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THE PASTORAL AGE
IN AUSTRALASIA

JAMES COLLIER

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**THE PASTORAL AGE IN
AUSTRALASIA**

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JOHN MCARTHUR.

[*Frontispiece.*

THE
PASTORAL AGE
IN AUSTRALASIA

BY
JAMES COLLIER

AUTHOR OF "SIR GEORGE GREY: AN HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY," ETC.
AND EDITOR OF COLLINS'S "ENGLISH COLONY IN NEW SOUTH WALES"

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS



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To

MY WIFE

IN LOVE AND HONOUR

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The Publishers are indebted to the courtesy of Mr. W. A. Gullick, Government Printer, Sydney, for supplying electros of some of the portraits. The admirable photographs of Bush-life and station-scenes here reproduced were taken by Messrs. Kerry & Co., 310 George Street, Sydney. They were selected from a collection that is probably co-extensive with the pastoral and rural activities of Australia.



THE PASTORAL AGE IN AUSTRALASIA

CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE

FAR away in the South Seas, a hundred years ago, more or less, the humane British Government was engaged in making a social experiment that had an issue undreamt of by its benevolent originators. It sent out to the newly discovered wilds of New South Wales successive contingents of its convicted felons, not only from the natural desire of getting rid of its worst citizens, but also with the hope of reforming criminals who could, by no possible chance, be reformed in England. The design succeeded beyond the hopes of its promoters, but far less through the measures taken by them with that end in view, than as an indirect result of unforeseen occurrences. While its representatives at the Antipodes, the rulers of the new British colony, were planting out so many of its "exiles" on farms near the settlement or employing the more skilled among them in works of public utility, an altogether new development was initiated by private individuals, which was to ensure by other means the results aimed at, and at the same time bring about incalculable results of a totally different nature.

For the first half-century of its history the new province was divided into two parts—a part that was

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enclosed by the somewhat uncertain recognised boundaries of the settlement, and a part of indefinite extent habitually described as being beyond those boundaries. The portion "within the pale" was occupied by several distinct classes. The convicts, of course, formed the bulk of the inhabitants; and these, under the direction of their superintendents, contributed somewhat less than one-half of the total pastoral, agricultural and orchard produce of the Colony. Over against these stood the free citizens to whom the Government had assigned grants of land. Chief among these were the officers of the regiments then acting as a garrison, who found it compatible with their military duties to engage in pastoral and agricultural farming, and who, by the concession of abundant gratuitous convict-labour, were encouraged, at once to provide for their own wants, and to aggrandise the wealth of the Colony. Civilian officers were treated in the same manner, and the amount of the cultivation contributed by these classes is compared, by the early chroniclers, to their advantage, with the produce yielded by the mass of convict labour. Foremost among these officials were the early chaplains, whose energy and persistence entitled them to be placed in a class by themselves. Still another class, consisting of discharged soldiers and released convicts (not always essentially different) to whom small grants of land were made, hardly deserves to be taken into account; too often, either through fraud or as a consequence of debauchery, as the records show, they speedily parted with their holdings. A fourth class, of sea-captains, who brought out vessels to the Colony and remained in it, was gradually strengthened by immigrant settlers. All of these were members of a convict settlement. Convict labour was furnished, and that labour regulated; stock was supplied, and the produce of the farms bought, by the Government. It was a compact and organized industrial system, with a convict base, and the reformation of the convicts for its reason of existence. It was never designed as a free

colony, and, so long as the original policy was maintained, it could never have become a free community. For these free settlers were but a handful—a few hundreds in the midst of many thousands of unfree, and as fresh convicts were being constantly poured in, the free would ever have been swamped by the unfree. This predestined unfree settlement was, then, the base of the free community that has been reared on it. But it was never the root of that community. That we must seek for elsewhere.

Within the somewhat restricted limits of the settlement—necessarily restricted in order to keep the community well in hand—there was but little scope for immigrant settlers. Yet these kept coming in increasing numbers. Many an escaped or released convict was doubtless among the numbers who gradually spread beyond the legitimate boundaries of the Colony. But these were not the majority. All who were attracted by a life spiced with adventure—all who were moved by the nomad instinct—all who were attracted by the wide free spaces of the new colony and its wild free life—flocked to the country when its character had been made known in England and the failure of the convict experiment was threatening to prove a reality. Most of these, many of them English pastoralists, set pastoral pursuits before themselves as their chief object. Such individuals, finding themselves cramped within the limits of a strictly governed settlement, pushed out across the Blue Mountains to the west, down south towards the future colony of Victoria, or away north towards the Liverpool Plains. By every creek or river these experienced or apprentice pastoralists sat down, bringing with them flocks and herds. By degrees the new industry became an independent interest, expanding and thriving, self-supporting and a producer of wealth. It gradually changed the character of the community from a convict settlement into a pastoral community, using the convict elements at hand, indeed, but radically different in principle, and thus initiating

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a new departure. Henceforth, the convict staple steadily loses ground, absorbed by the new elements, or dying out, and no longer replenished from without. On the convict base it had been founded; from this new pastoral root it grew. Now the real life of Australia begins.

The local Government was alarmed by those ugly ducklings, who thus boldly took to the water. Urged by the Home Government to put down such unauthorised squatters, it endeavoured to suppress them. The character and the very existence of the Colony were at stake. It had to be determined whether those immigrant pastoralists should be hunted like wild animals and turned into Bedouins of the desert, or should be encouraged to grow up like the patriarchs of old, nursing within themselves the germs of the future State. The English authorities hesitated long, seeing their plans for Australia on the point of being completely overthrown by events they could never have foreseen. At first, the Imperial Government decided in favour of adhering to their original design, and instructions were issued to arrest the overflow of unauthorised squatting beyond the boundaries. It was too late; the colonial Canute who would have said to its waves: "thus far, and no further," would have been as impotent as Mrs. Partington with her mop. Two wise Governors endeavoured to regulate the inundation they could not dam, and by a series of ordinances they introduced law and order into the lawless doings of the adventurers. In these they saw the promise of opulence and the beginnings of a mighty State. These sagacious men reported to that effect to the authorities in England, and succeeded in persuading them of the justice of their views. Squatting was legalised and regularised, and, giving an impetus to free colonisation, it lifted the community to a higher plane, and started it on a new career.*

This, then, is the true germinal protoplasm of the

* *Bush Essays*, by CAPRICORNUS [GEORGE RANKEN]. Edinburgh, 1872, pp. 4-5.

British colonies at the Antipodes, their substance and inner life, that for which, through more than half-a-century, Australia existed, that out of which all else has grown. The historical specialist * is perplexed by an inability to discover the "sociology" of a passage in Australian history that she has skilfully delineated. I presume to think that the solution of her problem will be found here. The "autocracy" of Governor Macquarie was a final and unsuccessful attempt to govern the Colony on the lines the British Government designed from the first. Those lines were not of Nature's drawing. The true lines on which the Colony was to be built were not prearranged; they were found unconsciously by individuals who were bent on their own ends. The abortive experiment being recognised as a failure, the ground was left clear for a right design that was of Nature's devising. The convict settlement being in principle condemned, the pastoral community was henceforth free to develop along its natural lines.

All else, I said, has grown out of this root. The goldfields, and all the transformations they wrought, are only an episode in comparison, tending to aggrandise the pastoral and central life of the Australian communities. Other interests rise up by the side of it, its nurslings, like the mechanical industries, or spring up out of it by natural growth, as agriculture and horticulture; but, at the heart of everything the pastoral interest remains, narrowed in area, but deepened in intensity, and destined to an unlimited duration. The history of Australia for fifty or sixty years is the history of that interest; its political history is predominantly pastoral, and the men who figure most prominently in that history were pastoralists. That

* DR. MARION PHILLIPS, *A Colonial Autocracy*, London, 1909, p. 331. Perhaps the two best monographs on Australian history have been produced by women. The other is IDA LEE'S (or MRS. BRUCE MARRIOTT'S) *The Coming of the English to Australia*, London, 1909. I have since found that Dr. Marion Phillips has clearly discerned and firmly grasped the key to the early history of Australia. See her *Colonial Autocracy*, p. 331, etc.

interest gave birth to some of the strongest personalities in the Colony. It led to revolutions in the affairs of State. It gave birth to a political organization. For one generation or more it ruled the seven colonies with a sway that waxed as the absolute power of the Governor waned. It composed the legislature, appointed the judges, controlled the executive, and, if the Governor was refractory, it sent him "home." The agriculture that has during that time arisen has existed to supply *its* wants, and the various industries were long its auxiliaries. Nay, the aristocratic industry *par excellence* was the first to organize and arm its artizans. The largest union in Australia consists of workers on the stations, and the most revolutionary journals published in the Commonwealth are its organs. So was it with commerce. Colossal wool-brokers have conjoined to make Sydney "the greatest wool-mart in the world," it is claimed; at all events, with Yorkshire Bradford, one of the two greatest; and the large importing houses in each provincial metropolis have come into existence to supply its wants. Villages were formed to supply its local needs, and seaports created to afford scope for its output. Rank, wealth, and fashion have waited on it. Social life reflected its tastes and was the measure of its grandeur. It constituted 'society,' ran the races, gave the balls, and kept open house; the surrounding villages lived in its sunshine. By it, principally or largely, the various colonies have been reknitted to the Motherland, and new links of connection with it have been forged. The old religion was born afresh on the station; literature, science, and various forms of art have been begotten or rejuvenated by it. All this is the work of the Golden Fleece.

CHAPTER II

PASTORALIST SYSTEMS, ANCIENT AND MODERN

THE germinal protoplasm of pastoralism stretches from age to age and spreads from this country to that, but is always and everywhere self-identical. It is an undying chain, which began with the first domesticated herd of cattle or horses, the first tamed flock of goats or sheep, is still vital, indeed is more vigorous than ever, and will live on till mankind returns, at the end of its long parabola, to a condition resembling its primitive state. Its manifestations in this age or that, its duration in this country or that, its transformations and modifications, are all secondary; they are but changes of costume, slow or rapid, on the Earth's stage, of an ever-during reality, which pursues its course across all obstacles. This is primary and essential; all else is but a passing show. One and the same figure, under many disguises, eternally reappears. The Hebrew patriarch—Abraham, Father of the Faithful, or the fickle Lot, in the dawn of time; the ancient Arabian sheikh—the patient Job; Saul, the son of Kish, or Psalmist David, as the sun of Palestine mounted towards its zenith; the magi who greeted the new-born Saviour; or the shepherd- and cattle-kings of Australia—John McArthur and Ben Boyd, Patrick Leslie or Sir Samuel McCaughey, James Tyson, Sidney Whitman, or “Triggs of Yass”—in our own or recent days—there is but one eternal shepherd or neatherd, with his flocks or his herds, his patriarchal family, his moving tent or his stationary abode, his simple life, his sane morals,

his primitive religion, his close contact with Mother Earth and with the tame creatures that live still closer to it. This is the age of innocence among mankind, and the remains of it in the most advanced country keep human existence clean and sweet, like a waft of ozone from the sea over a hot and parched land.

To the anti-Semitic imagination of Edgar Quinet the social state indirectly described in the Vedas is the most primitive of which tradition has preserved any account. There we perceive the true dawn of the social world, where there is, as yet, no nation or State, no people and no visible government, but only clans and patriarchs, who are surrounded by their herds, seeking from peak to peak of the Indian Alps the freshest grasses; with no other wealth than that which they carry on their waggons; lighting their fires on the high plateaux by rubbing one branch against another; then burning the virgin forests in order to clear a track or prepare the ground for a hut; without agriculture or fixed property, without temple or home; marking each stopping-place with a new song and a monumental sacred stone; already addicted to war for the purpose of defending or increasing their own herds or of attacking another's; and connecting all things—their prayers and poetry, their labours and beliefs—with those all-nourishing herds as the source of life. Such is the picture of the ancient Aryan Indians presented in the Vedic hymns.* There are features of this primeval pastoralism that are lost in the reproductions of it found in other lands and other times, but its essential characteristics are the same, wherever cattle are the chief sustenance of a still nomad people. The Vedic neatherd is the lineal ancestor of the Australian stockman.

Of at least equal, and possibly greater, antiquity are the simple pastoral societies that figure in the Hebrew books of *Job* and *Genesis*. The *Book of Job* is popularly

* *Génie des Religions*, bk. iii. ch. i.

believed to be the elder, but the pastoral development seems there to be more advanced than in *Genesis*. The community has apparently ceased to be nomadic; and the use of coined money or bullion, is known, as, indeed, it is also in *Genesis*. What appears to be still more decisive is the character of the discussions and speculations enshrined in this the loftiest of ancient books. It ranks, indeed, with (and above) the *Prometheus Bound* and the *Rubaiyat* of Omar, above even *Hamlet* and *Faust*, as the most inspired utterance that trial and sorrow have wrung from the heart of suffering humanity. Not in the morning of the world, any more than these sublime masterpieces, but when Chaldæa's sun was nearing its zenith, were those moving plaints and threnodies, that noblest vindication of the ways of God to man, conceived and composed.

Nevertheless, the life described is among the most archaic that is known. Though probably Semitic, it has one note of the Turanian race. The patriarch Job is stated to possess 7,000 sheep, rising after his vindication to 14,000, and these are first mentioned. Either number would seem small to a modern grazier on the Canterbury Plains of New Zealand or the Liverpool Plains of New South Wales. Yet Job was "the greatest of all the men of the East." For he had, besides, 3,000 camels (where the modern pastoralist has horses), 500 yoke of oxen, 500 she-asses (all of these figures were doubled after his trials), and "a very great household." His four sons had separate, but adjacent, households and families of their own. Polygamy was practised, and adultery committed. Agriculture was carried on jointly with pasturing, as it has been to some extent from the first by the Australian pastoralist; and oxen were put in the plow, as they were by early Australian pastoralists. Vines were reared. They drank milk and made cheese. That the community was now stationary is shown both by the existence of houses and by the use of landmarks, which were sometimes fraudulently removed. Flocks were violently stolen. Corn was

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grown, ground into flour, and made into bread. Exactness in commercial transactions is proved by the use of the balance. Pledges were given. Wealth in gold and silver abounded. Oil was expressed from plants or trees. Golden earrings were worn by men as amulets. They played on the timbrel and the harp, and "rejoiced in the sound of the organ"; and, like almost all known peoples, they danced. They trapped animals with nets and snares. They lived in a state of perpetual war with the neighbouring peoples; and they fought with iron weapons and glittering swords and bows of steel. Cities existed, and some kind of a government, with the stocks as one form of punishment. Above all, the true God was worshipped, though sacrifices of rams and bullocks, as long afterwards in ancient Israel, revealed its somewhat sanguinary character. Evidently, we have in this account, drawn directly from *Job*, a picture of a pastoral state that has long passed out of its infancy.

That the pastoral state just described was Semitic may, perhaps, be inferred from the fact that the Palestinian pastoralism was plainly a continuation of it. An intermediate stage is revealed by the delineation of pastoral life in Mesopotamia, when Jacob revisited his kindred in the old land. The narrative, as Milman remarks, breathes the free air of the open inland plains of Central Asia, where wide spaces are still left to be occupied by the flocks, herds, and camels of those opulent pastoralists.

A parallel and kindred development took place in Palestine. There Abram, sheik or emir of a pastoral clan—himself and his wife both belonging to a fair-complexioned people—possessed large flocks of sheep and herds of oxen, asses and camels, men-servants and maid-servants. So rich was he too in silver and gold that he could pay down 400 pieces of silver, coined or not. He was still nomadic, and, having migrated from far Carrhan, where Marcus Crassus in later days was defeated with a Roman army, to Arabia and Canaan,

then gone south to Egypt, under stress of famine, he finally settled in Palestine, first in the valley of the Jordan, on the plains of Mamre, and near Hebron. A warrior, too, he was, and he routed the hostile force that had carried off his relative, Lot. He maintained the purity of his race, and wives were sought for his son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob, among his distant kindred in the land of his birth. Though not himself apparently polygamous, he had children by a concubine, one of his slaves; and Isaac and Jacob were both polygamous. The right or custom of primogeniture was already in force, and, notwithstanding the contentions of the brothers McLennan, who maintained that the Hebrew patriarchs never possessed the Roman *patria potestas*, or absolute paternal authority,* Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac is a proof of the existence of very large paternal powers. A defined system of succession, depending on relationship, was in use, which would have opened up the headship after Abraham to a relative in distant Damascus. The religion of the patriarch, like that of all pastoralists, was simple and, apparently, anthropomorphic; he carried with him his images of the Deity; and goats, rams, doves, and pigeons were sacrificed on altars reared on the mountain-tops. Save in this, the Hebrew patriarchs, in fact, so closely resembled the Arabs of the present day, who have remained virtually unchanged for thousands of years, that scholars adduce their habits and customs generally to illustrate the manners of the Hebrew patriarchal times.† Far away seem these ancient worthies, and yet very near they are, as we contemplate them from an Australian head-station. "Men travelled with their flocks and herds," writes Mrs. Campbell Praed, "and, like Abraham and Lot, fought the tribes for land and water." Their life and

* *The Patriarchal Theory*. By JOHN and DONALD McLENNAN. London.

† MILMAN, *History of the Jews*, bk. i., and SCHEPPIG, *Descriptive Sociology*, pt. vii.

that of the Australian pastoralist were at bottom the same.

Classical scholar as he was, and with the scholarship that had been jappanned at Oxford ingrained in his mind by a residence in the Ionian Islands, Sir George Bowen was apt to perceive the analogies between the state of Homeric Greece and pastoral Queensland. The "runs" that have replaced the old "sheep-walks" he found verbally anticipated in the *δρόμοι ἐυρέες* (or "cattle runs," as Liddell and Scott have it) of the *Odyssey*, and the comparison had already been made by Mr. Gladstone, who was at one time Minister of the Colonies. The high plateau of the Darling Downs reminded him of mountainous Thessaly, and there he found the *Larissæ campus opimæ* — "the prairie of opulent Thessaly," while the Peneus had a worthy successor in the Condamine, and the surrounding hills recalled Pindus and Olympus; he might have added that the snowy crown of the mountain of the gods, with the snowfalls that still occur in Athens, are paralleled by the occasional winter-mantle of the Downs.

The pastoral system of New South Wales curiously resembles all or most of the other pastoral systems the world has seen at different stages in its history. It may even be said to recapitulate them, as the embryo retraces the evolution of its parent species. It certainly has a remarkable resemblance to the Roman domain. At the summit of that was the Imperial domain, constantly being swollen by confiscations, and amounting under Nero, who confiscated the estates of the six largest proprietors, to one-half of Roman Africa. So did the fee-simple of New South Wales, which in the early days embraced Victoria and Queensland, belong to the British Government. Its composition was akin to that of the Roman *saltus*, and consisted of uncleared forest, pastoral lands, and agricultural farms. The status of the denizens on it was similar. There were convicts, who were virtually slaves, at the base; above these, in both systems, were freedmen, emancipated

slaves or convicts, often mechanics, as in Rome ; higher still were tenant-farmers, who were often also emancipated convicts, as the Romans were often emancipated slaves ; then came the free settlers, farmers or agriculturists on a small or a large scale. Diffused among them were superintendents of convict labour, who easily, in time, passed into station managers, answering closely to the superintendents of the *ergastula* or the *villici* or bailiffs of the farms.

We do not need, however, to go far back to past ages in order to witness the beginnings of the pastoral occupation of the Earth. On the level steppes of Central Asia, over the vast tracks that lie between the Altaic and the Tauric ranges, in countries like Mongolia and Tartary, stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Pacific Ocean, we may view this old world of ours as it was in the days when the Vedic Indians wandered from plateau to plateau of the Hindu Kush, or when the early Semitic patriarchs, Abram and Lot, Job and Lamech, Jacob and the hunter Esau, fed their flocks and drove their herds on the plains of Mamre or Shinar, or folded them under the skies of Mesopotamia and Chaldee. There we may still see the nomad pastoralist with his tents, often surrounded for leagues by immense flocks and herds, ranging from ten to one hundred thousand, living on the flesh and the milk of these, and making their clothes out of the skins and their tents out of the hair of their camels. Out of the canes that grow by the river-beds the warlike bands carve bows and arrows. Government, properly speaking, they have none, but the taming and pasturing of wild cattle, John Millar long ago perceived,* gave rise to a permanent distinction of ranks such as could never have arisen in the hunting stage of mankind. Greater industry or better fortune enabled individuals to acquire more numerous herds and flocks, live in greater affluence, maintain a number

* *The Origin of Ranks*, p. 72. Third edition, 1871. The treatise that initiated all subsequent speculations on the structure of the family.

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of servants and retainers, and increase their power and dignity; all of which advantages were transmitted by these patriarchs from one generation to another. The tribes remain nomadic so long as they keep to the north of the fortieth parallel of latitude. Let them cross that viewless boundary, and they instantly settle on the magical new plains, build houses, form governments, wage wars, and fashion peoples out of their once-wandering hordes.

At the other extremity of the world, on the distant pampas of South America, contemporaries of the Asiatic nomads, but bringing something of a higher civilisation from Southern Europe, the Spaniards, themselves the first skilled sheep-breeders in modern times, reared a pastoralist system that has both singular homologies and pointed contrasts with the old-world Asiatic and Arabian systems. On plains as vast as the Mongolian steppes great ranches have been carved out of the untrodden wastes, and mighty herds and flocks graze where, for tens of thousands of years, no foot of man or hoof of beast had ever stamped human ownership on the wild. In the Argentine, in the thirties, when Darwin travelled in the country, General Rosas had a number of great *estancias*. One of these was fortified against the Indians, and was of so great an extent that Darwin, arriving in the dark, believed it was a fortified town. The estate occupied seventy-four leagues of land, employed about three hundred men, and grazed immense herds of cattle—300,000 in number. Other *estancias* were much less extensive. One, in the Banda Oriental, had only 3,000 cattle, though it would have well supported three or four times that number, 600 sheep, 800 mares, and 150 broken-in horses. It was valued at only £2,500. The cattle were driven twice a week to a central spot to be tamed and counted. Some stations were ruined by the attacks of Indians. At others there were no women. One or two wonderful sheep-dogs sufficed to guard large flocks of sheep. As in Australia, the stations are visited by horse-breakers.

The Gaucho, a marvellous rider, is the South American homologue of the Australian stockman.*

Did we wish to descend below the nomad tribes that wander between the Tigris and the Euphrates, we should find them in the Hottentots of South Africa, the Masai and Bahima of Central Africa, and the Todas of India, and in all those peoples that are rising above the hunting-stage and beginning to domesticate animals. In Sardinia at the present day we may still perceive the rude initiation of that pastoral existence which spread from Arabia to Numidia and Spain, and thence to Germany, France, and England, to South America, and Australia.

* DARWIN, *Voyage of the Adventure*, pp. 52, 85, 104. 1890.

CHAPTER III

THE AUSTRALIAN PASTORALIST RÉGIME : THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

A HUGE parallelogram of a continent, *not* "much larger than Europe," as Cook imagined, but somewhat smaller and nearly equal to the Dominion of Canada and to the territory of the United States; resembling Africa in its mass, with similarly unvaried outlines and comparatively few capacious harbours; truncated by the loss of portions now represented by the Great Barrier Reef and islands like New Caledonia, and thus sharply isolated from all the rest of the world; Australia seems to be set apart for the generation of peculiar vegetal and animal species and the nurture of an original type of human society. A vast and moderately elevated tableland, whose low and scanty mountain-ranges are but the escarpments of its plateaus, which slope down to and surround the central basin with its desolate and forbidding plains, it might appear the predestined home of the pastoralist.

The pastoralist, however, needs something more than level and spacious lands; he needs water and grass. Before there can be all-nourishing rivers, feeders of flocks and herds, there must be mountains, the resting-places of the snow and the reservoirs of the rain. Australia has its spinal mountain-chain, like other countries, but it is ill-placed, forming a close parallel with the eastern coast, and making the country lop-sided. It is, moreover, of a low altitude, nowhere rising above the snow-line, and therefore the rainfall is almost every-



Photo by Kerry, Sydney.

BLUE-GRASS PLAINS, WITH ARTESIAN BORE RUNNING THROUGH.

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where deficient. Nor is the soil, at first sight, at all alluring. Calumniated by Dampier "the barrenest spot on earth, it was called by Captain Cook "rather barren than fertile," though in parts he found "a deep black mould." "Barren . . . and [that] in a high degree"—"in every respect the most barren country I have ever seen," is the verdict of a great early observer, Sir Joseph Banks. These disparaging statements are very wide of the truth. Between "the rich, turf-clad western plains in the Great Valley of Victoria" in the South and the splendid pastoral country in the far North-East, which Sir Thomas Mitchell declared "was sufficient to supply the whole world with food," there are rich grass-lands and fertile regions of lakes and meadows, from the Darling Downs of Southern Queensland to the fine pastoral country of Kimberley in North-Western Australia, not less opulent in grass than in gold. Nevertheless, the fertile coastal plains, alluvial country and volcanic patches being thrown out, the soil of Australia as a whole is better fitted for pasture than for agriculture. The poverty of the vegetation and the consequent poverty of the soil make it unfit for bearing heavy crops. On this score, too, Australia is obviously a predestined pastoral country.

Even as such it has obvious imperfections. Settlers were to be long—they are still—handicapped by the many eccentricities of Australian rivers. These take their rise in the Dividing Range, it is true, but, instead of thence making their way to the sea, the greater streams flow towards the centre of the Continent. The river-system of Eastern and Southern Australia virtually consists of but one river, which has many different names. Most of the Northern rivers flow into the Darling and most of the Southern into the Murrumbidgee, while both the Darling and the Murrumbidgee blend their waters in the mighty but almost useless volume of the Murray, which a seven-foot craft can hardly navigate at its obstructed mouth. The country is, accordingly, not only ill-watered, and pastoral occupation imperilled ;

its rivers could never become the vomitories of production or the highways of commerce. Next, like the Rhine, they expire into swamps, or (as Dr. Fitchett has wittily said) into "a landscape of swamps." Lastly, in summer and autumn at least, most of them are of feeble dimensions; the third-class rivers, as the Lachlan and the Macquarie, are then waterless beds, the hollow mockeries of rivers; even "the mighty Darling," for many a month of every year, is but a chain of water-holes. Yet it is on these disappointing streams that the pastoralist depends, and along their banks—at first, along them alone—that he settles.

Ill served by the rivers, the pastoral industry is scarce more bounteously enriched by the rainfall. All over the Continent, save on the fertile coastal belts, the temperate water-supply is insufficient. Heavy enough on these, it fades away as soon as the pastoral plateaus are reached, and sinks to as small a quantity as six inches annually in the central desert. Here the situation of the Continent comes to the rescue. Raising both its shoulders high into the tropics, it allures the tropical rains that make the pastoral industry possible. Twice a year, in February and August, or at other adjoining months, the monsoonal rains pour down their golden drops, like Zeus into the lap of Danaë—often too late for the farmer, whose crops were long before ripe, but perennially useful to the pastoralist. The very scantiness of the rainfall is his salvation. Finding it impossible successfully to rear the cross-bred sheep that thrives in well-watered New Zealand, he has devoted his efforts to acclimatizing and perfecting the merino, which can live, as it was bred, under comparatively rainless skies.

Playing a part equal to the situation and structure of the Continent, as a factor in its economic history, the climate is governed by these. They bestow a sufficient rainfall on the plains and plateaus of the eastern and southern coasts, where vast flocks of sheep are reared; while the western coasts (save from a point above Fremantle south to Albany) have a light rainfall, with

a poor soil and a stunted vegetation. As the westerly winds are robbed of their moisture by the heated surface before they reach the interior, the centre of Australia and tracts like the boundary between Victoria and South Australia are deserts. The northern portions, on the other hand, embedded in the tropics, are drenched by the monsoonal rains, and are eminently suited for the rearing of cattle. The southern highlands of New South Wales, paradoxically, have the same adaptation ; while its northern highlands, with a milder climate, are better suited for sheep. The arid extreme West of the State is a sheep-breeding country, though, so light is its rainfall, it carries only one sheep to eight or ten acres. The reverse holds in Queensland. There the hot north, with its strong grasses, is best for cattle and horses ; while the pastoral downs in the south are for sheep ; the west, again extremely arid, though with soil rich enough for agriculture, is doomed to remain pastoral by the inopportuneness of its rainfall. The temperate climate, rich soil, and uniform rainfall of Western Victoria give it an ascendancy in the rearing of sheep. The wool grown there is one-fifth more valuable than any grown elsewhere in Australia. Crowning all, the elastic, buoyant atmosphere makes labour easy and living a delight, while it facilitates all pastoral occupations and enables the skilled breeding of stock to be rapidly perfected.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORGANIC ENVIRONMENT

IF ever men, in the dim beginnings of history, were led by Providence into lands where they could dwell with their flocks and herds, as we read of the old Hebrew patriarchs, no less did the first pastoralists in Australia obey the leadings of Nature, when they travelled with *their* flocks and herds into the hot interior of untrodden New South Wales, or overlanded it, spite of many trials, into South Australia, or pushed across the ranges into unknown Southern and, in later days, into Northern Queensland, or the still more distant and dangerous Northern Territory, or the far north-west of Western Australia. They were continuing and methodizing the work of nature, which in lavish abundance produced its nutritious herbage as if to invite the graminivorous species to pasture on it and thus contribute to its growth. For, at the very outset, we observe one notable difference between the rich native pastures of Australia and the naturally grassless pampas of South America. In these bare savannahs the ox must tread before the sheep can graze or the man can settle or supervise. In such countries the ox is the first colonist. Where he plants his hoof he drops his manure, and in it germinate the seeds that have come we know not whence or how—it may be, hidden in the ox's coat, or passed through his digestive organs uninjured. The wind scatters the seeds that man could neither acclimatise nor propagate. Finding soil and shelter, they spread and multiply; they advance and conquer; without the aid of man they

prepare the ground for the sheep and the settler. The pampa or savannah, the prairie or steppe, thus becomes the arena of the pastoralist, and ultimately the home of the agriculturist.*

Only part of this evolution has been witnessed in Australasia. On the coast of Northern Queensland and in the Northern Territory, where many species of grass grow with tropical luxuriance, huge herds of cattle graze, and browse on the salt-bush and other varieties of bushes; and it may never happen that the time will come when the more lucrative rearing of sheep will be prosecuted. Away in Western Australia, and still more, perhaps, in "the Nor'-west of West," the grass grows tall and rank, and cattle are there bred to eat it down. But in all the cooler colonies, and in the interior of the more tropical, the grass grows short and sweet, and on all the vast plains sheep or cattle are reared abundantly.

Yet the first accounts of the vegetation of New South Wales were not encouraging. On the sandy, but very light, soil Sir J. Banks found the grass tall enough, but "thin-set," and the trees, too, were far apart. Such was the general face of the country as you sailed along side of it, and even some little distance inland—as far, namely, as they penetrated. Captain Cook was more cordial. In many parts the plains and valleys were covered with herbage, and among the adjacent woods there were "interspersed some of the finest meadows in the world." Sixty years later the report of a great naturalist was, on the whole, still unfavourable. On the plains of Bathurst Darwin saw "a thin brown pasture," which appeared to his eye to be "wretched," but was "excellent for sheep-grazing." That, he perceived, was the secret of the prosperity of Bathurst; it was, indeed, the secret of the subsequent prosperity of all Australia. A generation earlier another naturalist had discovered the secret of the secret. M. Peron,

* E. DAIREAUX, *Les Grands Pays d'Élevage*, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, April 15, 1886, p. 915.

naturalist of the French discovery-expedition that touched at Australia in 1802, called attention to a hitherto unobserved feature. He noted "the peculiar nature and agreeable perfume of the native herbage," probably accompanied by an attractive flavour, that made it doubly grateful to cattle, horses, and sheep. He already foresaw the creation of a new and lucrative branch of English commerce.

The earlier travellers had generalised too hastily from an insufficient field of observation. They did not know—what was not discovered till long afterwards—that the grasses of the interior are far hardier than those of the coast. They were unaware that other vegetation besides the grasses was available. The salt-bushes, for example, are the hardiest of all the vegetal growths, and of the greatest value to pastoralists.*

Henry Kingsley describes the portions of New South Wales where he settled in the fifties. He writes of the "bright green grass" (which often deserves to be called, never-green), of the rich pastoral downs, of the broad, well-grassed plains, of the richly grassed volcanic plains, of the fertile grassy land on the volcanic slopes, and of the grassland stretching before one "like a waveless sea.† He carries his characters into Gippsland, and there some Victorian pioneers had found 20,000 acres of the finest herbage—a fine feeding country, lightly timbered, with hills and glens, and suited for stations. Yet only 1,000 miles in 14,000 were good pastoral land.‡

Pastoral Victoria was, at the end of the thirties, as Golden Victoria was fifteen years later, the cynosure of all eyes. It was looked upon as the source of unbounded wealth, by "affording unlimited pasture for sheep, and that of the finest kind." When they landed at Melbourne, the adventurers found the country, for miles around Melbourne, grassy and luxuriant, with trees

* PALMER, *Early Days in N. Queensland*, p. 228.

† GEOFFREY HAMLYN, pp. 320, 322, 346, 379.

‡ *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 295, 297, 193, 197.

scattered over it as in England. Some of the hills resembled the Wiltshire downs, with the same short pasturage, while others were covered with rich, long herbage. All animals, they soon found, that were sent over there from Tasmania, thrived. At three months they were equal to their mothers; and the cows were like "fats." Grass was abundant at every point.*

"When I arrived through the thick forest-land from Portland to the edge of the Wannon country," enthusiastically writes a pioneer squatter, "I cannot express the joy I felt at seeing such a splendid country before me. . . . I could neither think nor sleep for admiring this new world. . . ." There were no fewer than thirty-seven different species of grass, and they were about four inches high, of a lovely dark-green.†

In Western Victoria billowy waves of oat-grass, wild clover, and half-a-dozen strange fodder plants, adorned the great meadows and river flats. Far-stretching plains, where salt-bush, cotton-bush, and many another salsiferous herb and shrub grew. It was called "sound fattening country."‡

In Western Victoria the volcanic plains are rich in saline herbage, intermingled with the best kinds of fattening grasses.§ The most north-westerly tract of pastoral country in the Wimmera district of Victoria "is of the finest description of sheep country, very openly timbered, but scantily watered."

Of South Australia we may compendiously say that the grassy portion of it consists of endless undulating plains, somewhat reduced in value by the lightness of the rainfall.

Mr. Bartley writes enthusiastically of the broad pastoral plains of Queensland. There "the rich succulent herbage, showing less than a foot above ground, is fed by roots six feet deep, moisture-gathering and

* *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 276, 277.

† *Ibid.*, p. 33.

‡ BOLDREWOOD, *Squatter's Dream*, ch. iii.

§ *Ibid.*, ch. xxi.

drought-defying." And he grows enthusiastic over the Mitchell grass and the blue-grass prairies.*

Of the Northern Territory a resident writes that there is a vast area of grass country near the magnificent rivers of Arnheim's Land. There is no finer place, she adds, for breeding cattle and horses. In other portions of the territory there is a great variety of grasses and bushes, all of them edible.†

In only two quarters is a different note struck. So long ago as 1846, before the experiment had been actually made, a false prophet rashly predicted that the wide Canterbury plains in the South Island of New Zealand would never be capable of carrying large flocks of sheep.‡ These glacier-shaven plains, the prophet did not know, though the fact would have confirmed him in his opinion, have been levelled by glaciers from the Southern Alps, but they have bred many millions of sheep. Canterbury "contains millions on millions of acres of the most beautifully grassed country in the world, and of the best suited for all manner of sheep and cattle."§

On his way from Bahia Blanca on the coast to Buenos Ayres, Darwin was greatly struck with the marked change in the aspect of the country after he had crossed the Salado. From a coarse herbage they had passed to a carpet of fine green verdure. A like change was observed between the country around Monte Video and the thinly inhabited savannahs of Colonia. Darwin was at first inclined to attribute the difference to some change in the nature of the soil. It turned out to be entirely due to the manuring and grazing of cattle. A similar change is observable in North America, where the coarse grass, between five and six feet high, changes into pasture land after it has been grazed down by cattle. In many parts of Australia precisely the same

* *Opals and Agates*, p. 186.

† *Chambers's Journal*, 1846.

‡ BUTLER, *Erewhon*, p. 3.

§ DALY, *Northern Territory*, pp. 218-9, 276.

change is noted. In Western Australia, in particular, the tall grass has first to be eaten down by cattle. Darwin was puzzled to know whether the change was due to the introduction of new species of grass, to the altered growth of the existing species, or to a change in their proportional numbers.* Perhaps the reader who knows still less about Botany than the eminent naturalist professed to do might plausibly conjecture that the change is to be ascribed to the joint operation of all three causes. He would be wrong, however. It is the new grasses that change the complexion of a country. These are the companions and allies of the invading colonist, as the old grasses were of the indigenous inhabitants. That new species are introduced has been proved by the naturalist, Azara, who found a number of new plants in the track of horses. What he says of wild horses is true of other species, especially of dogs and of cattle. It is in the track of cattle that the grasses have sprung up on the pampas.

A like change, though not quite of the same nature, took place in Australia. There was grass everywhere, said an early colonist; yet it was thin. Then the soil was, as it were, electrified by the touch of colonisation. Trees and plants flourished where there had been nothing larger than scrub or shrub. A change of vegetation took place, and the very climate was modified. A district that had been parched and waterless showed, after a few years feeding, water permanently standing. Sometimes a tufty herbage was changed into a sward. It became a good level turf, intersected with runnels †.

The same phenomenon was to be found in the neighbourhood of the Lachlan river. The rich river-flats there afford fine feed for stock. Above them are plains that extend for hundreds of miles, covered with a low scrub. In the hollows some fine silvery grass grows, but the tops are devoid of vegetation. That was in 1844. Ten years later the whole of the

* DARWIN, *Voyage of the Adventure*, ch. vi.

† RANKEN, *Bush Essays*, p. 5.

country had been occupied. The herbage had improved from being fed over, and the sheep thrived on the various salsolaceous plants.*

In the same country a modification of the climate appears to have taken place. Tracts where the prospector had ridden vainly in search of water were, some years later, occupied by stock. The procuring of water by artificial means is the key to the transformation. Waterholes were sunk, and dams thrown across the slight falls or declinations of the plain; and these, in the wet season, become runs of water.†

Settler after settler testifies that "the country is now much improved for pastoral purposes. Inferior grasses disappear, and superior grasses take their place. 146, 150. Imported animals, trees, and plants now live and thrive, where in forests comparatively few such flourished before.‡

Indeed, a complete change of both vegetation and climate followed the settler with his flocks and herds. After a few years of feeding with stock water was found standing permanently where it had never stood before, and a tufty herbage sprang up by its side that formed a natural sward. Flats that had been swamps in winter or bare dusty ground with cracks in it in summer formed a good level turf intersected with runnels cut by the hooves of cattle and sheep.

At the confluence of the Lachlan with the Murrumbidgee for hundreds of miles the plains are covered with a low scrub, with fine silvery grass growing in the hollows (the destructive silk-grass). So it was in the forties. In the fifties the whole of this country was occupied. The herbage improved from being fed over, and the sheep thrived on the various salsolaceous plants that abound. A similar transformation took place in the Billabong country in New South Wales and the flat box-country between the Edward and the Murrumbidgee

* STURT, in *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 243-4.

† *Ibid.*, p. 240.

‡ *Bush Essays*, p. 5.

ivers. In the forties they were without creeks and devoid of waterholes. In the early fifties sheep were found in occupation of the whole of this country.*

The country in the Wimmera district, which was poor and thinly grassed when it was first occupied, has so much improved since it was stocked with sheep that it will now fatten more than double the number, writes a Victorian pioneer in 1853.

On the other hand, there has also been not a little deterioration. On some runs coarse grasses took the place of the natural grass and herbs. In other places the native grass was apt to get scrubby from neglecting to burn it. Having been driven away from Van Diemen's Land by the ravages of the silk-grass, which was destroying the pastures, he rejoiced to be unable to "detect any of this noxious grass." Alas! he was very soon to discover it. A severe frost, in one night, destroyed the beautiful blackwood trees. Next, the shrubs were all burnt. Deprived of their shade and shelter, many of the herbaceous plants began to disappear, and in their place the silk-grass began to appear in patches on the edge of the bush-track, and in patches on the hillside. The patches grew larger, and herbaceous plants and grasses gave way before them. The consequence was that the long, deep-rooted grasses that held the strong clay hill together died out; the ground was exposed to the sun, and it cracked in all directions; and landslips were numerous. The tussocky grass in the water-channels died before the springs of salt water that burst out in every water-course, where the soil was trodden hard by stock. Ruts, from seven to ten feet deep and wide, made the country as hard to ride over as if it were fenced. The settler who tells this, in its way, tragic narrative, deplures that the number of sheep his run would carry was daily diminishing.† The pastoralist thus partly creates and partly destroys the scene of his activities.

* *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 243-4, 240.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 150, 33-5.

Not a few portions of Queensland have been impoverished by constant grazing. It is otherwise with the great Liverpool Plains in New South Wales. There more than sixty years of continual grazing have failed to exhaust what is described as the finest pastoral country in Australia. It is said to carry a sheep to the acre.*

Magical as is the transformation of the physiognomy of a country made by the disappearance of its flora and the advance of new graminivorous species, it is paralleled and complemented by an equal change in the fauna of the country. In Australia the kangaroo, wallaby, opossum, and all the various marsupials, the dingo, wombat, and bandicoot, the wild native cat and the harmless native bear, have been driven to the recesses of the bush or the rocks, and, having been once equal denizens of the land with its human inhabitants, they retire before the invaders along with them, and become, like them, *feræ naturæ*. They have to be "protected," and they are hunted to provide specimens for the museums. Their disappearance is no less necessary for the success of the pastoralist than the advance of the graminivorous species.

* SATGE, *Journal of a Queensland Squatter*, pp. 90-1.

CHAPTER V

THE GOVERNMENT AS A PASTORALIST

THE Government, in New South Wales, being then the only capitalist, was the first pastoralist. The first cattle and horses in New South Wales were brought by Governor Phillip from the Cape of Good Hope in the First Fleet. David Collins, the first chronicler of the new settlement, regularly records the rise and fall of the public stock. In December, 1792, the Government owned 3 bulls, 15 cows, 5 calves, 11 horses, and 105 sheep. It made large importations of both cattle and sheep from India and the Cape of Good Hope. Travelling by the Cape in 1795, Lieutenant King selected 53 young cows, of which only 28, with 3 bulls, were landed, at a price of £35 a head. In 1801 Governor King contracted for 150 young cows from Bengal at £28 per head. The authorities needed the command of many head of stock. Exercising paternal—or, as we should now say, socialistic—functions, the Government of Captain Phillip gave to each immigrant settler, each settler from the Marines, and each settler from the *Sirius* one ewe and as many she-goats as could be spared. Special services were by this means rewarded; the Governor presented John McArthur with 100 fine ewes, and gave a cow to one Squires for introducing hops. Long afterwards, continuing as late as the forties, a free loan of cows from the Government stock was one of the many gifts that immigrant settlers might expect from a benevolent State.

It soon began to be felt in England that the Government of New South Wales was plunging too deeply into matters that properly belonged to the individual citizen. The Secretary of State, Lord Hobart, accordingly instructed Governor King to diminish the amount of cultivation carried on by the Government, and this would involve a decline in the number of stock bred and kept. King mildly protested, representing it as unavoidable in the then state of the Colony, and stock-keeping, at least, was continued by the Government for many after-years. It further encouraged pastoralism by being the chief purchaser of cattle for the Government stores, and it regulated the market by fixing the prices of meat.

The Government also took an interest in the improvement of wool. Governor King engaged an expert wool-sorter in order to derive from his suggestions the means of improving it. In September, 1805, Mr. Wood reported that, wherever in New South Wales he found sheep bred, there was a prejudice in favour of weight of carcase, while in England the manufacturers were interested solely in the fineness of the wool. King himself admitted that the wool continued to ameliorate beyond belief. Yet he refused to appropriate public labour or public money for the work. He held that it would thrive better in private hands. Compulsion, he rightly believed, would not be beneficial.

We do not complain that the Government of New South Wales did not itself carry on the breeding of sheep and cattle on a large scale; that would have been a grave error. Government in general takes up a social institution that has been originated by individuals and perfected by associated activity. In Australia, owing to peculiar circumstances, the opposite course was adopted. The Government of New South Wales initiated the pastoral development that has made Australia great. Having given it a start, it left the nascent growth severely alone at times, while at others it thwarted and fettered, or favoured and

pampered it. For the first thirty years of the existence of the Colony, the Government gave little encouragement to the individuals who were ambitious of continuing the work the Government had begun. Both the Secretary of State and the Governor of New South Wales persistently refused to grant the large estates without which the industry could not have been solidly founded. Even after the Minister had authorised extensive land-grants to enterprising individuals, the local Government refused or delayed to give effect to the instructions they had received. To judge from the hesitations of Governor King, and the language addressed to him by Governor Bligh, one would have said the Captain John McArthur was a would-be public pilferer, instead of being the greatest benefactor the Colony ever had. When he endeavoured to float a joint-stock company for the growing of wool, he had again to encounter coldness and denial, though he was this time supported by the authority of Commissioner Bigge, expressly sent out by the Home Government to report on the state of the Colony.

The two contending parties were controlled by two incompatible ideals. The Government, Home and local, desired to reform successive generations of English convicts by creating out of them a community of peasant-proprietors or peasant-tenants. The nascent pastoralists aimed to build up a pastoral society of freemen, with the breeding of stock for its chief end and the employment of the convicts as its chief instrument. The Governmental ideal was gradually relinquished, but it controlled the policy of the Government for more than thirty years and affected it for a quarter of a century after it had ceased to control it. The pastoral history of New South Wales, as of all Australia, is, indeed, closely interwoven with its political history. At every point the main actors in it come into collision with the actors on the political stage. Nay, these are themselves among the chief actors. They pass from the one arena to the other; they energize from the one sphere into

the other. The Government, like all early rulers, possesses the eminent domain of the land, grants, leases, or sells it to suitable or favoured recipients, and controls the cultivation of the soil. To a very late date—down to the present time, indeed, and more actively now than ever—the Government incessantly intervenes in the landed evolution, experimenting in the mode of tenure, leasing or selling it, allocating or repurchasing on a small or a large scale. In the early days its intervention was more personal and arbitrary, and the apparitions of individuals on the stage were more dramatic and sometimes sensational. In these encounters high, even heroic attributes—sagacity, firmness, strenuous resolution, indomitable persistence through the opposition of those in authority, determined battling for the right—were brought into collision with the ignoble spirits that gnaw at every beneficent undertaking—petty malignity, mean jealousy, and dark insanity—and win out of the most discouraging circumstances a genuine success—we might say, a real triumph.

CHAPTER VI

THE CLERGY AS PASTORALISTS

IN its revelation of the part played by the spiritual power in the progress of colonisation Australia repeats, though faintly and, as it were, perfunctorily, the history of Europe. Chateaubriand has glorified the initiation of agriculture in Gaul and Germany by the monasteries, and Montalembert has told in eloquent detail the story of the *Monks of the West*. There is some difficulty in discerning, through the cloudy rhetoric of these two great writers, and their deliberate, indeed unavoidable, omission of specific statements, exactly what was the part played by the monks in the clearing of the dense forests and their conversion into pasture or agricultural land. We may suspect that it has been somewhat exaggerated by the enthusiasts who led the Catholic reaction at the beginning and in the middle of last century. The number of the monks was limited, and among them the industrial pioneers were few, while the forests were still extensive. They were certainly not the initiators of either deforesting or rearing or cultivation. The Roman proprietors of Gaul held great domains, which consisted largely of grassy meadows. The territorial princes who preceded the Roman conquest, as we know from Julius Cæsar, had thousands of serfs, who must have tended flocks and herds over far-spreading lands.* But there was much left to be done. The monks must have given an

* FUSTEL DE COULANGES, *Le Domaine rural chez les Romains*, I. iii.

impulse to the extension of settlement throughout Northern and Western Europe. They were the fitting accompaniments of the new race of colonists, and they gave German colonisation its proper sanction as of Divine ordering, or, as we now say, a necessary result of natural laws.

Just such was the part played by the clergy in the early days of New South Wales. If they were no more the initiators of pastoral and agricultural settlement than the monks were, they contributed to it in no small degree; and they gave it the consecration it has had in all ages, if we may trust the myths of many countries, and is all the better for having.

Of the Anglican clergy in the far South-East a similar tale has to be told. The Rev. Richard Johnson, first chaplain to the new settlement in New South Wales, was perhaps the earliest settler on a considerable scale to breed cattle and sheep and sow grain. He owned 600 acres, on which he fed 150 sheep and some horses and cattle, and he planted three acres with vines and orange and other fruit-trees. According to Captain Tench, he was the best farmer in the Colony. His success as a saver of souls may have been doubtful, but he initiated the pastoral industry of the Colony, and in twelve years, selling his land and stock, he went back to England with "a large fortune." * He did not sacrifice his religion to his worldly speculations, however, but was faithful in teaching and preaching to a froward and perverse generation, where the officers and the soldiers were nearly as bad as the convicts. He was,

* Dean Kenny also states that he "returned to England with a good fortune." If Johnson's own letters may be trusted, the facts are very much otherwise. He went back to England in broken health, a mere skeleton; yet, so far from being a wealthy returned colonist, he found himself, in his own words, "under the painful necessity of serving as a curate." He had to make repeated applications to the authorities for a measure of relief. His health must have improved in later years, for he lived to be seventy-four years old. (BONWICK, *Australia's First Preacher*, p. 252.)

if not quite of saintly quality, a worthy man and an estimable minister, the friend of Wilberforce and a friend of humanity.

His successor and at first his assistant, Samuel Marsden, was of a more heroic type. He fought strenuously against evil-doers in high places; he was unwearied in the exercise of his calling; he was a philanthropist of equal energy and success; he was a missionary of the Word and the founder of Christianity in New Zealand; and, to crown all—no mock crown!—he was, in the judgment of the sagacious Governor King, “the best practical farmer in the Colony.”

Why did a minister of the gospel take to farming? If he may be himself believed, Marsden seemingly had no salary, and perhaps, while Johnson remained in New South Wales, he had none. He received fees, however, but in fourteen years these amounted to only £1 per annum. His farming was therefore not a matter of choice. As he himself said, they *had* to grow cabbages, potatoes, and wheat, or else starve. He consequently grew rich in this world's goods. He added field to field, flock to flock, and store to store, says Mr. Bonwick, “till he became a wealthy man.”* He procured experts in Yorkshire, then as still the chief seat of the woollen industry, and in Warwickshire. From the private stud flock of King George, through the agency of the ever-helpful Sir Joseph Banks, he was given five pure-bred merino sheep. From these he bred successfully, and he sent to England fleeces of such a high quality that they excited the belief that the wool of Australia would yet make Great Britain independent of the Continent. (Many years afterwards, Dr. Lang was shown, somewhere in the interior, flocks that were bred from “Marsden's sheep.”) It was a great result, and yet these things were but the byplay of a mind that was devoured with an enthusiasm of humanity that led him to induce both ministers and school-masters to emigrate to New South Wales, and

* BONWICK, *Australia's First Preacher*, pp. 228, 229.

to form large plans for the spread of missionary effort in the South Seas. It was in keeping with his efforts for the improvement of the pastoral and agricultural improvement of the Colony that he should conceive a new missionary ideal. He held that missionary zeal should be accompanied with efforts for the promotion of civilisation. It was the grand difference between his view of the proper methods of missions and the view of the orthodox missionary. We may add that Marsden's plan was the plan of Robert Moffat, David Livingstone, "Mackay of Uganda," and many another successful missionary.

These are good or splendid examples, and in later years, in several colonies, clergymen have abandoned their profession to become squatters; ignoring Christ's command, "Feed *My* sheep," they have fed their own; and almost reversed the Divine transformation that had converted fishers of the deep into fishers of men. During the stock-mania of 1826-7 clergymen and ministers, reversing the transformation of the prophet Amos, of the commentator, John Brown of Haddington, and of the philosophically minded John Cairns of Berwick, forsook the altar to become "herdsmen of cattle" and keepers of sheep. Others, again, burning to be opulent in countries where very many are wealthy, have engaged in speculative land transactions that have compromised their character as ministers of the Gospel. Such men, we are assured by an observer, never hesitated to acquire, on favourable terms, landed estates that came within their grasp, or were to be seen, armed with carbine or pistol, making their way where such properties were to be secured.* Only a few years ago a Presbyterian minister in Wellington, New Zealand, died bequeathing almost £30,000—not to charities. Yet his sole legitimate source of income had been his modest ministerial stipend.

* GRANT, *Bush Life*, ii. 172-3.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST GREAT PASTORALIST : JOHN MCARTHUR

THE heroic figure by pre-eminence in the pastoral history of New South Wales is that of John McArthur.* Superficially viewed, he might appear to be the stormy petrel of early Australian history. Scrutinized more closely, he shines through that murky dawn like a hero of Corneille. McArthur's career as a colonist was almost coeval with the existence of the Colony. His connection with Australia may be said to have begun in 1789, when he was appointed lieutenant in the New South Wales Corps, or Botany Bay Rangers—a regiment specially enrolled for service in New South Wales. On January 17, 1790, he sailed with his detachment on board the *Neptune*—a transport that conveyed also D'Arcy Wentworth, who became the father of the

* The name of John McArthur is now always spelled, Macarthur. It was not so spelled by himself. In an early document published by MR. BRITTEN, *History of New South Wales from the Records*, ii. 95, the signature of McArthur is written, John McArthur. In a volume ascribed to his son, James, produced in London while he was there presenting petitions against the Emancipist party—*New South Wales: its present state and future prospects*—and published in 1837, the name is written Mac Arthur, as the great Scots novelist writes his name, George Mac Donald. In the Index it figures as Macarthur—John McArthur, commandant at Port Essington, signs his name in 1843 as just printed. Hannibal Hawkins McArthur is written of with the same orthography. On the other hand, in the same year, Sir George Gipps writes the name of James Macarthur in full. This probably furnishes the key to the change. Others wrote it so, and the family adopted the changed spelling. (See Mitchell MSS., vol. 42. *passim*.)

famous W. C. Wentworth, the author of the Constitution of New South Wales. The ship that carried Cæsar and his fortunes was scarcely more richly freighted. McArthur must have been born under a tempestuous star—say, Jupiter, with his storm-zones, and the troubles that were to chequer his life in Australia began before he set foot on the transport. He had already quarrelled with Captain Nepean, commanding the detachment, and the quarrel was revived after the troops reached Sydney. While the *Neptune* was still in British waters, the hot-headed lieutenant quarrelled with the commander of the transport, and, on a trivial pretext, fought a duel with him at Plymouth. After sending a bullet through Captain Gilbert's coat, and having a second chance of assassinating the wearer of it, McArthur declared that his honour was satisfied. To all appearance McArthur was in the wrong, but the gallant captain, who could not refuse the challenge, was superseded, and another commander appointed. McArthur did not gain by the change. Gilbert's successor treated the fiery lieutenant, who must have acquired the repute of being a *mauvais sujet*, with studied discourtesy, and at his own request, McArthur was transferred to the *Scarborough*—another transport of the Second Fleet. Here again the boon was a questionable favour; McArthur was attacked by the fever that beset the plague-stricken ships, and narrowly escaped with his life. The duelling phase in McArthur's history we may wind up by stating that he afterwards fought a duel with his commanding officer in Sydney and another with the major of his regiment there; if he did not fight duels with two civilian officers of the Government in New South Wales, it was not for lack of challenging them in all but set form. Strife with his fellows was a condition of his stormy existence or, at least, a necessary consequence of his irascible character.

Such a nature was certain to find abundant opportunity for quarrelling in so very mixed a community as the convict colony of New South Wales. Yet for ten

years he steadfastly combined the pursuit of farming with his military functions and his public duties. By March, 1791, as we learn from a letter of his wife, discouraged by the comparative failure of his neighbours and the Government, he had not yet embarked on the pursuits he was afterwards to carry on so vigorously. He soon became emulous of their success. Two years later he was granted by Lieutenant-Governor Grose 100 acres at Parramatta, and there he carved out what he called, after his admirable wife, Elizabeth Farm—a name which the place, no longer rural, still bears. Grose did still more for him. Finding the direct supervision of all the settlements impracticable, he appointed McArthur, still a lieutenant, his deputy at Parramatta, and at the same time created for him the office of Inspector of Works. A salary for the position was refused by the Home Government, but it sanctioned additional grants of land to him, with extra convict servants. Both were doubtless conceded, and McArthur may have made fresh acquisitions by purchase. In August, 1794, he informed his brother that he owned as much as 250 acres at Parramatta, of which 100 were under cultivation, including 20 acres of “the very finest wheat,” while 80 acres were about to be sown with maize and planted with potatoes; he had reaped the extraordinary yield of 50 bushels of wheat to the acre, and had 1,800 bushels in his granaries. He was evidently a successful farmer—perhaps the first highly successful farmer in the Colony, for Johnson’s and Marsden’s successes were not of earlier date. For the first time, and quite naturally, an optimist tinge gilds the views of the settlers. McArthur lauds the Colony, lately so spurned! and exults in his own success. It went on increasing. Six years later (in September, 1800—the very year in which Richard Johnson went Home with a fortune made in pastoral and agricultural pursuits) McArthur was the fortunate owner of 50 cattle, 10 horses, and 600 sheep; and he valued his estate at £4,000.

Then, at this first height of success, came his first check. Instead of loyally co-operating with the wise and strong new ruler, Governor King, who had been sent out to suppress the infamous trafficking in spirits practised by the military and some civil officers, he took prompt action to show his disapproval of King's drastic policy. He offered to sell his farm and stock to the Government, and declared his intention of leaving the Colony. He was to leave it, but under far less honourable circumstances than he designed. One Lieutenant Marshall, unconnected with the New South Wales Corps, had assaulted a captain of that corps and also our friend McArthur. Marshall was tried by the officers of that distinguished regiment, and sentenced to be fined and imprisoned. King remitted the fine and term of imprisonment, and sent the condemned officer to England to be tried by a more legitimate tribunal. This proceeding incensed the officers, who resolved to make themselves offensive to the Governor. Their colonel opposed the resolution, and thus incurred McArthur's wrath. McArthur insulted Paterson, well knowing that, according to the savage code of "honour" binding in those barbarous days, Paterson must demand "satisfaction." Our champion swashbuckler was more nearly successful this time than he usually was in his assassination-plots, and Paterson long lay between life and death. Meanwhile, the impenitent McArthur was arrested and imprisoned. When Paterson recovered, McArthur, having a quixotic private, in addition to the conventional public, code of honour, refused to "quit his arrest," and the much-tried Governor washed his hands of him by sending him to England to be dealt with.

We need not follow him in chase of his brutal Dulcinea, but will confine our attention to the good fortune that his contriving brain, and not his destructive sword, hewed out by the way for himself and the Colony. In June 1801 the Duke of Portland, the new ephemeral Secretary of State, sternly censured the association of

farming and trading with military duties by the officers, and strongly disapproved of their doing so "at the public cost"—that is, with the aid of convicts who were provisioned out of the public stores. The condemnation doubtless concurred with the military imbroglio to precipitate McArthur's decision to leave the Army and adopt the profession of a grazier, as it is now called. Other circumstances co-operated. One of his fellow-officers, Col. Foveaux, who had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Norfolk Island, offered to sell his sheep to the Government, and while the offer was still under consideration, the impetuous McArthur struck in and purchased the whole large flock. Lord Hobart, now Secretary of State, disapproved of the questionable transaction while the Government was in treaty with Foveaux, but McArthur recked little of that; a bit of "sharp practice" was apparently quite consistent with a high standard of "honour." We resume his pastoral history, although the course of it, as of more romantic things, does not long run smoothly.

McArthur had evidently long ago withdrawn, in his own mind, the proffer of his stock he had made to the Government. He bought Colonel Foveaux's 1,200 sheep, and, before he departed for England, he purchased many more. He informed the Governor that further negotiations with him must be conducted in England, but Governor King, who now estimated the value of the accumulated stock at almost five times the original amount (or £19,000) no longer advised the purchase. The sentiments of both the Governor and the Secretary of State were strongly opposed to the engaging of the State in private industry. Positively and negatively, on the other hand, by purchases and refusals, McArthur was, personally and officially, dedicated to pastoral pursuits. Energy and enmity and accident combined to determine the vocation of the first Australian squatter.

If McArthur rebelled against King at first, described

him as a tyrant, and sought to effect his overthrow, he loyally stood by the Governor at a time when the convicts were hatching plots against him, and sedition threatened to wreck the young community; in 1806 he was grateful to King for his aid, and would have lamented his retirement; and when King finally left the Colony, McArthur joined all the most reputable citizens in flattering addresses of gratitude and regret. Just once again was he to take a prominent part in public affairs, and suffer cruelly in consequence. The story cannot be omitted from a sketch of his life, but we must first record a peaceful interval of fruitful activity.

McArthur's despatch to England was a fortunate event, and lent itself to the promotion of his designs. He was then by no means forgetful of his pastoral ambitions. Questioned by Commissioner Bigge twenty years afterwards, he modestly told the story of his tentative efforts.

"In 1801 I took to England specimens of the wool of the pure merino, and of the best of the cross-bred, and having submitted them to the inspection of a committee of manufacturers, they reported that the merino wool was equal to any Spanish wool, and the cross-bred of considerable value. Thus encouraged, I purchased nine rams and an ewe from the royal flock at Kew, and returned to this country determined to devote my attention to the improvement of the wool of my flocks. I only landed here five rams and one ewe of the sheep purchased from the royal flock."

Papers laid before the House of Commons in 1837 yield evidence of his untiring perseverance. In July, 1803, he addressed a memorandum to Lord Hobart, telling the story of his efforts, his failures, and his successes, and enlarging on the advisableness of cultivating such an industry in Australia. He then applied for an extensive grant of land, with its usual accompaniment of convict servants.

McArthur soon began to experiment in wool-growing. Early surveyors—men so skilled as Grimes and Robbins—disparaged the natural grasses of Australia, and did

not believe that either sheep or cattle could be profitably depastured on them. McArthur knew better and saw more truly. He had discerned the cattle that had strayed from the Government domain in 1788 feeding at Mount Taurus and seen them thrive. In 1794 he purchased from an officer, who had imported them from Calcutta, 60 Bengal ewes and lambs, and soon after he bought two Irish ewes and a young ram. They were far from being promising progenitors of a good stock. The Indian sheep grew mere hair; the wool of the Irish sheep was of coarse texture. The happy thought of crossing the two breeds occurred to the experimenter, and the blending of the two yielded a mingled fleece of hair and fine wool. The problem was solved; the hair could be eradicated, and fine wool grown.

McArthur was still not contented with the result, and he looked for aid in another direction. He had possibly heard that Spanish merinos thrived at the Cape of Good Hope, and he desired two officers of men-of-war returning to England by the Cape to inquire whether any of them were for sale. He had struck the "psychological moment," and was fortunate beyond his expectation. His agents arrived there at the very time when a large flock of merinos was in the market. The King of Spain had presented to the King of Holland a number of pure-bred merinos selected from the Escorial or private stud farm of the sovereign. These the Dutch Government judiciously sent to its colony at the Cape. There the flock was placed in charge of Colonel Gordon, but the Colonial Government valued the gift too lightly to care for it as they should. Gordon died, and the flock, now reckoned as having been his private property, was about to be sold. McArthur's agents bought only twenty sheep—12 for others and but 8 (3 rams and 5 ewes) for McArthur. This small acquisition might seem to furnish few materials for making a fresh start in a new industry, but it was enough for McArthur. The other purchasers neglected

their acquisitions, and, mingling the pure merinos with the commoner breeds, soon saw their finer strains disappear. McArthur was wiser. He kept his Spaniards apart from his Indians and his Irish, and bred them successfully, increasing their numbers and maintaining the fine quality of the wool. It was the foundation, not of the cultivation of wool—that was almost coeval with the birth of the Colony—but of the growth of the finest kind of it—the pure Spanish merino. It was of vast importance to the future of the all-Australia.

McArthur fought his battle as an ancient Hebrew patriarch might have fought with a neighbouring sheikh, his overlord. He addressed statements to the Secretary of State. He pressed his views on the Treasury. He presented memorials to the Privy Council. He proposed to form a company for the breeding of sheep, and, to preclude the charge of monopoly, he offered that a stipulated portion of the stock bred should be annually distributed among the settlers. He was even prepared to conduct the undertaking single-handed, if he were granted a large enough extent of land and a sufficient number of convict shepherds.

His perseverance was rewarded. He was a man of determined character, and he had influential friends, although he seems also to have had to have excited dangerous enmities. In July of the same year he appeared before a special session of the Privy Council, or before a committee of it. McArthur then stated his case, disclosed his plans, and appealed—not for aid, but—for a sphere of action, where he could sow the beginnings of an industry that would emancipate England from her dependence on a possibly closed Continent for her chief staple. The Privy Council, realising that England was then being throttled by the Napoleonic blockade, listened with interest, hesitatingly approved of his proposals, and cautiously recommended the Secretary of State to authorise the Governor to make a conditional grant of land. It was all that McArthur

wanted—at least, it was all that he needed. Thus fortified, he found Lord Camden still more sympathetic, or less timid, than the Privy Council. That instructed the Governor of New South Wales to convey to McArthur in perpetuity 5,000 acres “fit for the pasture of sheep.” And he expressed a wish that the land should be selected in the locality desired by McArthur. Among the many evidences of official blundering connected with the colonisation of Australia, we record with pleasure and eulogy this just and beneficent act.

McArthur's troubles were not therefore at an end. Sagacious and upright though he was, Governor King did not at once give effect to the instructions of the Secretary of State. He demurred to McArthur's choice of a locality and recommended another. McArthur was loyal, but found the proposed locality unsuitable, and King properly yielded. Then McArthur was placed in possession of 5,000 acres at Mount Taurus, where his discerning eye perceived the pastoral possibilities, because some cattle that had, many years before, strayed away from the Government settlement had there found a home and multiplied. He carved out the noble estate to be known to all time as Camden Park, having been named after the enlightened Secretary of State who had granted the concession.

Even now his warfare over his estate was not over. Governor King's successor, the half-insane Bligh, had evidently made up his mind that McArthur was a dangerous man, who must be kept within bounds. A few days after he had entered on office Bligh showed a strong animus against him. The story has been told by McArthur, and has several times been repeated, but it must be told over again.

Meeting with Bligh at Government House, Parramatta, McArthur led the conversation to his all-absorbing theme and gave Bligh an opportunity of acquainting him with any wishes the Home Government had expressed. Then Bligh, he relates, burst into a towering rage. “Are you,” he cried, “to have such flocks of

sheep and such herds of cattle as no man ever heard of before? No, sir! I have heard of your concerns, sir; you have got 5,000 acres of land in the finest situation in the country, but, by God, you shan't keep it!" McArthur truly replied that the Privy Council had recommended the Secretary of State to order the Governor of New South Wales to grant the land, and the Governor had granted it. "Damn the Privy Council! and damn the Secretary of State, too! What have they to do with me? You have made a number of false representations respecting your wool by which you obtained this land." Bligh afterwards denied that he had used such language, but he had used it in presence of witnesses whose testimony could not be shaken, and it was too perfectly in keeping with his character to be doubted.*

"The day that dawns in fire will die in storm," and Bligh's brief day as Governor of New South Wales was tempestuous. The too-famous Mutiny of the Bounty was the undress rehearsal of a less famous, but more important mutiny. The story of the rebellion against Bligh in Sydney in 1808 is the classical parallel to the mutinous rising against oppressive sovereigns in English history. Bligh was neither a Richard III. nor a James II.; he was simply a hot-headed and high-handed official, who was driven into exile in consequence of acts that strained the endurance of the military. McArthur was the pivot of the revolt, and was in all

* A pamphlet entitled: *An Accurate List of the Landholders in the Colony of New South Wales*; corrected to 1813 and published in 1814, has been shown me by Miss Windeyer, the obliging and capable Chief Cataloguer in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. In this List McArthur figures as having been granted 200 acres at Parramatta and 425 at the Field of Mars, near Sydney; but, at an evidently later date, he is shown to have been granted, first, 2,750 acres, and, next, 2,250 acres—both at "the Cow Pastures." In all, 5,625 acres. It was probably the last two large grants that were in the mind of Governor Bligh when he broke out against him in a fury. It was doubtless the root of the animosity that afterwards cost both of them so dear.

probability its inspirer. He had spurned a warrant for his apprehension on account of his blameless connection with a trading schooner, and asserted in writing that he would never submit to "the horrid tyranny" of Bligh till he was forced to submit, adding that he looked upon it (the innocent warrant), as on the persons directing its execution, "with scorn and contempt." He was promptly lodged in gaol for his bold defiance of the constituted authorities. The six military officers composing the court urged that he should be re-admitted to bail. As soon as he learned that this recommendation had been made, Bligh summoned the recalcitrant officers to appear before him at Government House on the following day (January 27), to answer charges of "certain crimes," or on account of "practices which" Bligh "considered treasonable." They never did appear before the irate Governor. His last *coup* gave the finishing stroke to the endurance of the long-suffering officers and better class of settlers; for we cannot yet properly speak of the people. They appealed to their commanders to place Bligh under immediate arrest. It was feared that McArthur would be privily made away with. Major Johnston then arrived at the barracks on the afternoon of the 26th and at once issued a warrant to the gaoler to deliver up McArthur, who was brought to the security of the barracks. Then McArthur, who was evidently the real leader, writing on a gun in the square of the barracks, drafted a requisition, calling on Johnston to place Bligh under arrest. The document was at once signed by McArthur and other prominent colonists, and afterwards more numerously. An angry mob surged towards Government House. Stricken with mortal terror, Bligh, who had played the man in far more dangerous crises, seems to have shown the white feather, and was found under circumstances that compromised his manhood, like Claudius, elected Roman emperor; but an angry mob is said to be more terrible than an embattled host. His heroic daughter fought more bravely for him than he

fought for himself. Johnston then left Bligh under arrest, proclaimed martial law, and purged the public service of unworthy officers. McArthur was re-tried and acquitted, and next appointed Colonial Secretary. So ended the first act of the tragi-comedy.

Such is the commonly accepted version of this strange series of events. It is almost certainly biassed and partial. Judge Barron Field and Judge-Advocate Wyldé were no mere partizans, and they were McArthur's contemporaries. Well, their account of "the Botany Bay Mutiny" was uncompromising. They wrote of "the rebellion which he John McArthur almost alone caused." A writer of later date—certainly no friend of McArthur—Dr. Lang, denominated the rising as simply "rebellion." It is probably the opinion of most readers now. Bligh's temper and manners were none of the best, it is true. He screamed at McArthur as if he were, like the majority of Bligh's subjects, a convicted felon. With an oath he blasphemously took in vain the high name of the Secretary of State and the still more august dignity of the Privy Council. But it was chiefly the big men, the officers and the leaders, who had cause to be offended. The evidence offered (as by Rusden) to show that their resentment was shared by the community is unconvincing.

The free settlers, according to Lang, were for Bligh and exerted themselves for him. They were not numerous, it is true, but they existed, though they were all along borne down by the military. All of Mr. Rusden's attempts to diminish the magnitude and importance of their sympathy strike one as being in the nature of special pleading. He had a thesis to maintain. He evidently believed Bligh to be either an outrageous fool or a violent madman. He makes no attempt to account for Bligh's unpopularity with the military. The chief consideration he could have adduced he was precluded from using. He had maintained that Governor King had completely suppressed the military monopoly and the trade in spirits. He

was therefore unable to contend that it was Governor Bligh's endeavours to suppress this trade, which still existed, that made Bligh an object of hatred to the officers of the New South Wales Corps, which saw its gainful privileges threatened. Why, otherwise, should he have manifested so violent an animus against McArthur? He soon learnt that McArthur was the real inspirer of all the opposition to the successive Governors. He doubtless heard that McArthur boasted of having "sent Home" three successive Governors, and he knew that he had no favour to expect at the hands of the truculent officer, if he trenched upon the prized military monopoly. Is not this enough to account for Bligh's arrogant behaviour to McArthur? Yet of all this we read nothing in Mr. Rusden's animated pages. There, Bligh's expletives and objurgations read like the causeless ravings of a madman.

Bligh's arrest and expulsion were simply the consummation of twenty years' latent rebellion on the part of the military. The result of a military conspiracy, it was, in the proper sense, a mutiny, and was officially described by the Commander-in-Chief as "the Botany Bay Mutiny."

How would the Home Government view this extraordinary rising? Would it allow the defence of imperious necessity set up by the leaders? For eighteen months the whole Colony remained in suspense, and perhaps was beginning to forget the peril that brooded over it. The Home Government did not forget. With the slow but sure advance of the avalanche the retribution meted out by the authorities was sheeted home to the leaders of the mutiny. With the last day of 1809 the new Governor, Colonel Lachlan Macquarie, arrived, and a few months afterwards the principals were sent to England to be judged. In 1811 the court-martial gave its decision. Bligh was vindicated, or at least his deponents were condemned. Major Johnston was cashiered, but he returned as a private citizen to the Colony his firmness had saved from the caprices

of a madman, and in Sydney his honoured name became a household word, as it still is. McArthur had retired from the army and could not thus be tried, though his part in what the Home officials called "the Mutiny at Botany Bay" was only less conspicuous and really more onerous. He was left severely alone, and in his case the punishment was crushing. No one could reside in the closed reservation of New South Wales without the leave of the Governor or of the Home Government, and to John McArthur that leave was inexorably denied. For five years he seems to have remained quiescent, exercising patience (a virtue abhorred by him) and exerting firmness (a congenial attribute), having left his stout-hearted wife to manage his estate in his absence. He yet neither relinquished the desire of returning to the Colony with which he, like Johnston, had cast in his lot, nor discontinued his efforts to smooth the way. In 1816 he first cherished hopes that the wished-for boon would be no longer withheld. His appeals to Lord Bathurst were frequent, yet not pitiful, but earnest and manly. Why should he be a "solitary victim" selected "from almost an entire population"? Why? Because he was the brain alike and the backbone of the rebellion. All his acts in the "mutiny," he claimed, had been the offspring of "a fatal necessity." Should not an Act of Oblivion be passed, wiping out all condemnation of measures imperiously demanded by the safety and the very existence of the Colony? The Secretary of State at last relented. Having been assured that McArthur was sensible of "the impropriety of his conduct," Lord Bathurst no longer objected to the return of so dangerous a disturber of the peace.

It was now the turn of the high-spirited McArthur to reveal the unyielding basis of his character. He could not accept the proffered boon on the conditions annexed to it. He felt no regret and admitted no impropriety. Like the dying Prussian king, Frederick William, who was besought by his chaplain to confess

his wrong-doing in certain public cases, he declared that his acts were right and just. Rugged man though he was, with features as if moulded of cast-iron, he was a tenderly affectionate husband and father. But his pride, and the morbid sense of honour that had led him into most of his troubles, forbade him to "become a party to his own dishonour." Like Dante, if he could not return save on such terms, he would not return at all. Still Lord Bathurst would not consent. He could go no further than he had done. He even stated that McArthur's unequivocal refusals raised an insuperable barrier to his return.

McArthur was a man fertile in resource, and now he played his trump-card. If the Secretary of State refused to let him return, he would appeal to the Commons of England in Parliament assembled. He would adduce such proofs of Bligh's peculations as would scare the Government into releasing him, in order to keep him quiet and preclude the exposure.

The bold step was successful. In February, 1817, he was able to announce that his "differences with certain great people" were satisfactorily arranged. No concessions were made on one side or admission on the other. His honour was saved. Now he could face the brave wife and the loved children from whom he had been separated for seven years. His "tempest-shattered bark" was within sight of its haven. At the end of 1817 he returned to New South Wales. In due time he was made a member of the newly created Legislative Council, but thenceforth he played a secondary part in the political history of the Colony. He was still to be closely connected with its pastoral history. *Revenons à nos moutons.*

McArthur had been granted his broad domains by Governor King in 1804; twenty years later he was not yet in full possession of them. For some occult reason Governor Brisbane refused to give him a legal title to them. His son, John, with some of his father's grit, was then in London, and he vigorously pushed

his father's claims. Lord Bathurst had long ago dealt sternly with McArthur, but he had no mind to see the pastoralist denied his rights. Sparing no emphasis, he peremptorily required the Governor of New South Wales to place McArthur in immediate possession of 10,720 acres on payment of a sum of £2,850, or of an annual quit-rent of £142 10s. An extensive estate, it will be said, acquired on easy terms ! Yet it was far less extensive than many a more than lordly domain owned by the squatters of a later day, and was well within the capacity of the first and most capable of Australian breeders and squatters, while the price paid was the conventional one of five shillings the acre. Whoever in Australia may have acquired land at "the price of an old song," it was not John McArthur. The historic estate of Camden Park was his at last, and it is his heirs' still.

He was now able to resume his efforts and experiments. They were met with many discouragements and general indifference. So late as 1818 he wrote of himself as pursuing in virtual isolation his "feeble attempt to introduce merino sheep," which crept on "almost unheeded and altogether unassisted." He was not so completely unaided as he alleged. Governor King had given him 100 of the best ewes belonging to the Government, and convict labour had been assigned to him ungrudgingly ; though Mrs. McArthur, in one of her letters, asserts that most of his servants were paid by himself. Still, Government encouragement was not, in the main, the kind that he either needed or desired. Hunter recommended and King appreciated his endeavours. King gladly allowed that the gradual change of the fleece from hair to wool, largely due to McArthur's experiments, "continues ameliorating beyond belief." Yet he would not apply public (or convict) labour and the cost of its support to such an object. It would thrive better in private hands, he wisely believed ; compulsion, said this disciple of Adam Smith, would not be beneficial.

The aid McArthur desiderated was of another sort. He proposed the creation of a new class of landholders. These were to have estates of at least 10,000 acres, with contiguous reserves of equal extent—evidently, to be available for future occupation. Such a body would accumulate wealth, and might develop into an aristocracy. Such a pastoral class would oppose ever multiplying and enlarging, an effectual barrier to the threatening democracy.

Grantees of large estates, he held, should be compelled to fulfil certain conditions, and should hold those estates on the tenure of scientific breeding. Addressing Governor Brisbane, McArthur undertook "to devise methods by which the most respectable class of proprietors might be excited to more strenuous exertions to increase their flocks and improve the wool to the utmost degree of fineness. . . ." He had still another plan. He did, indeed, suggest to Commissioner Bigge the employment of convicts in agricultural and pastoral pursuits; but the measure he most strongly urged was the introduction of a large body of settlers. He condemned the class that had hitherto in good part immigrated to the unpopular Colony. "Adventurers without capital," he maintained, "retard all improvement and sink ever deeper into poverty and distress." All new settlers should be "men of character," possessing both skill and capital. Such men would soon become wealthy and form an aristocracy. Years before Wakefield devised means towards a like end McArthur aimed, by arbitrarily limiting Government grants of land, and limiting also the assignment of convicts as servants, to accomplish the same result. His immediate success was not encouraging, but he worked for the future. Men of the stamp he desiderated dribbled rather than flocked to New South Wales in later years, but they came, and among them were not a few who would have reflected honour on any State in Christendom.

McArthur's personal immediate success was not small. For one bale of wool sent by him to England

in 1821 he received the extraordinary price of 10*s.* 4*d.* per lb., while the bulk of the Australian wool that reached England brought no more than two shillings a pound, and from one to two shillings was a common price. His merits were recognised at Home. Early in the twenties McArthur was presented by the Society of Arts in London with two gold medals "for importing into Great Britain wool, the produce of his flocks, equal to the finest Saxony."

The real significance of the struggle between McArthur and the Government, as embodied in Governors King, Bligh, and Macquarie and in successive Secretaries of State, was the struggle between two ideals. The Ministers and the Governors, who represented them, stood for Australia as a convict settlement, with the reformation of the convict for its final cause; while McArthur, violent and unreasonable though he often might be, was the living embryo and anticipation of the new Australia, free, pastoralist, and patriarchal.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST RECLAIMER : ALEXANDER BERRY

SOME of the more eminent pastoralists of those early days we can briefly focus as the curtain rises on their physiognomies, their adventures, or their activities. The discoverer and reclaimer of one of the most fertile districts in New South Wales has an enduring place in the front rank of Australian pioneers. Alexander Berry was a native of Cupar, in Fifeshire, and passed through his curriculum in Arts at the neighbouring University of St. Andrews. Having graduated at the medical school of the University of Edinburgh, he entered the service of the East India Company as a surgeon, and he made many voyages to India and China in his professional capacity. He was indirectly connected with some great events. It contributes to give historical perspective to his life when we learn that he medically accompanied back to England the remnant of a regiment that had taken part in the battle of Assaye under Sir Arthur Wellesley. In later years, as a private citizen, he witnessed the bombardment of Cadiz by Soult, and ever after he spoke of the famous field-marshal's military capacity with contempt. Abandoning the service of the Crown, in September 1807 he went out to the Cape of Good Hope, and there chartered a prize ship which he patriotically named the *City of Edinburgh*. Never was a vessel seemingly more doomed to disaster. Sailing for New South Wales with supplies for the famishing colonists, who were threatened with starvation, within eight days she lost her masts in a gale. The intrepid master

(Berry is now denominated "captain") navigated her to Sydney under jury masts. He next took her to New Zealand, where she had to be completely re-sheathed. While he was waiting, he nobly rescued (in 1810) the survivors of the murdered crew of the *Boyd*, who had been killed in revenge by the Maoris. These he brought back to Australia and ultimately settled in Shoalhaven. For there, his unfortunate ship having foundered, he himself settled. Coasting up and down in another *Royal George* than the man-of-war that went down in harbour, he discovered the Shoalhaven River and the large extent of pastoral or arable land that lay on each side of the well-named stream. Two years later (in 1822) he entered Crookhaven River adjacent, and there found a haven whence he could communicate with Sydney at a time when there were no other possible means of communication. There, or not too far from it, he solidly founded the settlement that has never since ceased to grow. He took into partnership Edward Wollstonecraft, a cousin of Mary Wollstonecraft, the celebrated wife of William Godwin and the mother of Mary Shelley. The two—Berry and Wollstonecraft—were the meritorious recipients of the free grants of land that were customary in those happy days. The much-maligned Governor Macquarie never did a better thing for the Colony than when he presented the two pioneers with 4,000 acres, of which 3,500 acres were in the district Berry had found, while Wollstonecraft reserved the remaining 500 acres in the now populous "North Shore" of Sydney, where one of the suburbs perpetuates the name of the authoress of the *Rights of Women*.

The 3,500 acres at Shoalhaven were only the nucleus of the great Berry Estate, which in 1889 had expanded to over 60,000 acres. An additional tract of 10,000 acres was purchased from the Government for a sum of £16,000 or its equivalent. Berry's brothers, John, William, and David, with their two sisters, Janet and Nancy, soon arrived to join their enterprising brother. Doubtless, they too received the usual free grants of



ALEXANDER BERRY.



land from a liberal-minded Governor, though this is not stated, and by other purchases (some, it is stated, by Mr. C. J. B. Watson, being at the rate of £21 per acre) from the Government the remainder of the estate was acquired. The acquisition was thought at the time to have small value. The whole tract had so often been overflowed by the adjacent waters, by marine tides and periodical floods. The shipmaster had forsaken the sea to settle on the land, but it was not the dry land. Shoalhaven was a chain or a network of swamps. The scholar Faust, in Goethe's classic, had dedicated his last years to redeeming his sin-stained soul and atoning for his deep offences.

“Let that high joy be mine for evermore,
To shut the lordly Ocean from the shore,
The watery waste to limit and to bar,
And push it back upon itself afar !

To many millions let me furnish soil,
Though not secure, yet free to active toil ;
Green, fertile fields, where men and herds go forth
At once, with comfort, on the newest Earth,
And swiftly settled on the Earth's firm base,
Created by the bold, industrious race,
A land like Paradise here, round about.”

Alexander Berry's achievement was not unlike Faust's dream. His first business was to make his river navigable by clearing away the shoals that obstructed its entrance. He cut the first canal in Australia, thus connecting the Shoalhaven River with the deeper entrance to the Crookhaven River ; and the canal has since then been so deepened and broadened that it is now as deep and wide as the river. In so doing he created a peninsula of 700 acres of alluvial soil, of which the Government at once took possession. Had he not earned the right to retain them ?

His gigantic task was only begun. These vast swamps were to be drained. His labour and that of his partner, with all that they could command, were endless, and, as he himself stated, “it was at an expense unknown to

the public that" they "gave a value to the swamps of Shoalhaven that no one had expected." When Alexander Berry died, his brother David succeeded to the Faustlike and beneficent task. The work has never since been pretermitted. Under the nominal direction of the subsequent owners, but by the engineering skill and resource of Mr. Morton and his sons, some 10,000 acres have been pulled ashore from the sea or lifted up out of the swamps, while 15,000 more on hitherto-barren ridges have been made available for pasturage. The whole estate, at first a sheep-walk, has been converted into rich dairy-lands, where hundreds of small dairy-farms have been carved out, yielding for local consumption and export many thousands of tons of butter yearly. In New South Wales, nay, in all Australia, there is hardly another such example of the conquest of nature by man.

Alexander Berry did the work of a Faust, but he can have had few of Faust's sins to redeem, save possibly some alleged hardness and miserliness; and much of the opulence he acquired served to raise out of honourable impoverishment an ancient Scottish university. He was a man of strong character, cast in a Calvinistic mould. His disposition may be inferred from his account of interviews that he had with two leading members of the Presbytery of Sydney, in connection with some politico-ecclesiastical dispute. One of them he found overflowing with a spirit of Christian forgiveness, while the other, the famous Dr. Lang, breathed forth charges and recriminations. His sterling qualities were early appreciated by the authorities. He was appointed a member of the Legislative Council, then the sole legislative chamber, at a time (in the late twenties) when there were only three non-official members; and he retained his seat after the Council was reformed. Only in 1861 did he finally sever his connection with public life. His portrait reveals the Presbyterian elder of the old school, clad in the fine, black broad-cloth of those days and a generation

later, and wearing a profuse white neckcloth, like the old-time minister and doctor. A strict man, firm with others, and not indulgent with himself, governed by rules of action derived from the Bible, we may be sure, but the Bible as read by the framers of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. A God-fearing man, as he would have been then called ; and, if not directly a lover of men, yet doing more for their welfare than is often accomplished by professed humanitarians. He aided in founding and nurturing one of those Presbyterian communities that form a large part of the backbone of Australia and New Zealand. Everywhere such men are the salt of the Earth.

CHAPTER IX

THE GENESIS OF THE STATION

THE first plan or system—and very unsystematic it was—consisted in the free granting of Crown lands in absolute possession. No other had been devised, or even thought of. The conquering or annexing Power had grasped and taken the fee-simple of, as the lawyers would say—the absolute property in and rights over—the whole territory of what was then denominated New South Wales. Having taken it without any reservations, and kept it without incurring any other than moral obligations to the indigenous population, it felt free to confer it on all of its subjects who seemed likely to use it to advantage. This first stage of colonial land-ownership did not repeat that stage in European history, when a conquering Power possessed itself of all the rights which the overlords already had. When Norman William conquered England, he did not take from the English farmers or landholders all their land. He simply took from their overlords all the rights that inhered in those who were afterwards called *seigneurs*. It was consequently these that he granted. In New South Wales, on the contrary, the English conquerors acquired, of course, by force, the absolute possession of the soil, and it was this kind of possession—with necessary reservations on the part of the Crown—that was now conceded to the grantees. No other was practicable, for very few of the grantees were in a position to pay for them. On no other terms would the grantees have cultivated their allotments. All

the circumstances were adverse. Only such rewards as are attached to personal ownership would have induced them to cultivate their patches in spite of such discouragements.*

This period of the gratuitous concession of lands lasted till well on in the twenties. Hesitatingly entered upon by Governor Phillips, who doubted his power to grant such lands, but was assured of it by the Secretary of State after he had left the Colony, and continued by his successors, it may be considered to have lasted till some years after the arrival of Governor Darling. Under it all Governors, from Phillip to Darling, were empowered to make grants of Crown lands to individuals. Specific regulations seemed to limit them, but in reality they exercised their personal judgment without any limitations. As a consequence, Dr. Lang informs us, "charges of partiality or of injustice were urged against the Governors of the Colony without intermission." To make an end of such abuses, Governor Darling in 1825 instituted a Land Board and issued regulations for the granting of land. It was to be granted in proportion to the means or the property of the applicant, and even then only if there was reason to believe that the recipient was able

* A pamphlet in the Mitchell Library gives a corrected list of landholders in New South Wales till 1813. They number from 600 to 650, and hold possibly less than 100,000 acres of land. About two dozen of them were granted from 1,000 to 3,000 acres. Governor Bligh granted more than 3,000 acres to the wife and children of the retiring Governor King. He himself was granted, possibly by Governor Macquarie, 1,000 acres. It is often stated that the military officers scooped large slices of the public estate, and Captain McArthur was given 5,625 acres, while Colonel Foveaux received 1,770 acres and Major Johnston (if it is he who figures under the name of Johnson) 2,000 acres, but few other officers appear for large amounts. Some of the civilian officers comfortably feathered their nests. D'Arcy Wentworth always knew how to look after "number one," and he was successively granted 880, 1,900, and 100 acres, in all, 2,880 acres. The pastors of the flock were almost equally solicitous for their own interests. Johnson, first chaplain, received 600 acres, and Samuel Marsden 1,230.

and willing to improve it. Yet Lang gives instances to show that the old system was not completely disused. On his own representations 640 acres, or a square mile, were granted by Darling to a well-doing family, and he implies that there were many like cases. The grants were often meritorious. Alexander Berry discovered and explored the Shoalhaven district about the year 1820. With the aid of assigned convict servants he cut a channel from the lower end of the Shoalhaven River, which had terminated in a sand-bar, to the Crookhaven River. He thus made the Shoalhaven navigable. He was fittingly rewarded. A few years later Henry Dangar, who had discovered, through a prospector, the district of Armidale, was granted 700 acres, which became the nucleus of his Neotsfield property on the Hunter River. Grants were not lightly made in the early days, even by Governor Macquarie. One of the best of the old settlers, J. Blaxland, uncle of the discoverer of a track across the Blue Mountains, was granted 8,000 acres on condition of expending £6,000 in clearing and cultivating them.* Sometimes grants were made with large public objects. Thus, when Macquarie's system of making grants to selected persons was done away with, and Commissioner Bigge's report had drawn attention to Australia as a field for colonisation, very large grants were sometimes conceded.

These earliest grants were usually coupled with conditions. Residence was required; cultivation was enforced; reservation was made of timber for naval purposes; and a quit-rent was exacted. The quit-rent was, of course, a peppercorn rental, and was at first sixpence per 30 acres to emancipists and two shillings per 100 acres to free settlers, but in both cases only after ten years' occupancy. Governor Macquarie slightly varied the amounts. His successor, Governor Brisbane, withdrew the clause requiring cultivation, and annexed it as a condition of grants that so many

* See a despatch of Macquarie's to Lord Bathurst and a letter of Blaxland, in the Mitchell MSS. vol. i.

convict-servants should be employed by the settler, who thus relieved the Treasury of the burden of their maintenance; and the amount of the grant was in proportion to the number of convicts employed. This method of disposing of lands by granting them on a quit-rental was soon discovered to be illusory. As in all countries where they have existed, such rents could not always be collected. None were collected before 1822; on much of the four million acres of land alienated by 1831 they could not be collected at all. In 1836 the quit-rents in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, though they were light—sometimes as low as an eighth of a penny per acre—were in arrears. In 1840 Governor Gipps endeavoured to enforce the payment of arrears, and he was accused of collecting them harshly. Mr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Cowper prayed the stern Governor to suspend the issue of distress warrants. By December, 1843, these rents were in arrears to the extent of £55,000. Yet it was on these terms that the great landholders held their vast domains—the Australian Agricultural Company (with its million acres), the Van Diemen's Land Company, the Peel River Company, and the princely occupants of the Liverpool Plains, where eight pastoralists held 1,747,840 acres, nine held 311,040, five held more than a million, and one (Ben Boyd) held 381,000, paying an annual quit-rent of £80.

These men and these companies were virtually owners of their vast domains, as the fief-holders were in medieval Europe, and the insignificant quit-rents they paid were the equivalent of the peppercorn rental, the various dues, and the military service the vassals owed their suzerains. But not from these and their tenures, of whatever nature, sprang the "runholders"—the great pastoralists who eventually covered the larger part of Australia with their flocks and herds.

With these the pastoral industry, indeed, originated. There Marsden bred his sheep, and there McArthur initiated the whole subsequent pastoral development.

Yet between the Dividing Range and the sea, or even within the limits of the nineteen counties to which the Colony was extended, there was no sufficient scope. If it was to become a national industry it must spread out into the unknown wilds. McArthur made, and Commissioner Bigge supported, the proposal to form a joint-stock company that would seek unlimited range for the flocks in the interior, "not approaching nearer to the settled estates than five miles." The proposal met with little encouragement from the Government, and Bigge confessed that he found little eagerness on the part of stockowners to leave their estates in the settled districts and repair to those in remote localities. Against this we have the statement of W. C. Wentworth, made still earlier, in 1819, to the effect that local pastoralists within the pale were under the necessity of sending out their flocks beyond the boundaries "in order to preserve them in health," or rather, we should incline to affirm, because there was no longer room for expansion.

This was the real beginning of a new kind of landed tenure—that by occupancy. After the publication of Commissioner Bigge's three masterly reports in 1822-3 an ever-increasing stream of superior immigrants flowed over the boundaries of the settlement and gradually took possession of that—the greater—portion of New South Wales that lay outside of the pale, then of (the future) Victoria, and in time of (what was to be) Queensland. These it was who constituted the great body of the pioneer pastoralists. These were the true "squatters" in the later acceptance of the term, and they it was who formed the haughty caste that long lorded it over Australia. These built up the pastoralist system and largely founded a commonwealth of their own. They acknowledged, indeed, the suzerainty of the Government so far as to pay £10 a year for their license, though it was not always paid, and several runs were lumped together as one; but, as happened with the feudal vassals, the mere right of occupancy tended to harden,

as we shall see, into a right of property. Around these the early history of Australia revolves. These were its chief makers, and from their rise between 1815 and 1825 till the gold-discoveries of 1851 the life of the settled portions of the Australian colonies, if it does not drop out of sight, as Mr. George Ranken affirms,* becomes subsidiary and instrumental to its chief activities beyond the pale of settlement.

These "makers" had no little difficulty in gaining a footing in the country which they were to "make." As the omnipotent British Government would allow no one to emigrate to Australia, save such as it approved of, its masterful representative there, Governor Macquarie, permitted no one to depasture in "new country" without special authority from himself. In those days there was apparently a mortal dread of the Colony getting out of hand. Imbued with the notion of a country derived from the daily sight of a crowded land like England, the authorities dreaded that the population would get to be too widely scattered; and when we consider the materials of which it was largely composed, we may believe that there were grounds for the fear. Every hole and corner, every recess and natural fastness, would harbour multitudes of rebels or criminals, or those who could easily be converted into such. Accordingly, squatters strayed across the ever-expanding frontier, and built huts, planted gardens, and kept a few cattle, which had often been stolen.†

A fresh step was taken by Macquarie's successor. Sir Thomas Brisbane freely granted to reputable persons licenses that were revocable at six months' notice. The main object of these was to determine what persons were allowed to settle in remote places at a time when all were to be under the eyes of the guardians of the law.‡ The license was granted as a proof that the squatter was reputable enough to reside beyond the

* *Bush Essays*, pp. 9-10.

† RUSDEN, *History of Australia*, sec. ed., ii. 514.

‡ *Ibid.*, ii. 517.

recognised boundaries of settlement. All unlicensed squatting was henceforth to be suppressed.

That able Governor, Sir Richard Bourke, developed the system. In common with previous Governors he held all land beyond the recognised boundaries of settlement as public commons that were free to all as pasture, so long as they were not wanted for settlement. It was, as we know, the old German and the old Aryan system, if, indeed, we should not carry it still further back. Had these squatters been allowed to remain unlicensed, each endeavouring to hold his own, and hold it by main force, against the aggressions and encroachments of rivals, society in those parts would soon have reverted to a state of nature. To obviate disputes, Bourke required that each squatter should take out a yearly license, for which the fee was, and long remained, £10. In addition, a small assessment on each head of sheep, cattle, or horses provided for the maintenance of a border police for squatting districts.

These proceedings were by no means taken with the object of aiding the pastoral advance. On the contrary, Acts were regularly passed, year after year, perhaps for the last time in 1845, to restrain unauthorised occupation. In the following year the customary annual motion was introduced to re-enact the measure. It was strenuously opposed by Robert Lowe and Dr. Lang, James McArthur, Wentworth and Windeyer. The high permanent officials and the nominee members voted for it, but all the elective members voted against it. On the motion of Richard Windeyer it was thrown out, and by a majority of 19 to 10. Evidently, the Government was still at heart opposed to the extension of pastoralism. So it remained during the term of the following Governor, Sir Charles FitzRoy. When flocks were already being driven far to the north of the twenty-sixth degree, FitzRoy desired to prevent the occupation of the country "by private enterprise in opposition to the rights of the Government." None the less, the

squatters outside the pale, aided by the squatters inside the pale, had won a legal triumph. The right to form a station was at last assured, and it was continually being exercised. Not till 1846 did the Colony realise in what numbers such stations had sprung up, and how massive was the force, when they were put on their metal, they could exert.

To how large an extent the conquest of the soil was made by the new squatting element we have but to turn to the figures showing the quantity of stock and the amount of land held without and within the pale of settlement. At the beginning of 1846 the number of cattle within these bounds in New South Wales was 417,000, and of sheep 1,891,000; while the cattle without them numbered 698,000, and of sheep, 2,518,000. The disparity is still more sharply accentuated in what was for some time known as the Port Phillip province, or Victoria. There only 30,000 cattle and 351,000 sheep were inside the settlement, while 200,973 cattle and 1,430,914 sheep grazed outside of it. The disproportion was far greater still in Queensland. There the great mass of the grazing runs long lay outside of the settled districts. In 1884, at the time of the passing of the Dutton Land Act, only 334 runs, held by a far smaller number of lessees, containing 7,440,000 acres, were within the settled portion of the Colony; while 9,208 runs, again held by a much smaller number of tenants, and embracing no less than 308,669,026 acres, lay outside of the occupied and settled districts. Evidently, in Queensland as in New South Wales, and indeed in all the colonies, the pioneer squatter has been the author of its chief and most prominent advance. He has rough-hewed the path that others have trod, and which others still have converted into a highway. He is one of those social variants who are the authors of all social progress, as Darwin has taught us to see in physiological variations the agencies of all organic evolution. He is by pre-eminence, *the* "maker of Australasia."

CHAPTER X

THE EVOLUTION OF THE STATION

THE arrangements for taking up new land in districts "beyond the boundaries of settled occupation" were in those days primitive. Only one thing was needful: official application had to be made to the Commissioner of Crown Lands of the district for a license to occupy. This license did not necessarily—indeed, it did not usually—define the boundaries of the contemplated "run." These were provisionally and amicably settled in conference with neighbours, who were only too glad to have good neighbours.* The license permitted the grazier (the name was already in use in 1836) to depasture stock for one year, and the grazier had to produce evidence that he possessed real or personal estate sufficient to serve for visible lawful means of support. It looked no further than the end of the next ensuing year. No hint is there of that fixity of tenure or right of pre-emption that were afterwards to be bones of contention between the squatters and the agricultural farmers.†

The extent of the country taken up was often a matter of free choice. One individual, like Mr. Brodribb, might take up only 100 square miles; but it was no uncommon thing for squatters to claim 200 or 300 square miles. Land was a drug in the market; it was free as the air to all who had the means of stocking it;

* BRODRIBB, W.A., *Recollections of an Australian Squatter*, Sydney, 1883, p. 12.

† *Ibid.*, p. 12. Mr. Brodribb reprints the license, pp. 213-4,

and worthy applicants were readily granted one or more stations.

The pioneer squatters, in fact, helped themselves to as many acres as they had a mind to, none at first disputing their claims. Other pioneer squatters would then arrive and sit down among a group of squatters, "taking part from each, but most from me," says the narrator in one instance.

Of course, they quarrelled about their boundaries, and awaited the arrival of the Crown Lands Commissioner. One might content himself with a trifle of 12,000 acres, there being around them "a sort of natural boundary." When the Commissioner appeared, he "was left with less than 2,000 acres." He was not so easily to be defrauded of his broad domains. "Knowing some little of human nature," he invited the Commissioner to his station, and there attended to "the man as well as his horses," with the result that he "was put in possession of his original boundary."*

Disputes about the boundaries of runs were frequent. One settler relates that, after taking up a run and remaining there with his sheep for some years, other settlers arrived, and then contentions began. The consequence was that he left his station, with the improvements he had made, to those who liked to occupy it, and travelled elsewhere. Another took up part of a run already in occupation, and a battle-royal ensued, when each runholder led his men. A lawsuit displaced the invader.†

The vicissitudes of runs or stations would form an interesting—perhaps a painfully interesting—chapter. The station of Tartha, in Queensland, was formed by Beck and Brown in the late fifties. It was sold to Dr. Nelson in 1862. He soon tired of it, and sold it in 1864 to Forbes and Pettigrew. They, again, were no more successful than the doctor, and Brown bought it back from them in 1866. He, too, found it unprofitable, and parted with it to a man who had been his horse-driver

* *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 23.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 165, 147.

and shearer, one Dockrill. A saying current in New Zealand is to the effect that the first man who goes on the land breaks his heart; the second goes into the bankruptcy court; and the third makes a fortune.

The vicissitudes of runs can be adequately shown only in detail. The manager of a company or firm often stepped into the place of the runholder. Thus, Alfred Crowder, a manager for the Lochinvar, Rosenthal, and St. Ruth Company, formed Weranga station. His brother, John, stocked it. He put J. Miller in charge of it. Then Hook bought it, when it was sold to Mort and Laidley. Manager J. Miller formed Dulacca, which had been taken up by another manager, J. Crowder, but Miller formed it in 1855. Miller held it till 1857, when he took Miles as a partner, who subsequently bought Miles out.

The average station went through four different stages. First, it was a fattening station, with a choice herd of cattle; for all its improvements, a stock-yard and a hut. It was valued at £30. Next, it was advertised as fully improved, fenced, and subdivided sheep-property. Thirdly, it was a valuable pastoral estate of 35,000 acres freehold. Finally, it consisted of rich agricultural land, divided to suit intending farmers.

The early pastoralists are long in dying out. When these denizens of the past are extinct in Victoria and New South Wales, they are but coming into being in Southern Queensland and, afterwards in Northern Queensland, and when they are passing away in Queensland, they are re-incarnating themselves in the squatters of Western Queensland, the Northern Territory and the north of Western Australia. There, if no longer elsewhere, are still to be found the great cattle-runs, the Gaucholike stockmen, the trained camp-horses, the wild scrub cattle; and there life is as rough as it was of old in the tracts where sheep have long ago supplanted cattle, or wheat-growing has supplanted sheep-breeding. There the comparatively small runs of the more southerly regions are unknown. Scattered sparsely over vast

spaces, these western, northern, and north-western runs range in area from 1,000 to 9,000 square miles ; they are separated from one another by great stretches of untrodden bush-land that may be from 20 to 100 miles in breadth, marked by a faint track that leads from one to another. They may thus be compared with the vast *estancias* of South America, where a single individual (like General Rosas) may be lord of seventy-four square leagues of land. The South American, however, may own as many as 300,000 head of cattle,* while the Australian stations are credited with only some 70,000 cattle, which produce 20,000 calves a year. All of these runs are still fenceless, like the early runs, and their boundaries are creeks, rivers, and mountains.†

* DARWIN, *Voyage of the Adventure*, chs. iv. viii.

† General Rosas's *estancia* seems to have been exceptional in its extent. Another that was seen by Darwin was only two and a half square leagues in extent, and had only 3,000 cattle. Its boundaries were the river Plata and two impassable brooks. *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 30, 1910.

CHAPTER XI

THE PIONEER SQUATTER

AFTER the middle twenties many young men pushed out into the wild, sometimes 200 miles to the westward, to a new country on the banks of an intermittent stream. They had no choice. The only land remaining in the nineteen counties was inferior land that could not be purchased but at a prohibitive figure. Their single alternative was to push on into the far interior and take up land under an annual license for pastoral occupation. They had come out with capital for the purpose of setting up as gentleman-farmers, but for that the country was not yet sufficiently advanced, and the would-be agriculturists sank back a degree in the scale and became pastoralists or squatters perforce.

Some of the immigrants had themselves been gentleman-farmers, or were the sons of landholders. Others had been unfortunate in mercantile speculations or felt the pressure of hard times (for it was in the decade that followed the great European war), and had decided to risk the remains of their fortune in a new country, while others still were doubtless actuated by a spirit of adventure.

At what time did these new pastoralists receive the name of 'squatters'? They never assumed it, but when they wanted a name, they called themselves, like the migrants from Van Diemen's Land, "adventurers." The term, squatter, had in New South Wales originally the same signification as in the United States. Travelling to Bathurst in the year 1836, Darwin passed "a

few squatters' huts." Either because such squatters were among the earliest unauthorised settlers, or because some of the new, but still unauthorised, pastoralists belonged to a similar class, the name was gradually appropriated to the new pastoralists.

Mr. H. S. Russell asserts that the term, 'squatter,' (for runholder), was not in use till 1842. There is evidence to show that this is an error. Writing to Lord John Russell in December, 1840, Governor Sir George Gipps remarked that the licensed occupiers or squatters must not be confounded with persons assuming the same name in the United States. Among them, he stated, were young men belonging to the wealthiest families in England, not a few of them graduates of the older universities.

The famous traveller, Dr. Leichhardt, who was well acquainted with the squatters of the Darling Downs, describes the class as "principally composed of young men of good education, gentlemanly habits, and high principles."

Squatters and overlanders, in those years, were almost convertible terms; the overlander was a migratory squatter, as the squatter was an overlander who had settled down. Well, of the overlanders Sir George Grey wrote in similar terms. They were young men of good family and were often Etonians or Oxonians. Lady Barker describes a young squatter, fresh from his university, of refined tastes and culture, who had bought at Mount Ida, for £1,000, "the worst and bleakest bit of the worst and bleakest run" in Canterbury, New Zealand. There he led the life of a boor. He had not even the reward of success. He went out of it three years afterwards with the loss of half his capital.*

We have only to trace the routes of the pioneer squatters on the maps to realise that their toils, difficulties, and dangers were, in sum, not fewer or smaller than those of explorers. Their path was through untrodden wastes, and the terrors that environed the

* *Station Life*, ch. iv.

explorer for a comparatively brief space surrounded the pioneer squatter for long years.

“It is the most difficult of tasks to keep
Heights which the soul is competent to gain;”

and the task of the pioneer squatter to make head against both natural obstacles and the acquired obstacles arising out of his occupancy of the new ground was often more arduous, as it was always continuously more exacting, than that of the discoverer who left his natural enemies behind him. As the work of the explorer on a large scale was the necessary forerunner of pioneering, so was the pioneer squatter the indispensable precursor of the grazier who reaped where he had not sown, and so was *his* function again the inevitable preparation for agricultural settlement.

Even in the early days the men who took up a station were not always the men who formed it; in later days, of course, prospecting for stations, and immediate sale of them, became a business. Thus, to give a single example where many could be given, all the country for hundreds of miles from Dogwood Creek, in Southern Queensland, was taken up in 1849, but none was occupied save Narrandoo, which was taken up by the Halls of Dartbrook, who stocked both it and Weribone. Yet in this comparatively safe country occupation was not long delayed. Talavera and Yamboogle were soon afterwards formed.

The vicissitudes of individuals are as numerous as those of runs. Lord John Russell's suggestion (it hardly amounted to a proposal) to raise the license-fee from £10 to perhaps £50 was doubtless made in ignorance of the real circumstances of many of the squatters, especially in Queensland, or it would not have been made. At this very time many of them actually lost their stations through being so impoverished as to be unable to feed their shepherds and stockmen. No wonder they were filled with consternation. “Johnny had” again “upset the coach!” A drought was

drying up their resources, and the "banks" were pressing them. Some of the runs had to be sold in order to escape impending ruin. The venture, perhaps, like Murray Prior's station of Naraigin, had originally been extravagant, and had been made practicable only through heavily mortgaging the run. Its owner was almost penniless. In his sore need he declared: "I will boil down 1,500 wethers as a sop to the bank." A debt of £10,000, at 10 per cent. interest, hung round his neck like a millstone. "I have reaped the covetous man's reward." * We may think that such men were ground to powder by "the bank." Yet 10 per cent. was, in those days, the ordinary bank-rate of interest. In New Zealand, in 1887 and 1889, 10 per cent. was still, more than thirty years later, the customary rate of the colonial Shylock. The safest investment then in Queensland should have returned 12 per cent. interest.

After a few weeks' tour through the squatting districts a sheep-station would be selected, often on the spot where a future township was to stand; 1,200 ewes in lamb would be bought; in due time lambing would take place, and a great increase would be the result. Unavoidably, a great deal of hard work was involved on the part of the owner. He was often his own shearer and washer, with but little aid. House and station buildings were at first of a rude description. Run-holders, having no fixity of tenure, were reluctant to expend money on structures or other improvements that might soon pass out of their hands. The "new era" for squatters lay yet ten or twelve years ahead.

The life of the pioneer squatter was at times hazardous and often abounded in adventure. It was assuredly never monotonous. There was a constant advance, almost always into the Unknown. There were long and stubborn conflicts with drought and flood, snowstorms and heat-waves, disease in their flocks and herds, disappointment and loss, death at the hands of the blacks—often incurred, Ernest Favenc tells us, by the most

* CAMPBELL PRAED, *My Australian Girlhood*, p. 109.

kindly-disposed of the settlers—or from thirst or hunger, or from the wasting sickness that came of hope deferred. Some died victorious, rich in ever-increasing flocks and herds, in broad acres, in well-grassed paddocks, sometimes in yellowing fields of corn. Others fell defeated, “not having received the promise,” leaving their bones to bleach under the Western sun, or in their homes, ruined by financial distress. All such men, the vanquished no less than the victors, have merited well of the country whose prosperity they founded; and their much-enduring, often heroic wives and daughters deserve to be included in the honourable muster-roll.

CHAPTER XII

TYPES OF SQUATTER

AUSTRALIAN history has no more picturesque figure than that of the pioneer squatter. Rarely a native, almost always a gentleman immigrant, often a man of education and culture, "Glover of Corpus," accidentally forgathered with "Hallett of Oriel," merry-hearted and of undaunted courage, he was partly driven, and partly he set himself, to find out unconquered pasture-lands in the wild.

Portraits of typical squatters have been limned for us by various hands. Mr. Nehemiah Bartley, Mr. A. C. Grant, Mrs. Campbell Praed and dozens of others have left luminous silhouettes. He was unique and *sui generis*, according to Mr. Bartley. Generally, tall and sinewy, with iron-gray hair and often hard eyes, he had a strong, concentrated, purposeful, earnest gaze. Educated and intelligent, he possessed ample *savoir-faire* and knowledge of the world. Frank and hospitable on his station, he showed abundant *aplomb* in his city club. A born leader, he had a commanding eye, and had many a time directed a dangerous wild ride on a mountain-side to hinder the escape of wild cattle. No coward he, nor his wife either, for they had fought the blacks in their barricaded cottage for seven hours on end, a hundred miles from all possible aid. Each firing and loading alternately, they at length drove off the blacks with heavy loss. We are not surprised that the daughter of such a couple should have "a look of resolution" on her face. (Bartley, pp. 341-2.)

Other such figures meet us as we pass along. One is that of "a big bronzed man, with a fair beard and a bright laughing eye"; he too kindly and hospitable (Grant, i. 47). Another was a pleasant, frank country-gentleman-looking squatter, with a kind word for everybody, and a keen eye for sheep, cattle, and horses (ch. x.). Still another was an ex-officer, who was short and very stout. A young native Australian, on the other hand, was a tall, fine-looking young fellow, with a short glossy black beard and moustache. He was simple, frank, cheery, and open-hearted; and manliness was imprinted on his honest, open face. He was a skilled horseman and a thorough bushman. The son of a pioneer he had grown up on the station; every spot was familiar to him and was associated with some early memory.

Sometimes a very slight difference of geography engendered two distinct types. In 1858 the Victorian squatter was dressed in a plaid jumper, or guernsey, while the New South Wales squatter was clad in a fawn-coloured tweed of Parramatta make. They looked as distinct from one another as if they were denizens of two different countries, and the difference was apparent as soon as the Murray was crossed.

"What a lot of splendid fellows!" writes Rolf Boldrewood of his associates in the Western division of Victoria. "All gentlemen by birth and education." The two Aplins, owners of a cattle-station near Belfast, were "cultured and refined people, not long from England, of whom the elder was afterwards Government Geologist in Queensland, and the younger was a poet. The holders of another such station were "men of high principle, great energy, early culture, and refined habits." Culture, assuredly, was not lacking. One of the three just mentioned, Charles Macknight, was a political and social essayist of repute. Authorship, indeed, was not uncommon among them. James Dawson, situated twenty miles to the east, was the author of a volume on the aborigines, derived exclu-

sively from personal observation of the blacks. Rolf Boldrewood himself has been a voluminous and successful author. While Fred Burchett was "a well-read man and a fair scholar," and Robert Craufurd, a younger brother of the Scots judge, Lord Ardmillan, was a "fair scholar" (Rolf is somewhat exacting on the score of "scholarship"—in the bush!), a writer of *jeux d'esprit*, a thorough sportsman, and an inveterate practical joker.

The moral lineage of most of the squatters of Rolf Boldrewood's acquaintance was unmistakable. They were gentlemen by birth and education, and by their pedigree belonged to the English country gentry. The Cox family has, perhaps, "furnished more pattern country-gentlemen to Australia than any other." Another fine family was that of the Hentys, three in number, the pioneer squatters of Portland Bay. They were explorers, sailors, squatters, farmers, merchants, and politicians, but as Carlyle says, they are "all vanished now, all vanished!" The squatters, stalwart and steadfast, yet genial and hilarious, massed themselves there, as elsewhere, in family groups. There were, in that Western Division of Victoria, three Winters, two Jamieson brothers, three Allans, three Burchetts, and four Hunters. The majority of the "Mount Gambier mob" "had attained to social distinction." Evelyn Sturt was aristocratic, athletic, adventurous—the Bayard of squatters.

Another was "a man of remarkable intellect," and still another, apparently of foreign origin, was "a man of brains and method, culture and knowledge of the world." One of the most successful was "tall, slight, delicate in frame and constitution—cultured and artistic."

One Victorian squatter was "a stalwart Australian" six feet four in his socks. Another was "small of stature and not stalwart," but yet held his own with his fellow-squatters. A third was tall and soldierly-looking and portly. Rank sometimes was not lacking, even among foreign nationalities. A hereditary Prince

of Augustenburg once squatted in Western Victoria, and a German baron married the daughter of a station-owner.

All the historians unite in lauding "the splendid type of men" who were the pioneer squatters of Queensland. They were "a brave, reckless band," says Mrs. Campbell Praed.* "Quick to love, quick to hate, full of pluck and endurance, dauntless before danger, iron in physique and nerve, and ready for any difficult or dare-devil feat—their adventures, escapes, and jokes would have furnished rich material for an Australian Lever or Fenimore Cooper." Here is a pen-and-ink portrait of one of them, and he one of the best, though not the most successful—Colonel Murray-Prior, drawn by the hand of his accomplished daughter, Mrs. Campbell Praed. He was full-bearded (a new thing in the fifties and sixties), a wild man of the woods, and wore a bushman's dress—a blue shirt and blue-and-white guernsey, a pair of trowsers of his daughter's making, and enormous leggings. Yet this "bushman," not long after, was a cabinet minister and figured at Government House balls. Patrick Leslie was a lion-hearted man.

The squatter of North Australia, on a cattle-station in the tropics, as sketched by Mrs. Dominic Daly, who knew him well, wore the ordinary toilette of the bushman—a flannel shirt, a broad leather belt, knee-breeches and long boots, and sombrero. On the Esplanade at Palmerston the same man appeared in a white linen suit and a starched collar.

Such men are scattered all over the Australian bush. David Carnegie found in the sandy desert of Western Australia two individuals owning a cattle station. In such an out-of-the-world place these men must have been coarse and uncouth, if not savage? Not at all. One of them was the brother of a bishop, and the other had an equally creditable origin, with both talent and culture.

* *My Australian Girlhood*, and also in *Sketches of Australian Life*, pp. 3-4.

While the proportion of Scottish settlers in the population of the United States during the first years of independence hardly exceeded six per cent., the number of Scots among the early squatters of New South Wales was considerable. There were many, Mr. Bartley tells us, settled on the Lower Darling. They were among the first to push in advance. The three pioneer squatters of (what is now) Queensland were Scots—John Campbell and the brothers Leslie. About 1850 two Scots explored the comparatively unwatered country above the Darling and eventually stocked it. One of these settled at Memindie with sheep and the other at Pooncaree with cattle. It has been said, with pardonable exaggeration that the Scots own all the land in Australia, while the Irish own all the public-houses. In Northern and in other parts of Southern Queensland the same ethnical feature is found. In Western Victoria Rolf Boldrewood found them preponderant. "I wish I had been a Scotchman, Rolf," said one of his squatting associates to the genial author of *Old Melbourne Memories*. "I should have had a good run and 20,000 sheep by this time." Yes, replied his friend, and kept them too. They figure not unfrequently, and not to their disadvantage, in the gossipy writer's reminiscences of his old squatting days.

In all parts of Australia squatters have risen from the ranks. Some of them known in West Victoria to the Crown Lands Commissioner, Captain Fyans, were of a very low class and lived in hovels. Another class consisted of old shepherds, many of whom had become wealthy and behaved with discretion; but most of them, he considered, should have remained shepherds.*

Dr. Lang relates that he had met with many squatters of humble origin. One, in particular, from lowly beginnings, had come to possess one of the largest pastoral establishments in the country.†

Most of the squatters on the great cattle-runs of

* *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 120-1. See also pp. 180-1.

† *Account*, i. 268.

North Australia were originally stockmen, and are still addressed by their stockmen as "Jack" or "Bill." They seem to command the respect of those who know of their strenuous lives and brave deeds.

One of the first Victorian pioneers had been a cabin-boy and had risen to the position of ship-master. A long list of superintendents, managers, and overseers have risen to owning the stations on which they were employed.* It may be only a poet's jest, but is far more likely to be the truth, that servants of the lowest rank have climbed up so high. A country lout named Andy was "Middleton's rouseabout," who worked on Middleton's station for "a pound a week and his keep."

"Type of a careless nation,
Men who are soon played out,
Middleton was ;—and his station
Was bought by the Rouseabout." †

Some, like the finder of the Eacott pearl, have suddenly come into the possession of wealth, and bought a run. Or the overworked head-master, the disenchanted politician, or the newspaper-editor *manqué*, has retired from the turmoil, and escaped to a station. Men who have made a fortune in trade—city grocers who knew nothing of pastoral life—sometimes men who have dropped into one—desire to gild it by sitting down on a station, only to find, like the retired poulterer from New Bond Street, or the widow of a member of Parliament who has unfortunately been "in trade," the daughter, she, of one of the greatest of British shipbuilders, that the neighbouring gentry refuse to recognise him.

* See *Letters of Victorian Pioneers*.

† LAWSON, *In Days*, etc.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ROUTE OF THE PASTORALIST

IN picturesque and now, thanks to a host of special researches, tolerably exact detail the story of the Teutonic conquest of England has been told. It reads like a narrative of the settlement of Australia. We learn how the Engles, Jutes, and Saxons advanced along this great river and up that, how they spread over the quiet, open meadows of a third, how they marched through valley and by estuary, and crossed the heights from one river to another, or went along a ridge of hills, where there were breaks in the dense line of forests.*

The advance of pastoral pioneering in Australia followed the line of least resistance, and, like the English, crept up the estuaries, the rivers, and their tributaries. In New South Wales it first made its way up the Parramatta River and occupied the Cow-Pastures, while simultaneously it moved up the neighbouring Hawkesbury River to the rich agricultural soil of the adjacent valley. For a quarter of a century settlement was cooped up within the narrow strip of land, some thirty or forty miles in breadth, between the Blue Mountains and the Sea. That great Barrier once surmounted, the wide country of the plains was thrown open. Then followed the first great pastoral exodus. The owners of stock, who were feeling themselves cramped after a recent drought, climbed the devious and difficult track of

* GREEN, *Making of England*, passim.

Gregory Blaxland, in 1813, across the Dividing Range, and accomplished the toilsome feat of driving their stock to the western slopes of the Blue Mountains. Then they inundated the plains of Bathurst and stocked the heads of some of the rivers and creeks. There they settled and fought their first fierce battles with the blacks. The quiet Hunter River, easily approached from the sea, was stocked in these same early years. The easy ascent of the Liverpool Range in the following decade threw open the inexhaustible soil of the famed Liverpool Plains, where Boyd, Wentworth, and other rich pastoralists were the kings and princes of the region.

Each great discovery initiated a wave of settlement. Thus, Sir T. Mitchell's tracking-down of the Darling opened up the vast country to the westward, and determined a large number of stock-holders in New South Wales to migrate from a drought-stricken country, to one that was more highly favoured. On his way back in 1835 Sir T. Mitchell found stockmen in occupation of a cattle station on a country discovered by him in 1832. A settler from Bathurst followed Mitchell in those years. So early as February, 1838, a migrant relates, a large number of squatters, with their flocks and herds, were on the line of march to the South-West. It was the same as late as August, 1840, when it was said that there were 20,000 cattle on the road between Yass and Melbourne. None tarried by the way or turned either to the right hand or to the left. All hastened towards the Land of Promise discovered by Major Mitchell. The intermediate district, through which the road lay, was, it appears, still very thinly stocked and settled, but (and this must have deterred occupation) it was all nominally taken up. The migrating hosts followed "the Major's line," which apparently was "the line of least resistance." *

On the back of discovery came settlement. The publication in 1837 of Hume's journal of exploration

* *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 150-1, 210-1.



SIR T. MITCHELL.



led (Brodrigg believes *) to the settlement of Victoria, not only by the Tasmanians, but by the Australians also. Many settlers who had thus formed stations on the Upper Hume in 1836-8 moved on to Port Phillip country. Large sheep and cattle stations were formed there; over 100,000 sheep crossed the Murrumbidgee in three months.†

After Melbourne had been settled in 1836 by a band of daring adventurers from Launceston, two streams of pioneers concentrated themselves upon Victoria. Reports of the new-found country spread from Launceston to Hobart, and from many parts of Van Diemen's Land, where both stock and stations had risen to exorbitant prices, settlers crowded over the narrow Straits.

The squatters came with their flocks and herds and their ripe experience, and in a very few years as much progress was made as might otherwise have been made in a quarter of a century. Within two years, it was authoritatively stated, no fewer than 250,000 sheep had been transported, chiefly from Tasmania, and perhaps half-a-hundred stations formed; and the greater part of Western Victoria taken up.‡ Geelong was the first centre of settlement, and about thirty stations were, in 1837, formed along the banks of the Moorabool, Barwon, and Leigh rivers. In the following year other stations were made higher up the same rivers. At almost the same times Melbourne and Portland were the initial points of further settlement. In 1837 four Tasmanian squatters occupied the Colac country, finding already one pioneer there. Early in 1838 eight more took up unoccupied land round about Lake Colac. Others stretched out westwards, and towards the end of 1838 and the beginning of 1839 Tasmanian squatters spread rapidly over Western Victoria.

* BRODRIGG, *Recollections*, pp. 13-5.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Victorian Pioneers*, p. 272. See map in the same volume, p. 39.

The Tasmanian stream was soon augmented by a smaller stream from New South Wales. It was led by the first overland expedition, with Joseph Hawdon and John Hepburn at its head; they formed, near the Yarra, the first cattle station in Victoria. A few sheep stations were already in existence. In 1838 the pioneers took up the first run connecting the line of squatters from Sydney-side who had crossed the Goulburn River, with the pioneers from Van Diemen's Land. The station was formed by a Mr. Howey, and was near the township of Gisborne. Others followed. In 1839-40 a long series of other stations was formed.*

Almost all the pioneer squatters discovered the runs they afterwards occupied. Thus (to take here one or two instances) G. D. Mercer relates how he and two others went out beyond the boundaries of settlement in the plains, in May, 1838, and following up the creeks, discovered the country now occupied as stations by four squatters, and themselves took up five runs on it. Messrs. Manifold "discovered their present run." A squatter and an overseer, prospecting away from the rivers, discovered the Mount Talbot country—one of the finest runs in the country. Hunter and Campbell discovered the station on the Upper Goulburn River that Hunter afterwards occupied. We cease to wonder that the pioneers claimed their stations by right of "discovery and conquest." †

The earlier pioneers in Victoria confined themselves to the coastline, but not for long. Two or three years after the later squatters pushed inland, and settled on the creeks forming the river Wannon. Next, they formed stations on the west and on the east bank of the Glenelg. Others, on creeks, as Bryant's, or on rivers, as the Wando. Others, later still, on both shores of the Glenelg, lower down or higher up. In the early days very little of the country that had no frontage to rivers or creeks was considered available for settle-

* *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 46-55.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 179-80, 154.

ment. Not till 1844, in Victoria, were stations taken up in the back country. Then a party took possession of the Mount Talbot country. In 1847 a tract of pastoral country, forming a bay on the edge of the large sandy desert through which the boundary-line of South Australia and Victoria runs, was taken up as a run.*

Only the richer portions of each colony were at first settled by graziers. When melting down began to be practised, and gave a value to lean stock (which were wanted to replace the "fats" taken from the richer runs and boiled down), "country till then despised was greedily taken up." The northern plains of Victoria, and the parts watered by the Wimmera and its tributaries, were then settled. Tracts that were barren in summer from lack of water had a peculiar value in winter, says a good observer. "In fact, it gradually became apparent that they were second to no district in their capacity for producing fat stock, the fattening seasons, however, being different." Stations thus formed, for a temporary purpose, remained permanent. A general rush, in fact, was made to the plains lying to the north.†

Another pioneering wave was that which flowed over Gippsland in 1842. Mr. McMillan, overseer to Mr. Macalister, in 1839, discovered the new province and returned to form a station, as did also others. Then it was rediscovered by Count Strzelecki, and the pamphlet he published, with his map of the route to the new land, came into the hands of squatters in different parts of New South Wales that were scourged with drought. Some 15 licensed, and 7 unlicensed, squatters soon occupied the fertile country.‡

In the following years settlement advanced, less like the waves of the sea, than like a tidal wave, which rises insensibly. The pastoral advance was continuous,

* *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 162, 164, 177, 108-9.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 213-4, 185.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 254-9, 130-4.

gradually "enveloping the upper tributaries of the Darling in its folds," says Mr. Favenc, "till they gradually united above Fort Bourke." Eastern New South Wales was, for the most part, taken up; pioneers had to look outside of it for further conquests. An inborn restlessness possessed them and urged them as the gadfly urged Europa from land to land. "Where shall we go?" was Arthur Hodgson's daily and nightly vigil, we are told, in (Australian) New England, about 1840. Circumstances co-operated with the inward impetus. The cold winters of the highlands hindered the breeding of merino sheep and the production of fine wool. They soon found out whither to go. Patrick Leslie was no Columbus of Southern Queensland; he was rather the Cortez or Pizarro of a new Mexico or Peru, who conquered new lands and, he too, made head against hostile natives. He had in his mind the report of Allan Cunningham, who, thirteen years before, in 1827, had been the first white man to descry and explore the afterwards far-famed Darling Downs. From Cunningham's hands he received helpful notes of his journey, but a promised map of the district never arrived, and Leslie had to feel his way. His portrait has been sympathetically drawn by men of his own type, who followed in his tracks and received a portion of his spirit. They describe him as a man of restless activity, overflowing with energy, "the prince of bushmen and good fellows." An educated man, we judge from the chastened diction of his diary,* as also in after-years from the wording of his vigorous protests against the questionable Dr. Lang. Of Scottish origin, he must have been a scion of those "bonnie Lesleys" who, in Scottish ballad, "gaed ower the Border"—namely, between Scotland and England, and this was exactly what the pioneer squatter of Queensland did when he crossed over into the future colony.

He had a long journey before him and took just one companion—a convict named Murphy, sentenced to be

* In RUSSELL'S *Genesis of Queensland*, pp. 164-71.

transported for life, but granted a ticket-of-leave. He was "as good a servant as ever a man had"—so devoted, indeed, that, at a critical point, when danger threatened, he declared, in answer to a question, that he "would go to Hell with" Leslie. The migrating squatter was bound for warmer quarters certainly than the highlands of New England, but still to comparatively cool uplands. A month afterwards he travelled over the Darling Downs from end to end. That was only a preliminary trip, however, but it was enough and more than enough. As soon as Leslie realised that here was the place he sought, the grass, the soil, the skies, he returned to the neighbourhood of a station at Collaroi, near Cassilis, in New England, and prepared to remove his whole stock. Driving before him 4,000 breeding ewes in lamb, 100 ewe hoggets, 1,000 wedder hoggets, 100 rams, and 500 old widders, with teams of horses and bullocks, and 10 saddle horses, and accompanied by 22 ticket-of-leave men, of whom he could hardly speak too highly ("as good and game a lot of men as ever existed"), the heroic pioneer, little conscious of being a hero, migrated from the cold heights of New England to the plateaux of Southern Queensland. It was like the migration of Abraham from the plains of Mamre to the land flowing with milk and honey beyond the Jordan, and the call was doubtless as "divine" in the one case as in the other. Marking trees and blazing his track, he at length arrived at the Condamine river. There he formed his head station and his out-stations, and distributed his sheep among them. Finding afterwards that he had taken up too great an extent of country, Leslie sold parts of his gigantic "run" to various individuals and a company. He had successfully founded the pastoral industry of Queensland.

The first squatter in a new province may be such by accident. Patrick Leslie is commonly spoken of as the first pioneer squatter in Queensland, but he had a predecessor. In January, 1840, John Campbell set out

in search of a run, leaving Dight's station on the Lower McIntyre, with two servants. He settled on the Gwydir, but his right to be there was disputed. Therefore he sat down at Bebo, and built huts there, while he made his cattle-camps on the other side of the river. Thus, by accident, he became the first stockowner in what was to be Queensland. Two months later Patrick Leslie passed his station on his way to the Darling Downs.*

A pioneer squatter inspired others to emulate and follow him. The more successful of these were variants on their leader, took different routes, and worked different districts. Where so many are conspicuous it is hard to select, but almost all the names that distinguish those early days are notable. Not a few of them were heroes. David Cannon McConnel was the first settler on the head-waters of the Brisbane. He had been exploring as far south as Moruya, 200 miles south of Sydney, but resolved to try the northern country, and he went to New England, where he seems to have squatted for a time. There he heard of Patrick Leslie and his adventurous journey still further north—indeed, Leslie had started from that very district—and he resolved to push on in the same direction. Following the track of the Leslies as far as the Severn, he there diverged from their route. He passed by Tenterfield and Stanhope, and looked for suitable country near the heads of the Clarence or Logan districts. He found the country disappointingly broken and untempting. Then, traversing the tableland to the Upper Condamine, he crossed the Great Dividing Range and settled on Cessbrook Creek, a tributary of the Upper Brisbane River, in 1841; he was the first, Mr. Bartley tells us, to settle with stock on a run to the east of the main range in Queensland. There he bought pedigree short-horn bulls from the Australian Agricultural Company, and imported others from England. The herd thus bred still exists.

* J. J. KNIGHT, *In the Early Days*, pp. 75 ff.

Others speedily followed. In 1841 a succession of pioneer squatters settled on the Darling Downs. "Joe" King and Sibley sat down on another affluent of the Condamine, and formed King's Creek station. Hodgson and Elliot were the next, and they settled Etonvale. Hughs and Isaac took up Gowrie, Henry Stuart Russell Cecil Plains, Dennis the small, but rich, Jondaryan, while he also took up Dathy, on Myall Creek, for Charles Coxen and Warra for Irving. Henry Dennis found for R. Scougall "the huge Jimbour run and three others." The Gores occupied Yandalla and Tummaville—two large principalities that were as big as English counties. So that by 1844 as many as thirty stations had been formed on the Darling Downs.*

All through the forties, in the fifties, and early sixties, successive waves of occupation flowed over Queensland, flowing past existing stations and pressing on into unoccupied country, settling great tracts of it and necessitating the opening of fresh ports further north on the east coast and in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Leaving his partner Taylor on Cecil Plains, H. S. Russell pushed further on and was in 1843 the first to settle—he and Glover—on the Brisbane River; they were soon followed by others. Then John Eales, from the Hunter River, was the first to settle in Wide Bay. The Joneses, afterwards well-known in the soft-goods line in Sydney, were among the first to cross over the Brisbane Range.†

When pack bullocks wended their way through Cunningham's Gap with supplies for the squatters, settlement began below the range. Two former superintendents of convicts took up Grantham and Tenthill with Helidon. A dozen pioneers settled on the Upper Brisbane. Settlement on the Lower Brisbane, or on the Logan, was precluded by the Government prohibition to settle within fifty miles of the penal station, at Moreton

* BARTLEY, *Pioneering*, pp. 203-4 and ch. viii. EDWARD PALMER, *Early Days*.

† PALMER, *ibid.*

Bay. After the Darling Downs the Northern Rivers were consequently the first to receive their tale of colonisation. Stimulated by the discoveries of Andrew Petrie and Henry Stuart Russell, settlement advanced rapidly in the North. The Burnett was the earliest to be settled. The Healeys were attracted to its upper reaches, while John Eales, coming with stock from the Hunter River (the chief supplier of Northern Queensland), was the first to plant himself down in Wide Bay. The Joneses of Sydney were the first to pass the range, nearer Nanango; while the middle and Upper Burnett were attacked from various points.

No family shines with a brighter lustre in the colonisation of Northern Queensland than that of the Archers. In 1853 the seven famous Norwegian brothers were squatting on the Burnett. A thirst for new conquests, a longing to push into the Unknown, drove them further afield. In the year named they started from Eidsvold, endeared by its name to all who have travelled in Norway. Travelling from Dalgangal to Rawbelle, they found at the foot of Mount Rannes the outmost station in that direction, occupied by the Leith-Hays. Moving towards the river which they descried in the distance, they came up with that magnificent sheet of water, Gracemere Lake. Next, they saw the picturesque lagoon which they named the Pink Lily. Then they pushed on to the river, which, having reached it, they called (after the Governor) the Fitzroy. Two years afterwards they placed their head-station by Gracemere Lake, and there they have ever since remained, giving it a repute of the first order for its breeds of stock and its modern methods. The whole neighbouring country was by them explored and marked out in blocks, which were rapidly taken up. They were the pioneers of the district, and their lead was followed by many others. Some of them earmarked their runs without at the time stocking them—a thing then practicable under the land regulations. Some sat down in the neighbourhood of Gladstone, like the Landsboroughs of Raglan—one of

them famous as an explorer—who had moved up from Wide Bay. Blackman and Young were other followers of the Archers, and on their report in 1855 these Blackmans tendered for four separate stations, and held a fifth till recent years. Young led the way *northward* and aided in opening the country between Gladstone and Rockhampton. A dozen others followed Young.

The high price of wool raised the value of all the pastures, and there was a constant push to the great unoccupied tracts of the far north and west from the southern parts of Queensland and the southern colonies. After Leichhardt made his discoveries individuals pushed out towards Peak Downs. Among the first was Stuart, who in 1861 overlanded his sheep from Victoria all the way, while the first mob of cattle was brought for two new stations on the Thomson. After these, "runs were taken up with astonishing rapidity" in both north and west. James Gibson was the pioneer in the Burke district and was the first on the Flinders, where he stocked a number of runs. In 1863 Rule arrived at Aramac Creek and formed a station there. In 1864 Gibson settled two more stations. Another squatter, N. Buchanan, who had been one of the first on the Thomson, crossed the Albert and sat down on Beames Brook station. Not content with this, he took up another run, twelve miles in length, along the banks of the Landsborough, at a place where the river was a mere waterhole. J. G. Macdonald, who had explored the country years before, now set up at Floraville and afterwards on Gregory Downs, close by the river Gregory. Two brothers named Brodie came from New South Wales, and settled Donor's Hill. Two or three squatters from Wide Bay—Atticus Tooth, Edward Palmer, and W. Shewring—sat down on Conobie in 1865. Others advanced by Bowen River and Cape River, and settled on the junction of the Cloncurry and the Flinders.

Another wave of occupation flowed past the runs

formed by the pioneers in 1865-6, and found unsettled country further on. They, like their predecessors in 1864-5, followed the course of the rivers. Two names stand out still more conspicuously than most of these. Captain John Mackay was navigator and explorer before he became a pioneer squatter, and he continued his navigation and exploration after he became, or in order to become, a pioneer squatter. Setting out from Armidale in 1860, he tracked to the coast the river named Mackay, and decided to tender for the fertile valley it watered. Having been successful, he set out from Armidale in the following year with 1,200 or 1,400 head of cattle, 50 horses, and two bullock teams. In 1862, after overcoming crushing difficulties, he formed his station. Still living (1910), he was one of the *cekists* of Northern Queensland.

Another was named Jardine. Carrying into effect an idea of Sir George Bowen, the first Governor of Queensland, Jardine travelled a mob of cattle from Bowen to Somerset, and there established a refuge and a coaling station. It was a journey of 1,600 miles, and it took the heroic pioneer, with his two sons, six months to accomplish one of the most thrilling of early expeditions. They cut their way through the bush, swam their horses across rivers and creeks, and performed the last 300 miles on foot. The year of their success was 1864.

Discoveries of new country suitable for stations were sometimes made, in a manner, by accident. An assigned convict servant, Richard Craig by name, in the employ of Dr. Dobie, of New England, wandered away with the intention of escaping from his servitude, or else, as he professed, losing his way in the mountain ranges while he was shepherding. He was carried down to the low country by the blacks, with whom he for a time resided. Getting tired of their company, he came back to his employer, to whom he told his story of a great river, a mile broad, flowing between banks where grew the cedar in abundance, and behind them

were well-grassed ridges, copiously watered by streams. This was news indeed, especially at a time when New England was in the throes of a long drought. The doctor at once forgave his deserting servant and sent him down with a flock of sheep to the district he had discovered. Then he sat down on country close to the present township of Grafton, which may be said to have been founded on his station. Others soon followed. The Ogilvies broke through the difficult mountain ranges between the Clarence and the Upper Hunter, and settled at Yulgilba.*

Blacks sometimes guided pioneers in quest of runs to a good situation for a station. In 1852 Messrs. Beck and Brown were led by them to "the beautiful, open blue-grass country" on the Moonee, which had escaped the observation of exploring parties through being hidden behind a scrubby and sandy frontage. There they took up 1,100 square miles.†

Sir George Bowen might well find "something sublime in the steady, silent flow of pastoral occupation over North-Eastern Australia." With some leaps and gaps it was spreading from Moreton Bay to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Had he lived longer in Queensland, he would have seen it spread over a far more difficult and dangerous country—North and North-Western Australia.

A pioneering wave that had, more than any of its predecessors, a large speculative and commercial element within or at the back of it was that which set, in the seventies, towards the Plains of Promise discovered and christened by Captain Stokes. In the early forties it fell to the lot of Stokes to expose the hollowness of the dazzling visions conjured up by Sir George Grey on the sandy foundations of his imaginary discoveries in Western Australia. By a singular nemesis he was himself to make discoveries that proved as illusory. Rowing up the Albert River in the Gulf

* BARTLEY, *Australian Pioneers*, p. 41.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 175-6.

of Carpentaria, his imagination, rather than his eyes, saw stretching before him wide plains of verdure. Excited by his reports, and spurred with the prospect of huge financial gains, a large number of capitalists (Sir John Robertson among them) spread over them and towards the Queensland portion of the Gulf. It was soon realised that they had not the pastoral value they appeared to possess. The stock was brought back and the stations abandoned. Sir John Robertson might well say that his farms brought him in "infinitely more than his stations." A substantial profit is infinitely more valuable than a minus quantity.

The settlement of the Northern Territory recapitulates the settlement of the Southern provinces. The new province was settled from Northern Queensland. The first overlanders to arrive were D'Arcy Uhr with cattle, and Dillon Cox with horses, both in 1872. Next came Nelson and Giles—the four of them by the Roper River; then Wiltshire; all of them taking up rich land. Not a few died of starvation *en route*. Mobs of cattle followed these pioneer squatters. By 1877 more than half of the land suitable was taken up, but, as in Queensland, many of the runs were never, or not for a long time, developed. Pastoral occupation advanced, and pastoral associations, like that of the Musgrave Range, held immense areas all over the Northern Territory. All the pastoral land, from Port Darwin east to the Roper River and the Gulf country, was taken up and stocked. Some runs were 6,000 miles square, and carried 2,000 head of "fats." Fat cattle were shipped, already in the eighties, from Glencoe to Batavia and Singapore.*

The pastoral advance follows the twofold line of least resistance and most allurements. At first clinging to the coast or creeping up the coastal rivers, it gradually pushed inland and settled on the larger rivers or their tributary creeks. Sometimes, and oftener than once, it leapt over rich intervening country in order to gain

* DALY, *Northern Territory*, pp. 219-22, 263, 274-6.

a more distant objective. Thus, the tide of settlement that had flowed down the Murrumbidgee and the Murray to below Gundagai and Howlong evaded the stockman's paradise drained by the Wakool and the Edwards. It made the same unobservant blunder in pioneering to Adelaide. And (as is noted by Mr. Favenc, to whom I owe these instances) it made a similar irrational leap on the Darling Downs and left long unoccupied the country between the Lower Condamine and the Darling. Next it proceeded from the river-frontages to the back country and even skirted the edges of the sandy deserts. A later stage was reached when land that had been despised was perceived to have value for producing fat stock in the winter and spring seasons. A discovery of equal importance was made when it was found that artesian or other springs (for the propriety of the name is disputed by geologists) could correct the niggardliness of Nature and supply her deficiencies. Then rich, but waterless, regions in the interior were taken up. With the opening up of the country by means of railways the wavy or intermittent settlement of it was superseded by a continuous occupation. Examined closely, it might still disclose slight and swift rhythmical movements, and that "rhythm of motion," which Emerson first enounced and a great philosopher erected into a cosmic principle, would be found exhibited by the pastoral advance throughout Australia.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PASTORALIST AND THE CONVICT

IF the courtesan is the ghastliest female figure that human society has to show, the felon is perhaps its most repulsive male figure. Sequestered from his family, his old associates, the active community of his fellows, and sometimes even his companions in crime, banded only with that awful brotherhood that stretches back to the first murderer, with the brand of Cain on his forehead, shut within bare, narrow, dark cell, heavy doors securely locked upon him to the clank of ponderous keys, still heavier high gates and high walls closing him in, blest only with that light which brought cold cheer to Persephonê when she entered Hades, fed on meagre fare, clad in prison garb, sometimes chained to gangs, and always working with others as in a band of slaves, seen never by those of his own kindred, or only through gratings, lying under the condemnation of his fellow-men, his freedom to move from place to place severely restricted, warders looking at him sternly and treating him brutally, he toils through enforced ungenial labours that will not end for years and, under the old régime, may never end!

It must have appeared at first an aggravation of his fate when the convicted felon was sentenced to be transported to a distant country. It is hard for all to wrench themselves from a happy home and go out to a land where they will meet with friends or relatives, will enjoy comfort or luxury, may re-establish or regain health, and may find a career, with profit and dis-

tion behind it, open up to them. Far harder it must appear to the transported convict, who knew not what fresh horrors awaited him when he was sent on a six months' voyage to Australia a century and more ago. His worst anticipations were at first more than realised. Through the judicious and energetic prior supervision of Captain Phillip comparatively few deaths occurred during the voyage of the First Fleet, but the voyages of the Second and Third Fleets were funeral processions across two oceans. The filthy persons and clothes of the convicts, and the diseases thus engendered in the crowded ships, carried off scores of convicts and not a few free immigrants. The accounts given of the arrival of these fleets at Sydney are sickening and harrowing, and the suffering experienced during the voyages must have been immeasurable. Things doubtless improved in later years, but the voyage to Australia can never, under such circumstances, have been anything but a horror.

When the first convicts arrived in Australia, experiences of a new sort broke on them. Their food in an English gaol had been prison fare, but it was sufficient; in the newly-founded settlement grim and gaunt Famine was an ever-threatening visitor, and the allowance of food was often reduced to a point at which the bodily strength could not be maintained. The Colony was governed like a prison, even by the humane Phillip, and the crack of the lash was ever heard. They were soon set to till the soil and engage in mechanical occupations; and this alone greatly improved the situation of the convict. They reared buildings of many descriptions, and the sombre architecture of some old structures survives to tell its origin. A still more durable monument to the memory of the convict has been laid in the roads. To the north, south, and west of Sydney and across the Blue Mountains the massive roads resemble the mighty highways which the iron genius of the Romans formed for the legions.

Worse things almost than foul conditions and mortal

diseases made many of the later voyages unique in the sin-stained annals of mankind. Honest women, transported for a bagatelle or a point of honour, were constrained to prostitute themselves, and not a few of the ships were arenas of promiscuous sexual intercourse, therein resembling some ancient heathen temples on occasion of the worship of certain deities.

The numbers of the convicts were considerable for a new colony. The historical First Fleet brought out 565 men and 192 women, and two or three subsequent "fleets," together with a large number of single vessels, swelled the convict-population. In 1828, when he introduced a bill to amend the constitution, Mr. Huskisson stated that there were only 18,000 free settlers in a total population of 49,000, showing that New South Wales was still predominantly a convict-settlement. On the other hand, Sir James Mackintosh, supported by Joseph Hume, claimed that there were in the Colony 55,000 free settlers—an obvious and gross exaggeration.

In 1833 the convicts in New South Wales numbered 28,000. That was a large proportion in a population of hardly 65,000, and it conclusively proved that the Colony was still a convict settlement. But of the 37,000 free only 21,000 had been originally free; 15,000 or 16,000 were freedmen, ex-piree or pardoned convicts, emancipates or emancipists, as they were euphoniously styled. Only 30 per cent. of the population consisted of free citizens. In the same year there were in Van Diemen's Land as many as 15,000 convicts. Governor Sir J. Eardley Wilmot stated that 16,000 persons in less than four years were transported to that Colony. On the whole, it may be roughly computed that, when transportation to New South Wales ceased in 1851, some 90,000 convicts had been transported thither.

It has often been said, in well-meant deprecation of the possible evil consequences arising from the founding of a community on a convict base, that most of the convicts transported to New South Wales were guilty only of minor offences, which the savage criminal code

of that harsh day annexed severe punishments. Others have affirmed that the majority of the convicts were political offenders. It would be hard to say which of the two assertions is the more incorrect. Contemporary narratives like Collins's, the despatches of the Governors, the known histories of certain of the convicts, the evidence given before English Parliamentary committees, the observations of travellers, and the mere existence of such convict-hells as Parramatta, Port Arthur, and Norfolk Island, are there to prove the contrary. Some of the convicts transported to New South Wales in its first and second decades were certainly criminals of a venial type, whom the starvation too common in those dark days of the European war drove of necessity to crime, and whose nature was not criminal. Others, like the Scottish political "martyrs," were men of unblemished character. These last were, indeed, allowed to live in comparative freedom. Still others, like Dr. Redfern, were transported for actively sympathising with the mutineers of the Nore. Two were gentlemen who were transported for killing in duels. Some were women who were sent out for concealing, or conniving at the escape of, their lovers, French officers on parole. But the bulk of the convicts were men and women of undeniably bad character, and, with one striking exception, they were often the more irredeemably bad because they had a taking exterior and a plausible address.

What was to be done with such materials as these? What kind of a community could be built up out of them? The reformation of the convicts and the foundation of a new system of colonisation—that of "colonising-transportation," as it was called, were the chief objects of the settlement. Both were in large measure attained, but not in virtue of the means used to attain them. Numbers of the convicts were reformed, but not by transportation only and participation in public works, but as the instruments of a new form of rural industry, as servants of the pastoralists.

And the colonising of Eastern Australia was a success, but only because the existence of convict labourers enabled and facilitated the pastoral occupation of the country.

The convicts thus figured in a capacity that directly concerns us here. The majority of them were assigned to settlers who desired servants in their homes and on their farms, and were distributed all over the Colony. In 1835 over 20,000 convicts were thus assigned. There was romance in the assignment system, and there was tragedy. The convict might be assigned to his wife, who evinced her devotedness by following her convict husband oversea.

One of the largest pastoralists, John McArthur, had from 90 to 100; William Cox had as many as 120, besides free labourers, while D'Arcy Wentworth and a wealthy emancipist named Terry, who held the two most extensive estates in New South Wales, had more still. Sometimes the whole of the servants on a run were convicts or ticket-of-leave men. One pastoralist at Tumut in 1839 had twenty "Government men" and about 1,200 head of cattle. Another sent sheep from Tasmania in 1835 with, successively, six, five, and seven freedmen as shepherds. We observe their numbers gradually diminish. Eight years later there were 49 ex-convicts on the 40 stations in newly discovered Gippsland, among 327 of a population. As free immigrants arrived, runholders replaced their convict-servants by freemen.*

Fustel de Coulanges has spelled out, imperfectly and with difficulty the status and conditions of the unfree workers on the large Roman domains. We are more happily situated with respect to the convict servants assigned to the great landowners in the early days of Australia. The elaborate reports of Chief-Commissioner Bigge, the evidence given before him, the letters addressed to him, together with innumerable publications

* *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 169, 11, 12, 199.

of the time, throw a flood of light on all the problems connected with them.

The conditions of servitude were minutely regulated by the Colonial Government in a succession of ordinances, chiefly in 1804, 1814, and 1816. A master was required to feed and clothe his servant in a suitable manner, and similarly to a Government servant. The convict-servant was, moreover (and this is a feature of the institution that differentiates it from slavery), given a wage of £10 a year, on the assumption that this sum was paid for work done after three o'clock p.m., when, in theory, the servant was supposed to be "on his own hands"; and the money was generally to be paid in coin, not in kind. If he was assigned to one of the smaller settlers, he sat at his master's table and partook of the same food (the origin, possibly, of the practice of the colonial Boniface to sit always at the head of his own table); and compared with the English peasant of the period, who seldom saw butcher-meat, the Australian convict-servant, who had a pound of meat and a pound of flour, with tea, sugar, and spirits, daily given him, was handsomely bestowed. He associated with his master's family, and often married his master's daughter.* Evidently, the absorption of the convict-element began early in the history of the Colony.

When convicts began to be assigned as servants to settlers, their labour was regulated in an order issued by Governor Hunter in 1798-9, and in 1804, at the instance of Governor King, an indenture was made out. The working-day ended at 3 p.m.—a limit that had its origin in a kind of accident. During the times of famine that occurred so frequently in the early days convicts were often physically unable to labour till sunset. Hence, they were released at 3 p.m., and the practice hardened into a rule. If an amount of labour additional to that required by the Order or stated in the Indenture was exacted of them, they were to be paid at a rate fixed by Governor King, which remained

* BIGGE, *Report*, 1822, pp. 75-8.

unaltered till 1816, when Governor Macquarie settled it at £10, preferably paid in money.* The indenture-system, we may add, was maintained to the last.

When the convict had gained a ticket-of-leave, he could work for wages; the slave had risen to be a serf. Many of them were mechanics, and in that capacity they often erected the whole of a station buildings. Dr. Lang tells of a house where all the brickmaking and bricklaying, the carpentry and joinery, the plastering and shingling, and perhaps the cabinet-making and upholstery, had been executed by assigned convict servants.† The assigned convicts were also largely and for long shepherds. Probably, most of the shepherds in New South Wales during its first half-century were convicts, and as late as 1852, in Van Diemen's Land, Governor Sir W. Denison, a great believer in transportation, asked: to whom but to convicts could colonists look to cultivate their lands, tend their flocks, and reap their harvest?

Yet the convict shepherds of the early days were the chief agents in breeding trouble with the natives. They drove their masters' flocks into locations where their rights to encroach were, sometimes fiercely, disputed by the blacks. It was not only aggressions on the land that they committed. The reports of settlers (communicated to Lieutenant-Governor Latrobe and now reprinted) assert that the real cause of the quarrels between blacks and whites was always the same. The convict servants or shepherds trafficked with the *jins*, and, having made a bargain, failed to give the articles promised. Or, "they were over-familiar with" the blacks, "for the sole purpose of getting their women." Hut-keepers and stock-keepers took *lubras* from their camp and brought them to their own huts, and then shot the husbands. Sometimes they shot the blacks for sport. A ticket-of-leave man was not content with shooting blacks on his employer's station. He

* BIGGE, *Report*, 1822, pp. 74-7.

† *Account*, etc., i. 248.

invaded a neighbouring station and shot the blacks there.

In 1837-8 the Commissioner in New South Wales for the assignment of convicts had assigned 5,454 as domestic servants and from 10,000 to 12,000 convicts as shepherds, stockmen, or rural labourers. So large did the demand for convict servants become that, at one time, under Governor Darling, 2,000 applications lay unsatisfied. It was unequally and partially dealt with. Dr. Lang observed that one settler, who was in favour with the Government, would have many convict servants, while a neighbour, who was more under a cloud, was absolutely denied them. Did the reverend doctor, who knew so well how to look after his own interests and those of his family, forget, what he had elsewhere stated, that his brother, with only 1,500 acres, had no fewer than 40 convict servants?

The treatment of such servants was various and unequal. By an Act passed through the Legislative Council that able Governor, Sir Richard Bourke, decreed that magistrates sitting in Petty Sessions should not have it in their power to order a penalty of more than 50 lashes. This humane measure, according to Lang, raised a howl of indignation in squatting circles, where it was reprobated as ill-judged lenity and an encouragement to, or an evidence of, general insubordination on the part of the convicts; indeed, the squatters professed to dread an insurrection and a servile war.* Yet Lang says that he knew that, on the best-managed stations, punishment by flogging was scarcely ever used. On the other hand, where it was used, the legal 50 lashes were often inflicted "for insolence, laziness, or disobedience, or for any of the many constructive crimes and misdemeanours of the old convict code." †

Difficult problems arose in connection with the assignment of convict labour. In the time of Governor Darling, in the year 1827, the convict servants were withdrawn from a certain individual by a bench of

* *Account*, i. 246-7.

† *Ibid.*, i. 357.

magistrates. A strong protest was made. The Governor replied that he had an absolute right to assign or withdraw convicts, as justice might require, and he could at any time modify the status by issuing rules regulating it. If convicts were insufficiently fed or clothed, or were suffered to work abroad or at large, their employers were liable to lose them. About the same time Sir George Arthur, Governor of Van Diemen's Land (1824-36), admitted that all of his tasks together were less embarrassing than the "anxious duty" of apportioning public lands among the settlers and assigning convict servants.

The assignment-system was denounced by a select committee of the House of Commons in 1838 as unequal in its incidence, radically vicious, and surrounded by abuses. The assignment of convicts to their wives and to other relatives seems to have been a fact as well as a theme of fiction. Yet it was shown by evidence before that committee that on the whole it had worked well. In respectable and well-conducted families the condition of such servants was similar to that of servants in England. They were employed as teachers and domestic tutors, often imposing, it appears, on anxious mothers the necessity of their frequent presence and constant vigilance.

Two measures aided in stripping the assignment system of its abuses. Governor Bourke drafted a code of regulations for the assignment of convict servants. It limited the number of such servants and made it proportional to the extent of land and especially of land in cultivation. Not more than 70 convicts could be assigned to one proprietor or runholder. Governor Darling created an Assignment Board to correct the abuses arising out of the system, which, it was notorious, had often been a source of patronage. The result was, in some measure, to equalise the distribution of convicts among the settlers. Yet Dr. Lang gives instances of great inequality under Darling.*

* *Account*, i. 248.

Convicts were the stand-by of prospecting squatters. A pioneer squatter would give his men the choice. He would tell them that he was going into the interior. If any of them jibbed (did not like the job or the expedition), they were to let him know, and he would dismiss them and procure others, but if they stuck to him, he would stick to them, and give them good rations and £20 a year. Very few of them did jib, and most of them behaved so well that many of them got tickets, while some, like Patrick Murphy, Patrick Leslie's chief henchman, got conditional pardons.*

Ambitiously and daringly advancing into the wilds, and spreading themselves out in all directions as pioneers, immigrants discovered sites suited for new pastoral stations, and, "biting off more than they could chew," often earmarked them (as they could legally do), before they could stock them and, still more, before they could man them. The cry for labour was the cry of the famished and the despairing throughout pastoral Australia. Labour was dear and bad when it could be found, but most commonly it was not to be had. At their wits' end for it, the Northern squatters, in full sympathy with the squatters in Southern parts, petitioned the Secretary of State for more convicts. "What has" Patrick Leslie "ever done for the country," cried Dr. Lang, "beyond assisting in putting up public prayers to the 'god' Grey for more convicts?" The pioneer squatter of Queensland had done much more than that; but, at all events, he did petition for more "exiles." And one of the class that he adorned stated, when he moved a resolution at Ipswich in 1850 in favour of the introduction of convicts, that he "would rather have the pick of the gaols than the refuse of the workhouses."

As Cairnes and the economists have proved, slave labour is dear. So was the labour of those convicts who were the true equivalents of the ancient slaves. Governor King shall tell us why. The Governor wrote that they were perverse, and that their labour could

* CAMPBELL PRAED, *My Australian Girlhood*, p. 8.

be made profitable only through constant vigilance, inspection and the exercise of authority. Their overseers belonged to the same class, and they needed strong incentives—the assignment to them of convict servants, better rations, and the prospect of being pardoned—to induce them to perform their duty. One of the pastoralists writes of the “uselessness of most of the convict servants,” and John McArthur’s account of them is mainly adverse.*

On the other hand, it is stated that the ex-convicts imported into South Australia by Robert Gouger in 1838 were more skilful workers in the various classes of labour needed in a young colony than British workmen. In splitting timber, fencing, and putting up rough wooden buildings, they already had the expertness that nearly all colonists soon acquire.

Like the Jew or the peasant who understates his wealth in order to escape the rapacity of the tax-gatherer, the squatters, too, sometimes sought to disarm opposition by depreciating the labour of their slaves. Convict labour, they alleged, was not cheap labour. They did not *always* assume the dearness of convict labour. When it suited their purpose, they could profess that it was cheap labour. The members of an association formed in 1843—the Association for Obtaining Permission to Import Coolies (what a title!)—alleged that “the abundance and cheapness of convict labour had created their former land-fund.” (This was truly to magnify the convicts and the services they had rendered!) And they declared that the introduction of coolies was the only measure “calculated to avert the ruin with which they were threatened.” † The sagacious Governor, Sir George Gipps, admitted the scarcity of labour in the Colony, but evidently doubted the wisdom of the proposed step. The proposal came to nothing, but it left an unsavoury odour around the persons of the

* *Victorian Pioneers*, p. 169; and appendix to BIGGIE’S *Reports*.

† Mitchell Library MSS., vol. xlii.

squatters. One of the many reproaches that were flung in the teeth of Wentworth during his last contested elections was that he belonged to a class which had favoured the importation of coolies. 'Coolies,' or kanakas, have since then been imported in thousands into Australia, though for another class of labour than the pastoral; yet that very importation of slave labour reveals the true character of the coolie labour proposed to be imported and of the convict labour already utilised. All alike were forms of slavery.

The squatters fought hard for the continuance of transportation, but it was a new kind of transportation they contended for. It was denominated exilism, because it was the transportation of convicts who were to be free to act as assigned servants to the squatters, and who were known as "free exiles." The "exile" had passed through a term of probation in an English convict prison, and was to be permitted to live in rural districts for not less than a year. Sent out to New South Wales and Victoria, such individuals, it was expected, would be absorbed by the labour market. They were "sent out with conditional pardons. When hired, they were under no direct control as convicts." *

This was the expansion of the penal system designed by Earl Grey in 1848. He did not invent it. Four years earlier a public meeting held in Melbourne, clamouring for labourers and yet dreading the influx of expirée convicts from Van Diemen's Land, favoured the receiving of exiles. In that very year of 1844 an initiative in the same direction was taken in England. In 1844 Lord Stanley suggested that the Governors of these colonies should devise measures "to provide for the reception and employment of *exiles* from" England. This was possibly the first use of the term, at least in England, though we may suspect that it was in Australia that this softening of a harsh designation originated. As an experiment, 345 such exiles were sent out

* RUSDEN, *History of Australia*, ii. 466 (sec. ed.).

to Hobart, and in the following year 174 more exiles were despatched to Geelong. Simultaneously with this importation of exiles from England an importation of them went on within the Australasian colonies, in Victoria. The fact was discovered in this wise.

A despatch written in May, and received in Sydney in October, 1846, revived the question of transportation. In 1839 Sir John Jamieson, Wentworth, and Dr. Bland—president and vice-presidents of the Patriotic Association—urged that transportation should be continued, but coupled with the importation of immigrants, and associated with the old assignment system. They were unsuccessful, but Mr. Gladstone's despatch seemed to reopen a way to the accomplishment of their designs. Mr. Gladstone, then for a brief period Secretary of State, suggested that transportation, discontinued since 1839, should be revived under a "modified and carefully regulated" system. A committee of the Legislative Council was appointed to inquire into the subject. It was then found that private individuals had taken the matter into their own hands. As always, anticipating the action of Government and supplying it with a model, employers of labour in Port-Phillip had imported from Van Diemen's Land more than 1,800 emancipated convicts. Employers in New South Wales had furnished themselves with labour from the same source. Other ex-convicts, whether ex-pirees or pardoned, had also immigrated to Australia. The Governor of Van Diemen's Land had facilitated the process. He had issued pardons that were to be held valid throughout the Australian colonies. These pardons had been granted with the sanction of the Crown. Governor Gipps nevertheless informed Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe that such introduction of pardoned convicts was "absolutely illegal," and he warned Lord Stanley of the evils that might arise from the influx of such pass-holders. Governor Grey in South Australia no less protested against such a violation of the spirit of the Acts under which South Australia was founded.

In 1850-1 the 570 convicts brought to Moreton Bay by three ships were "quickly snapped up," we are told, by the pastoral tenants as 'assigned servants,' but many of these, it is stated, "deserted their hired service almost before the ink on their agreements was dry."

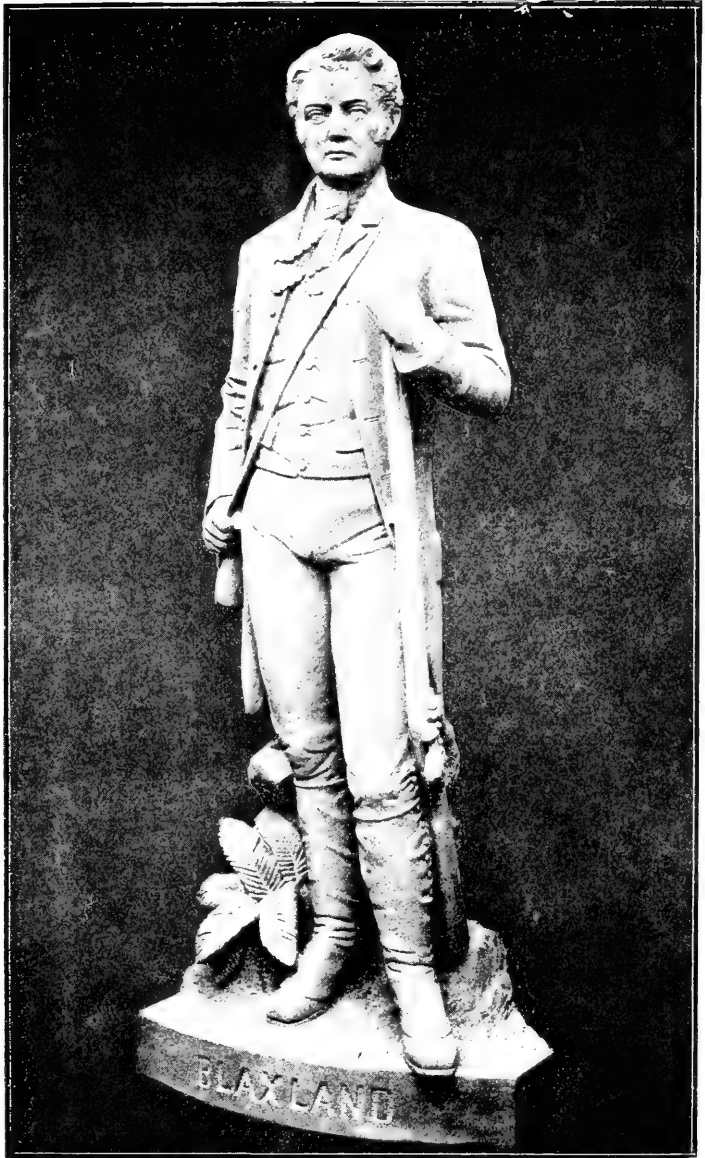
The early squatters of Queensland were almost unconditionally in favour of the importation of convicts. They might be for separation from New South Wales, but only on the understanding that it should be accompanied by the continuance of convict-labour. Forming a Northern Districts Association Separation in 1851, they passed a resolution to that effect. They had three million sheep, they said, and they had only 1,200 "exiles" and Chinamen, while they needed 3,000 shepherds and hut-keepers. There was an absolute dearth of free labour. Give us that, they cried. A few weeks later, with the arrival of the Bangalore in 1851, transportation for ever ceased, at least in Eastern Australia.

Convictism had another aspect than its primary or industrial feature. It bred a social and political movement. This surprising new complexion it owed to Governor Lachlan Macquarie, who reigned for the long period between 1809 and 1821. Macquarie is an interesting figure in Australian history. His dry, contracted visage, as of wrinkled parchment, the thin, tight lips, the aquiline nose, the high, arched eyebrows, raised as if in mute surprise that anyone should presume to dispute *his* authority, a lofty sense of his own importance, and an unswerving resolution—such is the physical man who looks out on you from his portrait. The physiognomy was true to his inner nature. Shall we say that his social ideal was low? It was, at all events, not that of a mean nature, but that of one who dreamt of lifting up to a higher plane the sin-stained souls whom he so sympathetically governed.

He came out to the Colony with no other thought than to govern the convicts by the methods hitherto customary. Only after he had entered on office did he entertain the happy thought that no retrospective

inquiry should be held into the antecedents of pardoned or expirée convicts, but that, due regard being had of their rank and character, they should be placed on the same footing with freemen. He it was gave definite shape to the scheme of the Home Government, and, in formulating it, developed it. He made of it the conscious end and deliberate policy of the Government. By his own confession he "saw the necessity and justice of adopting a plan on a general basis, which had always been practically acted on, towards those people"—the convicts. The error lay in the formulation. He almost necessarily blundered. As Dr. Marion Phillips has clearly perceived, this is the key to all the collisions and all the discontent under Macquarie.

It was well that the policy should be distinctly shaped and systematically acted on. Perhaps in no other way could its futility have been discovered. Yet it served an end. Macquarie could not raise the convicts to the level of freemen, or give them the status of free labourers, but he improved their position, and did something to wipe away the stain from meritorious emancipists. Throughout his entire term he set himself to exalt the convict class and their sympathizers, while he depressed and endeavoured to abase the free settlers. Under his rule grew up the emancipist party. Upon D'Arcy Wentworth he heaped favours, and the Wentworths, both father and son, became thorough emancipists. They were naturally devoted to Macquarie. D'Arcy did not hesitate, at Macquarie's instance, to accept a trusteeship that Marsden had refused, because it involved the trusteeship of two ex-convicts. In his father's house young Wentworth met with his father's friends, and these were ex-convicts. A Dr. Bland (whose name was afterwards given to a suburb of Sydney), who had been transported to Australia from India for there killing a man in a duel, warmly took up the convict cause, and contributed to its respectability. Dr. Wardell, who immigrated to Sydney as a barrister, taking up the emancipist cause as he would take up any cause at the



GREGORY BLAXLAND.



bar, or because of the spice of rebellion that is often like the iron in a young lawyer's blood, associated himself with Wentworth. They were appointed editors of official journals, and they controlled the *Government Gazette*. Swelling in importance, they soon formed a party in the State, or a political party gathered round them. In 1838 it was described by Sir W. Molesworth as "a powerful political party," whose object was to gain for old convicts the status and privileges of free citizens, including the right to sit on juries. The party consisted, not only of ex-convicts and those members of the free class who naturally sympathized with them, but also of persons of high respectability, who adhered to it "on the ground of political principle." When it is mentioned that the first great statesman of Australia, W. C. Wentworth, and his henchman, Dr. Bland, were among the leaders of the party, its character and importance will be appreciated. It formed an Australian Patriotic Association, which had Sir John Jamison as its president and the two public men just named as its vice-presidents.

It was strong enough to influence the government of Australia and even the policy of the Motherland towards its Australian colonies. Guided by it, aided by the Chief-Justice, and in spite of the veiled protest of one of the puisne judges, Governor Sir Richard Bourke threw open the civil jury to the emancipists, namely, to men who had been convicted of crime, transported, and had served a term of imprisonment. Allied with a kindred party in England, of which Archbishop Whately was the leader, it was potent to bring the whole system of transportation to an end. The assignment of convicts to service in towns ceased in 1838; in 1839 assignment in rural districts ceased.

While Macquarie reigned, the emancipists were in the ascendant. "In our present state," wrote John McArthur in 1820, the Governor's "distinguished friends are in the majority, and their voices preponderate in every public question." Macquarie treated the

enemies of the convict class with studied harshness. Marsden, in particular, he used with signal injustice. He banished him from Government House. After Marsden had resigned his position as a magistrate, Macquarie, who had ignored the letter of resignation, arbitrarily removed him from the bench. He refused Marsden leave to visit New Zealand, where he was doing a noble civilising work. And after he had left the Colony he levelled grave accusations against the chaplain. Did Bligh treat McArthur worse than Macquarie used Marsden? Yet Marsden submitted for the sake of peace, while McArthur raised the military in rebellion against Bligh and had him deposed.

Then the British Government, ill at ease in consequence of persistent rumours about Macquarie's eccentric methods of governing New South Wales, sent out Commissioner Bigge with instructions to probe to the bottom his management of affairs and the state of the Colony. His mission resembled the strict inquest that was made into the administration of the Spanish viceroys of South America before they could be allowed to return to Spain. He censured the building-craze of the Governor. He inquired minutely into the relations of the Governor with the convict-class. He condemned the favour shown to the ex-convicts and their enforced patronage. He disapproved of the Governor's ideal of the Colony as primarily a convict settlement, and he recommended that its gates should be thrown open to free immigrants, whose advent should be encouraged.

His recommendations soon bore fruit. The Royal Instructions to the Governor accompanying the Constitution Act of 1823, directed that the pampering of the ex-convict class was to cease. Convictions for forgery, mutiny, and rebellion were no longer to be passports to political privileges. Such injunctions could not very well be put into a statute, but they were express and explicit.

They were not therefore implicitly obeyed. Certain

of them were, indeed, carried into effect. In 1822 Newcastle was abandoned as a convict settlement, and rapidly overflowed with free pastoralist settlers. Its convicts were sent to Port Macquarie, and thence to Moreton Bay—that is, stationed outside of what is now New South Wales. The Colony was slowly getting rid of its convicts, who were being expelled to an ever greater distance from the free settlers. Meanwhile, they were gaining ground in other directions. Chief-Justice Forbes, who was appointed under the new Constitution Act, apparently came out to Australia resolved to treat the ex-convicts as Macquarie had treated them, and especially to give them a place on the jury-list. He is hypothetically described (by Mr. Rusden, surely in error) as the draftsman of the Act, and his friend, Sir James Mackintosh, unsuccessfully endeavoured to mould the bill in this sense on its passage through the House of Commons. By a trick of interpretation the Chief-Justice thought to admit ex-convicts to juries that sat at Quarter Sessions, but was foiled by the magistrates of Sydney, guided by Saxe-Bannister, the Attorney-General. At a public meeting held on Anniversary Day in 1827 the leader of the Emancipists, Wentworth, admitted that ex-convicts were not yet held eligible for juries, and still, as he reluctantly confessed, justice was done. Nevertheless, both he and his ally, Dr. Wardell, clamoured for their inclusion. A new opportunity arose in the discussion on the amended Constitution Act of 1828.

Thwarted on this line, the Emancipist leaders fed the flames of a constant agitation that was designed to procure for all freedmen the complete possession of political privileges. For many years it was ardently maintained. At last, as he perceived that his contention for the rights of the freedmen would injure his agitation for representative government to the Colony, Wentworth insensibly dropped the earlier and lesser cause, or let it merge itself in the greater. But things had not yet come to this pass.

Meanwhile, the agitation continued. The Emancipists sent Home petitions in one sense, and the Exclusives carried Home petitions in the opposite sense. To give these latter weight, and spread an atmosphere about the whole question, James McArthur published a volume in London in 1837 that was an able piece of special pleading on the subject. He strongly disclaimed all sympathy with the "slave-masters," and he repudiated the association habitually made between convictism and slavery. The parallel between even American negro-slavery—at all events, between ancient Greek and Roman slavery—is too close to be lightly denied. The power of the master to flog the convict, and his right to keep him in confinement, are two identifying features that cannot be mistaken. Was even Wentworth, the great champion of the unfortunate class, quite devoid of the sentiments of the slave-driver? A once well-known person in New South Wales, a squatter and a magistrate, James Mudie, published in London an exceedingly bitter and almost scurrilous volume on *The Felonry of New South Wales*. It abounds in pointed descriptions and pungent anecdotes, which sometimes throw a turbid light on the state of the Colony.

The marriage, or other sexual relationship, of the convicts with one another or with the free, and the consequent proportion of convict blood in the existing population of Australia, are subjects so disagreeable as to be habitually shunned. Writers like Father Tenison Woods and Professor Gregory minimise both, and a third has said, in a lovely phrase, that the convicts failed to "achieve domesticity," or to leave offspring. But "facts are chieft that winna ding," and here the facts are dead against the rash generalisers. When Commissioner Bigge visited Australia in 1819–20, he found a very different state of things. He affirms that the marriage of male convicts with freedwomen, and with young white native women, was "very frequent." So common was it that regulations had to be made in connection with it; in such cases application had to be

made to the chaplains. On the other hand, the marriage of male white natives with female convicts or emancipists was rare; the young fellows naturally looked down on them.*

It does not follow that they had no intercourse with them. On the contrary, promiscuous interbreeding was general. Illicit relationships were common, and there are many references to them; while the frequent prohibitions for an unmarried settler to accept female assigned servants tell their own tale. They were the mistresses of the unmarried settlers. It could not have been otherwise. Sexual relationships, whether legal or illicit, could not have been hindered. Comparatively few free unmarried women came to the Colony before Governor Macquarie left it in 1821; the mass of the emancipists therefore could have married few others.

In later years we find frequent references to convict *ménages*. Even if it could not be proved that the transported felons begot children, it remains a fact that, there being few free women in the Colony for the first thirty years of its existence, the mothers of a large proportion of the first generation of Australian-born children were, or had been, convicts. But of course it can be proved that the male convicts had offspring. The total absence of charges of infanticide in early Australia would, negatively, suffice to prove that the children who must have been born in large numbers survived.

A writer whose exhaustive researches clothe her utterances with authority ascribes even the characteristic Australian ethnical type to its convict origin. The type of the "cornstalks" was created. In a single generation they were already differentiated from their parents not by the growth of new traits, but by the reversion of the children of the convicts to the older Anglo-Saxon strain that had disappeared in their parents. Tall, loose-limbed, and fair, they were the fathers and mothers of the "cornstalks" to be. Daring

* BIGGE'S *First Report*, p. 105.

equestrians, skilful and trusty sailors, quick to learn all trades without needing to serve an apprenticeship, they were evidently the ancestors of the typical Australians of to-day. More than this: the same writer boldly affirms that the characteristic Australian sentiment—self-sufficingness and independence—is an inheritance from the early convicts. This is doubtless an error. The origin of moral qualities can seldom be ascertained with certainty, but it is maintained in the present volume that that high inheritance—the ideal of the elder Humboldt—is a necessary result of the free pastoral life.

Every aspect of convictism in New South Wales and Tasmania reveals its consanguinity with ancient slavery. The Australian convict was a slave for life or a long term. He worked in chain-gangs on the roads or in *ergastula* at Parramatta or Port Arthur, in Tasmania, and in New South Wales they were near to raising such a slave-war as led in ancient Rome. The convicts were, in fact, the first form of the labouring class in the new colony, and to some extent, by no means wholly, its real progenitor. The class they gave birth to had the great career I have depicted. It became a party in the State, and had for its leader the greatest among early Australian statesmen. It grew and grew—until it vanished, when the convicts were lost in the crowd of free workmen. That crowd is now the dominant Labour party in the world. It manipulates, as in New Zealand, ministries to govern in its interests and legislatures to make laws to its advantage, and, when its time comes, it quietly takes possession of all the powers of government, as happened in Western Australia, or has thrice happened in the Commonwealth of Australia, still more recently in South Australia, and within the last few months in New South Wales.

CHAPTER XV

THE PASTORALIST AND THE NATIVE

IN almost every country where members of a white race have visited or settled they have been received by the indigenes with cordiality and without suspicion. Where unfriendliness has been shown, it is because previous visitors had acted unworthily and prejudiced the natives against foreigners. Only in rare instances does this idyllic state continue. It is quickly succeeded by a state of open warfare or veiled hostility. This may linger through years. Or it may be ended by a decisive defeat. Then the tribe may submit, and in due time come in and work peaceably and usefully for the squatters, who, during this period, may lose numbers of their sheep and cattle and some of their shepherds.

The Australian natives rendered essential services to the pioneer colonists, such as few savage peoples have rendered to their conquerors and the invaders of their country. This was doubtless due in large measure to the nature of the pioneers' pursuits. The blacks could have given little aid to the agriculturalist or the industrialist, but they could and did abundantly help the pastoralists, whose occupations, moreover, did not collide directly with the activities of the blacks. Several blackboys were employed on every run, especially in Northern Queensland; on Naraigin station, occupied by Murray Prior, there were three, his daughter tells us. As stockmen they were invaluable. Herds were kept together by their untiring skill in tracking, and the

success of the Queensland pioneers may be ascribed chiefly to the interest they took in their work. So, at least, affirms an unusually competent judge.* They were armed in high measure with the passive virtues not uncommon in savage races. They cheerfully bore suffering and privation. They were hilarious around their camp-fire, and constant corroborees afforded an outlet for their sociability.

The relations between whites and blacks in the more unsettled districts were often hostile, but where the whites were just and humane, a beautiful harmony not seldom prevailed. In the late thirties, Mr. Bartley relates, two squatters in the district of Armidale by the kindness they showed induced a small tribe of blacks to remain almost constantly near their station, employing the young men as stockmen, shepherds, and domestic servants. In Queensland, says Mrs. Praed, recalling her childhood (and the writer has been furnished with similar evidence about the interior of New South Wales), they were nurses to the children, and carried them on their backs across creeks, or when they climbed trees in search of opossums; Mrs. Campbell Praed, when she was a little girl, was taken by them to a corroboree. The children went to (not into) the gunyahs and played with the blacks. Young Rose Murray Prior loved a half-caste boy, and Ringo taught her to find grubs, iguanas, and the eggs of the black snake. At the camps of the blacks she learnt to plait dilly-bags, chop hives out of trees, and make drinking-cups out of gourds.†

The state of things that prevailed in the southern colonies in the thirties, forties, and fifties, and in Northern Queensland in the fifties and sixties, is still to be found in the Northern Territory and the North-West. The stations from the Gascoyne River right through the country and round the coast to Port Darwin, says a well-informed writer, "are practically run by

* GRANT, *Bush Life in Queensland*, ii. 155-61.

† CAMPBELL PRAED, *My Australian Girlhood*, pp. 64-8.

Native labour." Natives used to shear on all the stations in the North-West, and on some they do it still. They are fencers, shepherds, rabbiters, gardeners. The men plant and tend ornamental trees, such as the oleanders. The women "can be trained to make excellent housemaids and nurses," and they are said, by their patient ministrations to make the life of the white woman in these solitudes endurable. But they must be treated according to their dispositions. They must be left a good deal of their freedom, and they must not be too much interfered with.* What was said about them in more southern districts in the forties is true of them still. Mr. Brown, of the famous Queensland runholding firm of Beck and Brown, "always found them reliable, if reliance was placed on them, and if they were kindly, though firmly, used." They did their work well, he admitted.†

The relationship had its darker side. The blacks, writes Mrs. Campbell Praed, who knew the sunny side of them so well, "were a vague terror of my childhood." Nightly she listened to blood-curdling stories of murder by the vindictive and treacherous natives, and again to tales of pursuit and wholesale massacre by the infuriated whites. That very night when she was taken to the corroboree she witnessed the rehearsal of a deed of blood, and she ever afterwards reproached herself with not having betrayed to her father the wild things she saw, believing that she might thus have prevented the terrible tragedy that followed, when venerable mother and marriageable daughters, men and boys were slain under their own roof. News would come that several hands had been murdered at Young's station, near Gladstone, or that Folsom, of Balloo Creek, had been speared on the verandah of his house, and that another squatter had been tomahawked while camping under his dray. After a succession of such outrages, or after one that was more than ordinarily

* *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 14, 1910.

† BARTLEY, *Reminiscences*, p. 185.

hideous, when the passions of the whites were roused to fury, a war of retaliation, fierce and deadly, would be entered upon, and might last for months. Stockmen and trusted blackboys would be armed, and a foray made. The far-famed and ill-famed black police might be summoned. The fighting blacks would almost all get killed, and the rest of the tribe be driven further northwards. But the lesson would be only too well learned. A spirit of distrust would grow up on both sides. Refined women would learn to shoot with the revolver and become deadly shots.*

Nevertheless, these same women were not blind to the blood-guiltiness of the whites. "We should have had no murders," said one of them, "had we consistently appealed to the generosity of the blacks." After telling the story of the Myall Creek murders, when Attorney-General Plunkett was determined to procure the conviction of the leaders, Mrs. Praed adds: "Had there been more like Plunkett, the national conscience would have had less cause for self-reproach." † It was terror or a desire for revenge that drove the blacks to commit their worst atrocities. The abuse of fire-arms by convict servants was a frequent source of strife. Countless hundreds of blacks, a police magistrate testified, had been slaughtered away in the back country, where high-handed wrong-doers were equally free from protection, as they complained, and secure against detection, as they felt, if they did not boast of it. ‡ All the histories and most contemporary narratives abound in such tales. The case of the Myall Creek murders is almost classic, but it needs to be told again because, unhappily, it is typical of this class of crimes, if it is far from being typical of the punishment meted out to them.

In 1838 some 40 or 50 migratory natives, more than half of them women and children, were temporarily

* PRAED, *op. cit.*, pp. 74, 100.

† *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

‡ RUSDEN, *History of Australia*, ii.

encamped near a station that was situated on Myall Creek, close by a tributary of the Darling River in the far north of New South Wales. They are described as being, all of them, "inoffensive and friendly." Returning to his station after a short absence, the superintendent missed the natives. Riding about the run, he soon found the charred and blackened remains of about 30 of them. A ghastly narrative was elicited from Mr. Hobbs's stockmen. One day, he related, a band of armed whites had come from a distance to the station with the avowed object of taking vengeance on the blacks for some alleged wrongs they had committed. The stockman, a convict, as were most members of the band, at once joined it, and together they attacked and destroyed the greater number of the natives. Ten or twelve of them were said to have escaped, but these were next day chased by the whites and to all appearance made away with. The only provocation alleged was that the blacks had speared some cattle twenty or thirty miles further down, and it was not proven that they were the same blacks. Sternly natural means, yet such as in elder days would have been regarded as supernatural proofs, led to the finding of the remains of the victims. As "the Cranes of Ibycus" in Schiller's impressive poem sheeted home a murderer's guilt, so hundreds of birds of prey soaring over the spot guided the searchers. Seven men—not squatters, as, I think, Mrs. Campbell Praed calls them, but convict servants—were tried for the crime, found guilty, and promptly hanged. Need we say that the resolute Sir George Gipps was then Governor? What other Governor that New South Wales has had would have dared to outrage the sensibilities of the colonists by hanging white men for the murder of mere blacks? A "most wise judge—a Daniel come to judgment," Sir W. W. Burton, long afterwards that President of the Legislative Council who, with nineteen members resigned their seats and solemnly left the Council chamber because the Council had been swamped with

new appointees to carry the Free Selection Act—tried the case, and in sternly comminatory language gave a narrative of the facts that was itself damning. What made his condemnation all the more necessary was the confession of the murderers, who avowed the commission of the offence charged. They “were not aware that in killing blacks they were breaking the law.” The admission is itself a condemnation of the state of society in which such a sentiment could be cherished. The inflexible judge and the unsparing Governor were savagely vilified, while the condemned criminals met with sympathy.

The case against the settlers can be very strongly stated, as it has been by Mr. Rusden, who holds a brief for the defence of the poor blacks, as he did for the Maoris. Lust, fear, hatred, and revenge, he energetically says were the motives actuating the settlers in their relations with the blacks. He had access to the letters from Victorian pioneers addressed to Lieutenant-Governor Latrobe while they were still unpublished, and he extracts passages that tell strongly against the whites. One told how women and children were killed; another of the “impudent and cruel conduct of some of our people.” He also cites expressions of opinion by Governor Darling, who in 1826 “apprehended” that certain memorialists, complaining of the “incursions of numerous tribes of black natives” and their “threats and murderous designs,” were themselves responsible for the Native disorders because they did not reside on their properties, and also because irregularities had been committed by some of their own people. He adds on his own account that the atrocities perpetrated by the whites can be but faintly imagined by those unacquainted with the convicts, who were the servants of the squatters. We must take a broader view of the subject than his sympathies permitted Mr. Rusden to take.

In all parts of Australia the advance of the white settlers was in the nature of an invasion, and was

resisted by the blacks as invasions are resisted. Wave after wave of settlement flowed along the shores of rivers and the banks of creeks, and occupied ground where the nomadic blacks dwelt, and drove away the game on which they fed. Can we be surprised that the plundered and expelled natives had recourse to acts of war? All the records are full of such facts and events as belong to a state of war. Open that very collection of letters from Victorian pioneers, and what do we find? On almost every page there are accounts of depredations by the blacks, injuries inflicted on cattle, and murders committed by them. Open it, then, at page 190. Thus, in 1844, on one station, a flock of sheep was driven away, and all the winter "the natives were very troublesome." At another station 1,000 sheep were lost, and a shepherd badly speared. At another, the blacks stole, during the winter, 800 sheep; and there thefts of sheep were continual. A fourth firm of squatters had 200 sheep stolen, and in one winter lost in all about 900 sheep. Next year the losses of the settlers by robberies were considerable, and one firm lost 1,000 sheep. But we need not continue the monotonous record. A long list of stations could be given in several provinces, whence the runholders were driven away by the persistent hostility of the blacks.

Real and deep provocation there doubtless often was. Thus, a settler on the Glenelg River, Victoria, reports a "fearful loss of life" on the part of the "poor natives by two heartless young vagabonds" left as overseers.* There is abundant evidence, again, to show that the black women were taken and kept, their husbands being sometimes murdered to facilitate the rape. On the other hand, the settlers asserted that the women either voluntarily offered themselves or were offered by their relatives in exchange for presents.†

Cupidity on the part of the blacks was doubtless

* *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, p. 30.

† *Ibid.*

another source of trouble. They had hitherto lived on the few mammals, nearly all marsupials, that were natives of the country, and the few wingless birds; but when they came to know the flavour of beef and mutton, they keenly relished them. They therefore stole sheep and cattle for food. Yet all observers state that those they killed for food were few to the numbers they killed in revenge.

As the pioneer flits from place to place, driven northward, westward, and north-westward by the pressure of population, precisely the same phenomena haunt his steps. In the desert, on his way to the Northern Territory, the overlander may come upon a lonely grave, and, close by the remains of an old gunyah, find another—the graves of victims of the blacks. Elsewhere another opened grave is found under an ironwood tree, on the bark of which may be read the words, rudely cut: "Travis—speared by the blacks," with the date of his death. The blacks had dug up and scattered the bones, and tried to obliterate the inscription.*

In the new country—the western side of the Northern Territory and the Kimberley district of Western Australia—the blacks continue the troubles they have created everywhere else that the white man follows them. They still do great damage among the cattle, still more by those they scare than by those they kill. The chroniclers of to-day tell the same tale as the historians of a past generation—that cattle are easily frightened or maddened by the scent of the blacks, and, when they have been once scared, they grow wild and unmanageable. Yet the number of cattle destroyed by the blacks in the Kimberley district alone is very great: it is estimated at 4,000 head a year. There are always, we are told, from 40 to 100 cattle-spearing blacks in the gaoles of Wyndham and Derby,† and there,

* MRS. DOMINIC D. DALY, *Northern Territory*, pp. 332, 334, 337.

† *Sydney Herald*, April 30, 1910.

another relates, the blacks who come from the interior with the drovers cast contemptuous glances at their brethren in chains. In the vast North-West, where the white man found both goldfields and grassy prairies to reward his discovery, alone in all Australia, the blacks are able to hold their own with the invading whites.

The young pioneer squatters in the Northern Territory cheerfully encountered hardships and perils. Some lay down and died of starvation. Others, and these also not a few, died of thirst, and men have been found lying face downwards in a dry creek, though they had wealth in their pockets. Very many, alas! were murdered by the natives. We hear of the long list of brave men who paved the way for future squatters and planters. Page after page of Mrs. Daly's otherwise bright volume on the Northern Territory is chilled with the ghastly narratives of the crimes of the blacks, such as the Daly River outrages in 1882, and again those committed in 1886. In the latter year the newspapers teemed with the "murderous outrages" committed by the blacks, not only on the coast, but all over the back blocks, or in the interior. The squatters took stern reprisals. They learnt, the amiable lady informs us, that summary jurisdiction (or massacre without investigation and without trial) was "the most efficient and humane" way of dealing with these outbreaks. As a detail, blacks were obliged to disarm before they approached a settlement.*

One of the most distinctive uses that have been made of the lower races by immigrant peoples is to treat them as what they really are—beings raised some degrees above the animals, but retaining animal characteristics. Darwin tells us that the Pampas Indians are employed by the Spaniards as bloodhounds have been employed in Cuba—to track out persons who endeavoured surreptitiously to pass by the custom-house stations in the mountains. The Australian blacks

* DALY, *Northern Territory*, pp. 324-5, 219-22, 226-7, 294-6.

have for ninety years been employed in a similar manner. In the early days, whenever (as was constantly happening) convicts tried to escape, they were instantly followed into the bush by the black tracker, who had a wonderful facility in tracking them, and, being armed, seldom failed to bring them back, dead or alive.

The too-famous Black Police has been the theme of both history and fiction. It naturally arose from the employment of the blacks as trackers—first of cattle, and next of robbers and murderers. It was the almost necessary counterpart of the earlier white mounted police raised by Governor Brisbane in 1825. That consisted of picked British troops, and it is described as having been valuable and efficient. For five and twenty years it did much to ensure the safety of the settlers and guard their stock. Some writers have deplored its disbandment in 1850, but though it might doubtless have been effective in hindering the rise or the spread of bushranging, it had accomplished its primary task. By 1850 the blacks of New South Wales, at least, had ceased to be formidable.

The Black Police was first formed in Victoria in February, 1842, and the men were induced to join the force through the influence of a leading chief. So, at all events, states Mr. Thomas, a Protector of the Aborigines.* Another account affirms, doubtless of another district, that the brothers, Pulteney Dana, were its organizers and chiefs. The first-mentioned were recruited from the Yarra tribe; the second from beyond the Murray and in Gippsland. The blacks composing the force were selected for their physique and intelligence, and they were well disciplined. The troopers, with their white commanding officer, rode up in uniform, on serviceable, well-conditioned horses, with their carbines slung, their swords dangling and jingling. They had a smart, serviceable look.

Their way of setting to work has been described by

* *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 70 ff. BOLDREWOOD, *Old Melbourne Memories*.

a close observer. Suddenly, as they ride, one dismounts and picks up a small piece of bark that had lately been ignited. The other troopers gather round him. They next examine every foot of the way. They then find a tree whence a branch has been cut by a tomahawk. The trail has been found. Patiently, for hours, they follow it up, and soon they discover fresh signs of a body of blacks having passed that way. A yell is heard from one of the troopers, and all of them gallop up at full speed and disappear in the scrub. A black is stationed at each corner, and with two troopers they charge the centre of the black tribe that has been found. They soon make short work. In a few minutes the resistance is broken.—From Victoria the institution passed to New South Wales and Queensland.

The gradual destruction of the aboriginal blacks was the greatest of the negative changes that the settlement of Australia produced. The last of the continents was converted from a black to a white. With the disappearance of the indigenous dark race and the advent of the most robust of the fair races it was definitely launched on its career as a rival and leader of other continental peoples. This great obstacle to the complete colonisation of Australia had necessarily to be removed. Much injustice and many wrongs were doubtless inflicted in the course of it. All such acts must be branded; and all have been bitterly expiated. They do not affect the justness of the process. Landed reserves have been made and aids to soothe the sufferings of a dying race. But the natives had no longer a place in countries where all the conditions of existence, even the climatic, had been radically changed.

There can be no question of right or wrong in such a case. The only right is that of superiority of race, and the greater inherent capability on the part of the whites; the only real wrong on the part of the blacks is their all-round inferiority and their inability to till the ground or even make use of its natural pastures. All other wrongs were incidental and, in comparison, trivial.

This was the capital offence, and it was irredeemable. Let their usefulness as shepherds and stockmen be admitted, fully let it be allowed that, when the gold-fever broke out, many a station was completely deserted by its hands, and the case for the blacks and against the whites is not really bettered. They could work as servants of the white immigrant; as Darwin already found in the thirties, they could not work for themselves. They were not industrial units. The Maoris learnt to farm; the Australian blacks never learnt to keep sheep or carry on a cattle-run.

Their disappearance was a natural necessity. It came about in obedience to a natural law. It was effected by natural processes, and followed on the lines of the substitution of vegetal and animal species all over the world.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SQUATTERS' BATTLE

THE squatter was engendered by the excess of individual energy and enterprise over the inertness and routine of Government. Finding himself cramped within the settled boundaries of the Colony, he pushed out in search, not of "fresh woods," but of pastures new. To regularise his occupancy of such lands "beyond the boundaries of location," he was granted an annual license at a moderate rate, with additional stock-money on his head of cattle or sheep. Then, for a quarter of a century, ensued a keen contest between the squatters and the local Government, sometimes aided, sometimes thwarted, by the Home Government. For, by the Orders in Council of March 9, 1847, the squatters gained from the Colonial Office under Earl Grey, a long-demanded and bitterly denied "recognition of their claim to become, by mere occupation, entitled to the ultimate freehold" of vast territorial tracts. At least, so it was in New South Wales and, with more uncertainty, in Victoria. South Australia, wisely guided by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, and New Zealand, judiciously governed by Sir George Grey, escaped the scourge. Wakefield, indeed, always protested against the creation of a Crown title to the users of natural pasturage. His protest had little weight with the able and conscientious, but wrong-headed and crotchety Secretary for the Colonies. With this exorbitant acquisition, the run-holder, now definitively known as the very lordly squatter, the patriarch of his county or his district and

the patrician of the State, became the chief collective power in New South Wales. Such was the outcome of a mere claim to a constructive title or pre-emptive right in respect of pastures held under license.

The making and the conceding of the claim were the beginning of woes. The battle resembled the struggle between the great fief-holders of England and the Crown; and the steps by which the feudal chieftains emancipated themselves from their obligations to their suzerains and acquired an absolute property (as absolute as ever British law allows it to be made) in their granted and their hereditary estates, was a rehearsal of the struggle between the run-holders of New South Wales, claiming property in their runs, and the Government and the people.

Towards the end (December 19) of 1840 Governor Sir George Gipps luminously explained the situation to Lord John Russel, then Secretary for the Colonies. He described the licensed occupiers, or squatters, and plainly differentiated them from the American squatters. They were often gentlemen of good family, officers of the army or navy, or graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, and they had always some means, while some of them were wealthy. They did not yet claim (if Gipps was right) to have a secure possession of their stations, nor did they assert any right of pre-emption. They knew that their lands would eventually be taken from them, or that they would have to pay an advanced price to purchase them, but they believed that, as the country was gradually thrown open to occupation, one district after another, in the scramble they would have at least an equal chance with other buyers at auction. On one point especially he doubted the wisdom of the regulations made earlier in the year. One of these regulations permitted individuals to select special surveys of 5,120 acres. Had it been perpetuated, it would have definitively legalised the large runholder. Now, it was decided that no more special surveys of 5,000 acres, equal to eight square miles, like some near



SIR GEORGE GIPPS.



Melbourne, should be allowed. In February, 1841, the regulations were rescinded. Gipps, strong and capable, had prevailed. Lord John Russell, who had seemed to favour the big squatter, now scared him by a proposal to raise both the licenses and the assessment on stock. He thought "the license might be raised to five or six times its present amount" (from £10 to £50 or £60). The proposal threw them into a panic, for times were bad then. Then came a new bill carried by Lord Stanley, who decided that no more gratuitous grants should be made (a superfluous decision), and provided, instead, that land should be sold by auction at a minimum price of £1 per acre, while special blocks of 20,000 acres might be sold. Evidently, there was an uncomfortable oscillation between large and medium-sized domains. Governor Gipps was still against the large squatters, but had not yet influenced Lord Stanley as he influenced Lord John. He took measures to heighten the panic Russell had created. He aimed at limiting runs, say, to an amount that would suffice for 500 head of cattle or 5,000 sheep. The license for each run (many of the squatters held a number of runs) was to be separate. Improvement or cultivation would give the occupier "a kind of right to purchase a portion of his run, or otherwise to obtain secure possession for a term of years after occupation as a tenant-at-will."

After making official inquiries through 1843-44, Gipps issued his Regulations for the Occupation of Crown Lands. They do not now appear specially onerous. He merely proposed to limit the extent of runs and to exact contributions according to the area occupied and the number of stock depastured. The right of the Government to oust the squatter was to remain absolute, and runs were to be resumable without compensation. The whole colony rose against the new regulations like one man. But it was by no means a rising on the side of the squatters. Little sympathy was felt for the would-be aristocracy, though much might be somewhat hypocritically expressed. It was a rising against arbitrary

taxation, without the assent of the semi-elective Legislative Council that then represented alike the governors and the governed. The squatters skilfully made what was really their cause appear to be the popular cause. A question of tea lighted up a national insurrection in North America, and a question of land-tenure gave birth in Australia to a quasi-national rising; for it was as passionately urged in Victoria and the future Queensland as in New South Wales. For once, and once only, the three most potent personalities in the Mother-Colony made common cause and banded themselves together against the action of the Governor. Wentworth opposed them, and endeavoured to stamp out what he called "the leprosy of the beautiful Squatter Regulations," because he had quarrelled with Gipps, and because he belonged to the threatened class and saw his personal interests endangered; but he opposed them on larger and more creditable grounds as invasions of that British fetish—the liberty of the subject. Robert Lowe opposed them, it is said, because he too had quarrelled on pitiful personal grounds with his former patron Sir George Gipps, but far more, we may hope and believe, because the regulations were in collision with those Liberal principles of which he was all his days the convinced exponent. Finally, Dr. Lang opposed them, partly (we may suspect) because Gipps had thwarted the repayment of a large sum to the Scots Church—that is, to Dr. Lang—which Lang had expended in its name; but again, we are fully assured, because they constituted—or appeared to constitute—an attempt at taxation by the Executive without the indispensable sanction of the Legislature.

The squatters saw their supremacy threatened, their very existence endangered, and they fought as men fight *pro aris et pro focis*. Not only the squatters, but merchants and traders, who however must have been largely dependent on the squatterocracy, united to oppose the new encroachments on the privileges of the Legislative Council (whose prerogative of legislation

seemed menaced) and the rights of the people. Meetings were held in Melbourne and Sydney and elsewhere. The storm, for such small communities, was loud and threatening.

Though of iron mould, Gipps bent before the blast. He privily communicated to a member of the Council certain modified, indeed new proposals. Settlers buying their homesteads would secure thereby undisturbed possession of their runs for eight years. A second purchase would secure another eight years' tenancy, and so on. Rights of the Crown over the runs, he admitted, were still absolute, but he laid stress on the security derived from the character of the British Government, which would not arbitrarily deprive any squatter of his run.

This concession but slightly appeased the rage of the great landholders. Ben Boyd, holding 388,000 acres, and paying as a quit-rent what Mr. Mantalini would have termed "the ridiculous sum" of £80, presided over a protesting meeting. Robert Lowe, who at one time was a henchman and nominee of the Governor, strongly opposed the Regulations, doubtless finding in the squatters his most remunerative clients. Lord Stanley loyally stood by the Governor. He refused to acknowledge the doctrine that an absolute property in their runs inhered in the occupiers. Still, he would communicate to the runholders a feeling of security by granting them leases for an eight-years' occupation of their runs.

Not only did the combatants win their cause; they accomplished a far greater result. They succeeded in annulling the regulations of Sir George Gipps, but they also made the triumph of the squatters' cause a certainty. It was largely through the influence of Lowe, Wentworth modestly said, that the pastoralists were granted fixity of tenure and rights of pre-emption. Lowe and Lang aided in bringing about that reign of the shepherd kings they were the first to deplore.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SQUATTERS' VICTORY

THE squatters *en masse*, with such great leaders and such powerful allies, had defeated the Anti-Squatting Governor. They were not therefore satisfied. The concessions that had been made to them had only whetted their appetite. They were now organized and grown conscious of the unity of their interests and the menace of their strength.

Circumstances favoured them. Their neglect to seek the annual renewal of the license, and the failure to demand payment of the annual fee, laid the foundations of their subsequent claims. They began to look upon their runs as their own. The permission to sell them—that is, to sell their grazing rights in them—confirmed this feeling of ownership. What a man can sell belongs to him. With every improvement made—the building of a house, the equipment of a stockyard, the stocking of the run—the sense of proprietorship was strengthened. They “formed” the station, it was said. Was a station taken up and abandoned without being formed? It was no-man’s-land and lay open to all-comers.

The mood of the squatters was well expressed in some doggerel lines of the time. When A. Boyd was supposed to be asked by Earl Grey whether the squatters would accept leases of their runs, he mimicked the famous rhyming despatch of Canning, and replied :—

“ My lord,
It sounds more clever,
‘ To me and to my heirs for ever ! ’ ”

That was their ambition, and their habitual feeling was one of possession.

Rolf Boldrewood, in one of those very years (1844), has well expressed the exultation of the runholder :—

“Pride and successful ambition swelled my breast on that first morning as I looked round on my run. My run! my own station! How fine a sound it had, and how fine a thing it was that I should have the sole occupancy—almost ownership—of about 50,000 acres of ‘wood and wold,’ mere and marshland, hill and dale. It was all my own—after a fashion—that is; I had but to receive my squatting license, under the hand of the Governor of the Australias,* for which I paid ten pounds, and no white man could in any way disturb, harass, or dispossess me.” †

Their case had its strong points. It seemed a terrible thing that men who occupied thousands of acres with thousands of cattle and tens of thousands of sheep, should be at the mercy of an outcry for the sale of any portion of their land, and lack security of tenure. Fixity of tenure, convertible into freehold by means of a right of pre-emption, was their aim and their war-cry. They scouted the rights of the Crown. They demanded that the annual license-fee should be abolished or made nominal; that quit-rents should be waived or reduced; and that the control of the Crown lands should pass into the hands of the Governor and the Legislative Council, which should frame such leases as would give security to occupiers.

The clamour for security on the part of the squatters was incessant. They asked that it should be made impracticable for selectors to buy their runs, or any considerable portion of them, over their heads. Was it unreasonable? Does not every tenant of a house, in London, Sydney, or Christchurch, solicit an assurance that some mean, grasping, or (it may be) vindictive individual does not successfully tempt the cupidity or unwisdom of his landlord by taking his house from him by offering a higher rent? And does he not desire

* Sir C. FitzRoy was the first Governor-General of Australia.

† *Old Melbourne Memories*, ch. v.

the same security against the result of a sale? Both claims appeared nothing more than reasonable to the mass of the people in Australia, as to the few in Great Britain who felt any curiosity on the subject. In 1845 associations were formed in both England and Scotland, where the runholders had many influential connections, to protect the special "interests of the squatters and the general interests of New South Wales," as if, for once at least, the interests of the individual and the community were identical. The head of an ancient Scottish noble family, Lord Polwarth, supported the claims of the pastoralists and the granting of long leases. His son, Henry Scott, pleaded their cause in the House of Commons. A meeting was held in London, where a motion was carried proposing the granting of leases for twenty-one years. (All the proposals were for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, and it is curious to observe that State terms are so often multiples of seven.) Lord Stanley, Secretary of State, was evidently moved—as deeply, perhaps, by his now confirmed Toryism as by the plaints of the big squatters or the remarkable and rare consensus of public opinion. He was now inclined to favour the granting of leases. He referred the matter to "his man, Friday," as Dr. Lang coarsely named the masterful Governor, and plainly with the desire that the Governor should supply him with the necessary encouragement. Gipps was no weakling, and he was reluctant to yield to the demands of the pastoralists. He still held that "to allow the large squatters to seize on all the waste lands of the Crown would be to ruin the Colony." To the last he clung to quit-rents. He still objected to leases for more than a year. He opposed the right of pre-emption. Yet he felt that the drift of opinion, official as well as public, was all in the direction of making the concessions demanded. Struggling vainly against the same current, Lord Stanley brought in a bill granting leases for seven years in place of the annual licenses, which had insensibly merged in virtual leases. The subject was still

under discussion in official circles when the thoughts of all were absorbed in the vital question of protection *versus* free-trade. Lord Stanley disappeared from office with the fall of the Peel ministry, and, in England at least, the question went to sleep for a time.

But not for long. A new Secretary of State, Lord Howick, soon to become Earl Grey, succeeded to Lord Stanley. He too was masterful, even perverse, and ill to deal with. He quickly discerned the way the wind was blowing. In his very first year of office, 1846, he already expressed his willingness to grant leases. He said, quite incorrectly, that Governor Gipps had recommended the granting of eight years' leases. He could not but perceive that English opinion was steadily growing favourable to the concession. He confessed that it was thought by his predecessors and himself that such a change should be made as would prevent the squatters from continuing in a state of barbarism. A bill was introduced in 1846, and Orders-in-Council of 1847 gave effect to it, which provided for the granting of leases for a maximum term of fourteen years, with an average term of eight years. The right of pre-emption was conceded. The squatters had gained all that they asked for, and far more than they can ever have hoped to obtain.

The effect was immediate. Possessed with a feeling of security they had never before known, the squatters everywhere began to make "improvements." They fenced, and were the better able to cope with the ravages of disease in their flocks and herds. They built stock-yards and commodious woolsheds, and were in a position to perfect their breeds and accurately class their wool. They built houses and could now, in most cases, first offer a home to women of their own class, who introduced the elegancies of life where rudeness had prevailed, brought civilisation into the midst of barbarism, and refined the manners of the men who had already sunk some degrees in the social scale and were in danger of sinking further. They had lived from

hand to mouth ; they might now plan and build and breed for a decade or (as in their intoxication they believed) for all time. The squatters had triumphed.

A strange reaction in public opinion ensued. The Colony appeared to wake up to a sense of what it had done, and realised that it had bartered away its birth-right, for no visible equivalent. By the admission of the squatters' historian, G. W. Rusden, Earl Grey's bill, with the Orders-in-Council that gave effect to it, exasperated the community against them, because it locked up the land, squandered a magnificent inheritance, and led to corruption in the Government departments by favouring intrigues to obtain land. A profound jealousy of the great pastoralists sprang up and bore bitter fruit for many years. Their very friends turned against them. Robert Lowe had fought hard for them, and when—largely through his agency, we are assured on the high authority of Wentworth—they had got all that they claimed, this ardent advocate of their rights wheeled round and became the squatters' implacable foe. None had more strenuously battled against the proposed squatting regulations of 1844 than Dr. Lang, but from the moment the Orders-in-Council of 1847 were issued, he reprobated the squatters as the natural enemies of the rest of the Colony. The populace even lifted up its heel against the man who had long been its idol, and when Wentworth stood for re-election in 1851, he had to make a passionate personal appeal to the electors of Sydney, who were bent on driving him out, and who relented so far as to place him at the bottom of a poll where Dr. Lang, his sworn foe, was at the top. The democracy at last realised that the squatters were its natural enemies.

In New South Wales the great extent of the land that remained in the possession of the Crown, which was still available to make provision for new selectors without infringing on the integrity of the runs held by the squatters, hindered the question from becoming a matter of life and death. It was otherwise with more

limited Victoria. There the demand for agricultural land or land for townships was keener and less easily satisfied, and the resentment against the Orders-in-Council was stronger. Mr. Fawkner, one of the founders of Victoria, and (as Mr. Rusden would say) a squatter *manqué*, denounced the squatters as robbers. Lieutenant-Governor Latrobe took the same side, though he, of course, did not use the same language. He was more argumentative. In 1851 he was still opposed to making any concessions to the pastoralist occupiers. He warned the Government of New South Wales against the impolicy of recognising the claims of the squatters to the fee-simple or to the right of pre-emption over them. He advised the revision of the Orders-in-Council and, especially, the rescission of the acknowledgment of the squatters' pre-emptive rights. Sir Charles FitzRoy, the squatters' Governor, considered the extinction of these rights, or even the qualification of them, as "incompatible with the preservation of the faith of the Crown pledged by the Orders-in-Council." The subject was referred to that solvent, or confuser, of all colonial political problems—the Colonial Office, which on this occasion thoroughly earned the title of the Circumlocution Office. The Duke of Newcastle was then at the head of the hybrid department of War and the Colonies—and in those days there was apt to be a wonderfully close connection between war and the colonies. The Duke took ample time to consider the many knotty questions submitted to him. He thought to shelve the question by referring the decision on it to the law-officers of the Crown. Their opinion, or that of one of them, would have settled the matter, could any legal opinion have settled it. So high an authority as Sir Roundell Palmer held that the occupants had "a clear and indisputable right to leases." The Colonial Office, somewhat scared doubtless by so positive a deliverance, did not venture to ask the opinion of the other law-officer, Sir Alexander Cockburn. In a quandary, the Duke of Newcastle refused to lay down any

principle, but authorised Governor FitzRoy to sell land that was required for public purposes, even though it was within the boundaries of a run. But it was apparently by annexing private conditions to the sale. On the other hand, he was authorised to grant leases, and for the maximum term, if the pastoral tenants were content to receive them exempt from those conditions which are at once injurious to the community and useless for merely pastoral purposes."

At this point, as far as New South Wales or Victoria was concerned, the matter remained, and the outbreak of the Crimean war drew the thoughts of Ministers in England in a different direction.

In South Australia there was never any collision between the pastoralists and the agriculturalists, and there the Orders-in-Council were successfully applied.

The judgments passed on the Orders-in-Council, framed to give effect to the famous Waste Lands Act of 1846, were various. That of Robert Lowe was the most trenchant in expression. As against a fellow-subject, he held, they gave the squatter "every muniment that can give permanence to possession." As against the Crown, they "left him defenceless." As a sale was impracticable, the squatters' temporary occupation was equivalent to permanent alienation. Their terms, indeed, seem to leave no doubt on the subject. According to cap. 2, sec. 6, the land in occupation by a runholder could not be sold during the continuance of the lease. They could still be sold to such lessee. But the power given to a Governor to dispose of lands for public purposes, implied the absolute dependence of the squatter on the Government. A difference was made according as the lands occupied were in settled or unsettled districts. A new local Order, permitting the short leasing of lands in settled districts, also permitted such lands to be sold, but in the unsettled districts—that is to say, over the greater part of all the colonies—land was held under leases that ran for fourteen years, with a prior right to purchase inhering in

the leaseholder. The character of the Orders seems beyond cavil. They granted practical temporary possession to all holders and permanent possession to all men of adequate means.

It was a squatters' victory, and was on all grounds defensible. For that longer or shorter period in the history of every Australasian colony, while the pastoral age endured, such a hold on their tracts of pasture-land was acquired as would enable that age to be lived out to the fullest measure of the colony's capacity. Nothing less than a degree of possession while it lasted would have sufficed to treat those pastures and breed those sheep and cattle that have formed far greater stores of wealth than have been dug out from the bowels of the earth. Nothing less would have reared the men—grazier, stockman, drover, carrier, shepherd and shearer—who solidly laid the human base of the pastoral age.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SQUATTERS' TRIBUNE: W. C. WENTWORTH

It is altogether fitting that one of the greatest Australians should trace his ancestry back to famous historical individuals. Wentworth claimed to have sprung from the most celebrated of all the Wentworths—that Earl of Strafford, whose motto and practice of “Thorough” assured for him an immortality of glory or infamy by the side of the master whom he served only too faithfully; and the present head of the family, who maintains the pretension, possesses a pedigree drawn up by Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King-at-Arms, which upholds the claim. Unfortunately for the patrician pride of the founder, the claim is not allowed by the unofficial heralds who open or close at will, on due cause being shown, the rigid circles of aristocracy. The conscientious Mr. Ashworth Burke professes to show that the Australian patriot belonged to an old Irish family which traces its ancestry back to D’Arcy Wentworth of Athlone, in Roscommon County. The Irish family was, none the less, of English origin. Wentworth of Athlone was the son of Michael Wentworth of York, who was himself the scion of a distinguished family. Wealth did not accompany the immigrant to Ireland, or did not remain in his family. Our statesman’s father is described as “an impoverished Irish gentleman,” who emigrated to New South Wales, as his ancestor had done to Ireland, to improve his fortunes, and in this respect he was more successful than his ancestor. Speaking in Sydney in 1848, W. C. Wentworth said: “It is on my native soil



WILLIAM CHARLES WENTWORTH.



that I here stand." The expression was a figure of speech. He was born at Norfolk Island, and that island, it is true, was then a dependency of New South Wales, but it was only by a forced construction that he could call himself a native of New South Wales. A native of Gibraltar or of Malta might properly describe himself as an Englishman; he certainly could not speak of England as his natal soil. Like most men of his commanding stamp, however, Wentworth was taken at his own valuation, and in those years, while they were still friends, Robert Lowe spoke of him as "the great son of the soil." It was morally, if not physically, true.

He was not the first member of his family who played a part in the history of New South Wales. On a memorable occasion he declared that "the best blood" in his veins flowed to him from his father. D'Arcy Wentworth came out to Australia in the same ship of the Second Fleet in which the still more famous John McArthur at first sailed. Had it contained no others of note, that fleet would have been well freighted. Having some medical education, D'Arcy was early sent to Norfolk Island as a Government surgeon, and there his record was not quite unblemished. In later days he was publicly reprimanded by Lieutenant-Governor Johnston for disobedience to orders, and soon after he was suspended from his office as Assistant-Surgeon by Governor Bligh. He must have grown wealthy, but not, we may feel sure, as a medical practitioner. Under Governor Macquarie D'Arcy Wentworth and two others undertook to erect a hospital in Sydney, provided they were allowed to purchase and retail annually 15,000 gallons of spirits for a period of four years; for the Colony was still in the bad days of the infamous traffic in spirits, which a succession of Governors had endeavoured to suppress. According to Dr. Lang, who is not an impartial authority on the subject, the arrangement was a highly gainful one to the contractors; the building

was equivocally known thereafter as the Rum Hospital.* Some adjacent public-houses were owned by the syndicate.

With his high connections young Wentworth readily found official employment in a colony of officials. In 1811, at the age of eighteen years, he was appointed Deputy Provost-Marshal. But also, with his great talents, he soon found employment for himself, and in 1813, when only twenty, he accompanied Gregory Blaxland and Lieutenant Lawson in the first successful escalade of the Blue Mountains, when the plains of Bathurst and the valleys of the Murrumbidgee and its tributaries were thrown open to an invading army of pastoralists.

The younger Wentworth was destined to greatness. While still an undergraduate at Cambridge he unsuccessfully competed for the prize for a poem on Australia, which equalled most prize poems in the splendour of its versification, and surpassed them all in reality and in passion bred of an intimate acquaintance with the things described. Returning to his native land, he soon began to take an active interest in public affairs. We shall see how prominent and how glorious was the part that he played on certain great public questions, while his policy on others gradually alienated from him the popularity he had honourably won.

In 1819, while he still resided in England, he published his great work on Australia, which long held a place as the first book adequate to the subject that had been published. There a diatribe against Chaplain Samuel Marsden was relieved by an eulogium of Governor Macquarie for his behaviour to the Emancipists. In 1824 he returned to New South Wales in company with Dr. Wardell, where they practised as barristers—the only ones in the Colony, and they enjoyed a lucrative practice. He started a newspaper, which was a scourge of officialism. He set up as the leader of the Emancipists, and plotted the overthrow of Governor Darling; and,

* *Account*, i. 141-2.¹

when Darling was leaving the Colony, he organized a disgraceful orgy at his home of Vacluse and under the cabin-windows of the ship in which the anti-emancipist Governor was to sail.

With his innate distinction and his squatter's habits and surroundings, Wentworth can never have been a democrat. Yet it is notable that, unlike James McArthur, Charles Cowper, and other squatters, or Robert Lowe, who was the squatters' friend, he never sat for a county in the Legislative Council. As if he were too great to belong to a party or a class, he habitually presented himself to the electors of Sydney, even after he had lost much of their confidence. Indeed, he professed to be a tribune of the people. He showered contempt on the nominee members of the Legislative Council. He asked the *plebs* if it would tamely submit to an intolerable form of government. He urged it to demand the common-law rights of every subject, which an unreformed Parliament had for forty-five years withheld from it. He denounced financial arrangements—namely, the fixing by the Government of the permanent officers in its employment—made without the knowledge of the Council. He claimed for the Council the right to control the proceeds of the sale and leasing of Crown Lands. It was their industry, he told his hearers, that raised the revenue; would they endure taxation without representation? If they did, they were “a conquered, an abject, a degraded people.” All this was in 1833, and he aided in forming a Patriotic Association to demand a reformed constitution. He led the patriots, but he also led the Emancipists, and it was on this ground that most of the squatters deserted him for a time.

His temper was autocratic. He browbeat a sheriff who, presiding at a political meeting, ruled a point of order against Wentworth's party. “I will neither be curbed myself nor suffer any friend of mine to be curbed,” he haughtily cried. It was not justice for others that he sought, but justice for himself. Like

some of the advocates of *laissez-faire*, he was resolute to assert his own rights, but less eager to defend the rights of others.

Wentworth's political career did not hinder him from eagerly pursuing his own interests. Dr. Lang described him as "one of the largest speculators in land and stock in New South Wales." He was a wealthy land-owner in Australia, but land-hunger is not easily sated, and, shortly before the annexation of New Zealand, Wentworth and other members of what we should now call a syndicate concluded, with some nine Maori chiefs who had lately visited Sydney for the purpose, a treaty, duly signed and sealed, for the cession of the greater part of the South Island of New Zealand! According to the veracious Dr. Lang, the syndicate bartered for the twenty million acres thus easily acquired some coarse blankets, some cheap English muskets, some kegs of gunpowder, and other such articles.

Such is the perverted account of the transaction supplied by Dr. Lang's distorting imagination. The true account of it varies considerably. (1) Instead of 20 million acres in the South Island, only ten millions were contracted for, together with 200,000 acres in the North Island. (2) In place of Lang's burlesque purchase-money (blankets, etc.) each of the (nine) Maori chiefs was to be paid £200 and to receive life annuities of £100. It was a bad transaction, but not quite so bad as Dr. Lang misrepresented it. Truthfulness and exactitude were not the fighting doctor's cardinal virtues.

Happily for itself, New Zealand was then a political dependency of New South Wales, and the government of the Mother-colony was then, still more happily, in the strong hands of Sir George Gipps. When the bill for giving effect to this extraordinary transaction came before the Legislative Council, the Governor-in-Chief did not spare the 'bloated monopolist.' In scathing language he reprobated the shameful bargain. If all the corruption, he asserted, that had defiled England since the expulsion of the Stuarts were gathered into

a heap, it would not amount to such a sum as was involved in the transaction now debated. If all the jobbery since Walpole were piled up into one job, it would not be as big a job as this that Wentworth now asked the Governor or the Government to perpetrate. The chief owner of twenty million acres! He would have been a squatter *in excelsis*! And all these broad acres bought at a price reckoned at the rate of a farthing per 100 acres! That would have surpassed missionary Williams, missionary Taylor, and other like worthies, who "bought" only 110,000 acres from the unsuspecting Maoris, and paid much more for them. But there was still, Sir George held, such a thing as public virtue, and public integrity was not banished from the bosoms of men in office. In the name of these high attributes the Governor urged the Legislative Council to pass the prohibitory bill, declaring that no titles to land were valid that were not derived from or confirmed by the Queen-in-Council. Wentworth pleaded before the Legislative Council for two days, but the bill was passed. Wentworth threw up his commission as a justice of the peace, and Gipps withdrew his recommendation that Wentworth should be placed in the Legislative Council. It was a humiliating defeat for Wentworth, and he was not one of those who forgive. He was thenceforth Gipps's implacable foe.*

Wentworth's defeat on this historic occasion nerved him to press for the reform of the Council. A few years later he partially succeeded. The Council was made elective in 1851. A few more years, and he was to be completely successful. Constitutional government was granted to the Colony. His defeat had other results still. When Gipps endeavoured to inoculate the Colony with "the leprosy of his beautiful code of squatters' regulations," as Wentworth called it, the great squatter, not yet the squatters' tribune, led the van of the resist-

* Dr. Lang reprints the speech of Sir George Gipps, and he could hardly have taken a more deadly means of paying off old scores. See his *Account of New South Wales*, i. Appendix.

ance. Not till 1847, when the Orders-in-Council were issued, he was at last won over to be the pastoralists' chief. A year later he recanted his Radicalism. In 1839, as a member of the Patriotic Association, he was so much of a Radical that he advocated a £5 franchise ; in 1848 he went so far back on his old contentions that he deemed a £20 franchise low enough.

A great landholder, Wentworth was one of eight individuals on the Liverpool Plains who held, among them, 1,747,840 acres ; and the possession of three great stations was but the just expression in landed property of that puissant personality. He was the squatters' tribune ; and in that capacity beyond doubt the greatest service that he rendered to the cause of the pastoralists was the introduction and the carrying of the Lien on Wool Act 1844 ; and he threatened to leave the Colony if it was vetoed by the Home Government.

Wentworth was not the tribune of the squatters on their own terms. He had not always been their ally. During the twenty years of his crusade on behalf of the Emancipists he was necessarily opposed to them, and in his book on Australia, published in 1819, he launched an indictment against the " Excluvivists "—the squatters and others who would deny to the emancipists the possession of political privileges. In 1844 he delivered against Ben Boyd, the largest squatter in Australia, the most stirring of his speeches. When he addressed his constituents in 1848, he admitted that he belonged to an unpopular class. " I perceive that the squatters are no favourites of yours," he told his audience, " and I am a squatter." He was a squatter rather by status than by predilection, and (I am authoritatively informed) he never resided on any of his three large stations. When he stood for election, he did not seek a squatter's constituency ; he preferred to sit for Sydney, and he long rejoiced in representing the democracy. It was Robert Lowe, far more than himself, he explained, whose influence and oratory had procured leases of their runs for the squatters. No one, he asserted, " had more

earnestly upheld the people's right of freehold." He was, in fact, a statesman by vocation, and if he was a territorial prince, the virtual owner of half-a-county, it was for the honour of the thing and the prestige attached to the practical possession of extensive domains. He was the Australian homologue of the great English and European nobles, in whom the government of their country was inseparable from the tenure of great landed estates.

The possession of those great estates conspired with his innate pride of race to convert Wentworth openly into the aristocrat that he had always been at heart, and dug a gulf between his earlier and his later career. The old emancipist and Radical was already a Conservative. In that great year of 1848 Wentworth stood at bay, as if resisting the advent of that democracy that was to sweep men like him for ever from power. He spoke like Gladstone in 1866, defending himself from a charge of tergiversation or apostasy. On the Transportation question he had acted with Cowper and Lowe. "Why, then," he indignantly asked, "do you raise your voices against me only? Why am I to be singled out for obloquy for doing that which all besides have done? Why do you not clamour down others with this charge?"

He was accused of misrepresenting and slandering the Irish. It was a dangerous charge in those days, when the vast majority of the emancipists was Irish, and therefore the bulk of the population was Irish. It would be a dangerous charge even now, when nominally 30 per cent., but probably, if personal observation may be trusted, 60 per cent., of the population of Sydney, is still Irish and Catholic. His retort was passionate and personal:—

"It is true that in a certain debate in the Council I did denounce the Irish murderers—those branded ruffians who, in some of her counties, were polluting her soil and blasting her fame with the blood of innocent and unresisting victims. In the full abhorrence and detestation of my heart I denounce these men,

not only as destroyers of human life, but as the assassins of Ireland's good-name. Some of the best blood in my veins is Irish, and who will venture to tell me that I am bold enough or base enough to calumniate the land of my father ? ”

Unlike Gladstone, he had grown Conservative with age, and the champion of the unrepresented populace would now restrict the franchise he had proposed to enlarge in 1839. He had ceased to be a democrat, and yet was much of a Liberal. His chief offence, however, was that he was a squatter, and the squatters were not now popular. But who made them unpopular, he queried ? What monopolies and what privileges loaded them with odium ? Who gave them fixity of tenure and the right of pre-emption ? It was the very people—the anti-squatting democracy—that gained these things for the maligned squatter. Was it not they who crowded to the Royal Hotel in Sydney in 1844, and petitioned the Home Government to grant twenty-one years' leases to the squatters ?

Did he not again resemble Gladstone—the Gladstone of the famous peroration beginning :

Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor—

when he said—still in this impassioned harangue of 1848 ?

“ You may cause it to be written on the tombs of my friend and myself—*Here lie the rejected of Sydney*. But I will venture to prophesy that in juxtaposition with these words posterity will add—*Who gave to those who deserted them the liberty of the Press, Trial by Jury, and the constitutional right of electing their own representatives.*”

There spoke the true patriot, and the words that followed burned still more ardently with love for what was, by both birth and adoption, his native land.

As it happened, he was not one of “ the rejected of Sydney,” which in after-years was twice or thrice to reject another great Liberal, Sir Henry Parkes, but only after he had rejected his own most characteristic principles.*

* RUSDEN, G. W., *History of Australia*, ii. 449-54.

He was returned at the head of the poll in 1848, in recognition of the justice of the self-vindication his haughty spirit had stooped to make ; but when, three years later, he was precipitated to the lowest winning place on the poll for the same metropolitan constituency, a revulsion of feeling took place in his mind. He was called on to resign, but, declaring that he would hold the seat to which he had been legally elected, he inwardly resolved that he would retain it only till he had carried his proposed constitution through the Legislature, and then he would shake the dust of the Colony from off his feet. He carried his great measure, and, having been sent Home to coach it in its passage through Parliament, he washed his hands of Australian affairs and settled down to the life of an English country gentleman. It is sad to have to make this confession, but there are authoritative reasons for stating that he was cut to the heart by the ingratitude of his fellow-colonists for the priceless services he had rendered to his native country, and he was overwhelmed with disgust at seeing the government of the Colony fall into hands that he deemed unworthy. If he felt in this way while the country was still being governed by as fine a type of statesmen as have ever ruled a British Colony, what, if he were still living, would he say now when a Labour Ministry has just been installed in the places he once coveted in the Colony he did so much to make and mould ? Still more, how amazed he would be when he learnt that, in the vast Commonwealth that had been reared on the scaffolding of the Australian colonies, another Labour Ministry was guiding the policy of all Australia, while its chief was figuring at the inauguration of another federation within the Empire ! And he would perhaps have honestly recognised that both of these Ministries were comporting themselves in a manner not unworthy of even so great a constitution-maker.

For seven years Wentworth remained in England, taking no part in English public life, and estranged from the only public life that he knew. Then, like many an

exile, he felt a strong yearning to visit once more the land that was virtually his birth-land. He was received like a returning monarch. For some months he condescended to hold the high office of President of the Legislative Council in New South Wales; but feeling that he was no longer of that time or that place, he again left the shores of Australia. He was never to see them again. Ten years later he died. But Australia, in one of whose political constitutions was embodied his immortal part, was also to possess all of him that was mortal. He lies buried in his own estate at Vacluse, near Sydney, where he was laid with a solemnity and pomp befitting the occasion. We might sing with the poet of "The Return of the Emperor":

"The clouds shall pass away from thy great glory;
 Nothing to trouble it for aye shall come;
 It shall expand itself o'er all our story,
 Like a vast azure dome."

According to Mr. Rusden, he had a classic Roman head and a massive figure, but a slouching gait and a cast in the eye. His voice, his son tells me, was extraordinarily powerful and could be heard at a great distance. In his lifetime opinions differed about his rank as an orator. He was compared and contrasted with Robert Lowe. The speeches of Lowe were the "abler" of the two: they shone with greater literary brilliancy; they were more redolent of culture; but they were cold with a purely intellectual passion, while Wentworth's burned with elemental fire and fused facts, citations, and ideas in a molten stream. From the passages cited by Rusden one would infer that they might be compared with the speeches of the great orators of our race—with Pitt and Gladstone, if not with Fox and Bright, with Daniel Webster, if not with Wendell Phillips; but either comparison would do him far too much honour. Their elevation, their passion, their invective are not always sustained; there are commonplace passages and conventional language; in construction and diction they are often careless and sometimes slovenly. His

elocution was as unequal as his rhetoric. Roger Therry, Attorney-General in the forties, says that his manner of speaking was "abrupt," and asserts that he neglected to sacrifice to the graces. It was the man behind his utterances that made them impressive and persuasive.

With all its greatness, Wentworth's was a career *manqué*. He never fulfilled the measure of his possibilities. He had no adequate arena. The Legislative Council of his day—and he was fifty years old before he attained even that small eminence—with its few members and limited powers, was no proper sphere for such a royal nature. He skilfully led his small Opposition faction in that Council, but he had never a chance of being a great Parliamentary leader. Still less had he an opportunity of proving himself a statesman. Never, save indirectly and, as it were, surreptitiously, in the time of Governor Sir Charles Fitzroy, when he enjoyed the repute of being the dictator of the Colony, did he influence the administration of the affairs of State. It was all a matter of environment. In England, one or two generations earlier, he might have been a Pitt or a Chatham; a generation later, he might have been a Gladstone. Even in Australia he is now almost forgotten, and sometimes, on high juridical authority, he is disparaged, as Sir George Grey is now either ignored or contemned in New Zealand. Outside of Australia he is almost unknown. Yet, though he lacked the highest kind of greatness—moral grandeur, he was one of the Empire's greatest sons.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ANTI-SQUATTING GOVERNOR: SIR GEORGE GIPPS

So vast a movement as the evolution of the pastoral interest necessarily engendered men of towering individuality and commanding characters, between whom a conflict necessarily arose. Had Wentworth and his followers, aided for the time by men who were afterwards his keenest foes, encountered no effectual resistance, it seems far from improbable that the great demagogue, who was animated by the same rebellious and domineering spirit as John McArthur, would have done as John McArthur did, and endeavoured to work a revolution in the State. Had Governor Gipps been as heady and as foolish as Governor Bligh, he might have furnished just the kind and amount of provocation that would have made Wentworth's passion blaze up in open revolt. Happily, Sir George was a man of a different stamp. Cool, wary, and resourceful, the anti-squatting Governor was more than a match for the squatters' tribune.

Belonging to a profession—that of engineering—which has produced some of the greatest philosophers of England, Germany, and Switzerland, and to that military branch of it which has furnished several eminent colonial Governors, and fresh from an official mission in Canada, Gipps came to New South Wales equipped with all the resources requisite for pacific conflict and with much of the experience necessary for dealing with conceited colonials. His term of Governorship, as it happened, lasted through the period when the struggle

with the squatters was at its acutest phase, and during it he was brought into collision with almost every leading public man of the time. Before him pleaded once, and pleaded successfully, the future land reformer, Sir John Robertson—doubtless, on a squatting-question, relating to quit-rents unpaid or overcharged—one day to take Gipps's place as a chief enemy of the squatters. A few years earlier he fought a battle to the death with Wentworth over that brave monopolist's bold scheme for the cheap and easy acquisition of the whole South Island of New Zealand and some one hundred thousand acres in the North Island. From that moment Wentworth was the implacable enemy of Gipps. He let slip never an opportunity of thwarting Gipps's policy in return, and as his was a commanding voice in the reformed Legislative Council from 1843 onwards, he gained many a petty victory.

Gipps was not a natural enemy of the pastoralists. He held that Australia was in general better fitted for pastoral pursuits than for agriculture. Like Darwin, he was struck with the poverty of its soil and the destructiveness of its droughts. He did not know that 750,000,000 acres of the island-continent enjoyed a rainfall heavy enough to grow wheat. He was unacquainted with the rich wheatlands of Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales, which now stand represented by a trifle of five million acres. He nevertheless believed that "the time would come when the improvement of the land would be aimed at," but he also believed that "it would be wiser to let this time arrive naturally than attempt to accelerate it by any contrivances." By "improvements" he must have meant agriculture. He was therefore no enemy of the pastoralist régime. Why, then, did he so strongly take ground against the squatters? He was moved solely by a spirit of justice, or of righteous indignation at the arrogance of men who claimed possession of the estates they had been granted on annual license, not on lease for a term. He could perceive a haughty spirit

growing up in them that would brook no remonstrance. He was resolved to retain for the Crown the lands that belonged to the Empire and were held for its behoof. He therefore stoutly resisted all attempts on the part of the pastoralists to get rid of the payment of quit-rents, or of the annual license-fee, to mass their stations into runs, and to acquire leases. Over all these contentions the battle raged hotly through Gipps's administration.

Gipps was to furnish an occasion for the squatters to triumph. In 1844 he called for reports by the Crown surveyors on the state of the pastoral runs throughout New South Wales. On the strength of these he took it upon himself, in 1845, to issue regulations affecting them. He called on all runholders to take out separate licenses for each station; he proposed to raise a considerable sum for the necessities of the Government by augmenting the amount payable for each station; and he notified all unlicensed persons as intruders. It was a strong measure, and it delivered a deadly blow to the squatters. These had come to look upon themselves as life-tenants—nay, as inalienable proprietors of their runs. The small license-fee of £10 per annum they had doubtless paid once, believing that they paid it once for all, and that they thus acquired proprietary rights over their stations. With impunity they ran several runs together, as a person ties several packages together which he is leaving at the Left-Luggage Office, in order that they may count as one.

The Governor raised the whole Colony against himself and his "regulations." Men who had never before run in the same harness now ran side by side or, perhaps, tandem-wise. Wentworth, Lowe, and Lang, men who differed on everything else, agreed on this. The patriots, the lawyers, and the reformers banded themselves together in order to aid the squatters and fight their battle for them. Not that the Regulations were wrong in themselves, but their form was infelicitous. They appeared not only to the pastoralists, but to most colonists,

as an attempt to raise taxation unconstitutionally. The squatters were beside themselves, and the politicians got up a constitutional agitation. All parties—Lowe and Lang, as well as Wentworth and Windeyer—united against them, and the unfortunate Governor had but one supporter. The result did not upset his composure and never made him quail. He had placed Robert Lowe in the Legislative Council as his nominee, and he had favoured the brilliant lawyer. Lowe turned his heel against his patron, and lent his splendid talents to the cause of the squatters. Gipps treated him as Disraeli treated him twenty years later, with contempt, and in his despatches he never mentioned the name of the apostate. He bore hardly upon Lang, whom he describes as—J. D. Lang, Esquire, and of whom he relates that he had been solemnly deposed by the Synod of Australia. Wentworth he treated as Disraeli treated Lord Cranborne, with more respect, but was none the less resolute against him. At Wentworth's instance the Legislative Council sent a threatening reply to Gipps's farewell speech in May, 1846, and refused him, through the mouths of its leading members, all credit for the improved state of the Colony. It was Wentworth, too, who moved, at a critical moment, the adjournment of the Council; Gipps replied by proroguing it, and thus outgeneralled Wentworth. Gipps procured the revocation of the Royal Instructions, granting special surveys of 5,120 acres at a uniform price. And, as already stated, he dealt a final blow at the squatters by reissuing his obnoxious regulations of 1845. His merits will be differently judged according to one's point of view. As a Governor of New South Wales, his capacity will not be denied. He was undoubtedly the strongest opponent in high place that the squatters of New South Wales ever had. He was the last of the Governors of that Colony who wielded a personal authority.

Though he was strenuously supported by one Secretary of State, Lord Stanley, he was practically thrown over by another, Earl Grey, who granted to the squatters

the leases that Gipps would have refused. Within the Colony he had but one influential ally. The Bishop of Australia was to him what Bishop Selwyn was to Sir George Grey in New Zealand. Both had been educated in English Canterbury and were schoolmates there; both were married there; and there both suddenly died—Gipps in 1847 and Broughton in 1853. They had fought side by side in New South Wales, and in death they were not divided. To both there are monuments in Canterbury Cathedral, where it was appropriate that a battle so heroic as theirs should be durably commemorated.

If Hegel is right in affirming—and Cardinal Newman speaks to the same effect—that they who, like Joseph de Maistre and Edmund Burke, honestly and nobly resist the progress of true ideas more effectually subserve the interests of society than they whose crimes or offences have been made the means of realising such ideas, then was Sir George Gipps of greater moral worth in opposing the pastoral advance, at least in the form of runholding on a large scale, than was Robert Lowe, whose duplicity and tergiversation brought about their realisation. If not directly a maker of Australasia, Gipps was undesignedly a moulder and director of a large body of its makers.

CHAPTER XX

THE SQUATTERS' APOSTATE : ROBERT LOWE

WHAT ill or happy chance was it that brought out to Australia, in its keenest battle-days, perhaps the most brilliant of the many remarkable men who have been attracted to the island-continent during the century and a quarter of its political existence? Not the thirst for gold, whose glitter an albino could hardly discern. Not the desire of an idyllic pastoral life such as inflamed the imagination of "Rolf Boldrewood" and many another. Least of all, the ambition of a political career, for which the arena was but being prepared. It was the physical disability of his semi-blindness that had driven the successful scholar from learned Oxford and the unsuccessful barrister from crowded London. Here, too, in this glorious climate, he might hope to strengthen the enfeebled health consequent on his albinism. So, in 1843, he came out as an experiment, dubious, like most immigrants, whether he could remain, and for a time threatened, even here, with total worldly failure. Ill-health continued to dog him, but in good part he surmounted the obstacles it created; he became a successful barrister and a prominent politician.

In 1843 he was taken up by Sir George Gipps and appointed a member of the Legislative Council, now reformed, but still largely nominee. For a space he supported the fighting Governor. Why did he desert one who needed and desired support? For petty personal and private reasons, his enemies asserted and assert. Because the Governor had engaged in a policy which ran in the teeth of Lowe's most cherished prin-

ciples as a Liberal, he would himself have asserted. He put himself in the wrong by not at once resigning the seat he had been given on the implied condition that he should support that very policy. At length he did resign, and the pastoralists of two combined counties elected him their representative. In that position he lent to the squatters' cause his powerful advocacy. He joined the Pastoralists' Association Committee, and loudly trumpeted its claims and contentions. So effective was his championship that, to believe the magnanimous Wentworth, "there was no one whose speeches and whose writings had so much weight with the Home Government in the concessions it made to the squatters." It was ungrudging. From none of the pastoralist contentions did he withhold his support. He strenuously aided Wentworth, who for almost thirty years had been crying out for a political constitution that would enable the Colony to govern itself and the squatters to govern the Colony. In supporting him he out-Wentworthed the ultimate author of the Constitution. A genuine Liberal, he had fought side by side with Wentworth. He was at first imaginative, and, so early as 1846—the very year in which Sir George Grey was scheming a federation of New Zealand with the South Sea Islands—he forecast a far grander federation, wherein "England and her colonies would be knit in an iron confederacy supreme in its strength." Then he became vituperative and menacing. He charged the Home Government with "wilfully and of malice aforethought murdering the liberties of the Colony." If it refused to listen to their remonstrances—"if the Government of Great Britain would insist upon thrusting a Governor on the Colony when we are quite ready to govern ourselves," then the time would have come when the Colony should consider whether its connection with the Motherland should not be dissolved. He was a member of the Committee of the Legislative Council on Transportation, and, jointly with Wentworth, he was responsible for the Report advising the resumption of transportation.

But "the principle of his life was change," said Wentworth, and again his opinions were transformed. He deserted the squatters as he had deserted Gipps. Again he clung to his seat, though he forsook his principles, and once more, according to Wentworth, he "choused" his constituency out of its representation. Yet again he made "a treacherous *détour*" and "stabbed in the back" his "old comrade," Wentworth, as that old comrade declared. "A parasite of the moment," in 1848 he stood for Sidney, and on the hustings the rivals fought a battle-royal. Not till 1895, when Sir Henry Parkes and Sir George Reid contested the King division, was there another such duel. Having previously spoken of Wentworth as "that great son of the soil," he deplored that he had lauded the statesman "in the simplicity and the folly of his heart." Still impartial, Sydney elected both; and, when another election came round three years after, Lowe had gone Home.

He went, Lord John Russell hinted, because the Colony had grown too hot for him, and he could remain no longer. "Many former associates felt obliged, for reasons to which I need not now advert," added Wentworth, "to drop his acquaintance." So far did his opponents carry their animosity that a number of individuals, squatters and politicians, refused to sail in the ship that was to carry Lowe back to England, and the Australian *Jonah* had to find another. That is an entirely Wentworthian account of the matter, and is given by Wentworth in a political pamphlet. Could his malignity not sleep? Alas! Lowe had waked it afresh. Having "old scores to pay off, mortifications and insults to forget, and vengeance to wreak," he opposed in the House of Commons the Constitution bill for New South Wales, which Wentworth was urging through Parliament. We might acquaint the squatters' tribune, if his ghost still haunted his tomb at Greycliff, on the romantic shores of Vacluse, that Lowe abandoned New South Wales for the same reason as Wentworth himself forsook it: he had grown too great for it.

The consciousness of powers that fitted him to play a high part in the most august senate on Earth was already stirring within him. The future anti-democrat had been trained for his mission on Australian battlefields. The squatters' apostate, through whose instrumentality the great pastoralists were established on their stations, was, in the most direct manner, a maker of Australasia.

CHAPTER XXI

SQUATTERO-MASTIX : JOHN DUNMORE LANG

OF the five remarkable personalities that dominated the pastoral phase in New South Wales the biographies of four have yet to be produced. McArthur, Wentworth, Lang, and Gipps are still without biographers. Mr. Rusden, it is true, has had access to the Camden MSS., some of which have since been published in the *Historical Records* of the Colony, and his narrative of McArthur's public career, with some glimpses of his private life, is full and sympathetic. Of Wentworth it is known that a biography, authorised by his literary executor, has been prepared, although it was left unfinished at the death of the author, G. B. Barton ; but the date of its publication, if ever it is published at all, is uncertain. Of the strongest Australian Governor, Sir George Gipps, the most that we can expect is a historical account, such as has lately been published of Governor Macquarie ; he was a fugitive on the Australian stage, and can claim to be judged as a statesman is judged. Robert Lowe was almost as ephemeral, but his private life and his public career were equally bound up with the history of the Colony, and the biography composed by Arthur Patchett Martin worthily takes its place among biographies of Australian statesmen. Of no Australian would the biography be so interesting—not to say, spicy—as one of Dr. Lang. The incidents and adventures of his private life, which was hardly private, seeing that it was lived in the sight of all, were so mingled with his strenuous and often

effective action in public spheres that a work which left "half told the story of Cambuscan bold," would be a maimed and truncated composition. He has acted to some extent as his autobiographer. In speeches, pamphlets, and treatises, historical and contentious, Lang has related as much of his own story as he perhaps cared to tell, though by no means as much as we should like to know.

The commanding part played by churchmen in European history has had but faint reflections in the history of colonisation. Colonial history has seen no such picturesque figures as Innocent III. or Gregory VII. ; there was little or no scope for such personalities in countries that passed through a mere remnant of the ecclesiastical stage. Yet Australia and New Zealand have afforded a theatre for three or four remarkable ecclesiastics who have done great things or exercised effective influence outside the pale of their communions. Samuel Marsden fought many a stout battle with the high officers of the State, and Bishop Broughton, as long a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, or as heard before it, contended on equal terms with such men as Wentworth and Lowe, and was a valiant ally of the strong Governor of his day. But two men stand out conspicuously by their intellectual power and moral energy and the largeness of the arena where they battled—Bishop George Augustus Selwyn and Dr. John Dunmore Lang. In the Church of England and the young colony of New Zealand Selwyn was another Innocent, though usually in alliance, like St. Boniface, with governing persons and potently swaying a barbarous people ; while Lang was far more of the type of Hildebrand, endeavouring to mould or subjugate Secretaries of State and Governors, Councils, Presbyteries, and Synods, fulminating brands of excommunication when he failed, defying all, chained on his rock or confined in prison ; withal, a leader of peoples, a founder of colonies, and a planter of churches.

Born in 1799, Lang came in almost with the new

century and embodied its energy and progressiveness, while Wentworth, six years his senior, was always in spirit a denizen of the eighteenth century. With grimy Greenock as his birthplace, he was reared in the romantic west of Scotland, on the shores of the Firth of Clyde, and there he made the acquaintance of the sea in all its moods, which his mobile spirit reflected; perhaps he there imbibed the vein of poetry that cast a faint halo round his warrior figure. Like most clever Scottish youths whose families were in comfortable circumstances, he was bred for that grand arena of talent, the Kirk, and in 1822 he was ordained one of its ministers. The fiery energy of the young probationer could ill brook waiting (as he himself expressed it) "for a dead man's shoes," and, having no such "interest" as would command preferment, he stormily resolved that he would migrate to a country where no Presbyterian minister had yet settled. The resolution was aided by the knowledge that his elder brother had gone out to Australia, and was seemingly doing well. In 1823 he landed in Sydney, and ever afterwards he was proud to describe himself on his numerous title-pages as the Senior Minister of the Church of Scotland in New South Wales; as if, it was said, he claimed to be the Pope of Presbyterianism. He soon made his mark. He built up a church—the famous Scots Church of Sydney, to which Lang appears to have bequeathed his animosity against Roman Catholicism. His incorrigible meddlesomeness soon got him into trouble. Though Governor Sir Ralph Darling, as he himself tells, was evidently willing to oblige the able young minister, Lang had not been six months in the Colony before the authorities placed him on the list of the proscribed. Like Robertson of Brighton, he was to be a marked man, and that from his early years.

In 1826 he made the first of his many visits to the "old country"—then at six months' distance—and when he returned he brought out with him the first, but by no means the last, of his eminently desirable immi-

grants—his father, mother, and brothers. He showed his faith in the Colony by determining to build up a clan in Australia; it was the first of his many points of resemblance with another great Presbyterian divine that, like Dr. Chalmers, who had “sixty cousins in Edinburgh,” he could count on the support of a numerous clan. For his father he procured a grant of 2,000 acres and for his brother a grant of 1,000 acres. In 1828 he experienced the first of his disappointments at the hands of the authorities: with his customary daring and largeness of view he projected a Scots College, the nurse of a future university, but Governor Darling refused to let the structure be raised by convict labour, and as there were then few mechanics, had there been money to pay them, the scheme necessarily lapsed. He did not therefore drop the project. In 1830 he made another trip to England, where, so great were his powers of persuasion, he prevailed on the Secretary of State, Lord Goderich, to give him an order on the Colonial Government for a large sum (£3,500), provided an equal amount were previously raised by subscription. Of this sum one-half was to be appropriated for the payment of the passage-out of 50 or 60 Scottish mechanics whom Lang had induced to emigrate. It was the first of his immigrating bands, for Lang was to build an enduring fame as a leader of peoples. Then, as always, he brought out immigrants of the best sort—blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, and plasterers, as if to rear the college on which he had set his heart. He again visited England in 1833–5, and again he paved the way for valuable immigrants—this time 250 vine-growers, engaged by himself in Germany, but (if one rightly remembers) the emigrants were allured by the inducements offered them in Brazil, and there deserted the man who had made it possible for them to reach the shores of the New World. He was a man of many disappointments, but his robust nature triumphed over them all.

Detained in New Zealand on his way back to England in 1839, Lang there found little to approve of. He



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condemned the methods of the missionaries. He condemned still more sternly the action of the missionaries in taking possession, for a nominal equivalent, of large tracts of native lands, and when he arrived in England he published his condemnation in scathing language. He no less condemned the proposed colonisation of the Islands by the newly formed New Zealand Company, and in his first important publication he outlined a large scheme of national colonisation.

Returning by way of America, he paid a visit to the United States. There, in a country that was once occupied by a group of British colonies, he saw churches of all denominations thriving on voluntary support. He was promptly converted to a belief in the disestablishment of the Church. He was not a man to conceal conclusions that he had arrived at, and, in a volume on *Religion and Education in America*, he stated his views so trenchantly as to give great offence to churchmen in both Australia and Scotland. He believed, with George MacDonald, in the weakness of letting oneself be wounded by the ill-nature of others, and he did not allow some sour faces or stinging words to deter him from carrying into effect the purpose he consequently formed. In New South Wales, which alone of the Australasian colonies (a single province of New Zealand temporarily excepted) rapidly passed through the stage of ecclesiastical establishment and endowment general in Europe, four religious denominations—Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists, and Presbyterians—were recognised and supported by the Colonial Government, which nevertheless assumed none of the rights of control usually claimed by the state over established and endowed churches. Such a system was not made to last, though all the subsidised denominations seemed content to accept such "tainted tribute." Yet it needed twenty years of remittent agitation to upset even this unstable equilibrium. In 1842 he renounced for himself as a minister all aid from the State. Believing that he had thus fatally weakened his position, or feeling uncom-

fortable in a city where he had made so many enemies, he resolved to shake the dust of Australia off his feet, as he had shaken the dust of Scotland off his feet, and depart for New Zealand, then in the throes of birth as a colony. His congregation, though tried by his eccentricities and his frequent absences, was yet proud of him, and induced him to remain. So he stayed on till his dying day, to fight many a battle, be involved in many a trouble, and become the most famous Presbyterian minister in the Empire, with two possible exceptions—Thomas Chalmers and Edward Irving.

The reconstitution of the Legislative Council in 1842 opened up a path for Dr. Lang into political public life. The Council had hitherto consisted of high officials and Government nominees, as the Norman sovereigns had at first no other council than one formed by the officers of the Court and those others—warriors or clerks—whom the monarch thought fit to summon. It was now enlarged to admit the representatives of electoral districts. Lang was the last man likely to have been nominated under the old system by any Governor, who could not desire to place in the Council a scourge for his own back. Now he was put in a position of independence such as he could never otherwise have gained. He was elected one of the members for the newly settled province of Port Phillip. In one way he had earned the distinction : he had long energetically protested against the virtual control of the Council by an autocratic Governor, aided rather than checked by a band of like-minded advisers ; and he had taken a leading part in claiming for the Colony the right of enacting its own laws and controlling the appropriation of its own revenue. He was to earn it in another way by resolutely contending for the separation of Port Phillip from New South Wales. It need hardly be said that, while he remained a member of the Council, he formed part of the Opposition. The Governor was then the masterful Sir George Gipps, and he had to govern with the consciousness that every bill he brought forward would

be received with hostility by a portion of the Council organized as a parliamentary Opposition. Why did Lang necessarily become a unit of this faction? As almost always with Lang, primarily for a personal reason. Apparently, because Gipps refused to comply with a recommendation of the Legislative Council that a grant should be made to the Scots Church. Ever afterwards, and in his History long after Gipps was dead, he was extremely abusive of the eminent Governor. He named Gipps, with more coarseness than wit, "Lord Stanley's man Friday." He assailed Gipps as "not having learnt the proprieties of his place." But there were deeper reasons, inseparable from the nature of the man. He was a reformer, like Wentworth in those days, and like him, we may suspect, was a reformer only till those above him had been levelled down to himself, while he was little in favour of levelling up to himself those who were politically below him. He was accordingly in favour of extending the franchise, still somewhat high, and he made strenuous efforts to have it lowered. He denounced the nominated portion of the Council as being contrary to the Bill of Rights. He claimed that taxation was the inherent, incommunicable, untransferable, and exclusive right of the people and their representatives. He affirmed that the Civil List, largely made up in England, and the appointment of high officials in England, were infringements of the constitutional powers of the free inhabitants.

As always, Lang's attitude was affected and his position complicated by financial embroilment. Presbytery and Synod called for an explanation of certain transactions connected with his College, and summoned him to appear before them. He took no notice of the summons. The Synod deposed him, and appointed one of its members to preach the Scots Church vacant. Lang refused to admit the minister to his pulpit. The Presbytery refused to recognise *him*; he would refuse to recognise *it*. It went further. It transmitted to the presbytery of Irvine, which had ordained him, all the documents

in the case, and the Scottish presbytery deposed him. The law of the Church is said to be that no Presbyterian minister or church can exist in isolation; he and it must be in communion with the presbytery within whose district it lies. Lang cared not; he was a church or a denomination by himself, and, till towards the end of his days, he remained unconnected with the presbytery of Sydney. He visited England in 1846, and remained there for three years, but he then took no steps to vindicate himself; either it was that he did not think of the resource he afterwards tried, or he had "other tigers to comb." Not till 1861, when he was again in the old country, did he adopt the measures he should have resorted to, it might seem, at an earlier date. In that year he appealed for redress to the presbytery of Irvine, which refused to grant it. He then appealed to the supreme civil tribunal—the Court of Session, which compelled the presbytery to annul its act of deposition. He was set right before the now disrupted Kirk, which was once more made to feel its dependence on the State, and he was set right before the Presbyterians of Australia. He did not need to be set right in his own eyes.

Other and more carnal activities occupied, without ever engrossing, the activities of the amphibious divine. His main object was to enlist a band of emigrants with whom to people and occupy the new colony he projected in the North-Eastern parts of Australia, which he proposed to name COOKSLAND. He gathered together his emigrants, chartered his ships, and had one of them despatched. Then the Colonial Office intervened. It had not allowed some irregularities connected with the payment of the requisite deposits on account of each passenger to hinder the issue of land-orders to those emigrants, but it now decided that before such orders could be issued to future emigrants, the customary deposits must be paid. Why should there have been any difficulty about the payment? To all appearance the sums paid were appropriated by Lang. This was not done in order that he might become personally pos-

sessed of the money, to be used for his personal ends. It was employed, we may presume, to meet the costs of shipping and settling his colonists. But it had an ill look, and the Colonial Office took an unfavourable view of the transaction. Then the wrath of the doughty Doctor broke out unassuageable. He addressed a letter to Earl Grey, then the Secretary of State, which may be compared with the philippics of Junius against the Bedfords and Graftons. As Lang wrote this letter on the eve of his departure with one of his emigrant ships, he put it out of the power of the Colonial Office to reply while Lang was still in England. Lord Grey nevertheless did reply, and in scathing language. During the three years Lang had been in England he had never once called on Lord Grey; he did not write to him; he wrote only when Lang's own acts placed it out of Grey's power to reply. The Colonial Office had winked at his irregularities for a time, and intervened only when those irregularities amounted to open defiance. The emigrants, moreover, were not of the class required in the proposed new colony. They were to be imported as cotton-planters, but they were inexperienced as such. The truth is, Lang had ways of his own of doing things, which jarred against official ways and methods. The masterful man got on ill with other people who were as masterful as himself.

He returned to Sydney in 1850 and was at once elected a member for Sydney in the Legislative Council. He was re-elected in 1851, when he was at the top of the poll, beating the great Wentworth, who was at the bottom. After the Wentworthian constitution came into force Lang still maintained his political position. The bulk of the topics legislated upon had drifted outside of the purview of a priest, but on certain special subjects he showed unremitting energy. The agitation for the disestablishment of the churches, not the Church, he at length brought to an issue twenty years after it had been set on foot, and, though "vested rights" were respected (the last Anglican recipients of State bounty died only

a few years ago), all churches in New South Wales, as in all the other Australasian colonies, were in 1862 disconnected with the State. With one other reform his name is also inseparably identified. Still as member for Sydney, the democrat carried through the Legislature a law repealing that old aristocratic custom embodied in the "law" of primogeniture.

On a question fraught with larger importance Lang took a bold and independent line. Burning with indignation on account of the treatment he received from the Colonial Office in 1849, he conceived, like Sir George Grey, a passionate aversion for the Government of England. While Wentworth looked forward to an Imperial federation of all the colonies with the Motherland, Lang prophesied the dissolution of the British Empire, and he dreamed of the future "freedom and independence of the Australasian colonies." His expectation that a disruption would eventually take place between Australia and England was shared by many, perhaps by most, public men of the time. Liberals, Conservatives, and Radicals were alike under the dominion of the fatalistic belief that all the self-governing colonies would follow the example of the United States by taking up the freedom that would not be refused them. Lang's belief that the disruption would "probably" be accompanied, if not accomplished, by violence was peculiar to himself, and was begotten of his own strong passions and imperious ways. There is something repugnant in the very notion of a fighting preacher of the religion of peace. But Lang, like his Divine Master, if *he* was correctly reported, had come to Australia to bring, not peace, but a sword. He contemplated the establishment, "probably by violence," of "a system of government in which Great Britain shall have nothing to say." He had grown rootedly hostile to the English Government. When the Crimean war broke out, he refused to attend a meeting convened in Sydney to express sympathy and offer aid. This was not necessarily a proof of his disloyalty. Many men of high

character in England and Scotland, besides Bright and the Quakers, Cobden and the Manchester School, condemned it at the time, as many a man condemned the South African war, in the name of equity.

Many of the incidents of his life throw a disagreeable light on his character. He was thrice prosecuted and twice imprisoned for criminal libels. In 1850 he was prosecuted for libelling Mr. Icely, a well-known member of the Legislative Council, for things done twenty-six years before, and he was then fined £100 and imprisoned for four months. In 1855, after his son had been convicted of embezzlement, he scurrilously libelled the Chief-Justice of Victoria, who heard the case ; but Lang, possibly in compassion for a sorely tried father, was generously acquitted. The judicial leniency taught him no lesson. Only four months later he was convicted of libelling a functionary of the bank in which his son had been an employee. He took it all, sunshine or hail, with more than philosophic composure. He used the enforced leisure of the prison in revising his historical account of New South Wales, in reading the newspapers, and in drinking coffee. He was evidently sustained in all his trials by the consciousness of rectitude, but he was supported yet more by an innate fortitude that was in good part physical.

Is it not a prodigy that a man who was so often in trouble, who was dragged before the Courts on criminal charges, who had made acquaintance with the inside of a prison, who was expelled from his church, who was deposed from his clerical office—that is, stripped of his rank as a minister, who was publicly assailed in the strongest terms of reproach by leaders in the State, such as Wentworth and Lowe, who had a succession of Governors against him, who was in questionable ways mixed up with financial imbroglios, and was accused of something worse than sharp practice, who was deserted by the creatures of his hands—men whom he had brought out to Australia to serve as schoolmasters and ministers—is it not a prodigy that such a man

should have been able to maintain his position as a minister and a citizen, should have held the affections of his congregation, should be a power throughout New South Wales, should die in honour, and be commemorated by one of the best statues in Sydney, placed in a central square ?

Throughout his career he constantly reminds us of one of his greatest contemporaries—Thomas Chalmers. Both were Presbyterian church leaders and founders of churches. Both were social and political reformers. Both had a firm grasp of public affairs and the capacity of a statesman. Lang enjoyed the splendid opportunities that fall to the lot of men of light and leading in a young country, and he was besmirched in a way impossible to Chalmers. Yet Chalmers was, like Lang, in troubles oft, and he was bitterly assailed by a large section of his fellow countrymen. Hardly should we have inferred from the incidents of his public career that Chalmers was an unworldly, God-fearing man and an intense Christ-worshipper ; but his *Journal* reveals the secret of his strength. Did we possess the journal of Dr. Lang, what confessions, what evidences of self-abasement, what solicitous anxiety for rectitude, what an enthusiasm of humanity might we not find ? Even the libels which he expiated so bitterly were just such as would be committed by a priest, accustomed to conceive of the difference between right and wrong as infinite, looking at it, as Mme. de Staël would have said, from the heights of Heaven or the depths of Hell.

He plumed himself on resembling men who had made many enemies, as Bishop Burnet, or been shunned, like St. Paul. Lord John Russell said of the bustling bishop that he “exposed himself to envy by his independence and disinterestedness,” and Lang evidently took Russell’s words to himself. So vast was his self-esteem that he habitually thought of himself in large relations. When he addressed an open-air congregation on the Turon gold-fields, he remembered that our Saviour had spoken to some thousands of people in not dissimilar

circumstances ; and if he did not distribute loaves and fishes to his hearers, he might reflect that he was addressing gold-diggers, who could have been in no want of either. Paul, he admitted, had been instrumental in settling far more ministers than he had himself been in Australasia. If his disinterestedness is open to dispute, he had no doubt of it himself. He never shrank from recalling that he had made great personal sacrifices and exertions on behalf of public causes. The property he had surrendered, he claimed, would now (when he spoke—say, in the sixties) be worth £100,000.

He claimed that he had made an end of the practice of concubinage in official circles, and he put a stop to the editing of official journals by freedmen. He brought out schoolmasters of a high class, divinity students—some of them men of talent, and successful ministers ; and he planted and reared many a church. What a host of individuals he must have baptized, married, or followed to the grave in his long life ! He carried one great measure through Parliament—the repeal of the laws of primogeniture and entail. The carrying of another—the disendowment of the four subsidised Churches—was initiated by the action he took in 1842, when he renounced State aid and virtually seceded from the Presbyterian Church, and was throughout aided by his incessant agitation.

Why have I thus fully outlined the career of the Squattero-Mastix—the most interesting, though not the most attractive, personality in the history of Australia ? Because it forms a large part of the social environment in the pastoral age, and because his attitude to the pastoralists is the key to nearly all his activities. All the pastoralist leaders—McArthur and Wentworth, Berry and Leslie—at one time or another came into collision with this clerical Ishmael. Nearly all of their measures fell under the lash of his invective. He urged a continuous polemic against their policy.

He never tired of denouncing the curse of squatterdom, and he looked back indignantly on those "dark days" when the squatterocracy ruled New South Wales. At all times he did his utmost to thwart its ends. Twice he carried to England and the Colonial Office petitions against the retention of the Clarence River district in New South Wales, because he believed that that was in the interests of the squatters. For the same reason he opposed the retention of the Riverina. From the first he hailed the gold discoveries as being certain to work a complete transformation of the social conditions. Especially did they ring the knell of the squatters. "The object of these gentlemen," he wrote, "was to occupy and engross the country for themselves exclusively, to partition it into immense sheep-walks and cattle-runs, and prevent the influx and settlement of an agricultural population." They sought to keep the people down. In 1846, by granting them long leases, and in 1855, by handing over to a clique of Australian squatters the noble inheritance of the people in the waste lands of Australia, the Colonial Office aided them. Now the ascendancy of the squatters had virtually ceased. The game was up, and the days of the pastoralists, as a powerful political party, were numbered." *

For the same reason he welcomed the Free-Selection Act carried by Sir John Robertson, and he told how, through the financial embarrassments of the principal original owners, some large estates in the neighbourhood of Bathurst had been broken up, and thus prepared the way for "that wonderfully salutary revolution" which had "almost revolutionised the Colony." † He aided in engineering the transition to the agricultural stage by importing farmers and farm-labourers. He was not only the scourge of the squatters; he was largely the destroyer of their class. He has therefore well earned the title he took, of a "maker of a new Australia."

*⁷ LANG, *Account*, etc., ii. 353-4.

† *Ibid.*, ii. 214-5.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PROSPECTOR

HAVING examined the various forces, physical and moral, that went towards the shaping of the pastoral life in these new countries, we are now prepared to watch their operation. The disadvantages of presenting the different phases of that life in sequence, logical or not, when they are simultaneous may be compensated by the clearer view that is thus had of each separate phase.

The prospectors of country suitable for runs were still more various than the prospectors of goldfields. Sometimes an individual, "seized by the longing to explore new country," would set out by himself or accompanied only by a mate. He would be armed with a gun, equipped with a compass, and supplied with provisions. Many such perished in the bush. Such was one of the very first settlers of these in Northern Queensland, described by Mrs. Campbell Praed. His gun accidentally going off, he was killed, while his companion, unable to guide himself by the compass the dying man taught him to use, drifted among the blacks, who kept him for eight months. Another, whose bones, together with fragments of a letter, were found, might be either surveyor or prospector.*

Or a rich squatter, actual or potential, would despatch an overseer or bushman, to go in search of new country. Thus, in 1832, W. G. Cann headed an expedition sent by Henry Dangar, and, after encountering formidable obstacles and suffering fearful privations, discovered Armidale. Four years later the same prospector pushed

* *My Australian Girlhood*, pp. 101-2.

north-west to Myall Creek, of infamous memory.* In 1840 Captain McAlister despatched his overseer, McMillan, on a journey that resulted in the discovery of Gippsland.† R. Scougall, of Liverpool Plains, sent Henry Dennis exploring up north, and *he* found "the huge Jimbour run." Often these deputies took up runs for others. The same prospector took up Dalby, on Myall Creek, for Charles Coxen.

Another would set out on horseback, like Don Quixote, in search of a run and also of "colonial experience." After riding many miles he would find quarters for the night in a bark hut, where, after unsaddling and hobbling his pony, he would sup with some fifteen or sixteen stockmen on tea, damper, and boiled beef. He would sleep warm on a sheet of bark near the fireplace, under a pair of not over-clean blankets, in company with the stockmen. Edward Palmer spent a whole year in the search of a run.

As the art of prospecting develops, it becomes more collective. At first conducted by a single individual, or by two friends together, with a few servants, usually convict in the beginning, each expedition now grows co-operative. The party consists of a band of prospectors (often six in number) of equal rank, who may all be in search of new country, and who, indeed, may be secretly endeavouring to forestall one another. In older days the prospector provided the entire equipment of his party. In more recent times each equal member of the party provides a certain number of horses and his share of the food and other necessaries likely to be consumed or needed during the journey. There may be as many as forty horses, 24 of them pack-horses, laden with food-supplies, clothing, tents, medicine, and tomahawks—the tomahawks being needed, not for scalping the blacks, but for the chopping of wood for the camp-fires. There are generally also blackboys (blacks of any age), and all are well-armed. A leader

* BARTLEY, *Australian Pioneers*, ch. viii.

† BRODBIBB, *Reminiscences*, p. 8.

is at the outset chosen, whose orders all are bound to obey, on pain of expulsion. He rides, as a leader should, at some distance ahead of the main body, accompanied by a black. The others follow in twos, like the United States cavalry hunting down Indians, or Tarass Barabola's brigands in Ruthenia, while the spare horses and pack-horses bring up the rear. At first, till they get out clear into the open country, they ride at the rate of fifteen miles a day; then at various speeds, as the leader determines—10, 20, or 25 miles daily. Or sometimes they encamp for a few days, while the country is being explored in various directions, and possibly marked off for future selection. For every bit of good country the party passes through is examined, its trees marked, its landmarks noted, so that it may be described when leases or licenses are applied for at the Crown Lands Department. When the tents are first pitched, the party is carefully organized, and special duties assigned to each member of it. The worst bushman is made cook, and is also left in charge of the camp and of the spare- and pack-horses while the others are gone on flying excursions. All of these, and all the apportionment of functions, are directed by the leader, who exercises an absolute despotism. On no other terms, to all appearance, could the party be held together. Only thus could the quarrels, heartburnings, and jealousies in the band be kept under; only thus could latent rebellion be nipped in the bud. Then we may picture their joy when they discover from some eminence far-stretching plains and rolling downs, clothed with rich natural grasses and nutritious herbage. These, they know, will one day be the home of thousands, when farms have replaced runs, and towns have supplanted farms. Meanwhile, the first inescapable pastoral stage has to be traversed, and the runs have to be defined and formed. In each great area several large runs are measured off. The bearings of the most remarkable points are taken, and the boundaries of each run are vaguely defined according to the natural features of

the landscape—creeks, rivers, or lakes, hills and ravines. Their task accomplished, they set out on their return journey, and on the way they ballot for special bits of land or tracts suitable for runs. Finally, they rush for the metropolis, fearing to be forestalled, and take out licences for their finds at the Crown Lands Office.

There may be rival expeditions in the field. Two parties may aim at taking possession of the same tract of country. War may then break out, with its strategy and manœuvres and casualties. Or the leader of an expedition may have descried a fine country in the distance, but concealed his discovery. Then autocratically diverting his party on another track, he would return, organize a fresh expedition, and set out a second time to secure the Promised Land (the land he had promised himself) he had descried from Mount Pisgah. But still another party might be organized by a member of the first band to go in quest of the country he had only suspected to exist, and this party too would find the desired track. Then there would be a race between the rival parties for the priority in gaining the licence to hold the run at the Crown Lands Department. For in those days runs could be held without being stocked. They were therefore taken up by stockless and moneyless persons, who speedily sold them for a few hundreds of pounds to intending squatters. Thus the prospecting for runs became a speculation and almost a gamble. It served an end, however. As squatters could not obtain runs close at hand unless they would pay for them, they went further afield, and discovered fresh country. Thus the whole province, and ultimately all Australia, have been opened up. Nowadays the pioneering prospector, like the pastoral stage itself, over a large area, has been superseded by the railway, which has opened up hundreds of miles of country, where scores of runs can be formed.*

* ALEXANDER C. GRANT, *Bush Life in Queensland*, chs. XXI-XXII. EDWARD PALMER, *Early Days in North Queensland*, p. 91. HAYGARTH, *Bush Life in Australia*.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE NOMAD

NOMADISM in a manner long prevailed, and still prevails, with the Australian pastoralist. When the grass has been browsed bare, the sheep or cattle are removed from one tract or (since fencing has been adopted) from one paddock to another ; as is done by the nomad tribes that still roam over the steppes of Central Asia, Siberia, and Eastern Russia. Had a precocious airman fluttered over the riverside tracks of New South Wales and Victoria in the late thirties and early forties, and over those of Queensland in the forties and fifties, he would have dimly seen from his airy heights long processions of sheep and cattle being driven from the coast and coastal districts inland towards the river-flats and well-watered plains. They were in search of stations, it is true, but for long after a nomadic movement in quest of better conditions was ever in progress. As in ancient days, on the banks of Tigris or Euphrates, when the stock expanded beyond the capacity of the region occupied to supply grass enough, or when the pent-up energy of the younger members of a family craved for elbow-room, a migration was made to another district. Thus, Esau "went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob ; for their riches were more than that they might dwell together, and the land . . . could not bear them because of their cattle." Sometimes patriarchal families quarrelled, it might be about wells and springs, and then they separated. "Is not the whole land before thee ?" asked Abraham of Lot.

“Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me : if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right ; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.” They forsook their native or early seats, together with their kindred, whom they might not see again, and went, like the migrant and semi-nomadic Boers of South Africa, on *trek*.

The nomad instinct proper to the pastoral race was often enough shown by the early Victorian squatters. Many of them were continually on the move. One removed from the Seven Creeks northward to the great Saltbush Desert. Others changed, more sensibly, from the Upper Yarra to the richly grassed Western division of Victoria. Others still ruined everything for the sake of change, and gave up good stations for ones that were far inferior.* Thus, John Highett “remained (moving about) a short time on the Barwon,” before he removed into the Melbourne district. Messrs. Manifold removed from one station to another. Messrs. Learmonth left the Barwon for Buninyong.†

Much of the nomadism arose through the same necessity as made and makes the Mesopotamians and Central Asians nomadic. The Boers of the Transvaal shift all their stock every summer from the low to the high veldt and in winter shift it back to the low. In time of drought the more sedentary pastoralists of Australia remove their starving flocks from the scorched plains to the cool and still grass-covered highlands. “It was only,” writes a Victorian pioneer, “by having my marching establishment complete, and thus constantly shifting my ground, that I was enabled to keep the stock alive.” ‡

The nomadism of the old pastoralist was no less deeply ingrained in the Queensland squatters. Thus, the earliest of Queensland squatters, Patrick Leslie, sold out in 1856 the run he had culled from his many seizures,

* BOLDREWOOD, *Old Melbourne Memories*, ch. xiv.

† *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 136, 155.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

and returned to his native Scotland. Once more he was tempted to the Antipodes, but this time to New Zealand, where in the late seventies (he was there in 1877) he settled in the barren Waikato district of the North Island. Of the two well-known station-partners, Beck and Brown, Brown travelled from Canal Creek with sheep, Beck remaining in charge at Canal Creek. Going in search of a run, Brown pulled up at Dogwood Creek, which was the furthest out station where sheep grazed. Beck and Brown had taken up 1,100 square miles of land, but could not for a long time occupy so great extent of country. They were far from their base of supplies; labour was dear and hardly to be procured; there were no neighbours within 100 miles. Brown wandered from place to place with his sheep—sometimes a year here, at another a year there. For two years he settled in Gidemhay's country, which was then unoccupied and still in a state of nature, with no roads beyond, but only a track. Not till 1856 was the vast area (of the 1,100 square miles) formed, and then it was sub-divided into four stations.*

In certain parts of Australia the early nomadic movement is constant. The overlander and the bullock-driver or the sheep-drover are the descendants of the Kirghiz and the Bedouins. "A Riverina Road" witnesses their daily passage:—

"A land of camps where seldom is sojourning,
Where men, like the dim fathers of our race,
Halt for a time, and next day, unreturning,
Fare ever on apace."

Mobs of sheep and cattle are driven in search of pasture.

"The sheep are travelling for the grass, and travelling very slow;
They may be at Mundaroon now, or past the Overflow,
Or tramping down the black-soil flats across by Waddiwong."

* BARTLEY, *Pioneering Reminiscences*, pp. 185-6.

And after both cattle and sheep have become comparatively stationary, individuals may still be restless.

“He’s shearing here and fencing there, a kind of waif and stray,
He’s droving now with Conroy’s sheep along the Castlereagh.”

Or “the red marauder,” Drought, drives the swagman “out back.” He begs his way “on the parched Paroo and the Warrego tracks,” but the tramp “never got hands in wool, though he tramped for a year out back.” He dies at last in the scrub.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE OVERLANDER

ALMOST as soon as Port Phillip and South Australia were colonised, the new class of Overlanders was begotten. Exploring Western Australia in the late thirties, Sir George Grey was interested by this striking group. They were men—often capitalists—who drove large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle across country from one colony to another—sometimes across great part of Australia. From New South Wales to Port Phillip and South Australia, and in later days from all parts of Australia to Northern Queensland, they patiently trudged with their stock, following the slow stride of their cattle and the still slower step of their sheep. Among them, probably, he first met with E. J. Eyre, who was subsequently his subordinate officer in South Australia, in a post which his overlanding journeys peculiarly qualified him to fill, some years afterwards his lieutenant-governor in New Zealand, and long subsequently the too-famous Governor of Jamaica. Eyre raced another overlander, Joe Hawdon, with stock from Mount Alexander to Adelaide. It was the beginning of Eyre's remarkable journeys of exploration. For, eager to beat Hawdon, who was following the course of the Murray, Eyre cut across the first big bend the Murray makes to the south, and struck the Wimmera. As if by an enemy, a red herring had been drawn across his trail. Fired by the prospect of tracing the course of the new-found river to the sea, as he probably imagined, he followed it down-stream, only to find that it

lost itself in Lake Hindmarsh. Again he started off on another wild-goose chase. He had seen the Lindsay pour its waters into Lake Hindmarsh, and he would run it to earth. Alas! it was a characteristic Australian river, which soon disappeared in the ground. Then, after having nearly lost his life in the dreaded mallee scrub, he came back to the stock he had left in charge. Of course, he had lost the race.

These overlanders were the saviours of new colonies. The older settlements, Governor Sir George Gipps told Lord John Russell in 1840, were the hives "whence swarms of sheep and cattle were driven to give value to the lands of Port Phillip and South Australia, which without them would to this day be an unprofitable wilderness. The enterprising colonists," he added, "who first drove sheep from New South Wales to Victoria rescued that colony from ruin." Hawdon we have already seen at work. In 1836 he was the first to drive or send cattle from New South Wales to Port Phillip. Later in the same year W. A. Brodrigg started the second draft of cattle. The two of them, he tells us, were "the first to mark a road to Melbourne." The explorer blazes a track. The overlander marks a road.*

Such trips were frequent. Did a squatter on the Broken River in New South Wales sell his stock to Port Phillipians? He would make a trip overland in order to deliver it to the purchaser. Taking with him a servant, a gig, and 2 horses, he would accomplish the journey in ten days, and in three days more the delivery would be accomplished.†

Such an overlander might sell his own surplus stock, or he might purchase stock to sell it over again. He would return to Sydney, and purchase, say, 1,200 head of cattle, grazing at a station 300 miles to the westward. He would then, what he called, organize an expedition to take possession of these cattle. He would buy several stock-horses, pack-horses, teams of working-bullocks,

* BRODRIGG, *Recollections*, p. 15.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

and drays. A week afterwards the station in the interior was reached, the cattle were collected by the stockmen, and delivery taken. Then followed the trip to Melbourne as before. They proceeded by easy stages. The party would consist of the purchaser and his brother, two friends, and nine men. It was no light job. Masters and men divided the night-watches among them, burnt large fires, and rode around the cattle. They worked like slaves, night and day. They rode from daylight to dark. Half the night, at other times, they watched the night through, for they could not trust the men. Travelling for seven weeks, by easy stages of eight or ten miles a day, they reached Melbourne.

When the market was glutted in Melbourne, two gentlemen would join together to form a cattle expedition in order to push on to Adelaide and capture the market there. But there the cattle market would be found to be depressed, and the expedition would be recalled.

The cattle thus waiting for a purchaser would be placed on a temporary run near Melbourne. A number of squatters kept large herds of cattle in depot at Port Albert in the neighbourhood of Melbourne, whether for sale or for forming new stations. But cattle were then a drug in the market, and unsaleable at anything like a remunerative price. A little later large flocks and herds of sheep and cattle, brought across country from New South Wales, were camped around Melbourne for sale. All values had fallen. Out of these gentlemen-overlanders developed the professional cattle-men, who grew into the cattle-kings.

Sometimes the overlanders struck out in an altogether new direction. Gippsland had lately been discovered, first by McMillan, and again by Count Strzelecki. The problem was to find a practicable route for stock from the newly discovered country to Melbourne. A meeting of Overlanders was held some time in 1842 with the object of discovering such a route and, at the same time,

ascertaining whether a harbour existed on the Gippsland coast, where a depot could be formed. A company was formed, and a vessel chartered. They were successful in finding a harbour, but unsuccessful in finding a stock route. But they made two discoveries—they first beheld the Latrobe River and Lake Wellington. The expedition cost £2,000.*

As Sir George Gipps stated, and Sir George Grey explains, the class of Overlanders was called into existence by peculiar and, we may add, temporary circumstances. There were new colonies—Victoria, South Australia, and, later, Queensland—to be stocked; new stations in the mother-colony to be formed; and old stations to be replenished. Or, sometimes, a station-owner would substitute sheep for cattle or cattle for sheep. And this continued till the Colony had been stocked, when the Overlander necessarily disappeared, or was transformed into a cattle-dealer.

The Overlanders were usually single men in the prime of youth, says Grey, and certainly most of them in the early days, when he was acquainted with them, were comparatively young. If they were not, all of them, "remarkable men," as he affirms, at least they needed no little grit. Their toilsome journeys were often over snow-clad mountains, through drought-stricken, grassless plains, across swollen, and hardly fordable rivers, enduring hunger and thirst and lack of all things, in perils oft, but keeping ever a light heart, and seldom needing to appeal to the unyielding will that lay behind and at the bottom of their cheery spirits.

Grey picturesquely imagines a man of this class and type who had finished one long overlanding journey and was prepared to essay another. Ill-clad and unimpressive, he enters a company of heavily bearded, weather-beaten men. They take little notice of him. Then, joining in their conversation, he proposes a new and practicable route for stock, and declares his willingness to undertake a trip over it. All are instantly

* BRODRIBB, pp. 95, 20, 24, 45, 51.

attentive to the speaker. They will club with him. Like him, they are capitalists. They have large sums at their command, and, making heavy purchases of store-cattle, they will add their mobs to his. They will follow the route that he, it may be, has discovered, and, arriving at their destination with a mob of cattle and stock, at once change the situation of a district or of a colony, give it a fresh impulse, supply cheap cattle, develop the land, and make a fresh conquest. On the back of this new occupations spring up, and a tide of immigration begins to flow. Such men have earned the gratitude of a whole people, which shows it by fêting them. They have become personages. Were this a mythological age, they would be made heroes and demigods.

A few figures will show the magnitude of the operations engaged in by the Overlanders. On a trip a single Overlander, of course aided by shepherds and bullock-drivers, would carry with him 855 cattle, worth £8,550 ; 62 horses, worth £3,720 ; and 900 fat wethers, worth £1,575 ; or, stock valued at £13,845. Did he take sheep alone, he would drive sometimes from 6,000 to 12,000, worth from £10,000 to twice that sum. How largely South Australia, for example, benefited by the operations of the Overlanders appears from the figures showing the stock taken from New South Wales to South Australia in a period of fifteen months during 1839-40. In that space 11,200 cattle, 230 horses, and 60,000 sheep, valued at so great a sum as £230,800, were driven across two frontiers into the young colony. It was after stock had been driven as far as Adelaide that the name of Overlanders was applied to the class.*

In the last years of the fourth and the first of the fifth decade, we are told, the track (we must not yet speak of a road) from Sydney to Melbourne was "studded with drovers of stock," and all drovers were armed.

Sir George Grey saw the Overlander from the outside ; later writers evolve him out of their inner conscious-

* GREY, *Journal*, ii.

ness, because they have led his life and gone through his toils. He is no longer the large capitalist of Grey, who was nevertheless a reality, but a fugitive one; nor is he the large squatter of the thirties and forties, like "Joe" Hawdon and W. H. Brodribb, who is a squatter first of all, and only makes himself an Overlander on occasion. He is shorn of the aureole of wealth and independence with which Grey's imagination had clothed him. He is now, in the sixties, but a small capitalist, who purchases the stock of a large squatter, or as much of it as he can buy. His object, of course, is to drive it to some distant market where he may dispose of it to advantage. It is a speculative transaction, as the journeys of the early Overlanders were speculative. Like most of them, he invests his all in the purchase, and, if he fails, he is ruined. Like them, too, he drives his own stock.

In the same decade there was a second class of Overlanders, who stood on a very different financial footing. These simply hired themselves to "take down" (the phrase has now a very different signification) the stock belonging to another. This class is, or was, by far the more numerous; in fact, the typical Overlander of the sixties, as of the present day, was a drover on commission, while the capitalist drover of the thirties and forties has become virtually extinct. The occupation is by many preferred to residence on a station; it is better paid; it affords more scope and opens up prospects of independence. The overlander of this class often wins a name for himself, and, if he is successful, he may amass a competence. He then reaches the summit of his ambition and acquires a station.

This new and now prevailing type of Overlanders is drawn from all ranks in society. Like the older type, it includes men from the universities and the public schools, from the army and the navy. Many Overlanders are bushmen or stockmen who have risen, and again some of these may be of good family.

The Overlander's occupation and responsibilities de-

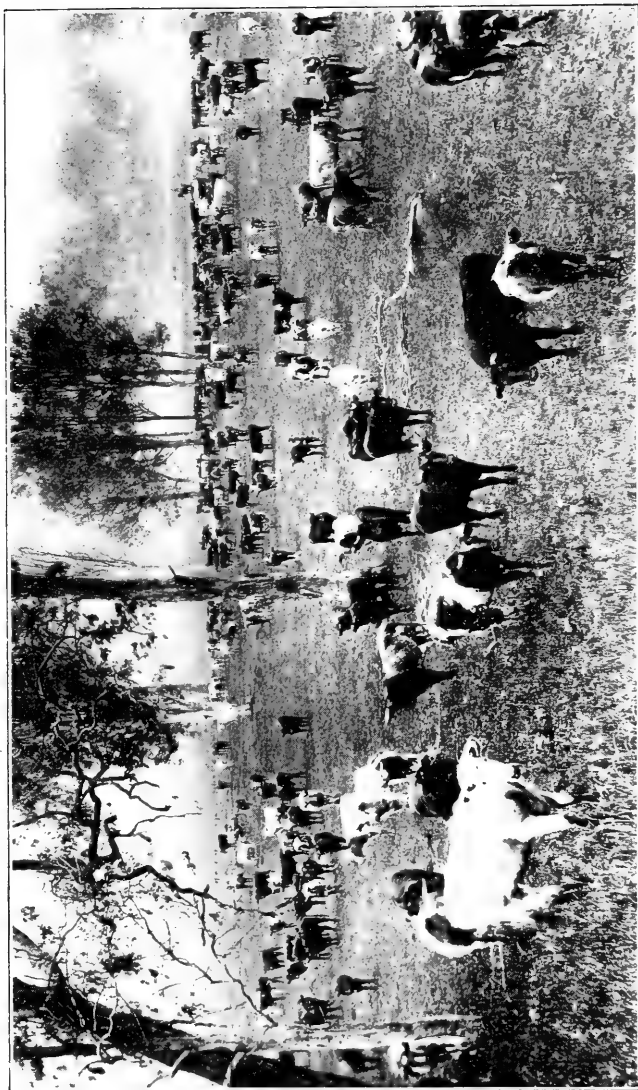


Photo by Kerry, Sydney.

OVERLANDING CATTLE.



mand sterling qualities. On him all depends. Does he lack any essential attribute? The undertaking will fail disastrously; the stock will die *en route*, or be lost, will never reach their destination, or reach it reduced in numbers. He must be constantly vigilant over both his stock and his hands. His eye must be ever on his men, who, without his incessant supervision, would lose their heads, neglect their duties, go wrong, or fail. The ideal Overlander must have an iron constitution, like all pioneers. He must be acclimatised to all weather, and ready to face all vicissitudes. He is ever watching over, thinking, dreaming of, his flock or herd. He is a prey to racking anxiety. The strain on both mind and body is tremendous, and is never lifted. Few could endure it for many years; if it lasted long, it would drive them mad.

The Overlander is active and hardy, and has remarkable energy and endurance. He has large practical knowledge of all things connected with stock. He is endowed with quick perceptions and a sound judgment, not rash or hasty, but, when he has matured his plans, decisive. He must have the power of command, be firm and yet kindly, and know men. His behaviour must be exemplary.

He must be a thorough bushman—apt at finding a track and at picking it up again when it is lost. He knows where water is to be found, and he is an adept at handling his thirsty stock when they rush madly towards a newly found water-hole. He is no less qualified to cope with the minor difficulties that beset the travelling stockowner.

The Overlander might have six men for driving the cattle and the horses, while an overseer and two men would drive the sheep. The men might be young, and “greenhorns at driving cattle.” Then the boss had to be active, day and night. Sometimes a guide had to be employed, as across the Snowy Mountains, over “a dreadful route.” Over a mountainous, scrubby, and boggy tableland, with a running stream in every

valley, they might have to pass. The descent of rocky and precipitous mountains would task their skill and endurance. As it was impossible to drive the whole mob down at once the side of a mountain a mile deep, they would cut off 25 or 30 at a time. These they would force down 300 or 400 yards to the first ledge, where they left two men with them; the owner and the rest would go back for the remainder; till the cattle formed a long line from near the top to the base. Exhausted though the master and men alike were, the process had to be repeated with the sheep. All had to watch by night. Truly, the difficulties, trials, and dangers of an expedition with stock over the Australian Alps made the journey memorable.*

They might be overtaken on the summit tableland of the Australian Alps by a tremendous snowstorm. It was hard then, even with the help of the sheep-dogs, to get the sheep on. Deeper and deeper fell the snow, so that the guide would lose his way. It was intensely cold, and they could go no further. They were brought up in front of a high and wooded mountain. The boss would fall asleep, with his head on the saddlebow, as he stood by the side of his horse. It snowed heavily all night and all next day. The position grew dangerous. The boss and the guide, leaving the sheep with the two shepherds, went off in search of the track. With the aid of a compass they found it, and they reached the spot at nightfall. Next day they went back for their sheep, which had sustained no harm from their long and terrible exposure.†

Very daring bits of overlanding were sometimes attempted and accomplished. An Overlander was engaged by a South Australian squatting firm to take 2,000 cattle from the Darling Downs to Adelaide. Men were hired and supplies purchased. Then, instead of following the customary route by the Darling and the Murray, the leader boldly struck across country, ap-

* BRODRIBB, *Recollections*, pp. 82-3.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 62-4.

parently to avoid being entangled with the cattle on stations passed on the orthodox track. His men, panic stricken by the abandonment of the rivers-route, suddenly forsook him in a body as soon as he got beyond the more settled country. Aided only by a blackboy and his dogs, this original Overlander persevered with his plan, and, driving them slowly or fast, according to the state of the herbage, brought his cattle to Adelaide with but slight loss and in improved condition.*

More daring trips still were undertaken. A freebooter of the type of Rob Roy gave an example of Highland cattle-lifting on a large scale. Taking 1,000 head from a station on the Thomson river, in Northern Queensland, he drove them by Cooper's Creek and the Barcoo to Adelaide, where they were sold by auction. Had the robber not taken a white stud bull from a station on the Darling Downs, he might have escaped detection, but he was tried for his crime. There must have been at Roma some of the sympathy the Highland cateran or the Border freebooter usually found in his neighbourhood, for he was acquitted. By way of punishment, it is stated, the district was deprived of its circuit court.†

* BARTLEY, *Australian Pioneers and Reminiscences*, pp. 189-90.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 188-9.

CHAPTER XXV

THE SUPERINTENDENT OR MANAGER ; AND THE OVERSEER

THE type of manager, or superintendent (familiarly abbreviated to "super") was various and has often been drawn. In the early days the runholder was his own manager, and sometimes, like Brodribb, he gave up his own station to manage another's. Where there were two partners, one stayed at home to manage the run, while the other remained in town to conduct the commercial part of the business, or, if the partners held two runs, he managed the second. Where the sole partner was not in customary residence, as was the case, for example, with Wentworth, who never truly squatted on his stations, though he owned huge runs, a superintendent or manager was employed. He was sometimes of extraordinary muscular development ; gray at forty (not an uncommon thing in these colonies and in the liberal professions here) from hardship and exposure ; a grizzly-bearded, stern-looking man, with a gruff, authoritative voice, and a tanned complexion. He wore a cabbage-tree hat, a flannel shirt, a short tweed jacket over it, and corduroy breeches, with a broad belt around them instead of braces—a common practice in the bush. He was a hard worker, and was wrapt up in sheep. Or (if he was on a cattle-station) he was great at mustering cattle, cutting out "scrubbers" (cattle that had wandered away into the scrub and came back to join the herds), getting in wild horses, and drafting beasts in the stockyard. He handled with

skill a mob of wild cattle. Dash and courage were two of his chief attributes. Humane he was, no less. He would carry a lamb for miles on his saddle-bow, and nurse a ewe through her first lambing. He was strict with his men, and no skulker could hope to escape his sharp eye. He was taciturn from his solitary habit, but he had a keen eye for a bargain.* For such services he received, with his keep, the modest salary of £80.†

The station-superintendent yields a variety of types, and a picture of the Victorian manager may supply some deficiencies in the sketch of the Queensland manager.‡ He has worked up through various stages of bush-apprenticeship, and hopes one day to pass into the ranks of the 'squatocracy.' He is a man of keen intelligence and great knowledge of stock, commercial shrewdness and a military tactician's power of combination. He is in possession of the latest lights, and himself invents improvements of various kinds; and all his appliances are of the most modern stamp. He is deep in all the mysteries of wool, and can judge of the fineness, freeness, density, and length of staple of the ideal merino. He can tell how much the building of a dam will cost, and how many men, working how many days, and consuming certain quantities of provisions, will be wanted to construct it. He is in his glory when he is calculating, planning, ordering, and arranging. He chooses out-stations, drafts and apports stock, selects the ration-carrier, and directs the making of stockyards. He is noted for his perfect mastery of every particular, his energy, his forecast, his rapid and easy arrangement of a hundred jarring details, and his prompt decision. All his plans have a knack of succeeding. He forgets nothing and superintends everything. He trusts nobody; he coerces, persuades, and manipulates everybody. He has the terms of all con-

* ARTHUR NICOL, *Wild Life and Adventure in the Bush*, pp. 87-90.

† GRANT, *Bush Life*, i. 52-3, 72.

‡ ROLF BOLDBREWED, *The Squatter's Dream*, chs. iv. v.

tracts at his finger-ends. He keeps the various parties in hand. Toiling all day and half the night, he does the work of two or of ten men. We do not wonder that, in a comparatively few years, out of a salary of £300, he saves so much as £2,000, or sometimes £3,000. He is usually rewarded by being taken into partnership, or becoming a runholder by himself. He often rises to the Legislature.*

The transition from squatter to manager reveals the passing away of the true patriarchal stage. The pastoralist who squatted in the midst of his flocks and herds, and lived surrounded by his *familia* (in the old Roman sense)—his family and his dependants, was becoming a thing of the past. He preferred to live in the provincial capital, where he might be a legislator or a minister, where his children could be educated, his sons find a career, and his daughters be married. At best, he withdrew to his run when the season was over, as the English country gentleman returns from London in August to his "place" in the country. Or he sold out to a syndicate or a mortgage or loan company, or he was superseded by the bank, which foreclosed on its mortgage and placed a manager in his room. The station grew ever more into a commercial speculation.

The lucrative results of the gold-discoveries tempted squatters to sell out and depart for the metropolis. The squatters got rich and promoted their stock-riders to be overseers and their overseers to be managers. The manager of a run has not always sprung from the English rural class, nor graduated through successive stages of experience in the bush. He may have belonged to the English urban classes. Sometimes the secretary of a club has been taken straight from the city to a station by a grazier who had confidence in his capacity.

On a large run owned by a wealthy pastoralist, who resides in Sydney, where he is a legislator, there may be a "swell super," with a salary of £1,000 a year, who

* *Victorian Pioneers*, p. 22.

drives a four-in-hand, wears kid gloves on the station, and keeps race horses. On such a "swell" station there may be two overseers.*

In early days it was impossible to distinguish between manager and overseer; the same individual was both; sometimes the squatter was himself both. In course of time, as stock increased and hands multiplied, the two professions were differentiated. The manager reserved for himself all larger matters—the employment of men and their wages, the purchase and sale of sheep or cattle, the breeding and allocation of them, while the task of supervising both animals and men was left to the overseer, who was the manager's executive. One of his duties was to go the round of the sub-stations, counting and inquiring about the sheep. The manager might be a gentleman, or one who aped the manners of such. On great stations in Queensland he might drive about in drag and four and wear kid gloves on the station, and have a salary of £1,000 a year. On smaller sheep-stations in New South Wales the manager, in the eighties, received a salary of £400 and sometimes £500 a year. He, again, was the subordinate of a general manager, who controlled three separate stations, belonging to a single proprietor or, afterwards, a company or institution. The manager was an autocrat. He might keep his family in town, where they lived in ease, and where his children were educated.

The overseer, who was often a hard-working bushman, was fed on salt junk, boiled pumpkin, and damper (unleavened bread)—Nicols, *Wild Life*, 115-7. He was sometimes of a different class. Dr. Traill's overseer was originally a "gentleman new chum," who went to stay in New England with his relatives at Cassilis. He at first "humped his swag" (went on tramp), became a station-hand, was next made overseer, and finally was appointed head-overseer. He was a man of great determination of character. Some have won the reputation of being first-rate station managers, and

* GRANT, *Bush Life in Queensland*, ch. vi.

such men (like Dr. Traill) soon become owners (Satge, 98).

The rationale of the evolution of the manager is that it begins with the runholder being his own manager or superintendent. When he retires to town to live on his means or take part in public life, the manager assumes his position. And when the pastoralist sells or is sold out, the manager retains his place, but is subordinate to the bank, mortgage-agency, or other financial institution that now owns the estate. Should the estate ever be nationalised, he will remain as working superintendent. The evolution ends, as it began, with a working-pastoralist at the head, though on different planes.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE STOCKMAN

AFTER the superintendent or the overseer the chief indispensable employees on a cattle station were its stockmen. Like most others on the station, the stockman had a strongly marked individuality. Mrs. Campbell Praed has drawn his portrait. He is long and loose-jointed, lean and sunbrowned. He wears tight-moleskin trousers, elastic-sided boots, and a shirt of gray flannel; and his kerchief, the woman's eye keenly notes, is tied in a sailor's knot—the bushman thus anticipating a recent fashion. On one foot he has a short-necked spur. He slouches loosely in the saddle, but, like his congener, the Gaucho, is a piece of the animal and has a firm seat. The stockwhip, which, unlike the bullock-whip, is always changing its make, a strap, and a pouch complete his equipment. His leash of kangaroo-dogs is indispensable. Very independent in spirit, he won't be "bossed about." A handy man, he can do most things, from baking to building a house.*

He is a man who can procure posts in the bush, split rails and shingles, take contracts for building houses, stockyards, etc.; who works among timber continually, sometimes falling and splitting, sometimes sawing; a hard-working man and one of the best specimens of the Australian workman.† But his special business is to watch and handle cattle. He may be sent

* *My Australian Girlhood*, pp. 177-8, 13.

† GRANT, *Bush Life in Queensland*, i. 80-1.

to quarters that are fifty miles from the head-station, where he will reside in a bark hut and close by a fenced-in water-hole. His duty is to ride a patrol fifteen miles north and south of his hut, and turn back all cattle that have crossed during the night. Once a fortnight his food, with a newspaper, is brought him by the ration-carrier.*

Often these stockmen were men of good family, with bronzed and bearded faces, quick in their movements, first-rate in the saddle or with a stock-whip, a dead shot with a revolver, and yet, if put in dress clothes, and dropped down in a London ballroom, would bear himself confidently and be the hero of the ladies.† Sometimes a newly arrived immigrant, a hard-headed, resolute-looking sort of a farming-man, would soon learn the work of a station, and become a thoroughly good horseman, who knew the ways of cattle and was inured to labour. It was a case of a natural vocation for bush-life. In the early fifties, in the dearth of labour, the Queensland squatters imported Germans—two shiploads of them arrived in 1855; the majority turned out excellent. They remained long in the service of the squatters, who engaged them for two years; but many of them remained for fifteen. English immigrants of a good class followed them, and were equally stable. Never again was there the same dearth.‡

Their duties were sometimes rendered dangerous by the proximity of hostile blacks or the treachery of black boys employed as their assistants. Murders of stockmen were common, and many a station was deserted in consequence. They were told always to carry a revolver, not to give rations to blacks, and, if cattle were killed by the blacks, to follow them up. "You know what to do then, eh?" A. E. gives an account, evidently from personal knowledge, of one such murder. Jim, the stockman in question, gave his nigger, or blackboy, "a big-fellow growl,"

* A. E., *Overlanding*, pp. 21-2.

† *Ibid.*, p. 2.

‡ BARTLEY, *Pioneering Reminiscences*.

charged him with being sulky and lagging behind, and finally struck him with his stockwhip. In revenge the black killed him while he was stooping over his fire. Two new-chum stockmen chased the party, and picked out the murderer, who was taken nominally to a distant police-camp, but really was privily made away with.* The case was typical.

The stockman was capable. In Victoria in the forties, tens of thousands of cattle were managed by a single stockman (afterwards named a stock-rider) with the aid of a black (known always as a blackboy) or a white boy. They were remarkably independent, and sometimes exasperating. Knowing their power and seizing their opportunity, they would strike just when a new station had been formed, or would demand an impossible rate of wages. Especially was this the case after the discovery of the goldfields, and indeed for two or three years afterwards, when they were completely masters of the situation. Then, on many a station, cattle and sheep were herded and shepherded by blacks.

The stockman, like most Australians, had a high notion of his own importance, and scornfully resented identification with a parallel and, one would say, equivalent functionary—the shepherd. His wages varied a good deal at different times and from province to province. About 1840 (I think it must be Mr. Brodribb who makes the statement), shepherds in New South Wales received £2 a week, and bullock-drivers and stockmen “proportionally.” I don’t know what “proportionally” means as here used, but elsewhere he states that drovers and bullock-drivers received £2 a week and rations. According to Rolf Boldrewood, who was squatting in Western Victoria about the same time, wages were not high. One stockman and his wife there received £30 a year, while another was paid only ten shillings a week. On the Conda mine and its tributaries experienced station-hands asked from £100

* *Overlanding*, pp. 37-8.

to £150 a year, with food, as their lowest wage. In other parts of Queensland the customary wage was 25s. per week, with the usual rations—flour, tea, sugar, oatmeal, and salt. Tobacco, soap, and matches were paid for at the ordinary station-rate. The Victorians at least were contented. They saved money, bought stock, and became squatters. In some parts of Queensland they completed a term of service under indenture, and then, with their savings, bought small farms. Many of the great cattle stations in Western Queensland and North-Western Australia at this day are owned or managed by old bushmen.*

Such men necessarily played a large part as "makers of Australia." They were the squatters' indispensable skilled instrument in the handling of cattle. Often they were but little inferior to the squatter, if also they were sometimes little superior to the animals they splendidly handled. They can seldom have lived with their cattle as the Laplanders live with their herds of reindeer, which look upon their masters, it is believed, but as a higher sort of deer, who sometimes sink into bestiality; but the cattle in Australia knew their masters and obeyed them. Many times the stockmen have rendered special services. A bushman discovered the district of Armidale for Mr. Dangar, his employer; and a similar incident in *A Squatter's Dream* may be typical.

Many of the workers on a station were regularly or periodically imported. In 1836-9, at the instance of Dr. Lang, eighteen shiploads of destitute persons from the highlands and islands of the west of Scotland, numbering upwards of 4,000 individuals, were brought out at the expense of the Colony, and landed in Sydney and Melbourne. Semi-pastoral people, they were found acceptable, and were scattered over New South Wales and Victoria as shepherds and small farmers.† Some

* BRODRIBB, *Reminiscences*, p. 20; *Old Melbourne Memories*, ch. x.; BARTLEY, *Pioneerina*, p. 43; A. E., *Overlanding*, p. 20.

† LANG, *Account*, i. 267-8.

ten years later Mr. Neil Black, of Basin Bank, used to import annually, as stockmen, a "draft of stalwart Highlanders." A section of Western Victoria is now peopled by the clansmen and their descendants.*

Squatters would ride fifty miles to hire male or female servants on board of an immigrant ship. That was in days when all the station hands save the overseer had left for the gold-diggings. The squatter would then hire two "fine upstanding Carlow men," who were indentured to him for a year. But they remained with him for years—indeed, till the station was sold. The squatter himself would break them in to stock-riding, and in a year they would ride, rope, brand, and draft.†

Immigrant stock-riders changed with the changes of the land. They became thriving farmers. Thus, the squatters not only prepared the way of the farmers; they bred the farmers.

The English farm-labourer, hired from an emigrant ship, still wearing his smock-frock, speaking his Dorsetshire or other dialect, and with his rustic gait, "developed through various stages of colonial experience," into dairyman, rouseabout, bullock-driver, stock-rider, and working overseer. Not a few of the overseers rose to be runholders.‡

* BOLDREWOOD, *Old Melbourne Memories*, ch. ii.

† *Ibid.*, ch. xxii.

‡ *Ibid.*, ch. xvi.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BULLOCK-DRIVER

WHEN the cattle-run or the sheep-walk has been formed, the station and its routine organized, and everything got into working-order, it is necessary to set up and maintain relations with the distributing and receiving centre. This may be a small township on a neighbouring river or a larger town or a city on the sea-coast, which receives the wool or hides and other products of the run, and distributes the commodities that are given in exchange. The welfare and the very existence of the up-country station depended on the greater or less regularity of the agencies of exchange. Were the rivers in flood? An out-back station might be cut off from its base and, receiving no supplies for months, be reduced to everlasting beef or mutton as its sole food. The chief intermediary then was the bullock-driver, with his team. The bullock was as naturally the squatter's ally as the camel was that of the Arabian or the Arab, and the ass that of the Oriental. He was always at hand, and fed himself by the way; if he was slow, time was then of small consequence; and his harness was of the simplest description. The driver was an individuality. He was an Australian institution, and is believed to have been unique, like the Australian pastoralist régime itself. There are teamsters in Canada and the United States, but they are of a different kind. Drivers of bullocks are found all over the world, but the bullock-driver is Australian. Australian blacks acquire some proficiency in the craft,

and are employed as off-siders, but aliens of the white, yellow, or brown races never rise above being "finished bunglers."

The bullock-driver was a sunburnt, healthy-looking man, of tall and muscular figure (height was needed for the successful wielding of the whip), clad in a home-made flannel shirt and moleskin trousers, wearing usually a cabbage-tree hat and sometimes also a Parramatta frock, which may be conceived to repeat the English peasant's smock. The assistant blackboy was similarly dressed, but wore a gaudier shirt. Both rode on horseback when the journey was long, but where a difficult place had to be negotiated the driver descended to *terra firma*.

When the bullocks yoked up to start on their short, but lengthy day's journey, there was much running about, shouting, and swearing. The whip was freely used, and every lash left a long, deep cut on the hide of the animal. In driving there were great differences in skill. With an amateur in charge, the team would move at its own pace, but when the true driver appeared, the bullocks straightened themselves and instantly obeyed the word of command. He did not walk up and down his team, but was where he was wanted, pushing on a laggard, or urging the polers over a stiff place. The leaders and polers showed themselves docile and obedient to the word of the driver, says another old bushman; but the bullock, according to a third, is, on occasion, the most exasperating animal that man has ever used as an instrument. Even the best team, by its perversity, may "reduce" an irascible driver to "a state of foaming idiocy," or impel him towards the boundaries of insanity. The craft would have been called, by the medievals, a "mystery." At one place the driver will issue an imperious call: "Stand up, Tiger; get on, Snowy," in stentorian tones. As they near a steep and apparently unscalable barrier, he addresses Spot and Mouse, Brindle and Nobby, in terms of endearment, and the scene that follows has been described

by a master.* The air is rent with the thunderous diapason of the bull-punchers' hoarse blasphemy, with the deep-toned, sullen thuds of the whips, or with cursing, encouraging, entreating. You see a chaos of hurtling horns and staring eye-balls, of slavering mouths and low-bent brawny necks. The dray is sometimes embedded in the plastic clay of the terrible hillside. This time it is going to emerge. There is a vision of blood, and the sound of demoniac oaths. A crash of commingled whips, bullocks, yokes, chains ensues; a long, deep, ominous, rolling explosion bursts forth; there is one deadly roar of culminating and murderous profanity; and, at last, the crest of the hill is gained. The bushman's Waterloo was only "Jerry's Pindi."

Very picturesque looked the encampment (usually pitched near a lagoon or a water-hole) when the day's journey had come to an end, and the bullocks were unspanned, when sonorous bells were fastened on their necks and the sonorous oxen driven to the pasture. Then followed the evening meal, prepared on a huge log-fire; it consisted of a smoking dish of beef and potatoes, while tea was boiled in a galvanized-tin billy.

The part of the bullock-driver as a "maker of Australia" is notable. He was formed of the very stuff required for the building-up of a pastoral community. He greatly aided in exploring the eastern and south-eastern colonies—Victoria, Queensland, and New South Wales; and he accompanied Sir T. Mitchell and many another bold discoverer. Over high ranges or across endless plains, through thick scrub or treacherous morass, in drought or flood, on unfenced roads with awful ruts, he held the uneven tenor of his way. The offside was a caricature of the driver, and faithfully reproduced in an exaggerated form all his ways. The famous greenhide bullock-whip remains unaltered and formidable, but the dray is at length superseded by the waggon, when larger teams (of 30 to 40 bullocks, travelling ten miles in seven days) and still more skilful

* BARTLEY, *Opals and Agates*, pp. 272-4

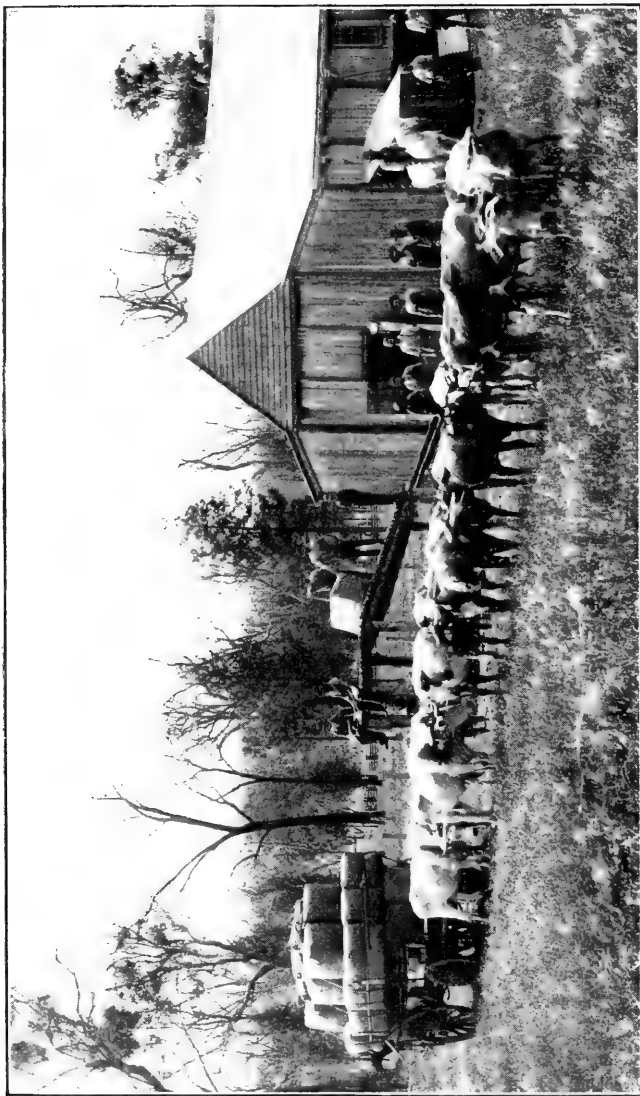


Photo by Kerry, Sydney.

THE BULLOOK-TEAM.

driving are demanded. That, again, was eventually ousted by the railway-train, which almost supplants the bullock-driver, save for short journeys.*

The subject may be summed up, and its philosophy stated, by describing the bullock-driver as an offshoot of the stockman and a special variety of that type. He disappears with the bullock-team, which was his incarnation in an animal-form, and he almost dies out with the pioneering phase.

* A. C. GRANT, *Bush Life in Queensland*, chs. iv. v. ; ERNEST FAVENC, in the *Sydney Morning Herald* ; EDWARD PALMER, *Early Days in Northern Queensland* ; and station-literature generally.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SHEEP-DROVER, THE SHEPHERD, AND THE BOUNDARY-KEEPER

THE bullock-driver must be born to his trade, to be successful; the sheep-drover may be made. He may have spent all his days at "clerical" work (accounting, teaching, perhaps preaching, writing, painting, who-knows-what?), be "as weak as a cat," obnoxiously modest, and "too bloomin' polite for anything." He may possess literary skill and have culture enough to cite Dante and the poets. Suddenly, he is thrown out of gear, and, half-doubtfully, half-eagerly, he grasps at a "droving billet." He takes his first job—to aid in driving a thousand sheep from one station—say, Narni, to another—say, Yarrawanga, on the Victorian side of the Murray, whence they are to be consigned to Melbourne. His horse is his first trouble, and it is "for six consecutive weeks a terror by day and an incarnate nightmare." He makes his first acquaintance with an extensive drafting yard, which seems to him "a mere maze, the prize ground-plan of a labyrinth." He has, to begin with, repeatedly to carry two buckets of water from a water-hole 800 or 900 yards away, but looking and feeling as if it were miles distant, and that under the torrid blaze of the Riverina-plains sun at midday, when the thermometer sometimes stands at 117° in the shade. The stock-route, which is not necessarily either the coach-road or the regular travelling thoroughfare, but must follow the lead of feed and water, may be the worst imaginable. Its desolation may be

primeval, its difficulties formidable—a true *via dolorosa*. It may pass through a swamp that stretches in a deep depression right across the track. The getting of the sheep through this bog is a labour of Hercules. Running and rushing and yelling, boss and man vainly strive to drive the sheep through the slough of despond. The “man” has to take one across, dragged by his horns, struggling tremendously; perhaps on his back, kicking through the water. Thrice through the flood he struggles, and ties the ram to a tree. After two hours’ racing and chasing, the foremost of the mob follows, and the whole flock starts after him. Their chief trouble is at an end, and they have no more adventures on this journey. But every expedition has its tale of vicissitudes, and in facing and overcoming them there is as much room for heroism as in more historical exploits. The sheep-drover, too, was and is one of “the makers of Australasia.”

The Australian shepherd but partially resembles his congeners in distant England or Scotland, and he must be still more unlike his brethren of the craft on the banks of the Tigris or Euphrates. Literature and biography have made us familiar most with the shepherd in the country which, most of all, has moulded itself upon the ideal of the patriarchal Hebrews. John Brown, of Haddington, taught himself Latin, Greek, and Hebrew while he, a “herd-laddie,” fed sheep on the hillsides, and he has been the ancestor of at least two generations of famous Browns, among whom we must include the best or best-known of them all, the finely cultivated and humane Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh. John Cairns, too, a favourite pupil of Sir W. Hamilton, and a successor of Chalmers as a pulpit orator, was a rustic figure who looked like a shepherd even in the pulpit. Of the same rare and high type were such men as figure in George MacDonald’s Scottish novels. They figure also in Carlyle’s *Reminiscences*. Many a time he walked, barefoot, on his way to Edinburgh, through the “Peebles-Moffat moor country”—a “region

without roads, often without foot-tracks ;” “ a charming secluded shepherd country, with excellent shepherd population.” “ The vast and yet not savage solitude ”—“ long miles from farm to farm, or even from one shepherd’s cottage to another ”—impressed itself deeply on his mind and memory. “ You lodged with shepherds who had clean, solid cottages, wholesome eggs, milk, oatbread, porridge, clean blankets to their beds, and a great deal of human sense and unadulterated natural politeness. . . . A kind of confraternity of shepherds from father to son. No sort of peasant labourers I have ever come across seemed to me so happily situated, morally and physically well-developed, and deserving to be happy, as these shepherds of the Cheviots.” Carlyle himself, in his last years, with the Annandale peasant coming out plainly in his face, might have sat for one of these Cheviot shepherds.

Shepherds of as fine a type as these are apparently not to be readily met with in Australia. At all events, the portrait of the “ Australian shepherd drawn by a cultured “ jackeroo ” from England is sketched in sepia. In those days, at least, (the forties) two men were set apart for every flock—a shepherd and a watchman. Every morning, soon after sunrise, the shepherd set out with the flock. All day long he followed it without intermission, keeping within the limits of the run ; for trespass beyond them was punished by the District Commissioner. At sunset he returned, saw that the sheep were put into their folds, and, the day’s work over, resigned them into the hands of the night-watchman, aided by his indispensable collies. Every day the latter shifted the folds, following the sheep. The wage given to the shepherd was £25, with ample rations, permitting substantial savings to be put past. Yet the occupation was unpopular. It was considered the lowest kind of labour on a station. The life was monotonous and uninviting ; * perhaps it bore the

* HAYGARTH, *Bush Life in Australia*, ch. v.

ignominy of its convict origin. Most of the early shepherds had been convicts.

Lady Barker paints a more attractive picture. *Her* shepherd, living alone at an out-station, with his dogs for his sole companions, was, in comparison, a superior being. His chief duty consisted in daily riding a boundary down the gorge of the river, which had many times to be crossed and recrossed. His it was, too, to supply the home station with mutton, killing four or five sheep a week for the purpose. All day he was employed out of doors, but he had the evening to himself, and he spent it in reading. He was well-informed and intelligent, and expressed himself clearly and forcibly. He was a bit of an artist besides, and had covered the walls of his hut with sketches.* In the awful solitude it has often happened that the shepherd, brought up as a Calvinist, has gone mad while he brooded over the doctrines of election and redemption.

In later days the shepherd and the boundary-rider have disappeared with the erection of fences. Yet Mr. De Satge, writing recently and at a time when there was "a profusion of paddocks of small area," says scornfully that "your boundary-rider" now requires a paddock for his horses and a verandahed cottage.† He has evidently risen in the world.

A variety of the shepherd is the boundary-keeper, as he is called in New Zealand, where the runs are comparatively small, or the boundary-rider, as he is named in Australia, where they are often of far greater extent. He belongs to the pre-fencing days, and his business is to act as a human fence. He and his dog (for the well-bred sheep-dog, with hereditary instincts, is as essential as the man) are stationed on the boundaries of a run to keep the sheep from wandering away. He makes reconnaissances; he catches sight of a stray flock and sets off in pursuit of them; he stops them by means of his dog, which places itself in front of them,

* *Station Life in New Zealand*, Letter xii.

† *Pages from the Journal of a Queensland Squatter*, p. 165.

or heads them off in a different direction. Sometimes he loses a mob, which gets snowed in till next spring sets them free.

This too is a lonely life, and sometimes the boundary-keeper, like the shepherd, loses his reason. But, to distract his thoughts, there is much to interest in Nature. Sunset and sunrise are clothed with fresh magnificence; the snow (we are in New Zealand now) plays many a prank; and the Bush takes on new aspects with the approach of spring. The boundary-keeper (who is sometimes an educated man) returns to civilisation with a keener appreciation of its advantages.

CHAPTER XXIX

STATION-PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

A VOLUME on the pastoral industry that should contain no chapter on the processes and procedures that form the culmination of its activities would resemble the proverbial play, with the chief part in it omitted. And yet we feel, with the Roman historian, that such topics are better left severely alone than inadequately treated. The voluminous descriptive literature of the station expressly and fully, and the best of the station fictions incidentally, but with a still greater wealth of illustrative detail, clearly describe or vividly paint scenes that rank as distinctive features of bush-life. In these they should be sought. A few points may nevertheless be noted, showing both the changes that time has brought and the unchangeableness of things that are revealed on a larger scale.

Everything connected with the station passes through an evolution that recapitulates a like development in the Motherland. So recently as 1854, although New South Wales had then been growing wool for more than fifty years, the mode of sheep-washing was simple and inexpensive, just as it was in England at the same time. The fleece was placed on rough slabs and under a bark-roof; the wool-table was clumsy, and the wool-press only a long lever, with a box attached to it. Now vast improvements have been made. All implements have been perfected, often at great expense. The wool-shed on the huge run of Jondaryan, in Southern Queensland, for example, cost as much as £5,000. Spout- and

steam-washing have been introduced. The sustained rise in the price of wool and the rapid growth of pastoral industries have made such developments practicable and such expenditure remunerative.* In such directions, as in many others, it is probable that the daughter-land has far outstripped the Mother-country whose slower steps she was at first content to follow.

Sheep-shearing is doubtless one of these. The speed and the skill with which sheep are shorn on Australian stations is possibly unexampled. The shearers are a very different type of men from the convicts who were the first shearers, or the reckless, drunken hands who succeeded them. They belong to the most powerful trades-union in Australia, and, by means of the Court of Arbitration or the Wages Board, they can dictate their own terms to the pastoralists. The head office of the Union is called upon by these to provide stations with shearers and shed-hands; while the employer is required to furnish suitable machinery, and, if the machinery is not in good condition, the workers may successfully claim legal compensation from the station. The men are now sober, of good character, and earn large sums. Arriving at a station on their bicycles, they race through their task, and then hasten to another station where they have "booked a stand." There is a minute division of labour in the industry. Besides the shearers, there are penners-up, wool-rollers, pickers-up, piece-pickers, cooks, and rouseabouts, with "the boss of the board" at their head, or the shearing overseer and shearers' "rep." Along with this division of labour necessarily companies an equally high degree of organization. A code of rules, made by the men, the squatters, or the court, binds the system in an organic union.

It would be as idle to repeat twice, or twenty-times, told tales of yarding and drafting, mustering and tailing, on a cattle-station as of shearing on a sheep-station; vivid narratives of all such station-procedures

* SATGE, pp. 50-1, 97.

will be found in A. C. Grant and the descriptive writers, or in Henry Kingsley and the novelists. These things on such a scale are almost as threadbare as the descriptions of them, and, if we look for novelty, the exhibition of them on a large scale, we must betake ourselves to the great cattle-runs of the Far North. There, on a station 9,000 square miles in area, with 70,000 head of cattle, bullock-mustering dwarfs all prior station-procedures of a like kind. When the six months' wet season that stretches through the summer is at an end, the first mustering-plant sets out for three weeks' work on distant parts of the run. Six or eight stockmen, all of them splendid riders, with as many blacks on unbroken horses. A train of laden pack-horses, with a supply of provisions and the mustering-plant, follows. Behind these ride the cook and his blackboy, who seek for a site for a dinner-camp. Then comes the fierce work of the long, hot morning. "Over spinifex ridges, down gorges and gullies, across spear-grass plains and through ti-tree scrub" the cattle are mustered and driven towards the camp. Then comes the cutting out of the bullocks, and then are to be seen "wonderful feats of horsemanship, wonderful handling of the long, heavy stockwhip, furious galloping and wheeling in and around a great mob of ever-moving cattle, with great tossing horns and pawing hooves." *

* *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 30, 1910.

CHAPTER XXX

SUBSIDIARY INDUSTRIES

VARIOUS subsidiary industries came to the rescue of the hard-driven squatter in his extremity. Dr. Lang denounces the practice of boiling down sheep and cattle for the sake of their fat, which can thus be converted into fat ; yet he lauds H. O'Brien, of Yass, who invented boiling down. There cannot be a doubt that the discovery of its practicability saved the pastoral industry of New South Wales at a crisis, and perhaps oftener than once. At times when sheep and cattle were un-saleable in any market—when the distance from a market was so great and the roads so bad that stock was untransportable, this precious resource, wasteful though it seemed, fell like manna from heaven and saved the squatter in many cases from the extinction that overtook others that lived too soon.

Other industries sprang out of the pastoral. An innovator in many fields, Thomas Sutcliffe Mort ranks with Alexander Berry as one of the pioneers of dairying in Australia. About the middle fifties, in copartnership with Joseph Hawdon, the famous overlander and pioneer squatter, he purchased an estate of 14,000 acres at Bodalla, in the Moruya district, on the east coast, 200 miles south of Sydney. There he bred cows, and sent their milk and butter to Sydney. The undertaking was a great success, and in 1860, when the estate had expanded to 38,000 acres, and he had expended £100,000 on it, he bought out his partner. The business is stated to be the most extensive in Australia, and its products are said to be equal to the best English

dairy-products. Not only do Moruya and Coolangatta, where the Berry estate is situated, supply Sydney ; they export hundreds of tons of butter annually to England.

A still bigger industry was the offspring of Mort's enterprise. So early as 1843, possessed with the belief that meat could be exported to England, Mort had attempted to cure beef in the ordinary way and then export it. The attempt was necessarily a failure. Towards the end of the sixties or the beginning of the seventies, at Mort's instance and with his financial support, a man of scientific capacity and training, E. D. Nicolle, discovered—he first, not only in Australia, but in the world—a cheap means of producing artificial cold by the repeated use of the same quantity of ammonia. He demonstrated that meat could thus be thoroughly frozen, that its quality was not thereby injured, and that, after being thawed, it kept better than other meat after it was killed. Mort built slaughter-houses in the valley of Lithgow and freezing works at Darling Harbour, in Sydney, at a cost of £80,000, while the squatters of the Colony subscribed £20,000 to export the frozen meat that was to save them and their stations. In 1875 the practical experiment was at length made, and, unfortunately, it issued in heart-breaking failure. But the failure was only temporary. A few years passed, the process was perfected, and in 1881–2 the first cargoes of frozen meat were despatched from Australia and New Zealand. The writer well remembers the surprise of the captain and officers of an American barque, boarded in mid-South Atlantic, at the sight of the funnel on a meat-carrying sailing-ship in 1882. The funnel marked the successful initiation of the great new source of food-supply that Mort had inaugurated. It was to convey cheap butcher-meat to the masses of the British people, as now even to the United States ; and it rescued from insolvency large numbers of squatters and sheep-owners.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE SQUATTER'S FOES

No one who lands or alights at any of the cities of Australia would readily imagine that the denizen of this favoured continent could have any serious enemies at all. The chances are, at almost any season of the year, that the warm sun is shining in a sky of cloudless blue. A cool and tonic breeze, highly charged with ozone, is blowing in from the sea; the bleak and bitter winds, the prolonged tempestuous, or cold and rainy weather, that bulk so largely in the biographies of our European contemporaries—of Carlyle, Huxley, Spencer, George Eliot—as in the correspondence of Goethe and Schiller in a former generation, are soon discovered to be almost unknown. Of what, then, can the pastoralist have to complain? Of what is he afraid? Is not this the Garden of Eden, the Lost Atlantis, the dreamland of the poet, where eternal spring abides and never-failing flowers, and where (in most parts of it) there “never falls the least white star of snow?”

Alas! the very beauty of the climate is its danger and its snare. The sun, so genial in spring and autumn (for winter is hardly known), is as a burning fire in summer, which is often prolonged through many months. Pitilessly it shines down on the burnt-out pastures, piercing at length to the roots of all but the deepest-rooted grasses. Rain has ceased to fall for weeks or months, for eighteen months or two years in many parts of Australia and certain provinces of New Zealand. The herbage is reduced to mere earth, and dark clouds of fine dust blow over it. With the death of the grass

the cattle and sheep die—of thirst as well as of starvation, and their bleaching bones or the stench of their rotting carcasses assail the senses of the traveller. The human inhabitants suffer almost as keenly as the dumb animals. Their cows cease to give milk, and the empty tanks supply no water to cook with or drink. Men and women, prostrated with sunstroke or heat-apoplexy or other grave illness, when the mercury stands at 120° , crowd the hospitals. The traveller hastens to a creek that he knows in the hope of quenching his maddening thirst. O God! it is dry, and he falls dead in its dried-up bed. The wild birds, overestimating their strength, sink beside a lagoon that would have saved them, could they have reached it earlier.

The most gigantic of scourges is undoubtedly that which has been named, the drought-fiend. If foot-rot and tick slay their thousands, and scab its tens of thousands, drought slaughters by the million. Diseases travel slowly and strike individually, and are often local and limited in their operation, like thunderstorms or rain; drought spreads its broad wings over a whole State or the greater portion of a continent, and all life dies or dwindles under the upas-blight. First, the water-courses give out, and great rivers that are thousands of miles in length, which, even in the ordinary Australian summer are mere chains of water-holes, dry up altogether, and the supply for hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle is completely cut off. Their tributaries, on which yet more flocks and herds depend, disappear still earlier. The grass, no longer nourished with dews or fed by rains, withers down to the root; if the drought is protracted, even the roots, tenacious though they be, are killed. Cattle and sheep grow lean and at length die, and the ground is littered, as the air is poisoned, for miles and miles by their decay. Siroccos, or heat-waves, engendered in the torrid north, make the dweller even on the comparatively cool seaboard feel as if he were living in a furnace and breathing flame, like Apollyon. Day after day the sun rises in a sky of

cloudless blue, and the heavens are brass, while the earth is as hard as iron. Human beings are conscious of the oppression, and cry in despair: will the rain *never* come? Now and then such clouds as would foretoken rain in any country temperate gather in the sky and raise vain hopes. So it goes on through weary weeks and months, and even, in a mitigated form, through years and years. The protracted drought of Queensland lasted from 1900 to 1903, but the terrific drought that began in New South Wales in 1895 endured still longer. Even this is slight to the droughts of Argentina, which sometimes are prolonged through as many as fifteen years.

The havoc such scourges work is terrible. The mere figures are impressive. In Queensland, by 1890, the number of sheep approached 22 millions. After the three-years' drought that ended in 1903, it had decreased to 7,213,895—a reduction of more than two-thirds. The losses in cattle were no less appalling. Their number had risen from 432,890 in 1859, in spite of recurrent shorter droughts, to 7,012,997. Then came the big drought, and the number fell to 2,481,717—another decrease of about two-thirds. As the result of a drought of equal severity in 1900–2 in the other Colony that is most exposed to such calamities, New South Wales, the number of sheep fell from over 42 millions to less than 20 millions.

In the train of drought, or sometimes after a short rainless spell, follows the yet more destructive conflagration. The smallest accident—a dropt lucifer-match, an unextinguished picnic-fire, the dregs of a broken whisky-bottle inflamed by a burning sun—may give it a start, and all the resources and exertions of the "little god of earth" will be powerless to arrest it. The most memorable of all such bush-fires gave its name to Black Thursday, on February 6th, 1851, when a wall of fire 100 miles in breadth swept Victoria from far inland to the sea, licking up grass, corn, bush, and trees, sheep, cattle, and horses, farm-steadings and station-home-

steads, and even human beings in its dread flight. But we need not go back for sixty years. Turn only to the newspaper of this very day (December 23rd, 1910), and we find an account of a huge bush-fire that sweeps station-properties over an area of 30 miles long and up to 12 miles wide. In its brief career it has many vicissitudes. Driven by a strong northerly wind, and fed by the long, dry grass, the flames travelled at a tremendous pace.

The flood is the counterpart of the drought, and usually affects the same country. Elsewhere floods that are often beneficial are created by the melting of the upland or mountain snows; in Australia they are begotten of tropical or monsoonal rains, which are, when normal, the standby of the pastoralist. So heavy are these that not many days' rain is wanted to flood a country. In temperate New Zealand and south-eastern Australia three inches may at times fall in a few hours. In tropical countries, like Queensland, eighteen inches may fall in one day. A few days' rain, at even the lower rate, will raise the starved rivers far over their low banks. Then flocks and herds, horses and houses and human beings are swept down by the all-engulfing stream. Many a squatter has been ruined by floods.

Or there may be only continued wet weather, when many stations run out of rations. Drays may then be fourteen months on the road. There is no food but mutton or beef. Always the iron pot is on the fire. There is no tea, and such flour as they could procure is carried on pack-horses.

In more temperate countries, such as New Zealand, here repeating the experiences of the Motherland, especially Scotland, drought may be matched, in an adjoining province, by a calamitous snowfall. Lady Barker gives a harrowing account of the digging out of sheep that had been buried in snow. Under its warm mantle they would have been safe, had not a stream risen and drowned them. One-half of the sheep were lost, she writes, and ninety per cent. of the lambs, while on the

back-country ranges the losses were far heavier. Sheep and cattle were found dead in hundreds along the fences, where they had mistakenly gone for shelter. In all, half-a-million sheep were lost.* (In her later volume the numbers are much reduced.)

Hardly less destructive than drought, and often endemic where drought is only epidemic at long intervals, is the sheep-breeder's deadly enemy, scab. A French philosopher has ingeniously hazarded the view that the invasion of human beings, as of the animals he domesticates, by myriads of parasites, embodies the revenge of the lower species against the higher for dispossessing them of the Earth. It is a questionable theory, but the exasperated pastoralist, harassed on all sides, would perhaps have found consolation in it. Scab was doubtless the worst of the diseases that make sheep-farming precarious. It annually carried off large numbers of sheep, which at times died by hundreds and thousands, or were boiled down for tallow, when the poor pioneer was almost a ruined man again. It was a dread word, which spelled ruin and heavy loss, endless torment, death, and destruction. The straying of a single sheep, due to a careless or malignant station-employee, might introduce the ovine leprosy and undo all that had been done to obviate it. One's neighbour was often then one's natural enemy. If he were a careless flockholder, he might ruin your flocks. There were, of course, remedies for the disease. A late judge of the Supreme Court in New Zealand, himself an ex-runholder, used to relate how he cured a flock of scab-smitten animals with tobacco-juice; a former legislator, at the other end of the same colony used to trumpet the virtues of his famous dip. But most remedies were ineffectual.

The foot-disease comes next in destructiveness. It first showed itself in cattle, and next in sheep, in the year 1803. It disappeared with the drought, and, for almost three-quarters of a century, it was virtually unknown. Then it again became afresh formidable as the

* *Station Life*, Letter xx.

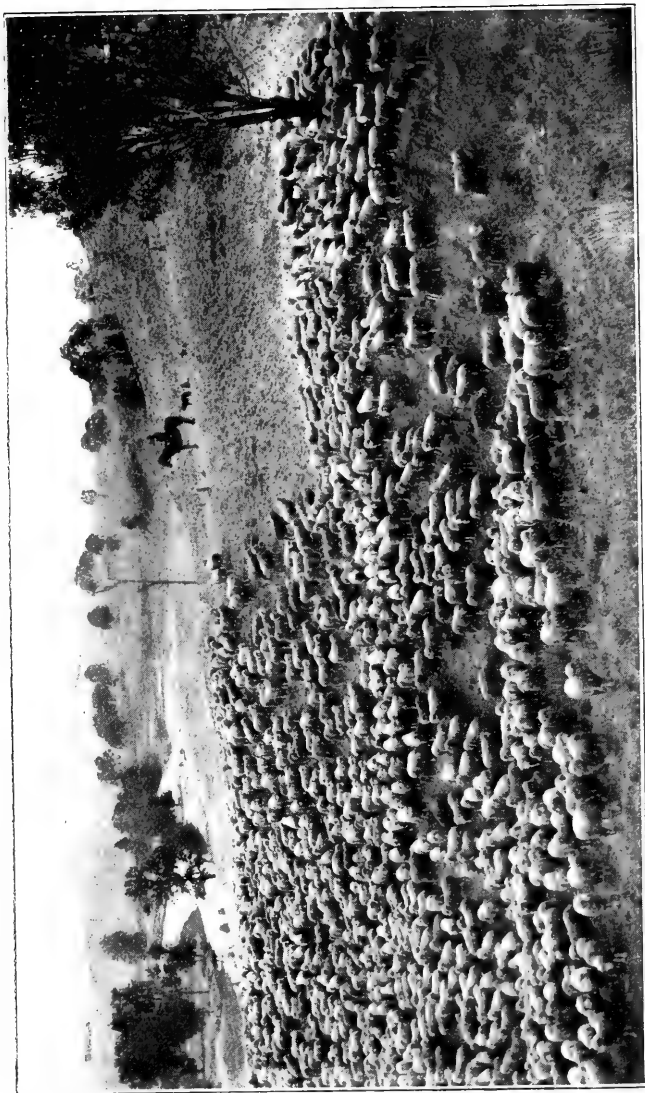


Photo by Kerry, Sydney.

TRAVELLING SHEEP.



foot-and-mouth disease in cattle and as foot-rot in sheep. The cause of its reappearance is unknown, but it generally accompanied the rich herbage that grew on certain fertile soils. The results of it were that flocks were habitually lame, and the yield of wool was greatly reduced. Many hands had to be employed on sheep-stations; and the son of a large squatter would tell, as late as 1884, how he and his men, for two or three weeks together, had been occupied in paring the hooves of some twenty or thirty thousand sheep.

Larger animals than the bacteria that engender scab and foot-rot have been less formidable, because they can be extirpated. On cattle-runs kangaroos eat up the grass. The dingoes, or Native dogs, did not at first show themselves, but began to appear on stations when they found there was food to be had; * they ate calves and foals, worried sheep, and destroyed lambs. In some parts their destruction has checked the disappearance of the kangaroos, on which they preyed. All such mammals are vanishing with the black denizens of the Continent.

The kia, or parrot, that feeds on the kidneys of sheep in New Zealand, is comparatively isolated, and the mischief it has done grows less, year by year. Other avian pests need only be noted. "Crows and eagle-hawks are our worst enemies," wrote a Victorian pioneer.* They alone are likely to persist.

Whether the more destructive pests can be completely eradicated is still a question. The vast inorganic foes of the squatter, drought and flood, present a more formidable problem. Yet much has already been accomplished. Wells have been sunk on every station, and, by means of artesian bores, the great, parched interior and western plains are being irrigated by the plenteous waters flowing underground, or stored-up there for countless ages. Nay, the scientists themselves, with Sir Oliver Lodge at their head, encourage us to hope that the day is at hand when electrical science, which has

* *Victorian Pioneers*, p. 148.

created artificial sunshine for less-favoured lands, will, a new cloud-compeller, unlock the treasures of the flocks and herds of the sky for the benefit of the herds and flocks of the Earth, and thus convert the drought-stricken southern land into one copiously washed by supernal rains as by subterranean waters. Thus the physicist will become, as the engineer has already proved himself to be, a true "maker of Australasia." Other branches of science will contribute their quota. The biologists have tracked the metamorphoses of the liver-fluke, destroyer of sheep ; they will yet trace the microbe that rots the hooves and the bacterium that produces scab, and with the discovery of the poison there will come, in time, the invention of its antidote. Man will then be the master as well as the maker of Australasia.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE BREEDER

THE story of the breeder, in so far as it belongs to the earliest pastoralists, has already been told. After that earliest importation the others were "casual and heterogeneous." At different times the small buffalo breed was imported from Calcutta. An Andalusian cow was left by a Spanish ship in 1794. A hornless English bull and cow were sent from St. Helena in 1796, and they greatly improved the existing breeds. The first breeders took their stock where they could find them. They imported cattle from India, and some blood, now infinitesimal in amount, of a hump-backed Brahmin breed, still flows in Australian cattle. Sheep of a fine quality were yet harder to be procured, and it was by means of chance importations from the Cape and gifts from the royal stud in England, that the merino was domesticated. With a strong faith in the possibilities of the climate, though in the teeth of the prediction that not wool but only hair could be grown on the backs of Australian sheep, John McArthur and Samuel Marsden persevered with their self-imposed task, and they soon engendered the expectation in England that they would eventually produce wool equal to the finest Saxon. They, or their successors, were far to surpass all existing breeds. The genial climate, aided by the rich and succulent native grasses, was favourable to all stock, but was most of all favourable to the sheep, especially the merino. It made practicable the rapid blending of types and varieties to such an extent that, in a comparatively few years, Australia has traversed all of the stages passed through

by sheep in their European and American evolution, and left the latest behind.

The breeder has ransacked the world to find the materials for fashioning his perfect sheep. Three varieties of the Spanish merino, which date from the beginning of the seventeenth century, and these further modified by a detention in Germany, formed the ground-sources. To these add one famous French breed, also of Spanish parentage; one purely Spanish type, imported direct from Spain; four American types, also of Spanish origin, immediately or remotely. All these varieties have been blended in the Australian merino so completely that the visitor describes the sheep on every station as being "thorough-bred mongrels." That, of course, is an incorrect expression, but it adumbrates the number of strains now blended in Australian merinos. They are believed to be unequalled or unapproached in conformation of carcase and length, silkiness, weight, spinning character, and general quality of wool. The mixing of the breeds answers to the blend of the human population, and has but one base—the Spanish merino, imported *via* Germany, the modified descendant of the primitive European sheep. The breeders who have thus "made" Australia would form a long but honourable roll of "makers," known and unknown, who must here, perforce, remain anonymous.

The evolution of Australian cattle might similarly be described as consisting of the blending of the many great English stocks by a multitude of breeders, who might reasonably claim a place in all accounts of the making of Australasia.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE ECONOMICS OF THE STATION

IN the early days of Australian colonisation land had little or no market value, and the first estates, like the first estates in England after the Norman Conquest, were granted as donations. Between the years 1810 and 1821 estates of from 3,000 to 5,000 acres were promised to gentlemen-settlers by the Secretary of State in England proportionally to the capital they carried out with them. In 1821 Governor Macquarie drew up a scale regulating the extent of land-grants by the apparent capital possessed by the immigrant, and ranging from 100 acres for £100 to 2,000 acres for £3,000. The days of free gifts had come to an end. When John McArthur, who already held 7,500 acres, induced Lord Bathurst to assign him 10,000 more, he was to pay for them at a stipulated rate.

All such acquisitions, however, were freehold, and, though the earliest pastoralists, Johnson and Marsden, were freeholders, and McArthur, the first great pastoralist, was a freeholder, it is not with them that we are here primarily concerned. It is in the at first unlicensed and afterwards licensed occupiers of the waste lands of the Crown lying outside of the recognised boundaries of settlement that we are here interested. The pastoral initiation took place within the pale, and from it the stimulation issued, but the *nisus* of pastoral progress operated without the bounds, on the vast stretches of untrodden land that were hungry for the advancing settler.

A large number of the pioneer stations—those formed in New South Wales from 1815, in Victoria from 1836,

in South Queensland from 1840, and in North Queensland from 1850—were discovered and formed by their first owners. As a licensing fee of £10 was all that had to be paid for the "right of station," their whole means were laid out in the purchase of stock and the erection of station-buildings. The majority (not all) of the pioneer pastoralists who settled Victoria in the late thirties or early forties brought stock with them from Van Diemen's Land or New South Wales. A large number of the squatters who formed runs in Australia brought wealth with them from England, or had acquired it as superintendents of stations (as in Tasmania), or in other employments, as that of a sea-captain. The capitalists who at first purchased extensive tracts of land in Western Australia from the Home Government, then, finding conditions impracticable there, migrated to Tasmania, and finally, learning the promising prospects of pastoralists in Victoria, settled there, are examples of the first class, while John G. Robertson and John Hepburn are examples of the others. Young men like Rolf Boldrewood, as T. A. Browne is honourably known in literature, was furnished by his father with the means of purchasing stock enough to form a small run, and when he had completed his purchases he found himself in possession of a few shillings as his sole floating capital. Others were sent by their fathers to take up runs at some distance from the paternal station, and they overlanded thither the surplus of their father's stock. Others still had acquired cattle or sheep by means of theft, like certain innkeepers in Queensland and small squatters (in the primary sense) or, it might be, free selectors everywhere.*

These are instances of stations formed and often discovered by their owners. But the sale and purchase of stations already formed rapidly sprang into existence, and a run often changed hands repeatedly in a few

* *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 22, 43, 265, and passim; *Old Melbourne Memories*, ch. i.; DARWIN, *Voyage*, etc., ch. xix.; GRANT, *Bush Life*; and PATERSON, *An Outback Marriage*, chs. xiv. xv.

years. Here is an example of the terms on which the transaction was effected. In the Salt-Bush country, 200 miles from Melbourne, an immigrant family, consisting of husband and wife, with two sons, bought a station with 10,000 sheep for £10,000. A sum of £3,000 was paid down in cash; the rest was held on mortgage for four years at an interest of 10 per cent. Tanks were placed, and dams built. Within four years the mortgage was paid off; more vacant country was procured; and as many as 25,000 sheep, by purchase or increase, then owned. That was an exceptional case, it will be said; and, as we shall see, things did not go as smoothly with the majority of runholders.

What was really sold was the stock, whether sheep or cattle, on the station. At most, the permissive "right of station," or "right of grass," was sold. The right of brand, the stock-horses, station-stores, implements, homestead and station-buildings and furniture were given in. Mr. Brodribb gives a specimen of the terms on which the transference was effected, which, he says, remained constant for forty years. One-third of the purchase-money was paid in cash. The balance was paid in instalments, at intervals of one, two, or three years, by bills payable at a bank, and bearing interest at 10 per cent. And the settler held a mortgage on the property until the last bill was paid. The station was then transferred to the purchaser, provided the transaction had received the sanction of the Government.*

The thing sold is variously expressed. Brodribb habitually writes of "stations" being sold. Boldrewood-Browne speaks of the "right of run," sometimes of the "grass right of run," and again of the "right of station." Another Victorian pioneer says that he purchased the live stock of certain station-holders, "with the right to their station." Years later he purchased more stock, "with the right to" the extensive stations of the parties. Another sold "my right to the . . . run." †

* BRODRIBB, *Recollections*, p. 19

† *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 157-9.

The mere opening up of vast tracts of land on all sides, after the policy of keeping all the inhabitants penned up within comparatively narrow boundaries was abandoned, was a temptation too strong to be resisted. As had happened when the granting of land was confined to the pale, sanguine individuals took up an extent of it beyond their means adequately to stock. What else could they then do but apply to the banks and the financial institutions to supply them with the means? Many such institutions, in order profitably to invest their capital, urged individuals to take up runs, and financed them. Or they almost forced loans upon them. "The Bank will be most happy to honour your drafts up to £10,000. If you need more, you will be kind enough to advise us," the manager of a great banking corporation would write to a pastoral client. After a good clip, said one such squatter, "I might have had 10,000 sovereigns to take away in my hat." Scarcely had a station been discovered and stocked, when the owner was compelled to seek financial aid. "Accommodation" was then given at the rate of 10 per cent., brought up to 17 per cent., or much more, by commission, brokerage, compound interest, and a hundred other charges.*

The position of the pastoralists was apparently strengthened, but was rather weakened, by the very measures that were devised to aid him. The granting of leases in 1846, and the legalising of the transfer of titles to stations, gave them a strong hold on their stations, but also induced them to embark on speculative adventures. Even the Lien on Wool Act, which Wentworth promoted and Deas Thomson declared had been productive of immeasurable benefits, led to a corresponding development of banking in questionable forms. When pastures and stocks were alike pledged as securities for the debts incurred, and thus converted into assigned pledges, there was witnessed the novel phenomenon of agents who had no money negotiating large transactions in paper with bank directors who had little

* LANG, *Account*, etc., ii. 187.

more ; the only real values passing between them being hypothetical possessions.*

To recover the advances, a system of jobbing in stations grew up and was stimulated by the banks. Under the operation of this system many stations thus formed or thus aided passed into the hands of the banks or the merchants, even while they remained in the hands of their nominal owners. Consider for a moment what this necessarily implied. The merchant to whom a squatter was indebted held a preferential lien on his wool or a mortgage on his live stock. Before the squatter could call an ounce of the wool on the sheep's backs his own, his liabilities to the banker or merchant had to be met. He could not bargain for its sale. He must send it to London in ships chosen by the mortgagee. Bills of lading must be endorsed by the mortgagee, and this was done at a cost of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. He must accept supplies from the merchant, and at the merchant's prices. A chain of monopolies bound him hand and foot.†

The gains of the pastoralist were affected by a variety of circumstances. The profits of the first year were swallowed up by expenses. Then a financial panic in London might send down the values of stock or the price of wool with a mighty and disastrous fall. Wages were high and discount was at war-rates. Three-fourths of the squatters had hazarded their all in buying stock and acquiring stations. Loaded with debt and unable to meet their liabilities, they sank into despair. A drought might ensue, when the sheep and cattle died in thousands. Absolute ruin seemed imminent. Large business-firms became insolvent or passed through the bankruptcy court. The banks themselves were pushed. Such was the state of things in 1838-9 and in 1843-8.‡

Embarrassed themselves, the banks put pressure on their clients. These were informed that the bank must close all pastoral accounts under a certain amount. It

* RANKEN, *Bush Essays*, pp. 13-4.

† BRODEBIBB, *Experiences*.

‡ LANG, *Account*, ii. 187.

realised on the securities it possessed promptly and without respect of persons. It accordingly called on the squatter to extinguish his liabilities without delay. Or it would at once realise on these securities for the moneys advanced through a long series of years, and it threatened to sell up without mercy, in the middle of a grass-famine and a money-famine, the pastoralist who had been led to imagine that he would be allowed time, accommodation, and reasonable assistance in order to repay.*

To the despairing squatter a letter comes from his banker formally requesting him to reduce his overdraft. If he could not meet this demand, it seemed that he was to be sold up (as Rolf Boldrewood graphically puts it) in the very vortex of the panic, in the worst month of the year, in the most depressed period of the worst drought. He goes to town and calls at the bank. There, in the ante-chambers, sit other squatters who have been called to account. One of them is a pioneer squatter who, by long years of toil, risk, and privation, had built up a modest property. He had incurred debt by compulsion in order to buy a few thousand acres around his homestead when free-selectors came swarming over the flats he had discovered and ridden over as his own for twenty years. "If they sell me up," he said, "I shall have to go out a beggar." He is summoned to the manager's rooms. Soon he comes out with clenched teeth and ghastly features of hopeless woe, and eyes that are awful in their despair. His own turn comes. The bank-manager suavely names an indispensable measure—the formal execution of a mortgage over the station—as a matter in the ordinary routine of business, which is requisite "for the support of our advances to you, past and future." In fact, the deed is already prepared and is now submitted for his signature.

The signature involves the actual sale of the station, and, very shortly afterwards, the bank realises on its investment, and sends a new owner to take possession.

* BOLDEWOOD, *Squatter's Dream*, chs. vi. xvi.

The lately-wealthy capitalist goes out, like the grizzled pioneer after a life of toil, a beggar, and has to commence life afresh.*

Such experiences may seem to give the unfortunate squatter some ground for believing, what more impartial persons gravely assert, that the banks and money-lending firms have always secured the lion's share of squatting profits. Yet it should be remembered that banks were themselves involved in the financial ruin they were instrumental in bringing upon others. They passed their dividends, or were "reconstructed" in a manner that left their shareholders stricken for long periods, or they faded out of existence. Only twenty years ago the strongest bank in New Zealand, and a perfectly solvent bank, as it has since abundantly proved, came down with a crash that beggared its proprietors. A few years later bank after bank in New South Wales and Victoria put up their shutters, and the passer-by saw their closed doors, while he read, with a pang, that they had "suspended payment." The banks have, none the less, played a large and beneficent part as "makers of Australasia," and especially in connection with the pastoral interest. Speaking one evening with his customary violence at a college table, Ruskin blurted out that "all bankers should be hanged." Nothing in the early history of Australia is more striking than the absolutely necessary rise of a banking-system. The principal superintendent of convicts acted in his private capacity as a banker and a moneylender, and this may be considered the germ of the now-important Government Savings Bank. But in 1817 a private bank, the Bank of New South Wales, came into existence, and both its genesis and evolution were closely connected with the pastoral industry.

Many of the earlier squatters, who had been indebted to merchants or to the banks, either for the means of purchasing or for the means of carrying on, had to surrender their stations, and became penniless. Others,

* ROLF BOLDBREWED, *A Squatter's Dream*, chs. xv. xvi.

for many years embarrassed by their liabilities, often incurred at high rates of interest, succeeded in freeing themselves only after long struggle. The new men, on the other hand, who purchased the surrendered runs, escaped the anxieties and privations of the pioneers, and became rich. Forgetting what they owed to these (the older settlers complain), the younger men look down on them as "fossils, when they do not treat them as incumbrances." *

One old squatter sadly sums up the "salient points" of his experience as a squatter. "I have lost my capital. I have lost my health. I have lost fifteen of the best years of my life. I have undergone many hardships, exposed myself to many dangers, and am now a poorer man than I was when I became a squatter." †

Edgar Quinet considers that the record in the Book of Genesis is shown to be less ancient than the picture given in the Indian Vedas, because it mentions the use of money; Abraham weighs out 400 shekels of silver, current money, to Ephron the Hittite, for the purchase of a burying ground in the cave of Macpelah. In the *Book of Job*, which is popularly supposed to be of greater antiquity than *Genesis*, it is sardonically related that, when prosperity had returned to the patriarch, his relatives and acquaintances brought him presents of money. In these old books both man and nature, the imaginative Frenchman believes, appear to be of inferior antiquity to the men and life of the Vedas; yet, if one remembers rightly, there is, even in these world-old narratives, some mention of money. Tried by this test, the Australian pastoralist régime is, in one sense, older than the most ancient records and, in another, younger than some of the most civilised European countries. Money in the form of coins of the realm is, on a station, almost unknown. All payments are made by means of cheques on a distant bank. W. C. Wentworth himself, an old bank-clerk relates, "used to come into my little sanctum and pore over the array of orders and cheques that

* *Victorian Pioneers*, pp. 184-5.

† *Ibid.*, 188.

had rolled in from his numerous and wide-spread stations," and he was only one of many.* The practice was unavoidable. Almost all stations were distant—some were very remote—from villages or towns. Money was as useless to the dwellers on a station as it was to the blacks, who sometimes waylaid and murdered a traveller, and left his gold-laden pockets or belt unripped. The practice was unavoidable, but it often had lamentable consequences. Receiving a cheque for a large sum as the liberal payment of a year's labour, a stockman would set out for the nearest country town, or, it might be, the provincial metropolis, and there put up at an inn. He at once handed the cheque to Boniface, who took good care to see that it was soon exhausted by carousing and "shouting." When he got tired of his guest, he turned him out of doors, saying that the bushman had received the equivalent of his cheque. The process has ever since been known as "lambing down." Australia has the demerit of having invented one of the vilest known forms of crime, and untold thousands must thus have been robbed. Out of it, possibly, have grown the "confidence-man" and the cloud of harpies who regularly swoop down on countrymen arriving in town. Ten thousand such individuals are said to make a living in each of the larger Australian capitals.

* N. BARTLEY, *Opals and Agates*, p 56.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE COMPANY AS PASTORALIST

THE Company has played so considerable a part in the pastoral development of Australia that it cannot be ignored in describing that development; but its part has always been secondary, and here it must therefore be content, like other pastoral features, with a skeleton chapter, where space is lacking to clothe the naked anatomy with flesh and blood.

The natural evolution of the pastoralist system was from simple to complex forms. It began with the taking up and the tenure of a single station by a single individual, and this form has survived the others. The next was the joint tenure of a run by two, or sometimes three, related persons, oftenest brothers (and there were many such),* or brothers-in-law, like the famous run-holders, Beck and Brown, or otherwise related, then repeating the phase shown in the occupation of the plains of Mamre by Abraham and Lot, uncle and nephew. Perhaps the next phase, if it was not simultaneous, was the co-partnery of two (or three) unrelated individuals. The passage from this phase to the company was insensible. A number of small companies, never incorporated, like the Lochinvar and St. Ruth Company, and one mentioned by Edward Palmer, both in Queensland,

* Squatting firms of brothers abound in the *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*. Thus, there are—Bateses, Whytes, three Wedges, Carmichaels, Addisons (three of them), Ruffys (again three of them), Dennises, Learmonths, Watsons, Collyers, Manifolds, Yuilles, Simsons, Campbells, Faithfulls, Pykes, McLeods, O'Rourke.

came into existence, and held, each of them, a number of runs. Out of these the larger and incorporated joint-stock companies would naturally have developed. As a matter of fact, no such evolution took place. The industrial development of the Motherland here cut across the growth of the pastoral industry in Australia at an angle.

The second and, still more, the third decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the rise of the joint-stock company. Having recently resided in England, where he observed the phenomenon, Captain John McArthur's scheming brain devised such a company in Australia for the encouragement of the pastoral industry. Australia was not England, and the requisite capital could not then be raised. The aid of Government was therefore to be invoked. Especially was its financial assistance requested, the assignment of convict servants desired, and the importation of merinos at Government expense demanded. The Government, by way of security, was to have a certain number of shares in the Company, and (in order to obviate the danger of mutiny) the estates of the Company were to be placed in the interior, at a distance of at least five miles beyond the settled districts. The demands were perhaps unreasonable; at all events, Macquarie seemed to dread the removal of convicts beyond practicable Government control. Accordingly, though the proposal was approved of by so advanced, yet sober, a mind as that of Commissioner Bigge, the Company was not formed. Perhaps it was best so. Pastoralists were put on their mettle, and their efforts were in due time crowned with success. The individual and independent pastoralist was evolved.

The time of the Australian company was not yet come. The time of the English company was, however, at hand. In 1825—a great year for the formation of joint-stock companies in England—the Australian Agricultural Company was formed by a number of Members of Parliament and other gentlemen connected with the wool-trade. It received vast grants on easy terms.

For a million acres, at the end of five years, it was to pay a nominal quit-rent, and its lands were to be redeemed in twenty years by the employment of a proportionate number of convicts, thus relieving the Colonial Treasury of the burden of their maintenance. Its estates were situated away in the rural districts—at Port Stephen, the Liverpool Plains, and Peel River. It was therefore virtually McArthur's Company on an English, in place of an Australian, base. Like many English colonising companies, it was controlled by men of high character and lofty aims; Sir Edward Parry was one of its chairmen, and Admiral Gidley King (son of the eminent Governor) one of its directors. A similar Company, the Van Diemen's Land Company, was formed in almost the same year, and on quite the same principles. An offshoot of the A.A.C. came into existence as the Peel River Company. All of these were rather English than Australian companies, and their history belongs in good part to the commercial history of the Motherland. The A.A. Company still exists, though now shorn of its splendour; and the Peel River Company, its daughter, which pays good dividends, is still vital and active. It holds, I have heard, three stations, of which one, at Tamworth, has a million and a half of sheep, and is therefore the largest sheep-station in Australia. In 1910 it paid a dividend of 10 per cent. All these companies have played a large part in colonial pastoral history. Sometimes their action has been conservative and retrogressive, and the greatest of all has latterly been a millstone around the neck of the colony. Only under pressure, and in recent years, has it released its grasp on the lands it obstinately kept under pasture, and surrendered them for conversion into agricultural farms.

Another big pastoral company enjoys the unenviable distinction of being the most colossal failure in Australia. The Western Australian Company was founded in 1838 in order to attract settlers to Australia by applying (so we are told) the principles on which South Australia had been formed. In 1840 it purchased extensive blocks for



Photo by Kerry, Sydney.

“MUSTERERS” READY FOR A START.

settlement in the western colony. The remoteness of the settlers from one another and from their base, caused by the vast extent of the grants, and the lack of labour supplied by the convicts in Australia, wrecked a hopeful and well-intended scheme. Yet it introduced many valuable settlers into Western Australia, and it laid the foundations of that south-western province which has passed from a pastoral to an exporting agricultural country.

Some of the men who had failed in Western Australia migrated to Van Diemen's Land, and there, on a smaller and more manageable area, slowly acquired instead of being seized in mass, they succeeded. So well did they succeed that in 1835 an association of "adventurers," as they called themselves, was formed in Tasmania, and it aided in accomplishing the splendid undertaking of colonising Victoria and spreading pioneer pastoralists over the broad grassy acres of the West. Having served its end, the association dissolved.

In 1836 the Derwent Company purchased the shares and interests of the Van Diemen's Land Company, and formed stations in the Geelong district. The Clyde Company formed stations on the Moorambool, and the Circular Head Company in Tasmania. In later days companies, with endless sheep and capital, competed for mammoth stations. The Lochinvar, Rosenthal, and St. Ruth Company, in Queensland, owned many runs, and Edward Palmer mentions a company as existing in 1859, which had realised all its ambitions. Most of these companies were English. The United Australian Pastoral Company has a large station, with 50,000 sheep and 10,000 cattle; it was formed some forty or more years ago, and still declares a good dividend. In the seventies the Musgrave Range Company held a large extent of country in the Northern Territory. A New Zealand Pastoral Company (R. Campbell and Sons) declares a fat dividend. The existence of such companies is the outcome of a general movement. Company-ranches and company-*estancias* in North and South America are parallels

in the New World to the company-stations in this southern world.

A station-trust is hardly in sight. Yet the various pastoral associations, which act and sue like legal persons, reveal an organization that perhaps better answers the same purpose. The nationalisation of stations, which is the trust carried a stride further, has been proposed, at least in regard to the Native reserves in the Far North and NorthWest. In those remote wilds, where alone the black now seems to thrive, still cattle and sheep ranches, together with the growth of rice, cotton, sugar, tobacco, rubber, and tropical fruits, might all, it is believed, be carried on by the State, in the interests and by means of the natives. From Native reserves, thus aggregated under Government, to private or company-runs, similarly massed, there is but a step.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE HOMESTEAD AND THE HOUSE

THE first business of a squatter who purchased or formed a run in a new country was to fix a site for the head-station, where he was to reside. There he built a house and planted a fresh germ of the collective life. The growth of the dwelling reflected the successive stages of the pastoral life.

For a time many pioneers lived in tents. Henry O'Brien, says Dr. Lang, was, like Jabal, the "father of such as dwell in tents and of such as have cattle." It was the first stage in the pastoralist existence and recalled the nomad phase. Two ladies, the wife and mother of Victorian pioneers, one of them seventy years old, lived in tents for ten months. Doubtless, it was a brief stage with the squatters and their ladies, but in one form it long survived. The lining of the first slab huts on a station long consisted of canvas.

The improvements on some of the pioneer stations began with two thatched huts. Then, with the arrival of a new proprietor and his wife a cottage was built, after the model of an Indian bungalow, with an all-round verandah. It was thatched with long tussock grass, as was also the new detached kitchen. A garden was made, and a piano introduced.

Sometimes, but very rarely, as with F. N. Broome's station in the Malvern Hills of Canterbury, New Zealand, the house was built two miles away from the homestead, when the squatter's wife liked "to be removed from the immediate neighbourhood of all the work of the

station." * Often it was situated on a rise, or on a spur running from the hills, as if to command the various out-stations, and to provide, like the feudal castle that was built on a height, against attacks by the natives; and there, like the homestead of Elsey Creek in the Northern Territory, it might overlook a lagoon so large that it might be called a lake. Yet also thick timber and wattle bushes might hide the approaches to it, though the huge trees were often stripped of their bark for a mile or two, and stumps of large trees that had been sawn down lay scattered. The various buildings were enclosed in a paddock, and they looked ragged, patched up, and rather tumble-down, yet they had on the whole a comfortable appearance. Those trees that were left imparted a parklike aspect to the scene. These buildings formed a quadrangle or square court, in the centre of which might grow a large tree, round which, in Queensland, a merry circle of black girls might be gathering the everlasting flowers and, amid laughter, decorating their short shining curls with them. In front would be a large low-verandahed cottage adorned with roses. The sides were formed by the store, with the offices on one side and kitchen-buildings on the other. The fourth side was occupied by the bachelors' hall. The stable, cowshed, and dry-store were in a line with the last, while, further away were a hut for the men and a substantially built stockyard. All of these structures had grown up bit by bit as they were wanted, and the straggling quadrangle had "many corners and unexpected doorways and passages," which made it somewhat of a maze.

The germ of the whole later evolution was a rough slab hut, often containing only two rooms—a *but* and a *ben*, as the Scots would say—with a sloping bark roof fringing ruggedly over the eaves. The slabs stood apart,

* BARKER, *Station Life in New Zealand*, letter x.; see also GRANT, *Bush Life in Queensland*, i. 132-5, 56, 153; DALY, *Northern Territory*, 340-1.

the freshly felled and cut wood not having been seasoned. The walls were lined with canvas. The rafters were bare and the home of tarantulas, centipedes, and other uncanny creatures. The bunks were made of sawn saplings, nailed against the slabs. The humpey, as such structures are termed in Australia, had no windows properly so called, but only openings, with rough slab shutters in which the planks hardly joined. At first, there was a huge slab chimney, with a large open fireplace, like a little room. But this soon caught fire, and was replaced by a chimney of stone, where a fire was kept fuelled by mighty logs. The house may have consisted only of the two original, rather large, rooms, but as children came, rooms opening on the verandah were added to it. The verandah, imperative and indispensable in all parts of Australia and in most parts of New Zealand, ran along the whole front of the house, and it had an earthen floor and log steps.*

Commonly, the original building remained the principal living-room, and rooms are successively added to it, as they are needed, so that, as was wittily said, a colonial house looks for all the world as if it "had come out in penny numbers!" Sometimes, however, it is pulled down, and a cedar house, with kitchen and bedroom wings, is built round a garden. Then there will be a splendid broad verandah all round, with doors and French windows and an iron roof. Even then the old couple may live on in the old humpey, which may remain detached, because they are used to the place, and perhaps no longer feel equal to housekeeping on a larger scale. Such a new house, though built of hardwood slab, like the old house, would be carefully built, with doors and French windows, and, though one-storeyed, would be long, with a splendid broad verandah all round and an iron roof. In the pioneer stations of the Northern Territory it might be a large barnlike building

* PATERSON, *Outback Marriage*, pp. 35-6. CAMPBELL PRAED, *My Australian Girlhood*, pp. 59-60, 154.

with slab sides and a high and steep-pitched roof, as was everywhere the old way. Others, again, that were more advanced, in that same Territory, might be solidly built of freestone.

In the headquarters of squatting in New Zealand the house at the head-station is often beautifully situated, comfortably built, and of a handsome design, belonging to a rich squatter whose name is (or used to be) a power, but it is still of wood, like so many of even city houses in almost stoneless New Zealand. In Australia the house of a great squatter may be substantially built of stone, of bungalow shape, with only one story, and a three-sided broad verandah. Easy-chairs and lounges will be scattered over the verandah. The high windows come down to the floor. The door is wide and inviting, opening on to a spacious cool-tiled hall. There may be a couple of drawing-rooms, and behind them a cheerful morning-room, while the bedrooms, always cool and airy, open on to the verandah. A group of detached buildings contains bachelors' quarters and a schoolroom, which may be used equally for a concert-hall and a chapel. In front there may be a natural lake or ornamental water, with a windmill and pipes running into the garden.

Some of these houses, even if belonging only to pioneer squatters, may be, like Lady Barker's in the Malvern Hills, adorned with many of the little elegancies of life, such as drawing-room ornaments, pictures, etc. The dining-room may have fine prints on the walls and a "trophy of Indian swords and hunting-spears over the fire-place." The hall may be hung with whips and sticks, spears and hats. In the drawing-room may be seen a tall, white classically shaped vase of Minton's pottery. While the sitting-room may be the picture of cosy comfort, with well-filled book-shelves, arm-chair, and sofa. Yet that was a pioneer station, far in the interior of Canterbury province, in New Zealand. Such a house may be small, but as a pioneer squatter said, it is "large enough to hold a great deal of happiness."

It may be rough, but it is often the dwelling-place of refinement and culture.*

No colonial house of any pretensions would be complete without its garden, full of exotic blooms. None of the wonders of the great country houses are, of course, to be seen either in Australia or New Zealand, but they are adorned by native or imported wealth of blossoms, growing in the open, such as few English mansions can show. The great hedges of cactus that struck the visitor in Sir George Grey's island of Kawau, do not grow further south, at least to any size, but the luscious passion-fruit and the gorgeous sun-flower are widely spread. Just as colonial homes are often decorated by "all sorts of nondescript treasures, placed in one's boxes at the last moment of leaving English hall or rectory by careful loving hands of mothers or sisters." So in Canterbury "the flowers and shrubs of Old England grow side by side with the wild and lovely blossoms of" the new island home. In the court of an Australian station a handsome gigantic convolvulus round a central tree, while "morning glories" twine their graceful stems on the posts of the verandah. Often there were acres of garden, with great clumps of willows and acacias, but the garden might be almost as lacking in design as the house. There might be "acres of fruit-trees, with prairie-grass growing at their roots, trees whereon grew luscious peaches and juicy egg-plums; long vistas of grape-vines, with little turnings and alleys, regular lovers' walks, where the scent of the honeysuckle intoxicated the senses." At the foot of such a garden a beautiful stream, with its pebbles flashing like opals in the sunlight, was fed by the mountain snow. In the lately savage Northern Territory even homes that are on the confines of the desert are adorned with oleander and other trees. Lawns and gardens made and kept by the blacks humanise these wild spots. Other stations in

* GRANT, *op. cit.*, i. 153; BARKER, *Station Life*; DALY, *op. cit.*, 340-1; WISE, *Commonwealth of Australia*, pp. 40-1.

the same region are said to have well-stocked gardens, which are kept by Chinamen.*

* Writing about the beginning of the century an old pastoralist, Mr. De Satge, estimates that a sum of 100 million pounds sterling has been invested in pastoralist improvements in New South Wales—houses, woolsheds, wire fencing, dams, reservoirs, and artesian wells.—*Journal of a Queensland Squatter*, pp. 2-3.

CHAPTER XXXVI

SOCIAL LIFE, SPORTS, AND RECREATIONS

SOCIAL life was cheerful and bright in those early days. What society, we may wonder, could there be on the Darling Downs, where each station, or little group of human beings, was separated from all the others by many miles of roadless tracks, where there were few women, few luxuries of any kind, few of those contrivances subsidiary, but so necessary, to enjoyment? Yet those days, by the account of those who lived through them, were the happy period, the golden age, of young pastoral Queensland. In 1843 there were already twelve stations on the Downs. There some house, whether a station or that of a Commissioner of Lands, was a social centre that "it would have been hard to match for good-fellowship and warm attachments." The beauty of the new scenery and the delightful atmosphere gave health to all, imparted cheerfulness, and engendered social brightness. There were constant rounds of visits, and everywhere the guests met with a hearty welcome. Reciprocal services were cheerfully rendered. A cheery spirit was ever the squatter's viaticum. Hope gilded the future and cast retrospective rays upon the present.

Those who have lived through the patriarchal phase in Australia or New Zealand recalled their life there with the regretful longing that we feel for "days that are no more." The wife of one of the oldest pioneer settlers in Queensland said that "those wild days were the happiest," and the lady who reports the saying speaks in her own name as well. "Those journeys,

those days and nights of camping out, are just the things I am gladdest of, the most real and the most cherished" (A.G. pp. 82-3). It was the same in New Zealand, where the very occupations of the station were wrought into materials for happiness. Lady Barker tells of an expedition after wild cattle in the Kowai bush that consumed three days—"three long, happy days," she calls them. And years afterwards she speaks of "those delicious wild days," when she was the wife of a Canterbury runholder (S.L. ; S.A. p. 79). We are reminded of Hawthorne's "wild, free days on the Assabeth" in the company of Ellery Channing.

Just so did the Patriarchal Age lay "an invincible spell" on the imagination of the Hebrews, so that a large section of the people yearned ever to revert to it; and Renan explains their religious evolution as a reversion, under the influence of the prophets, from the worship of a stern and terrible Jahveh to a genial adoration of the more kindly Elohim. Just so did the New Englanders of North America look back on the early days of colonisation, though their trials must then have been hardest; and just so do the Canadians of the present look back on the contented and happy life led by a past generation in the eastern provinces.

The mood is not entirely an illusion. Those days *were* happy days, when care pressed lightly on the brow, and life was bright and free, and simple pleasures abounded. It was an idyllic existence, such as was led "in the days of ignorance," in Arabia, or—

"Where shepherds still their songs repeat,
And breaks the blue Sicilian sea."

It was well to taste once of such bliss as made the Garden of Eden credible. Even now the dreamer, returning to a station whereon his youth has been spent, may recall days when "the blood ran riot in the veins," and "the dullest felt vague strivings which he could not resolve into words, dim visions of holier things." Then the autumn mornings were for riding through the timber

or for rowing by the willows, or for high resolve, for the clearer vision or the sudden illumination, which does not last.* Neither the vision nor the life could last. The world has to be faced and fought with, its chagrins and disappointments experienced, and its bitter disenchantments undergone. Lady Barker, bright and happy soul though she was, and Mrs. Campbell Praed, though fame was to come to her, were to see the darker sides of life and know something of its woe. Rolf Boldrewood, who writes of pioneer station-life in lyrical strains, was to find his reminiscences of it, even financially, the most lucrative portion of his experiences, and Henry Kingsley, who has been censured for describing station-life as "a prolonged picnic," was to know dark reverses of fortune. They but repeated, with much assuagement, the vicissitudes of the most tried of Oriental patriarchs. Let us hope that, like him, they were able to justify the ways of God to man in their persons and retain their faith through sorrow and calamity. Those bright early days, in Australia as in Chaldæa, in New Zealand as in Sicily, were the days of youth, and could no more endure than the youth of Tithonus.†

The arch-opponent of the squatters, Dr. Lang, asserted that very few of the squatters in the forties were married. How could they be? we may ask. What woman, fit to be a helpmeet for such men as many of them were, would consent to share such an existence? Who would invite gently reared women to come into such solitudes, where many of the necessaries and almost all the luxuries of life were denied them, where dangers to health and life were to be encountered? He adds—and the statement is the key to the other—that very few of them possessed the fee-simple in a single acre of the land they occupied. That was it: even their tenure of their comfortable homes and their toilsome stations was insecure.

Yet Lang's assertion is doubtless exaggerated. Though it was ten years later, the conditions were the same on

* E. H. C., in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

† See also *Victorian Pioneers*, p. 239.

the Darling Downs in the fifties as in Southern New South Wales in the forties, and early in that decade Patrick Leslie, pioneer squatter of Queensland, married. Not long after Mr. Murray Prior, father of Mrs. Campbell Praed, married also. And when the famous Orders in Council of 1846 brought security to the precariously situated fraternity, a new era dawned, says Mr. Brodribb, who lived through that time. Squatters made permanent improvements, pushed farther into the interior, and occupied new country. With the new sense of permanence their circumstances gradually improved. On stations hundreds of miles from Sydney or Melbourne you would meet with highly respectable ladies, whose families were reared in comfortable homes, where they were happy and contented. And of the following decade in Queensland Henry Stuart Russell, himself married, writes in similar terms.*

Men who, gently bred and brought up in luxury, find themselves in the Australian bush, hundreds of miles away from a settlement, with everything still in the rough—rough food and clothes, rough beds and housing, rough companions and rough overseers—are often seized with an inextinguishable regret that they rashly threw away such priceless advantages as were theirs in order to lead the life of a clod. They remember “the gray city with its dreaming spires,” and they lament the abandonment of the congenial studies for which, they now fancy, they were better fitted. Some of them were doubtless right. One of the best books about Australian life in the bush was written, seventy years ago, by one such remorseful emigrant.† They grieve, more superficially, that, through long disuse of it, they have become unfit for society. Even a large squatter, who is a member of the Legislature of his colony, will confess to his conscious unsuitedness for even the social life of the provincial metropolis. The younger and still amorous stockman will ask how long it is since he has touched

* LANG, *Account*, i. 356-7. BRODRIBB, *Reminiscences*, p. 57.

† HAYGAETH, *Bush Life*.

a lady's hand,* will grieve that he must spend the Christmas day like a savage in the isolation of a bushman's hut, and will wonder whether the cousin he left behind him in England is now letting another man make love to her.† The more piously disposed will bethink himself with anguish on a Sunday that he is fifty or a hundred miles away from a church, and he reflects that the religious sentiment itself soon disappears when the ordinances that nurture and express it fall into abeyance.‡ Often the nostalgia is so strong that it drives men back irresistibly to the old country, and even men who have grown gray in the successful service of their colonies return to spend the evening of their days amid the scenes of their youth.

The style of living on a "station" Sir George Bowen saw to be much more advanced than that of the Homeric Greeks. He was struck with the signs of luxury in the squatters' houses. There these lords of broad acres lived in patriarchal style, dispensing a patriarchal hospitality. Their days were spent in the saddle, and 400 pastoral centaurs escorted him to Warwick, as, twenty years later, a like number of farmers escorted Mr. Gladstone to Haddo House in Aberdeenshire. Their evenings were spent in refined and cultured intercourse, in aesthetic enjoyment, or in innocent pleasures. The picture is idealised or too rose-coloured, and to one who, like Mrs. Campbell Praed, grew up in that way of living it contrasted sharply with the stern reality as she knew it only too well. It was truer of the nearer than the remoter stations.

Very different pictures of station life might be drawn. Take first the less favourable. The station is situated 500 miles up country, and that country of the dreariest description. It stands amid the sandy plains of the Condamine River, and into the weary souls of the dwellers has entered the iron of those plains and of the brigalow

* See poem in SLADEN'S *Australian Anthology*.

† A. E., *Overlanding*, pp. 65-7.

‡ HAYGARTH, *op. cit.*

scrubs of the Dawson country. For seven years their food has consisted of "fat hen," their only vegetable, salt beef, and damper, or unleavened bread. Through years of bad times the struggling squatter often wishes for death as a release, "when he views his haggard wife and foredoomed children—doomed to a scant education, social extinction, and early trouble." When a crisis arrives, like that of 1866 in Queensland, the pressure becomes acute. Money grows scarce. The rates of carriage are prohibitive. Flour can hardly be bought. Under such conditions the harassed squatter cannot make both ends meet. He sells out, and returns to town, where he lives as he can. Others, it is true, face the same hardships and hold on grimly.*

Cultured habitués of pioneer stations in those early days write, on the other hand, of the "châtelaine's soft voice and ever-varying converse," and Henry Kingsley's pictures, as of Mrs. Buckley, as also of Major Buckley, are portraits of typical English gentlemen and gentlewomen transported to a strange environment. Just so did Arthur Young, travelling in France before the great revolution, fall into raptures over the charms and accomplishments of the old French nobility, with whom he spent the evening, after he had passed the day in inspecting their estates. The charm that Boldrewood found then in the stations of Western Victoria was no more lasting than the refinements of the château; it vanished with the sale of the runs and the advent of the goldfields.

In the monarchical countries of Europe the genesis of social life was marked by the advent of ladies to the king's court. Society, so called, began in France with Francis the First, who professed that a court without the ladies was like a year without a spring and a spring without roses, and so he attracted by the splendour of his fêtes the châtelaines who, until then, had remained forgotten in their feudal castles. In England it was hardly older than the contemporary of Francis, Henry VIII. It had its rise in the ascendancy of some female

* BARTLEY, *Pioneering*, etc., pp. 267, 256, 196.

personage, not always royal or even legitimate, who (says an old French historian) "brought to the court politeness and courtesy and gave keen points of generosity to well-born souls." In all of the Australasian colonies, as in the British colonies of North America, the initiation of society, in its more restricted sense, followed on the arrival of a Governor of striking social gifts, accompanied by a *châtelaine* of sympathetic disposition and winning ways. Just such an admirable pair arrived in the metropolis of Queensland in 1859 in order to inaugurate representative government in the Colony. Was it they—Sir George Bowen, the accomplished scholar, and his diamond princess—whom Mrs. Campbell Praed paints? He, of the Viking type, was "quite splendid," while his lady was a fitting helpmeet for such a man. A Greek, from Corfu, and named Diamantina, she was "a stately, sweet, and sympathetic figure," with dark Southern eyes and Greek head, her hair growing low down on the brow and gathered in a "Clytie knot." At a (Queen's) birth-night dance she, divinely tall, seemed a picture in amber satin; in a crimson and gold-amber cloak, she appeared quite regal.*

Of the "court" these two distinguished persons gradually formed the pastoralists and their leading families were prominent figures. As many of the political offices, from the Premiership downwards, were held by the squatters—the Palmers, Bells, Murray-Priors, Hodgsons, Mackenzies, Archers, and who not?—these were among the foremost social figures. As in London and Washington, the Parliamentary session was the social season. Did the pastoralist party hold office? Then the families of the squatter-ministers were resident in town, and their social life was a perpetual whirl. The ministerialist position might be threatened, and then the ministerial families remained in a flutter of expectancy. For three days and nights and a fourth day the testing debate in the Legislative Assembly might last, and it might end with the defeat of the ministerialists. A cloud would then

* *My Australian Girlhood*, p. 216.

fall on the squatting families. Loss of office meant to them a return to their stations in the country, which was a fall from Heaven to Earth. Their fate might be suspended. An appeal to the constituencies at least promised a reprieve. But social "functions" were at an end for a time.*

Still, there remained the birthnight or other great balls at Government House, to which ins and outs were alike invited, and then the more prominent pastoral families shone like stars. Long years afterwards, when those splendours had faded into pictures of memory, high ladies would tell how, when days of continuous rain made the roads impracticable for vehicles, they rode as far as twenty-five miles to attend a big ball at Government House, arriving in the evening at half-past six o'clock. Far into the night they danced, and in the glorious Australian dawn they rode back to their homes. How and where did they carry their gorgeous ball-dresses? it may be asked. They had practically none. Tarletan frocks were their chief raiment, and natural flowers their only adorning. Those were still the days of the simple life.†

The pastoral life engendered new types of occupation. It changed the character and affected the activities of prominent individuals not directly connected with it. It exhibited beautiful specimens, individual and domestic, of the pastoral type. It gave a new complexion to features inherited from its Oriental forms.

It illuminated the path of empire, and opened up new and vast dominions. The work of mustering and tailing, the pursuit of runaway or stampeding cattle, and the amusements of the chase serve, as Gibbon, not only historically but prophetically said, as "a prelude to the conquest of an empire."

The "most honourable" of the Asiatic shepherds devolved on their captives the management of their flocks and herds; and the early Australian pastoralists

* *My Australian Girlhood*, p. 216.

† *ETTA YOUNG, Queenslander*, August 7, 1909, p. 23.

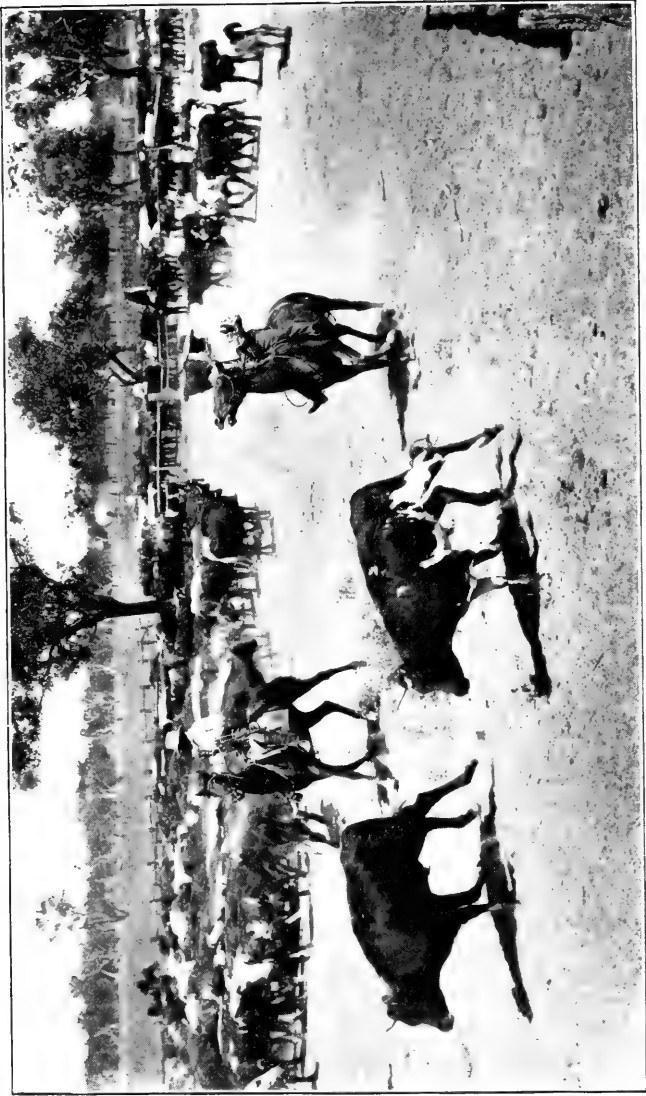


Photo by Kerry, Sydney.

CUTTING OUT.

deputed the same duties largely to their convict servants. The leisure thus left to them was in both partly devoted to the strenuous pursuit of the chase. The cattle-drovers of every age have been celebrated as "bold and skilful riders." The horsemanship of the Gauchos, who are real centaurs, is shown in amazing feats; and the Australian stockrider can keep his seat on the unbroken-in Brumby or ride down declivities that are steeper than the roof of a house. They confidently ford streams and swim rivers in flood.

Hunting, once the sole pursuit of a people, when it rose above trapping or fishing, and acquired the means of capturing large game, became half a necessity to our Australian squatters and half a recreation, as an intermediate stage towards its being a sport. As with the Vedic Indians and many another people, it was a means of importing a wholesome variety into the monotony of the daily fare, consisting largely of beef or of mutton alone. In the early pioneering days, when both animals abounded, kangaroo-hunting provided kangaroo-tail soup in abundance, and the stockmen often rode down emus for food. Almost every day the gun was in their hands. In the forties there were to be seen large flocks of bustard, numbering from ten to thirty or forty or more; and quails were plentiful. In the early fifties, reports an old Crown Lands Commissioner, "there is nothing in the shape of sport, except in the season a few snipe and quail; then it ends till the next September. For an idler or a sportsman this country affords nothing, and for a military officer" like himself, "it is the most damnable quarter in the world. Now, in the early fifties, the kangaroo and the emu are nearly extinct in the district; the country is almost devoid of game."

In those early days—the forties, namely, in Victoria, Rolf Boldrewood recalls "glorious times," when they wandered about, gun in hand, or with their three famous kangaroo-dogs, slew the swift marsupial.

There were no foxes then in Australia, but a tolerable substitute was readily found. The native dog was game enough to be hunted and fast enough to be chased on horseback. The gentlemen squatters in Western Victoria kept a noble pack of hounds and hunted twice or thrice a week. "Noble sport. They met at one another's houses, and sometimes as many as thirty gentlemen would sit down at table. At daybreak the squatter master of the hounds sounded his bugle; his second was soon after sounded for breakfast; and his third, in half an hour, for mounting. A fine pack of dogs appeared, led by the master of the hounds, and followed by thirty well-mounted gentlemen-squatters." After passing over sixteen miles of ground without one check, twenty riders were in at the death. The pack, the sport, and the sportsmen, in the opinion of Captain Forster Fyans, were worthy of Leicestershire (*V.P.*, 119—20).

The life of often-ungenial, but seldom unremitting, toil on a station has from the first been frequently varied by bouts of indolence or recreation. While the grass is growing in the earth, and the wool growing on the sheep's backs, and the cattle are fattening, the masters of these sheep and cattle and the broad acres on which they graze, may disport with a freedom the agriculturist hardly knows and the industrialist finds hopelessly out of reach. Their amusements are evidently limited by the lack of numbers; they cannot, in the pioneer stage anyway, play at cricket or football or any of the games for which a score or more of players are required. But all have horses, and all can ride, and one of the most exultant sensations a man or a woman can know is theirs in prodigality. They are the horsemen of the Empire, and when a new form of soldier is devised—the mounted infantry-man—in a country where a new form of warfare is necessarily waged, the young squatter or stockman fights at an advantage.

One, at least, of the old recreations was practised in two portions of an Australasian colony. In the bleak

uplands of Canterbury in the South Island of New Zealand, close by the Southern Alps, and in the still bleaker uplands of Otago, by Lakes Wakatipu and Wanaka, the exhilarating sport of skating could be pursued. Even in Canada there is no better skating, Lady Barker believed, than among the Malvern Hills, where, in remote and black mountain-tarns, on the borders of the glaciers, ice several feet thick lies all winter. There, on lakes far inland, bullock teams could travel in safety. To such lakes the squatting party would ride by two or three stages. First, they would ride for thirty miles to a neighbouring station. Facing the majestic chain of the Alps, they would pass through long, winding valleys and steep gullies, or, later, through bleak, desolate valleys, round the shoulder of projecting spurs, through swamps, and up and down rocky staircases. Spending the night there, they would set out next morning on a rough road, through desolate gorges, in scenes of desolate grandeur, and amid a silence that seemed awful, and after two hours' difficult riding, they would arrive at their skating ground—a gloomy tarn, where two mountains rose sheer from the water's edge, and a dark pine forest loomed before them. Situated in "the cleft of a huge, gaunt, bare hill," lay a sheet of black, thick ice. There, for three successive days, they skated amid an "intense, appalling loneliness." *

More exotic sports are open to the squatter's family in certain colonies. Once in twelve or fourteen years, in the far inland parts of Canterbury, the Canadian recreation of tobogganing may be enjoyed. Then, after a week's incessant snowfall, the foothills of the Southern Alps—themselves an amphitheatre of snow-covered mountains stretching for a hundred miles from north to south and standing out a vision of white as appalling as rare—are covered with snow. A smooth slope down one of them at an angle of 40 furnished a course for a

* BARKER, *Station Amusements in New Zealand*, ch. iv.

toboggan, and a level drift by its side was a *montagne russe*. A home-made sledge, roughly put together with a board six feet by one, two battens nailed on it, a sheet of iron nailed under it and curved upwards in front, and brakes made out of bits of wire-fencing, connected with an iron chain. On this frail vehicle, well poised at length, down they flew at a pace of a thousand miles an hour, writes Lady Barker, drawing on her imagination, the descents "showing every variety of mishap," save broken bones.*

As old a recreation as either skating or tobogganing was and still is at the command of the squatter in certain provinces. On one of his voyages Captain Cook, intending a service to the inhabitants, present or future, liberated a number of pigs in both islands of New Zealand. Like all domestic animals that have been bred out of savagery, and new characters fixed in them by human selection, they gradually reverted to their original state when the process of selection was withdrawn. They then became the prey of the colonial huntsman, and, were the New Zealand bush as close at hand as the Harz forest, might afford sport for an emperor or an archduke. Called pig-sticking in New Zealand as in India, because the boar is oftener killed with the spear than with the rifle or the revolver, it is termed pig-stalking by Lady Barker, who often bravely took part in it. Quite as difficult as deer-stalking and incomparably more dangerous, for the wild boar is as keen of scent and sight and hearing as the deer, it tests the courage and tasks the endurance of the sportsman, who may have to ride some miles in pursuit of his game and then stalk him through a densely tangled undergrowth. The trained dog may bale him up against a tree and get ripped open for his pains. Then the hunter will close in on him, stab him with the spear, or end his days with a revolver. Sometimes a single rifle shot from an opposite hillside will bring down a "fierce old

* BARKER, *Station Amusements in New Zealand*, ch. v.

warrior," who is fighting for his own hand, like Hal o' the Wynd, because, being too quarrelsome, he has been driven, like a rogue-elephant, from the society of his kind. Evidently, "life in the bush" has its compensations. It has also its drawbacks, which are the close counterparts of its compensations. By resuming the pursuits of primitive or mediæval man, the squatter sinks back to the mediæval or primitive stage. The corresponding sentiments, the politics, the religion, and too often the manners necessarily spring up as accompaniments of the activities of an earlier stage. Station life is a reversion to patriarchal life.

One thing to some extent saves the dwellers on a station, or a portion of them. They are often within practicable distance of a provincial metropolis, and then the monotony and the miseries of the bush are temporarily relieved by visits to Sydney or Melbourne, Brisbane or Adelaide, Christchurch or Dunedin.

A station picnic had all the characteristics and was clothed with all the charms of the bush. Its objective might be a black unfathomable lagoon, hid in the heart of the scrub, and never before visited. It was on horseback, and the procession wound up the range. Over plains and timbered ridges it passed, and through a dense scrub, "where the bottle-trees rose weird and white, and the stately bunyas drooped." With their tomahawks blackboys "blazed" a track for the return of the party. Up stony ridges, down steep gullies, over breakneck rocks they rode. They camped for the night on a plateau amid great volcanic boulders. The ladies slept in the tent on couches of grass-tree tops; the men camped by the fire, wrapped in their blankets. At sunrise they bathed and dressed by a running stream in the gorge. The horses were then saddled; the blackboys tied the tomahawks and pint-pots to the dees of the saddles; the men boiled the tea, or baked johnny-cakes in the ashes. Then they rode upwards along the gorge, over a ridge where the golden wattle shed on

them its fragrant pollen, and again into the scrub, majestic, perfumed, gloomy, and wonderful. A deep ravine blocked further progress. The riders dismounted, and climbed, by the aid of compasses and poles, to the Bungwhal Hump, through the virgin forest, where foot of white man had surely never trod before. They lost their bearings in the hopeless labyrinth of the scrub. In the intense gloom two of the party slipped, and one of them fell down a precipice and was killed. Thus ends, sometimes, an Australian picnic.*

After a bush wedding a whole cavalcade would leave the station, consisting of the marriage party and the family and friends, and two vanguards of blackboys; all on horseback. Four long cooes would sound the farewell of the marriage pair.

Nothing is more characteristic of Australia than its race-meetings, and nothing is more indubitably part of the inheritance of squatterdom. The "Arablike love for horses and their belongings that marks the predestined son of the Waste" was found in Australia, remarks Rolf Boldrewood, "as duly as at Yemen or the Nejd." The denizens of a station were "reared in an atmosphere" of horses;† and each son and daughter of the station had a riding-horse of his or her own. Moreover, in most of the British colonies at the Antipodes squatters have been the chief breeders of race-horses. They were also long the organizers of race-meetings. The introduction of Arab blood by Patrick Leslie engendered a new sport in Queensland, and the whole countryside gathered together from far and near. For many years horses were ridden at races by gentlemen jockies, and then, as he rode past the grand stand, when he was greeted with smiles from under gay bonnets (bonnets were still fashionable in those early Victorian days) the young squatter's cup of bliss was full, and his thirsty lips drank deeply of it.‡ The spectacle

* MRS. CAMPBELL PRAED, *Dwellers by the River*, pp. 38-77.

† BOLDREWOOD, *Old Melbourne Memories*, ch. xxi.

‡ RUSSELL, *Genesis of Queensland*.

was such as could hardly be seen elsewhere, and the cavaliers of the Logan were no more distinguished a band of racers than the cavaliers of Western Victoria.

A slightly different scene is painted by later observers than the chronicler of Early Queensland. Now the jockeys are stockmen, though some of these are still men of good family. "Only those who have seen a Christmas race-meeting in the interior can have any idea of such a scene, with its motley crowd of niggers [blacks] and stockmen from the adjacent runs, all eager to knock down their twelve-months' cheque in drinking or in backing the horses from their respective stations."*

Race-time was a carnival equally for blacks and whites. There might be as many as a hundred guests at table. The bushmen rode up in spotless moleskins; the bush girls, too, were on horseback; the blackboys were picturesque in bright-coloured shirts. Racehorses and heavily freighted buggies were driven up to the station.

Station amusements expanded and refined with the rising tide of pastoral prosperity. Large parties were then invited to spend a week at a station, when picnics, dances, and "all sorts of *al fresco* entertainments" were provided. Each day's programme was prepared and the necessary arrangements regally made. Drags, mail-phaetons, carriages, dog-carts, and horsemen formed a Derby-day-like procession, and traversed a mile-long avenue. Races, riding-parties, shooting parties, fishing excursions, kangaroo and opossum battues made the week one of mirth and revelry. It was as a decameron from Boccaccio, and never, by the confession of its most gifted chronicler, did mortals drink more deeply of the cup of innocent pleasure, or return with more regret to every-day life. We may compare it with an intoxicating day spent by Herbert Spencer with the Valentine Smiths on their Highland estate, but the

* A. E., *Overlanding*, p. 76.

English party's sober delight was trivial to the delirious pleasure of the Australians.

Hospitality is, perhaps, the most eminent virtue of the pastoral state, and binds, as by a golden chain, all the pastoral ages together. It is still such in contemporary Australia as much as it ever was in ancient Chaldæa or modern Arabia, or South America. It is, indeed, less a virtue than a necessity. Were it denied, on stations separated from the next by a distance of many—sometimes, as in the Northern Territory, a hundred—miles, death would be speedy and sure. Thus, at every Australian station, the wayfarer, of whatever class or colour, receives a regular dole, which has come to consist of a pound of meat and a pannikin of flour. Such swagsmen are known as "sundowners," because they usually arrive at a station about sundown, when the labour of the day is ended, and they are less likely to be required to do any work as a condition of receiving food. Some professional vagrants are known as "coasters," because they coasted up one bank of a river and down the other (in the early days most stations were placed on the banks of rivers or creeks), visiting each station as they passed. These were malingerers, who lived on the doles it was sometimes dangerous to refuse. They are capable, in such a case, of doing serious mischief. The description of a new, costly, and thoroughly well-appointed wool-shed being set on fire and burnt to the ground by some such miscreants, whom the superintendent had angrily ordered off the station, is evidently sketched from life.* A primary virtue flouted, a clamorous need denied, thus avenges itself.

How to treat such wayfarers was long a problem. To supply them gratuitously with food *ad libitum* would have imperilled the subsistence of the station-dwellers and brought down on them a cloud of harpies. To meet the difficulty the "traveller's hut" was invented. There the swagsman would find an iron pot, a bucket,

* BOLDREWOOD, *The Squatter's Dream*, ch. viii.

and a kettle, with a supply of firewood, and there he might cook as he pleased the pound of meat and the pannikin of flour that were given him. Next day, if no job were assigned him, he was expected to move on to the next station.

Hospitality is a virtue that the patriarchal age has bequeathed to the industrial.

CHAPTER XXXVII

PASTORAL MARRIAGE

HIGH authorities in Sociology suggest that there is something in the pastoral life that peculiarly affects the relations between the sexes, and they adduce the Todas of India and the Masai and the Bahima of Africa to show that very great laxity in these relations, together with very low types of marriage, may be found among pastoral peoples.* Polygamy in particular, or, at least, concubinage with native women of an inferior race has been a character of the patriarchal or pastoral state in many countries from the time of Abraham onwards. When Renan affirms that the pastoral phase "bred personal honesty and the family instinct" in olden times, we must therefore understand by the family the patriarchal, not the monogamous, family. The men who founded the pastoral system in Australia were Englishmen and Scotsmen who knew no other than the monogamous family of advanced civilisation. Some of the earlier of them, like the Berry brothers, were ascetes in practice and died unmarried (but one Berry was married), while others, like John McArthur, were noted for the mutual fidelity of the parties through long years of separation and the tender beauty of the marital relationship. The phase of purity, unhappily, did not continue, or was not universal. Lacking the power of choosing life-companions among women of their own class and sometimes their own race, and conscious of holding a patriarchal position that raised them above the

* FRAZER, *Totemism and Exogamy*, iv. 139.

public opinion, the pioneer squatters in several of the Australasian colonies gratified their needs or their passions in an illicit or a vicious manner. The squatters of New South Wales and Tasmania often placed the convict women employed on their stations by the side of their hearth, and their stockmen did not fail to follow their example. A still more questionable form of the relationship arose in colonies where there were no convict women. "Mr. —, of —, near me," writes one of the Victorian pioneers, "kept a harem for himself and his men. The consequence was that he, like a good many more, had to sell out"; the "harem" of course consisted of black women.* Both masters and men grew dissolute through the power they possessed of taking black women as their wives and concubines. The practice was not confined to Victoria. Not a few instances are known, where English gentlemen, happily married to women of their own class, have become so infatuated with black women as to make them their mistresses and ultimately their wives and the mothers of their children.

Partly, it may be, from old attachment, but also to maintain a distinctive feature of a caste or class, some of the squatters went "home" (back to England) for wives, as those ancient pastoralists Isaac went, and Jacob was sent, to their relatives in the distant Chaldæan birthplace of the tribe for the same purpose. "I am not surprised at your returning to Britain," writes one squatter to another, "be it for weal or woe. As for me, I suppose, as I made a fool of myself by going home for a wife, I must also make a fool of myself a second time by going home again with her." †

* *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, p. 31.

† *Ibid.*, p. 141.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

PASTORAL MORALS

THE pastoral stage in Australia, like the same stage in ancient Palestine or modern England, has left or is leaving an indelible impress on the character of the people. It bred in them a spirit of rude independence that permeates the Australian of all classes and professions, so as to make him resist dictation and resent even being "spoken to." It bred the simplicity of life where the multitude of ranks in the "Byzantine hierarchy" of Europe has almost completely disappeared, and there only exist at most the squatter or the manager (when these are not of the same class as the others), his overseer, and his stockmen, while the scarcity and urgency of labour put the employee on the same level as his employer, when they do not give him the upper hand. It bred or elicited no less the capacity for grappling with gigantic evils, such as floods, droughts, epidemics, and attacks by the natives. It bred also the loafing disposition and the wandering spirit that still canker Australian life, and if it also bred that indifference to wealth and show that is but now being lost in Australia, it was the root of that religious indifference and lazy tolerance that strike the immigrant and the visitor. It was an educator in self-help, in willingness to dispense with the indispensable, and make the most of life "under bare poles" or reduced to its lowest terms. No less did it nurture a readiness to aid others, if only because on no other conditions could existence be carried on. Independence, unworldliness, equality, tol-

erance, resistance to natural forces and great calamities, self-help, and unselfishness—a community could hardly have a more solid foundation.

The morals of the pastoralist days had the simplicity of primitive communities. "How honest," remarks Boldrewood of the early primitive forties, "were nearly all men in those days!"* Did a man wish to dispose of a run, he rode with the would-be purchaser all over the ground, and pointed out all its faults. It was far otherwise twenty years later. Then, as Lady Barker relates, the owner of a station would juggle a comparative new-comer into the purchase of a run that was not worth a fraction of the sum given for it, and could hardly be believed upon.† In the pastoralist Golden Age of Western Victoria the uncommercial relations were also at their sweetest and best. "How strong and unquestioning was friendship! . . . How divine was love!"

We must remember that the individuals were young and the community was young. Those were days when they tasted true happiness, and their like has never been seen since. None were too rich. None could afford to live in Melbourne. Everyone was his own overseer. All were friendly and genial, cheery and contented.‡

At the same time, we must not accept Mr. Browne's rosewater accounts too guilelessly. They *may* have been true of the best class of squatters, and yet were not true even of them without qualification. Among Rolf Boldrewood's golden men were the Hentys, and it was through Mr. Henty that one of the Victorian pioneers, his neighbour, lost a great portion of the land he had chosen for a station. It was evidently of him that J. G. Robertson was thinking when he said that "the most conflicting evidence was given before the Crown Lands Commissioner by unprincipled men. . . ."§

* *Old Melbourne Memories*, ch. ii.

† *Station Life*.

‡ *Old Melbourne Memories*, chs. iii. xi.

§ *Victorian Pioneers*, p. 24.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE PASTORAL CULT

THE most solemnly important scene in all history, viewed from the Christian standpoint, was one where shepherds, afterwards aggrandised into shepherd-kings and *magi*, having come from afar, did homage to the infant in whom a large portion of mankind has seen the Saviour of the World. No single event has been more besung, more variously or more gloriously painted, more widely or frequently or heartily celebrated. The "herald angels" sang it in the sky; children and "waits," consisting of young men and maidens, still sing it on earth on Christmas Eve, when the ground in Northern Europe is white with snow, or when, at the Antipodes, if ever the sacred dawn is there kept at all, it is kept to (or rather by) the songs of birds and the gladness of all nature in her richest summer attire.

It was altogether fitting that one of the earliest stages of human history—the first, indeed, after man has arisen out of savagery—and perhaps the finest and peace-fullest of all, should be inseparably associated with human redemption. Yet man had hardly needed to be redeemed had he begun—had it been possible for him to begin—with the pastoral stage, or could he have remained at that stage. It was not to be. Man had been a savage and a barbarian, a trapper and a hunter, before ever he was a shepherd, and in future times he was to be a warrior, a conqueror, and an industrialist. Out of this oasis in his history between two seas of blood have been selected some of the richest imagery

that has adorned the Christian faith. It furnished Christ with one of His tenderest parables, out of which grew the conception of Christ Himself as the Good Shepherd.

If we ignored the pastoral state, truly says Professor Patrick Geddes, "we should be losing sight of a main fount of spiritual power." Some have even maintained that down the pastoral hillsides first trickled the slender stream of the religious life. We now know that religion has lowlier beginnings. Long before man has domesticated the sheep or the ox, it strikes its roots in the grave and blossoms over the tombs. None the less, the pastoral age is the great watershed of religions. On this side and on that it has poured down the faiths of Chaldæa and Palestine and Arabia, of ancient India and modern Scotland. On all of them it has left its stamp. In Hebrew times God was already a shepherd-god. Three-fifths of the Psalter are understood to have been composed after the return of the Jews from Babylon, but the grand old Twenty-third Psalm is believed by Ewald and other equally authorised critics to be of pre-Exilic origin. Though it belongs to the pastoral period, it has formed the consolation of hundreds of generations in ancient Canaan and modern Europe and all over the world. Is it quite obsolete in free-thinking Australia?

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Sung on the bleak hillsides of Scotland by persecuted Covenanter or Cameronian, a psalm so quietly trium-

phant must have filled their souls with peace and nerved their hearts with fresh courage. In the hymns of Vedic India, noble though they often are, is there aught to compare with it? Has the pastoral age produced anything more affecting or more sublime?

All through its history the pastoral age continues to furnish materials for religious instruction. It supplied Jesus with one of His tenderest parables, and made of Christ Himself the Good Shepherd. "Feed My sheep," He commanded Simon Peter, chief of the Apostles, and the loftiest of Christian painters has made the scene of the injunction immortal. It has given rise to a religious sect known as "the sheep-calling Baptists" in Alabama. It is the theme of many a hymn besides the one Mr. Sankey, the American musician-revivalist, rendered so potent in effecting conversions. Alas! it is also the refrain of the despairing song shouted by Kipling's "gentlemen rankers."

"We are lost sheep who have gone astray;
"Baa, baa, baa!"

A mythology could readily have sprung up in the sunbaked deserts of Australia. "What were clouds in the Riverina," writes Rolf Boldrewood, "but the heralds of prosperity, or its synonym, the Rain-King, but the lord and gold-giver of all the sun-scorched land?"* And precisely such feelings of exasperation and rebellion as are expressed in one of the Vedic hymns come (we are told) into the minds of the dwellers in drought-stricken Texas,† and also (I am informed) into the hearts of the Australian up-countrymen, as, day after day, they see clouds drift across the sky and shed never a drop of rain. To the desolate squatter, threatened with ruin, the columns of dust, or moving cloud-pillars, seemed the abodes of evil genii. And when we read of men dying in the beds of dried-up creeks, or again, in time of flood, of "the hungry, surging rush" of "the

* BOLDREWOOD, *The Squatter's Dream*, chs. xii. xxv.

† RAGOZIN, *The Story of Chaldea*.

angry river," we do not wonder that, in Eastern countries, where these phenomena are to be witnessed on a still larger scale, the Pantheon should be peopled with sun-gods and storm-gods, and their terrifying deeds dramatized—divinized or diabolized. In many an Australian mind the rudiments of just such a mythology must have been planted.

The natural religion of the squatter, apart from the traditional beliefs and observances that he had brought out from England, would be of the simplest character. He would feel "the same dreaminess in the atmosphere, the same crisp clearness, and the same vague consciousness of haunting voices and of invisible benignant presences which" Mrs. Campbell Praed had "never found but in the Australian bush." Others have found in the great Australian plains by night a scene the most "able to enforce reverence from man." That consciousness and the sense of infinite space the plains beget are the base of all the higher religion.

It is not all brightness on the station. Indeed, a character in one of Mrs. Campbell Praed's melancholy tales sadly says: "Nothing of any consequence has ever happened to us on the Ubi [in Queensland] without death coming into it." No clergyman being, oftener than not, at hand, sometimes an old squatter, well fitted to be a layman-priest, would read the funeral service—one who could both fight and pray, and had laid his own dead to rest out there in the lonely desert plains. Mrs. Praed is surely not wrong in thinking that "there is something infinitely beautiful and solemnizing in such simple burying amid the vast Australian solitudes." *

The pastoralist's religion long remained of this "alluminous simplicity," and his form of worship partook of it. The head of a pastoral tribe was at first its priest and sacrificer. So was the pioneer squatter his own minister. Sir George Grey, the shepherd king of his island in the Hauraki Gulf; Sir Frederick Napier Broome among the hills of the Southern Alps; and other squatters

* *Dwellers by the River*, pp. 298, 305.

in the mountains and the plains, regularly "read prayers" to their patriarchal household, consisting of their own family, their man-servants and their maid-servants, their stockmen and shepherds. Only on special occasions, when there was a collective christening or a confirmation, was a clergyman or the bishop, at distant intervals, called in. The bishop having promised to come up and christen the younger members, Lady Bountiful makes white frocks for the catechumens. It is a beautiful winter's morning. The drays roll up, bringing elders and youngers, and each drayload is given to eat; as many as one hundred individuals arrive. The squatter and his wife stand sponsors. The children are lifted or carried to the officiant. The bishop's commanding figure and clear, penetrating voice (how well one remembers the good old bishop!) ensure a reverent demeanour, and his consecrating presence converts a secular abode into a church. The simple rite administered, he delivers a short sermon, and speaks helpful words to all the groups, one by one. The tiny community is lifted a degree upwards in the scale of civilisation.*

The squatters who settled in Australia went out into the wilderness, carrying with them neither the *teraphim* of the Semitic nor the household fire of the Aryan migrant; in rare cases they may have taken with them their family or pocket Bibles. We may well believe that the religion which had been ingrained in them by centuries of theological teaching and pious living was still alive within them, but in the records of those early days we find but few mentions of the forms of worship having been maintained. Away out in the wilderness, a hundred or, perhaps, hundreds of miles distant from a church, those of them who had had the habit of domestic worship may have fostered it. The Aberdeenshire Leslies on the Darling Downs and the many Scots elsewhere must have been brought up in it; and who can conceive Alexander or David Berry pretermittting the venerable exercises of "the cottar's Saturday (or

* BARKER, *Station Life in New Zealand*, letter xix.

Sabbath) night" ? To such men the Bible was their chief moral nutriment, the generator and sustainer of the inflexible principle that carried them triumphantly through the hard and bare life, the temptations and imbroglions of a pioneer settlement. Was it not David Berry who said, "I find more comfort and consolation in the Bible than in all else besides ? In thrilling interest it surpasses all the novels ever written, and in all respects concerning the true welfare of man, as regards this world and the world to come, all other books bear no comparison with it." The utterance is halting, but the sentiment is respectable, and it goes far to explain the inception and growth of the Shoalhaven estate.

Such sentiments and such practices were far from being normal. Constant course and strenuous occupation with animals, gentle or fierce, or with material things, deadened in most the finer sensibilities on which religion depends. The lack of association with piously disposed persons inhibited the further growth of the rudiments that lie in all compact communities ; for, do not the sociologists tell us that religion is but the intensest form of the common (not the individual) consciousness ? Most of all, the total absence of the forms and ceremonies of the nominal religion, and of the consecrated individuals who administer them, is fatal to that consciousness. The Sabbath, says Renan, is not a patriarchal institution, nor is the Sunday a sacred day in the Australian bush. Work proceeds on the pioneer stations much as on other days ; it is a chance if the name of the day is remembered. The immigrant jackeroo, who may be hundreds of miles distant from a church, listens in vain for the sound of church bells, summoning him to prayer and sacred lessons, and he feels an aching void when the long-wonted, mellow notes no longer greet his ear.

The squatter and his family, with here and there an educated immigrant, possess mental resources beyond the reach of their employees, and, aided by the spiritual ministrations of books and music, which at length find

their way to the pioneer station, are able to nourish the emotional mood that forms the core of religion. It is otherwise with the stockmen and shepherds, the shearers and rouseabouts. Alone in the sometimes fearful solitude of the bush, those of them who are of Calvinistic rearing torture themselves with the problems of predestination and election, and sometimes go mad with utter bewilderment and terror. The others sink to the level, not indeed of savages, but of primitive folk, who have not yet risen to a dogmatic faith and a ceremonial worship. They revert to the religion appropriate to the pastoral phase—a religion without temples, ceremonies, or priests, without material idols or those idols of the cave or the mind that we call creeds.

CHAPTER XL

THE STATION AND SCIENCE

IF the pastoral life in ancient Chaldæa begot the science of Astronomy, we may almost say that in Australia it has engendered Meteorology. The minute care shown in collecting records of rainfall, when every drop of rain is registered as if it were golden, and the unceasing endeavours to generalise the observations and arrive at laws or cycles, are the direct offshoot of the pastoral industry. One of the greatest meteorologists, Mr. Clement Wragge, whose services were too lightly dispensed with during a period of necessary retrenchment, and have never since been again sought, was himself, *quâ* meteorologist, largely a product of one of the great pastoral States.

The science of Geology has been advanced by the search for artesian wells to replenish the pastures and by the theories originated to account for them. Professor Gregory's many volumes are remarkable equally for their scientific depth and their popular style of presentment.

Some speculative advances are still more notable. Many of the men and not a few of the women who took up with the feeding of sheep and the herding of cattle in the wilds or the solitudes of Australia and New Zealand were persons of culture, and would have moved, or actually had moved, in refined circles. When they also possessed talent, they were readily induced to devote such leisure as they had to the writing of books and in more than one instance to the composition of

works of art. Two such works do honour to Australia and New Zealand. Samuel Butler, a grandson of another Samuel Butler, who held the high office of head-master of the famous Shrewsbury School and was afterwards Bishop of Lichfield, was a jackeroo, or cadet, on a sheep station in the Canterbury Province of New Zealand and lived not very far, we gather, from another station which was adorned by a genuine literary pair, Mr. (later, Sir Frederick) Napier Broome and Lady Barker. Mr. Butler was one of the many good scholars of whom New Zealand can boast, and, like Andrew Lang, he rendered both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into simple and melodious prose. He was also a philosopher, of the scientific sort, and, while fully accepting the general theory of evolution, he believed that Darwin's statement of the doctrines of natural selection could be improved and supplemented. Having a strong belief in the universality of intelligence, he apprehended that cunning, rather than chance, as Darwin contended, was the key to the acquisition by animal species of new characters. In a succession of works, carefully numbered *Op. 3, 4, 6, etc.*, like the works of musical composers, he elaborated his not quite novel, but freshly stated and independent views. He had musical gifts and sympathies and wrote a cantata, which was set to music. He was a painter and exhibited at the Royal Academy, but, by his own candid admission, without ever attaining the success he dreamed of. Lastly, he was an "original," and he was an attractive, but paradoxical, figure in the London professional society of the seventies. He appeared to be always originating new ideas, and every time he was met with, as Goethe said of Schiller, he had invariably something fresh to communicate. It was, perhaps, less sound than the developments of the great German poet, but it was ever bold and striking. Once he was full of a project for eliminating death by means of natural selection; it was but the evolution of an idea adumbrated in *Erewhon*. That "development," grimly said

a New Zealand Premier, would consume some time in its accomplishment; but ridicule had little effect on the good-natured artist, who has since found support in scientific writers.

Most of these evolutions lay hidden in the womb of the future, when Butler was still a cadet on a New Zealand station. Still, two germs of his later speculative activity were then deposited in a fruitful matrix. The substance of the renowned book *Erewhon* was conceived, and four of its most characteristic chapters drafted, while the chief of his anti-Darwinian speculations was then originated. The scenic background of his most famous work, sketched in the first four or five chapters, was drawn from his Canterbury surroundings. They are touched in with the eye of a painter and the hand of a poet. "The beauty of the scene," he says on one occasion, "cannot be conveyed in language. The one side of the valley was blue in evening shadow, through which loomed forest and precipice, hillside and mountain top; and the other was still brilliant with the sunset gold. The wide and wasteful river with its ceaseless rushing—the beautiful water-birds too, which abounded upon the islets and were so tame that we could come close up to them—the ineffable purity of the air—the solemn peacefulness of the untrodden region—could there be a more delightful and exhilarating combination?"

There, as he gazed on the majestic panorama of the Southern Alps, the idea of the book dawned on him. The squatters had travelled ever further inland with their flocks, and still found a well-grassed country as they penetrated nearer to the mountains. Might it not be that, beyond the foot-hills where he dwelt, and yet on this side of the snow-clad range that bounded the horizon, there was another country where he might discover new tracts that he could stock, or, it might be, find copper or diamonds, silver or gold? Nay, what was there beyond that majestic range itself? He played with the thoughts, which haunted him, and half-

unconsciously dreamed a dream which, years after, he wove into a tale that formed the setting of some of the boldest speculations that have startled the world.

Perhaps the most audacious chapter in this book of audacities was conceived and drafted under the vast shadow cast by the great chain. The *Book of the Machines* was first published in a high-class New Zealand journal, the Christchurch *Press*, under the title of *Darwin among the Machines*. It is an argument for the ultimate evolution of consciousness in machines. No class of beings has made such rapid progress. They already possess most of our faculties and structures: they eat, drink, and sleep; they have hearts, and they feel; they are susceptible of hope and fear, shame and anger; they remember and foresee. They employ a host of servants. They have even a reproductive system and breed other machines. They evidently live, or at least possess germs that may be developed into a new phase of life. They are plainly gaining ground on us. Are we not alarmed at the prospect? Reacting no man, and making him, as they do, they may yet overtake us, and we may one day be superseded by our own creatures.

This glorification or deification of machines led the author of the inglorious speculation into one that was plausible in comparison. As others were doing in those years in London, Butler contends for "the rights of vegetables." The subtle thinker who could on so many points identify mere mechanisms with the marvellous framework of humanity was at no loss when he came to vindicate those "rights" on the ground that vegetal organisms have all the powers and sensibilities that adorn the animal. In connection with it he first expounded his theory of organic memory. The action that each generation takes, by recapitulating the history of its parent organisms, can be explained only by the supposition that it has been guided by memory, and this implies that there is an organic memory transmitted from one generation to another. The theory was long

a chokepear to the psychologists. It is no stumbling-block now. Five years later (in 1870) the German biologist, Ewald Hering, affirmed that "memory is a general property of organic matter," and five years later still Ernst Haeckel enounced the hypothesis that molecules of plasm which have the property of memory are the vehicles of heredity. Haeckel even does not see how heredity can be explained without this assumption. Verily, daring and ingenuity are justified of their children.

The more hazardous speculation, identifying machines with men, is now also passing into science. The successor of Claude Bernard at the Sorbonne, Professor A. Dastre, admits that science "envisages a vitality more or less obscure in inanimate bodies." These, like living bodies, consist of protoplasm, are organized, and develop. Some of them, like crystals, have a specific form and restore themselves by re-assimilation. Crystals have also, in a manner, the faculty of nutrition and even the power of reproduction. M. Dastre may well write of "the life of matter."

A more fantastic speculation still had its birth in New Zealand, when Butler conceived souls to be wandering in "the world of the unborn," as Matthew Arnold's soul flitted "between two worlds—one dead, the other powerless to be born." In *Erewhon*, however, a way to the world of the born has been graciously provided, and nowhere does the author's Addisonian humour more playfully disport itself. The conception of "musical banks," which is likewise of Antipodean origin, was possibly suggested by certain political proposals made in New Zealand. Lastly, the treatment of disease as crime, which forms one of the most original features of the book, had its origin in the colonies, where rude health was, at that time, so general that ailments brought there, still more than elsewhere, the penalties of criminal offences.

Books are the parents of books, and *Erewhon*, taken together with Lord Lytton's *Coming Race*, almost

simultaneously produced, was a joint progenitor of the large brood of Utopian constructions—numbering over a hundred, we are told—that have since been ushered into the world. It is not a little singular that the best of these—the loftiest, the most imaginative, and withal the most philosophical—should have been produced in that very Canterbury province where *Erewhon* was conceived.*

* *Limanora : the Island of Progress*. By GODFREY SWEVEN (Professor J. Macmillan Brown). New York : Putnams. 1903.

CHAPTER XLI

THE STATION AND ART

IN no country save in Australia or New Zealand has the pastoral age bequeathed much of a legacy to plastic art. It has lent something to music, and the shepherd-god who blew his reed-made flute in ancient Hellas was perhaps the first of instrumental musicians, while Pan cannot be said to be dead as long as goatherds beguile the sunny hours by playing their "oaten stops" on Sicilian hillsides. Even in modern Australasia the plastic harvest would have been small were the country only pastoral. The hands that are habitually employed in drafting cattle or branding sheep or engaged in others of the many manual occupations belonging to the station have not yet developed the fine sensibilities of the artist-finger. As a higher type of civilisation gathers around the simpler life, the elect individual is born, perhaps on or near a station, who shall render on canvas, in appropriate colouring, the more attractive of station scenes, the more characteristic of station events, and the typical aspects of station life. At least a dozen of prominent Australian artists are eminently painters of the station and the bush.

Their painting has a distinctive character. Not only do two-thirds of the oils and nine-tenths of the water-colours in the various annual exhibitions consist of landscapes. Even in those where the organic elements—trees, shrubs, grasses, and wild flowers—form the most conspicuous part of the picture, it is still the action on these of inorganic agents that is the real theme.

The effects of light in particular are the main concern of many artists. They may well be. Hardly Greece itself (and who that has voyaged in the Ionian Sea is likely to forget how the splendour of the sunset or the brilliancy of moon or stars is there heightened by the limpid air?) surpasses Australia in the ethereal brightness of its atmosphere.

Australian painters have been slow to realize their chief asset. The earlier painters knew nothing of it. These, it is true, were birds of passage, and foreigners at that. The pictures of Chevalier and Von Guérard are said to have no atmosphere—at least, the luminous Australian atmosphere is conspicuously absent. The trees, the mountains, the plains, even the skies, are painted heavy and dark, which they seldom are. The Bush is “stern and funereal,” as it was to the first novelists and the first poets—Marcus Clarke and Charles Harpur, whereas, in literal truth it is commonly flooded with sunshine. Homesick exiles, they had missed its characteristic note. The Swiss Buvelot, a disciple of Corot, mediated the transition to a greater veracity. As so often happens with poets and even with men of science, his more ambitious works, his oils, were the least true to their subjects, while his less considered water-colours more truly depicted the landscapes he really saw. His Bush in oils was Swiss or French; in waters, it was genuinely Australian.*

A succession of eminent painters has made this great conquest for art, and adapted their colour-scheme to the high key of light and colour that is the characteristic note of the Australian landscape. Arthur Streeton has painted the gaiety and the lyric beauty of the Bush. For him the sun ever shines under a blue sky, and the creek winds beneath shimmering trees. Mr. Sid Long knows the hidden beauties of the Bush, as Mr. Salvana paints the shy and secret places of the Blue Mountains. Mr. Ford Paterson, of Victoria, is at home among the tree-ferns and the mighty gum-trees of

* L. E., *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Gippsland; and Mr. Lister-Lister, President of the Royal Art Society of New South Wales, has seen, as no other eye before his had seen, the Golden Splendour of the Bush. All of such scenes are to be found within the compass of a cattle-walk or a sheep-run, but the distinctively pastoral landscape has not been forgotten. A typical such picture was to be seen in the 1910 Exhibition of the Royal Art Society in Sydney. Neither sheep nor cattle, it is true, are to be there in the painting named, "A Type of a Coming Nation and a Land of Cattle and Sheep," but only a grizzled bushman, standing beside his horse and dog, and gazing at the vast expanse of sunbrowned herbage. There is little in the picture, it may seem, and Darwin, seventy years ago, found little in the scene. Yet on those brown pastures are reared more than a hundred millions of sheep, and out of them has come the greatest pastoral industry in the world.

As is to be expected in a young country, where art must traverse the same stages as it passed through in older lands, Australian art is still weak in figure-painting. Nevertheless, it has been successfully achieved by some of the more eminent Australian painters. The *genre* pictures of Mr. Tom Roberts are understood to be his most characteristic work, and they render various aspects of Bush life with truth and energy. He is still largely inorganic, or, if animal and human, at best muscular, as when he depicts the effects of heat on a dusty Bush road, the rush of a flock of thirsty sheep to a water-hole, or the strenuous activity of sheep-shearing. Mr. Fred McCubbin has delineated, with a pathos that reminds us of Millet, the hard struggles of the pioneer with Nature. And Mr. George Lambert, in "Across the Black Soil Plains," powerfully exhibits a team of straining horses pulling a wool-waggon.* Nor should the highly skilled photographic artists of the weekly journals be left out of account. The station-scenes and landscapes artistically

* L. E., *Sydney Morning Herald*.

cally reproduced, week by week, in such journals as the *Sydney Mail* and the *Australasian* are on the threshold of high art.

If, by such interpretations of Bush life and such revealings of Australian landscape, Australian artists have not established a new school of painting, as they once claimed, or even laid its foundations, as is now asserted, they have at least set up a happy variant on English landscape- and figure-painting. With much of the veracity and reflective depth of English painting, the Australian school frames its new scenes and novel subjects in a brighter scheme of colouring than is known to English art. The great legislator of English art æsthetics, Sir Joshua Reynolds, laid an authoritative ban on blues, yellows, and yellowy reds or whites; and Sir David Wilkie commended Raeburn for abandoning his Prussian blues and Neapolitan yellows. The Australian school has adopted the French colour-scheme, its reds generally excepted. Yellow and blue are dominant colours in its pictures, because they are dominant colours in the scenes that it paints.* As Australia has produced a Melba in song, it may yet bring forth a Turner in plastic art, who may find new colours on his palette wherewith to paint more visionary scenes. But the pastoral landscape and the pastoral life will have been the base and the motive-power of the whole plastic development.

* *The Nation*, New York, xci. 400-401.

CHAPTER XLII

THE LITERATURE OF THE STATION

THE prospectors of new grazing-lands and the formers of new stations in the wilderness must have been conscious that they were making history, and the consciousness may have cheered them in times of trial or consoled them under acknowledged failure. They must have perceived that their work was of the same order, if on a lesser scale, as that of the great explorers—the Sturts, Humes, Eyres, and Leichhardts, and, like theirs, deserved to find “a sacred bard.” Some of them, we know, kept journals. Patrick Leslie kept one, and, many a year after his notable achievement, he confided the vital portion of it to Henry Stuart Russell. John Campbell, one of the two or three first pastoralists to settle in Queensland, kept a diary, and, a still greater number of years afterwards it was embodied, rather than transcribed, in J. J. Knight’s *Early Days*. In general, the experiences of the early squatters, like these journals, were slow to be converted into literature. W. J. Brodribb, a squatter successively in New South Wales and Victoria, published in a very interesting and only too brief account of his personal experiences, his efforts to form stations, his vicissitudes, the economics of squatting, the effects of legislative changes (such as the famous Orders in Council of 1847) on runholding, some touching incidents in his domestic history, his retirement from pastoral occupations, and his entry into politics. Still later, another runholder, Henry Stuart Russell, of Cecil Plains in the Darling Downs, published

a huge volume on *The Genesis of Queensland*. There, amid mountains of slag, not a few grains of genuine gold are crushed into a few brightly written chapters on prospecting for runs, merging into exploring for its own sake, the work of a station, its trials and hardships, its many failures and its few triumphs, and (best of all) social life on a station, with glimpses of station amusements, as when bright eyes flashed favour on the gentleman-jockey if he won on the racecourse, or (like the princess in Rossetti's poem) whether he won or lost. With no other work describing run-finding and station-making was the late well-informed Ernest Favenc apparently acquainted, but the literature of the subject is copious and valuable.

Some of the best books about station-life have been written by women, who describe a side of it but little known to men. Mrs. Campbell Praed's reminiscences have a charm due to the imaginative style of the authoress, who, writing in mature womanhood of the life of her girlhood, clothes all with romance and tinges it with a colouring derived from the mingled pleasure and regret with which we look back on the days of our youth. The book * records station-life as seen and known by a bright and happy girl. It passes lightly over the vicissitudes of her family and leaves the bulk of the practical work on a station untouched. But the exotic environment, often striking and sometimes glorious, is picturesquely filled in. The pleasant relations with the blacks when she was a child, such as many an ex-station girl will still relate, are humorously told; the relations with the stockmen or the passing swagsmen or tramps; the intercourse with the poet, the speculative doctor, the practical dean. The doctor's anecdotes are sometimes racy, sometimes pathetic. One of the latter class may bear repeating. The doctor was sitting by the bedside of a woman who was at the critical stage of a severe illness. The atmosphere was oppressive, as it

* *My Australian Girlhood*. It is in good part, sometimes verbally, identical with her *Sketches of Australian Life*.

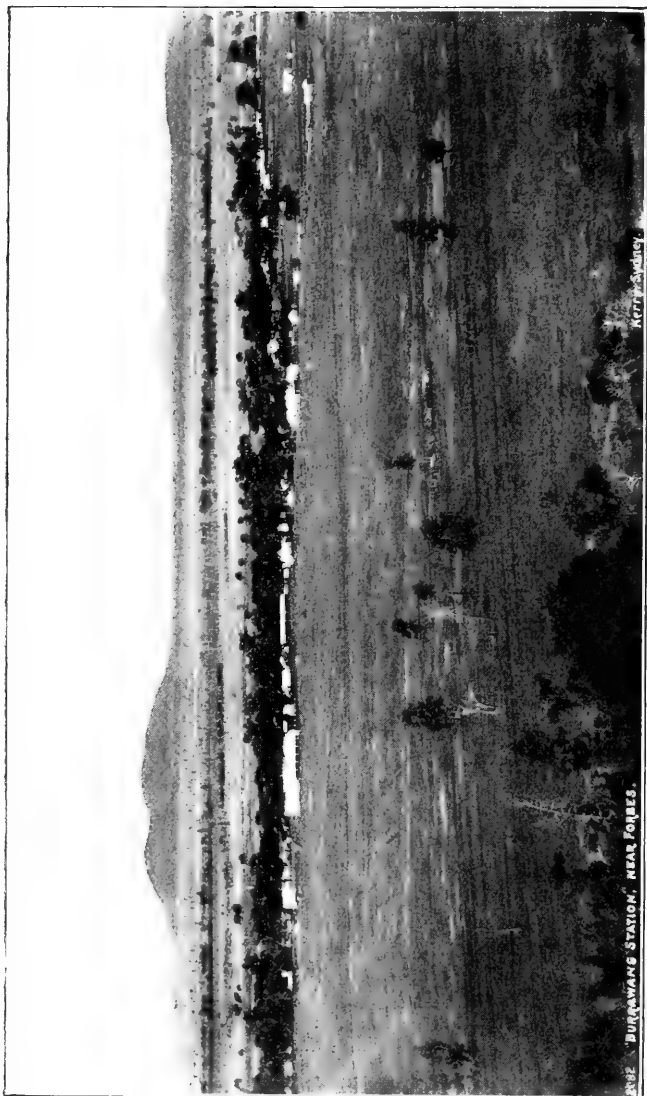


FIG. 2. BURRAWANG STATION, NEAR FORBES.

Photo by Kerry, Sydney.

BURRAWANG STATION, NEAR FORBES.



can be only in the tropics, or in the temperate regions when a hot wind hamstring the body and prostrates the mind. A tropical thunderstorm was plainly impending. The husband appealed pitifully to the doctor. "Doctor, can you do nothing to carry her through? You know that she cannot endure a thunderstorm." The doctor could do nothing, but He who can do all, or almost all, heard the prayers doubtless fervently made by the despairing husband and the sceptical but sympathetic doctor. The woman sank into a deep and healing slumber, and, when she awoke, the storm had passed away.

True literature is also the little volume written by Lady Barker on *Station Life in New Zealand*, though (or because) it professes only to "record the brighter and less practical side of colonisation." The letters of which it consists photograph "the expeditions, adventures, and emergencies diversifying the daily life of a New Zealand sheep-farmer." They leave exactly the impression that her husband, Sir Frederick Napier Broome, states that they are designed to convey—of a simple way of life that is metaphorically as well as literally at the antipodes of the "highly wrought civilisation" of England. She too takes in her environment, and attempts to delineate the phenomena in a Canterbury sky which forerun a hot wind from the north-west, although she confesses that "no one but a Turner could venture upon such a mixture of pale sea-green with deep turquoise blue, purple with crimson and orange." She tells eloquently of the familiar arch in the clouds over the mountain range to the west before (she says, but surely also during) a violent gale from the north-west. "It was formed of clouds of the deepest and richest colours; within its curve lay a bare expanse of a wonderful green tint, crossed by the snowy silhouette of the Southern Alps." That glorious chain of mountains forms the panoramic background of the whole Canterbury province. In the very early morning she would stand shivering at her window "to see the noble outlines gradually assuming shape and finally standing out sharp and

clear against a dazzling sky ; then, as the sun rises, the softest and rose-coloured and golden tints touch the highest peaks, the shadows deepening by the contrast."* Lady Barker's *Station Amusements* continues, and sometimes repeats, the sketches made in the earlier volume.

The earliest literature, of course, belonged to New South Wales. Still one of the best books about those early days—the late thirties and the first forties—is Haygarth's *Recollections of Bush Life*. It is the production of an educated man of some culture—an old Oxonian who had found his way out to Australia before it had become usual for cadets to seek a career on an Australian station. Too late, perhaps, he realised the precious savour of the delightful studies he had forsaken, and the possible learned career or liberal profession he had abandoned, in order to lead a new life in the Australian bush. He keenly felt the hardship of the life, its baldness and bareness, its total lack of refinement, its mean drudgery and almost degrading toils. As the Sunday came round by dead reckoning, he listened in vain for the clang of the Sabbath bells, and was conscious of a woeful blank when he could no longer hear the consecrated words or witness the sanctified ceremonies of the holy place. He did not know that the sordid occupations and even the very things he felt as a loss and a want would furnish him with an equipment and a theme. With careful art and fine perspective, with completeness and accuracy, and often with animation, he describes the station of the early forties, its homestead and auxiliary buildings, its daily and periodic rounds of duty, its occasional striking incidents (such as the prospecting for a new run and the encounters of rival squatters), its occupants, their types and their struggles. The book will live by his delineation of the new and strange life that he lived and saw others live, while books of his describing far-off countries and other times might have had far less of truth and reality.

* Letter viii.

Many other works embodying the experience of squatters complete or complement the early history of squatting in New South Wales. Captain Lancelott's two-volumed book again abounds in precious personal details on the formation and development of a station, the collisions with rival would-be squatters, the successes and failures of those who had to buy experience at so dear a rate. Light sketches by several French writers (such as Hubert de Castella's *Les Squatters australiens*), or studies by Germans like Semon's *Im australischen Busch*, show how many sides the large subject possesses and to how many interests it appeals.

None of the colonies has a richer squatting literature than Queensland. Settled late in the history of Australia, it has given birth to quite a number of writers who have left no feature of its pastoral development without a record. The descriptive literature of annals, history, and reminiscences is hardly more opulent than the constructive literature of poetry and fiction. Sometimes they are skilfully blended, as in Alexander C. Grant's *Bush Life in Queensland*. The arrival of the new chum in Australia, his first sight of a colonial city, his journey up country, his initiation into bush life, his experiences on a station, his visits to other stations, where he makes the acquaintance of admirable families—worthy men and attractive women and girls, station life and work, the tragedies, the humours, and the amusements of the station. All this is interwoven with, or strung upon, a thread of personal romance that runs through the work. A Bushman's Romance, it might be called. Vivid pictures of the incidents and accidents of station life leave an indelible impression on the memory. It shows a complete mastery of the subject that could have arisen only from actual realisation. We have no difficulty in understanding that so experienced a bushman and so skilled a writer should have become the active head of one of the best-known stock and station agencies in all Australia.

To Queensland also belongs Nehemiah Bartley's

Pioneering Reminiscences. Nowhere else, till quite recently, was there to be found so ample a narrative of the discovery of new country (as that of the Clarence River District) and its prompt settlement, the taking up and the forming of stations in Queensland and New South Wales, their abandonment and resumption, their vicissitudes and passage from hand to hand, together with some attractive pictures of squatters' homes. Two other works belong to the same historical class. J. J. Knight's *In the Early Days* is richly charged with historical detail, and his contributions to the jubilee number of the *Queenslander* in 1909 form almost a complete history of the settlement of Queensland. What he omits, for Northern Queensland, Edward Palmer fills in, and the latter writer adds to the value of his historical sketches by descriptive pictures of typical bush figures—the superintendent, the overseer, the stockman, the boundary-rider, the shearer, and other station types.

A volume that has a still higher value and almost a greater authority than these is part of the inconsiderable literature of squatting published in Victoria. In 1853, a few months before he retired from the governorship of Victoria, Lieutenant-Governor Latrobe despatched a circular to the Victorian squatters, inviting them to furnish him with detailed accounts of their experiences—their acquisition of their runs and settlement on them, their stocking of them, their economics, their success or failure, and above all (for this seems a prominent feature in all cases) their relations with the aborigines. Replies were promptly returned by almost sixty squatters—some of them brief but significant, most of them moderately full and richly instructive, and one of them (written, as he confesses, by an uneducated man) of great length and importance. These precious memorials of the pastoral age in Victoria remained for more than thirty years in the Victorian archives, where they lay undisturbed, save by G. W. Rusden, who ransacked them for evidence of the relations between the squatters

and the blacks, and who cites from them several passages in his *History of Australia*. Late in the eighties they were edited by Dr. T. F. Bride, then Principal Librarian of the Public Library in Melbourne, and a large portion of them was then printed. Not until 1898, for some unnamed reason (probably the impoverishment of the Colony), were they passed through the press, and for the last dozen years they have still been unregarded. Yet they are rich in authentic materials for the pastoral history of Victoria. Simple, sincere, and manifestly veracious, they are transcripts from real life, most of it but a few years old. If they are not, in the proper sense, literature, they are in one sense better than literature. They show the pastoral life in its reality.

It would be unfair not to include the hosts of articles in the Australian journals that have thrown light on every aspect of station life in Australia and New Zealand. Not a few of these deserve to be reprinted and published. Those especially by the late Ernest Favenc, the explorer, who perhaps knew the face of Australia more intimately than any man of his generation, might form the substance of many a chapter of colonial history. The physiography of Australia, on which the pastoral life of the country depended and which governed it, the successive waves of settlement, the overlander, the bullock-driver—these and many more such topics have been the themes of numerous articles contributed by him to the Sydney journals.

Most of the poems written by the greatest of Australian poets, Adam Lindsey Gordon, may be described as station-poems, because they were composed on the author's own station at Mount Gambier, in South Australia, on the confines of Victoria. The best of them, especially, the gem of the collection, and perhaps the only classical poem that Australia has produced, vividly describes some of the more picturesque scenes of station-life by one who has lived it as stockman and squatter, whose rhythm is that of the bush. The very

spirit of it exudes from the ringing verses which every Australian knows, or should know, by heart.

“ ’Twas merry in the glowing morn among the gleaming grass,
 To wander as we’ve wandered many a mile,
 And blow the cool tobacco cloud, and watch the white wreaths
 pass,
 Sitting loosely in the saddle all the while.
 ’Twas merry ’mid the blackwoods, when we spied the station
 roofs,
 To wheel the wild scrub cattle at the yard,
 With a running fire of stockwhips and a fiery run of hoofs ;
 Oh ! the hardest day was never then too hard ! ”

He sings, too, of his chase of the bush-rangers. He recalls the “ yarns ” spun at the station and the songs there sung, and he muses over the deaths of his old comrades, most of them by such mischances as happen on a station. On a station he desires to be buried.

“ Let me slumber in the hollow where the wattle blossoms wave,
 With never stone or rail to fence my bed ;
 Should the sturdy station children pull the bush-flowers on
 my grave,
 I may chance to hear them romping overhead. ”

The best, perhaps, of the longer Australian poems, *Convict Once*, by Brunton Stephens, has also colonial and, in a manner, station life for its basis, though its theme is one of dark and turbid passion such as is peculiar to no country. The scene of the tragedy is an Australian station, and the two chief actors in it are, the one a female ex-convict, the other the son of a convict. The verse has a brave lilt and a vigorous swing, and the story of a “ convict once ”—a young woman of twenty-three who has served a term of seven years for some unnamed offence—is artistically told, by indirection mainly. Exultant over her recovered freedom, she resolves to lead a new life, and outwardly she does reform, but the fates, that is, her wildly passionate nature, are against her. Having become a governess on a station, she wilfully diverts to herself the love of the son of another station-holder

(the latter another ex-convict), and thus wrecks the life of the eldest of her three young pupils, who was affianced to him. The description of the "one supreme moment," when she surrendered herself to the false lover—"the one sublime bound to the copestone of bliss, then the chilling recall," may be the high-water-mark of Australian verse. The convict twice, as she might well be, ends appropriately with brain-fever, madness, and death.

Brunton Stephens's celebrated poem was composed, Mrs. Campbell Praed tells us, by the shores of a lagoon on a station where he was a tutor, but station-life has not been favourable to the production of literature. Years after the station-holder or the dweller on it has left it he may put together his reminiscences of bush-life, or work up the materials then gathered. Strange to say, the one squatter in New South Wales, William Forster, once Premier of the Colony, who is known to have produced verses has apparently written nothing on station-life, but has found conventional themes. It is otherwise in Victoria. There the chief literary glory of the South, T. A. Browne ("Rolf Boldrewood"), has masked a virtual autobiography behind *A Squatter's Dream*, but though he has written a score of works, chiefly novels, he will live, it is understood, by his masterpiece—*Robbery under Arms*. For, though himself originally a squatter, he had experience of other professions, and was for a time a resident magistrate, when he had occasion to study the facts of both bush-ranging and gold-digging at close quarters. He studied them to some purpose. No other such picture of the bush-ranging for which Victoria has an ill name, though New South Wales was still more severely scourged by it, has been painted. So humane and yet so true, it harrows the feelings by terror, while it purifies them by pity. It has perpetuated in literature a sad and bad social type, which was the necessary sequel of convict antecedents in Australian history.

Full many a gem of description or portraiture lies

scattered through the prose as well as the verse of Australian literature. Rolf Boldrewood paints in water-colours a picture of Mustering in Stormy Weather. On a darkening winter's day a drove of heavy bullocks lumbered over the sands or along the beach, the stockmen riding behind them. One squatter-stockman noted "the sad-toned, far-stretching shore—the angry storm-voices of the terrible deep—the little band of horsemen—the lowing, half-wild drove—the red-lit cloud prison, wherein the sun lay dying." The Night Ride to Portland was an Arabian night. The gallop along the shore, on the hardened milk-white beach, by the side of the star-bright, illimitable ocean, the lengthening silver pathway made on the sea by the moon, and the flood of radiance it cast on the land, are all as vivid as a painting.*

The first of great station-novels, in both time and rank, is Henry Kingsley's masterpiece, *Geoffrey Hamlyn*. Though the earliest of all, it is considered the crowning glory of Australian fiction, and it deservedly takes this position by the value and beauty of its kernel. Save by its substance and subject, however, it belongs rather to English than to Australian literature. Legend relates that, and how, it was written on a Victorian station, where the writer utilised the materials he was in daily conversance with to paint a faithful picture of station-life. This seems not to be the fact. The scenes described in it are apparently drawn from station-life in New South Wales of the fifties, though towards the conclusion of the book the background shifts to the mountain solitudes of Victorian Gippsland. The book itself, it is authoritatively stated, was composed by its gifted, but somewhat ill-fated, author at the now-famous village of Eversley after he had returned to England. The work has high merits. A limpid style and pellucid simplicity of presentment make of it a transparency through which the then novel and strange life of the bush shines with a bright,

* *Old Melbourne Memories*, ch. xxii.

if not quite a brilliant, illumination. Characteristic incidents, such as the bush-fire, are vividly narrated. It has but one fault. Most of the personages are too amiable—in plain English, too good—to be salient, or even true to their originals; but underneath the smiling surface there are dark abysses of tragedy—a convict tragedy, with bush-ranging accompaniments, as was fitting in those far-back days.

If Henry Kingsley paints station-life, his nearest rival, Thomas Alexander Browne, *alias* Rolf Boldrewood, delineates station-business and procedures. *A Squatter's Dream* describes the pilgrim's, the rake's, or the fool's progress of a young squatter from peace and prosperity, through bankruptcy, back again to prosperity and contentment. Few features of station life or business have been omitted. The forming of a station, its daily tasks, the building of a woolshed, the flood and the drought and their ruinous consequences, the transactions with the bank, the squatter's insolvency, his wanderings in a far country and his exertions on a pioneer station there, his return and his marriage, all taken together, make the most complete transcript of the station and all its multiform and connected activities that has been flung into literature.

Mrs. Campbell Praed, a daughter of Colonel Murray Prior and reared in Queensland, is the worthy third member of the distinguished trinity of station-novelists. With her we get away from the outsides of bush life, which figure as mere accessories, and are carried straight to the very heart of things. The inner natures of the men and women of the high bush, their love affairs and romantic passages, their rivalries and entanglements, their angry passions and wild deeds, the visitations of death and the doom that seems ever to lower over them all; such are her multiple and yet uniform themes. For trouble must have come into her own bright existence and darkened her happy disposition, while the sun was still low in the morning sky; and her melancholy stories reflect the hidden tragedy of her

life. In this respect she is the sister of George Eliot. The great English novelist was happy ; how could she have been else beside so genial a nature as George Lewes ? But the inner tragedy of her heart betrays itself in every tale that she told ; and so it is with the most charming of Australian romancers. She was born for happiness, and happiness has eluded her grasp.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE SQUATTING TOWNSHIP

TOWNSHIPS of a novel character grow up at suitable places to serve as receiving and distributing centres for squatters' produce and supplies. Very commonly they are found at the head or highest navigable point of a river, like Cleveland and Ipswich in Southern Queensland, or Grafton in Northern New South Wales, or on the coast, like Mackay in Northern Queensland or Moruya in Southern New South Wales. The pioneer squatter was, indeed, the forerunner of towns. On the Darling Downs Warwick grew up on the site of the first station—Patrick Leslie's Toolburra. Drayton and Ipswich had the same origin. Gundagai in the Riverina is another example of the law. Condamine town now stands on Bingham and Macdonald's head-station; Toowoomba on Taylor's Swamp. But indeed half of Australian townships have no other beginnings. Many a picture of one or another enables us to realise the scene a squatting town presented in the old days. All day long men kept arriving from the country or departing thither, usually on horseback. Everyone—men, women, and children—seemed to ride, and they passed continually up and down the streets, or their horses stood tied up at the doors of hotels, stores, or private houses. For every house had its post, and almost every one had its stockyard, or enclosure, where horses and cattle were kept when driven in from their pasture.

The squatter would ride in consequentially from his station on his well-bred hack, attended by a blackboy

leading a spare horse or two. The practised stockman cantered past with the easy carriage of the Gaucho—a modern Centaur. The rail-splitter or fencer and the shearer, strong, bearded, and muscular, comfortably clothed and often with a packhorse by his side, would come in to squander the cheque he had just received for months of labour. The old shepherd—he too with his cheque—would ride slowly past on a quiet old nag, himself clad in an old blue-serge shirt, dirty white moleskin trousers, and wearing a pouch that contained his knife, lucifer-matches, and tobacco.

Laden bullock-drays constantly came and went to or from the busy little township, and lined the streets. They were drawn by teams of ten or twelve bullocks—but there might be as many as 30 or 40 on special occasions. Their drivers were sunburnt, healthy-looking men, wearing flannel-shirts, moleskin trousers, and cabbage-tree hats. Or, if two or more teams travelled together, the second and third might be driven by blackboys, who were dressed like the other bullock-drivers, but more gaudily. Clouds of dust rose in the hot, dry streets as they passed, the air rent with the shouting of bullocks' names and the cracking of the formidable greenhide stockwhip. Or they would stop at stores, and there unload their bales of wool and load supplies for the stations.

The public-houses were busy. Squatters, merchants, and professionals transacted their business over the bottle, while the stockmen, shearers, and shepherds found pleasures and liquor inseparable. Incessant treating, or "shouting," was the rule, for having a drink all round was then "the great national pastime." A refusal to drink evoked an outburst of mock indignation. "Oh, you're too damned proud to drink with a poor man!" It was at least a less savage form of intercourse in a state almost of nature than the fierce outbreak of the Western cowboy who shot the refuser in similar circumstances. "Good God! Can I never come into town without shooting somebody?"

On the roads or in the streets would be seen parties of aboriginals—the men in tattered clothes, the women in shirts or skirts, sometimes wearing opossum cloaks, and often carrying children on their backs. For some kind of clothing was compulsory by law. Most of them idly loitered. Sometimes the men chopped wood or brought water. The *gins* might be engaged in domestic duties. Some begged for tobacco or money. Others sat or lay stretched alongside of a building, sleeping or singing, “A merry, happy, tolerably well-fed, dirty, greasy set of black people, with a peculiar smoky, overpowering smell about them,” is the judgment of the new chum on the Australian indigenes.

Or take another picture of a squatters' township, whose size and importance has been swelled by the alleged discovery of a gold-field in the neighbourhood. Like Ipswich, Rockhampton is a depot of supplies for the stations that are being taken up and stocked in the vicinity. It swarms with young men who belong to these stations and who are down for supplies. Others were about to start on an exploring expedition or had just returned from it, and were loading supplies and waiting for the arrival of the Crown Lands Commissioner to inspect their run. Others still were overlanders, who were driving overland mobs of cattle, sheep, or horses for sale or to stock runs. Crowds of shepherds, stockmen, drovers, bullock-drivers, shearers, bushmen, were recklessly spending their hard-won cheques. Swarms of loafers hung about them. And there was the usual cortège of Government officials, bankers, merchants, and publicans who were dependent on the squatting crowd. The band of young men who were overflowing with vitality and high spirits, gave the town a disagreeable reputation for rowdiness. Drinking, fighting, practical joking, and blatant boasting went on at all hours of the day, and in the intervals a little business was transacted.*

Larger towns than either Ipswich or Rockhampton

* GRANT, *Bush Life*, ii. 7-9.

—the provincial capitals themselves, Brisbane and even Sydney—long bore the impress of the squatter. Its largest business premises are wool stores, which face the new arrival as he approaches the wharves. Its leading firms are wool-brokers. The Exchange is at first a Wool Exchange. The chief importers, filling whole streets, supply the storekeepers in the small country-towns who supply the squatters. Some of the most sumptuous private houses are occupied by such importers.

Ports were opened up by squatters to facilitate the export of their wool. Such are Rockhampton and Port Curtis. The squatters of Southern Queensland fought desperately to make Ipswich, situated higher up the river, the working capital of Queensland. It was nearer the Darling Downs; the export of wool and the import of supplies would presumably have cost them less; and they would have been better able to control it. They completely failed; nature was against them.

Roads were made by the squatters, sometimes (as on the Darling Downs) combining in a "working bee" to clear the dense scrub. Half-a-dozen such squatting firms cut a track for wool-drays across the Dividing Range.

Railways were first determined by pastoral needs. Thus the first railway in Queensland was built to drain the Darling Downs stations of their wool and supply them with their desiderata. It had its terminus at Ipswich, some distance up the Brisbane River, and Brisbane, the provincial metropolis, was left out in the cold. Yet the *Times* asserts that the railways of New South Wales were built in the interests of Sydney, to carry wool from the interior.

CHAPTER XLIV

LATER DEVELOPMENTS

TEN years after its separation from New South Wales Queensland took the step Lord Grey took on behalf of the pastoralists of New South Wales in 1846-7. In 1869 the Legislature passed a Pastoral Leases Act granting the persistent demand of the squatters for fixity of tenure, by liberally issuing leases for 21 years in parts of the country beyond the settled districts, and making provisions that operated favourably for runs in ill-watered districts. This wise enactment doubtless led to the occupation of a large portion of Central Australia. Or rather, it legalised and regularised the occupation that had already taken place. Recent explorations—those of Landsborough, McKinley, Gregory, and Walker—had shown that, instead of being a waterless desert, Central Australia contained vast tracts of fine pastoral country. Following on the track of these explorers, a band of enterprising young men from the Southern colonies spread over and occupied wide pastures in the North and West. Between 1870 and 1880 the pastoral districts of Burke, Kennedy, Mitchell, and Warrego were taken up and stocked with cattle. In 1880 one run—a very big ‘run’ that—had in the Mitchell district over 300,000 sheep.

In New South Wales an Act of the same year granted to its pastoralists a lease of only ten years. This term was made extensible for another period of ten years by an Act of 1889, provided the lessee could convince the local Land Board that he had improved his holding.

New South Wales was at length abreast of her daughter, robust Queensland.

The Dutton Act of 1884 is credited with making a new departure in pastoral development. These colonies, till this time, had known the runholder on a large scale with almost anything over 30,000 acres on lease from the Crown; and it was getting to know the agricultural selector on his 200- to 500-acre farm. Now they were to make the acquaintance of the grazier proper. A new class of yeomen was created. Under the Act pastoralists might select grazing farms ranging from 2,560 acres to 30,000 acres. They could lease these from the State for a period of thirty years—the longest term, anywhere in these colonies, yet granted to the pastoralist—and the annual rent was to be not less than 1d. per acre. Residence was required, and the holding had to be fenced. They answered to the improvement leases—leases held at a low rate on condition of improvements being made—that have for many years been in operation in New South Wales, and in connection with which the biggest official scandals of recent years arose. In the one case, as in the other, it is admitted, such leases have been answerable for the creation of a class of graziers who have produced a large increase in the quantity of wool grown and, as most of them were capable and experienced breeders, finer wool and greater weight of fleece.

In 1884-6, by the creation of grazing-farms, a new race of pastoralists was engendered. These differed from the old race of squatters, who could not tender for the portions thus cut out of their runs.* The grazier proper was evolved.

In another direction New South Wales has followed in the steps of the northern State. So recently as 1895 Sir Joseph Carruthers passed an Act creating in New South Wales the class of small grazier, and the Act is stated to have been successful in placing on the land large numbers of worthy settlers.

* SATGE, *Journal of a Queensland Squatter*, p. 348.

Inheritance plays a modest part in the landed evolution of Australia. The well-known race-horse breeder, James White, inherited some two or three stations; to these he added station after station. Most of the large landholders have personally acquired their land, and they seldom transmit it "in its integrity." The Australian spirit is hostile to the laws of entail and primogeniture, and it is indifferent to the founding of a family. Few of the early squatters, we are told, are now represented by one or more of their descendants; fewer still see sons of theirs on their old stations. Yet the statement must not be exaggerated. Quite a number of such cases are to be found in all the provinces. In New South Wales there are still families that hold the lands that were granted by Macquarie and Brisbane eighty or ninety years ago.* Some of the oldest pastoral families in Queensland still hold the stations they first formed. The Archers are yet on Gracemere, which they discovered, and a Bracker still dwells at Waroo, on the Darling Downs. Their sons come to town and successfully build up branches of commerce, like the Joneses and Burdekins, Dangars and Morts, or live on their inherited wealth. Nor do they themselves continue faithful to their elected pursuits. They retire from rural life to the comforts and luxuries of the cities, and become legislators, like Brodribb, in New South Wales, or accept political positions, like Ebden in Victoria, or get snugly ensconced in an influential permanent political office, like Rusden, or are given a magistracy, like "Rolf Boldrewood." We do not blame them; it was a natural result; and their colonies gained by their ripe experience and trained abilities. Of the dwellers in that lost Arcadia the dispersion could hardly have been more complete.

The evolution of landed property in Australia has described the same cycle or geometrical curve, whether we call it, with Dr. Gustave le Bon, a parabola or a

* IDA LEE, *The Coming of the British to Australia*, p. 215. BROWNE, *Old Melbourne Memories*, ch. xi.

hyperbola, or, with M. Cheysson, an exponential equation, or even, it may be, a spiral, where each ascending curve repeats the curves below, but on a higher plane. The essential point is that, after passing through a succession of very different stages, the end of a social institution repeats, but in a different form, its beginning. This seems likely to be the law of the development of landed property. All the land in Australia was at first, or was assumed to be, virtually possessed by the State. The nationality of the land, which is now the ideal of many land-reformers, was, in Australia, the first phase of landed property. The next phase was when smaller or larger pieces of land were granted as a reward for services rendered or for good behaviour. A third phase arrived with the granting of large tracts to immigrants who possessed the means of using them. Then, as settlers overflowed the recognised boundaries of the settlement, and sat down without "the pale," a license was granted to such hitherto unauthorised squatters, but revocably and annually (at least, in theory), and conjoined with the payment of an annual fee, which was the equivalent of the services, latterly nominal, rendered by the vassal to his seigneur. Next, this pastoral land was leased for a term—ostensibly limited, but practically indeterminate—which signified in many cases something like absolute property on the part of the occupier. Property, indeed, it commonly became, as absolute as British law ever allows it to be. Meanwhile, and still earlier, the practice of selling land by auction was introduced, and in this way a large portion of the agricultural land of the State, together with a portion of its pastoral land, was parted with. Whether broken up into large farms, or leased in vast tracts for pastoral purposes, the land of the Colony appeared equally to be lost to the State. Then, after nearly forty years of this phase, the return of the curve began. A belief in the desirableness of nationalising the land sprang up in the wake of Henry George's propagandist works, especially his *Progress and Poverty*. The Govern-

ment of New Zealand made itself the organ of this belief and desire, and through a succession of years it went on buying back, or forcibly resuming, large landed estates. Its example has been imitated by the Australian Governments. The Labour Government of the Commonwealth has imposed a land-tax with the object of breaking up the big estates, and in 1910 the Labour ministry of New South Wales decided that no more public lands should be sold, but all of them leased. Let the process of resumption be completed, and in all of the Australasian States the whole of the land will once more become the property of the State. The last phase of the evolution of landed property in Australia will then, though on a higher plane, repeat the earliest.

CHAPTER XLV

THE SQUATTER IN POLITICS

It was impossible that men possessing such forcefulness of character as the early landholders, so well educated as most of them, and sometimes of such commanding talents as one at least of them exhibited, should not actively intervene in the government of the colonies. The story of the first great typical squatter, though he was a proprietor and not a runholder, has been already told. John McArthur was a political force in New South Wales through three or four decades, and he claimed in Dr. Lang's hearing to have been the means of procuring the recall of the first four Governors, while Dr. Lang believed that he was answerable for the recall of the sixth. He went near to founding a dynasty of politicians. Two of his sons inherited a portion of his faculty and his influence and continued his policy on his own lines. In his days the Governor was still virtually absolute, and such power as the strongest landowner enjoyed was moral solely, due to the rectitude of his cause, the ascendancy of his character, or the weakness of the Governor. While the strong-minded Macquarie was in the saddle, the large landed proprietors, still very few in number, kept in the shade. McArthur was forcibly detained in exile—that is, in England—most of the time, and the Governor had peace. An agitation for the creation of a council, resembling the early privy council of the sovereign, was got up by these, but temporarily failed, and the autocrat rejoiced that the project had been abandoned. Its abandon-

ment could not be other than temporary. It was revived in 1824, when Lord Bathurst requested that the names of ten principal merchants and pastoralists should be submitted to him. Three were selected, of whom two were pastoralists, and when the Council was reconstituted in 1828, almost all the unofficial nominees were pastoralists, as it was also from among pastoralists that vacancies were filled. This close corporation was in 1843 liberalised by the substitution of a larger elective element. These new members, elected by large constituencies, such as the district of Port Phillip, the future Victoria, were, as we know from their names, commonly great landholders, and, so far as their counsels could sway the proceedings and their votes determine the result, the Colony was then largely governed by the squatting fraternity. But the presence and influence of the permanent high officials, together with the preponderance of the Governor, almost invariably decided the complexion of the legislation. In the forties, when Governor Sir George Gipps ruled the Colony with a firm hand, the squatting power could by no means have things always its own way. When Wentworth endeavoured to gain possession of a whole island, almost as large as England, it was the Legislative Council, led by Gipps, who was supported by the permanent members, that thwarted the nefarious design. It was otherwise a few years later. Dr. Lang's charge against Governor Sir Charles Fitzroy is that he was governed by Wentworth. During his Governorship, if Lang be right, the Colony was governed in the interest of the squatters. Wentworth was then, according to Lang, the virtual dictator of the Colony.

The Legislative Council was, in 1851, made purely elective, and the granting of the franchise was accompanied with such a distribution of seats as practically threw a large part of the representation into the hands of the squatters. A property qualification of £2,000 was required of a member of the Legislative Council. Exaggerating the rule that assigns a larger number of

representatives to the rural districts than to the towns, the new Act provided that 1,500 voters in the rural districts, which were controlled by the squatters, could elect one member, while 15,000 votes were needed in Sydney to elect a single member.

One of the two cardinal principles of colonial evolution is that each colony severally repeats, in an abridged form and with local modifications, all or most of the phases through which its metropolis or motherland has itself passed.* So does the pastoral age in the British colonies at the Antipodes recapitulate the corresponding stage in the history of England.

For many centuries, but notably from the signing of Magna Charta and the beginning of the thirteenth century, the power of the great territorial nobility had been steadily growing in England with the growth of their landed possessions. In the seventeenth century the King of England was still desperately contending for the power that was slipping from his grasp, but the dynastic revolution of 1688 for ever robbed him of the reality of sovereignty, leaving him only the shadow of it. From that date onwards till the epoch of the great Reform Act the government of England lay in the hands of the territorial nobles. They were the advisers of the sovereign, premiers and Secretaries of State, ambassadors and governors of dependencies and colonies. Save for a few lucky lawyers, they monopolized the House of Lords and membered the House of Commons. They seem to fill the stage. What pamphleteer in our days would persistently attack the leading nobles as Junius assailed the Dukes of Bedford and Grafton? The higher subordinate offices, including the permanent under-secretaryships, were filled with their connections. The bench, more rarely, was occupied by their creatures. The country gentry officered the army and the navy. The greater prizes of the Church were in the hands of the peer and the squire : they virtually created bishops

* See a series of seven articles (by J. COLLIER) on *The Evolution of Colonies* in the *Popular Science Monthly*, in 1898-99.

and deans, canons and prebends ; its richest benefices were in their gift and were often held by their sons. As constituting the "great unpaid" class of honorary magistrates, they administered a large portion of civil and criminal justice. They controlled the government of counties and parishes. They were the leaders of society. The three classes or castes together—nobles, county families, and clergy—constituted a paramount oligarchy and possessed political, ecclesiastical, and ceremonial supremacy.

The parallel between two social states is never complete, and assuredly there is no complete parallel between Australia in its pastoral stage and aristocratic England during the long and varied period of the paramountcy of the great territorial landholders. Yet certain characteristic features are alike in both, and in both they arise from similarities of structure. We observe, first, in Australia and New Zealand, the ascendancy of the great landowners. So long as there was a strong anti-squatting Governor, who resisted their sway with the aid of the permanent high officials appointed by the Crown, the large pastoralists necessarily remained in opposition. Save for the occasional and accidental alliance of an outsider, governed by public motives or by pique, they, indeed, formed the Opposition. Such was the state of things in Australia when Sir George Gipps was king. His chief allies were Deas Thomson and the officials ; the Opposition was led by Wentworth, with the squatters at his back, and casually supported by Lang. From the time of Brisbane—certainly from the time when the Legislative Council was reconstructed in 1843 and the elective element introduced, or a year or two later, till 1861, when the squatting majority, with the president at their head, dramatically walked out of the chamber in order to make a dignified protest against the Free Selectors bill, this element had the upper hand, and virtually ruled New South Wales, both through the legislature and the administration. Some scattered references, where a detailed scrutiny

is impracticable, will reveal the extent to which the great pastoralists controlled the State system.

His past deep offences forgiven and his eminent services to the State at last duly recognised, John McArthur was almost the first to be appointed to the Council in 1824, when it was created. He held the seat till he died, and his two civilian sons, James and William, succeeded him. All alike constantly pursued (what may be called) squatting politics. One of his colleagues was Alexander Berry, ex-doctor and ex-navigator, reclamer and dairy-king, and he retained his seat through all the changes of constitution the Council underwent—in 1828, 1843, 1851, and 1854, till he resigned it at an advanced age in 1861. The squatter-politician was, indeed, a conspicuous figure after a measure of responsible government had been granted to New South Wales, and the Legislative Council had been made partly elective. Ebden, who had first settled on the Upper Hume in 1836-8, and next drove stock westwards to the Port Phillip country, became a representative of the Port Phillip province and fought for its separation from New South Wales. He was afterwards Auditor-General in Victoria and played an active part in Victorian politics. Henry Mort, pioneer squatter in New South Wales and in Queensland, sat for Queensland in the New South Wales council. Then, when Queensland was severed from the Mother-colony, he sat in the Legislative Assembly as member for West Macquarie. From 1879 onwards he was a member of the Legislative Council. Terence Aubrey Murray, born in 1810, was at first a sheep-farmer on his father's land. From the date of the reconstruction of the Legislative Council in 1843 till his death he was closely connected with public life. Squatter though he was, he was prominent in all struggles for popular rights. He was rewarded by being appointed Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. From 1862, when Wentworth retired from his brief tenure of the presidency of the Legislative Council,

till 1873 he was member and president of the Second Chamber. Such a record was worthily crowned by knighthood and enhaloed by the posthumous distinction of his son as a Scottish and English professor and classical scholar. Out of the strong proceedeth sweetness, as the old Hebrew riddle hath it.

We interrupt the beadroll of distinguished names to mention a significant fact. In 1844 (September 17th), so sympathetic was the Legislative Council with the interests of the pastoralists that it passed votes of thanks for his services to Charles Buller (Carlyle's old pupil and then a rising member of Parliament) and to Francis Scott (son of that advocate of the pastoralists, Lord Polwarth) "for his masterly exposition of the cause of the Australian squatters." Next year it was decided to appoint Scott its Parliamentary Agent.

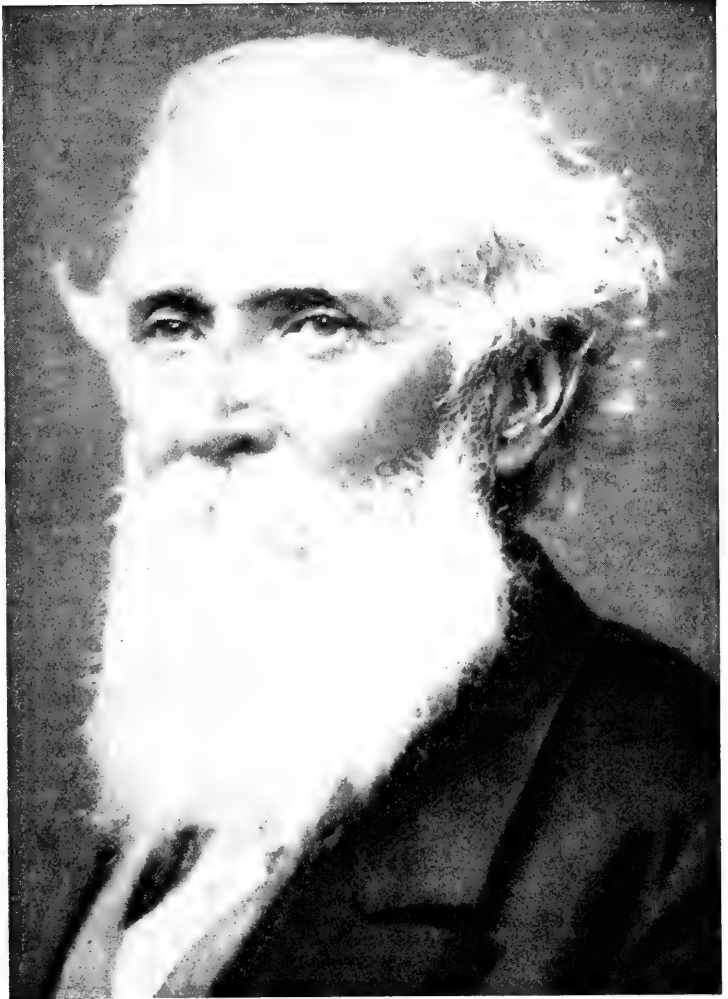
It will show the extent to which the unreformed Legislative Council was permeated by pastoralist influences to state that the three nominated unofficial members were pastoralists—Alexander Berry, John Blaxland, and Richard Jones. Even when the Council had been made partially elective, sixteen out of the twenty-four elected members were connected with pastoral pursuits.* It is true that two of these are described by Sir George Gipps as barristers; but Wentworth had for some years ceased to practise, he owned three stations, and he publicly said: "I am a squatter," though he never resided on his stations. And William Forster, who was afterwards Premier of the Colony, though described as a barrister, was also a squatter.

Many country gentlemen, we are told, were returned to the Legislative Council in 1843. Two years later Henry Dangar, an extensive pastoralist, was elected, and, in company with Wentworth and James McArthur, he supported Earl Grey in his attempts to resume transportation. In 1848 he was re-elected, and for years after. In 1854 he was placed in the Legislative Council of the new Constitution. Sir Charles Cowper

* See the names in the Mitchell MSS., vol. 42.

was bred to the bureaucracy, but belonged to the squatter-class, and, after holding some minor offices, applied himself to pastoral pursuits, but never seriously or with much success. His heart was in politics. He did not therefore win the squatters' hearts. James McArthur, son of the celebrated John and inheritor of Camden Park, intrigued against him, when standing for Camden, and succeeded in running him out. Cowper's turn soon came. McArthur stood for the county of Cumberland; Cowper was new to the constituency, if not to the constituents, but he defeated his opponent by a large majority. Another hereditary squatter, Sir John Robertson, who, along with Captain Towns and Sir Charles Cowper, "held immense tracts of pastoral country . . . on the Norman and Albert Rivers near the Gulf of Carpentaria," was, as Wentworth claimed to be, a champion of the freehold. How large a part the recreant, as his fellow squatters doubtless deemed him, played in landed politics, we shall subsequently see. "The father of separation," Edward Curr, the reputed author of the severance of Victoria from New South Wales, was manager of the Circular Head squatting company in Van Diemen's Land.

After the introduction of responsible government into the Australasian colonies in the middle fifties, the squatting element in the various legislatures was by no means proportionally diminished; perhaps it was increased. Squatters were freely elected to the more popular chamber—by whatever name it was known; and the second chamber, or Legislative Council, became their stronghold. W. J. Brodribb, who has told his own story, may be taken as a type of the post-constitutional squatter. Migrating from New South Wales to Victoria, and standing for a suburban constituency, he favoured the policy embodied in the Robertson Act of 1861, and, as a Victorian legislator, he assisted in passing the Duffy free-selection Act of 1862; on no other terms, doubtless, could he have been elected for an urban constituency. Removing to New South Wales,



SIR JOHN ROBERTSON.



he sat there in the Legislature. He was a consistent free-trader, and to this day the squatter remains a supporter of free trade.

A more prominent type of political squatter is represented by Sir John Hay (not to be confounded with the dairy-farmer, who was never a legislator). He was a steadfast representative of the pastoralists. He it was who led the opposition to the Robertson free-selection bill, and in the Legislative Assembly he carried his hostile amendment to it by a majority of 33 to 28 votes. It was a Pyrrhic victory. On the strength of it he became for a brief space Premier of New South Wales, and, being a well-educated Aberdonian and a polished speaker, he adorned the office, but he did not, as a minister, survive an appeal to the country.

Queensland, with few and unpopulous cities for a long while, at first afforded ample scope for the squatters as both legislators and administrators. The "Squire of Naraigin," Murray-Prior, was appointed Postmaster-General of the Colony before responsible government arrived, but retained his office when it did, and he then was representative of the Government in the Legislative Council. Sir Joshua Bell, another squatter, was continuously elected to the Legislative Assembly from 1863 to 1879; he was then President of the Legislative Council till his death. From 1864 to 1867 and from 1871 to 1874 he was a Minister, under several Premiers. As we run the eye down the list of the *personnel* of the various Queensland cabinets, we find, especially among the early ministries, the names of prominent squatters everywhere—R. R. Mackenzie (Premier), Coxen, Wienholt, Gilbert Elliott (who presided over sixteen sessions of the Legislative Assembly), Arthur Macalister, Murray-Prior (more than once), Gore, "that fine old polished gentleman," Archibald Archer, of Gracemere, Arthur Hodgson, Oscar de Satge (whose son has proved one of the historians, or novelists, of squatterdom), Sir Arthur Palmer, (he, too, Premier), B.B. Morehead (another Premier), C. B. Dutton, who was the Robertson

and the Duffy of Queensland, most of them more than once, and others still. In the first nine parliaments the squatters seem to have had an ascendancy; in the tenth, when Sir T. McIlwraith, was Premier, the pastoral element almost disappeared, or, at least, was greatly reduced. They had been Premiers, Ministers, Speakers, and Presidents since the separation from New South Wales, and in legislation and administration they maintained the pastoral traditions long after they had become extinct in New South Wales. Lawyers, merchants, agriculturists, and Labour members took their places. Now and then a squatter got into the Assembly, like the popular George Story; but he seldom strode into office. The pastoralists' day was gone by, at least in the first chamber. The Legislative Council, as the native home of Conservatism, was the natural refuge of the class that had been driven from the more powerful chamber. In it they long held a prominent place, there they steadfastly resisted the advance of the agricultural stage, and there, in a large proportion, they still remain.

James Taylor, who rose from being stockman to being a squatter, represented the Darling Downs for many years; for a brief space he was Minister for Lands; and he was a member of the Legislative Council till his death. Such men conceived themselves the natural rulers of the community. The successful manager of a large station, in Mr. de Satge's opinion, might aspire to fill any position, from the dispenser of justice "from his own bench of magistrates" (the words are notable) to that of Premier.*

In 1881 the pastoral interests of Queensland were still represented in the Legislative Assembly by twenty out of twenty-five members. In 1891 it would have been difficult to pick a dozen squatters out of seventy-two.

Much the same story might be told of New Zealand, which has witnessed the slow decline of the once all-

* SATGE, *Journal of a Queensland Squatter*, p. 98.

powerful pastoral interests in the Legislature. In the unreformed days the political leaders were chiefly pastoralists. After a constitution had been granted, pastoralists flooded the nominee Legislative Council and copiously figured in the House of Representatives. Comparatively few now sit in the Council, and, while a number of squatters or managers sat in the House of Representatives so lately as 1887-90, only two now sit there. Three or four pastoralists have been Premiers—Sir Edward Stafford, acknowledged to have been by far the most capable Parliamentary leader New Zealand has had; the high-minded Weld, afterwards promoted to a succession of colonial governorships; and the courteous Sir John Hall. A nominal Premier of a few weeks' duration, till he was expelled from the Cabinet by his colleague, the imperious Vogel, one Waterhouse, was the most contemptible bungler that ever held the office. None now count for less in the semi-socialist politics of the island-dominion than the old pastoralists.

The Legislative Assembly grew ever more democratic, but the Legislative Council in New South Wales, as in most of the colonies, remained the stronghold of the squatters. When, in 1861, it threatened to repeat its rejection of the Robertson land bill the year before, the Government of the day appointed twenty-one councillors—exactly the number required to give the bill a majority of one. Thereupon the President, Sir W. W. Burton, and nineteen members simultaneously withdrew from the Chamber, and immediately resigned their seats as a protest against the swamping of the Council. With this creation, which carried into effect a policy only threatened in connection with the House of Lords in 1832 and 1910, the protracted ascendancy of squatterdom came at last to an end. It made a dying sputter when it resisted the Land and Income taxes proposed in 1895. Then, however, the Chamber yielded to the verdict of the general elections, which the Chamber of 1861 refused to recognise. The Duke of Newcastle severely condemned the action of Governor

Sir John Young in lending himself to so extreme a measure, but his censure has not received the approval of a later generation, while Sir John's appointment as Governor-General of Canada, together with his peerage (as Lord Lisgar), shows that the Colonial Office wisely accepted the situation and tacitly approved of the *fait accompli*.

The struggle thus dramatically closed has been repeated, in one form or another, on other legislative arenas. In the seventies the Legislature of Victoria was the scene of a prolonged conflict between the two chambers. The issue was not ostensibly one between the pastoralists and the agriculturists, but the bone of contention was substantially the same. On the one side were the squatters, who scorned, and on the other sat the democrats, who claimed to receive a honorarium as members. Only men who had the large leisure of the pastoralists could afford, without remuneration, to spend months at a time in the provincial metropolis, attending Parliament; if the democracy, or even the harder-worked agriculturists, were to come by their own, their representatives must be paid; and again, by "tacking" a bill for the purpose to a supply bill, the new men eventually triumphed.

A new policy arose with the ascendancy of a new class. New avocations—the cultivation of cotton and the growing of sugar-cane, besides the agriculture usual in temperate countries—must be created to counter-balance the influence of the stockowners. This was done almost single-handed by Dr. Lang, who flooded Brisbane with free immigrants while the Home Government was flooding it with convicts. The squatters now saw themselves circumvented, and they fell back on the proposal that immigrants and convicts should be introduced in equal numbers. This concession was not accepted. The anti-convictists grew and increased. On no terms would they agree to the renewal of transportation. In order to strengthen their cause and assure the success of their policy, and doubtless also for its own

sake, they began to agitate for the separation of the future Queensland from the Mother-Colony. Again the squatters bowed to the inevitable—perhaps also seeing their interest in it—and formed a Separation association. But they advocated separation on one condition—that convicts should continue to be imported. The demand of the squatters for unfree labour and the demand of the people for free immigration dug an impassable gulf between the pastoralists and the bulk of the citizens. A succession of minor contests ensued. When Wentworth's Constitution bill had become law in New South Wales, and new constituencies were created, the popular representatives in the Northern districts defeated the squatters' nominees. These elections decisively settled the questions at issue. The party of "Separation without exiles" definitely triumphed.

Every political problem was entangled with the interests of the pastoralists, who determined the solution of it. Playing so large a part both in the industry and the politics of New South Wales, the squatters formed a huge factor in the movement that precipitated the separation of Queensland from the Mother-Colony. Not that they favoured the movement; on the contrary, they most strenuously opposed it. But it was eminently their opposition to it, or, latterly, their adhesion to it, coupled with impossible conditions, that made it practicable and inevitable. Dr. Lang believed that the Clarence and the Richmond rivers district was retained for New South Wales by them as a field "for the extension of the domain of squatterdom," and he roundly asserted that the retention was "accomplished by chicanery and fraud."* Yet it seems to be clearly marked off as a necessary portion of a future Southern Queensland, embracing a semi-tropical area, while the northern and western portions of Queensland would form other States. In some quarters he is held to have contrived the inclusion of the Riverina in New South Wales; probably, he would have asserted that it too

* LANG, *Account, etc.*, ii. 308 note.

was brought about by the same agencies and with the same object. One has only to examine the map in order to conclude that that great squatting area, with Sir Samuel McCaughey's opulent principality in its centre, is a predestined province of Victoria, as it is, for all practical purposes, already Victorian. But Dr. Lang had nothing to do with the decision. He was absent in England between the years 1846 and 1850, when the decision was taken, and his voice to the contrary, had it been heard at the Colonial Office, where he was not a *persona grata*, would have done more harm than good. The real authors of it were the squatting members of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, with Wentworth at their head, doubtless aided by the Sydney merchants, who hoped to control the exports and monopolize the imports of the province. It certainly is a fact that it was strongly urged by Bishop Broughton, who was supported by his old fellow-townsmen and ever-loyal henchman, Governor Gipps. Nor is it false that, as Mr. Rusden states, Governor Gipps, the anti-squatting Governor, recommended the Murray as the boundary to the Home Government; but the impression one receives is that Gipps acted as he did from comradeship, and did not realise that he was playing into the hands of the squatting majority in the Council.*

Early in the sixties broke out the long-nursed reaction against the pastoralists, their social predominance, their administrative influence, their politico-commercial policy. As an immediate outcome of it, in 1863 Sir James Martin formed the first Protectionist ministry, and in the Assembly he carried a motion in favour of the imposition of Protectionist customs' duties. The eloquent Irishman—like Mr. Gladstone, he "could not help being eloquent"—made a lofty defence of his proposals. He thought that "this most magnificent territory, teeming with the elements of every kind of wealth . . . was intended for other purposes than a sheep-walk, like a vast

* RUSDEN, *History of Australia*, ii. 202-3, 379 (second ed.).

Asiatic steppe, or a mere commercial emporium, like some small city of the Middle Ages." He considered that there was in Australia an ample field to which the starving thousands of the Mother-Country could be removed. He could not ask the skilled British artizan to come to a country where the necessaries of life were dear [was not butcher-meat "dirt cheap," Sir James, and the loaf of bread no dearer?], and the articles he manufactured imported at a price with which he could not compete. There was a limit to the number of shepherds and bullock-drivers, porters, warehousemen, and clerks, and the other workers concerned in the pastoral industry, that were required, and there were many other occupations equally desirable and ennobling. He knew that the greatness of England arose from her manufactures as well as from her agriculture. Aided by wise legislation [were they not hindered and sometimes throttled by it, Sir James?], those small islands became the abode of the greatest and most opulent people on earth. Yet the metals, the wool, and the soil that formed the foundation of England's greatness lay here, too, and in larger measure. But while the British Islands supported thirty millions of a population, New Zealand maintained only four hundred thousand. By its pastures and its petty commerce with the South Sea Islands alone it might become a kind of Antipodean Venice, but could never reproduce a manly, vigorous, or numerous population. Only by the creation of manufactures could it hope to be peopled with such a population. Only in this way would there be scope for every man to raise himself. Only thus could everyone be comfortable rather than a few be rich. It was a noble appeal, but it was made to deaf ears. The bill or motion was rejected by the Legislative Council, always attached to free trade, and at the ensuing general elections the Protectionist Ministry was defeated. A Ministry with a squatter-Premier came into office and passed a bill imposing *ad valorem* duties. New South Wales was still strongly anti-Protectionist. The squatters have ever

since remained the backbone of the Free-trade party, and the comparative ease with which a Protective tariff was carried through the Parliament of the Commonwealth was partly due to the fact that not one squatter, or a single representative of the class, sat in that assembly. At this day the president of the Pastoralists' Association annually fulminates against the creation of factitious industries by means of protective duties.

The foreign policy of the squatters was but an extension of their domestic policy. Surveying the pastoral races among mankind, the many conquests they have made, the thrones they have overturned, and the terror and devastation they have spread over the most fertile and warlike countries, Gibbon confesses, with some reluctance, that "the pastoral manners, which have been adorned with the fairest attributes of peace and innocence, are much better adapted to the fierce and cruel habits of a military life." We must not rashly import into our as yet peaceful Australia conceptions that apply to less civilised races, but it is a fact that the lives of the pioneer Australian pastoralists were lives of warfare. In many parts of Australia the struggle with the blacks was incessant. All the squatters had fire-arms, and many of them daily went about armed. Some entered into defensive alliances with one another. Those who could not do so, or were of an unwarlike temper, were driven from their runs. Gibbon also notes that the necessity for keeping their flocks and herds at night within the camp gradually introduced the rudiments of the military art into the distribution, ordering, and guarding of the encampment. Just such precautions were taken by the early Australian overlanders, who were the survivors of the nomad pastoralists of Europe and Asia, and by the pastoralists who travelled in search of runs. They were thus in constant training for warfare. Naturally, among such pastoralists sprang up a force of volunteer cavalry; the Australian Lancers were at first composed of squatters or their sons; the army of the Shepherd Kings in Canterbury, New Zealand,

consisted of the younger pastoralists ; and when contingents of rifle-carrying cavalry, or of mounted infantry, were demanded during the South African war, the sons of the squatters rushed to the fray. Their addiction to the chase, which is "an image and a school of war," was in the nature of military training. Their habitual and often day-long riding in mustering cattle or in pursuit of them was a no less valuable discipline.

Pastoralists who have been accustomed to "annex" whole provinces, like the overseer or the foreign count who discovered Gippsland, in Victoria, or the discoverer of (the Australian) Kimberley, or the first occupiers of strath or plain, of river-flat or mountain-plateau, can perceive no reason why their colony or country should not annex an unappropriated island or territory in any quarter of the globe. Thus, Australian and New Zealand pastoralists in general heartily approved of the annexation of New Guinea by Queensland, while they urged the acquisition of Fiji, Samoa, and New Caledonia, and were ardent supporters of the South African war. Indeed, men who need ever-wider stretches of grass lands for their ever-increasing flocks and herds are of all the most clamorous for the appropriation of waste lands. The agriculturist can find relief under pressure in more intensive cultivation of the soil, and the industrialist demands only space enough to build his factories upon or to find the iron-ores and coal-mines that are the breath of his life ; but the cry of the pastoralist is, like that of the daughter of the horse-leech : "give, give !"

CHAPTER XLVI

PASTORAL LEGISLATION

THE legislation of the pastoral age has, at all times and in every country, had a character of its own. In countries where the inhabitants were still nomads there could be no written laws, but there were still unwritten usages, and these were binding. When the laws or usages of a people are codified, these ancient customs are often incorporated with the prescriptions of less ancient times. Thus, "enactments intended for a people with settled habitations, and dwelling in walled cities," says Milman, "are mingled up with temporary regulations, suited only to the Bedouin encampment of a nomad tribe." The whole subsequent legislation has its root in these usages. Just so had the written customary, or common, law of Europe its beginnings in tribal usages. The capitularies of Karl the Great, so formidable to look at in the antique pages of Baluze or the modern edition of Pertz, are in good part but the instructions of the Emperor to the *villici*, or managers, of his farms. Yet out of them have grown the landed customs and the land-legislation of modern times. According to Darwin, General Rosas, in Argentina, first gained his celebrity through the laws he made for the government of his *estancias*.*

There were unwritten laws in the Australian bush. Some related to the occupation of land and others to the ownership of cattle or sheep. Thus, it was tacitly agreed among the Victorian adventurers as they arrived that no one should take up a station within three miles

* *Voyage of the Adventure*, ch. iv.

of another ; the intermediate land being equally divided. Out of just such understandings grew the written laws of later years.

Such legislation was naturally concerned with the primary interests of the pastoralists. In the early days there were, as yet, no fences ; lonely shepherds tended their sheep by day, and at nightfall drove their flocks to fold. Liable to diseases to which all flesh, ovine and bovine as well as human, is heir, sheep might contract scab, catarrh, and foot-rot, and these wrought havoc among the sheep. As a single sheep might stray into another run, and infect a whole flock, the lack of isolation might ruin a station. Many a law was passed to protect the squatter against his neighbour, as in later days to protect the cattle-owner against himself. The new race of shepherds kept vigilant guard over the integrity of their flocks. Periodical musters were held, and every herd counted. All animals were forcibly branded.

To remedy trespass impounding laws were enacted and continually amended. Laws were passed to regulate the slaughtering of cattle, killed by dishonest men preying on their neighbours. None could slaughter without a license ; in Queensland, so late as the nineties, a slaughtering-Act was re-enacted.

One of the most characteristic pieces of pastoral legislation was brought forward by Wentworth in 1844. It was carried successfully through the Council, and received the Royal assent at the hands of the Governor. Its object was to enable pastoralists to mortgage the wool while it was still on the sheep's backs, and it was intitled, *The Lien on Wool Bill*. It met with a very cool reception at the Colonial Office, which was then controlled, as regards the future self-governing colonies, by the masterful Sir James Stephen. It declared, in sentences that bear the imprint of Stephen's pen, that such transactions as were legalised by the Act were in contravention of the spirit of English jurisprudence, and the Office forbore to exercise the unquestioned power of refusing or recalling the Royal assent, in the

hope that the measure would not be re-enacted. In due course it was re-enacted, its author declaring that if the bill were not perpetuated, he would leave the Colony. The beneficence of the Act appears to have been unmistakable. Wentworth's chief opponent, Sir Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary and long the official leader of the Council, admitted that the operation of the Act had saved many a squatter from imminent ruin.

Hitherto, the squatters had it all their own way. So stamped with the brand of pastoralism was the legislation of the forties and fifties in New South Wales that Sir John Robertson, the son of a squatter, for some years his father's superintendent, and latterly himself a squatter, denounced it as partial and unjust. Examined before a Parliamentary committee in 1855, he declared that the object of it, or at all events, its tendency, was to depress the agriculturist and, at his expense, exalt the pastoralist. He asserted that the two classes ought to be placed on a like footing, and claimed that the facilities afforded to the one should be granted to the other. He especially referred to the Impounding Act, which gave the grazier an unfair advantage over the agriculturist. The Lien on Wool Act should be extended to agricultural produce. The Mortgage on Cattle Act, which aided the pastoralists in a similar manner, was another unfair discrimination against the agriculturists. Lastly, he condemned the system by which favoured pastoralists occupied Crown lands, for an indefinite period and at a nominal rent, while the agriculturist was subjected to more stringent requirements. The doughty ex-squatter's denunciation of the privileged class that he belonged to was to raise a tide of feeling which embodied itself in just such laws as he demanded. Hardly a lustrum more and the agricultural interests were to gain the ascendancy that had long been enjoyed by the pastoralists. Robertson himself who had become an agriculturist on a large scale, was to lead the new crusade.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE KNELL OF THE SQUATTER

THERE are countries where the soil is so barren that it cannot produce root-crops, though the grass may be nutritious and abundant, or may be sufficient in its season. Such were, and are, the major portion of Arabia and the valley of the Jordan, and no small part of Central Asia. The bulk of the Transvaal and, indeed, of all South Africa is well-suited to cattle-raising, but wheat, oats, and barley are exiguous. Large portions of Australia and New Zealand lie under a like disability or enjoy a like privilege. Extensive tracts of the Canterbury Plains in New Zealand, shaved bare by glaciers in the ice-age, and the foot-hills above them, are too light or too rocky to be suited to agriculture, but on them the finest breeds of sheep thrive. The great Western Division of New South Wales is in summer a mere tract of blowing dust, but for six or eight months of the year it can at least rear sheep. In such countries no conflict between pastoralist and agriculturist can arise; they remain for ever dedicated to the peaceful pursuits of the pastoral life.

It is otherwise with the rich straths, the alluvial tracts, the volcanic patches, the valleys and the plateaus enriched by the decayed foliage of a hundred thousand vegetal generations. At the epoch of colonisation they are covered with scrub, with bush, with forest, and while they so remain, they are the home of sheep, which graze in the intermediate pastures, or of cattle, which fatten on the succulent leaves or twigs. So long as

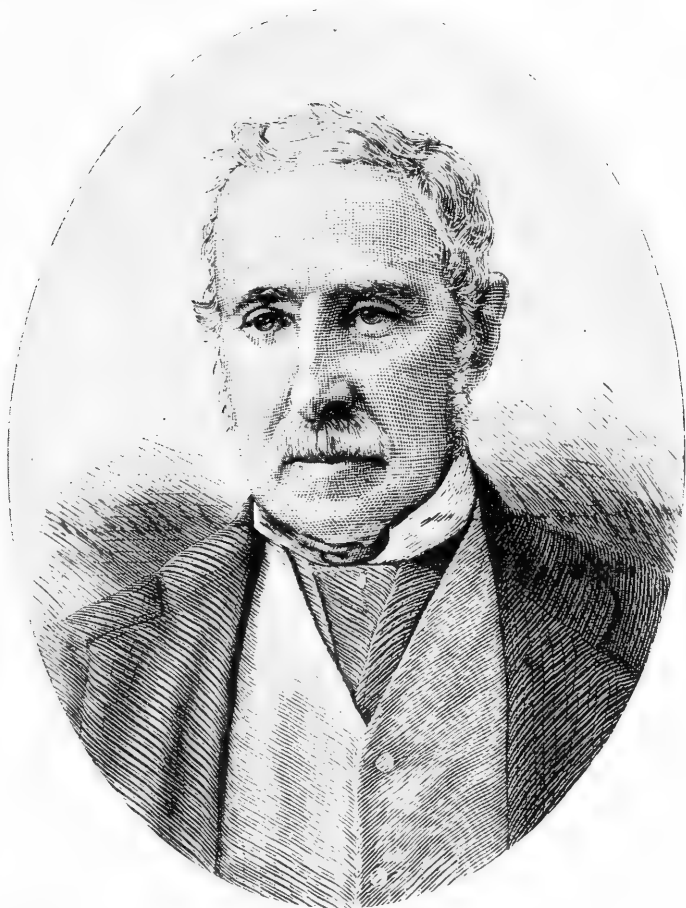
population is scanty, this is the predestined use of such lands, and the shepherd with his flocks, or the stockman with his cattle, is their rightful denizen.

As among the ancient Hindus described in the Vedas, the pastoral phase passed easily into the agricultural phase. The two were indeed simultaneous. In the fifties there were in Australia, side by side with the extensive pastures, "cultivated fields well fenced on nearly every station." * Small farms date back to the very beginnings of settlement in New South Wales. By grants to convicts and to settlers Governor Phillip and Acting-Governor Grose created a "chain of farms" between Sydney and Parramatta. The first two chaplains, Johnson and Marsden, devoted no small portion of their unemployed time and energy to mixed farming, namely, at once pastoral and agricultural. Most of the military officers, who received from the Government moderate grants of land, and some of whom purchased on easy terms the farms of returning convicts or disheartened settlers, were small farmers. The greatest of early pastoralists, John McArthur, was at first, in this sense, a mixed farmer, and it was out of these confused attempts that his pastoral pursuits grew, dwarfing his agricultural operations. In much later years Dr. Lang found that, in the neighbourhood of Bathurst, some of the great pastoral domains had been broken up through the insolvency of their owners, and subdivided into farms. † Everywhere too, in the less settled districts, squatters (in the primary sense of the word) were dropping down into nooks and corners on the big runs, where they made themselves more conspicuous than agreeable. All of these types of small farmer together had made sensible encroachments on the integrity of the squatters' preserves.

Yet the dominion of the great runholders remained unbroken. Over virtually the whole of each province in Australasia the big pastoralist had laid an unyielding

* *Victorian Pioneers*, p. 140.

† *Account*, ii. 214-5.



SIR GEORGE GREY.



grasp. Did the farmer seek to plant himself down in the estate over which the squatter lorded it, although ostensibly he held it only on lease? He bought them up, one after another, wherever he could. Only here and there could the small man effect a lodgment. The land could be purchased, because no titles could be given, beyond the boundaries of settlement. The State must step in, if the monopoly of the modern Goetz with the Iron Hand was to be broken. Sir George Grey in New Zealand was doubtless the first of the iconoclasts. As Governor of New Zealand he was placed in an unprecedented position—unprecedented, at least, for a British colonial Governor. The Secretary of State virtually handed over to him the whole of the Crown Lands in the Colony, and clothed him with power to legislate for and appropriate them as he deemed best. He felt it to be a high, but by no means an exorbitant, prerogative, and he was prepared to exercise it in a manner that must have gone beyond the intentions of the minister who entrusted him with it. Always a democrat at heart, he resolved to make an end of the monopoly of the land by the great pastoralists who had “barred the door against proletarian settlement.” On the eve of his departure from New Zealand “he issued a proclamation embodying a plan of rural administration and land settlement that . . . reveals a clear conception of the end he had in view and a firm grasp of the means by which it was to be gained. There were to be three classes of lands; limits were to be set to the number of acres that could be held; and all were to be sold by auction. Above all, lands that had hitherto been sold at £1, £2, and £3 per acre were to be sold at ten shillings and five shillings.”

We need not be surprised that the revolutionary ordinance “roused a storm of disapprobation.” The large pastoralists were still all-powerful in New Zealand, and if the Governor could issue autocratic ordinances, the carrying of them out depended on the squatterocracy.

They set themselves to thwart the ordinance of 1853. While "Grey claimed that he had made an end of the practice of closing the land against the poor," they took effectual measures to show that he had only thrown open the gates of large landed estates to the rich. "By 'gridironing' the land and 'taking the eyes' out of it wealthy individuals were able to defeat the Governor's designs. Just so had Earl Grey suspected that they would be defeated." *

The history of the question in New Zealand rehearsed its evolution in Australia—its visionary inception and its long-delayed success. As in New Zealand, the chief enemy of the large runholder was the free selector. Here he was the creation of Sir John Robertson, in New South Wales, and of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, in Victoria. In 1861 a minister who enjoyed the prime qualification of a very complete practical acquaintance with the matter, if he had an exhaustive ignorance of everything else, set himself to secure as a patrimony for the people the landed estates that were the monopoly of the wealthy and the privileged. The new Gracchus came from the ranks of the squatters, and yet he had already, years before, contended in the congenial presence of Sir George Gipps, the anti-squatting Governor, for the rights of the selector. Ten years later, in 1856, he pleaded for the right of free selection over all public lands. In 1861 he introduced a bill that legalised this principle. The potency or the sting of it lay in the word, "free." It was a catchword that appealed to the British colonist, who was proud of his freedom, so much greater than he had ever enjoyed in the Motherland. Robertson used it to signify the selection of land without previous survey. What did this mean? Ten years earlier the sagacious Gipps had asserted that a clear and sure tenure of unsurveyed land was impracticable. Robertson scouted the idea. His object was to save expense and obvious delay. He would thus flood the country with freeholders who would acquire

* COLLIER, *Sir George Grey*, pp. 84-5.

their farms speedily and without cost. In 1860 a step towards this result had been taken. An able minister of the squatter class, Sir John Hay (no relative of the recent millionaire) carried in the Legislative Assembly a resolution to the effect that selection might be made after survey. Concession though it was, the victory was momentary. A dissolution of Parliament ensued, and Robertson carried the elections on his own platform. Free selection before Survey, the war-cry of the new party, was to be the gateway to universal occupation of the untilled soil. The bill was again sent up to the Legislative Council, which had previously rejected it. The squatting majority still dominant there was prepared again to reject it, when the Government resolved to swamp the Council by placing in it twenty-one new members who would more than counter-balance the majority of twenty that was opposed to it. The Governor, Sir John Young, yielded to the pressure put upon him, but the Council would not yield. The faithful Abdiels of squatterdom, with their honoured President at their head, resigned their seats in a body and left the Council in a dramatic manner. The Duke of Newcastle, then Secretary for the Colonies, condemned the Governor, but did not dare to exercise the royal veto, and in 1861 the bill became law.

The accounts given of its working and its effects are various and, indeed, contradictory. The historian of the squatters, reflecting their prejudices and their beliefs, damned it comprehensively. "It poisoned the springs of Government, defrauded the revenue, was the agent of demoralising the people, and scattered them in places remote from production and subject to evil influences." *

Dr. Lang, the inveterate opponent of the squatters, speaks of the Act in very different terms. He describes it as a piece of "salutary legislation" and as having effected a beneficent revolution in New South Wales.

In certain districts, as even the spokesmen of the

* RUSDEN, *History of Australia*, iii. 540 (first edition).

squatters admit, its operation was beneficial. According to Nathaniel Bartley,* it did most good and least harm in the Clarence River district, and the adjoining river basins. There, he says, "was no clashing between the interests of selectors and those of pastoral tenants," and with reason. The good lands were too heavily timbered with cedar to be fit for grazing, but they were well adapted for farms.

Equally unfriendly historians relate that the worst consequences ensued. Individuals selected pieces of land only in order to sell to a rich neighbour. Wealthy squatters used others as "dummies," and added to their estates. Children and relatives, real or fictitious, were similarly used. Thus large properties were aggregated. The condition of residence was evaded, or complied with in mockery. Of 112,000 selections only 19,000 had residents. Deferred payments were not collected. By 1880 a large proportion of the selections had lapsed. Many had passed into other hands. The loss to the Colony was tremendous.†

One of the chief promoters of the Act, Sir Henry Parkes, admittedly "looked back with misgiving" on some of its results. A species of dummyism, he confessed, had grown up by which men "fraudulently gained possession of large tracts of the choicest land with only a mock compliance with the conditions of the law and in direct contravention of its spirit and intention." Yet he insists that Robertson's Act "did immense good." It "brought hundreds of comfortable homes into existence." And, after all the amendments that have been made in it, its "chief principles are embedded in the law of the Colony." ‡

Victoria eagerly trod in the footsteps of New South Wales. In the following year that ardent democrat, Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, carried through the Victorian legislature a measure framed on the lines of the Robert-

* *Pioneering Reminiscences*, p. 44.

† RUSDEN, *History of Australia*, iii. 540 ff.

‡ PARKES, *Fifty Years of Australian History*, i. 151-4.

son Act. It had similar results. All the evils that ensued in the neighbouring Colony followed with greater intensity in more compact Victoria. Wholesale evasions of the Act took place. There arose a scramble for land, which, as in New Zealand and in New South Wales, only ministered to the creation of large estates. The author of the Act, Duffy himself, admitted that it had failed. The "very class for whom we are legislating," he confessed, "sold their inheritance for some paltry bribe." Dummyism, he admitted, was rampant. The failure dejected some earnest well-wishers in far-away England. In 1868 a great friend of Duffy—no less a man than Carlyle—wrote to him in doleful terms:—

"A returned emigrant (newspaper editor, I think, but certainly a sensible and credible kind of man) gave me very discouraging accounts not long since of the state of *immigration* among you. 'Next to *no immigration* at all,' reports he; 'the excellent Duffy *Land Law* made of even no effect' by scandalous 'auctioneering jobbers' and other vulpine combinations and creatures, whose modes and procedures I did not well understand. But the news itself was to me extremely bad. For the roaring anarchies of America itself, and of all our incipient 'Americas,' justify themselves to me by this one plea, 'Angry sir, we couldn't help it; and we anarchies and all (as you may see) are conquering the wilderness, as perhaps your Friedrich Wilhelm, or Friedrich himself, could not have *guided* us to do, and are offering homes and arable communion with mother earth and her blessed verities to all the anarchies of the world which have quite lost their way.' Australia, of a certainty, ought to leave her gates wide open in this respect at all times; nay, it were well for her could she build a free bridge ('flying bridge') between Europe and her, and encourage the deserving to stream across. I pray you, if ever the opportunity offer, do your very best in this interest, and consider it as, silently or vocally, of the very essence of your function (appointed you by Heaven itself) in that Antipodal world! And excuse this little bit of preaching, for it is meant altogether honestly and well."

Every colony in turn took up the same difficult, if not impossible, mission of actively interfering with the necessary operation of the natural laws of supply and demand. When Lord Cardigan rode down "the Valley of Death" at Balaclava, he cried out to his over-

impetuous followers, officers or men : " Don't force the pace." One after another, all the colonial Governments determined to force the pace. They would forcibly overcome the resistance of the great landholders, and they would, by legislation and proclamation, satisfy the just demands of the agriculturists. Four years after Victoria and five after New South Wales, the new Colony of Queensland trod in their footsteps. Large tracts of pastoral land in the districts of Moreton Bay and the Darling Downs were resumed by proclamation in 1866 with the object of setting them apart for agriculture, and the first Land Act was passed, two years later, making reserves for closer settlement to an extent of thirty miles inland along the coast. The intention of the Act was baffled in the same way as in New Zealand, New South Wales, and Victoria. By unscrupulous dummyism large estates were acquired under the Act, and productive agricultural lands were reclaimed for pastoral purposes. The legality of the procedure was long contested in the courts of law, but historians admit that the pastoral industry benefited by the aggrandisement of estates. They were improved to a higher point than smaller estates would have been ; breeding was perfected through the introduction of superior stock ; fencing, the conservation of the water-supply, and other improvements were made ; and capitalists from the southern colonies, equipped with modern methods and taught by large experience, were induced to embark on pastoral cultivation in Queensland.*

Sir George Bowen, the first Governor of Queensland, guilelessly believed that the strife between pastoralist and farmer, which raged before his eyes, had been brought to an end by the early laws passed in Queensland, cutting off portions of the great pastoral tracts in the interest of selectors. It was not brought to an end then, and it has not been brought to an end since. It will linger on till the last acre that is fit for cultivation has been put under the plough.

* P. R. GORDON, in *The Queenslander*, August 9, 1910.

There were collisions between the small cultivator almost from the beginning. Writing in 1818, W. C. Wentworth told how the large pastoralists, needing a larger area for their stock, and fearing to trespass on the small properties that, even then, were springing up in the most remote and unpromising situations, had to push further inwards and establish larger settlements.* "Rolf Boldrewood," who is apt to see everything in rose-colour, asserts, on the other hand, that there was no "jostling or antagonism" between pastoralist and farmer. Each had his own legitimate field. There were no "disturbing forces." There were "no studied schemes of resistance" on the part of the squatters or of circumvention by them. On the part of the farmers there were "no spiteful agrarian invasion, no black-mailing, no sham improvements."

That large portions of the rich land occupied by squatters in Western Victoria should be withdrawn from pasture and placed under the plough was inevitable. In all Australia no finer agricultural soil could be found. To have kept sheep grazing where wheat could bounteously grow would have been to fly in the face of Providence. The pastoralists therefore assented—they even co-operated—when the Government, from time to time, surveyed the great runs, selected the tracts suited for agriculture, and submitted them for sale. The pastoralists themselves bought up large portions of their runs that were not suited for such a purpose. When the new farmers sat down beside them, they quickly accommodated themselves to the changed situation. The farmers sold them flour and forage, and sometimes supplied needed labour. In later days they brought them hay and oats. The farmers reciprocated, and bought milkers and steers from the squatters. Between the two classes there was no unfriendly feeling. There was no feud or litigation. Nor was there any jealousy. Both met at agricultural shows and at races.

* *Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of New South Wales*, i. 436.

So far, the optimist Boldrewood. In New South Wales the resentment has been deep and lasting. Speaking in August, 1910, the President of the Pastoralist Union of Southern Riverina, Mr. J. A. Campbell, said that many graziers were forced "to buy a great deal of purely grazing land that it would have paid them much better to hold under lease." They had to buy land in self-defence against the selectors. They went into debt to do this, and bought the land for more than it was worth. Generally, he added, the settlement in small areas in the Western Riverina has proved a failure. The soil was not suited to agriculture in consequence of "the uncertainty of the seasons and the smashing droughts."

Lady Barker, in her *Station Amusements*, has drawn a vivid little picture of the invasion of the great pastoral holdings by the small selectors. Did a cockatoo or a mining speculator cast a greedy eye on any part of your run, he had only to go to the Crown Lands Office and "challenge your pre-emptive rights." You were informed of the challenge and given six weeks to raise the purchase-money. But it was often hard for a run-holder to raise some hundreds of pounds on short notice, and few did. Hence, large runs in the best situations were often cut up by small investors. People grew to distrust almost any stranger seen riding about. That was in New Zealand. In Queensland Mr. Grant asserts that squatters often availed themselves of their pre-emptive rights. Just so, when pastoralism begins to decline, do younger sons leave the patriarchal home or the station, and go out into the world. Many of them become farmers, and thus initiate the agricultural phase. Others remain connected with the pastoral stage by founding its commercial branches in cities. Others still adventure in industry or commerce. And still others become legislators or take part in the work of administration.

As in some ancient pastoral countries, after the nomadic stage has ceased, so in Australia in later days,

the seceding members no longer necessarily depart to a distance, or break off connection with the relatives they have left behind them, or on the ancestral estate, but settle in the neighbourhood. In later days, indeed, as we are now witnessing in Australia, squatters are breaking up their great pastoral estates and cutting them up into small pastoral farms, where their sons, it may be, are placed as the tenant-farmers of their fathers on their fathers' estates.

In Australia one great agency played a potent part in engineering the transition from pasture to agriculture. The statesman, Wentworth, looking on the spectacle of the gold-discoveries, with all his visionary eye could see nought in the future but "ruin and disaster" as the after-births of such a portent. He might well dread its advent. The whole class of squatters who saw their runs deserted, their flocks and herds denuded of shepherds and stockmen, and the cost of all labour raised to a prohibitive point, might loathe the discoveries and condemn the encouragement given to them by the State. They might as well have condemned the chemistry of the earth which, by natural processes, engendered the silver and gold that excited the cupidity of millions. "Before the gold" formed the great dividing line in Australian history, the time-shed whence wealth was to flow down on both sides, equally to the colonies that possessed gold and to those that had none. The farther-seeing Dr. Lang looked on it all with clearer eyes than the great squatter, and saw in its immediate consequences the downfall of the squatterocracy that had ruled Australia for so many years. It virtually converted a pastoral into a pastoral-agricultural country. The men who immigrated to dig gold remained to farm, as in Victoria and New Zealand, or went back to the colonies they came from and there farmed, as in South Australia. Or the gold won sent their colonies ahead; public works were undertaken on a large scale; and the road-makers employed on them at 15 shillings per diem took up farms, as in Otago of Southland in New Zealand.

Nor did the squatters suffer without alleviation. The farmers settled in their neighbourhood rendered them special services, and received them in return. The price of wool was raised through the greater demand for the articles made out of it, as also through the manufactures locally initiated.

How necessarily a pastoral district will be converted into an agricultural district, according as it becomes more remunerative to grow wheat than to breed cattle or sheep, is shown by the fortunes of the second Land Act in Queensland—the Dutton Act of 1884. The Act was democratic in its intention, and its aim was to break up the monopoly of the great squatters in the interest of the small grazier and the agricultural settler. The far-Northern and the far-Western divisions were excluded from its scope as being on the outskirts of settlement and still dedicated to pasture; only the more advanced Eastern and Southern divisions came under its operation. In them the "runs" were divided by special commissioners into two equal parts. One of these was "resumed" by the Government with the object of setting it apart for agricultural settlement or smaller pastoral occupation. The other was leased to the actual runholder or Crown tenant for a period of fifteen years, if it was situated in the unsettled districts, or for ten years, if it lay within the more settled districts. The tenant of the pastoral portion had, moreover, the option of renting the resumed portion till the advent of the free selector or farmer. As has been said, it was optional with the Crown tenants in certain parts of the Colony to bring their runs under the operation of the Act. They showed no reluctance to do so. On the contrary, we are told, the provision for breaking up the runs was "all but universally accepted."* In all the Australasian colonies pastoralists have been accused, sometimes with justice, of opposing the conversion of pastoral into agricultural land; here we find

* P. R. GORDON (who lived through the period), in the *Queenslander*, August 7, 1909, p. 12.

them facilitating the process. As a result, the leaseholders or runholders retired to the distant North, driven ever further away by the advance of the freeholders. By 1891 the pastoral estates in Southern Queensland were chiefly freehold. In Northern Queensland and the watersheds of the Gulf of Carpentaria they were chiefly leasehold.*

The passage from pasture to agriculture is a necessary transition. Whenever it becomes more lucrative to grow grain than to grow grass, the transition will necessarily be made. Writers of the old individualist school will ask: why not wait? To all appearance these eager and pushing communities cannot afford to wait. Their blood is on fire with the passion for wealth. All around them are peoples striving to pass one another in the mad race. The guerdon is not opulence alone. It is the acquisition of all the comforts and luxuries, all the potencies or capacities, that modern civilisation can supply or satisfy. The smallest and youngest of these colonies want railways and steamers, telegraphs and telephones, schools and churches, concert-rooms and theatres, and these they cannot have unless they have a growing population, which will not come without the existence of industries and lands to occupy. On the other hand, the great landowners are reluctant to break up their princely domains. Their pride, their self-consequence, their social importance, and their ambition to rank with the magnates of Old England forbid them to part with the broad acres that are the bases of their state. "I pay property-tax to the tune of £10,000 a year," complained one of the very lordly squatters of New Zealand, in the days when the property-tax had not yet been supplanted by the land-tax. "Happy man!" said a retired army-officer. Good and upright man though he was, our squatter yet did not feel quite "happy." The previous year the Government of the Colony had endeavoured to take from him by Act of Parliament a huge cantle of his far-stretching estates,

* SATGE, *Journal*, etc., pp. 357-8.

and he knew that his monopoly was doomed. Every landholder in New Zealand was willing to sell out, said a New Zealand squatter in 1884, could he do so on his own terms. As a matter of fact a large number of pastoral estates were freely surrendered to the New Zealand Government from 1893 onwards, but there came a time, perhaps ten or twelve years later, when the squatters stood out against the Government valuation, and refused to sell at the price assessed by boards of valuers, or, in some cases, to sell at all. Then entered the element of compulsion—what is sometimes called, confiscation—or, somewhat later, the thumb-screw of a smashing land-tax.

The decline or the transformation of the squatter has not even now been arrested. Not only has the policy of the various Australasian Governments in encouraging or providing for closer settlement necessarily involved the breaking up of the larger estates. The conception of the class of estates suited for breaking up has been expanded. Land that, little more than ten years ago, was reckoned to be sheep-country because it was distant from a market, now ranks as possibly agricultural land, suitable for small farms, because lines of railway have been carried into the interior, or because the new system of agriculture imported from California or others of the Western States, and known as dry farming, has made the conversion of pastures into wheat-fields practicable. A panorama of golden grain now waves where lately there were thousands of sheep in their pastures.

Disintegration is now rapidly proceeding. Every year settlement encroaches on the old runs. The harvester drones and the plough furrows where stock horses once galloped. Yet there is no diminution of the number of sheep. The combined farms into which a grazing run has been cut up yield as many sheep as their predecessor station held. The old graziers are co-operating with the movement. Many of them, especially on the Riverina, have broken up the whole

or portions of their runs into farms, while others, extending a practice that has for a good many years been used, are opening large areas for share-farmers.

Yet the process has not been free from tragedy. Many of the squatters have lost their runs through misfortune. They could not effect the transformation, because the railway had not yet come near them. Bad seasons, or a fall in the price of wool, or epidemics in their stock, launched them into financial embarrassment. The estate fell into the hands of the mortgage companies. The family was broken up and ruined. Now the trains run within half a mile of the station, which is worth £75,000. But it is too late.*

The knell of the squatter is not necessarily the knell of the pastoral age. Very strangely, the small farmer who was given his farm to place it under crop, says Mr. T. K. Dow, "has been so tempted by the attractiveness of grazing pursuits . . . that wheat-growing has engaged only a small share of his attention." If he acquires agricultural land, says the same authority, "it is to keep stock on an additional piece of land in order to avoid the necessity of putting so much of the farm under cultivation." If he begins by growing wheat, it is in order to gain money enough to launch out into stock-raising. Yet it was to encourage and promote agriculture that facilities were granted for the acquisition of pastoral lands, and Sir John Robertson declared in 1855 that he derived far more profit from his investments in agriculture than from an "infinitely greater" capital invested in pastoral pursuits. He omitted to add that he had invested most of his pastoralist capital in runs near the Gulf of Carpentaria, which was prematurely settled and had to be in good part abandoned.

A similar phase has lately been observed in New Zealand. There many of the great runs have been broken up and cut up into small farms. But it is grazing farms that have taken the place of the great

* *Sydney Herald*, November 19, 1910.

pastoral estates. The high price of wool and the deficiency of labour have made such farms still more profitable than agricultural farms. It stands to reason that grazing is most successfully carried on on a large scale. But there are times when it is profitably conducted on a small scale.

In all pastoral countries the transition to agriculture is on foot, and sometimes with curious similarities. The New Zealand "cocky," or cockatoo, has his homologue in the American "nester." The nester nestles on a small plot of land adjoining a ranch, as the "cockatoo" perches on a small farm cut out of a run. To the incurable grievance of their mere co-existence the nesters, like some of the Australian cockatoos, add the wrong of stealing cattle from the ranch. The transition obviously has its questionable sides. Yet the free-selector is not seldom, as Mrs. Campbell Praed shows, the equal of the runholder and an acquisition to the local community. In any case he is necessary. If people are to be brought together and no longer live in isolation; if a society is to be created in place of the inorganic union of the pastoral stage; if social life and the conditions of existence are to be expanded and improved, the advent of the agricultural farmer is indeed inevitable. And those who facilitate that advent may be truly described as makers of Australasia.

NOTES

CHAPTER II

PASTORALIST SYSTEMS

Apparently, no systematic history of the pastoral state exists though the materials for such a work abound. Among the more compendious treatises may be named, Professor David Duncan's volumes contributed to Herbert Spencer's *Descriptive Sociology*, and Dr. Scheppig's *Hebrews and Phenicians* in the same series. Dr. J. G. Frazer's work, *Exogamy and Totemism*, contains descriptions of many pastoral peoples, especially the Todas and the Gollas, the latter "the great pastoral caste of the Telegu people." The Todas despise agriculture, while the Gollas acquire lands and engage in farming. Among such African peoples as the Herero, the Bechuanas, the Nandi, the Baganda, the Banyoro, the Bahima, etc., the hunting, the nomadic pastoral, the settled pastoral, and the agricultural stages shade into one another. There are some pregnant remarks in John Millar's *Origin of Ranks*, ch. iii.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST GREAT PASTORALIST

John McArthur was born at Plymouth, in Devonshire, but he was of Highland-Scottish origin, and he is represented as having descended from the founder of the clan Campbell. Mr. Burfitt, in the *Wool Industry of Australia* seeks to vindicate for McArthur a monopoly of the merit of founding the industry at the Antipodes. He cites approvingly an article from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, where it is contended that Samuel Marsden bred rather for immediate profit than for prospective advantage. While he augmented the value of pure-bred, fine-wool sheep, he used them to improve the fleece of other breeds. With McArthur, on the other hand, the production of fine Spanish merino wool

was an ideal, and the breeding of sheep a passion. The perfecting of the merino was his objective. The small lot McArthur purchased at the sale at Kew of King George the Third's merinos was not of the best quality. It was of a different type from the lot purchased at the Cape. The English merinos were of the Negretti type, and derived their name from Count Negretti. There is an account of the sale of the King's merinos in Burfitt, pp. 37-41.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PASTORALIST AND THE CONVICT

The figures stating the proportion in the text of convicts to free evidently need sifting, and perhaps the exact number of convicts transported is unattainable. In ten years (1834-43), says Rusden, "39,844 deep-dyed offenders were transported to Australia" (*History of Australia*, first ed., ii. 134). After Romilly had purged the English criminal law the convicts must have been of a thoroughly criminal type.

CHAPTER XV

THE PASTORALIST AND THE NATIVES

All other causes—abduction of gins, punishment for theft of sheep or mutilation of cattle or sheep—were incidental. The deep, ever-acting, irremovable cause of the persistent enmity of the blacks was, everywhere and always, the advance of settlement, with the inevitable consequence that the tribes in occupation were either driven away or destroyed. It is idle to say that the natives had no rights of property in the soil they did not cultivate. Writing in 1832, Mr. Scott Nind affirms that the blacks "are very jealous as to encroachments on their property, and the land is divided into districts, which are the property of families and individuals." So strong is the practice of inheritance in the female line that sons "have a right to hunt in the country from which their mother was brought" (*Journal of Royal Geographical Society*, i. 44). According to another authority, Dr. Lang, they had tribal, family, and individual rights. The territory of each tribe is subdivided among the different families of which it consists, "and the proprietor of any particular subdivision has the exclusive right to direct when it shall be hunted over, or the grass burned, or the wild animals destroyed."* The place-name mentioned at the birth of the child is "the child's own country, its true home, where in future

* LANG, *Queensland*, p. 336.

it will have the right to roam and hunt." * The latest and most authorised inquirers into the laws and customs of the Australian blacks, Messrs. Baldwin Spencer and Gillen, state that "every local group is regarded as owning collectively the locality in which lies its *Ernatulunga*." The boundaries of the locality, they add, are well-known, and if its actual occupants die out, a neighbouring group may enter in and possess, provided they belong to the same 'class.' With the advent of the white man, the food-supply of the black is restricted, for the white man hunts and kills his kangaroos and emus. "In many cases he is warned off water-holes which are the centres of his best hunting-grounds, and to which he has been accustomed to resort during the performance of his sacred ceremonies." †

CHAPTER XXXII

THE BREEDER

An account of the origin of Australian breeds is given in Hawkesworth's *Australian Sheep and Wool*.

* FRAZER, *Totemism and Exogamy*, i. 538.

† *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 50.

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