now—nothin' didn't ever matter, nor—nor don't. You uster say as how it 'ud be all right termorrer" (pause); "termorrer's come, Brummy—come fur you—it ain't come fur me yet, but—it's a-comin'."

He threw in some more earth.

“Yer don’t remember, Brummy, an’ mebbe yer don’t want to remember—I don’t want to remember—but—well, yer see that’s where yer got the pull on me.”

He shovelled in some more earth and paused again.

The dog rose, with ears erect, and looked anxiously first at his master and then into the grave.

“Theer oughter be somethin’ sed,” muttered the old man; “’tain’t right to put ’im under like a dog. Theer oughter be some sort o’ sarmin.” He sighed heavily in the listening silence that followed this remark and proceeded with his work. He filled the grave to the brim this time, and fashioned the mound carefully with his spade. Once or twice he muttered the words, “I am the rassaraction.” As he laid the tools quietly aside, and stood at the head of the grave, he was evidently trying to remember the something that ought to be said. He removed his hat, placed it carefully on the grass, held his hands out from his sides and a little to the front, drew a long deep breath, and said with a solemnity that greatly disturbed Five Bob: “Hashes ter hashes, dus ter dus, Brummy—an’—an’ in hopes of a great an’ gerlorious rassaraction!”

He sat down on a log near by, rested his elbows on his knees and passed his hand wearily over his forehead—but only as one who was tired and felt the heat; and presently he rose, took up the tools, and walked back to the hut.

And the sun sank again on the grand Australian bush—the nurse and tutor of eccentric minds, the home of the weird.

The Union Buries Its Dead

WHILE out boating one Sunday afternoon on a billabong across the river, we saw a young man on horseback driving some horses along the bank. He said it was a fine day, and asked if the water was deep there. The joker of our party said it was deep enough to drown him, and he laughed and rode farther up. We didn't take much notice of him.

Next day a funeral gathered at a corner pub and asked each other in to have a drink while waiting for the hearse. They passed away some of the time dancing jigs to a piano in the bar parlour. They passed away the rest of the time skylarking and fighting.

The defunct was a young Union labourer, about twenty-five, who had been drowned the previous day while trying to swim some horses across a billabong of the Darling.

He was almost a stranger in town, and the fact of his having been a Union man accounted for the funeral. The police found some Union papers in his swag, and called at the General Labourers' Union Office for information about him. That's how we knew. The secretary had very little information to give. The departed was a "Roman," and the majority of the town were otherwise—but Unionism is stronger than creed. Liquor, however, is stronger than Unionism; and, when the hearse presently arrived, more than two-thirds of the funeral were unable to follow.

The procession numbered fifteen, fourteen souls following the broken shell of a soul. Perhaps not one of the fourteen possessed a soul any more than the corpse did—but that doesn't matter.

Four or five of the funeral, who were boarders at the pub, borrowed a trap which the landlord used to carry passengers to and from the railway station. They were strangers to us who were on foot, and we to them. We were all strangers to the corpse.

A horseman, who looked like a drover just returned from a big trip, dropped into our dusty wake and followed us a few hundred yards, dragging his packhorse behind him, but a friend made wild and demonstrative signals from a hotel veranda—hooking at the air in front with his right hand and jabbing his left thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the bar—so the drover hauled off and didn't catch up to us any more. He was a stranger to the entire show.

We walked in twos. There were three twos. It was very hot and dusty; the heat rushed in fierce dazzling rays across every iron roof and light-coloured wall that was turned to the sun. One or two pubs closed respectfully until we got past. They closed their bar doors and the patrons went in and out through some side or back entrance for a few minutes. Bushmen seldom grumble at an inconvenience of this sort, when it is caused by a funeral. They have too much respect for the dead.

On the way to the cemetery we passed three shearers sitting on the shady side of a fence. One was drunk—very drunk. The other two covered their right ears with their hats, out of respect for the departed—whoever he might have been—and one of them kicked the drunk and muttered something to him.

He straightened himself up, stared, and reached helplessly for his hat, which he shoved half off and then on again. Then he made a great effort to pull himself together—and succeeded. He stood up, braced his back against the fence,

knocked off his hat, and remorsefully placed his foot on it—to keep it off his head till the funeral passed.

A tall, sentimental drover, who walked by my side, cynically quoted Byronic verses suitable to the occasion—to death—and asked with pathetic humour whether we thought the dead man's ticket would be recognized “over yonder.” It was a G.L.U. ticket, and the general opinion was that it would be recognized.

Presently my friend said:

“You remember when we were in the boat yesterday, we saw a man driving some horses along the bank?”

“Yes.”

He nodded at the hearse and said:

“Well, that's him.”

I thought awhile.

“I didn't take any particular notice of him,” I said. “He said something, didn't he?”

“Yes; said it was a fine day. You'd have taken more notice if you'd known that he was doomed to die in the hour, and that those were the last words he would say to any man in this world.”

“To be sure,” said a full voice from the rear. “If ye'd known that, ye'd have prolonged the conversation.”

We plodded on across the railway line and along the hot, dusty road which ran to the cemetery, some of us talking about the accident, and lying about the narrow escapes we had had ourselves. Presently someone said:

“There's the Devil.”

I looked up and saw a priest standing in the shade of the tree by the cemetery gate.

The hearse was drawn up and the tail-boards were opened. The funeral extinguished its right ear with its hat as four

men lifted the coffin out and laid it over the grave. The priest—a pale, quiet young fellow—stood under the shade of a sapling which grew at the head of the grave. He took off his hat, dropped it carelessly on the ground, and proceeded to business. I noticed that one or two heathens winced slightly when the holy water was sprinkled on the coffin. The drops quickly evaporated, and the little round black spots they left were soon dusted over; but the spots showed, by contrast, the cheapness and shabbiness of the cloth with which the coffin was covered. It seemed black before; now it looked a dusky grey.

Just here man's ignorance and vanity made a farce of the funeral. A big, bull-necked publican, with heavy, blotchy features, and a supremely ignorant expression, picked up the priest's straw hat and held it about two inches over the head of his reverence during the whole of the service. The father, be it remembered, was standing in the shade. A few shoved their hats on and off uneasily, struggling between their disgust for the living and their respect for the dead. The hat had a conical crown and a brim sloping down all round like a sunshade, and the publican held it with his great red claw spread over the crown. To do the priest justice, perhaps he didn't notice the incident. A stage priest or parson in the same position might have said, "Put the hat down, my friend; is not the memory of our departed brother worth more than my complexion?" A wattle-bark layman might have expressed himself in stronger language, none the less to the point. But my priest seemed unconscious of what was going on. Besides, the publican was a great and important pillar of the church. He couldn't, as an ignorant and conceited ass, lose such a good opportunity of asserting his faithfulness and importance to his church.

The grave looked very narrow under the coffin, and I drew a breath of relief when the box slid easily down. I saw a coffin get stuck once, at Rookwood, and it had to be yanked out with difficulty, and laid on the sods at the feet of the heart-broken relations, who howled dismally while the grave-diggers widened the hole. But they don't cut contracts so fine in the West. Our grave-digger was not altogether bowelless, and, out of respect for that human quality described as "feelin's," he scraped up some light and dusty soil and threw it down to deaden the fall of the clay lumps on the coffin. He also tried to steer the first few shovelfuls gently down against the end of the grave with the back of the shovel turned outwards, but the hard dry Darling River clods rebounded and knocked all the same. It didn't matter much—nothing does. The fall of lumps of clay on a stranger's coffin doesn't sound any different from the fall of the same things on an ordinary wooden box—at least I didn't notice anything awesome or unusual in the sound; but, perhaps, one of us—the most sensitive—might have been impressed by being reminded of a burial of long ago, when the thump of every sod jolted his heart.

I have left out the wattle—because it wasn't there. I have also neglected to mention the heart-broken old mate, with his grizzled head bowed and great pearly drops streaming down his rugged cheeks. He was absent—he was probably "out back." For similar reasons I have omitted reference to the suspicious moisture in the eyes of a bearded bush ruffian named Bill. Bill failed to turn up, and the only moisture was that which was induced by the heat. I have left out the "sad Australian sunset" because the sun was not going down at the time. The burial took place exactly at midday.

The dead bushman's name was Jim, apparently; but they

found no portraits, nor locks of hair, nor any love letters, nor anything of that kind in his swag—not even a reference to his mother; only some papers relating to Union matters. Most of us didn't know the name till we saw it on the coffin; we knew him as "that poor chap that got drowned yesterday."

"So his name's James Tyson," said my drover acquaintance, looking at the plate.

"Why! Didn't you know that before?" I asked.

"No; but I knew he was a Union man."

It turned out, afterwards, that J.T. wasn't his real name—only "the name he went by."

Anyhow, he was buried by it, and most of the "Great Australian Dailies" have mentioned in their brevity columns that a young man named James John Tyson was drowned in a billabong of the Darling last Sunday.

We did hear, later on, what his real name was; but if we ever chance to read it in the "Missing Friends Column," we shall not be able to give any information to heart-broken mother or sister or wife, nor to anyone who could let him hear something to his advantage—for we have already forgotten the name.

“Lord Douglas”

They hold him true, who's true to one,
However false he be.

—*The Rouseabout of Rouseabouts.*

THE Imperial Hotel was rather an unfortunate name for an out-back town pub, for out back is the stronghold of Australian democracy; it was the out-back vote and influence that brought about “One Man One Vote,” “Payment of Members,” and most of the democratic legislation of late years, and from out back came the overwhelming vote in favour of Australian as against Imperial Federation.

The name Royal Hotel is as familiar as that of the Railway Hotel, and passes unnoticed and ungrowled at, even by bush republicans. The Royal Hotel at Bourke was kept by an Irishman, one O'Donohoo, who was Union to the backbone, loudly in favour of “Australia for the Australians,” and, of course, against even the democratic New South Wales Government of the time. He went round town all one St. Patrick's morning with a bunch of green ribbon fastened to his coat-tail with a large fish-hook, and wasn't aware of the fact till he sat down on the point of it. But that's got nothing to do with it.

The Imperial Hotel at Bourke was unpopular from the first. It was said that the very existence of the house was the result of a swindle. It had been built with money borrowed on certain allotments in the centre of the town and on the understanding that it should be built on the mortgaged land, whereas it was erected on a free allotment. Which fact was discovered, greatly to its surprise, by the building society

when it came to foreclose on the allotments some years later. While the building was being erected the Bourke people understood, in a vague way, that it was to be a convent (perhaps the building society thought so, too), and when certain ornaments in brick and cement in the shape of a bishop's mitre were placed over the corners of the walls the question seemed decided. But when the place was finished a bar was fitted up, and up went the sign, to the disgust of the other publicans, who didn't know a licence had been taken out—for licensing didn't go by local option in those days. It was rumoured that the place belonged to, and the whole business was engineered by, a priest. And priests are men of the world.

The Imperial Hotel was patronized by the pastoralists, the civil servants, the bank manager and clerks—all the scrub aristocracy; it was the headquarters of the Pastoralists' Union in Bourke; a barracks for blacklegs brought up from Sydney to take the place of Union shearers on strike; and the new Governor, on his inevitable visit to Bourke, was banqueted at the Imperial Hotel. The editor of the local "capitalistic rag" stayed there; the pastoralists' member was elected mostly by dark ways and means devised at the Imperial Hotel, and one of its managers had stood as a dummy candidate to split the Labour vote; the management of the hotel was his reward. In short, it was there that most of the plots were hatched to circumvent Freedom, and put away or deliver into the clutches of law and order certain sons of Light and Liberty who believed in converting blacklegs into jellies by force of fists when bribes, gentle persuasion and pure Australian language failed to convert them to clean Unionism. The Imperial Hotel was called the "Squatters' Pub," the "Scabbery," and other and more expressive names.

The hotel became still more unpopular after Percy Doug-

las had managed it for a while. He was an avowed enemy of Labour Unionists. He employed Chinese cooks, and that in the height of the anti-Chinese agitation in Australia, and he was known to have kindly feelings towards the Afghans who, with their camels, were running white carriers off the roads. If an excited Unionist called a man a "blackleg" or "scab" in the Imperial bar he was run out—sometimes with great difficulty, and occasionally as far as the lock-up.

Percy Douglas was a fine-looking man, "wid a chest on him an' well hung—a fine fee-GURE of a man," as O'Donohoo pronounced it. He was tall and erect, he dressed well, wore small side-whiskers, had an eagle nose, and looked like an aristocrat. Like many of his type, who start sometimes as billiard-markers and suddenly become hotel managers in Australia, nothing was known of his past. Jack Mitchell reckoned, by the way he treated his employees and spoke to workmen, that he was the educated son of an English farmer—gone wrong and sent out to Australia. Someone called him "Lord Douglas," and the nickname caught on.

He made himself well hated. He got One-eyed Bogan "three months' hard" for taking a bottle of whisky off the Imperial bar counter because he (Bogan) was drunk and thirsty and had knocked down his cheque, and because there was no one minding the bar at the moment.

Lord Douglas dismissed the barmaid, and, as she was leaving, he had her boxes searched and gave her in charge for stealing certain articles belonging to the hotel. The chaps subscribed to defend the case, and subsequently put a few pounds together for the girl. She proved her gratitude by bringing a charge of a baby against one of the chaps—but that was only one of the little ways of the world, as Mitchell said. She joined a Chinese camp later on.

Lord Douglas employed a carpenter to do some work about the hotel, and because the carpenter left before the job was finished, Lord Douglas locked his tools in an out-house and refused to give them up; and when the carpenter, with the spirit of an Australian workman, broke the padlock and removed his tool-chest, the landlord gave him in charge for breaking and entering. The chaps defended the case and won it, and hated Lord Douglas as much as if he were their elder brother. Mitchell was the only one to put in a word for him.

“I’ve been puzzling it out,” said Mitchell, as he sat nursing his best leg in the Union Office, “and, as far as I can see it all amounts to this—we’re all mistaken in Lord Douglas. We don’t know the man. He’s all right. We don’t understand him. He’s really a sensitive, good-hearted man who’s been shoved a bit off the track by the world. It’s the world’s fault—he’s not to blame. You see, when he was a youngster he was the most good-natured kid in the school; he was always soft, and, consequently, he was always being imposed upon, and bullied, and knocked about. Whenever he got a penny to buy lollies he’d count ’em out carefully and divide ’em round amongst his school-mates and brothers and sisters. He was the only one that worked at home, and consequently they all hated him. His father respected him, but didn’t love him, because he wasn’t a younger son, and wasn’t bringing his father’s grey hairs down in sorrow to the grave. If it was in Australia, probably Lord Douglas was an elder son and had to do all the hard graft, and teach himself at night, and sleep in a bark skillion while his younger brothers benefited—they were born in the new brick house and went to boarding-schools. His mother had a contempt for him because he wasn’t a black sheep and a prodigal, and, when the old man

died, the rest of the family got all the stuff and Lord Douglas was kicked out because they could do without him now. And the family hated him like poison ever afterwards (especially his mother), and spread lies about him—because they had treated him shamefully and because his mouth was shut—they knew he wouldn't speak. Then probably he went in for Democracy and worked for Freedom, till Freedom trod on him once too often with her hob-nailed boots. Then the chances are, in the end, he was ruined by a girl or woman, and driven, against his will, to take refuge in pure individualism. He's all right, only we don't appreciate him. He's only fighting against his old ideals—his old self that comes up sometimes—and that's what makes him sweat his barmaids and servants, and hate us, and run us in; and perhaps when he cuts up extra rough it's because his conscience kicks him when he thinks of the damned soft fool he used to be. He's all right—take my word for it. It's all a mask. Why, he might be one of the kindest-hearted men in Bourke underneath."

Tom Hall rubbed his head and blinked, as if he was worried by an idea that there might be some facts in Mitchell's theories.

"You're allers findin' excuses for blacklegs an' scabs, Mitchell," said Barcoo-Rot, who took Mitchell seriously (and who would have taken a laughing jackass seriously). "Why, you'd find a white spot on a squatter. I wouldn't be surprised if you blacklegged yourself in the end."

This was an unpardonable insult, from a Union point of view, and the chaps half-unconsciously made room on the floor for Barcoo-Rot to fall after Jack Mitchell hit him. But Mitchell took the insult philosophically.

"Well, Barcoo-Rot," he said, nursing the other leg, "for the matter of that, I did find a white spot on a squatter once.

He lent me a quid when I was hard up. There's white spots on the blackest characters if you only drop prejudice and look close enough. I suppose even Jack-the-Ripper's character was speckled. Why, I can even see spots on your character, sometimes, Barcoo-Rot. I've known white spots to spread on chaps' characters until they were little short of saints. Sometimes I even fancy I can feel my own wings sprouting. And as for turning blackleg—well, I suppose I've got a bit of the crawler in my composition (most of us have), and a man never knows what might happen to his principles."

"Well," said Barcoo-Rot, "I beg yer pardon—ain't that enough?"

"No," said Mitchell, "you ought to wear a three-bushel bag and ashes for three months, and drink water; but since the police would send you to an asylum if you did that, I think the best thing we can do is to go out and have a drink."

Lord Douglas married an Australian girl somewhere, somehow, and brought her to Bourke, and there were two little girls—regular little fairies. She was a gentle, kind-hearted little woman, but she didn't seem to improve him much, save that he was very good to her.

"It's mostly that way," commented Mitchell. "When a boss gets married and has children he thinks he's got a greater right to grind his fellowmen and rob their wives and children. I'd never work for a boss with a big family—it's hard enough to keep a single boss nowadays in this country."

After one stormy election, at the end of a long and bitter shearing strike, One-eyed Bogan, his trusty enemy, Barcoo-Rot, and one or two other enthusiastic reformers were charged with rioting, and got from one to three months' hard. And they had only smashed three windows of the Imperial Hotel and chased the Chinese cook into the river.

"I used to have some hopes for Democracy," commented Mitchell, "but I've got none now. How can you expect Liberty, Equality or Fraternity—how can you expect Freedom and Universal Brotherhood and Equal Rights in a country where Sons of Light get three months' hard for breaking windows and bashing a Chinaman? It almost makes me long to sail away in a gallant barque."

There were other cases in connection with the rotten-egging of Capitalistic candidates on the Imperial Hotel balcony, and it was partly on the evidence of Douglas and his friends that certain respectable Labour leaders got heavy terms of imprisonment for rioting and "sedition" and "inciting," in connection with organized attacks on blacklegs and their escorts.

Retribution, if it was retribution, came suddenly and in a most unexpected manner to Lord Douglas.

It seems he employed a second carpenter for six months to repair and make certain additions to the hotel, and put him off under various pretences until he owed him a hundred pounds or thereabouts. At last, immediately after an exciting interview with Lord Douglas, the carpenter died suddenly of heart disease. The widow, a strong-minded bushwoman, put a bailiff in the hotel on a very short notice—and against the advice of her lawyer, who thought the case hopeless—and the Lord Douglas bubble promptly burst. He had somehow come to be regarded as the proprietor of the hotel, but now the real proprietors or proprietor—he was still said to be a priest—turned Douglas out and put in a new manager. The old servants were paid after some trouble. The local store-keepers and one or two firms in Sydney, who had large accounts against the Imperial Hotel (and had trusted it, mainly

because it was patronized by Capitalism and Fat), were never paid.

Lord Douglas cleared out to Sydney, leaving his wife and children, for the present, with her brother, a hay-and-corn storekeeper, who also had a large and hopeless account against the hotel; and when the brother went broke and left the district she rented a two-roomed cottage and took in dressmaking.

Dressmaking didn't pay so well in the bush then as it did in the old diggings days when sewing-machines were scarce and the possession of one meant an independent living to any girl—when diggers paid ten shillings for a strip of "flannen" doubled over and sewn together, with holes for arms and head, and called a shirt. Mrs. Douglas had a hard time, with her two little girls, who were still better and more prettily dressed than any other children in Bourke. One grocer still called on her for orders and pretended to be satisfied to wait "till Mr. Douglas came back," and when she would no longer order what he considered sufficient provisions for her and the children, and commenced buying sugar, etc., by the pound, for cash, he one day sent a box of groceries round to her. He pretended it was a mistake.

"However," he said, "I'd be very much obliged if you could use 'em Mrs. Douglas. I'm overstocked now; haven't got room for another tin of sardines in the shop. Don't you worry about bills, Mrs. Douglas; I can wait till Douglas comes home. I did well enough out of the Imperial Hotel when your husband had it, and a pound's worth of groceries won't hurt me now. I'm only too glad to get rid of some of the stock."

She cried a little, thought of the children, and kept the groceries.

"I suppose I'll be sold up soon meself if things don't git brighter," said that grocer to a friend, "so it doesn't matter much."

The same with Foley the butcher, who had a brogue with a sort of drawling groan in it, and was a cynic of the Mitchell school.

"You see," he said, "she's as proud as the devil, but when I send round a bit o' rawst, or porrk, or the undercut o' the blade-bawn, she thinks o' the little gur-r-rls before she thinks o' sendin' it back to me. That's where I've got the pull on her."

The Giraffe borrowed a horse and tip-dray one day at the beginning of winter and cut a load of firewood in the bush, and next morning, at daylight, Mrs. Douglas was nearly startled out of her life by a crash at the end of the cottage, which made her think that the chimney had fallen in, or a tree fallen on the house; and when she slipped on a wrapper and looked out, she saw a load of short-cut wood by the chimney, and caught a glimpse of the back view of the Giraffe, who stood in the dray with his legs wide apart and was disappearing into the edge of the scrub; and soon the rapid clock-clock-clock of the wheels died away in the west, as if he were making for West Australia.

The next we heard of Lord Douglas he had got two years' hard for embezzlement in connection with some canvassing he had taken up. Mrs. Douglas fell ill—a touch of brain-fever—and one of the labourers' wives took care of the children while two others took turns in nursing. While she was recovering, Bob Brothers sent round the hat, and, after a conclave in the Union Office—as mysterious as any meeting ever called with the object of downing bloated Capitalism—it was discovered that one of the chaps—who didn't wish his name

to be mentioned—had borrowed just twenty-five pounds from Lord Douglas in the old days and now wished to return it to Mrs. Douglas. So the thing was managed, and if she had any suspicions she kept them to herself. She started a little fancy goods shop and got along fairly comfortable.

Douglas, by the way, was, publicly, supposed, for her sake and because of the little girls, to be away in West Australia on the goldfields.

Time passes without much notice out back, and one hot day, when the sun hung behind the fierce sandstorms from the north-west as dully lurid as he ever showed in a London fog, Lord Douglas got out of the train that had just finished its five-hundred-miles' run, and not seeing a new-chum porter, who started forward by force of habit to take his bag, he walked stiffly off the platform and down the main street towards his wife's cottage.

He was very gaunt, and his eyes, to those who passed him closely, seemed to have a furtive, hunted expression. He had let his beard grow, and it had grown grey.

It was within a few days of Christmas—the same Christmas that we lost the Pretty Girl in the Salvation Army. As a rule the big shearing-sheds within a fortnight of Bourke cut out in time for the shearers to reach the town and have their Christmas dinners and sprees—and for some of them to be locked up over Christmas Day—within sound of a church-going bell. Most of the chaps gathered in the Shearers' Union Office on New Year's Eve and discussed Douglas amongst other things.

"I vote we kick the cow out of the town!" snarled One-eyed Bogan, viciously.

"We can't do that," said Bob Brothers (the Giraffe), speaking more promptly than usual. "There's his wife and youngsters to consider, yer know."

"He something well deserted his wife," snarled Bogan, "an' now he comes crawlin' back to her to keep him."

"Well," said Mitchell, mildly, "but we ain't all got as much against him as you have, Bogan."

"He made a crimson jail-bird of me!" snapped Bogan.

"Well," said Mitchell, "that didn't hurt you much, anyway; it rather improved your character if anything. Besides, he made a jail-bird of himself afterwards, so you ought to have a fellow-feeling—a feathered feeling, so to speak. Now you needn't be offended, Bogan, we're all jail-birds at heart, only we haven't all got the pluck."

"I'm in favour of blanky well tarrin' an' featherin' him an' kickin' him out of the town!" shouted Bogan. "It would be a good turn to his wife, too; she'd be well rid of the—."

"Perhaps she's fond of him," suggested Mitchell; "I've known such cases before. I saw them sitting together on the veranda last night when they thought no one was looking."

"He deserted her," said One-eyed Bogan, in a climbing-down tone, "and left her to starve."

"Perhaps the police were to blame for that," said Mitchell. "You know you deserted all your old mates once for three months, Bogan, and it wasn't your fault."

"He seems to be a crimson pet of yours, Jack Mitchell," said Bogan, firing up.

"Ah, well, all I know," said Mitchell, standing up and stretching himself wearily, "all I know is that he looked like a gentleman once, and treated us like a gentleman, and cheated us like a gentleman, and ran some of us in like a gentleman, and, as far as I can see, he's served his time like a gentleman and come back to face us and live himself down like a man. I always had a sneaking regard for a gentleman."

"Why, Mitchell, I'm beginning to think you are a gentleman yourself," said Jake Boreham.

"Well," said Mitchell, "I used to have a suspicion once that I had a drop of blue blood in me somewhere, and it worried me a lot; but I asked my old mother about it one day, and she scalded me—God bless her!—and father chased me with a stockwhip, so I gave up making inquiries."

"You'll join the bloomin' Capitalists next," sneered One-eyed Bogan.

"I wish I could, Bogan," said Mitchell. "I'd take a trip to Paris and see for myself whether the Frenchwomen are as bad as they're made out to be, or go to Japan. But what are we going to do about Douglas?"

"Kick the skunk out of town, or boycott him!" said one or two. "He ought to be tarred and feathered and hanged."

"Couldn't do worse than hang him," commented Jake Boreham, cheerfully.

"Oh, yes, we could," said Mitchell, sitting down, resting his elbows on his knees, and marking his points with one forefinger on the other. "For instance, we might boil him slow in tar. We might skin him alive. We might put him in a cage and poke him with sticks, with his wife and children in another cage to look on and enjoy the fun."

The chaps, who had been sitting quietly listening to Mitchell, and grinning, suddenly became serious and shifted their positions uneasily.

"But I can tell you what would hurt his feelings more than anything else we could do," said Mitchell.

"Well, what is it, Jack?" said Tom Hall, rather impatiently.

"Send round the hat and take up a collection for him," said Mitchell, "enough to let him get away with his wife and

children and start life again in some less respectable town than Bourke. You needn't grin, I'm serious about it."

There was a thoughtful pause, and one or two scratched their heads.

"His wife seems pretty sick," Mitchell went on in a reflective tone. "I passed the place this morning and saw him scrubbing out the floor. He's been doing a bit of house-painting for old Heegard today. I suppose he learnt it in jail. I saw him at work and touched my hat to him."

"What!" cried Tom Hall, affecting to shrink from Mitchell in horror.

"Yes," said Mitchell, "I'm not sure that I didn't take my hat off. Now I know it's not bush religion for a man to touch his hat, except to a funeral, or a strange roof or woman sometimes; but when I meet a braver man than myself I salute him. I've only met two in my life."

"And who were they, Jack?" asked Jake Boreham.

"One," said Mitchell—"one is Douglas, and the other—well, the other was the man I used to be. But that's got nothing to do with it."

"But perhaps Douglas thought you were crowing over him when you took off your hat to him—sneerin' at him, like, Mitchell," reflected Jake Boreham.

"No, Jake," said Mitchell, growing serious suddenly. "There are ways of doing things that another man understands."

They all thought for a while.

"Well," said Tom Hall, "supposing we do take up a collection for him, he'd be too damned proud to take it."

"But that's where we've got the pull on him," said Mitchell, brightening up. "I heard Dr. Morgan say that Mrs. Douglas wouldn't live if she wasn't sent away to a cooler

place, and Douglas knows it; and, besides, one of the little girls is sick. We've got him in a corner and he'll have to take the stuff. Besides, two years in jail takes a lot of the pride out of a man."

"Well, I'm damned if I'll give a sprat to help the man who tried his best to crush the Unions!" said One-eyed Bogan.

"Damned if I will either!" said Barcoo-Rot.

"Now, look here, One-eyed Bogan," said Mitchell, "I don't like to harp on old things, for I know they bore you, but when you returned to public life that time no one talked of kicking you out of town. In fact, I heard that the chaps put a few pounds together to help you get away for a while till you got over your modesty."

No one spoke.

"I passed Douglas's place on my way here from my camp tonight," Mitchell went on musingly, "and I saw him walking up and down in the yard with his sick child in his arms. You remember that little girl, Bogan? I saw her run and pick up your hat and give it to you one day when you were trying to put it on with your feet. You remember, Bogan? The shock nearly sobered you."

There was a very awkward pause. The position had become too psychological altogether and had to be ended somehow. The awkward silence had to be broken, and Bogan broke it. He turned up Bob Brothers's hat, which was lying on the table, and "chucked" in a "quid," qualifying the hat and the quid, and disguising his feelings with the national oath of the land.

"We've had enough of this gory, maudlin, sentimental tommy-rot," he said. "Here, Barcoo, stump up or I'll belt it out of your hide! I'll—I'll take yer to pieces!"

But Douglas didn't leave the town. He sent his wife and

children to Sydney until the heat wave was past, built a new room on to the cottage, and started a book and newspaper shop, and a poultry farm in the back paddock, and flourished.

They called him Mr. Douglas for a while, then Douglas, then Percy Douglas, and now he is well-known as Old Daddy Douglas, and the Sydney *WORKER*, *TRUTH*, and *BULLETIN*, and other democratic rags are on sale at his shop. He is big with schemes for locking the Darling River, and he gets his drink at O'Donohoo's. He is scarcely yet regarded as a straight-out democrat. He was a gentleman once, Mitchell said, and the old blood was not to be trusted. But, last elections, Douglas worked quietly for Unionism, and gave the leaders certain hints, and put them up to various electioneering dodges which enabled them to return, in the face of Monopoly, a Labour member who is likely to go straight as long as any other Labour member.

In a Dry Season

DRAW a wire fence and a few ragged gums, and add some scattered sheep running away from the train. Then you'll have the bush all along the New South Wales western line from Bathurst on.

The railway towns consist of a public house and a general store, with a square tank and a school-house on piles in the nearer distance. The tank stands at the end of the school and is not many times smaller than the building itself. It is safe to call the pub "The Railway Hotel," and the store "The Railway Stores," with an "s." A couple of patient, un-groomed hacks are probably standing outside the pub, while their masters are inside having a drink—several drinks. Also it's safe to draw a sundowner sitting listlessly on a bench on the veranda, reading the *Bulletin*.

The Railway Stores seem to exist only in the shadow of the pub, and it is impossible to conceive either as being independent of the other. There is sometimes a small, oblong weather-board building—unpainted, and generally leaning in one of the eight possible directions, and perhaps with a twist in another—which, from its half-obliterated sign, seems to have started as a rival to the Railway Stores; but the shutters are up and the place empty.

The only town I saw that differed much from the above consisted of a box-bark humpy with a clay chimney, and a woman standing at the door throwing out the wash-up water.

By way of variety, the artist might make a water-colour sketch of a fettler's tent on the line, with a billy hanging over

the fire in front, and three fettlers standing round filling their pipes.

Slop sac suits, red faces, and old-fashioned, flat-brimmed hats, with wire round the brims, begin to drop into the train on the other side of Bathurst; and here and there a hat with three inches of crape round the crown, which perhaps signifies death in the family at some remote date, and perhaps doesn't. Sometimes, I believe, it only means grease under the band. I notice that when a bushman puts crape round his hat he generally leaves it there till the hat wears out, or another friend dies. In the latter case, he buys a new piece of crape. This outward sign of bereavement usually has a jolly red face beneath it. Death is about the only cheerful thing in the bush.

We crossed the Macquarie—a narrow, muddy gutter with a dog swimming across, and three goats interested.

A little farther on we saw the first sundowner. He carried a Royal Alfred, and had a billy in one hand and a stick in the other. He was dressed in a tail-coat turned yellow, a print shirt, and a pair of moleskin trousers, with big square calico patches on the knees; and his old straw hat was covered with calico. Suddenly he slipped his swag, dropped his billy, and ran forward, boldly flourishing the stick. I thought that he was mad, and was about to attack the train, but he wasn't; he was only killing a snake. I didn't have time to see whether he cooked the snake or not—perhaps he only thought of Adam.

Somebody told me that the country was very dry on the other side of Nevertire. It is. I wouldn't like to sit down on it anywhere. The least horrible spot in the bush, in a dry season, is where the bush isn't—where it has been cleared away and a green crop is trying to grow. They talk of settling peo-

ple on the land! Better settle *in* it. I'd rather settle on the water; at least, until some gigantic system of irrigation is perfected in the West.

Along about Byrock we saw the first shearers. They dress like the unemployed, but differ from that body in their looks of independence. They sat on trucks and wool-bales and the fence, watching the train, and hailed Bill, and Jim, and Tom, and asked how those individuals were getting on.

Here we came across soft felt hats with straps round the crowns, and full-bearded faces under them. Also a splendid-looking black tracker in a masher uniform and a pair of Wellington boots.

One or two square-cuts and stand-up collars struggle dismally through to the bitter end. Often a member of the unemployed starts cheerfully out, with a letter from the Government Labour Bureau in his pocket, and nothing else. He has an idea that the station where he has the job will be within easy walking distance of Bourke. Perhaps he thinks there'll be a cart or a buggy waiting for him. He travels for a night and day without a bite to eat, and, on arrival, he finds that the station is eighty or a hundred miles away. Then he has to explain matters to a publican and a coach-driver. God bless the publican and the coach-driver! God forgive our social system!

Native industry was represented at one place along the line by three tiles, a chimney-pot, and a length of piping on a slab.

Somebody said to me, "Yer wanten go out back, young man, if yer wanten see the country. Yer wanten get away from the line." I don't wanten; I've been there.

You could go to the brink of eternity so far as Australia is concerned and yet meet an animated mummy of a swagman

who will talk of going "out back." Out upon the out-back fiend!

About Byrock we met the bush liar in all his glory. He was dressed like—like a bush larrikin. His name was Jim. He had been to a ball where some blank had "touched" his blanky overcoat. The overcoat had a cheque for ten "quid" in the pocket. He didn't seem to feel the loss much. "Wot's ten quid?" He'd been everywhere, including the Gulf country. He still had three or four sheds to go to. He had telegrams in his pocket from half a dozen squatters and supers offering him pens on any terms. He didn't give a blank whether he took them or no. He thought at first he had the telegrams on him but found that he had left them in the pocket of the overcoat aforesaid. He had learned butchering in a day. He was a bit of a scrapper himself and talked a lot about the ring. At the last station where he shore he gave the super the father of a hiding. The super was a big chap, about six-foot-three, and had knocked out Paddy Somebody in one round. He worked with a man who shore four hundred sheep in nine hours.

Here a quiet-looking bushman in a corner of the carriage grew restless, and presently he opened his mouth and took the liar down in about three minutes.

At 5.30 we saw a long line of camels moving out across the sunset. There's something snaky about camels. They remind me of turtles and goannas.

Somebody said, "Here's Bourke."

The Sliprails and the Spur

The colours of the setting sun
 Withdrew across the Western land—
He raised the sliprails, one by one,
 And shot them home with trembling hand;
Her brown hands clung—her face grew pale—
 Ah! quivering chin and eyes that brim!—
One quick, fierce kiss across the rail,
 And, “Good-bye, Mary!” “Good-bye, Jim!”

Oh, he rides hard to race the pain
 Who rides from love, who rides from home;
But he rides slowly home again,
 Whose heart has learnt to love and roam.

A hand upon the horse’s mane,
 And one foot in the stirrup set,
And, stooping back to kiss again,
 With “Good-bye, Mary! don’t you fret!
When I come back”—he laughed for her—
 “‘We do not know how soon ’twill be;
I’ll whistle as I round the spur—
 You let the sliprails down for me.”

She gasped for sudden loss of hope,
 As, with a backward wave to her,
He cantered down the grassy slope
 And swiftly round the darkening spur.

Black-pencilled panels standing high,
And darkness fading into stars,
And, blurring fast against the sky,
A faint white form beside the bars.

And often at the set of sun,
In winter bleak and summer brown,
She'd steal across the little run,
And shyly let the sliprails down,
And listen there when darkness shut
The nearer spur in silence deep,
And when they called her from the hut
Steal home and cry herself to sleep.

And he rides hard to dull the pain
Who rides from one that loves him best . . .
And he rides slowly back again,
Whose restless heart must rove for rest.

No Place for a Woman

HE HAD a selection on a long box-scrub siding of the ridges, about half a mile back and up from the coach road. There were no neighbours that I ever heard of, and the nearest "town" was thirty miles away. He grew wheat among the stumps of his clearing, sold the crop standing to a cocky who lived ten miles away, and had some surplus sons; or, some seasons, he reaped it by hand, had it thrashed by travelling "steamer" (portable steam engine and machine), and carried the grain, a few bags at a time, into the mill on his rickety dray.

He had lived alone for upwards of fifteen years, and was known to those who knew him as "Ratty Howlett."

Trav'lers and strangers failed to see anything uncommonly ratty about him. It was known, or, at least, it was believed, without question, that while at work he kept his horse saddled and bridled, and hung up to the fence, or grazing about, with the saddle on—or, anyway, close handy for a moment's notice—and whenever he caught sight, over the scrub and through the quarter-mile break in it, of a traveller on the road, he would jump on his horse and make after him. If it was a horseman he usually pulled him up inside of a mile. Stories were told of unsuccessful chases, misunderstandings, and complications arising out of Howlett's mania for running down and bailing up travellers. Sometimes he caught one every day for a week, sometimes not one for weeks—it was a lonely track.

The explanation was simple, sufficient, and perfectly natural—from a bushman's point of view. Ratty only wanted

to have a yarn. He and the traveller would camp in the shade for half an hour or so and yarn and smoke. The old man would find out where the traveller came from, and how long he'd been there, and where he was making for, and how long he reckoned he'd be away; and ask if there had been any rain along the traveller's back track, and how the country looked after the drought; and he'd get the traveller's ideas on abstract questions—if he had any. If it was a footman (swagman), and he was short of tobacco, old Howlett always had half a stick ready for him. Sometimes, but very rarely, he'd invite the swagman back to the hut for a pint of tea, or a bit of meat, flour, tea, or sugar, to carry him along the track.

And, after the yarn by the road, they said, the old man would ride back, refreshed, to his lonely selection, and work on into the night as long as he could see his solitary old plough-horse, or the scoop of his long-handled shovel.

And so it was that I came to make his acquaintance—or, rather, that he made mine. I was cantering easily along the track—I was making for the north-west with a packhorse—when about a mile beyond the track to the selection I heard, “Hi, mister!” and saw a dust-cloud following me. I had heard of “Old Ratty Howlett” casually, and so was prepared for him.

A tall, gaunt man on a little horse. He was clean-shaven, except for a frill beard round under his chin, and his long wavy, dark hair was turning grey; a square, strong-faced man, and reminded me of one full-faced portrait of Gladstone more than any other face I had seen. He had large reddish-brown eyes, deep set under heavy eyebrows, and with something of the blackfellow in them—the sort of eyes that will peer at something on the horizon that no one else can see. He had a way of talking to the horizon, too—more than to his

companion; and he had a deep vertical wrinkle in his forehead that no smile could lessen.

I got down and got out my pipe, and we sat on a log and yarned awhile on bush subjects; and then, after a pause, he shifted uneasily, it seemed to me, and asked rather abruptly, and in an altered tone, if I was married. A queer question to ask a traveller; more especially in my case, as I was little more than a boy then.

He talked on again of old things and places where we had both been, and asked after men he knew, or had known—drovers and others—and whether they were living yet. Most of his inquiries went back before my time; but some of the drovers, one or two overlanders with whom he had been mates in his time, had grown old into mine, and I knew them. I notice now, though I didn't then—and if I had it would not have seemed strange from a bush point of view—that he didn't ask for news, nor seem interested in it.

Then after another uneasy pause, during which he scratched crosses in the dust with a stick, he asked me, in the same queer tone and without looking at me or looking up, if I happened to know anything about doctoring—if I'd ever studied it.

I asked him if anyone was sick at his place. He hesitated and said "No." Then I wanted to know why he had asked me that question, and he was so long about answering that I began to think he was hard of hearing, when, at last, he muttered something about my face reminding him of a young fellow he knew of who'd gone to Sydney to "study for a doctor." That might have been, and looked natural enough; but why didn't he ask me straight out if I was the chap he "knowed of?" Travellers do not like beating about the bush in conversation.

He sat in silence for a good while, with his arms folded, and looking absently away over the dead level of the great scrubs that spread from the foot of the ridge we were on to where a blue peak or two of a distant range showed above the bush on the horizon.

I stood up and put my pipe away and stretched. Then he seemed to wake up. "Better come back to the hut and have a bit of dinner," he said. "The missus will about have it ready, and I'll spare you a handful of hay for the horses."

The hay decided it. It was a dry season. I was surprised to hear of a wife, for I thought he was a hatter—I had always heard so; but perhaps I had been mistaken, and he had married lately; or had got a housekeeper. The farm was an irregularly-shaped clearing in the scrub, with a good many stumps in it, with a broken-down two-rail fence along the frontage, and logs and "dog-leg" the rest. It was about as lonely-looking a place as I had seen, and I had seen some out-of-the-way, God-forgotten holes where men lived alone. The hut was in the top corner, a two-roomed slab hut, with a shingle roof, which must have been uncommon round there in the days when that hut was built. I was used to bush carpentering, and saw that the place had been put up by a man who had plenty of life and hope in front of him, and for someone else beside himself. But there were two unfinished skilling-rooms built on to the back of the hut; the posts, sleepers, and wall-plates had been well put up and fitted, and the slab walls were up, but the roof had never been put on. There was nothing but burrs and nettles inside those walls, and an old wooden bullock-plough and a couple of yokes were dry-rotting across the back doorway. The remains of a straw-stack, some hay under a bark humpy, a small iron plough, and an old stiff coffin-headed grey draught-horse, were all that I saw about the place.

But there was a bit of a surprise for me inside, in the shape of a clean white table-cloth on the rough slab table which stood on stakes driven into the ground. The cloth was coarse, but it was a table-cloth—not a spare sheet put on in honour of unexpected visitors—and perfectly clean. The tin plates, pannikins, and jam-tins that served as sugar-bowls and salt-cellars were polished brightly. The walls and fire-place were white-washed, the clay floor swept, and clean sheets of newspaper laid on the slab mantelshelf under the row of biscuit-tins that held the groceries. I thought that his wife, or house-keeper, or whatever she was, was a clean and tidy woman about a house: I saw no woman; but on the sofa—a light, wooden, batten one, with runged arms at the ends—lay a woman's dress on a lot of sheets of old stained and faded newspapers. He looked at it in a puzzled way, knitting his forehead, then took it up absently and folded it. I saw then that it was a riding-skirt and jacket. He bundled them into the newspapers and took them into the bedroom.

"The wife was going on a visit down the creek this afternoon," he said rapidly and without looking at me, but stooping as if to have another look through the door at those distant peaks. "I suppose she got tired o' waitin', and went and took the daughter with her. But, never mind, the grub is ready." There was a camp-oven with a leg of mutton and potatoes sizzling in it on the hearth, and billies hanging over the fire. I noticed the billies had been scraped, and the lids polished.

There seemed to be something queer about the whole business, but then he and his wife might have had a "breeze" during the morning. I thought so during the meal, when the subject of women came up, and he said one never knew how to take a woman; but there was nothing in what he said that

need necessarily have referred to his wife or to any woman in particular. For the rest he talked of old bush things, droving, digging, and old bushranging—but never about live things and living men, unless any of the old mates he talked about happened to be alive by accident. He was very restless in the house, and never took his hat off.

There was a dress and a woman's old hat hanging on the wall near the door, but they looked as if they might have been hanging there for a lifetime. There seemed something queer about the whole place—something wanting; but then all out-of-the-way bush homes are haunted by that something wanting or, more likely, by the spirits of the things that should have been there, but never had been.

As I rode down the track to the road I looked back and saw old Howlett hard at work in a hole round a big stump with his long-handled shovel.

I'd noticed that he moved and walked with a slight list to port, and put his hand once or twice to the small of his back, and I set it down to lumbago, or something of that sort.

Up in the Never-Never I heard from a drover who had known Howlett that his wife had died in the first year, and so this mysterious woman, if she was his wife, was, of course, his second wife. The drover seemed surprised and rather amused at the thought of old Howlett going in for matrimony again.

I rode back that way five years later, from the Never-Never. It was early in the morning—I had ridden since midnight. I didn't think the old man would be up and about; and, besides, I wanted to get on home, and have a look at the old folk, and the mates I'd left behind—and the girl. But I hadn't got far past the point where Howlett's track joined the road, when I happened to look back, and saw him on horse-

back, stumbling down the track. I waited till he came up.

He was riding the old grey draught-horse this time, and it looked very much broken down. I thought it would have come down every step, and fallen like an old rotten humpy in a gust of wind. And the old man was not much better off. I saw at once that he was a very sick man. His face was drawn, and he bent forward as if he was hurt. He got down stiffly and awkwardly, like a hurt man, and as soon as his feet touched the ground he grabbed my arm, or he would have gone down like a man who steps off a train in motion. He hung towards the bank of the road, feeling blindly, as it were, for the ground, with his free hand, as I eased him down. I got my blanket and calico from the pack-saddle to make him comfortable.

"Help me with my back agen the tree," he said. "I must sit up—it's no use lyin' me down."

He sat with his hand gripping his side, and breathed painfully.

"Shall I run up to the hut and get the wife?" I asked.

"No." He spoke painfully. "No!" Then, as if the words were jerked out of him by a spasm: "She ain't there."

I took it that she had left him.

"How long have you been bad? How long has this been coming on?"

He took no notice of the question. I thought it was a touch of rheumatic fever, or something of that sort. "It's gone into my back and sides now—the pain's worse in me back," he said presently.

I had once been mates with a man who died suddenly of heart disease, while at work. He was washing a dish of dirt in the creek near a claim we were working; he let the dish slip into the water, fell back, crying, "Oh, my back!" and was

gone. And now I felt by instinct that it was poor old Howlett's heart that was wrong. A man's heart is in his back as well as in his arms and hands.

The old man had turned pale with the pallor of a man who turns faint in a heat wave, and his arms fell loosely, and his hands rocked helplessly with the knuckles in the dust. I felt myself turning white, too, and the sick, cold, empty feeling in my stomach, for I knew the signs. Bushmen stand in awe of sickness and death.

But after I'd fixed him comfortably and given him a drink from the water-bag the greyness left his face, and he pulled himself together a bit; he drew up his arms and folded them across his chest. He let his head rest back against the tree—his slouch hat had fallen off revealing a broad, white brow, much higher than I expected. He seemed to gaze on the azure fin of the range, showing above the dark blue-green bush on the horizon.

Then he commenced to speak—taking no notice of me when I asked him if he felt better now—to talk in that strange, absent, far-away tone that awes one. He told his story mechanically, monotonously—in set words, as I believe now, as he had often told it before; if not to others, then to the loneliness of the bush. And he used the names of people and places that I had never heard of—just as if I knew them as well as he did.

“I didn't want to bring her up the first year. It was no place for a woman. I wanted her to stay with her people and wait till I'd got the place a little more shipshape. The Phippses took a selection down the creek. I wanted her to wait and come up with them so's she'd have some company—a woman to talk to. They came afterwards, but they didn't stop. It was no place for a woman.

"But Mary would come. She wouldn't stop with her people down-country. She wanted to be with me, and look after me, and work and help me."

He repeated himself a great deal—said the same thing over and over again sometimes. He was only mad on one track. He'd tail off and sit silent for a while; then he'd become aware of me in a hurried, half-scared way, and apologize for putting me to all that trouble, and thank me. "I'll be all right d'reckly. Best take the horses up to the hut and have some breakfast; you'll find it by the fire. I'll foller you, d'reckly. The wife'll be waitin' an'——" He would drop off, and be going again presently on the old track:

"Her mother was coming up to stay a while at the end of the year, but the old man hurt his leg. Then her married sister was coming, but one of the youngsters got sick and there was trouble at home. I saw the doctor in the town—thirty miles from here—and fixed it up with him. He was a boozier—I'd 'a shot him afterwards. I fixed it up with a woman in the town to come and stay. I thought Mary was wrong in her time. She must have been a month or six weeks out. But I listened to her. . . . Don't argue with a woman. Don't listen to a woman. Do the right thing. We should have had a mother woman to talk to us. But it was no place for a woman!"

He rocked his head, as if from some old agony of mind, against the tree-trunk.

"She was took bad suddenly one night, but it passed off. False alarm. I was going to ride somewhere, but she said to wait till daylight. Someone was sure to pass. She was a brave and sensible girl, but she had a terror of being left alone. It was no place for a woman!

"There was a black shepherd three or four miles away. I

rode over while Mary was asleep, and started the black boy into town. I'd 'a shot him afterwards if I'd 'a caught him. The old black gin was dead the week before, or Mary would a' bin all right. She was tied up in a bunch with strips of blanket and greenhide, and put in a hole. So there wasn't even a gin near the place. It was no place for a woman!

"I was watchin' the road at daylight, and I was watchin' the road at dusk. I went down in the hollow and stooped down to get the gap agen the sky, so's I could see if anyone was comin' over. . . . I'd get on the horse and gallop along towards the town for five miles, but something would drag me back, and then I'd race for fear she'd die before I got to the hut. I expected the doctor every five minutes.

"It come on about daylight next morning. I ran back'ards and for'ards between the hut and the road like a madman. And no one come. I was running amongst the logs and stumps, and fallin' over them, when I saw a cloud of dust agen sunrise. It was her mother and sister in the spring-cart, an' just catchin' up to them was the doctor in his buggy with the woman I'd arranged with in town. The mother and sister were staying at the town for the night, when they heard of the black boy. It took him a day to ride there. I'd 'a shot him if I'd 'a caught him ever after. The doctor'd been on the drunk. If I'd had the gun and known she was gone I'd have shot him in the buggy. They said she was dead. And the child was dead, too.

"They blamed me, but I didn't want her to come; it was no place for a woman. I never saw them again after the funeral. I didn't want to see them any more."

He moved his head wearily against the tree, and presently drifted on again in a softer tone—his eyes and voice were growing more absent and dreamy and far away.

"About a month after—or a year, I lost count of the time long ago—she came back to me. At first she'd come in the night, then sometimes when I was at work—and she had the baby—it was a girl—in her arms. And by and by she came to stay altogether. . . . I didn't blame her for going away that time—it was no place for a woman. . . . She was a good wife to me. She was a jolly girl when I married her. The little girl grew up like her. I was going to send her down-country to be educated—it was no place for a girl.

"But a month, or a year, ago, Mary left me, and took the daughter, and never came back till last night—this morning, I think it was. I thought at first it was the girl with her hair done up, and her mother's skirt on, to surprise her old dad. But it was Mary, my wife—as she was when I married her. She said she couldn't stay, but she'd wait for me on the road; on—the road."

His arms fell, and his face went white. I got the water-bag. "Nother turn like that and you'll be gone," I thought, as he came to again. Then I suddenly thought of a shanty that had been started, when I came that way last, ten or twelve miles along the road, towards the town. There was nothing for it but to leave him and ride on for help, and a cart of some kind.

"You wait here till I come back," I said. "I'm going for the doctor."

He roused himself a little. "Best come up to the hut and get some grub. The wife'll be waiting. . . ." He was off the track again.

"Will you wait while I take the horse down to the creek?"

"Yes—I'll wait by the road."

"Look!" I said, "I'll leave the water-bag handy. Don't move till I come back."

"I won't move—I'll wait by the road," he said.

I took the packhorse, which was the freshest and best, threw the pack-saddle and bags into a bush, left the other horse to take care of itself, and started for the shanty, leaving the old man with his back to the tree, his arms folded, and his eyes on the horizon.

One of the chaps at the shanty rode on for the doctor at once, while the other came back with me in a spring-cart. He told me that old Howlett's wife had died in child-birth the first year on the selection—"She was a fine girl 'he'd' heerd!" He told me the story as the old man had told it, and in pretty well the same words, even to giving it as his opinion that it was no place for a woman. "And he 'hatted' and brooded over it till he went ratty."

I knew the rest. He not only thought that his wife, or the ghost of his wife, had been with him all those years, but that the child had lived and grown up, and that the wife did the housework; which, of course, he must have done himself.

When we reached him his knotted hands had fallen for the last time, and they were at rest. I only took one quick look at his face, but could have sworn that he was gazing at the blue fin of the range on the horizon of the bush.

Up at the hut the table was set as on the first day I saw it, and breakfast in the camp-oven by the fire.

The Water-Lily

A lonely young wife
In her dreaming discerns
A lily-decked pool
With a border of ferns,
And a beautiful child,
With butterfly wings,
Trips down to the edge of the water and sings:
“Come, mamma! come!
Quick! follow me!
Step out on the leaves of the water-lily!”

And the lonely young wife,
Her heart beating wild,
Cries, “Wait till I come,
Till I reach you, my child!”
But the beautiful child
With butterfly wings
Steps out on the leaves of the lily and sings:
“Come, mamma! come!
Quick! follow me!
And step on the leaves of the water-lily!”

And the wife in her dreaming
Steps out on the stream,
But the lily leaves sink
And she wakes from her dream.
Ah, the waking is sad,
For the tears that it brings,

And she knows 'tis her dead baby's spirit that sings:
 "Come, mamma! come!
 Quick! follow me!
Step out on the leaves of the water-lily!"

Mr. Smellingscheck

I MET him in a sixpenny restaurant—"All meals, 6d.—Good beds, 1s." That was before sixpenny restaurants rose to a third-class position, and became possibly respectable places to live in, through the establishment, beneath them, of four-penny hash-houses (good beds, 6d.), and beneath *them* again, of *three*-penny "dining-rooms—*clean* beds, 4d."

There were five beds in our apartment, the head of one against the foot of the next, and so on round the room, with a space where the door and wash-stand were. I chose the bed the head of which was near the foot of his, because he looked like a man who took his bath regularly. I should like, in the interests of sentiment, to describe the place as a miserable, filthy, evil-smelling garret; but I can't—because it wasn't. The room was large and airy; the floor was scrubbed and the windows cleaned at least once a week, and the beds were kept fresh and neat, which is more—a good deal more—than can be said of many genteel private boarding-houses. The lodgers were mostly respectable unemployed, and one or two—fortunate men!—in work; it was the casual boozier, the professional loafer, and the occasional spieler—the one-shilling-bedmen—who made the place objectionable, not the hardworking people who paid ten pounds a week for the house; and, but for the one-night lodgers and the big gilt black-and-red bordered and "shaded" "6d." in the window—which made me glance guiltily up and down the street, like a burglar about to do a job, before I went in—I was pretty comfortable there.

They called him "Mr. Smellingscheck," and treated him with a peculiar kind of deference, the reason for which they themselves were doubtless unable to explain or even understand. The haggard woman who made the beds called him "Mr. Smell-'is-check." Poor fellow! I didn't think, by the look of him, that he'd smelt his cheque, or anyone else's, or that anyone else had smelt his, for many a long day. He was a fat man, slow and placid. He looked like a typical monopolist who had unaccountably got into a suit of clothes belonging to a Domain unemployed, and hadn't noticed, or had entirely forgotten, the circumstance in his business cares—if such a word as care could be connected with such a calm, self-contained nature. He wore a suit of cheap slops of some kind of shoddy "tweed." The coat was too small and the trousers too short, and they were drawn up to meet the waistcoat—which they did with painful difficulty, now and then showing, by way of protest, two pairs of brass buttons and the ends of the brace-straps; and they seemed to blame the irresponsive waistcoat or the wearer for it all. Yet he never gave way to assist them. A pair of burst elastic-sides were in full evidence, and a rim of cloudy sock, with a hole in it, showed at every step.

But he put on his clothes and wore them like—like a gentleman. He had two white shirts, and they were both dirty. He'd lay them out on the bed, turn them over, regard them thoughtfully, choose that which appeared to his calm understanding to be the cleaner, and put it on, and wear it until it was unmistakably dirtier than the other; then he'd wear the other till it was dirtier than the first. He managed his three collars the same way. His handkerchiefs were washed in the bathroom, and dried, without the slightest disguise, in the bedroom. He never hurried in anything. The way he

cleaned his teeth, shaved, and made his toilet almost transformed the place, in my imagination, into a gentleman's dressing-room.

He talked politics and such things in the abstract—always in the abstract—calmly in the abstract. He was an old-fashioned Conservative of the Sir Leicester Dedlock style. When he was moved by an extra shower of aggressive democratic cant—which was seldom—he defended Capital, but only as if it needed no defence, and as if its opponents were merely thoughtless, ignorant children whom he condescended to set right because of their inexperience and for their own good. He stuck calmly to his own order—the order which had dropped him like a foul thing when the bottom dropped out of his boom, whatever that was. He never talked of his misfortunes.

He took his meals at the little greasy table in the dark corner downstairs, just as if he were dining at the Exchange. He had a chop—rather well-done—and a sheet of the *Herald* for breakfast. He carried two handkerchiefs; he used one for a handkerchief and the other for a table-napkin, and sometimes folded it absently and laid it on the table. He rose slowly, putting his chair back, took down his battered old green hat, and regarded it thoughtfully—as though it had just occurred to him in a calm, casual way that he'd drop into his hatter's, if he had time, on his way down town, and get it blocked, or else send the messenger round with it during business hours. He'd draw his stick out from behind the next chair, plant it, and, if you hadn't quite finished your side of the conversation, stand politely waiting until you were done. Then he'd look for a suitable reply into his hat, put it on, give it a twitch to settle it on his head—as gentlemen do a "chimney-pot"—step out into the gangway,

turn his face to the door, and walk slowly out on to the middle of the pavement—looking more placidly well-to-do than ever. The saying is that clothes make a man, but *he* made his almost respectable just by wearing them. Then he'd consult his watch—(he stuck to the watch all through, and it seemed a good one—I often wondered why he didn't pawn it); then he'd turn slowly, right turn, and look down the street. Then slowly back, left-about turn, and take a cool survey in that direction, as if calmly undecided whether to take a cab and drive to the Exchange, or (as it was a very fine morning, and he had half an hour to spare) walk there and drop in at his club on the way. He'd conclude to walk. I never saw him go anywhere in particular, but he walked and stood as if he could.

Coming quietly into the room one day, I surprised him sitting at the table with his arms lying on it and his face resting on them. I heard something like a sob. He rose hastily, and gathered up some papers which were on the table; then he turned round, rubbing his forehead and eyes with his forefinger and thumb, and told me that he suffered from—something, I forget the name of it, but it was a well-to-do ailment. His manner seemed a bit jolted and hurried for a minute or so, and then he was himself again. He told me he was leaving for Melbourne next day. He left while I was out, and left an envelope downstairs for me. There was nothing in it except a pound note.

I saw him in Brisbane afterwards, well-dressed, getting out of a cab at the entrance of one of the leading hotels. But his manner was no more self-contained and well-to-do than it had been in the old sixpenny days—because it couldn't be. We had a well-to-do whisky together, and he talked of things in the abstract. He seemed just as if he'd met me in *The Australia*.

Bill, The Ventriloquial Rooster

“WHEN we were up-country on the selection, we had a rooster at our place, named Bill,” said Mitchell; “a big mongrel of no particular breed, though the old lady said he was a ‘brammer’—and many an argument she had with the old man about it too; she was just as stubborn and obstinate in her opinion as the governor was in his. But, anyway, we called him Bill, and didn’t take any particular notice of him till a cousin of some of us came from Sydney on a visit to the country, and stayed at our place because it was cheaper than stopping at a pub. Well, somehow this chap got interested in Bill, and studied him for two or three days, and at last he says:

“ ‘Why, that rooster’s a ventriloquist!’

“ ‘A what?’

“ ‘A ventriloquist!’

“ ‘Go along with yer!’

“ ‘But he is. I’ve heard of cases like this before; but this is the first I’ve come across. Bill’s a ventriloquist right enough.’

“Then we remembered that there wasn’t another rooster within five miles—our only neighbour, an Irishman named Page, didn’t have one at the time—and we’d often heard another cock crow, but didn’t think to take any notice of it. We watched Bill, and sure enough he *was* a ventriloquist. The ‘ka-cocka’ would come all right, but the ‘co-ka-koo-oi-oo’ seemed to come from a distance. And sometimes the whole crow would go wrong, and come back like an echo

that had been lost for a year. Bill would stand on tiptoe, and hold his elbows out, and curve his neck, and go two or three times as if he was swallowing nest-eggs, and nearly break his neck and burst his gizzard; and then there'd be no sound at all where he was—only a cock crowing in the distance.

“And pretty soon we could see that Bill was in great trouble about it himself. You see, he didn't know it was himself—thought it was another rooster challenging him, and he wanted badly to find that other bird. He would get up on the wood-heap, and crow and listen—crow and listen again—crow and listen, and then he'd go up to the top of the paddock, and get up on the stack, and crow and listen there. Then down to the other end of the paddock, and get up on a mullock-heap, and crow and listen there. Then across to the other side and up on a log among the saplings, and crow 'n' listen some more. He searched all over the place for that other rooster, but, of course, couldn't find him. Sometimes he'd be out all day crowing and listening all over the country, and then come home dead tired, and rest and cool off in a hole that the hens had scratched for him in a damp place under the water-cask sledge.

“Well, one day Page brought home a big white rooster, and when he let it go it climbed up on Page's stack and crowed, to see if there was any more roosters round there. Bill had come home tired; it was a hot day, and he'd rooted out the hens, and was having a spell-oh under the cask when the white rooster crowed. Bill didn't lose any time getting out and on to the wood-heap, and then he waited till he heard the crow again; then he crowed, and the other rooster crowed again, and they crowed at each other for three days, and called each other all the wretches they could lay their

tongues to, and after that they implored each other to come out and be made into chicken soup and feather pillows. But neither'd come. You see, there were *three* crows—there was Bill's crow, and the ventriloquist crow, and the white rooster's crow—and each rooster thought that there was *two* roosters in the opposition camp, and that he mightn't get fair play, and, consequently, both were afraid to put up their hands.

“But at last Bill couldn't stand it any longer. He made up his mind to go and have it out, even if there was a whole agricultural show of prize and honourable-mention fighting-cocks in Page's yard. He got down from the wood-heap and started off across the ploughed field, his head down, his elbows out, and his thick awkward legs prodding away at the furrows behind for all they were worth.

“I wanted to go down badly and see the fight, and barrack for Bill. But I daren't, because I'd been coming up the road late the night before with my brother Joe, and there was about three panels of turkeys roosting along on the top rail of Page's front fence; and we brushed 'em with a bough, and they got up such a blessed gobbling fuss about it that Page came out in his shirt and saw us running away; and I knew he was laying for us with a bullock-whip. Besides, there was friction between the two families on account of a thoroughbred bull that Page borrowed and wouldn't lend to us, and that got into our paddock on account of me mending a panel in the party fence, and carelessly leaving the top rail down after sundown while our cows was moving round there in the saplings.

“So there was too much friction for me to go down, but I climbed a tree as near the fence as I could and watched. Bill reckoned he'd found that rooster at last. The white rooster

wouldn't come down from the stack, so Bill went up to him, and they fought there till they tumbled down the other side, and I couldn't see any more. Wasn't I wild? I'd have given my dog to have seen the rest of the fight. I went down to the far side of Page's fence and climbed a tree there, but, of course, I couldn't see anything, so I came home the back way. Just as I got home Page came round to the front and sung out, 'Insoid there!' And me and Jim went under the house like snakes and looked out round a pile. But Page was all right—he had a broad grin on his face, and Bill safe under his arm. He put Bill down on the ground very carefully, and says he to the old folks:

“ ‘Yer rooster knocked the stuffin' out of my rooster, but I bear no malice. 'Twas a grand foight.’ ”

“And then the old man and Page had a yarn, and got pretty friendly after that. And Bill didn't seem to bother about any more ventriloquism; but the white rooster spent a lot of time looking for that other rooster. Perhaps he thought he'd have better luck with him. But Page was on the look-out all the time to get a rooster that would lick ours. He did nothing else for a month but ride round and inquire about roosters; and at last he borrowed a game-bird in town, left five pounds deposit on him, and brought him home. And Page and the old man agreed to have a match—about the only thing they'd agreed about for five years. And they fixed it up for a Sunday when the old lady and girls and kids were going on a visit to some relations, about fifteen miles away—to stop all night. The guv'nor made me go with them on horseback; but I knew what was up, and so my pony went lame about a mile along the road, and I had to come back and turn him out in the top paddock, and hide the saddle and bridle in a hollow log, and sneak home

and climb up on the roof of the shed. It was a awful hot day, and I had to keep climbing backward and forward over the ridge-pole all the morning to keep out of sight of the old man, for he was moving about a good deal.

“Well, after dinner, the fellows from roundabout began to ride in and hang up their horses round the place till it looked as if there was going to be a funeral. Some of the chaps saw me, of course, but I tipped them the wink, and they gave me the office whenever the old man happened around.

“Well, Page came along with his game-rooster. Its name was Jim. It wasn’t much to look at, and it seemed a good deal smaller and weaker than Bill. Some of the chaps were disgusted, and said it wasn’t a game-rooster at all; Bill’d settle it in one lick, and they wouldn’t have any fun.

“Well, they brought the game one out and put him down near the wood-heap, and routed Bill out from under his cask. He got interested at once. He looked at Jim, and got up on the wood-heap and crowed and looked at Jim again. He reckoned *this* at last was the fowl that had been humbugging him all along. Presently his trouble caught him, and then he’d crow and take a squint at the game ’un, and crow again and have another squint at gamey, and try to crow and keep his eye on the game-rooster at the same time. But Jim never committed himself, until at last he happened to gape just after Bill’s whole crow went wrong, and Bill spotted him. He reckoned he’d caught him this time, and he got down off that wood-heap and went for the foe. But Jim ran away—and Bill ran after him.

“Round and round the wood-heap they went, and round the shed, and round the house and under it, and back again, and round the wood-heap and over it and round the other

way, and kept it up for close on an hour. Bill's bill was just within an inch or so of the game-rooster's tail feathers most of the time, but he couldn't get any nearer, do how he liked. And all the time the fellers kept chyackin' Page and singing out, 'What price yer game 'un, Page! Go it, Bill! Go it, old cock!' and all that sort of thing. Well, the game-rooster went as if it was a go-as-you-please, and he didn't care if it lasted a year. He didn't seem to take any interest in the business, but Bill got excited, and by and by he got mad. He held his head lower and lower and his wings further and further out from his sides, and prodded away harder and harder at the ground behind, but it wasn't any use. Jim seemed to keep ahead without trying. They stuck to the wood-heap towards the last. They went round first one way for a while, and then the other for a change, and now and then they'd go over the top to break the monotony; and the chaps got more interested in the race than they would have been in the fight—and bet on it, too. But Bill was handicapped with his weight. He was done up at last; he slowed down till he couldn't waddle, and then, when he was thoroughly knocked up, that game-rooster turned on him, and gave him the father of a hiding.

"And my father caught me when I'd got down in the excitement, and wasn't thinking, and *he* gave *me* the step-father of a hiding. But he had a lively time with the old lady afterwards, over the cock-fight.

"Bill was so disgusted with himself that he went under the cask and died."

When the Army Prays for Watty

When the kindly hours of darkness, save for light of moon
and star,

Hide the picture on the signboard over Doughty's Horse
Bazaar;

When the last rose-tint is fading on the distant mulga scrub,
Then the Army prays for Watty at the entrance of his pub.
Watty lounges in his arm-chair, in its old accustomed place,
With a fatherly expression on his round and passive face;
And his arms are clasped before him in a calm, contented
way,

And he nods his head and dozes when he hears the Army
pray.

And I wonder if he ponders on the distant years and dim,
Or his chances Over Yonder, when the Army prays for him.
Has he not a fear connected with the warm place down
below,

Where, according to good Christians, all the publicans
should go?

But his features give no token of a feeling in his breast,
Save of peace that is unbroken and a conscience well at rest;
And we guzzle as we guzzled long before the Army came,
And the loafers wait for "shouters," and they get there just
the same.

It would take a lot of praying, lots of thumping on the drum,
To prepare our sinful, straying, erring souls for Kingdom
Come;

But I love my fellow-sinners, and I hope, upon the whole,
That the Army gets a hearing when it prays for Watty's soul.

The Shearing of the Cook's Dog

THE dog was a little conservative mongrel poodle, with long dirty white hair all over him—longest and most over his eyes, which glistened through it like black beads. Also he seemed to have a bad liver. He always looked as if he was suffering from a sense of injury, past or to come. It did come. He used to follow the shearers up to the shed after breakfast every morning, but he couldn't have done this for love—there was none lost between him and the men. He wasn't an affectionate dog; it wasn't his style. He would sit close against the shed wall for an hour or two, and hump himself, and sulk, and look sick, and snarl whenever the "Sheep-Ho" dog passed, or a man took notice of him. Then he'd go home. What he wanted at the shed at all was only known to himself; no one asked him to come. Perhaps he came to collect evidence against us. The cook called him "my darg," and the men called the cook "Curry-and-Rice," with "old" before it mostly.

Curry-and-Rice was a little, dumpy, fat man, with a round, smooth, good-humoured face, a bald head, feet wide apart, and a big blue cotton apron. He had been a ship's cook. He didn't look so much out of place in the hut as the hut did around him. To a man with a vivid imagination, if he regarded the cook dreamily for a while, the floor might seem to roll gently like the deck of a ship, and mast, rigging, and cuddy rise mistily in the background. Curry might have dreamed of the cook's galley at times, but he never mentioned it. He ought to have been at sea, or comfortably dead

and stowed away under ground, instead of cooking for a mob of unredeemed rouseabouts in an uncivilized shed in the scrub, six hundred miles from the ocean.

They chyacked the cook occasionally, and grumbled—or pretended to grumble—about their tucker, and then he'd make a roughly pathetic speech, with many references to his age, and the hardness of his work, and the smallness of his wages, and the inconsiderateness of the men. Then the joker of the shed would sympathize with the cook with his tongue and one side of his face—and joke with the other.

One day in the shed, during smoke-ho the devil whispered to a shearer named Geordie that it would be a lark to shear the cook's dog—the Evil One having previously arranged that the dog should be there, sitting close to Geordie's pen, and that the shearer should have a fine lamb comb on his machine. The idea was communicated through Geordie to his mates, and met with entire and general approval; and for five or ten minutes the air was kept alive by shouting and laughter of the men, and the protestations of the dog. When the shearer touched skin, he yelled "Tar!" and when he finished he shouted "Wool away!" at the top of his voice, and his mates echoed him with a will. A picker-up gathered the fleece with a great show of labour and care, and tabled it, to the well-ventilated disgust of old Scotty, the wool-roller. When they let the dog go he struck for home—a clean-shaven poodle, except for a ferocious moustache and a tuft at the end of his tail.

The cook's assistant said that he'd have given a five-pound note for a portrait of Curry-and-Rice when that poodle came back from the shed. The cook was naturally very indignant; he was surprised at first—then he got mad. He had the whole afternoon to get worked up in, and at tea-time he went for the men properly.

“Wotter yer growlin’ about?” asked one. “Wot’s the matter with yer, anyway?”

“I don’t know nothing about yer dog!” protested a rouseabout; “wotyer gettin’ on to me for?”

“Wotter they bin doin’ to the cook now?” inquired a ring-leader innocently, as he sprawled into his place at the table. “Can’t yer let Curry alone? Wot d’yer want to be chyackin’ him for? Give it a rest.”

“Well, look here, chaps,” observed Geordie, in a determined tone. “I call it a shame, that’s what I call it. Why couldn’t you leave an old man’s dog alone? It was a mean, dirty trick to do, and I suppose you thought it funny. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, the whole lot of you, for a dratted mob of crawlers. If I’d been there it wouldn’t have been done; and I wouldn’t blame Curry if he was to poison the whole convicted push.”

General lowering of faces and pulling of hats down over eyes, and great working of knives and forks; also sounds like men trying not to laugh.

“Why couldn’t you play a trick on another man’s darg?” said Curry. “It’s no use tellin’ me. I can see it all as plain as if I was on the board—all of you runnin’ an’ shoutin’ an’ cheerin’ an’ laughin’, and all over shearin’ and ill-usin’ a poor little darg! Why couldn’t you play a trick on another man’s darg? . . . It doesn’t matter much—I’m nearly done cookin’ here now. . . . Only that I’ve got a family to think of I wouldn’t ‘a’ stayed so long. I’ve got to be up at five every mornin’, an’ don’t get to bed till ten at night, cookin’ an’ bakin’ an’ cleanin’ for you an’ waitin’ on you. First one lot in from the wool-wash, an’ then one lot in from the shed, an’ another lot in, an’ at all hours an’ times, an’ all wantin’ their meals kept hot, an’ then they ain’t satisfied. And now you

must go an' play a dirty trick on my darg! Why couldn't you have a lark with some other man's darg!"

Geordie bowed his head and ate as though he had a cud, like a cow, and could chew at leisure. He seemed ashamed, as indeed we all were—secretly. Poor old Curry's oft-repeated appeal, "Why couldn't you play a trick with another man's dog?" seemed to have something pathetic about it. The men didn't notice that it lacked philanthropy and logic, and probably the cook didn't notice it either, else he wouldn't have harped on it. Geordie lowered his face, and just then, as luck or the devil would have it, he caught sight of the dog. Then he exploded.

The cook usually forgot all about it in an hour, and then, if you asked him what the chaps had been doing, he'd say, "Oh, nothing! nothing! Only their larks!" But this time he didn't; he was narked for three days, and the chaps marvelled much and were sorry, and treated him with great respect and consideration. They hadn't thought he'd take it so hard—the dog-shearing business—else they wouldn't have done it. They were a little puzzled too, and getting a trifle angry, and would shortly be prepared to take the place of the injured party, and make things unpleasant for the cook. However, he brightened up towards the end of the week, and then it all came out.

"I wouldn't 'a' minded so much," he said, standing by the table with a dipper in one hand, a bucket in the other, and a smile on his face. "I wouldn't 'a' minded so much only they'll think me a flash man in Bourke with that theer darg trimmed up like that!"

The Loaded Dog

DAVE REGAN, Jim Bently, and Andy Page were sinking a shaft at Stony Creek in search of a rich gold quartz reef which was supposed to exist in the vicinity. There is always a rich reef supposed to exist in the vicinity; the only questions are whether it is ten feet or hundreds beneath the surface, and in which direction. They had struck some pretty solid rock, also water which kept them bailing. They used the old-fashioned blasting-powder and time-fuse. They'd make a sausage or cartridge of blasting-powder in a skin of strong calico or canvas, the mouth sewn and bound round the end of the fuse; they'd dip the cartridge in melted tallow to make it watertight, get the drill-hole as dry as possible, drop in the cartridge with some dry dust, and wad and ram with stiff clay and broken brick. Then they'd light the fuse and get out of the hole and wait. The result was usually an ugly pot-hole in the bottom of the shaft and half a barrow-load of broken rock.

There was plenty of fish in the creek, fresh-water bream, cod, cat-fish, and tailers. The party were fond of fish, and Andy and Dave of fishing. Andy would fish for three hours at a stretch if encouraged by a "nibble" or a "bite" now and then—say once in twenty minutes. The butcher was always willing to give meat in exchange for fish when they caught more than they could eat; but now it was winter, and these fish wouldn't bite. However, the creek was low, just a chain of muddy waterholes, from the hole with a few bucketfuls in it to the sizable pool with an average depth of six or seven

feet, and they could get fish by bailing out the smaller holes or muddying up the water in the larger ones till the fish rose to the surface. There was the cat-fish, with spikes growing out of the sides of its head, and if you got pricked you'd know it, as Dave said. Andy took off his boots, tucked up his trousers, and went into a hole one day to stir up the mud with his feet, and he knew it. Dave scooped one out with his hand and got pricked, and he knew it, too; his arm swelled, and the pain throbbed up into his shoulder, and down into his stomach, too, he said, like a toothache he had once, and kept him awake for two nights—only the toothache pain had a "burred edge," Dave said.

Dave got an idea.

"Why not blow the fish up in the big waterhole with a cartridge?" he said. "I'll try it."

He thought the thing out and Andy Page worked it out. Andy usually put Dave's theories into practice if they were practicable, or bore the blame for the failure and the chaffing of his mates if they weren't.

He made a cartridge about three times the size of those they used in the rock. Jim Bently said it was big enough to blow the bottom out of the river. The inner skin was of stout calico; Andy stuck the end of a six-foot piece of fuse well down in the powder and bound the mouth of the bag firmly to it with whipcord. The idea was to sink the cartridge in the water with the open end of the fuse attached to a float on the surface, ready for lighting. Andy dipped the cartridge in melted bees'-wax to make it watertight. "We'll have to leave it some time before we light it," said Dave, "to give the fish time to get over their scare when we put it in, and come nosing round again; so we'll want it well watertight."

Round the cartridge Andy, at Dave's suggestion, bound a strip of sail canvas—that they used for making water-bags—to increase the force of the explosion, and round that he pasted layers of stiff brown paper—on the plan of the sort of fireworks we called “gun-crackers.” He let the paper dry in the sun, then he sewed a covering of two thicknesses of canvas over it, and bound the thing from end to end with stout fishing-line. Dave's schemes were elaborate, and he often worked his inventions out to nothing. The cartridge was rigid and solid enough now—a formidable bomb; but Andy and Dave wanted to be sure. Andy sewed on another layer of canvas, dipped the cartridge in melted tallow, twisted a length of fencing-wire round it as an afterthought, dipped it in tallow again, and stood it carefully against a tent-peg, where he'd know where to find it, and wound the fuse loosely round it. Then he went to the camp-fire to try some potatoes which were boiling in their jackets in a billy, and to see about frying some chops for dinner. Dave and Jim were at work in the claim that morning.

They had a big black young retriever dog—or rather an overgrown pup, a big, foolish, four-footed mate, who was always slobbering round them and lashing their legs with his heavy tail that swung round like a stock-whip. Most of his head was usually a red, idiotic slobbering grin of appreciation of his own silliness. He seemed to take life, the world, his two-legged mates, and his own instinct as a huge joke. He'd retrieve anything; he carted back most of the camp rubbish that Andy threw away. They had a cat that died in hot weather, and Andy threw it a good distance away in the scrub; and early one morning the dog found the cat, after it had been dead a week or so, and carried it back to camp, and laid it just inside the tent-flaps, where it could best make its

presence known when the mates should rise and begin to sniff suspiciously in the sickly smothering atmosphere of the summer sunrise. He used to retrieve them when they went in swimming; he'd jump in after them, and take their hands in his mouth, and try to swim out with them, and scratch their naked bodies with his paws. They loved him for his good-heartedness and his foolishness, but when they wished to enjoy a swim they had to tie him up in camp.

He watched Andy with great interest all the morning making the cartridge, and hindered him considerably, trying to help; but about noon he went off to the claim to see how Dave and Jim were getting on, and to come home to dinner with them. Andy saw them coming, and put a panful of mutton-chops on the fire. Andy was cook to-day; Dave and Jim stood with their backs to the fire, as bushmen do in all weathers, waiting till dinner should be ready. The retriever went nosing round after something he seemed to have missed.

Andy's brain still worked on the cartridge; his eye was caught by the glare of an empty kerosene-tin lying in the bushes, and it struck him that it wouldn't be a bad idea to sink the cartridge packed with clay, sand, or stones in the tin, to increase the force of the explosion. He may have been all out, from a scientific point of view, but the notion looked all right to him. Jim Bently, by the way, wasn't interested in their "damned silliness." Andy noticed an empty treacle-tin—the sort with the little tin neck or spout soldered on to the top for the convenience of pouring out the treacle—and it struck him that this would have made the best kind of cartridge-case: he would only have had to pour in the powder, stick the fuse in through the neck, and cork and seal it with bees'-wax. He was turning to suggest this to Dave, when Dave glanced over his shoulder to see how the chops were doing—

and bolted. He explained afterwards that he thought he heard the pan spluttering extra, and looked to see if the chops were burning. Jim Bently looked behind and bolted after Dave. Andy stood stock-still, staring after them.

“Run, Andy! Run!” they shouted back at him. “Run! Look behind you, you fool!” Andy turned slowly and looked, and there, close behind him, was the retriever with the cartridge in his mouth—wedged into his broadest and silliest grin. And that wasn’t all. The dog had come round the fire to Andy, and the loose end of the fuse had trailed and waggled over the burning sticks into the blaze; Andy had slit and nicked the firing end of the fuse well, and now it was hissing and spitting properly.

Andy’s legs started with a jolt; his legs started before his brain did, and he made after Dave and Jim. And the dog followed Andy.

Dave and Jim were good runners—Jim the best—for a short distance; Andy was slow and heavy, but he had the strength and the wind and could last. The dog capered round him, delighted as a dog could be to find his mates, as he thought, on for a frolic. Dave and Jim kept shouting back, “Don’t foller us! Don’t foller us, you coloured fool!” But Andy kept on, no matter how they dodged. They could never explain, any more than the dog, why they followed each other, but so they ran, Dave keeping in Jim’s track in all its turnings, Andy after Dave, and the dog circling round Andy—the live fuse swishing in all directions and hissing and spluttering and stinking. Jim yelling to Dave not to follow him, Dave shouting to Andy to go in another direction—to “spread out,” and Andy roaring at the dog to go home. Then Andy’s brain began to work, stimulated by the crisis: he tried to get a running kick at the dog, but the dog dodged; he snatched up sticks and stones

and threw them at the dog and ran on again. The retriever saw that he'd made a mistake about Andy, and left him and bounded after Dave. Dave, who had the presence of mind to think that the fuse's time wasn't up yet, made a dive and a grab for the dog, caught him by the tail, and as he swung round snatched the cartridge out of his mouth and flung it as far as he could; the dog immediately bounded after it and retrieved it. Dave roared and cursed at the dog, who, seeing that Dave was offended, left him and went after Jim, who was well ahead. Jim swung to a sapling and went up it like a native bear; it was a young sapling, and Jim couldn't safely get more than ten or twelve feet from the ground. The dog laid the cartridge, as carefully as if it were a kitten, at the foot of the sapling, and capered and leaped and whooped joyously round under Jim. The big pup reckoned that this was part of the lark—he was all right now—it was Jim who was out for a spree. The fuse sounded as if it were going a mile a minute. Jim tried to climb higher and the sapling bent and cracked. Jim fell on his feet and ran. The dog swooped on the cartridge and followed. It all took but a very few moments. Jim ran to a digger's hole, about ten feet deep, and dropped down into it—landing on soft mud—and was safe. The dog grinned sardonically down on him, over the edge, for a moment, as if he thought it would be a good lark to drop the cartridge down on Jim.

“Go away, Tommy,” said Jim feebly, “go away.”

The dog bounded off after Dave, who was the only one in sight now; Andy had dropped behind a log, where he lay flat on his face, having suddenly remembered a picture of the Russo-Turkish war with a circle of Turks lying flat on their faces (as if they were ashamed) round a newly-arrived shell.

There was a small hotel or shanty on the creek, on the main

road not far from the claim. Dave was desperate, the time flew much faster in his stimulated imagination than it did in reality, so he made for the shanty. There were several casual bushmen on the veranda and in the bar; Dave rushed into the bar, banging the door to behind him. "My dog!" he gasped, in reply to the astonished stare of the publican, "the blanky retriever—he's got a live cartridge in his mouth——"

The retriever, finding the front door shut against him, had bounded round and in by the back way, and now stood smiling in the doorway leading from the passage, the cartridge still in his mouth and the fuse spluttering. They burst out of that bar. Tommy bounded first after one and then after another, for, being a young dog, he tried to make friends with everybody.

The bushmen ran round corners, and some shut themselves in the stable. There was a new weather-board and corrugated-iron kitchen and wash-house on piles in the back-yard, with some women washing clothes inside. Dave and the publican bundled in there and shut the door—the publican cursing Dave and calling him a crimson fool, in hurried tones, and wanting to know what the hell he came here for.

The retriever went in under the kitchen, amongst the piles, but, luckily for those inside, there was a vicious yellow mongrel cattle-dog sulking and nursing his nastiness under there—a sneaking, fighting, thieving canine, whom neighbours had tried for years to shoot or poison. Tommy saw his danger—he'd had experience from this dog—and started out and across the yard, still sticking to the cartridge. Half way across the yard the yellow dog caught him and nipped him. Tommy dropped the cartridge, gave one terrified yell, and took to the bush. The yellow dog followed him to the fence and then ran back to see what he had dropped. Nearly a

dozen other dogs came from round all the corners and under the buildings—spidery, thievish, cold-blooded kangaroo dogs, mongrel sheep- and cattle-dogs, vicious black and yellow dogs—that slip after you in the dark, nip your heels, and vanish without explaining—and yapping, yelping small fry. They kept at a respectable distance round the nasty yellow dog, for it was dangerous to go near him when he thought he had found something which might be good for a dog or cat. He sniffed at the cartridge twice, and was just taking a third cautious sniff when——

It was very good blasting-powder—a new brand that Dave had recently got up from Sydney and the cartridge had been excellently well made. Andy was very patient and painstaking in all he did, and nearly as handy as the average sailor with needles, twine, canvas and rope.

Bushmen say that that kitchen jumped off its piles and on again. When the smoke and dust cleared away, the remains of the nasty yellow dog were lying against the paling fence of the yard looking as if he had been kicked into a fire by a horse and afterwards rolled in the dust under a barrow, and finally thrown against the fence from a distance. Several saddle-horses, which had been “hanging-up” round the veranda, were galloping wildly down the road in clouds of dust, with broken bridle-reins flying; and from a circle round the outskirts, from every point of the compass in the scrub, came the yelping of dogs. Two of them went home, to the place where they were born, thirty miles away, and reached it the same night and stayed there; it was not till towards evening that the rest came back cautiously to make inquiries. One was trying to walk on two legs, and most of ’em looked more or less singed; and a little, singed, stumpy-tailed dog, who had been in the habit of hopping the back half of him along on one leg,

had reason to be glad that he'd saved up the other leg all those years, for he needed it now. There was one old one-eyed cattle-dog round that shanty for years afterwards, who couldn't stand the smell of a gun being cleaned. He it was who had taken an interest, only second to that of the yellow dog, in the cartridge. Bushmen said that it was amusing to slip up on his blind side and stick a dirty ramrod under his nose: he wouldn't wait to bring his solitary eye to bear—he'd take to the bush and stay out all night.

For half an hour or so after the explosion there were several bushmen round behind the stable who crouched, doubled up, against the wall, or rolled gently on the dust, trying to laugh without shrieking. There were two white women in hysterics at the house, and a half-caste rushing aimlessly round with a dipper of cold water. The publican was holding his wife tight and begging her between her squawks, to "hold up for my sake, Mary, or I'll lam the life out of ye."

Dave decided to apologize later on, "when things had settled a bit," and went back to camp. And the dog that had done it all, Tommy, the great, idiotic mongrel retriever, came slobbering round Dave and lashing his legs with his tail, and trotted home after him, smiling his broadest, longest, and reddest smile of amiability, and apparently satisfied for one afternoon with the fun he'd had.

Andy chained the dog up securely, and cooked some more chops, while Dave went to help Jim out of the hole.

And most of this is why, for years afterwards, lanky, easy-going bushmen, riding lazily past Dave's camp, would cry, in a lazy drawl and with just a hint of the nasal twang:

"'Ello, Da-a-ve! How's the fishin' getting on, Da-a-ve?"

The Lights of Cobb and Co.

Fire lighted; on the table a meal for sleepy men;
A lantern in the stable; a jingle now and then;
The mail-coach looming darkly by light of moon and star;
The growl of sleepy voices; a candle in the bar;
A stumble in the passage of folk with wits abroad;
A swear-word from a bedroom—the shout of “All aboard!”
“Tchk tchk! Git-up!” “Hold fast, there!” and down the range
we go;
Five hundred miles of scattered camps will watch for Cobb
and Co.

Old coaching towns already decaying for their sins;
Uncounted “Half-Way Houses,” and scores of “Ten-Mile
Inns”;
The riders from the stations by lonely granite peaks;
The black-boy for the shepherds on sheep and cattle creeks;
The roaring camps of Gulgong, and many a “Digger’s Rest”;
The diggers on the Lachlan; the huts of Farthest West;
Some twenty thousand exiles who sailed for weal or woe—
The bravest hearts of twenty lands will wait for Cobb and Co.

The morning star has vanished, the frost and fog are gone,
In one of those grand mornings which but on mountains
dawn;
A flask of friendly whisky—each other’s hopes we share—
And throw our top-coats open to drink the mountain air.
The roads are rare to travel, and life seems all complete;

The grind of wheels on gravel, the trot of horses' feet,
The trot, trot, trot and canter, as down the spur we go—
The green sweeps to horizons blue that call for Cobb and Co.

We take a bright girl actress through western dusts and
damps,
To bear the home-world message, and sing for sinful camps,
To stir our hearts and break them, wild hearts that hope and
ache—
(Ah! when she thinks again of these her own must nearly
break!)

Five miles this side the gold-field, a loud, triumphant shout:
Five hundred cheering diggers have snatched the horses out:
With "Auld Lang Syne" in chorus, through roaring camps
they go
That cheer for her, and cheer for Home, and cheer for Cobb
and Co.

Three lamps above the ridges and gorges dark and deep,
A flash on sandstone cuttings where sheer the sidlings sweep,
A flash on shrouded waggons, on water ghastly white;
Weird bush and scattered remnants of "rushes in the night";
Across the swollen river a flash beyond the ford:
Ride hard to warn the driver! He's drunk or mad, good Lord!
But on the bank to westward a broad and cheerful glow—
New camps extend across the plains new routes for Cobb and
Co.

Swift scramble up the sidling where teams climb inch by
inch;
Pause, bird-like, on the summit—then breakneck down the
pinch;

By clear, ridge-country rivers, and gaps where tracks run
high,

Where waits the lonely horseman, cut clear against the sky;
Past haunted half-way houses—where convicts made the
bricks—

Scrub-yards and new bark shanties, we dash with five and six;
Through stringy-bark and blue-gum, and box and pine we
go—

A hundred miles shall see to-night the lights of Cobb and Co.!

Mitchell on Women

“ALL the same,” said Mitchell’s mate, continuing an argument by the camp-fire; “all the same, I think that a woman can stand cold water better than a man. Why, when I was staying in a boarding-house in Dunedin, one very cold winter, there was a lady lodger who went down to the shower-bath first thing every morning; never missed one; sometimes went in freezing weather when I wouldn’t go into a cold bath for a fiver; and sometimes she’d stay under the shower for ten minutes at a time.”

“How’d you know?”

“Why, my room was near the bathroom, and I could hear the shower and tap going, and her floundering about.”

“Hear your grandmother!” exclaimed Mitchell, contemptuously. “You don’t know women yet. Was this woman married? Did she have a husband there?”

“No; she was a young widow.”

“Ah! well, it would have been the same if she was a young girl—or an old one. Were there some passable men-boarders there?”

“I was there.”

“Oh, yes! But I mean, were there any there beside you?”

“Oh, yes, there were three or four; there was—a clerk and a —”

“Never mind, as long as there was something with trousers on. Did it ever strike you that she never got into the bath at all?”

“Why, no! What would she want to go there at all for, in that case?”

"To make an impression on the men," replied Mitchell promptly. "She wanted to make out she was nice, and wholesome, and well-washed, and particular. Made an impression on *you*, it seems, or you wouldn't remember it."

"Well, yes, I suppose so; and, now I come to think of it, the bath didn't seem to injure her make-up or wet her hair; but I supposed she held her head from under the shower somehow."

"Did she make-up so early in the morning?" asked Mitchell.

"Yes—I'm sure."

"That's unusual; but it might have been so where there was a lot of boarders. And about the hair—that didn't count for anything, because washing the head ain't supposed to be always included in a lady's bath; it's only supposed to be washed once a fortnight, and some don't do it once a month. The hair takes so long to dry; it don't matter so much if the woman's got short, scraggy hair; but if a girl's hair was down to her waist it would take hours to dry."

"Well, how do they manage it without wetting their heads?"

"Oh, that's easy enough. They have a little oilskin cap that fits tight over the forehead, and they put it on, and bunch their hair up in it when they go under the shower. Did you ever see a woman sit in a sunny place with her hair down after having a wash?"

"Yes, I used to see one do that regular where I was staying; but I thought she only did it to show off."

"Not at all—she was drying her hair; though perhaps she was showing off at the same time, for she wouldn't sit where you—or even a Chinaman—could see her, if she didn't think she had a good head of hair. Now, *I'll* tell you a yarn about a woman's bath. I was stopping at a shabby-genteel boarding-

house in Melbourne once, and one very cold winter, too; and there was a rather good-looking woman there, looking for a husband. She used to go down to the bath every morning, no matter how cold it was, and flounder and splash about as if she enjoyed it, till you'd feel as though you'd like to go and catch hold of her and wrap her in a rug and carry her in to the fire and nurse her till she was warm again."

Mitchell's mate moved uneasily, and crossed the other leg; he seemed greatly interested.

"But she never went into the water at all!" continued Mitchell. "As soon as one or two of the men was up in the morning she'd come down from her room in a dressing-gown. It was a toney dressing-gown, too, and set her off properly. She knew how to dress, anyway; most of that sort of women do. The gown was a kind of green colour, with pink and white flowers all over it, and red lining, and a lot of coffee-coloured lace round the neck and down the front. Well, she'd come tripping downstairs and along the passage, holding up one side of the gown to show her little bare white foot in a slipper; and in the other hand she carried her tooth-brush and bath-brush, and soap—like this—so's we all could see 'em; trying to make out she was too particular to use soap after anyone else. She could afford to buy her own soap, anyhow; it was hardly ever wet.

"Well, she'd go into the bathroom and turn on the tap and shower; when she got about three inches of water in the bath, she'd step in, holding up her gown out of the water, and go slithering and kicking up and down the bath, like this, making a tremendous splashing. Of course she'd turn off the shower first, and screw it off very tight—wouldn't do to let that leak, you know; she might get wet; but she'd leave the other tap on, so as to make all the more noise."

"But how did you come to know all about this?"

"Oh, the servant girl told me. One morning she twigged her through a corner of the bathroom window that the curtain didn't cover."

"You seem to have been pretty thick with servant girls."

"So do you with landladies! But never mind—let me finish the yarn. When she thought she'd splashed enough, she'd get out, wipe her feet, wash her face and hands, and carefully unbutton the two top buttons of her gown; then throw a towel over her head and shoulders, and listen at the door till she thought she heard some of the men moving about. Then she'd start for her room, and, if she met one of the men-boarders in the passage or on the stairs, she'd drop her eyes, and pretend to see for the first time that the top of her dressing-gown wasn't buttoned—and she'd give a little start and grab the gown and scurry off to her room buttoning it up.

"And sometimes she'd come skipping into the breakfast-room late, looking awfully sweet in her dressing-gown; and if she saw any of us there, she'd pretend to be much startled, and say that she thought all the men had gone out, and make as though she was going to clear; and someone'd jump up and give her a chair, while someone else said, 'Come in, Miss Brown! come in! Don't let us frighten you. Come right in, and have your breakfast before it gets cold.' So she'd flutter a bit in pretty confusion, and then make a sweet little girly-girly dive for her chair, and tuck her feet away under the table; and she'd blush, too, but I don't know how she managed that.

"I know another trick that women have; it's mostly played by private barmaids. That is, to leave a stocking by accident in the bathroom for the gentlemen to find. If the barmaid's got a nice foot and ankle, she uses one of her own stockings;

but if she hasn't she gets hold of a stocking that belongs to a girl that has. Anyway, she'll have one readied up somehow. The stocking must be worn and nicely darned; one that's been worn will keep the shape of the leg and foot—at least till it's washed again. Well, the barmaid generally knows what time the gentlemen go to bath, and she'll make it a point of going down just as a gentleman's going. Of course he'll give her the preference—let her go first, you know—and she'll go in and accidentally leave the stocking in a place where he's sure to see it, and when she comes out he'll go in and find it; and very likely he'll be a jolly sort of fellow, and when they're all sitting down to breakfast he'll hold up the stocking. The barmaid likes this sort of thing; but she'll hold down her head, and pretend to be confused, and keep her eyes on her plate, and there'll be much blushing and all that sort of thing, and perhaps she'll gammon to be mad at him, and the landlady'll say, 'Oh, Mr. Smith! how can yer? At the breakfast-table, too!' and they'll all laugh and look at the barmaid, and she'll get more embarrassed than ever, and spill her tea, and make out as though the stocking didn't belong to her."

Mitchell on Matrimony

"I SUPPOSE your wife will be glad to see you," said Mitchell to his mate in their camp by the dam at Hungerford. They were overhauling their swags, and throwing away the blankets, and calico, and old clothes, and rubbish they didn't want—everything, in fact, except their pocket-books and letters and portraits, things which men carry about with them always, that are found on them when they die, and sent to their relations if possible. Otherwise they are taken in charge by the constable who officiates at the inquest, and forwarded to the Minister of Justice along with the depositions.

It was the end of the shearing-season. Mitchell and his mate had been lucky enough to get two good sheds in succession, and were going to take the coach from Hungerford to Bourke on their way to Sydney. The morning stars were bright yet, and they sat down to a final billy of tea, two dusty johnny-cakes, and a scrag of salt mutton.

"Yes," said Mitchell's mate, "and I'll be glad to see her too."

"I suppose you will," said Mitchell. He placed his pint-pot between his feet, rested his arm against his knee, and stirred the tea meditatively with the handle of his pocket-knife. It was vaguely understood that Mitchell had been married at one period of his chequered career.

"I don't think we ever understood women properly," he said, as he took a cautious sip to see if his tea was cool and sweet enough, for his lips were sore; "I don't think we ever will—we never took the trouble to try, and if we did it would

be only wasted brain power that might just as well be spent on the blackfellow's lingo; because by the time you've learnt it they'll be extinct, and woman'll be extinct before you've learnt her. . . . The morning star looks bright, doesn't it?

"Ah, well," said Mitchell after a while, "there's many little things we might try to understand women in. I read in a piece of newspaper the other day about how a man changes after he's married; how he gets short, and impatient, and bored (which is only natural), and sticks up a wall of newspaper between himself and his wife when he's at home; and how it comes like a cold shock to her, and all her air-castles vanish, and in the end she often thinks about taking the baby and the clothes she stands in, and going home for sympathy and comfort to mother.

"Perhaps she never got a word of sympathy from her mother in her life, nor a day's comfort at home before she was married; but that doesn't make the slightest difference. It doesn't make any difference in your case either, if you haven't been acting like a dutiful son-in-law.

"Somebody wrote that a woman's love is her whole existence, while a man's love is only part of his—which is true, and only natural and reasonable, all things considered. But women never consider as a rule. A man can't go on talking lovey-dovey talk for ever, and listening to his young wife's prattle when he's got to think about making a living, and nursing her and answering her childish questions and telling her he loves his little ownest every minute in the day, while the bills are running up, and rent mornings begin to fly round and hustle and crowd him.

"He's got her and he's satisfied; and if the truth is known he loves her really more than he did when they were engaged, only she won't be satisfied about it unless he tells her so every

hour in the day. At least that's how it is for the first few months.

"But a woman doesn't understand these things—she never will, she can't—and it would be just as well for us to try and understand that she doesn't and can't understand them."

Mitchell knocked the tea-leaves out of his pannikin against his boot, and reached for the billy.

"There's many little things we might do that seem mere trifles and nonsense to us, but mean a lot to her; that wouldn't be any trouble or sacrifice to us, but might help to make her life happy. It's just because we never think about these little things—don't think them worth thinking about, in fact—they never enter our intellectual foreheads.

"For instance, when you're going out in the morning you might put your arms round her and give her a hug and a kiss, without her having to remind you. You may forget about it and never think any more of it—but she will.

"It wouldn't be any trouble to you, and would only take a couple of seconds, and would give her something to be happy about when you're gone, and make her sing to herself for hours while she bustles about her work and thinks up what she'll get you for dinner."

Mitchell's mate sighed, and shifted the sugar-bag over towards Mitchell. He seemed touched and bothered over something.

"Then again," said Mitchell, "it mightn't be convenient for you to go home to dinner—something might turn up during the morning—you might have some important business to do, or meet some chaps and get invited to lunch and not be very well able to refuse, when it's too late, or you haven't a chance to send a message to your wife. But then again, chaps and business seem very big things to you, and only little

things to the wife; just as lovey-dovey talk is important to her and nonsense to you. And when you come to analyse it, one is not so big, nor the other so small, after all; especially when you come to think that chaps can always wait, and business is only an inspiration in your mind, nine cases out of ten.

“Think of the trouble she takes to get you a good dinner, and how she keeps it hot between two plates in the oven, and waits hour after hour till the dinner gets dried up, and all her morning’s work is wasted. Think how it hurts her, and how anxious she’ll be (especially if you’re inclined to booze) for fear that something has happened to you. You can’t get it out of the heads of some young wives that you’re liable to get run over, or knocked down, or assaulted, or robbed, or get into one of the fixes that a woman is likely to get into. But about the dinner waiting. Try and put yourself in her place. Wouldn’t you get mad under the same circumstances? I know I would.

“I remember once, only just after I was married, I was invited unexpectedly to a kidney pudding and beans—which was my favourite grub at the time—and I didn’t resist, especially as it was washing-day and I told the wife not to bother about anything for dinner. I got home an hour or so late, and had a good explanation thought out, when the wife met me with a smile as if we had just been left a thousand pounds. She’d got her washing finished without assistance, though I’d told her to get somebody to help her, and she had a kidney pudding and beans, with a lot of extras thrown in, as a pleasant surprise for me.

“Well, I kissed her, and sat down, and stuffed till I thought every mouthful would choke me. I got through with it somehow, but I’ve never cared for kidney pudding or beans since.”

Mitchell felt for his pipe with a fatherly smile in his eyes.

"And then again," he continued, as he cut up his tobacco, "your wife might put on a new dress and fix herself up and look well, and you might think so and be satisfied with her appearance and be proud to take her out; but you want to tell her so, and tell her so as often as you think about it—and try to think a little oftener than men usually do, too."

"You should have made a good husband, Jack," said his mate in a softened tone.

"Ah, well, perhaps I should," said Mitchell, rubbing up his tobacco; then he asked abstractedly: "What sort of a husband did you make, Joe?"

"I might have made a better one than I did," said Joe seriously, and rather bitterly, "but I know one thing, I'm going to try and make up for it when I go back this time."

"We all say that," said Mitchell reflectively, filling his pipe. "She loves you, Joe."

"I know she does," said Joe.

Mitchell lit up.

"And so would any man who knew her or had seen her letters to you," he said between the puffs. "She's happy and contented enough, I believe?"

"Yes," said Joe, "at least while I was there. She's never easy when I'm away. I might have made her a good deal more happy and contented without hurting myself much."

Mitchell smoked long, soft, measured puffs.

His mate shifted uneasily and glanced at him a couple of times, and seemed to become impatient, and to make up his mind about something; or perhaps he got an idea that Mitchell had been "having" him, and felt angry over being betrayed into maudlin confidences; for he asked abruptly:

"How is your wife now, Mitchell?"

"I don't know," said Mitchell calmly.

“Don’t know?” echoed the mate. “Didn’t you treat her well?”

Mitchell removed his pipe and drew a long breath.

“Ah, well, I tried to,” he said wearily.

“Well, did you put your theory into practice?”

“I did,” said Mitchell very deliberately.

Joe waited, but nothing came.

“Well?” he asked impatiently. “How did it act? Did it work well?”

“I don’t know,” said Mitchell (puff); “she left me.”

“What!”

Mitchell jerked the half-smoked pipe from his mouth, and rapped the burning tobacco out against the toe of his boot.

“She left me,” he said, standing up and stretching himself. Then, with a vicious jerk of his arm, “She left me for—another kind of—fellow!”

He looked east towards the public-house, where they were taking the coach-horses from the stable.

“Why don’t you finish your tea, Joe? The billy’s getting cold.”

His Colonial Oath

I LATELY met an old schoolmate of mine up-country. He was much changed. He was tall and lank, and had the most hideous bristly red beard I ever saw. He was working on his father's farm. He shook hands, looked anywhere but in my face—and said nothing. Presently I remarked at a venture:

“So poor old Mr. B., the schoolmaster, is dead.”

“My oath!” he replied.

“He was a good old sort.”

“My oath!”

“Time goes by pretty quick, doesn't it?”

His oath (colonial).

“Poor old Mr. B. died awfully sudden, didn't he?”

He looked up the hill, and said: “My oath!”

Then he added: “My blooming oath!”

I thought, perhaps, my city rig or manner embarrassed him, so I stuck my hands in my pockets, spat, and said, to set him at his ease: “It's blanky hot to-day. I don't know how you blanky blanks stand such blank weather! It's blanky well hot enough to roast a crimson carnal bullock; ain't it?” Then I took out a cake of tobacco, bit off a quarter, and pretended to chew. He replied:

“My oath!”

The conversation flagged here. But presently, to my great surprise, he came to the rescue with:

“He finished me, yer know.”

“Finished? How? Who?”

He looked down towards the river, thought (if he did

think) and said: "Finished me edyercation, yer know."

"Oh! you mean Mr. B.?"

"My oath—he finished me first-rate."

"He turned out a good many scholars, didn't he?"

"My oath! I'm thinkin' about going down to the trainin' school."

"You ought to—I would if I were you."

"My oath!"

"Those were good old times," I hazarded. "You remember the old bark school?"

He looked away across the sidling, and was evidently getting uneasy. He shifted about, and said:

"Well, I must be goin'."

"I suppose you're pretty busy now?"

"My oath! So long."

"Well, good-bye. We must have a yarn some day."

"My oath!"

He got away as quickly as he could.

I wonder whether he *was* changed after all—or, was it I? A man does seem to get out of touch with the bush after living in cities for eight or ten years.

When the World Was Wide

The world is narrow and ways are short, and our lives
are dull and slow,
For little is new where the crowds resort, and less where
the wanderers go;
Greater or smaller, the same old things we see by the dull
roadside—
And tired of all is the spirit that sings of the days when
the world was wide.

When the North was hale in the march of Time, and the
South and the West were new,
And the gorgeous East was a pantomime, as it seemed
in our boyhood's view;
When Spain was first on the waves of change, and proud
in the ranks of pride,
And all was wonderful, new and strange in the days when
the world was wide.

Then a man could fight if his heart were bold, and win if
his faith were true—
Were it love, or honour, or power, or gold, or all that
our hearts pursue;
Could live to the world for the family name, or die for
the family pride,
Could flee from sorrow and wrong and shame in the days
when the world was wide.

They roved away in the ships that sailed ere science controlled the main,
When the strong, brave heart of a man prevailed as 'twill never prevail again;
They knew not whither, nor much they cared—let Fate or the winds decide—
The worst of the Great Unknown they dared in the days when the world was wide.

They raised new stars on the silent sea that filled their hearts with awe;
They came to many a strange countree and marvellous sights they saw.
The villagers gaped at the tales they told, and old eyes glistened with pride—
When barbarous cities were paved with gold in the days when the world was wide.

'Twas honest metal and honest wood, in the days of the Outward Bound,
When men were gallant and ships were good—roaming the wide world around.
The gods could envy a leader then when “Follow me, lads!” he cried—
They faced each other and fought like men in the days when the world was wide!

The good ship bound for the Southern Seas when the beacon was Ballarat,
With a “Ship ahoy!” on the freshening breeze, “Where bound?” and “What ship’s that?”—

The emigrant train to New Mexico—the rush to the
Lachlan-side—

Ah! faint is the echo of Westward Ho! from the days
when the world was wide.

South, East, and West in advance of Time—and far in
advance of Thought—

Brave men they were with a faith sublime—and is it for
this they fought?

And is it for this damned life we praise the god-like spirit
that died

At Eureka Stockade in the Roaring Days with the days
when the world was wide?

.

With its dull, brown days of a-shilling-an-hour the dreary
year drags round:

Is this the result of Old England's power?—the bourne of
the Outward Bound?

Is this the sequel of Westward Ho!—of the days of
Whate'er Betide?

The heart of the rebel makes answer "No! We'll fight till
the world grows wide!"

The world shall yet be a wider world—for the tokens are
manifest;

East and North shall the wrongs be hurled that followed
us South and West.

The march of Freedom is North by the Dawn! Follow,
whate'er betide!

Sons of the Exiles, march! March on! March till the world
grows wide!

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Eureka Stockade

The Eureka Stockade was, in truth, a storm in a teacup. Nevertheless, it was an event which was the nearest thing to a full-scale armed rebellion in Australian history. As such, the event held an importance out of all proportion to its size. It became a symbol of Australian freedom and the focal point of Australian democracy. It inspired Lawson on many an occasion. It has inspired many other Australian poets, balladists and writers, to say nothing of that lesser breed, the politicians. The flag which the rebels in the stockade raised was, to all intents and purposes, the Australian flag of today. The rebellion marked the inevitable end of British colonialism in Australia. That this end was marked with so little bloodshed is a remarkable compliment to the British, in general, and to the English in particular. It was the ultimate example of the fact that they had learned the lesson of the American Revolution.

The three versions of the Eureka Stockade which are contained in this Appendix give a clue to the national characteristics of the English, the Americans, and the Australians. The American version is romantic, the English version coldly factual, and the Australian version neither one nor the other. And yet, reading these three versions, one can understand why the three peoples have so much in common—there are no real villains and no real heroes. L.B.

*The American Version**

THE great event of a public nature in Australia was the Ballarat rebellion, which, though subdued by military power, nevertheless

* From *The Experiences of a Forty-niner During Thirty-four Years' Residence in California and Australia*, by Charles D. Ferguson, edited by Frederick T. Wallace; The Williams Publishing Company, Cleveland, 1888.

caused a revolution in the affairs of the colonial government. Open expression of dissatisfaction with onerous laws and official oppression was first made by the miners at Bendigo in the latter part of 1853. Among the many grievances they suffered and of which they complained were, that every miner, and, in fact, every man on the diggings, was compelled to pay a monthly license to the government of thirty shillings, or seven dollars and a half of our money; that licenses were issued on common paper which the holder was obliged to carry upon his person and produce it as often as called upon by the authorities to do so, no matter if it was a dozen times a day. The digger carrying it constantly upon his person at work, it would become worn out before half the term had expired, and then his only course would be to hasten and purchase another, or otherwise run the risk of being arrested and imprisoned by being tied to a tree, and fined by the authorities. The diggings by this time had become so densely populated that they were paying over half of the revenue; besides, they had no one to represent their case in parliament or any branch of the colonial government.

The portion of the population called diggers, because they followed mining or were on the diggings, were totally disfranchised, although they possessed the most general intelligence and some of the best talent in the colony. A convention of miners and others on the diggings met at Bendigo in August, '53, where banners and mottoes of the old revolution were displayed, such as "Taxation Without Representation is Robbery," etc. A deputation was sent to Melbourne to petition the government to take into consideration their case at once, setting forth to that august assembly how their digger brethren were treated by their officials; how they had been chained to logs over night when they had already complied with the law and had paid their license, but the paper had become obliterated or entirely worn out, and that they were treated more like dogs than Christian men. They prayed to have the license reduced, and also that it be issued in some form that would enable the holder to preserve it during the full term.

This petition had the desired effect, in part, the license being reduced to two pounds (ten dollars) for three months; but there was more difficulty than before, for the license was issued on the same poor quality of paper and for just three times the length, or for nine months for thirty dollars, and the government was more stringent, if possible, in enforcing the law than before. Things went on in this

way from bad to worse, until the last straw that broke the camel's back was put on, which, had they fed the straw to the camel, it might have enabled him to bear his burden a little longer, and the lives of many lost in the Ballarat war might have been spared; but the revolt was to come, and it did come at last.

A new commissioner arrived at Ballarat who was determined to enforce the obnoxious laws at all hazards. His name was Harrison or Hamilton, I have forgotten which, and he used to send out the police or government detectives early in the morning, escorted by a body of mounted troops, so that if any unfortunate who had no license should attempt to escape, the troops could run him down as they would a fox. But the diggers were awake to the occasion, and no sooner did the troops make their appearance coming down the hill than the diggers would pass the peculiar watch-word, "Jo," along the line for miles. The first miner would strike the note and it would pass from man to man to the remotest digger in the gulch, faster than a steam-car would travel, and consequently there was no show for the troops or squad of detectives, for all those who had no license would have plenty of time to get down into their holes. Finally the officials determined to examine the holes and shafts by entering them, but it was not a pleasant job, and few of the petty officials had the courage to go down. In one instance a digger was killed in Reed's Creek, near Beechworth. The officer was going down into a claim and carrying his gun, which such detective police were allowed to carry, when by some mishap he struck the cock of the gun and it went off, the charge taking effect and killing a poor fellow who was looking on. The miners thereabouts were immediately aroused and the detective was instantly dispatched. Then a large force of miners went to the official camp and drove them off the creek to Beechworth. Things had got to such a pass there was no standing it any longer, and the miners turned out en masse and held a meeting at Bakery Hill and passed resolutions to that effect, built a fire and every man there stepped up and put his license in the blaze and then went home, having his doubts what the morrow would bring forth. The morrow came, and so did the troops. They were sent in double and treble numbers to what had ever before come out. The diggers stuck to one another and waited till they undertook to arrest some of the crowd, when they went to the rescue and turned upon the troops like so many tigers. The troops fired a volley over their heads, which only added fuel to the flames, and the diggers at once came down on the troops with sticks and stones and soon drove them back

to camp. The commissioner kept in the rear, out of harm's way, and ordered the troops to another charge. The die was cast; the first blow had been struck; there was no retreat; and the diggers met them manfully, and for the second time sent them back to camp, more crest-fallen than before. War had now begun in earnest between the diggers on the one hand and the commissioners on the other; but the government was bound to take the side of the commissioners, and that the diggers well knew.

The thing now to do was to prepare for the worst, for well they knew there would be no compromise on the part of the government, and as for the diggers, they did not ask it. The government was not idle, and at once commenced to forward every soldier in the Victoria colony, and sent to Sidney [sic] for more, and to New Zealand and Tasmania for all the old pensioners, mounted police, and force of every kind, horse, foot and dragoons. In a short time every available soldier in the Australian colonies, and all minor forces, with all the cannon of Melbourne and Sidney, were concentrated at Ballarat. Upon the whole, things looked rather warlike on the side of the government. The diggers, however, had not been idle, and had formed a camp, or stockade, on the hill where the Eureka hotel had stood, and known as the Eureka stockade. They had collected all the available timbers and built up a breastwork, preparatory to a sudden attack. All work in the mines had been suspended, and every digger had gathered all the arms and ammunition that could be procured.

There had been word received from the Castlemain, Bendigo and Creswick creek diggers that they were coming to our relief. We had the sympathy of the merchants and traders, and all the powder they had was freely given. There had been officers appointed, and all the blacksmiths were engaged making Irish pikes. Peter Lalor was appointed leader, or first officer; August Verne, a German, second; and James McGill, third—he was an Irish-American. There was a young Canadian named Ross, a man of force and spirit, who was killed. Thus far the Americans had not taken an active part in the affair, but the time had now come when they were compelled to act or stand neutral. Others complained that we were doing nothing, while it was a matter of as much interest to us as to them, and began to accuse us of cowardice. Therefore, a meeting of Americans was called and held at the Adelphi theatre, to take into consideration the subject, and determine as to the duties and obligations of the occasion. Many were enthusiastic and desired to enlist in the Digger army. As for myself, I

could not see the necessity or propriety of rushing into a revolt against government authority until we considered what it was going to amount to, and told them we had come to the country not very favorably impressed with the laws, but had found them quite as lenient as we had expected to; that there was no law compelling us to stay, and those who were dissatisfied with the country or its laws, had a perfect right to leave. I then offered a resolution in substance as follows:

That this meeting contemplates the present aspect of affairs between the government and the mining community of the colony of Victoria with feelings of the deepest regret. But that we, as citizens of the United States of America, do not consider it our duty to take any decisive part on either side until further events shall transpire; therefore, *Resolved*, That we, citizens of the United States of America, will take no part in the above mentioned affair, but remain neutral until the developments and necessities of the future shall determine our duty otherwise.

The Americans that attended this meeting had been present at Bakery Hill when the licenses were burned, but they had all abandoned work and were in full and hearty sympathy with the miners, though they did not want to take any active part until a blow had been struck. We regarded ourselves as foreigners, and had no right to be foremost in an open outbreak against the government. This meeting caused much hard feeling against the Americans, the diggers contending that it was everyone's affair, and that they fully depended on our assistance. We told them that if they went on they would have our sympathy, and if they made a stand they would not find us wanting, but we were not going to have it thrown upon our shoulders that we were the instigators of the outbreak, which it would be if it failed, and which, I ventured to add, it would; for which remark I was called a coward. I told them time would tell, if the trouble went on, whether or not I was a coward; that there were those who had not yet participated in the affair that would, when the proper time came, act as bravely as some who were now so enthusiastic.

This conversation was with Verne, the German, second in command, who, I am sorry to say, was afterwards the first man to run, and when I asked him what, in God's name, he was running for, he said, "To stop the rest." Lalor at last came to the Americans and had a talk. He seemed to have more sense and judgment than the rest, and expressed his desire that we should hold ourselves in readiness, for

he had no doubt when the time came and we were wanted, we would respond with alacrity. After this interview, we formed ourselves into a company, calling ourselves the California Rangers, and drilled as such, with the distinct understanding that we were independent of the others, and not in the least under their control, but fully determined when the time came it should never be said that the California Rangers were measured and found wanting. Many of our men were old Mexican soldiers of '46-'47. Anyone was allowed in the camp or stockade who wished to visit it, and the consequence was that the government sent in spies who kept the enemy posted in every move of the diggers. Word came that the cannon were coming which the government had ordered from Melbourne. This was a move of the government to induce the diggers to send out a party to intercept them, under the idea of thus weakening the government force. The diggers took the bait, and McGill was sent out on the second of December for that purpose. He took with him three hundred of the best armed men, and all picked men. The arms of the diggers were of course inferior, being only just what could be obtained in the mining districts. News was received from Castlemain and Bendigo that reinforcements might be expected in twenty-four hours, which had the effect to put every digger in high spirits. Word was expected to come the next morning from McGill that he had captured the cannon. They were constantly hearing news from the government forces, and that they were very much dispirited, therefore an attack from them was not expected. However, on the morning of December 3, 1854, at the early hour of three, it being Sunday, and a great number at home asleep in bed, never so much as dreaming of an attack, the enemy marched out of their camp, one thousand regulars of the Twelfth and Fortieth regiments, together with fifteen hundred troopers, and moved directly toward the stockade.

Word had come into our camp about one o'clock of the same morning that some arms and ammunition were secreted in a house on Bakery Hill, and I was sent with a detachment of men to seize it. On our way out we took two men we suspected as spies, and two men that had given the information about the arms, who were with us to direct us to the house, manifested so much uneasiness I had suspicion of them and put them under arrest also, and leaving them behind, under guard, took six men and went on myself to make the search. Just as I arrived at Bakery Hill, we saw the whole body of troops ascending the hill. We immediately went back to the party we had left, and

determined to make our way back to the stockade and report what we had seen. We had barely arrived there when the pickets came running in with the information that the enemy were upon us. The alarm was sounded "To Arms!" I had arrived not one minute too soon. Had I been but a moment later I should have been shut out, for the stockade was in a brief time surrounded. They had come down on us just as the light of day was breaking in the east. We were formed in line, and the first order received was, "California Rangers to the front!" The Fortieth regiment was advancing, but had not as yet discharged a shot. We could now see plainly the officer and hear his orders, when one of our men, Captain Burnette, stepped a little in front, elevated his rifle, took aim and fired. The officer fell. Captain Wise was his name. This was the first shot in the Ballarat war. It was said by many that the soldiers fired the first shot, but that is not true, as is well known to many. W. R. Hall, now living at Sidney, was standing alongside of me and next to Burnette when he fired the shot that killed Captain Wise. No sooner did that officer fall than the soldiers were ordered to fire on us, which they did, and then charged. The fire had a terrible effect, but we returned it with like effect, as deadly as theirs. Just at this time, when the splinters from the timbers of the breastwork were flying the thickest, Verne came running past. I asked him what he was running for. "To stop the others," was his reply. I had my own opinion about it. It was now the most exciting time I had ever witnessed. It was a hand to hand fight. The soldiers were in among us. Lalor was shot in the arm, and Hull pulled off his necktie and we wound that around it. He fainted from loss of blood. We put him in a shallow hole and covered it over with some slabs. I lost sight of Walter during the fight, and he afterwards told me that he saw the day was lost, jumped the stockade and made his escape. I was near poor Ross, and he said, "Charlie it is no use, the men have all left us," and the next instant he said, "My God, I am shot," and fell. Before I had time to look and see how badly he was hurt, a soldier demanded my surrender, to which I politely answered that I would see him dam'd first, and made my first attempt to escape. In the excitement I had not missed the rest, and upon looking around discovered that I was almost alone. It was said that Ross was shot after he had surrendered, but that was not so. As I jumped the stockade I fell, and the soldier who had demanded my surrender fired, and the ball passed through my hat. The fall resulted in making me a prisoner. I was not long, however, in getting onto my feet, but found a

party of troopers had headed me off in that direction. Turning I jumped back into the stockade, but was there met by any number of soldiers. I attempted to rush through, but was seized upon by several and we had it rough and tumble for a few brief seconds, and I finally got through and struck for another place to make my escape. The soldiers had been ordered to cease firing, but the police kept it up when they saw a poor fellow trying his best to get away. It had now become impossible for me to escape, as I had again been headed off, and seeing Captain Carter of the police, I ran to him and surrendered. I had only one thought for self-congratulation, and that was that the soldiers did not take me.

There was an American, James Brown, who had been a man-of-war's man; he jumped onto a rope and slid down a hole over a hundred feet deep, and afterwards climbed the rope. He was an expert on a rope—could go hand over hand till he was tired, then hold himself by his feet till he had rested his arms and then climb again. He afterwards told me he believed he was two hours climbing out of that hole. They took one hundred and fifteen prisoners. A poor woman came running out in her night dress and begged of them to give her her husband, but she was only pushed around roughly by the soldiers, when at last the commanding officer rode up and ordered them to deliver to the woman her husband. That was a manly officer. The woman was Mrs. John Tye, who, with her husband, is still living (1887) and keeps a hotel in the city of Sidney.

While standing on the field with Captain Carter I was enabled to observe the ghastly scene. The morning sun was just rising and spreading its light over the forms of dead and wounded men, who, but a few minutes before, were in full health and manly vigor, but now many lay in their long, last sleep, and others moaning in their pain, some only for a brief time, for death was sure to come to their relief. Prisoners were frightened out of their senses; and asking the soldiers what would be done with them, the consoling answer was, "Why, hung, of course." Some who were the most frightened were the bravest only a few hours before; others were sullen and said nothing. The whole of them were subjected to a thorough search by the soldiers—robbed rather, for all the money they found on a prisoner I noticed they put in their own pockets. When I surrendered I had upon me a Colt's revolver and a bowie-knife. These I slipped down my trouser's leg and kicked them out on the ground. I had, besides, some fifty dollars in money, which I put in the lining of my hat and

they did not get it. After they had taken all the prisoners they could get, we were marched to headquarters. Here again we were searched by the authorities, and those on whom arms were found were listed as such. Then I rejoiced that I had rid myself of my revolver and knife.

*The English Version**

AT THE beginning of August 1853, a petition had been presented by the Bendigo diggers, in which they urged the reduction of the licence fee and the grant of representation to the diggers. The Lieutenant-Governor returned a pacific reply, but the delegates in charge of the petition were evidently bent on arousing strong feelings, and they held meetings in Melbourne which went the extreme length permissible to loyal subjects. Still, the Lieutenant-Governor shrank from strong measures, and endeavoured to remove one ground of complaint by appointing, as a member of the Legislative Council, a gentleman who was believed to possess the confidence of the diggers. The nomination was at once repudiated by the delegates of the latter, and, at the end of August, an organized attempt was made to resist the renewal of licences on the old terms. Hundreds of diggers pledged themselves to pay no more than a third of the sum previously demanded, and those who were inclined to yield to the Government's demands were warned that the agitators would not "be responsible for their safety" if they remained at the diggings. The licence system had by this time extended, beyond the diggers, to the storekeepers and other tradesmen at the goldfields, who were making enormous profits out of the diggers, and these, for the most part, unhesitatingly complied with the demands of the agitators, willing rather to pay the fines for breach of the Government Regulations than to offend their customers. A daring attack on a private escort of gold near Bendigo, which occurred about this time, shewed that the colony was on the verge of a civil war.

Just at this moment, an event occurred which rendered it impos-

* From *The History of the Australasian Colonies (From Their Foundation to the Year 1893)*, by Edward Jenks, M.A. Cambridge University Press, 1895.

sible for the Government to maintain its position unimpaired with the scanty forces at its disposal. In the middle of September, 1853, the total abolition of the licence fee was seriously proposed in the Legislative Council of New South Wales. The news flew like wildfire to Victoria, where the diggers had hitherto looked upon the colonial legislatures (in which, it will be remembered, they were not yet represented) as their natural enemies. It seemed to them now that they had everything in their own hands, and it became clearly impossible for the Government, in the existing temper of the diggers, to exact the full amount of the licence fee. A Proclamation, hastily published with a view to allay excitement, by an unfortunate omission in the printed copies led the public to believe that the total abolition of the license system was contemplated by the Victorian Government. A select committee of the Legislative Council reported unfavourably upon the system. The Government made the best of a bad bargain, and accepted a fee of forty shillings for the three months ending 30th November, 1853; and, on the following day, the Legislative Council passed a new Goldfields Act, which greatly reduced the fees for diggers' licences, while it substantially increased those demanded for permission to open stores at the goldfields. It also provided for the grant of leases of auriferous lands, at a royalty of not less than 5 per cent, and gave legal sanction to the customs regarding the "claims" of diggers, which had gradually grown up to regulate the rival interests of neighbouring miners. Offences against the Act were to be decided upon by the magistrates; but the accused might demand a court of at least two members, and there was to be an appeal to General Sessions.

These measures were partly successful in restoring order, but it was obvious that the goldfields contained men who were averse from a peaceable settlement. Notwithstanding that the numbers of the elective members of the Legislative Council were more than once increased, that, with the full consent of the Home Government, a bill was being prepared for the introduction of Responsible Government, and that the material condition of the diggers was being rapidly improved, the Lieutenant-Governor had, in January 1854, to report the formation of a "Diggers' Congress," which obviously had for its object the supersession of the ordinary government.

Mr. Latrobe retired from office in May of the same year, and one of the first points noticed by his successor, Sir Charles Hotham, was the existence of an agitation against the Chinese at the Bendigo diggings.

Notwithstanding the enthusiastic character of his reception during his progress through the goldfields in September, the new Governor soon had to face serious disturbances. The events of the next few months formed a crisis in the history, not only of Victoria, but of Australia. Naturally there is much dispute concerning them, and, as the following account is taken chiefly from Sir Charles Hotham's reports, it is possible that the acts of his opponents may not obtain strict justice. But it is admitted on all sides that Sir Charles acted with the most perfect *bona fides*; and the accounts given by the insurgents are far too contradictory and prejudiced to receive much credit.

On the night of the 6th October, 1854, a miner named Scobie was murdered, or at least killed, at the Eureka Hotel, near Ballaarat. The Eureka Hotel was a place of no good repute, kept by a man named Bentley, who, as well as his wife, was (it is said) an ex-convict from Tasmania. Suspicion fell upon the couple, and they, with a second man (named Farrell), were arrested by the magistrates, but almost immediately released for alleged default of evidence. The dismissal of the charge excited a storm of indignation in the camp, and a body of diggers at once proceeded to wreck the hotel and lynch the accused. In the latter object they, fortunately, did not succeed, and so rendered themselves liable only to charges of riot and arson, instead of the more serious charge of murder. Four of the ringleaders were, through the prompt measures of Sir Charles Hotham, shortly afterwards arrested, and committed for trial. But the accusations of partiality against the officials were too strong to be resisted, and a Board of Inquiry hastily instituted by the Governor disclosed the ugly facts that Dewes, the magistrate who presided at the hearing of the charge against the Bentleys, had been in the habit of borrowing money from residents, and that Sergeant-Major Milne, of the Police Force, had been guilty of receiving bribes. The officials implicated were at once dismissed, and the Bentleys and Farrell re-arrested and convicted. But the Governor very properly declined to release the arrested rioters, who, shortly before Christmas 1854, were convicted and sentenced to short terms of imprisonment.

Meanwhile, more disturbances had happened. Though a Commission upon the general condition of the goldfields was holding its enquiries, in November many diggers again refused to pay the reduced licence fees, and, on the 30th of the month, a serious riot took place. The military were called out, the Riot Act was read, and there was

some shooting. Eight captures were made, but the lesson had not been severe enough, and a state of open war ensued. The diggers entrenched themselves in a fortified camp known as the "Eureka Stockade," openly drilled their forces in the presence of the authorities, and levied horses and rations from unwilling miners in the name of a "Commander-in-Chief." At the same time they issued a long political manifesto, which, while it did not avowedly disclaim allegiance to the Crown, contained proposals to which no regularly constituted Government could ever have assented.

The Governor at once ordered all the available military force to Ballaarat; but, before reinforcements arrived, the coolness and promptitude of Captain Thomas, the officer in command of the troops on the Ballaarat goldfield when the riot of the 30th November took place, had nipped the insurrection in the bud. Captain Thomas saw that, while the Eureka Stockade threatened to become a serious obstacle to the Government if its completion were allowed, in its uncompleted state it was really a source of weakness to the insurgents. By collecting their forces in one spot, and thus rendering them more exposed to a crushing attack, and by drawing off the men who threatened the Government camp, it really left the commander of the troops free to act with decision. Accordingly, Captain Thomas determined at once to attack the position. Assembling his forces (somewhat less than 200 men) at 3 o'clock on the morning of the 3rd December, he moved towards the stockade. At about 150 yards from the entrenchments, he was perceived by the scouts of the insurgents, who promptly fired on the advancing troops. Thomas himself, Pasley (his aide-de-camp), Rede (the Resident Commissioner) and Hacket (the Stipendiary Magistrate), all of whom were present at the attack, positively assert that the insurgents fired before a shot was discharged by the troops. Upon this reception, Captain Thomas gave the order to fire, and the entrenchments were carried with a rush after about ten minutes of sharp fighting. Captain Wise was fatally wounded, and three privates were killed outright; one officer and eleven privates were wounded. Of the insurgents, about thirty were known to have been killed, and many more wounded. Nearly 120 prisoners were taken. The effect of the victory was, so far as local disturbances were concerned, instantaneous. Even before the reinforcements under Major-General Nickle appeared, all resistance to the authorities had died away; and, though the Governor at once proclaimed a state of martial law, he was able to recall the proclamation in less than a week.

In other districts of the colony the effect was, for a while, doubtful. The extreme reluctance of Englishmen to admit the necessity for military interference by the Government told strongly in favour of the rioters. There was some danger that Melbourne and Geelong, left almost entirely unprotected by the concentration of troops and police at Ballaarat, would be taken possession of by rioters from the country districts, and Sir Charles Hotham made hasty application to Sir William Denison, the Governor of Tasmania, for military assistance. Very soon, however, the feelings of orderly citizens asserted themselves. Special constables were sworn in at Melbourne and Geelong, marines from two men-of-war stationed at Port Phillip guarded the prisons and the powder stores, wealthy men volunteered to serve as mounted police, and the arrival of the 99th Regiment from Tasmania on the 10th December dealt a final blow to the hopes of the insurgents. Even before this event, all the respectable classes in the community had rallied round the Governor, and he felt in a position to defy further outbreaks.

But the ugliest feature of the whole affair was yet to be revealed. Out of the large number of prisoners taken at the capture of the stockade, only thirteen were committed for trial, the magistrates being instructed to commit only when the evidence was of the clearest nature. It being considered impossible to obtain an impartial trial by a local jury, the prisoners were brought down to Melbourne, and, after various delays, the charges were proceeded with on the 20th February, 1855. A Boston negro, named John Joseph, and a reporter for the *Ballaarat Times*, named Manning, were first tried. The latter may have been merely led away by professional ardour in the pursuit of "copy," though the fact that he had been openly drilled and instructed in the use of a pike by the insurgents would seem to show that his zeal was somewhat excessive. In the case of Joseph, the evidence was overwhelming; he had actually been seen to fire upon the troops, and he was captured in a tent which had been used as a guard-room by the insurgents. No counter-evidence was offered, the prisoners' counsel relying entirely on the alleged absence of treasonable intention. Nevertheless, both prisoners were speedily acquitted, and, although the Government wisely withdrew the remaining cases for the time, subsequent trials produced similar results. Ultimately, however, the difficulties of the situation were allayed by the reforms introduced on the recommendation of the Commission appointed to consider the whole subject of the goldfields. This body presented, on the 27th March, 1855, an extremely able report, in which it recom-

mended the abolition of the licence fee and the substitution therefor of a "miner's right" or Crown permission, lasting for a year, and granted for a nominal fee of £ 1, to occupy for mining purposes a specific piece of Crown land. The deficiency in revenue anticipated from the abolition of licence fees was to be met by the imposition of an export duty upon gold, at the rate of half-a-crown an ounce. The Commission strongly recommended the granting of the political franchise to holders of "miner's rights," and the provision of liberal facilities for the acquisition of land by the miners. It also advocated the simplification of the existing complex system of government in the mining districts, whereby Commissioners, Police authorities, Commissariat officials, and magistrates all worked independently of each other, and suggested the substitution therefor of experienced "Wardens" at the head of elective Boards, who should not only dispose (with the aid of skilled assessors) of disputes specially connected with mining operations, but who should have power to issue by-laws adapted to the special requirements of each district.

These recommendations were, for the most part, carried out by legislation of the same year (1855), and, before his lamented death in December 1855, Sir Charles Hotham had the happiness of being able to report to the Home Government the almost perfect tranquillity of the goldfields. Moreover, the revenue had not suffered by the substitution of the export duty for the licence fees; but the Collector of Customs was of the opinion that the result of the change had been to throw the entire burden of the tax upon the importers of the colony, instead of upon the mining population. The Government was not, however, disposed to concern itself with considerations of abstract justice, so long as it could collect a sufficient revenue without serious opposition.

*The Australian Version**

THE ARRIVAL of the soldiers on the gold-fields was greeted with a shower of stones; six soldiers were wounded and one afterwards died. Here again the fault of the disturbance did not lie entirely with the

* From *Australia: Her Story*, Notes on a Nation, by Kylie Tennant, St. Martin's Press Inc., New York, 1953.

miners. Two diggers had approached the commanding officer, Captain Wise, and asked him if it were true that the wagons he was escorting contained guns. The officer contemptuously replied that he had no information to give a parcel of rebels. The angry men attacked the military convoy, captured one wagon, overturned another, and scattered the troops. The mounted police then dashed forth to rescue what ammunition had not been seized by the crowd or destroyed. They rode among the people slashing with their swords, and many were wounded.

Among the miners there were two dominant groups, the old Chartists and the Young Irelanders—the last, rash, misguided and fiery. On the 29th November 1854 ten thousand diggers gathered on Bakery Hill. Speeches were made, and one, Kennedy, recited [t]his poetic couplet:

*Brother diggers, moral persuasion is all humbug,
Nothing will convince like a lick in the lug.*

Fires were lighted and scores of licences tossed into the flames. Of course, 'Great Works' Raffaello was among the speakers, and repeated the oath: 'We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other and fight to defend our rights and liberties.' There is real poetry in the miners' descriptions of the hoisting of the flag of the Southern Cross. What it meant to those landless men of many nations was something that the autocratic Government could hardly comprehend:

'The Southern Cross was hoisted up the flagstaff—a very splendid pole eighty feet in length and straight as an arrow. There is no flag in old Europe half so beautiful as the Southern Cross of the Ballarat miners, first hoisted on the old spot on Bakery Hill. The flag is silk, blue ground with a large silver cross similar to the one in our southern firmament, no devices of arms but all exceeding chaste and natural.' Thus the fervent Raffaello.

The police reply was to organise a digger hunt the next day. One digger was shot and eight taken prisoner. In such circumstances, the one man among the diggers with a definite policy became their natural leader. The Chartists could give the miners a political platform, but confronted with a direct attack the advocates of gradual reform gave place to more revolutionary spirits. Peter Lalor, son of an Irish Member of the British Parliament, although only twenty-seven, became the central figure in the miners' resistance.

Lalor called for volunteers to resist the police. 'I then,' he testified later, 'called on the volunteers to kneel down. They did so and with heads uncovered and hands raised to heaven they solemnly swore at all hazards to defend their rights and liberties. They promised to meet next morning.' The likelihood of violence kept many away, but next day one thousand five hundred men armed with guns, pikes, hay-forks, or without any weapons at all, gathered on Bakery Hill. They hoisted their flag once more, organised into companies, and marched to Eureka Flat, a plateau of rising ground where they erected a pitifully flimsy barricade. Lalor was elected commander-in-chief, and Vern, a bombastic German, was second-in-command. Lalor said of the stockade: 'In plain truth it was little more than an enclosure to keep our men together and was never erected with an eye to military defence.'

By Saturday evening there were one thousand five hundred men in the enclosure, including the Independent Californian Rangers Revolver Brigade headed by McGill. The Americans were somewhat blamed later for the way they had boasted of their prowess. 'There was, however,' says Raffaello, 'a brave American officer who had command of the rifle-pit men. He fought like a tiger.'

Saturday night was cold and dreary and most of the men drifted back to their tents. There were only a hundred and fifty men in the enclosure, and they were mostly asleep, when about three o'clock in the morning of Sunday, 3rd December 1854, the signal was given that the troops were advancing. The diggers were outnumbered two to one. Two volleys from the troops swept the log parapet of the stockade, and when Lalor gave the order to the pikemen to advance, they broke and fled. The soldiers were over the top in a few seconds and in among the diggers. In the hand-to-hand fight that followed, the miners had little chance against well-armed and trained troops. About thirty out of the little garrison of a hundred and fifty lost their lives, while five soldiers were killed or died of wounds. The soldiers were said to have fought chivalrously, but the police were later censured by a coroner's jury for their brutal conduct. They killed at least two men who had already surrendered.

The scene on the gold-fields as the bodies were carried in was tragic. 'Poor women crying for their absent husbands, children frightened into quietness, carts of dead and wounded horribly stained with blood,' says Raffaello, preceded the sullen bands of captured diggers. The police increased the panic by setting fire to the tents,

and the captives had the added bitterness of seeing their poor possessions burning before their eyes.

During the fight Peter Lalor had been wounded in the arm, but the miners contrived to carry him outside and cover him with slabs. Suffering greatly from loss of blood, he managed to escape and disguised himself in a long black coat and hat. He found his way to the home of a friendly priest where doctors amputated his arm, which was thrown down a worked-out pit, to be later fished up and buried. Lalor remained concealed in the bush and in Melbourne for twelve months, and although a reward was offered for him and many people knew of his whereabouts, he was never betrayed. A year later he entered the Victorian Legislative Council as the representative for Ballarat; he was twice a Minister of the Crown; and for six years was the Speaker of the Legislative Council.

Peter Lalor had been the only real leader. Vern, an empty-headed braggart, ran at the firing of the first volley. When he later sighed in print for a warrior's grave, Raffaello, who had been four months in gaol, commented: 'Fate, be damned; the immoderate length of your legs was fatal to your not getting a warrior's grave.'

Melbourne people were disgusted with the behaviour of the police. A great public meeting was held at which it was claimed that the whole affair was a result of the digger hunts being carried on at a time of excitement on the gold-fields. The captured diggers were four months in gaol, some of them worrying about their wives and children. Then they were taken, chained two and two, to the city for trial; tall, red-haired Raffaello chained to a big mulatto called Joe.

'On passing through Eureka,' Raffaello writes, 'I got a glance at my snug little tent where I had passed so many happy hours and was sacred to me on a Sunday. There it lay, deserted, uncared for! My eyes were choked with tears, and at forty years of age a man does not cry for little.'

Thirteen men chained together in three carts, they went jolting to judgment. The troopers stopped for breakfast. 'They had biscuits, cheese and all served to them before our teeth.' The half-starved prisoners could only with difficulty beg from their guards a little water.

'What will be the end of us, Joe?' Raffaello asked the big mulatto to whom he was chained.

Joe was a realist. 'Why, if the jury lets us go, I guess we'll jump

our holes again on the diggings. If a jury won't let us, then . . .' He bowed his head over his left shoulder, poking his thumb between the windpipe and the collarbone, and, opening wide his eyes, gave such an unearthly whistle that Raffaello could perfectly understand what he meant.

The authorities were determined to 'crush the scoundrels', and had selected the thirteen prisoners with the object of making an example of them. But the city of Melbourne was solidly behind the diggers; the first two tried were acquitted in circumstances very discreditable to the Crown; and the legal battle ended with a general amnesty. Raffaello trudged back to the diggings on foot along the road he had ridden in chains. In his absence someone had rifled his 'snug little tent'. He never managed to reclaim the clothes and money the police took from him, and the diggers who had profited by the lifting of the tax immediately after the Eureka Stockade showed little gratitude, though Raffaello was elected after his trial to the newly formed Ballarat Local Council.

Whether the political reforms which took place in Australia earlier than in other countries were a result of the Eureka Stockade is a question of controversy. The Royal Commission that enquired into the outbreak held that the causes of the disturbance were the licence fee, the land question, and the lack of political rights. Acting upon the Commission's recommendation, the Government abolished the licence fee and instituted a Miner's Right, for which one pound per annum was paid. Within a year, manhood suffrage was granted and property qualifications abolished for the Victorian Legislative Assembly. Cautious historians doubt whether the liberalising of the governing institutions was a result of the brief skirmish with authority, but the verdict of a former Justice of the High Court of Australia, Dr. H. V. Evatt, is that Eureka was 'one of those rare cases where tyrannical enforcement of a harsh law is met by active resistance leading to the repeal of the law'.

The diggers may have been, as the official proclamation declared, 'A large body of evilly-disposed persons of various nations who had entrenched themselves in a stockade on the Eureka'; but their blue, starry banner has been the inspiration of Australian labour orators ever since.



APPENDIX B

SHORT GLOSSARY OF THE AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGE

a-humpin': carrying, "toting."

all-out: tired out.

bagman: swagmen (*see* swag), tramp. Originally derived from the word meaning travelling salesman.

bail up: to rob, to hold up.

barrack: to shout derision or encouragement at; *barrack for*, to support.

billabong: backwater, a pool in the bed of a river which has ceased to flow.

billy: a can for making tea.

blued: spent, "blown in."

bluey: *see* "swag."

bob: a shilling.

breeze: a tiff, scrap or row.

buggy: a horsedrawn vehicle built for two.

bullock (to): to work hard, toil.

bushranger: an outlaw such as Jesse James.

chyack: to tease.

cocky: a small farmer; short for cockatoo. Also one who keeps nit, keeps watch.

digger: a miner or prospector.

dingo: the native dog; applied to a man, a traitor, a coward.

double buggy: a surrey.

duff: a stiff flour pudding, or similar food.

fettler: a man employed in repair and maintenance of railway lines.

fiveer: a five pound note.

flash man: one who is boastful, counterfeit, showy in dress.

fossickers: searchers, scratchers in the tailings of a mine or other abandoned workings.

gammon: to "kid," "have one on."

gin: An aboriginal woman.

goannas: monitor lizards (corruption of iguana).

graft: to work.

gum: a eucalyptus tree.

humpy: cabin.

jim-jams: nerves or worse.

knocked up: tired out.

larrikin: a young rowdy.

Matilda: see "swag."

moleskins: trousers made of thick, soft-nap fabric.

marked: bad tempered, peeved.

outback: inland districts remote from settled areas.

overlanders: drovers or cattle men who drive their flocks or herds for vast distances.

peg out: establish a mining claim or, on the other hand, die.

pleuro: used colloquially for *pleuro-pneumonia*.

pub: a tavern.

rum-looking: strange looking.

run: pasture for grazing.

scotty: short tempered.

selection: site chosen for a farm by would-be settler or an actual one.

shirty: quick-tempered.

"shore": colloquial past tense of verb *to shear*.

spieler: anyone from a front man for a carnival side-show to a confidence trickster.

station: a ranch as opposed to a farm.

sundowner: a swagman or tramp.

swag: a rolled blanket slung over the shoulder with a piece of rope in which a sundowner or swagman carries all his earthly possessions. Also known as a Matilda. The sundowner often refers to his tramping as "waltzing Matilda."

tip-dray: a dump cart.

tracker: one who can follow tracks in the bush; guide, scout, usually an aboriginal.

trap: a vehicle equipped with springs.

treacle: molasses or syrup.

tucker: food.

twigged: understood, seen.

wattle: mimosa.

