CHAPTER I.

The Voyage—Port Phillip—*Melbourne*—John Chinaman—A Chinese Theatre—Cabmen—Melbourne Institutions—Pentridge Stockade—Australian weather—The People of Melbourne—Our Concerts in Melbourne—*Ballarat*—Down a Gold Mine—Ballarat Worthies—A Picnic—*Geelong*—A Farmers' Meeting—*Sandhurst*—The Suburbs of "Bendigo"—*Echuca*—Purchasing Coach and Horses—A Storm in the Bush.

ABOUT the middle of March, 1872, we sailed from Glasgow to Melbourne in the clipper ship "Ben Ledi." Its state-rooms were commodious, and just numerous enough to accommodate our party, so that we reigned supreme in the saloon. To while away the time, we occasionally gave concerts to the sailors. The jolly tars more than once reciprocated by decorating the forecastle with bunting and lamps, and inviting us to listen to their nautical lays. We of course had with us our small travelling piano, which was securely lashed-up in one of the hinder compartments. Here we juniors—under the paternal direction—held daily and nightly practice of vocal scales, glees, and part-songs. No matter whether the vessel was rolling off Madeira, or stagnant for a week in the sweltering calm of the tropics, or wildly careering in a ten days' gale far south of the Cape, there was the same rigid rehearsal. On one occasion, in the height of a storm, each of us holding a candle and swaying our bodies to the varying angles of the vessel, there was a sudden pitch, a roll, and a crash of waters breaking upon the

deck. My father was violently lurched off his camp-stool, and all of us huddled remorselessly into a corner amid black darkness and stench of extinguished wicks. While thus achieving a sufficient measure of "light and shade," it was somewhat difficult to import these qualities into our vocal numbers, so the rehearsal was that night abandoned in deference to the tempest. Otherwise, our ship-board life was not more eventful than commonly befalls the Australian voyager. We caught the usual albatross, and killed the customary shark. The passage, however, was exceptionally protracted, as it was not until dawn of a Sunday in June—when we had been all but a hundred days on board—that the "Ben Ledi" rounded Cape Otway, the mountainous promontory of the Victorian coast, and shortly afterwards entered Port Phillip Bay, at the head of which stood Melbourne, its towers and spires showing dimly through the dust that blew over the city. On the left lay the port of Williamstown, our desired haven, which was reached late in the afternoon.

A short railway ride brought us to the city, and an Albert car conveyed us to Scott's hotel. After disposing of a sumptuous meal, we took a moonlight peep at Melbourne, inaugurating our walk by purchasing at a fruit shop a magnificent pine-apple for sixpence. Bourke Street, the principal business thoroughfare, was filled with a busy crowd promenading before gaily-lighted shops and gas-flaring stands—the housewife with her basket, intent on purchases; the native Australian youth or "corn-stalk"; the Chinaman, with his stereotyped face; lounging fellows with big beards and tall slouched hats; Frenchman and German; English, Scotch, and Irish—all blending in one common throng.

Melbourne, at this time, had a population of 200,000—a fourth of the inhabitants of the colony of Victoria. The city stands on the Yarra Yarra River—a little stream, sylvan near Melbourne; but further down, afflicted with the stench of chemical works and tanneries. It is very tortuous, and takes eight miles to go from Melbourne to the Bay, which, as the crow flies, is scarcely a third of that distance. Viewed from

an eminence, the river resembles a liquid cork-screw. The principal streets of the city are one mile long, 100 feet wide, and run at right angles. The drainage is open, a stream of water running down each side of the street, with small wooden bridges for foot-passengers. Every house and shop has its verandah. The first thing that strikes the stranger as peculiar is, that lofty warehouses stand side by side with one-storied workshops; grand stone-built stores hob-nob with low wooden shanties; and stately churches rise in close proximity to timber-yards, tinsmiths' shops, and small public-houses.

Collins Street is the most regularly-built thoroughfare. At its intersection by Russel Street, is the monument erected to Burke and Wills, the famous explorers of the Australian Continent. Close to it stands the large and costly Presbyterian Church—its site one of the finest in Melbourne, and the lofty spire, a noble feature in the sky-line. Further down Collins Street is the stately Town Hall, with a lofty tower. Bourke Street boasts the principal places of amusement. Here, too, is "Paddy's Market," where tropic and temperate fruits and excellent vegetables may be obtained. In this street the miscellaneous business of the city is transacted, with a strange mixture of nationalities. Moses, Levi and Abraham will be happy to sell you all descriptions of cigars, pipes, and tobacco; Sprachen & Herr can supply unlimited varieties of fancy goods and colonial-made jewellery; Moosoo, Adolphus & Co., possess an excellent stock of furniture and "French polish"; and Ah Ching, Ah Wing, & Chum Foo have on hand a large assortment of tea, opium and Chinese curiosities.

In Little Bourke Street, the Celestials, with excusable clannishness, have gathered themselves together. At nearly every door you see "John" lounging and smoking, or grinning feebly at you as you pass. We see the gambling saloon with its group of avaricious speculators, and its windowful of "lucky" papers; the tea warehouse; the opium shop, with its vacant-eyed customers; and the lottery shop, presided over by a priestly hoary-haired Chinaman. Some Chinamen gain a livelihood as pedlars, their goods slung on a long bamboo, by

which they can carry great weights on their shoulders. They are frequently to be seen at back-doors, chatting with the servant-girls, and trying to dispose of their wares at a good profit.

One evening we went to the Chinese theatre, held in a booth at the head of Little Bourke Street. The tent was surrounded by a noisy crowd of eaves-dropping street-arabs and loafers. Paying our shilling we entered, and saw an audience of eighty or ninety Chinamen. We took our stand beside one of them, asking him to explain the "plot;" but he declined the task, as he had left China when he was only "one moon old." The stage was like an inverted proscenium—the "foot-lights" being placed above the heads of the actors, who raised their faces towards the lamps when any strong emotion had to be exhibited. Behind the performers, at the back of the stage, sat the orchestra, numbering two, who played Celestial airs on a monotonous gong and a wearisome one-stringed fiddle. The entrance of any great character was the occasion of a furious burst of sound, which subsided when he spoke, but was immediately resumed upon the conclusion of a sentence. No scenery graced the stage, the *dramatis personæ* appearing from behind two tapestried curtains. The drama was relieved by an incident not in the programme. A shower of missiles, thrown by the rabble outside, came flying through the roof of the tent, and alighted on the heads of an emperor and chief mandarin, who were instantly carried from the stage amid the shrill jabbering of the audience, the play methodically proceeding as before. Imagine the effect upon an English audience of seeing their favourite Hamlet carried off at the wings dangerously wounded by bricks hurled in at the skylights!

Naturally, we came frequently in contact with the Melbourne cabmen, many of whom were waifs from the diggings. In appearance, the Jehu is a respectable fellow, and on entering his cab or Albert car, you are soon put at your ease, as he talks in a friendly manner that is quite assuring:—

"Ah! you admire them houses, do you, sir?—well, what would you think of seeing them all trees, sir—all bush, nothing

but tents?—that's what I saw when I came out here twenty years ago this very month. I left the missus an' young folks at home, an' sailed for the diggings in '52—yes, sir, an' I made some thousands of pounds up at Ballarat. I wouldn't like to tell you how much I made—indeed, I wouldn't. I took the gold out in bucketfuls—didn't sift the gold from the dirt; that was too much trouble, sir—I took the dirt from the gold. Yes, I built a hotel up there, and it was crammed from week's end to week's end. My word! the coin I put away then! But I was a fool in those days, sir. I was too free, too generous, too open-hearted—spent all my earnings among my chums. I took to the drink, sir, bad; an' the money went as fast as it came. Then I lost the run of my luck, an' had to sell out an' come down to Melbourne a cab-driving. You'll be wondering, sir, at seeing me holding the reins, but a chap's got to be humble in this world sometimes, you know. It's my own horse an' cab, sir; all my own property; but it don't make up for the good old times. Get off at this corner, sir?—good-day, sir."

And away he goes in his Albert car, a vehicle memorable to us by reason of an accident that occurred one evening while driving down Bourke Street. We had reached a very steep portion of the road, which was slippery owing to recent rain, when the horse fell, the shafts flying into fragments and the front-seat passengers rolling out over the unfortunate animal; while my sisters had to be taken down by a ladder from the back of the vehicle.

A pleasing feature of Melbourne is its beautiful parks and reserves. The Botanical and Fitzroy Gardens are the two principal resorts, the former containing tropical and British plants, growing side by side in the open air, and the latter laid out in beautiful walks and ornamented with classical statues. Again, material prosperity does not shut out a due recognition of the Arts and Sciences. There is a fine University; also a Public Library of 80,000 volumes. One night we heard a spirited debate in the Legislative Assembly, an ample, well-seated, and excellently lighted chamber. The subject was the re-arrangement of tariffs, and the discussion of course

involved hard-hitting at Free Trade and Protection, to which latter Victoria pins its faith.

Nominally there are no poorhouses or workhouses in Melbourne. But there are kindred institutions—a Benevolent Asylum and an Orphan Asylum. Important buildings also are Melbourne and Alfred Hospitals. The Blind Asylum is another noteworthy institution, where the inmates, in addition to useful trades, are instructed in music, occasional concerts being given in the Town Hall; while of equal interest is the Deaf and Dumb Institution, where the scholars are taught by an elaborate system of signs grafted on their usual alphabet. The faculty of the pupils for mimicry is very great, and the superintendent cultivates it for their mutual amusement. Historical tableaux are arranged for the gratification of visitors, the scholars being chosen according to their real or fancied resemblance to Biblical or other characters. We were not favoured upon our visit with any special exhibition, the superintendent lamenting that he could not show us the spectacle of "Abraham offering up Isaac;" for though Isaac was still in the institution, yet Abraham had gone to Tasmania to see his friends.

One day we visited the great penal establishment at Pentridge, a few miles from Melbourne. This famous prison, or "Stockade," to which we were kindly invited by the Presbyterian Chaplain, contained 600 convicts. Inside we found the prisoners alphabetically arranged (A, B, and C), into various stages of wickedness. It was stated that our view of the Stockade would be limited, as the establishment was in great anxiety owing to the attempt of one of the prisoners the previous afternoon to murder Mr. Duncan, the Inspector-General, who was severely wounded. Passing along the first corridor, we heard scuffling and yells, and through an open cell-door saw the murderous prisoner struggling in the arms of two warders. Hurriedly moving on, we were presently locked up for a short time in the dreaded "Dark Cell," where however we performed a part-song! This dungeon is virtually sound-tight relatively to the rest of the building, any shout or yell being carried up through the roof by a long iron pipe.

Here we were told numerous stories of attempted escapes. A short time before, three men had for three days secreted themselves under the zinc covering of the roof, and were discovered almost dead from the extreme heat, the roof being fully exposed to the summer sun. Before leaving, we looked in at two halls where choirs were practising. In one place a group of sturdy Wesleyan felons were vigorously engaged over a hymn; and in another, up in a gallery, Episcopalian convicts harmoniously rendering "Hark! the herald angels sing," while a man in a canvas coat, with F.A.D. on the back of it, accompanied on a harmonium.

As the cold weather had just set in, we had twelve weeks' experience of an Australian winter, which was a failure as regards inclemency, the sunny days far out-numbering the rainy. Now and then there appeared light "mackerel" clouds, "downy feathers," and "horse tails," as they are called, that seemed to be switching the heavens to a most delicate blue. There was an exhilarating sparkle in the air—one seemed to be breathing brilliance—inhaling aerial champagne.

The people of Melbourne are bustling and energetic. There is still perceptible a flavour of the prodigal generosity of the early "digging days." The folks are very warm-hearted, off-hand, and not troubled with burdensome conventionalities. The fashions, however, hold as important a place in Melbourne as in any capital of Europe, which is incontestably shown upon a fine afternoon when the aristocracy promenade the northern side of Collins Street, "doing the block," as it is colonially called. The inhabitants are very jealous of the good name of their town, and on all occasions urge the new-comer to express his opinion of it. The vital question, "How do you like Melbourne?" was poured into our ears day and night. We had it at our meals, encountered it in our walks, and had volleys of it at evening parties. We were asked the fatal opinion in crowded railway carriages; questioned by acquaintances who cropped up in omnibuses; saluted with the query by "companions of the bath;" and addressed in all the varied circumstances in which it is possible to meet your fellow-man. Luckily a favour-

able answer could be given to their enquiries, for we admired their fine city almost as much as did the residents themselves.

Our entertainment of Scottish Song ran for fifty-two nights on our first visit to Melbourne. The building chosen was the new Temperance Hall, capable of holding over one thousand persons. It was situated in Russel Street, and as its lofty and spacious gable commanded a neighbouring and important thoroughfare, it entered into the head of our manager to cover the wall with a huge canvas announcement. I forget of how many square yards it consisted, but an "ornamental painter" was occupied several days in executing the mammoth-lettered advertisement in an extensive studio. At length the immense sign was safely secured to the gable, and was voted a success by some of the more gossipy prints of the city. Once, during a high gale, a large portion of the canvas "fetched away," in nautical phrase, and flapped so portentously, that one or two men had to be sent up with instructions either to replace it in position, or to take in two or three reefs.

By frequent change of programme we secured large numbers of regular attenders, who latterly looked on certain seats as their right—some facetiously terming them their "pew"—the illusion being increased by many of the audience holding sittings in the hall, which was temporarily used on Sundays by one of the Scotch Kirks. We were told that amongst our most ardent adherents was a Glasgow tailor, who systematically put aside ten shillings a week, saying, "That's for the Kennedy's." We had also the compliment of a noticeable clerical element in our audience. A story was current of two Scotch ministers meeting in Collins Street one evening, and holding only a brief chat. "Excuse me," said the one, "but I have a *very* pressing engagement." "And I too," replied the other clergyman; "I have a most important meeting to attend to-night." They hurriedly parted, went different ways, and five minutes afterwards confronted each other at the pay-box of "Kennedy's Sangs!"

Ballarat, the second city of Victoria, is 100 miles by rail from Melbourne. It has a population of some 47,000, and is possessed of fine streets. Sturt Street is surprisingly wide, with

reserves of trees running down the centre of the thoroughfare. Though most of the city is well built, much of it is narrow, tortuous, and uneven. The irregular streets are those formed along the line of a gold " lead " or claim in the palmy old days, —the historic ground of memorable nuggets. The south side of the town we found to be a wilderness of gold "claims." All around were innumerable heaps of sand surmounted by windlasses, with here and there a head and pick momentarily visible, —the scene a wholesale mutilation of nature. There were Chinamen, too, working the refuse or "tailings," and some in their eagerness sweeping the very dust of the road,—an act forbidden in the streets under a heavy penalty. If ever a city was "paved with gold," it is Ballarat.

One day my brothers and I went down that famous alluvial mine the "Band of Hope." We put on a complete miner's dress—a greasy canvas cap, a coarse flannel shirt, a dirt-bespattered blouse, thick worsted stockings, and voluminous, lengthy pants, the surplus of which we stuffed into a pair of knee-high Wellington boots. Equipped with candles, we went down in the iron cage. I was strangely tempted to look upwards, but our companion, a stalwart miner, cried: "For goodness' sake, sir, don't look up; why, only the other day a man had his brains scooped out agin' the shaft doin' the same thing; an' another fellow had an eye knocked out by a bit of stuff falling in his face: besides a chum o' mine that had a leg completely jammed to a jelly atween the woodwork and the cage; so keep your head well inside o' my arm, sir!" We came to the 500 feet level, where we stepped off, the cage going downwards a hundred and odd feet more. A grey horse stood near, looking sleek and comfortable enough, waiting to draw empty trucks back to the various "drives." We each jumped into one of the empty trucks, and after what appeared an interminable ride, arrived at a distant part of the workings. We came to a "jump up," communicating with a higher level of the workings; but we found the rope of the cage had broken, to the disablement of an Irishman, who hopped up to us rubbing a limb, and trying to look invalided, though it chanced he

was more frightened than hurt. As the ordinary means of communication had failed, we climbed up an iron ladder eighty feet high, placed in a shaft 2 feet wide, just large enough to admit the body. The ascent was no mean trial of the nerves, as the iron rounds of the ladder were wet and slippery. I climbed with my left hand, holding the candle in my right, an unlucky stream of water latterly extinguishing the light. We emerged at last into a large open space, where the principal mining operations were being carried on. The place seemed like a forest, the feeble candlelight showing us immense upright timbers supporting the lofty roof, the beams growing fainter and fainter in perspective till lost in the darkness. Here and there a light twinkled.

We saw a number of men busy upon a "facing"—a wall of earth or a ledge of rock in process of detachment or excavation. Upon our expressing a strong desire to see gold in its natural state, one of the miners exclaimed that he had found a speck, but it turned out to be smaller than a pin-head, and we had to flatten our nose in the dirt, with an eye in the candle, before we saw it. As a rule, the men scarcely ever see the "colour of gold." The earth has to be "washed" in large quantities to make it pay, and it takes about a ton of dirt to yield five or six pennyweights of gold. I may add that this mine is the most important in or near Ballarat. In the year 1867 it yielded £60,000 in forty-four days—a memorable seven weeks' work.

One day we saw a poor-looking old man posting our placards in the street. His face was spotted with paste, and his clothes threadbare. He was once rich, and had a fine hotel; made money during the gold rushes, and was elected mayor of a town not far from Ballarat; failed either in business or gold-mining, and gradually sank to his present humble position. We found him to be a philosopher, "not above his work," as he said, while his conversation was sprinkled with moral precepts and maxims that had a certain charm when coming from a bill-sticker. In the same street we saw a homely-looking man, dressed in plain clothes, with a red-spotted handkerchief

hanging out of his pocket. He had the look of a decent farmer, was slightly bent, and leant upon a thick stick. This was the richest man in Ballarat, and called "Jock" from his nationality. Originally an Edinburgh butcher, he came out to Victoria comparatively poor, and seems to have acquired wealth by always luckily possessing land that some person else urgently wanted. His life seems to have been a continual "buying-out." Once he had a farm, which a number of speculators desired for mining purposes. They offered him £5000—£10,000—£20,000—till finally the master of the situation closed with the magnificent sum of £30,000. But the speculators had not yet got rid of him. He required the money to be counted out in his own presence and in his own house, and that not merely in notes, which he religiously avoided, but in sterling gold.

A pic-nic at Kirk's Dam was arranged for our special delight by a worthy Scotsman, town-councillor, and veritable stranger's friend. Kirk's Dam is a delicious nook, a forest-encircled sheet of water, artificially constructed for the supply of the city. On its grassy banks was spread an elegant lunch. This was startlingly diversified by the capture of a poisonous black snake, three feet long, which one of the company triumphantly brought along on the end of a stick. The reptile was hung over a fence for the general inspection, many of the old colonists in our party never having seen a snake. Returning home, we passed Lake Wendouree, a small sheet of water graced with row-boats and pleasure yachts. Close to its shores are the Botanical Gardens, with verdant lawns and extensive gravel walks, one of the latter a mile in length.

Our footsteps were next turned to Geelong, once the second city of the colony, but Ballarat, with its gold discoveries, having shot ahead, has kept the lead. The town is busy during the summer, when pleasure-seekers troop in from all parts of the colony. The salt-water baths are a great attraction, the bathing-ground being staked in to keep out the sharks that infest the Bay. They are a very hospitable people in Geelong, fond of bazaars, tea-meetings, and evening parties. We felt rather

taxed upon one occasion when we had to dance in a hot crowded room, with the thermometer at 80°. I think that was the figure; but I am painfully certain it stood at 120° about midday. The party, who seemed composed of salamanders, danced indefatigably until the cooler hours of early morn.

Next day brought an experience of the abominable "hot wind." For many years this wind was a mystery. In the early days it was conjectured that it came from interior wastes, where the baked surface reflected back the fierce rays of the sun; and though recent explorers have found no absolute desert in the heart of the continent, yet the old speculation may be so far correct, that the large extent of uncultivated country does not absorb the heat as it might do if properly tilled and irrigated. We have not one good word for the hot wind. On this occasion the dust rose in immense cones and pyramids, drifted against the doors and windows, and enveloped struggling pedestrians. The gale blew the whole day and far into the night—the heat and the whistling and groaning of the wind almost banishing sleep. In the morning a southern breeze brought a heavy downfall of rain, the hissing sound of which was sweetest music. The sky brightened, the healthy, cool winds blew in from the sea——Ah!

The country round Geelong is agricultural. One day we drove to a Scottish farmer's house some fifteen miles out. The day was overpoweringly hot, and the road hilly, but we arrived in time to enjoy the hospitality of our host. Among many good things provided was a complimentary basin of "kail broth." Upon our return journey we stopped at the village of Ceres, and found ourselves in the midst of a jolly gathering of Scottish farmers. Old memories came crowding round them, and many volunteered songs. One said he would give a fabulous sum to hear such and such a song; another said he would sing a ballad he had not sung for the last fifteen years—a proposal received with acclamation. A loud chorus accompanied this song, and choruses became the order of the evening. One farmer produced a large volume of Scottish music, and searched for his favourite song. Another started up and proposed they

should sing the whole book through—a motion received with hearty cheers, but forgotten next minute in the vehement chorus of "Auld Lang Syne," ingeniously started by some individual who wished to draw the meeting to a close.

From Geelong we went to Sandhurst or "Bendigo," 100 miles north of Melbourne. It is an arid city, large and scattered—a place diluted with distance. On a hill in the outskirts stands a row of chimneys, marking the reef-line of the most celebrated mine in the district—the Great Extended Hustlers. Fine streets stretch in various directions, with, in many cases, handsome buildings, their elegant outlines standing out strangely against a background of smoke, chemical vapours, and steam. The principal street—Pall Mall—is fronted by a cool, shady, grassy, reserve——Puff! snort! creak! puff! What is this?—steam is rising behind that clump of trees. Looking closer, we see in all their hideousness a poppet-head, a steam-engine, and the open mouth of a mine. Along the pavements you see wooden pegs stuck in the ground marking the boundary lines of claims, and bearing the name of the mine in bold characters. This Pall Mall, however, had quite a metropolitan appearance on Saturday night, when the shops were brilliantly lighted and the street thronged with people listening to the brass band in the balcony of a large hotel. The bank windows that same evening were also great attractions, as the gold cakes of the different companiės were being exhibited—the meltings for the past week, fortnight, or month. The large masses of gold were guarded by wire screens—one window containing £18,000 worth of the precious metal, and another £20,000 worth.

Walking out to one of the suburbs on a very hot day we rested ourselves beside two Chinamen, who were engaged with a "cradle" in sifting cast-off "tailings." We inquired about their luck, and the younger turned out his sieve with great glee, showing us "one speck," with an air of acquired fortune. The elder Chinamen then asked us in broken English where we came from; and being told "Scotland," he brightened up, and said patronisingly, he had heard of the place. Before leaving, my father sang "Allister M'Allister" to their great delight,

though one may question the fitness of singing the least intelligible of Scottish songs to the most foreign of foreigners. Further on we entered a Chinese shop and bought a Chinese book. It was illustrated profusely with woodcuts. After some haggling we gave eighteenpence for it. "Nice book, John?" "Welly good book!"—at which the surrounding pig-tails were convulsed with laughter. We seized a passing Chinaman—"Read this!" "Ah! welly good book—one year book—days, moons—last year book—him no good now!" The rascally Chinese had sold us an old almanac!

In Sandhurst we became acquainted with two of its principal characters, whom we shall call Messrs. Smith and Jones. Their career had been a mixture of luck, pluck, and perseverance. They came from Ireland with their better-halves about twenty years ago. They were close friends, and agreed to go shares in every undertaking. On landing in Sandhurst their purse was limited, and they spent their all in purchasing a waggon and two horses, with which they carried goods to the goldfields. This vehicle was converted at night into a two-storey house, Mr. and Mrs. Smith occupying the interior of the waggon, while Mr. and Mrs. Jones slept underneath. As the goods-carrying business prospered, Smith and Jones came to be proprietors of a small cottage, in which they were one day digging a cellar, when lo! a bright stream of water bubbled up to the joy of the two Irishmen; for water was a scarcity, and brought from a long distance at great expense. The two friends carefully tapped the stream, and sold water to the miners at one shilling a bucketful—another source of increasing revenue. By various steps they rose to be the proprietors of two fine hotels.

We have a vivid recollection of a large public school in the vicinity of the town, kept by an Aberdonian, who exercises rigid authority over some hundreds of scholars. After school had been dismissed in stern, regimental fashion, the dancing class commenced. Half-a-dozen boys and girls entered the class-room, marshalled by an elderly dame, another Aberdonian, who unfolded to the rising generation the mysteries of Highland reels, flings, and strathspeys. It would have done a Celtic

heart good to have seen the lady tripping round the room followed by her juvenile charge, who executed the same manœuvres like so many shadows, hooking their elbows and snapping their thumbs in true Highland manner.

From Sandhurst we went north to Echuca, 166 miles from Melbourne, and situated on the river Murray, the boundary between Victoria and New South Wales. The main street is full of red brick stores and wooden houses, each end of the street terminating in rough wild bush—which bush lurks in back-yards and gardens, and creeps in at all corners—Echuca seeming to have settled down bodily in the forest, and scraped itself a resting-place. It was founded in 1853, when there was no railway, and when people did not care to settle in such a remote district; but during the great spluttering rush to the Bendigo gold-fields, some splashes of population found their way as far north as Echuca.

Along the banks of the Murray were traces of the great flood of 1870, which rendered Echuca amphibious for many days. The hotel we lived at had been severely damaged by this flood. The ceiling in the sitting-room showed two yawning gaps, and the plaster was coming down in flakes the whole time we were there; but assurance was given that no dangerously large pieces had fallen for some time. We happened to look in one morning at the Town Hall, where a half-caste was charged with committing an assault upon the son of a squatter. There were present two justices on the bench, a clerk, the prosecutor, and witnesses, flanked by a sergeant of police, a local constable, a trooper booted and spurred, and a miscellaneous crowd of townsfolk. The black man was ordered to be removed to the lock-up for twelve hours. The Town Hall is divided by folding doors into a court of justice and a concert-room, and in the latter we gave our entertainment that same evening. Amongst the audience we saw our friends of the morning—the two justices, the clerk of the court, the complainant, the witnesses, the policeman, and the trooper—all but the prisoner, who, we were told, was unable to attend, as his

sentence would not expire till an hour after the concert had concluded!

At Castlemaine, a thriving town, we took our leave of the railway, as we had mapped out some thousands of miles of bush-travelling. We went one morning to a hotel-yard to see an American waggon, with a square-built body, and glazed leather roof. The vehicle was hung upon "thorough-braces," two or three layers of leather belts bound together with clamps —iron springs being useless for Australian travelling, save in the case of light carts and buggies. The proprietor of this coach was in the "show" line, and had travelled most of the colony with this same waggon. "Here's the machine, gentlemen." We examined it carefully, fingered the bolts and nuts, jerked the wheels, measured our limbs on the box seat, unrolled the side curtains, moved the moveable seats, and scrutinized the condition of naves, tires, and axles. Everything was satisfactory, but we got a practical wheelwright to examine the vehicle—verdict, good for its age. "Here's the horses, gentlemen"—three stout, middle-aged horses, on which we got a veterinary surgeon to give his opinion—verdict, horses as excellent as they were old. "And here's the driver, gentlemen"—a short, red-haired Irishman, on whom we pronounced our own favourable verdict. We bought the whole "turn-out," and engaged the driver. Next morning the equipage drove up to the hotel door, the leading grey horse prancing in a way to make one proud. We packed the coach, building up the back part with luggage. Imagine the rack carefully strapped and roped up; imagine four of us inside, and two on the box; imagine—no, you cannot imagine—how we tore down the principal street and out into the country, bowling along a capital road, with the horses fresh, the day auspicious, a fine breeze blowing, and the landscape interesting. We had scarcely begun to feel the full sense of proprietorship when we rattled, with a succession of loud whip-cracks, into the paved courtyard of the hotel at Kyneton.

This was a quiet agricultural township. We drove out by invitation to a farmhouse five miles distant—a comfortable

dwelling of four rooms, stone-built and plain. There was a hole by the fire-place, with a large brick lying alongside, and we said laughingly to the goodwife, "You're fully prepared for the rats and mice, we see." "Mice!" she exclaimed, "we've no mice here; it's a snake. We keep the brick off through the day, because we can see to kill the creature; but we put the brick on at dusk, in case it gets out—I don't like the idea of the beast crawling through the house in the night-time!" The farm was situated on the banks of the Campaspe, amid softly swelling hills. A fine orchard overlooked the river, and being December, the trees were loaded with plums, apples, pears, and cherries of great size. The river Campaspe, which, strange to say, flows inland a hundred miles northwards to the Murray, was dry when we saw it, with a deep water-hole appearing here and there in the bed of the river,—a wonderful provision of Australian nature, by which man and beast can quench their thirst in the dead heat of summer. We accepted the fact as one of the numerous wonders poked at you by the Australians: —" Our seasons and months do not agree with yours; our cherries, as you see, grow stone outermost; our north wind is warm; and our gum-trees shed their bark instead of their leaves."

Soon after we encountered a bush-storm, while crossing the ranges near Mount Macedon. The wind tore over the hills, sweeping the rain before it in masses of spray. On every side flew branches of trees. Close by us, a giant of the forest rent asunder near its base, and slowly tottering, fell with an alarming crash amid clouds of earth. The sky was inky black, rent by lightning. The road was strewn with fallen trees, enormous limbs, branches, uptorn roots, and white flakes of timber. In several instances the fences had been destroyed on both sides of the track by the fall of more than usually lofty trees. Happily we escaped unscathed from the perils of the ranges.

CHAPTER II.

The "Stony Rises"—A Squatting Station—A Drove of Kangaroos—The Bush and Bush Roads—The Middle Diggings—Coaching to Sydney.

IN January, 1873, we commenced a tour in the western or pastoral district of Victoria. Before leaving the metropolis my father and mother invested in a horse and buggy, as they found the coach too fatiguing. The first stage of the journey consisted of a steamboat sail from Melbourne to Geelong, whence we started on our coach journey. We stayed a night at Winchelsea, and spent two days at Colac. Leaving Colac, we entered upon flat country—the coach running quietly along a soft earthy road. I sat half asleep upon the box, while Patrick, our driver, trolled out some Irish love-song, stamping the time cheerily with his right foot. I had become tired of counting the telegraph posts, and staring ahead for white milestones. Every now and then the hot sunshine would glow on my face, making me unspeakably drowsy. Heigho! A violent nudge on the elbow from Patrick. "Hillo now, wake up, wake up; don't you know we're just driving through the Stony Rises!" We suddenly come, with all the pleasantness of a transition in music, upon a lovely collection of hills, volcanic in origin, shaded by trees, and strewn with innumerable boulders, between which grew clusters of fern or bracken. For several miles the road wound amid miniature glens and charming dells, with the same delightful blending of bracken and boulder. Presently Lake Korangamite gleamed upon our right—the largest expanse of salt water in Victoria, being eighty miles in circumference and twenty miles long. It is supposed to be formed upon the site of an extinct volcano, and the peculiar saltness to be due to the drainage of the basaltic rock. Most of the country in Western Victoria is volcanic, and possesses rich soil. Approaching Camperdown, we saw a hill of a conical shape,

called the "Sugar-Loaf." Whenever you see a cone-shaped peak in Australia, be sure and call it the "Sugar-Loaf." In nine cases out of ten you will be right. Camperdown, a number of detached one-storey houses, lining a thoroughfare two hundred feet wide, is merely a continuation into the town of the main road. This extreme width of street dwarfs the buildings, but gives one an enjoyable feeling of space, freedom, and fresh air. The road has a broad margin of grass upon either side, called the "Poor Man's Paddock." This is used by stockdrivers for pasturing their cattle upon a long journey, and by passing travellers for their horses.

Here we first saw an aboriginal black. He appeared at the hotel-door in a white hat, a light linen coat, and tattered grey trousers. He had a flat nose, thick lips, dark black eyes, and straight hair. He made us a long speech, rather incoherent, owing to whisky and broken English. Then he whiningly begged for a "lickspince" (sixpence), and went off, making exaggerated salutes. Most of the western towns have a black; and this one, for distinction's sake, was called "Camperdown George." Government supplies with clothes, meat, and tobacco, any native who will reside in a particular township, but vagrant life is too strong a temptation for them. A gentleman in Camperdown informed us that he had officially given away about £500 worth of clothing to the natives, but that most of it had been found scattered over various parts of the country. No one is allowed to sell drink to the aborigine, but the latter turns his clothes into money, and gets the first available white man to purchase the whisky.

Here, in Western Victoria, reigns the squatter. He is no rough customer, but a pushing gentleman, full of care and forethought. He lives in a handsome villa on his property, enjoying his fine table, his wine, his library, and his garden. He is the landed aristocrat of Australia. Through the kindness of a squatter living near Camperdown, we had a glimpse of life at a sheep-station. His house lay some eight miles away, on the brow of a hill. We approached it through extensive sheep-runs and paddocks, arriving at the house through a closely-shaded

avenue of trees, and along a well-planned terrace garden. We had always regarded a squatter's house as a kind of rural habitation, a farm house on an extensive scale; but here we saw an elegant verandahed building surrounded by sloping gardens, and uniting all the homeliness of rural life with the luxuries of modern society. Previous to dinner we ascended the hill. Our host gave us the topography of the district—how his station extended to that fence, that dark line away in the distance—how it took in most of what we saw on the left hand—oh, no, that lake did not belong to him—that was Mr. Smith's lake—that hill there, however, was his; but the mountain further away was purchased recently by Mr. Jones, and now called Jones's Hill. After dinner we were mounted on stock-horses, in order to visit the sheep-washing sheds some miles off. Here the sheep have their wool made white, free from grease, and fit for market. The sheep are first driven into a large tank full of soap and warm water, then rinsed in a cold water tank, with the addition of a shower bath. After this Turkish bath the sheep are taken to the wool-shed, where they remain overnight to dry, the shearers setting to work upon them early in the morning. The men are paid 15s. per 100 sheep, and a skilled hand can shear sixty in ten hours.

This was peculiarly a sheep-station. At Terang, a village fourteen miles further west, we visited a cattle-station of 11,000 acres, with 3000 horses and cattle. The house was of stone, with a large fruit garden and two or three croquet lawns. Water pipes, supplying the cattle troughs, had recently been laid out at an expense of £5000. Lake Keilambete adjoins the station, the opposite side being occupied by "free selectors." We spent a Sunday in Terang, attending the Presbyterian Church in the afternoon. The congregation assembled in true country fashion from miles round. Men and women rode up to the door, and hitched their horses to the church-paling; others drove up in buggies and carts. There was one service every Sunday, supported chiefly by the landowners round about. The minister had a very comfortable position, with a

very short service—"In fact," he said to us with a quiet look "I daren't keep the squatters more than an hour."

The road to Mortlake, our next stage, lay through extensive cattle-runs, the coach winding about as if engaged in a gum-tree quadrille. We were in high spirits, and the driver had just begun to whistle the symphony to his love-ballad, when——

See, see! haul up the horses! by all that's wonderful, a kangaroo! a real, live kangaroo, right in the middle of the track, its eyes staring directly towards us, its languid forepaws preparing for a leap. There it is off! Hooray! it has cleared the high fence, tail and all, with feet to spare, bounding through the forest, scattering the dry leaves and twigs, and rousing three others, who keep company with it in flight. Hooray! another and another, and yet another, crop out behind the trees, till there is a full score of them bobbing irregularly in the distance. Hooray! hooray! our shouts have roused scores more, and the vista is filled with them in full retreat. Oh, how pretty! a drove of youthful kangaroos burst into an open glade, and follow their elders with juvenile leaps. Our sisters wave their handkerchiefs. In a few moments the kangaroos seem but grey phantoms flitting in the distance. The last tail has disappeared. Hooray! we give three cheers for the kangaroos—crack! goes the whip, and we're off on the track once more!

You cannot say you have seen the kangaroo till you have seen it leap. Those immense bounds sometimes reach a distance of 30 feet. Kangaroos are unmitigated pests to the squatter, as they impoverish the cattle-runs by eating up the valuable grass. They are hunted unmercifully. Kangaroo-dogs are to be seen about the townships—wiry, muscular animals, seamed and scarred with wounds. They are very plucky, and boldly attack the kangaroo, which is very desperate when brought to bay, gripping the dogs in a mortal embrace, and tearing them up with its strong hind claws. "Don't you get into their clutches," a man once said to us; "it's like being hugged by a bear with a circular saw in its stomach!"

Another day's journey brought us to Warrnambool, a seaport

town 170 miles south-west from Melbourne. Then *viâ* Belfast, another seaport town, we drove towards Portland, 45 miles further west, and reached by a really bad road, which at one point ran along the sea-beach. We had the greatest difficulty in getting along at all, as a storm had blown and washed up the sand into uncouth, irregular hillocks—the wheels of the vehicles sinking over the axles. After charging a mile or two of sand-heaps, one of the horses fell in a fit of the "staggers," and was only revived with difficulty. Our journey of 45 miles took from seven in the morning till seven at night, when we arrived weary and hungry. But at eight o'clock my father was on the platform as usual, introducing a large audience to "Twa Hours at Hame." From Portland we struck inland once more through the bush.

The Bush—what is the Bush? You will find nothing like it in our British woods, in the backwoods of Canada, or the forests of New Zealand. The Australian bush is unique. It consists of undulating, grassy, thinly-timbered country. The trees stand wide apart, and there is no undergrowth, so that a coach-and-four can drive through any part of it. The leaves on the gum-trees are long and thin, and turn their edges to the sun. There is therefore very little shade in the bush; the sun penetrates freely, and the grass, which is always light, grows thin and brown in the summer-time. Everything appears to be burnt up. The earth is hard and dry, and has not the springy velvetiness of a British park. The trunks of the trees are dry; there is no humid moss about the roots.

The bush road winds its lonely way, every succeeding horse and vehicle giving it more defined form. In wet weather the bullock-drays form deep holes and ruts, and lighter vehicles spread out in different directions to avoid the old road. It is a common sight to see seven or eight different tracks in all stages of development, from the almost completed road to the barely perceptible wheel-marks on the grass. Sometimes the traveller comes to an open space, with tracks winding tantalizingly to right and left, and if a "new chum," he is sadly at a loss. They stretch out before him like the fingers on his outspread hand.

This one does not lead in the right direction; that one is not enough trodden to be trustworthy. He would take the middle-finger track, if a little further on it did not suddenly turn in a suspicious fore-finger direction. The thumb starts well, but after all it is hardly so taking as the little-finger track. Yes, it will do; and yet the fourth finger is the very way he wants to go. Tut, tut! it gets fainter and fainter. Oh, if there were only a hut to inquire at! The stranger is sorely puzzled, but in the end trusts to luck, latterly finding that the tracks all harmoniously blend at no distant spot, like the converging lines of a railway junction.

A bush road is generally lonely, and you never meet any one except an occasional swagman, stock-rider, bullock-driver, or commercial traveller. The swagman or tramp is a kind of demoralized "gaberlunzie," who trudges from squatter to squatter, from township to township, begging food or assistance on his journey; which journey is endless, and continues from year's end to year's end. The professional swagman walks to live. One species of tramp is the "sundowner," so called from his habit of appearing at a squatting-station about sunset, and asking food and shelter for the night. The generous "open-door" hospitality of the early days, which has latterly been abused, is fast disappearing from amongst the squatters, and instead of his usual cold mutton, the swagman now gets the cold shoulder.

While driving along you will sometimes observe in the distance a cloud of white dust, and hear the creak of wheels, with loud shouts and whip-lashes, which announce the approach of the bullock-driver and his team. He is a seedy, dust-covered man in a slouched hat. He carries a long whip, its trailing lash eight feet long, with which he can flip the farthest bullock. "Hoick! hoick! get up, Diamond! Now, then, daisy! come hither, Strawberry! Hoick! hold off, Brandy! Hoick! you short-horned Whisky, come up! Nobbler, what do you mean, eh? hoick! hoick!" He gives each a cut in turn, with the addition of high-flavoured epithets, the bullock-driver being chargeable with a large amount of vocal sin.

At the small village of Branxholme we gave a concert in a little wooden schoolroom that stood solitary some 300 yards away in the bush. The room was so limited that tickets had to be sold in the open air. It was not till eight o'clock, when the shades of evening had set in, that the people began to assemble. At different points persons seemed to be starting up from the earth, so noiseless was their approach. On all sides we could hear the soft thud of horses' hoofs on the grass, and the jolting rumble of carts. The school-house formed a strange concert-room. The audience were seated on school-desks and forms, while we had to sing on a platform composed of a brandy-box covered with a tablecloth. The lighting consisted of our two coach-lamps, one each end of the "stage," supplemented by one or two candles stuck in bottles, which we asked the front-seat people kindly to hold in their hands. The room was soon filled to overcrowding; but upon the doorkeeper jocosely announcing to those outside that they could go "Up the chimney for a shilling!" some half-dozen people rushed in and took up position in a capacious fire-place, while the rest swarmed noisily outside, and looked in at the broken windows. The concert concluded, the audience slowly dispersed amongst the trees, with cart-rumbles, hoof-falls, and phantom flittings as before.

The town of Hamilton came next, and from there we went to Ararat. Here we struck the Middle Diggings—a region of hot, bricky, inflammable-looking townships, composed of one long stretch of shops and chief buildings, with other houses straggling out here and there, as if they had lost heart at not finding room in the chief street, and had become quite reckless and careless of appearances. Some of these wooden houses are more comfortable as to their interior arrangements than one would imagine. They have respectable furniture, and of course a piano. We say of course, because, as in most mining towns, nearly every person has a piano. During the gold rushes, when a digger became possessed of a "pile," he would perhaps commence by having a good lengthy drink, but he would assuredly at one time or other purchase a Collard or a Broad-

OUR CARAVAN

wood. As often as not the instruments were second-hand, tuneless, and thrummy; but what cared Alluvial Jack or Auriferous Bill? The piano had a shape to it, had a good shiny case, and was altogether about the right sort of length for him; so out came the roll of notes, and the piano went home.

Near Stawell or Pleasant Creek, one of these mining towns, is a small Scottish community, which some years ago was very exclusive. An Irishman, it is said, came one day to settle in the place, and next morning a deputation of indignant Scots waited on him, demanding he should either put Mac to his name or leave the district. He chose the former alternative, and was ever afterwards known as MacFlaherty! Landsborough was our next stage—a musty, canvas-flapping place; you could almost fancy you saw its ribs. In former days it was three times the size, owing to a great flock of tents that fluttered down during a famous rush. These have all fled, leaving the old nucleus of bark huts and stores. After finishing the Middle Diggings we went by Daylesford and Bacchus Marsh back to Melbourne, where we arrived near the close of a hot afternoon, ending our eight weeks' circular tour of 600 miles.

Our projected overland journey from Melbourne to Sydney struck our friends as a remarkable proceeding. Some of them conjured up bushrangers—others spoke of rough roads; but latterly they changed their friendly remonstrances into suggestions, one enthusiast writing us out a voluminous list of articles required for travelling. This wonderful document urged coils of rope, advised hatchets, counselled tin cans and soup-basins, proposed nails, hammers, and screw-wrenches, and above all things impressed upon us the necessity of taking feed for the horses and food for ourselves!

On the 17th of March, 1873, our procession swept out of Melbourne. First our big dog Uno, bounding and barking with joy: then two of us on horseback; then the coach with its white cover on the roof, its team of four-in-hand, and Patrick holding the reins with an air of great dignity; and lastly, the buggy, containing Pater and Mater. It was a hot-wind day—

before us, an implacably straight road, swept by dust-storms which veneered us with a white impalpable powder.

We rested at Kilmore, thirty-seven miles out, an agricultural town, with 1600 of a population, mostly Irishmen. Being St. Patrick's Day, two straggling, tuneless bands were promenading the streets, and a ball took place in the evening. The town was further excited on the following morning by a trotting match between a local pony and a stranger mare. Towards noon the revellers of the preceding night lolled about the streets in a very twilight state. Most of them were betting upon the race—one bemuddled man persistently stuffing as his stake a handful of pound-notes into another's eye. Our route lay by Seymour, Longwood, and Violet Town. The township of Longwood seemed to the eye as if half-a-dozen cottages had sworn to a hotel and post-office that they would keep them company, and not leave them in the wilderness alone. At dinner in the hotel at Violet Town we encountered some magnificent specimens of the colonial farmer—one a tall, strong-built Irishman, who treated his left-hand companion, a member of Parliament, to a condemnation of the Land Act. He also declared that it cost him £200 a year for his "nobblers" or drams, and that no man could say he was earning a living who banked less than £1000 per year.

We had some difficulty in getting quarters here, as the hotel was full. One limited room was occupied by six low trestle-beds placed side by side, and filling up the entire floor, so that to reach his humble couch the furthest sleeper had to step over five beds. "Shake-downs" or mattresses were also laid on the floors of the other rooms. As we had determined to sing in every place, large or small, we gave our entertainment here. The largest room in the hotel was arranged in imitation of a hall. The table became the platform, and all the chairs about the house were gathered together. The lounging benches that stood in the verandah were brought in; tub-stools came from the kitchen; and rough pieces of timber, or halves of saplings, were laid on boxes with the rough, rounded side uppermost. By a little squeezing and good-humour on the part of the

audience, a large number of people managed to get in. Most of them had come from many miles round. In all these country-places we used our "wee peeawny," as an old Scotsman called it. This was a square little instrument, four octaves and a half, made to order by Wornum, of Store Street, London. Since then it has been all round the world—been baked beneath the suns of Queensland, and frozen amid the snows of Canada—been handled by Yankee "baggage-smashers" or railway-porters—has tumbled off carts and fallen downstairs; and, in short, has conducted itself in a roving way, such as no piano, I am perfectly certain, ever did before. It served us well, and kept marvellously well in tune. We packed it in a canvas cover, with leather handles to it, so that two of us could carry it. The three legs were previously screwed off and enshrined in green bags. Within three or four minutes from the final chorus of "Auld Lang Syne," the piano was strapped up ready to go on the back of the coach. We regarded it as a valuable member of our family.

Next morning we had intended to follow the mail-coach to get the short route to Benalla, but the information which we received about the road was so precise that we proceeded on our own responsibility. This ended in our being lost five hundred yards from the town. We wandered for miles without seeing face or habitation, losing tracks and finding fresh ones, till we struck a small hamlet. Here we gained some more precise information, which sent us through innumerable paddocks with immense slip-panels, every individual bar of which had to be carefully taken out and replaced upon each occasion. A journey of seventeen miles thus extended to one of thirty.

Near Oxley, some few miles from Benalla, there was an encampment of blacks, and a company of four children and two women soon introduced themselves. One of the lubras was old, and very black, but with a blacker eye, which she had received during a recent "corroboree" or meeting of the natives. The old, plump, black woman's hair was long and glossy, and she was dressed in loosely-tacked corn-sacks. The other lubra was younger, had white pearly teeth, and carried a baby slung

over her back. The children were from six to twelve years old, and scampered about in costumes that seemed only a formal yielding to social requirements. The aboriginals work at the Oxley Hotel, but they are lazy; and it was amusing to see the length of time they took to clean a candlestick, shake a hearth-rug, or wash a plate. They presented us with a live opossum, which we kept as a pet for weeks afterwards. It was quite tame. It used to climb our knees, jump on the top of our heads, hang by its tail from our forefinger, scamper about the house, and scramble up window curtains. It was, of course, no favourite of the landlady we had in Sydney, and one day we found it curled up dead, evidently poisoned, in a corner of our room.

We visited Wangaratta, and then went on to Beechworth, a town which lies so high above the level of the sea, that one almost expected to see a thunder-cloud trailing along the main street, or driving mists obscuring shops and houses. Leaving Beechworth, an abrupt turn brought us in sight of Yackandandah, lying far below in a plain. This, the Valley of the Murray, is famed for vine-growing, the landscape being thickly dotted with luxuriant vineyards, gleaming with the rich yellow tints of autumn. Yackandandah, lying far below in the Valley of the Murray, was our next stage. Going from there to Chiltern, we came across the "Gap," a rough, precipitous track winding down a hill. After long suspense we reached the level ground, but had scarcely gone twenty yards when the "ring-bolt" of the coach (the pivot run down through the front axle) snapped in two, and with a crash the pole flew up, severely cutting one of the horse's mouths. With the greatest difficulty the animals were brought to a standstill, and had it not been for two strong supplementary belts round the axle, the horses would have bolted with a legacy of wheels.

Two days after, we crossed the Murray at Wagunyah, twenty-three days out from Melbourne, and passed into New South Wales. Eastward, on the north bank of the river, we drove forty-one miles to Albury, the chief town on the river Murray, and famed for its manufacture of wines.

We are off now to Wagga Wagga, ninety miles north—a hard two days' journey, but the horses are fresh. We start as usual early, and all forenoon wind monotonously through sheep-runs. At midday we camp for a couple of hours. We unharness the horses, and tie them to the trees; then one of us runs down to the creek to fetch water, another spreads a white cloth on a sloping bank, and a third scrapes together miscellaneous tinder, making a blazing fire against a tree stump. By this time the supplies are out of the coach—a cosmopolitan diet of canned meats—sardines from Paris, herring from Aberdeen, oysters from Baltimore, and currant-jelly from Hobart, Tasmania. The "billy" is bubbling on the fire, and another large can is simmering with potatoes. The horses are crunching their maize; our driver is bedding up the fire with logs, and fanning it with his old slouch hat. He makes capital tea, which we enjoy with the hot potatoes. Then we stretch ourselves out in the shade, and enjoy a short dreamy siesta. In half an hour we are bustling about, folding our tablecloth, collecting our tin pannikins, hooking our pails and billies to the back of the coach, collecting the horse-feed, and harnessing the horses. We are careful, too, to put out the fire—there is a heavy fine inflicted on any one who leaves anything burning in the bush. The grass is dry, and a spark sometimes will set it ablaze. A brief look round to see that nothing is left, and we are off.

Still the same wearisome scenery—trees, trees, trees everywhere—new vistas opening in front, and vistas fading away behind us. Towards the close of the afternoon, the sun sinking lower in the sky ribbed the track with the long shadows of the trees. Then the far-off timber seemed to rise and shut out the sunset, the track becoming suddenly dusky, and silence settling on us all at once. We had wished to reach the Billabong Creek by night-fall, but at last regarded it as hopeless. A shrieking laugh burst out of the bush. It was the vespers of the jackass birds—a hideous discordant chorus. When this batch finished, another family took it up, a little further off; then another further still, and another, and yet another, till the

laughs died away in the distance. Hark! the faint tinkle of a bell, nearer and nearer, till we meet a cloud of dust, out of which evolve a bullock-dray and driver. "Far from Billabong?" "No; a few miles." On again, poor sweaty, dusty team. There's the moon just shining over the tree tops; and, oh happiness! a light is glimmering ahead. Here at last is the solitary settler's house. Invisible dogs howl at us from every point of the compass. We knock!—silence—no one at home, so we hitch up the horses to a cattle-pen, and wait the arrival of the folks. On the other side of the creek a large fire is blazing, and round it a number of Wagga Wagga men, who have been driving bullocks to Melbourne, and are now returning after a six weeks' journey. They come to the creek-side and pray across to us for only one thing—they want but little here below, and that little is butter, which we feelingly throw over to them in a piece of paper. By the light of the moon we see two females approaching the house, and after a brief colloquy, it is found that the accommodation will only suffice for my mother and sisters.

The males "camp out"—a very romantic feat in this fine weather. We put the horses into a pen; then make a tent close by with a sheet of canvas, spreading a couch of straw and rushes. This makes an airy bedroom, and the moon shines through the sheeting. Oppressed with a general sense of quietness and straw flavour, and soothed by a lullaby of tail-whisking and hay-munching at our ears, we fall asleep, but are rudely awakened next minute by Patrick, who tells us to get up. It is five o'clock A.M.—"next minute" has lengthened to seven long hours. It is still dark; the moon is low down on the horizon, the morning cold and raw. There is a brisk fire with a billy on it—our breakfast. We seize the opportunity of the remaining moonlight to water the horses in the creek—not an easy job, two of them escaping up the opposite bank, and keeping us anxious till they come back neighing for their companions. The moon has given place to a streak of daylight, and we are greeted by the mocking laugh of the jackass-birds, this time put to the blush by a civilized cock, who crows

a prodigious blast. About six in the evening we cross a wooden bridge spanning the Murrumbidgee, and in the twinkling of an eye are in the main street of the town amidst cheerily-lighted shops and a Saturday-night pavement crowd.

Wagga Wagga lies midway between Melbourne and Sydney, and is the metropolis of a wilderness. It is in reality an emporium for the convenience of the wealthy squatters residing in the neighbourhood. We sing in the Masonic Hall, said to be the largest concert-room out of Melbourne; it had a sumptuous proscenium, and a stage loaded with scenery. There were, however, scarcely any seats, and persons using the hall were compelled to place planks over barrels, boxes, and brandy cases—a style of seating very laughable in such a pretentious structure. Among the "lions" shown to the visitor, is the hut of the Tichborne Claimant. The mean-looking hovel, now rented by a tinsmith, is jammed in between a larger shanty and a public-house in one of the by-streets. You find the usual persons who parasitically attach themselves to famous or notorious characters. Smith knew the Claimant, and so did Grazing Tommy; Bilkins supped with him, and Wilkins drank with him; Barber Brown had his butcher meat from him for years; Robinson worked with him for months on end; as for Jones, you might almost say he lived with him; and, in fact, they all knew him, and a rare good fellow he was. It would surprise even "Tichborne" himself to know the number of bosom friends he left in Wagga Wagga.

From hence we travelled to Gundagai, an extraordinarily clean-looking place, perched upon a hill-side, looking down upon some flats. This is Gundagai No. 2—Gundagai No. 1 having been totally destroyed by a fearful flood in 1852. A young squatter here gave us a reminiscence of the calamity "It was an awful time," said he. "My father acted as minister of the place, and read the burial service over forty-five persons. Our house didn't last long. We had to stand on the window-sill with poles, and stave off the big trees and rubbish. But the logs kept battering against the house, and letting in the water. For a long time we could hear the chairs and tables

washing about inside, and our grand piano bumping. Then the house fell away piecemeal, and it was all we could do to escape with our lives."

Yass, further east, was reached by a weary drive of two days. There was no incident to lighten the journey, save when we came upon an open glade covered with a dense flock of cockatoos. They rose in a large white cloud, circling and shrieking, and latterly flew to the shelter of the forest, where they clustered thick as orange blossom on the trees. The town is built upon the borders of Yass Plains, and here a great iron bridge spans the River Yass. The first to traverse Yass Plains was Hamilton Hume, the explorer; he discovered this portion of the country during his famous expedition. For many years he resided at Yass in quiet seclusion, spending his old age in a neat rustic cottage, fondly pointed out to strangers by the inhabitants. Strange to say, as we were entering Yass, the funeral of the venerable explorer was leaving it for the cemetery, which lay outside the town. The hearse was followed by forty vehicles, belonging to doctors, squatters, hotel-keepers, shop-keepers, and tradesmen generally, followed by a hundred horsemen, riding in couples, and representing every class of society. The spectacle approached the historical. A day's journey from here brought us to Goulburn, whence we took the train to Sydney. This ended our six weeks' overland trip of over 500 miles.

CHAPTER III.

Sydney—The "Larrikin"—Parramatta—Brisbane—The Wilds of Queensland—Gympie Gold Fields—Queensland Blacks—Rockhampton—Darling Downs—Stanthorpe Tin Mines.

THE streets of Sydney, the capital of New South Wales, are, generally speaking, narrow. "Yes, yes," a citizen said to us, "they are no doubt far from wide, but see the advantage in point of shade!" You feel nervous about the wheels of your vehicle, or the legs of your horse if you are riding. On the pavements of Pitt Street, you are either elbowing plate-glass windows or slipping off the kerb-stones. George Street is far more modern in appearance, and has commendable width. We took lodgings in Wynyard Square, a locality of boarding-houses, and white-porched private dwellings. Our landlady was as smirking as possible, with excessively fashionable daughters. She was generally agreeable, but upon any disparaging remark being made as to the size or quality of chop or steak, she flared up as to her high birth, and wondered what her ancestors would have thought of this keeping of boarders! The lodgings were close to Church Hill, so called because of the sacred edifices clustered round it. Of the Presbyterian churches Dr. Lang's is the oldest—the "Scots Kirk" as it is called, the foundation-stone of which was laid in 1833. We were invited by the veteran Dr. Lang to take tea with him, and we had a most interesting evening. The Doctor's talk was of a bygone generation—of the early strifes, politics, separations, Parliaments, and Governors of the colonies. He came to Sydney in the month of May 1823, and ever since has identified himself with New South Wales; the review of his career would almost be that of the colony. He has been in Parliament, and mixed in the heat of politics; he resigned his seat in the Legislative Assembly about the close of 1872. The

separations of Victoria in 1851, and Queensland in 1859, were a great deal due to the unflagging energy of Dr. Lang, who has also been foremost in the cause of immigration. Though over seventy, he still took part in public affairs, and was then preparing a fresh edition of his excellent *History of New South Wales*, one of the numerous works he has written on the colonies.

Sydney is blest in the matter of public parks and gardens. The Domain is charming, and the Botanical Gardens close to it, are a bewildering profusion of palms, bananas and fern-trees, while tasteful gravel walks wind about the grounds and skirt the dark blue waters of the Farm Cove. As to Sydney Harbour, the praises of it rang in our ears from the time we landed in the colonies. We craned our necks from the top-storey window of our lodgings, but could only see a small patch of water almost filled up with the masts of shipping. And yet our landlady claimed a View. Every hotel and lodging-house, if it command but a speck of water, advertises a View. We even saw one or two houses overlooking the harbour on tiptoe—that is, with about twelve feet of solid masonry as a foundation, and the front door reached by a narrow flight of steps. In Melbourne, people demand your opinion of the city. In Sydney they ask, "What do you think of the Situation?" and had it a political significance they would not ask it with more earnestness.

A kind friend projected a sail round the harbour and a pic-nic in one of its hundred pleasure grounds, getting together an enjoyable company of folks, and chartering a steam launch. Passing "Lady Macquarie's Chair," a stone seat carved out of the solid rock, we sailed through Watson's Bay; then doubled the rocky point on which the sea breaks coming through the Heads, once the scene of a terrible shipwreck, with no survivors. Our little steamer tumbled about here, but we soon got into smooth water in the Middle Harbour, the high-wooded banks of which recalled the River Hudson in America. We had a glimpse of Manly Beach, styled by the Sydney folk "the Brighton of Australia," and Clontarf, the pleasure-garden where the Duke

of Edinburgh was shot by O'Farrell—our sail concluding in Pearl Bay, where the steamer rasped and grounded some distance from the shore. A boat came off and took the ladies round a projecting point. Then one of the gentleman swam about, along with a brother-*sansculotte*, pushing off, till at last the launch slid away, one of the gentlemen clinging to the gunwale, and the other being left on the rock a knee-deep shivering white figure. When the boat came, he was right glad to be relieved, as he said that most of the time he had been standing on oysters. Safely landed, we beheld a table on shore spread with every imaginable delicacy. After three ringing cheers for our host, we all got on board again, and arrived at Sydney in the twilight.

There is one thing you make note of before you have been long in Sydney—the number of middle-aged people who have been reared in the colony, whose fathers were born in it. At least it seems peculiar after Melbourne, where nearly every mature man carries about with him the date of his arrival in Australia. You see a preponderance of the Jewish cast of countenance. In Sydney, also, there is an old established criminal class, which Melbourne, being a younger city, does not possess; a Sydney crowd can muster its roughs with any place we have seen. There is one deplorable character to be met with, the "larrikin," who is indigenous to the colonies generally, though Melbourne is more particularly his home. He is a wild youth, a creature bred by the absence of parental control—a lower-class youth, but not necessarily very poor, very wretched, or very young. You would not know him if I were to call him a street arab, a rowdy, or one of the "great unwashed." Like some foreign phrases, he is untranslatable. His misdeeds rival those of the "Tom and Jerry" days. The larrikins, in gangs of twenty and thirty, break street-lamps, wrench off knockers, tear down fences, mob and maltreat policemen, hustle respectable people at noon-day, and at night assault some sober citizen and rob him. Scarce a week passes without some larrikin outbreak.

Sydney has eleven suburbs. At Balmain, a picturesque

suburb, occupying a point of land, with streets sloping down to the harbour, we gave one of our concerts. During the day our manager came over from Sydney with a large box-full of oranges, a present from some unknown friend. We felt anxious as to how we could stow them away on our impending journey from Sydney to Brisbane; but the difficulty was unexpectedly solved. By the time of our departure there were no oranges!

Parramatta, fifteen miles from the metropolis, is an old town, settled in 1790 under the title of Rose Hill. The streets are wide, the houses old, and the whole place quaint. Tropical plants surrounded the hotel we lived at, and a rich orange tree was pushing its way into one of the bedroom windows. Who has not heard of the golden fruit of Parramatta? The orange groves are a sight to see—long straight rows of small trees speckled with flaring yellow fruit, and filling the air with fragrance—the oranges delicious to look at, but still more pleasant to be plucked fresh from the tree, and tasted in all their pure beady juiciness.

Steamboat life is the same here as at home—the same close saloon, the same red velvet-cushioned seats, the same sickly-smelling zinc-covered stairs, the same stokers, and the same broad-speaking Glasgow engineer—but not the same captain. The Australian skipper is a distinct species of being; there is nothing at all sailor like in his appearance. When you have singled out on the wharf some stout florid commercial traveller, and said to yourself, "That is the captain," behold! a slim gentleman in a black coat, white shirt-front, coloured necktie, steps on board and shouts his orders to the un-nautical crew.

Sydney to Brisbane, a sea-journey of 500 miles, occupied fifty-four hours. We left at six o'clock in the evening, and rose in the morning to a fine sea-picture. The sky was blue and cloudless—the scenery bold and mountainous. The coast was outlined in foam—the green seas breaking upon the shore, washing and swirling round the rocks, climbing up the shaded sides of the cliffs, and bursting in the sunshine on the summit into clear masses of spray. Scores of porpoises leapt about the ship—an exciting, inspiriting scene. I became ac-

quainted with a young Melbourne gentleman, and contrived to pass the time with him in interesting discussions. He maintained his views in a lofty philanthropical manner, supporting his arguments as if they were so many paupers. The captain was genial, though at table he proved himself a perfect Munchausen, pouring into unsuspecting ears a succession of improbabilities. We had heard of his powers ere we came on board, but he almost managed to hoodwink us with his fictions while apparently busied in something else—handling his knife and fork, or crumbling a piece of bread—his most flagrant efforts being made under cover of reaching for the cruet-stand. "Fine flavour this tea—best tea I've tasted for weeks—(a sardine, steward!)—it was lucky I got it as I did—the Marquis of Normanby, Queensland Governor, you know, had—(ahem, hem! something in my throat, I think!)—had ordered a large quantity of it from Hong Kong—the finest Bohea, mind you (another cup, Williams)—he bought more than the family could use; so—(I'll take the butter, please)—so I got three chests of the tea from the Marquis, and—and——" "Ah, captain," said he, shaking half a dozen remonstrative fingers—"ah, captain, how could you?" He gravely winked, and answered in a whisper—"You've found me out, but—but—you'd wonder how many believe me!" During the rest of the trip the captain devoted himself to a convalescent English curate and his brother, giving them a comic account of the coast—how Smoky Cape got its name from the fumigation of a cave full of escaped convicts—how the Solitary Islands were inhabited each by one man—how Cape Byron was so called because a descendant of the poet Wordsworth lived there—and how Point Danger, strange to say, was the safest promontory on the coast, with other facts that eventually opened the eyes of the two mild people.

Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, lies twenty-five miles from the mouth of the river. It is a new-looking town, with fine wide streets and a population of 20,000. From the verandah of the Royal Hotel we have a good view of the town. From the rear we look across an array of back-yards and

gardens, with waving banana-trees. The street is busy with horsemen, big red coaches, and drays with in some cases twenty bullocks attached. Aboriginals, male and female, and Polynesians from some up-country sugar plantation, stroll about, with blue-striped trousers, short coats, and umbrellas; while little boys are to be seen chewing sugar-cane two and three feet long, using it as a walking-sticking and eating the upper end.

Brisbane is a flourishing town, the capital of a young and thriving colony. Queensland, which for a time formed a northern district of New South Wales, did not come into separate existence till 1859. At first, it had a season of fictitious prosperity, flourishing on borrowed funds, precociously raising a national debt. But in 1866 there came a serious commercial crisis, paralysing trade, and creating a panic. Riots were feared, and the community was in disorder; when, like the opening of a door to relief and safety, there broke out the great Gympie gold diggings.

The hardest four days' travelling we ever had in Australia was from Brisbane north to Gympie. About dawn one evening my brothers and I went to the stables and hauled the empty waggon up to the hotel; then packed it with our boxes, bundles, piano, fiddle, and a quantity of eatables. At six A.M. my father mounted the horse "Bob," which he occasionally did as a variety to riding in the buggy, and we left the Royal Hotel, with a cheer from the stableman and waiter. Forty-three miles of a lonely bush road, and towards evening we reached a way-side inn, kept by a Perth woman. Here we had every attention, for she was a "real nice body," and bustled about in a heart-warming Scottish fashion. After tea the good lady was very anxious to hear once more the "Auld Scots Sangs," so in the twilight we all sat in the verandah and performed a selection from our programme..

On the second day the road was rougher and the scenery grander. On each side of us rose high banks surmounted by lofty trees, which towered up like walls. Coach and horses seemed to dwarf as we passed through this precipitous vegeta-

tion. The straight, tapering timber interwoven with parasites, like natural trellis-work, with long leafy tendrils trickling down from a great height. We had to walk for many miles this second day, urging the horses three yards at a time up the long hills.

"Folks generally swear here," said Patrick with an air of information, at the foot of a formidable ascent—"a good long oath; it makes the horses go better."

No doubt; but—hum—we could never think of——

The very thing! use the names of Scotch songs. We started up the hill. "Jo-o-ohn Grumlie!" shouted one; "Ye Banks and Bra-a-aes!" shrieked another; "Get up and Bar the Door—oh!" yelled a third, frightening one of the leading horses, who sticks manfully into his collar. On we go. "Oh, why left I my Ha-a-me!" takes us an immense distance; "Castles in the Air!" gets the coach up about fifteen yards; "We're a' Noddin'!" delivered with impassioned fervour, makes great difference in the speed; "My Heart's in the Highlands!" in despairing accents, sends us half-way up a slope; while "Tam Glen," "Ower the Hills an' far Awa-a-a!" in fierce excited tones by the entire company, bring us hoarse, perspiring, and exhausted to the mountain's brow.

Near the top of another ascent, the "Devil's Elbow," we fairly stuck. So we left our driver Patrick in charge of the coach, and trudged with the horses seven weary miles to Cobb's Camp, a wayside house, where we arrived amid rain and darkness. This inn was kept by a German, an honest, good-hearted man. The animals were stabled and arrangements made for additional horses in the morning. After tea the host and hostess began peering out into the darkness for the expected horse-express going down to Brisbane with late letters for the home mail. The man was behind time, the night wet, black, and stormy. The rustle and creak of the trees, the hiss and beat of the rain, prevented us from hearing distinctly, as we strained our ears for some sound of his approach. He was up and close upon us with his white horse before we knew, and in a second he was off and into the bar,

where he undid his dripping glazed coat and told the folks the weather was bad, and that the roads were bad, and that the fall he had was bad, and that the same horse had rolled over him twice before, and that altogether he felt like taking a glass of brandy. He stayed all night, and left with his saddle bags early in the morning.

We started not long after him, taking two fresh horses, and finding Patrick comfortably asleep inside the coach. This day's travelling was unspeakably rough, with descents over rocks and boulders, the coach running through the high grass, and shipwrecking upon sunken roots of trees. In the midst of the wilds a tall, fierce, half-naked black started up in front of us. "Lickspince" (sixpence), said he—"Give Song," said we —and to our utter amazement he burst forth into a grotesque, barbarous version of "Auld Lang Syne," which he had no doubt heard sung at nights round the fireside of some lonely Scottish shepherd on one of the great outlying sheep-stations. We met, too, a perspiring, red-faced man "swagging it" from Gympie—a plasterer, who was disgusted with the place. "Fancy," he exclaimed, "they wanted me to work for 8s. 4d. a-day—the place is going to the dogs!" We made only a stage of eighteen miles this day, so heavy were the roads. We stayed all night at a small inn. Robert had to sleep on a table, while I lay on the bar-room sofa, having for lullaby a game of "euchre," played by the maudlin host, a passing dray-man, and our driver.

In the dark of early morning we started upon our final stage, our business-agent being commissioned to ride direct, and with the least possible delay, to Gympie to make preparations for our arrival. We had a great extent of boggy ground to go over—narrow lanes hemmed in by the same thick undergrowth as before, with deep mud through which the horses floundered and the vehicle proceeded by slow plunges. "Cobb's coach," the public conveyance, came rolling and pitching round a corner, the driver saluting us with, "Keep up your spirits, there's only the Devil's Backbone now!" And this last slimy ascent merited its name. The gradient was so steep that the

horses could not pull the coach up more than a few feet at a time—even though we had all leapt out, and were each pushing desperately at a wheel, with Patrick in front tugging frantically at the leaders' heads.

We sighted Gympie at four o'clock that afternoon, and never was town so welcome. We were covered with mud from head to foot, and as we drove up the main street, a rumour spread that "they had arrived too late for their concert." But we set to work, had tea, and at eight o'clock stepped on the platform. The hall chosen for us by our local correspondent having been deemed unsuitable on account of its lying in a distant part of the diggings, we had moved to one nearer the principal mines. It had no ceiling, and was far from resonant, a fault which was by no means remedied by the crowded attendance. The entertainment had been well advertised in the prevailing fashion ; that is to say, the town-crier had traversed on horseback the extensive district, ringing his bell and shouting the news of our advent.

Gympie, the leading gold-field of Queensland, has been in existence since 1867. All mining towns have three stages of development—first canvas—then wood—then brick. Gympie is now in the climax of the wood metamorphosis. The principal street is an irregular thoroughfare winding up one side of a hill—the shop fronts in every shape and design, with wooden cornices surmounted by flagstaffs, and the street resembling from a distance the long straggling lines of booths at a country fair. We lived at a hotel which was a curiosity in its way. It had a good appearance outside, but was rather incomplete as to interior arrangements. The bedrooms, for instance, were all under one common roof, about eleven feet high, and separated from each other by wooden partitions about nine feet high. A knock at one door elicited "Yes" from half a dozen different people.

The population numbered 6000, one-half engaged in mining. We came across that wonderful digger, to be found on every gold-field, who retails to you his narrow escapes from good fortune, telling you what he might have been *if* he had only

held on to those valuable shares of his, *if* he had only taken the £5000 offered him for his small bit of land, *if* he had not been an ass, *if* he had kept his eyes open, *if* he had shut his mouth to drink, *if* he had not foolishly speculated with the hard-earned savings of years. This man of "buts" and "ifs" is vocally a millionaire. There were people in Gympie from every gold-rush under the sun. Whether they were managers, share-holders, or common miners, they all had an elastic, bounding confidence in Gympie. They based future prosperity on the reefs—deep-sinking was to be the foundation of Gympie's greatness. By all above the earth and underneath the earth, they believed in it.

The morning we were to leave Gympie, breakfast had been ordered at 7.30; but it was five minutes late and the hotel-folks were reprimanded. We were generally very precise in our arrangements for starting, trying our best to rival the railway in punctuality, in order to provide for the awkward contingencies which frequently beset the bush-traveller. A comparatively easy journey of two days brought us north to Maryborough. On the way we passed numerous heavy drays, sometimes with ten or a dozen horses each, conveying all kinds of goods to the diggings, where of course nothing is produced but gold. As we met about forty teams of eight on an average, as many as 360 dray-horses were at this time journeying southward. At Maryborough we saw large numbers of South Sea Islanders, who are brought to Queensland by as near an approach to slave-trading as it is possible to reach under the British flag. They are employed on the maize and sugar plantations, and work also on the wharves. There were scores of Queensland blacks, too, carrying cargo to the steamers —brawny, muscular fellows, with brass breast-plates inscribed "King George," "King Billy," and the like, though we were greatly shocked to see royalty tussling with corn-sacks and trundling bales of hay.

The blacks gathered about the town in large numbers, striding up and down with long spears, waddies or clubs, and boomerangs. The older women wore opossum rugs, had

their faces covered over with a thick coating of red chalk, and had a circlet of high feathers sticking up round their heads. All the women own dogs, and they share with them the bread and scraps of meat collected from domestics at the back doors of hotels. I saw one of these wiry dogs run over by a fast baker's van. The poor brute howled and doubled itself up in agony, while its old mistress, after great wringing of hands, set to work soothing the animal and replacing the pieces of abrased skin. All the time she continuously uttered a series of mumblings, a stray tear or two finding their way through the thick layer of red chalk upon her face. In a few minutes she was overjoyed, for the dog ate a piece of meat from her hand, and hobbled quietly along.

The Queensland blacks have a less civilised appearance, and altogether look grander savages, than their fellows in Victoria. They are sly dogs, too, those aboriginals. One of them was begging, and a gentleman tendered him an old battered threepennypiece. "No, no, no," said the black, shaking his head and grinning—"no, no—that no good—that congregation money!" A black at Maryborough offered us a boomerang for a shilling, and we asked him to throw it in proof of its genuineness. Accompanied by a large number of young blacks and a bevy of erect, poker-like females, who smoked and who used spears as walking-sticks, we went to an open piece of ground. The aboriginal stuck out his elbows on a level with his ears, poising the boomerang on the back of his left hand, and grasping it firmly in his right. Then turning half round on his heel, he suddenly sent the weapon flying high into the air. It whirled, dodged, curved, went this way, came swooping down close to the ground, rose high again with graceful sweep, lost a great deal of its vitality, revolved feebly, fluttered down again exhausted, skimmed lightly along the grass, and finally landed a few yards from the feet of the black. We bought the boomerang, and thought we had not spent our shilling recklessly.

Our driver Johnson was left behind at Maryborough to drive the coach back to Brisbane. The horse "Bob" and the pony

"Jessie" were shipped on the steamer for Rockhampton, not without much ado, "Bob's" head requiring to be veiled by a coat before he would "walk the plank." We had a perfect sea voyage from Maryborough to Rockhampton, a distance of 250 miles. The sea was smooth and veiled by a faint mist, like a vast mirror that had been breathed upon. The shoals, rocks, and sandy spits fluttered with sea-fowl, amongst which tall sober pelicans stalked in a paternal manner amongst the smaller birds. The river banks were covered with mangrove scrub, and fringed with reeds, vividly reflected in the water. As the sun set, the sky blazed with orange tints, while the long reach of the river, stretching out before us, shone staring white with the reflection of the colourless sky immediately above. Then quietness settled down; the low thud of the paddle wheels, the metallic "clunk" of the frogs in the marshes, the chirp and whirr of insects, the frequent ripple of hungry fish, and the occasional warning clang of the ship's bell echoing back from the hills, seemed to deepen the general stillness.

Rockhampton at last. Though the month of August, and the winter season, we felt the climate warm. The townsfolk themselves complained of the heat, and threw open their houses to the noon-day gaze, reclining in canvas lounges, smoking and chatting in the verandahs. The windows were in reality folding glass-doors. The Rockhampton people certainly know how to combat warm weather. The grocer, the butcher, and the baker are attired in the lightest costumes; the barber shaves you with tucked up sleeves, and shirt open at the neck; and the draper goes about without coat or waistcoat, selling his goods to gaily-dressed young ladies. In the summer, labourers are allowed two hours' rest at mid-day, to avoid the sun. The population of Rockhampton was at this time about 6000. A captain once told us how his first load of emigrants to Rockhampton consisted of forty-five single women—a precious cargo! At that time there were only six houses in Rockhampton, and the fair sex were all lodged in one building. In a few days they had all disappeared—one third of them into service, two-thirds into matrimony. The bachelor squatters

used to walk into this interesting domicile and make their choice.

The Fitzroy is one of the largest rivers in Australia, and navigable thirty-five miles from the bay. Crocodiles abound, some of them twenty-five feet long. "Big Ben," who was caught in this stream, and who we saw stuffed in a museum at Sydney, weighed half-a-ton. Now and then large nests are found, and a gentleman one day presented us with an egg, one of sixty-six he had discovered the same morning.

The Leichardt Hotel was most comfortable; the landlord kind; the coffee-room spacious, and with two large punkahs, which were very cooling in the hot evenings. I had for candlestick a black man's skull, the candle placed in one of the eye-sockets—a piece of *diablerie* that might have graced the table of Alloway Kirk, and would certainly have raised an extra hair on the head of glorious Tam. One forenoon we visited a garden in the neighbourhood, owned by a good-hearted German. Our friend met us at the little white gate, dragged us inside, bustled before us into his house, forced us to drink jugs of milk, and then took us round his adorable vegetation. Clumps of bananas, sugar-cane, and bamboo—umbrella-trees, pomegranates, passion-flowers, castor-oil plants! cauliflowers! cabbages!—the mind reeled amid the profusion. "Oh," suddenly exclaimed our friend, "dem veeds!" and he pulled up a number of pine-apples growing wild alongside the walk. He called them "weeds," but they were most palatable. Then we had some more milk at the house, and while we were eating nice home-made cakes the German made up gay bouquets, his good lady meanwhile filling a basket with oranges. She *would* have us take them, they were so healthy. Lemons were even better, she said; and the kind folks stuffed our pockets with them. The same day our friend came to the hotel, smiling over an armful of flowers. Then hurrying out, he returned again with more smiles, and a large canvas bag filled with limes. It will be long ere we forget either the good soul or his garden.

At Rockhampton we met a young squatter, who had just

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ridden down from his station, 200 miles up country. Some years ago a large party of blacks attacked the station and murdered the young man's father. He told us he found station-life dull. True, he read books and newspapers in the evenings, and sometimes visited his neighbours. Another squatter lived "only twelve miles distant," which was reckoned to be almost next door. Sometimes a passing show would call in at the little township—for be it known there is always a goodly collection of cottages and huts in connection with a station. One day a small circus came round, and the manager cast his eye about in a business-like manner. Then he addressed the squatter:—"Ah—hum—yes—I'll fix up my tent here, if you please. I've been turning the matter over, and perhaps it will—yes, it *will* be some slight trouble taking money from each person in the place—so I think it will simplify matters greatly if you just give me a cheque for the population!"

From Rockhampton we returned south to Brisbane, touching again at Maryborough. At this port, five aboriginals came on board, and literally "dropped off" at Frazer's Island. The youngest of the blacks was a child of about ten or twelve years old. The five rolled up their rags, and tied them on top of their heads, with a knot under the chin. After long fidging, twitching, and nasal droning, they dived off, one after the other, into the rushing, glancing foam. One old man had the additional task of pushing before him a bag of flour. The long yellow beach of the island, more than a quarter of a mile distant, was shining in the sunset, and thronged with blacks. Looking behind with a glass, we saw five black heads bobbing in the distance, then five dark figures scampering along the sand, and joining their companions on the shore.

We had to be in Brisbane on Friday to give a performance on behalf of one of the charities, but we did not find till too late that the steamer's time was altered, and that she was not due till Saturday! The captain, however, was most obliging, for he did not waste a moment, hurried up the loading at the

various ports *en route*, caught all the tides, and landed us at Brisbane in plenty of time for the concert.

One of our horses, "Billy," a massive animal, having had fever in the feet ever since the toilsome journey to Gympie, James and I took him by steamboat to Ipswich, while the rest came on by the coach. The tide was very low, so much so that the little steamer had to be steered on shore at the sharp turnings, and then poked off with poles—a most laughable procedure, the extreme shallowness inducing the captain and one of the passengers to bet as to whether the boat had or had not "scraped" on this or that occasion. Passengers, too, were picked up here and there off the river-banks, a small boat for the purpose being towed behind the steamer—giving one the idea of an aquatic omnibus. Once we drifted slowly under a large tree trunk that jutted out from the bank. "Unship the flagstaff!" shouts the captain, signalling to back the engines. A man springs to the bow, but is caught full in the back by the projecting tree, which takes him slowly off his legs. With such stirring adventures the time passed pleasantly.

Next to Brisbane, Ipswich is the most important city in Southern Queensland, and prides itself upon being the terminus of the Southern and Western Railway, the line running to the Darling Downs. This region is a splendid table-land rising fifty miles back from the coast, and reached by a railway that climbs 2000 feet up to the plateau. The carriages are roomy, and double-roofed to keep off the direct rays of the sun. There was a characteristic notice in our compartment:—"In consequence of damage done to the linings, persons are requested to take off their spurs before lounging on the seats" —a notice, by the way, which a bespurred squatter seemed to ignore. Through the breaks between the deep cuttings we had frequent far-off views of fields and forests—flat expanses of trees spreading out like carpets, wrought with a shady pattern of clouds. Presently came open grassy country of the table-land, contrasting strongly with the timbered, mountainous region we had just left.

The Darling Downs are cooler than any other part of

Queensland, and at Dalby we had a roaring log-fire in the hotel parlour. Our comfort, too, was increased by a humorous, autobiographical waiter, who presented his history along with the various courses of dinner. He served with the soup his butlership to an O'Donoghue in Ireland—he arrived with the joint in New York—by pudding time he had as a mariner got safely through the bombardment of San Francisco by the "Tuscarora"—and with the advent of cheese he finished a long career of glory in the principal hotels of Melbourne. The hall was a nice new building. Just as our concert was commencing, the red curtain of the proscenium had to be lowered for a few minutes at the desire of a number of the town's folks, who had not seen it before.

After singing in Toowoomba and Warwick, we went to the Stanthorpe tin mines. The road was awfully bad, having been cut up by the ore-laden and o'er-laden drays. The severe shocks the coach received bent the ring-bolt. We got a bush-blacksmith to make a new one, but soon this went like the other, and at last we had to bind up the underworks with ropes and chains. Two years before our visit, Stanthorpe was a lonely sheep station. A shepherd, who had lived unsuspecting on the spot for years, went mad with disappointment on the discovery of tin. This was the youngest township we had ever seen. Its sole street was three-quarters of a mile in length—a double row of wooden houses winding through an outer chaos of huts and sand-heaps. "Bar," "Bar," "Bar," stared at you on every hand. The signs were chiefly composed of calico. Among the principal houses were the "Mining Exchange Hotel," the "Woolpack Inn," and the "Sun Burst Tavern," with the rising orb pictured in front like a golden porcupine. Immense gum-trees grew in the middle of the street, proudly bearing Kennedy's posters! We stayed at a hotel built of wood and corrugated iron. The landlord united in his person the respective characters of publican, tin-buyer, and Member of Parliament. We had dinner in company with an editor, a commercial traveller, a squatter, a printer, and a railway official, and felt as if hob-nobbing with the vital interests of the place. The *menu*

was better than one could have expected. We had all the delicacies of a town hotel, as the landlord had the services of a French cook.

After dinner we view the township, and turning a corner come upon the Quart Pot Creek. Here truly was a scene of industry!—a veritable hive or unearthed ant-hill. Scores of men were to be seen in the stony bed of the creek. Men sat plunging away at horizontal brass pumps, thirteen feet in length—driving wheels, two or three feet in diameter, revolved in the water-races—miners in high boots, with long eight-pronged forks, were busy in the sluice-boxes. The water in the creek was carried off by a flood-race 300 yards long, but the inflow, still considerable, was drained off by two large Californian pumps, worked by steam, and constructed on the principle of the jack-towel and theatrical waterfall.

Returning from the Quart Pot Creek, we encounter stumps, bushes, boulders, fallen logs, barkless trees, heaps of sand, and square white canvas tents fluttering in the wind, with here and there a Chinaman's cabbage garden. We see a humble brown church, with the orthodox peaked door and windows, and with a bark roof straddled over by a framework of saplings to keep the sheets of bark from being blown off. The other churches are simply shingled weather-board buildings. The Wesleyans hold service in a shop. Every man seems to have been his own architect, and, as on most mining rushes, the rough appearance of the houses is more the result of necessity than poverty. One hut we entered was lined inside from top to bottom with cuttings from the illustrated papers, while over these again hung an excellent oil-painting.

We gave our concerts in the Court House, a wooden building raised on props two or three feet from the ground, with a platform outside reached by a flight of steps after the manner of "Richardson's Show." There were not enough seats in the building, so we had to borrow from various parts of the town. We carried out the prisoners' dock, and made it the "ticket-office"—the public paying their money over the long row of spikes with which the box was guarded. The jury-box was

hastily filled by a family who came very early. We sat ranged on the Judge's bench—a "terrible show!" The court-room was crowded and hot, and the windows had to be kept wide open, giving a full view of the performers to the large crowd which had gathered outside. On Saturday night, after our last concert, we had to return all the chairs and forms, as they were urgently wanted on the Sunday. My brothers and I had to unseat the Court House and reseat two churches before getting to bed that night! We sang in the choir of the Presbyterian Kirk next day, where we heard a most excellent sermon. The building was small and primitive-looking. The pulpit-step was a brandy box with the letters XX clearly visible upon it!

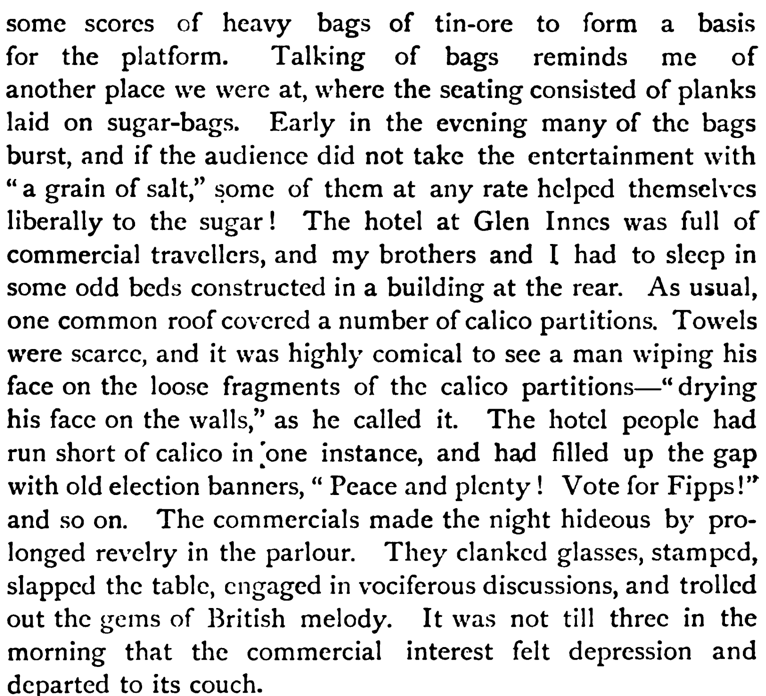
CHAPTER IV.

New South Wales again—A versatile Beadle—Our Dog Uno—Australian Hotels and Bush Inns—Hot Weather—Deserted by our Driver—An Upset.

LEAVING this lively township, we crossed the Queensland border into New South Wales, making our first stay at Tenterfield, a quiet town in the New England district. It stands about 4000 feet above sea-level, and has a pure, fresh, climate, though we felt it rather cold. "Cold? by Jove, this is excellent weather," cried an enthusiastic townsman, drawing in his breath with a hiss—"Cold? why, this is a glorious climate—same as England every bit—that is, barring the damp! Where will you find such glowing-cheeked damsels—such brown-faced sturdy young men! I love the cold wind, bless it!" The hall was in connection with the hotel, and its only entrance was through the latter. Seats had to be borrowed from a school, and lights from somewhere else. Furthermore, we had to fasten up a rickety door which had fallen off its hinges, and otherwise improve the premises.

A stage of thirty-five miles further brought us to Deepwater, the smallest place we ever performed in. It consisted solely of two inns about three hundred yards from each other. We had tea in the dining-room—then adjourned to the kitchen, where the concert was held. A rough wooden candelabra was hung from the ceiling, along with the coach-lamps. Forty people managed to crowd in, and we wondered where they all came from. The acoustics, I need hardly say, were not good, and one had the feeling of singing down the throats of the audience in the front seats. Even in such a small village as this we were not free from opposition, for the other half of the town—that is, the rival hotel-keeper—got up a "dance" to try and charm away our audience!

At Glen Innes, an agricultural township. The hall was an auction-room. We had the job of piling up



some scores of heavy bags of tin-ore to form a basis for the platform. Talking of bags reminds me of another place we were at, where the seating consisted of planks laid on sugar-bags. Early in the evening many of the bags burst, and if the audience did not take the entertainment with "a grain of salt," some of them at any rate helped themselves liberally to the sugar! The hotel at Glen Innes was full of commercial travellers, and my brothers and I had to sleep in some odd beds constructed in a building at the rear. As usual, one common roof covered a number of calico partitions. Towels were scarce, and it was highly comical to see a man wiping his face on the loose fragments of the calico partitions—"drying his face on the walls," as he called it. The hotel people had run short of calico in one instance, and had filled up the gap with old election banners, "Peace and plenty! Vote for Fipps!" and so on. The commercials made the night hideous by prolonged revelry in the parlour. They clanked glasses, stamped, slapped the table, engaged in vociferous discussions, and trolled out the gems of British melody. It was not till three in the morning that the commercial interest felt depression and departed to its couch.

We spent a Sunday in Inverell, another rural township, and went to the Presbyterian Church. This was the first time for months that we did not sing in a choir on Sunday, and the rest was peculiarly grateful. There was an attentive, respectable congregation of healthy-looking country-folks. Many of them had come on horseback, and the animals browsed outside the church until the conclusion of the service. Before entering the church, we had noticed a man tugging vigorously at the bell-rope. When the congregation had been "rung in," he hurried to the precentor's desk and led the psalms. Then later he whipped round with the collection-plate. Lastly, he saw the congregation out, and carefully locked the door. He was only equalled in versatility by a man we saw in Kilmore, Victoria, who was at one and the same time the Presbyterian church-warden, the town-crier, the bill-poster, and the inspector of nuisances! At Inverell we wished to buy a saddle-horse.

Patrick happened to mention that fact to the stableman, and in half-an-hour the news had spread all over the town. The street was soon busy with horses of every variety, and with all kinds of vices. My brothers and I had a hard time of it cantering up and down the road, trying the different hacks. At last we hit upon a small wiry horse, for which the extravagant sum of six guineas was asked! He was an insignificant looking, meek-faced animal, but we added to his dignity by calling him "the General." He turned out well, not only "in the field," but also on the road.

Armidale was the last town we visited in this New England district—the centre of an astonishingly fertile tract of country. We chanced to be in Armidale also on a Sunday, and found there a prosperous Presbyterian Church. The minister is hard-worked, for, in addition to his many duties in Armidale, he holds service at thirty-four different places every three months; but ministers are scarce and the country sparsely settled. The colonial clergymen certainly "live laborious days."

We heartily enjoyed our travelling. In the morning, just before the first streaks of daylight, we rose in the cold and the darkness, and made ready for the journey. Our driver busied himself in the stable by candle-light, giving the horses their oats and putting on the harness. We drew the coach out into the stable-yard—then took the wheels off, one at a time, and gave the axles a dose of castor-oil from a bottle which Patrick carried about with him for use equally on wheels and horses. The coach was packed; then off we started, Patrick smacking his whip, or "flagellator," as he called it, and our heavy dog Uno bounding in front. Poor beast! he had many a weary scamper alongside that coach, though he enjoyed himself in his own way. Now he would dash wickedly through the bush after some innocent sheep—now hear a rustling in the grass, and follow a snake to its nest in a hollow log—now rush excitedly after a drove of kangaroos—now sniff a tree for some hidden opossum. One day he would be splashed all over with black mud—another day powdered over with white sand—next day

covered from head to tail in red loam—according to the various districts we passed through.

We had great experience of Australian hotels. Taken as a whole, they were excellent. The accommodation was good—so was the "table." Meat of course entered largely into the fare. This might be expected in a country where beef is from fourpence to fivepence a pound, and mutton threepence a pound. The colonists eat a good deal of butcher-meat. A bush-farmer, a Scotsman, once said to us, "What wad the folks in Scotland think o' pleughmen gettin' mutton to eat in the mornin's? We have cauld mutton to breakfast, cauld mutton to dinner, an' cauld mutton to tea. We're weel aff, I can tell ye!" The charges in the hotels vary from eight shillings to twelve shillings a day, according to the quality of the house or the size of the township. This payment covers everything; there are no vague additional items such as "Attendance," or "Beds," or "Boots," or "Lights." Of course there is no law forbidding you to tip the waiter or stableman before driving off; but that is about the fullest extent to which anything is "looked for." While the accommodation in the country hotels is good, we cannot say so much for the bush inns, as the houses in the less-settled parts are called.

Hot, tired, dusty, thirsty, travelling through the lonely, endless bush, amid the unvarying fragrance of the gum trees, we come to a bush-inn, the "Traveller's Rest." We see its white-painted sides and its iron roof shining through the trees. We push forward in haste, the very horses pricking up their ears and quickening their pace. In a few minutes we draw up to the door. Immediately in front of it stands a tall white post supporting an empty square frame, from which the sign-board has broken away. A red-faced, sandy-whiskered man in tight trousers and a striped flannel shirt, with a halter dangling over his arm sees to the horses. In the bar, a bullock-driver is asleep upon a small three-legged stool, his head upon his arms, leaning on an ale cask that stands in one corner, and from which an occasional draught is tapped by the landlord for two swagmen who have just dropped in. A trooper has dis-

mounted from his horse, and is sitting on a form outside, reading the paper from the nearest township. At the side of the door a magpie chatters in a large round wicker cage. Going to the stable, we cross a rotten plank or two, that, from the slushing sound they make, seem to cover something sodden. We come upon dirty-faced, shaggy-headed children—dogs snuffing at old bones—hens pecking at cold potatoes—and a dozen pigs quarrelling in a small stye. The scene is backed by one or two tottering, drunken-looking out-houses. Near the stable-door lie half-a-dozen horse-collars, a set of chain-harness, a dingy stable-lamp, and an old brandy-case strewn with stray oats and chaff, the remains of some horse's *al fresco* feed. A thin layer of straw barely covers the earth in the floor of the stalls. The planks that compose the walls are wide apart, many of them swing loose, and a cold wind blows through and through the stable.

Dinner being ready, we enter the parlour. The walls are merely papered canvas, and bulge inwards with every puff of wind. The window is shaded by a white blind that is semi-detached from the roller and hangs down in a long dog's ear. The wide yawning fire-place, full of white powdery dead embers, resembles the mouth of a railway tunnel, for the smoke has blackened the wall immediately above. The sooty mantel-piece is occupied by empty pickle-bottles, two noseless, armless China statues, a tattered Cookery Book, and a tiny pocket thermometer, the mercury of which has broken its little bulb and trickled away in disgust at not being able to register anything but smoke. The table is covered with a glazed cloth, the veneer of which having scaled off in many places, shows the rough canvas beneath. At one end is spread a white cover, blotched with extensive yellow stains caused by the spilt coffee of some preceding guest. There are two dishes—an immense piece of corned beef, and a plateful of ham and eggs. The floor being uneven, you are in continual oscillation on your seat. The cruet-stand, formerly a tripod, has lost a foot, and now leans over invitingly towards us. The carving-blade is broad at the tip and curved like a scimitar; the

common knives, through long sharpening, look like daggers; the tarnished, dinted dish-covers are ranged on a side-table like shields. One feels as if dining in an armoury. A dog appears on one side, and puts its paws upon the table—a lean cat stands opposite and claws the cloth; you sit between a hungry, rampant coat-of-arms. The pudding is a long, dry rolly-polly, the jelly of which seems to have lost itself in one of the numerous convolutions. Obnoxious tea is brought in a large metal pot about eighteen inches in height. The bread, too, is unpalatable, being veined with raw white dough. The cups have rims a quarter of an inch thick; while the spoons are of a very miscellaneous nature, there being an egg spoon, a salt spoon, a German silver spoon, and a leaden spoon wherewith to stir our tea.

Robert, James, and I are quartered in one bedroom, and accommodated with what are called "swagmen's beds." The pillows are stuffed with straw, and wisps tickle our ears. We sleep under the national tricolour—red, white, and blue—a rough red-threaded coverlet, a thin blue blanket, and a thinner white sheet. Another sheet separates us from the barred trestle beneath, and we feel as if sleeping along a ladder. One window serves two rooms, the partition coming right in the middle of it. As the window is open, and a breeze blowing, we try to shut it, but find the gentleman next door has propped it up with the hair-brush. The wall on one side is a wainscoated partition, and a cataract of rats and mice pours unceasingly through it. The other is the usual calico screen, and when we blow out our candle we are startled by seeing, in gigantic shadow-pantomine, the whole of our neighbour's nocturnal toilette.

Just as my brothers and I are dozing off, we hear angry voices in the bar—a crashing of glasses, a scuffling of feet, with female shrieks for the police. Suddenly the sounds mellow down, and we know the combatants have been bundled into the open air. We hurry out and find the space in front of the hotel filled with a noisy crowd. In the middle stands a short, purple-faced, inebriated man, with disordered hair and ensanguined nose.

He is mildly denouncing everybody with a general wave of the hand—"Cowards all of you—I'm only a poor butcher—you're a lot of curs—I'm from the Moon-bi Range up there—seen skittles?—well, knock you all down like skittles—you're a confounded pack of —." "Shut up, will you!" roars another drunken fellow, bringing his fist down on the butcher's nose. Purple-face retaliates, but missing his aim, hits another individual full in the chest. This introduces a new combatant, who in turn becomes embroiled with some one else. There is a general melée. In the thick of it all is the Moon-bi man, whose nose is punched by every one consecutively. On the outskirts of the throng, the landlady tugs at the coat-tails of her husband, who is mixed up with the fight. The stableman excitedly rushes round with a lantern, and, standing on an inverted wheel-barrow, throws a glimmer of light upon the scene. For full five minutes there is continued shouting, kicking, and tearing of hair. Suddenly the crowd opens, and the poor butcher is projected violently against a wooden fence, frightening a number of hitched-up horses, who snap their bridles and vanish into darkness, followed by their half-sobered owners. The butcher sits for a time scratching his head, and meekly muttering vengeance; but eventually, with the assistance of some of his late foes, picks himself up and staggers into the bar, where he abruptly falls asleep over a "nobbler" of schiedam. It will be long ere we forget our day at this bush-inn, and our midnight introduction to the man of the Moon-bi.

At Tamworth, our following stage, some sixty-two miles south of Armidale, there was great talk about the capture of a party of bushrangers. They had committed robberies far up in the interior of Queensland, and had been tracked by mounted police into the vicinity of Tamworth, where they were caught after severe resistance. Sixty miles further south, at Murrurundi, we reached the Great Northern Railway, which extends to the port of Newcastle, a distance of 120 miles. Then we took the train to Singleton, passing on the way Musclebrook and Scone, two healthy-looking pretty towns. At the latter there were a large number of gaily dressed ladies

among the audience, and as they had ridden on horseback from the country up to the hall-door, it was wonderful how their toilettes had been preserved.

The weather during this month of October was very pleasant. On our second visit to this district, however, during December, the heat was intense. The town of Scone fully bore out its name, for it was baked. The thermometer stood for several days at 142° in the sun, and 110° in the shade. The grass went into powder beneath your feet—the earth was as dry as cinders; grasshoppers were to be seen in myriads on every meadow and field; mosquitoes sang loudly everywhere; and going to your bed at night you would probably find an enormous tarantula spider, like a small crab, crawling on the looking-glass. The forests of Victoria were ablaze from one end of the country to the other, and such overpowering heat had not been known for many years. At Scone we were almost compelled to keep indoors, and it was there that, seeing a drayman standing in the hotel porch, we remarked that the weather was hot. "Hot!" he rejoined, "I should think it *was!* every time a bullock passes me I smells beef-steaks!"

Maitland, the second city in New South Wales, and the chief town of this Hunter District, is an extensive place, substantial and well-built, with the Hunter River flowing close behind it. At home Maitland was always associated in my mind with floods. As we walked about, old flood-marks were pointed out to us. The flats on each side of the town, and in fact the whole of the level country in this large Hunter District, owe their unparalleled fertility to the occasional overflowing of the river. A pleasant remembrance of Maitland was our meeting with a family of Highland Kennedys, distantly related to us.

At this time the district was agitated by Parliamentary elections. At one place, in consequence of a meeting of miners in the hall, we could scarcely get the building in time for the evening's performance. The political crisis affected our concerts, the majority of the audiences being composed of the fair sex. At one town, however, where there was a meeting

the same night as our entertainment, the national minstrelsy proved stronger than politics, for the member of parliament broke off his speech, and, accompanied by his constituents, adjourned to the hall to hear the Songs of Scotland! Of course we were warned not to come at this time. Advice of that kind is never awanting. "Oh, you should have been here last week—last month—the middle of next week." "If you could only have been here on the miner's pay-day." "Oh, there's the church bazaar." "Ah, there's the Methodist soiree." "All our best families are away just now." "The awful bad crop's against you." "You've made a great mistake—you've come when there's no moon!" Despite all these imaginary odds, we secured large audiences.

From Maitland we took the rail to Newcastle. Like its namesake, Newcastle flourishes on immense exports of coal. The hall here was small and perched at the top of a hill so steep that one night an omnibus, overloaded with the public coming to the concert, fairly broke down. During our stay here, my father and brothers indulged in the luxury of sea-water bathing, in company with a venerable clergyman, in artificial stone tanks dug out of the solid rocks along the shore.

We came back from Newcastle to Musclebrook, and resumed our coach and horses, which we had left there while we went down by rail. Our route now lay across country, along what was not by any means a high road. We purposed reaching Gulgong, the latest gold-field of the colony, 124 miles inland, in five days. We had pleasant travelling to Denman, a small village fifteen miles from Musclebrook, where we stayed all night. Here Patrick had a quarrel with the innkeeper as to which of them should clean out the stable. Upon our not backing him up in his imaginary grievance, he threw up his engagement with us, and next morning we awoke in time to see Patrick far in the distance trudging back to Musclebrook. Here was a dilemma! We were left with a coach and horses on our hands—no other driver was to be had—none of us had ever driven a team before. But "Tom" our business-agent, volunteered to drive the coach. We left in the early morning,

and toiled through the bush till mid-day, when we rested three hours by the side of a creek. In the afternoon, as we were ascending a soft sandy hill, the coach stuck. The horses were not to be budged by any amount of lashing. Tired out though we were by a whole day's hard jolting heat, and some miles of hill climbing, we hauled out the luggage. The horses dragged the coach across the hill, and edged their way down the slope. The vehicle gradually began to tilt over, while Tom the driver sprawled over towards the higher side of the box, and latterly jumped off unhurt, dragging the reins after him, as the coach went down with a loud crash. We prised the coach round, so that we could lift it into position down hill, and within five minutes it was on its wheels.

Daylight had vanished long ere we had arrived at Merriwa, but the horses seemed to feel their way instinctively. As I was riding ahead, I threw over my back a broad white handkerchief, as a faint guide to the driver. We kept up a series of whistles and shouts as a link between us—one of our cries being "Coo-oo-oo-*ee*! a bush-call borrowed from the aboriginals. As we drove into the township the folks came out, astonished at this untimely appearance of a coach, and the road was bright with the light that shone through the open doors. The day following we reached Cassilis, where we remained over-night. Then off we went again, arriving at a rough wayside inn. The house lay on one side of a creek, and the gully was crossed by a most dangerous bridge. "Bridge" one could hardly call it, for it was a mere layer or raft of branches thrown loosely across, and filled in with twigs. It was narrow, too, and reached by a sharp descent, so that there was great danger. As the coach jolted over it, the ends of the saplings came flying up one after the other, like the hammers of a piano in a brilliant chromatic scale.

On the fifth day we made an early start, and arrived about eight o'clock at a creek, where we made an excellent breakfast. About two o'clock we reached Gulgong, a bustling, enterprising place. We sang in what was grandiloquently known as "The Prince of Wales' Opera House," a hall seated for 800 persons.

On Sunday we attended the Presbyterian Church. The clergyman was a young man who had recently given up the jewellery business, and had not even become a divinity student; while his wife played the harmonium. The congregation was of the smallest, and apparently did not embrace any of the mining class.

We were five days here, and then left for Mudgee, a stage of eighteen miles. On the way, there occurred the most serious accident we had in all our travels. My father and mother were driving quietly along in the buggy. There was a hot sun, and the horse "Billy" was not at all in a good humour. To waken him up a little, my father gave him a touch of the whip. In a moment "Billy" threw up his hind legs; one of them got jammed behind the swingle-bars, and away he wildly bolted on three legs. As on most bush-roads, stumps were plentiful, and "Billy" darted over one of these; but the front axle came with terrible force upon the stump. My father, thrown out by the shock, fortunately fell on his hands, and escaped unhurt. My mother was shot out violently against a fallen tree, her face striking full upon the rugged trunk. The harness gave way at once, and "Billy" rolled into a trench just large enough to hold him tight. He lay helpless on his back, with all his hoofs elevated safely in the air—a providential occurrence. My mother was picked up insensible, her face covered with blood. We laid her at the foot of a tree, where there was some little shade from the burning sun. After her face had been bathed with water, which we brought from a creek, she opened her eyes and spoke. Two of us galloped back some miles to get vinegar and brandy, while the rest repaired the damage done to the buggy. The shafts had to be bound up with splints—the swingle-bars held together with rope—the harness mended with twine. By the time we were ready to start, my mother had somewhat recovered. When we arrived at Mudgee, we called in a doctor, and a few days afterwards our patient was off the sick list. Sad to relate, a few days afterwards the doctor was drowned while fording a swollen creek not far from the scene of our accident.

We had a standing line in our programmes: "Ladies and gentlemen arriving late will kindly oblige by remaining in the lobby till the conclusion of a song!" To suit all the strange places we sang in, this should have been altered to "kindly oblige by remaining on the stair," "kindly oblige by remaining in the bar," "kindly oblige by remaining in the vestry," "kindly oblige by remaining in the jury-room," "kindly oblige by remaining in the open air;" and so on. The regulation was the cause of some trouble in Mudgee. One evening, during the third song on the programme, a gentleman demanded admittance. The doorkeeper politely requested him to remain outside, but he tried to force his way in, his hat coming off in the attempt. His friends immediately magnified this into an assault by our doorkeeper, who had all the time remained on the defensive. When the song had concluded, the indignant gentleman called out the whole of his party, twelve in number, who had gone in before the concert commenced. Their money was returned to them, and they left the hall. Those of the audience near the door were astonished—"Do you know who that is?—that's Mr. ——, the biggest bug we have!" Next day, a gentleman called on us in a friendly way, deploring the occurrence, and offering to carry an apology from us to Mr. ——, so as to stop any legal action! Of course we declined the offer, for we knew from the testimony of bystanders that our doorkeeper had not gone beyond his instructions. That evening a brass band planted itself under the window nearest the platform, and played loudly all through the concert. We offered them a large sum to move on, but they told us candidly they "were paid more money than that to come there!" The incident caused some stir in the community. The papers unanimously sided with us, one journal in a neighbouring town devoting two columns to a humorous discussion of the matter. As a rule, the public took favourably to this regulation. Sometimes two or three young ladies, on being kept out, would tee-hee, and say to each other, "It's just like being at church!"—sometimes a man would growl, "Is this a prayer-meeting?"—sometimes a late arrival would turn angrily on his heel, go

away, and, frequently, changing his mind, return in the middle of a crowd with the air of having just arrived! But, as a general thing, our audience thanked us for the quietness that prevailed during the singing of a song.

On our bills we had also the more common rule: " Children in arms not admitted." It was amusing to notice the way this was evaded. Very often the fond mother would place her infant against the wall, saying, "Ye see the puir thing can stand!" and again it was no uncommon thing to see a father and mother dragging a suckling between them, almost dislocating its arms, till they got it past the door. In large towns this rule acted well enough; but in the wide-settled country districts, where our concerts were advertised as much by rumour as by bills, people in ignorance of the "stern law" came long distances with children in arms. Then it was that our materfamilias had a pleasant duty to perform; for my mother, taking compassion on her country-women anxious to hear a " Scotch sang," looked after their babes in an adjoining room during the concert. Very often she had three or four of these valuable charges at once, the mothers coming out during the "Interval of Ten Minutes" to give them their natural nourishment.

We had a toilsome journey from Mudgee to Hill End, and another from there to Bathurst, where we joined the railway, and ended for the time our bush travelling. We had to sell off our coach and buggy and seven horses, to whom we had got attached during our long and sometimes perilous journeys together; and worse still, we had to part with our old companion and self-constituted guardian, "Uno," who had done many a weary day's trotting to and fro in pursuance of his chosen avocation.

CHAPTER V.

A Trip through Tasmania—Hobart Town—Launceston.

TOWARDS the end of December we sailed from Sydney to Hobart, Tasmania—a three days' passage. Sighting the shores of Tasmania, we passed a grand line of basaltic cliffs washed into quaint pillars by the sea, and in a short time reached Hobart. Bright green hills, squared into orchards and fields, and gardens filled with flowers, stretched up on either hand—the city appearing in front of us, surrounded by delicately-swelling ground, and backed by the massive proportions of Mount Wellington, 4166 feet high. On arriving at the wharf we encountered quite a plague of flies, or rather fly-drivers, and were conveyed to the hotel in a kind of two-wheeled omnibus.

Tasmania boasts two cities—Launceston in the extreme north, and Hobart in the extreme south. There are really no other towns, the rest of the island lying between these two points being studded by a number of pleasant villages. Hobart is the capital—an old, substantial city, with a population of 20,000, and prettily situated on the Derwent. It possesses an excellent town hall, fine churches, several jam-factories, a large orphan asylum, and two benevolent institutions, the last-named sheltering between them five hundred old men. The number of old men to be seen in Hobart and throughout the island is extraordinary.

The temperature of the island is mild, and affords a strong contrast to the Victorian when he crosses Bass's Straits. The Melbourne man goes to Tasmania as an Edinburgh or Glasgow man takes his family down the Clyde, or as the whites on the plains of India fly in the hot season to the Hills. When we landed in Hobart, the weather was cloudy and the air so sharp

that we required a fire in our sitting-room—an agreeable change from the sultry skies of New South Wales. A few days later it became very warm, one of the papers announcing the temperature to be 90° in the shade. "It's a downright shame to put that in print," said an irate Hobartonian; "it gives the colony such a bad name, and none of the Victorians will come over if they fancy it's so hot as that here!"

We lived at a very well-conducted hotel, immediately opposite an Episcopal church. On Christmas Day we interested ourselves in watching the people assembling for morning service, and were astonished to find the great preponderance of the fair sex. I think they stood in the proportion of five to one. In fact, it is only at certain seasons that balls or fashionable assemblies can be held, gentlemen being usually so scarce. The reason for this sparseness is, that whenever a youth grows up he departs for Melbourne to better his prospects. As if to make up for this exodus, however, a young man every now and then comes over from Victoria and bears away a Tasmanian girl as his bride.

Society in Hobart is highly respectable. An old man crossing the street may be pointed out to you as a "lifer," but you remember that in the olden time people were transported for trivial offences, or crimes for which the mind has not a great natural repulsion. Many convicts have been sent out for poaching, mutiny, and the like. As regards the numerous well-to-do convicts who have risen to be shopkeepers, or hotel-owners, or who fill perhaps the higher offices connected with a town, you are in great measure left to guess who they are, if your curiosity by any chance should ever rise to such a pitch.

The people of Hobart are in a marked degree homely and hospitable. It was more than once our happy privilege to meet an excellent lady, the granddaughter of Neil Gow, and daughter of Nathaniel Gow, the composer of "Caller Herrin'." We enjoyed the kindly hospitality of herself and her pleasant family. They were very musical. The good lady is a talented teacher of music, and her two sons are organists in the city. At her house we spent Christmas Eve and the last night of the

year. One or two hours of music and conversation were succeeded, in each case, by a banquet fit for the gods, and supplemented with strawberries and cream better than any strawberries and cream we ever hope to taste again. Tasmania is the garden of Australia—all the British fruits growing here in great luxuriance. At the hotel, jam was in constant supply and demand. This city is famous for its preserves, and the jam-cans of Hobart are to be seen in all parts of the colonies. Had this been an American town, it would long ago have been called Jamborough or Jellyville. During Christmas time the shops were decked with shrubbery, fruit and flowers, and everybody seemed bent on enjoying themselves. New Year's day was celebrated with races at a place a little way out in the country. One of the racehorses was said to have run more than uncommonly well. In the morning the poor beast conveyed a load of spectators to the course and in the evening took them back again.

Hobart is 120 miles from Launceston, and an excellent road runs north and south through the island connecting these two towns. This important highway, unsurpassed by any other in the colonies, was made entirely by convict labour. We drove through Tasmania in a hired coach. First we went to New Norfolk, a delightful journey of twenty-one miles. The road was like an English highway, with long lanes of high hedges, through breaks in which appeared flourishing hop-fields like those in Kent. The landlord of the New Norfolk hotel, an elderly man, who seemed to have "roughed it" in a jolly way through life, proved a really good soul. He was pressing for us to have a drink and a talk with him. This veteran host had been actually fifty-two years in Tasmania. He was the oldest inhabitant; everybody knew him, and he knew most other people. He detailed some experience of the early days. In former times, it would seem convicts were nothing else than slaves; or, which was the same thing, were let out as servants to the settlers. Some of these, however, acted well towards the convicts, and very often one of the latter, on getting a ticket-of-leave, preferred staying by his master. Other em-

ployers, again, and those who had once been convicts themselves, were very cruel to their men, giving them on the slightest provocation a note to the magistrate saying,—"Please give bearer twenty-five lashes and return him." Now and again this missive was never delivered, the wretched convict escaping to the hills, where he had the alternative either of death by starvation, or a return to a twofold worse slavery than before. True, there was another resource open to the more daring spirits. They became bushrangers, robbed travellers, lived on occasional provisions sent them by sympathizing villagers, or those who desired immunity from plunder, and altogether led a short, restless, unhappy sort of life. In this way our genial New Norfolk landlord gossipped of "auld langsyne" in Tasmania.

Our next stage was Hamilton. The hall here was a barn, deemed by many of the villagers to be insecure, but sufficiently tested that night. Under the barn one could hear horses champing and stamping and grooms swearing, but the concert was not greatly interrupted. Fortunately we carried with us a roll of carpet and a table cover, and with these we made an impromptu platform look decent.

From Hamilton we went to Bothwell. We had scarcely been ten minutes in the village when the secretary of the local cricket club invited my brothers and myself to join in the usual Saturday afternoon game. The sport took place in one of the numerous paddocks about the place. The club consisted principally of the trades folks; also several persons who, from their bare black arms and hands, had apparently just left off work in a blacksmith's shop; and last, not least the rector of the village, who was as off hand and jolly as any other member of the team.

We had another game at cricket, a few days later at a homestead called "The Grange," where we spent the day with some acquaintances. There were other visitors, and after dinner we joined them in the game, which was played both by ladies and gentlemen, though the fair sex while doing their "fielding,"

showed a strong disposition to sit together in a clump under shadow of parasols.

We met here two young men, the sons of Glasgow merchants, who were doing the tour of the colonies, partly for business, partly for pleasure, and partly on account of delicate health. We were constantly meeting them in our travels. We parted first in Melbourne, then saw them a short time afterwards in Sydney, where we again took a last good-bye; then bade them adieu once more in Tasmania; another farewell to them in Melbourne; then met them when we arrived in Scotland. They were fine fellows, and something above the average young men we met in the colonies. The young man in a new country, far from the old centres of civilisation, is to be pitied. There is an absence of that immediate bustle, life, and discussion of important events or great questions which press in upon one at home, like a strong atmosphere, at so much per square inch. Out here, of course, there are numerous libraries and reading rooms, but there is none of that glorious national history which makes a person proud of his country. The colonial youth, I have no doubt, feels some interest in the land where he was born aud brought up; but as the history of the colonies is as yet only that of material prosperity, the young man must of necessity be greatly material in his views. In Melbourne we met a young man from Launceston, who was an unfair sample of the rising Tasmanian, though one of a large class in the colonies—persons who are lacking in a strong moral sense—who will detail an arrant swindle on some one's part, and then, with open admiration, dilate on the fellow's success. This Launcestonian was scarcely a worshipper of fraud, but he had an undisguised regard for what he called "smartness."

One day we drove up to a wayside inn, round the door of which had gathered a group of men. They were chaffing an elderly, rough-dressed fellow, evidently an "old hand."

"Bill, how's yer little farm? That pays ye better than yer old trade, eh?"

"Come, now," retorted the old man, "my other biz was pro-

fitable enough—many's the handkerchief I nipped up, as neat as any man as ever lived; but my fingers is stiff now to what they was in the good old days—see, they'll hardly curl up anyhow; but I'll stick a bullock with any man here!"

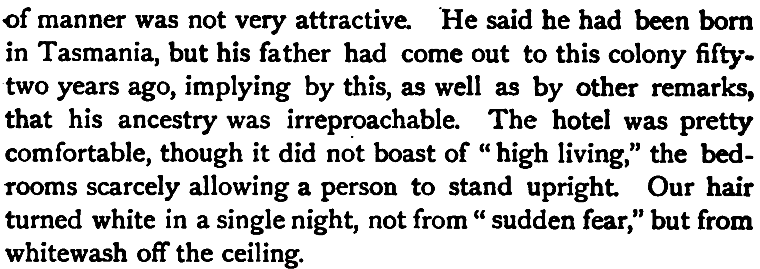
"Now, you chaps," remarked one man, "do you know that Bill here was once in the bushranging trade, him an' a batch of other fellows, and when the police got after them one day, they all ran away, 'ceptin' Bill here—he threw up his hands an' pretended he'd been robbed by the other coves—sharp practice, eh? Didn't he get sweet things said about him by the authoties, too! an' you was the worst o' the gang, wasn't you, Bill?"

"Of course I was; but I'll stick a bullock with any man here!"

This old convict evidently had his tongue loosened a little by "nobblers." As a common thing, individuals may confess they have been "sent out," but it is always a most trivial affair they have been guilty of. Something or other has been "lying around loose." A man once remarked that he had only been "throwing a bit of lead about," which, however, turned out to be a case of pistol-shooting!

In driving across Tasmania, we found the country very beautiful, but our spirits felt oppressed by the want of human life and industry, the absence of rural pursuits at times robbing the landscape of one of its principal charms. The pace of our team, too, was not quick enough to impart life, and the driver was stolid to all our hints. When we remarked that the axles were getting hot, he said that the wheels had been fresh oiled in the morning; on our being solicitous that perhaps the harness might break, he eased our minds by telling us he had plenty more; and when we praised the extraordinary "reserve of power" there was in the horses, he was mightily pleased.

Life in these townships must be dull; an old lady there told us, "It was vegetating, not living." At another township a stranger one day came into our sitting-room. The landlady whispered to us that this was a man "dying for society." He was rich, she said, but money could not buy company. So we tried to banish his ennui by talking to him, though his loftiness



of manner was not very attractive. He said he had been born in Tasmania, but his father had come out to this colony fifty-two years ago, implying by this, as well as by other remarks, that his ancestry was irreproachable. The hotel was pretty comfortable, though it did not boast of "high living," the bedrooms scarcely allowing a person to stand upright. Our hair turned white in a single night, not from "sudden fear," but from whitewash off the ceiling.

Launceston is a fine city, and not behind the southern metropolis in the size or elegance of its buildings. It is situated on the River Tamar, which here is seen flowing in many windings towards the sea through level country widely bounded by moderately high hills. On Saturday night we strolled through the town in moonlight, and happened to meet a tall, brawny, Border man, who had been a great many years "out," and had lost not the slightest inflection of his vigorous accent. He voluntarily confessed to having had two "laggings," but perhaps he was testing our credulity. However, he might at one time have been a poacher—indeed, he hinted to us something about his great delight at home being the shooting of game. He was a big, stalwart "dare-deevil"—a man fit at any time for a night struggle with a gamekeeper. But it may have been all our imagination.

We saw the last of Tasmania in magnificent weather. The sail from Launceston down the Tamar—beneath a warm, lovely sky, with the river sleeping under a soft haze, and reflecting on its unruffled surface every tree, bush, and rock upon its banks—will long be remembered. In Tasmania the delight of river and lake and sea is nearly always present. We were transported, not *to*, but *with* the charming little island. No one with the name "Van Diemen's Land" sounding in his ears can have any idea of the beauty, the quiet air of respectability that now pervades regenerated "Tasmania."