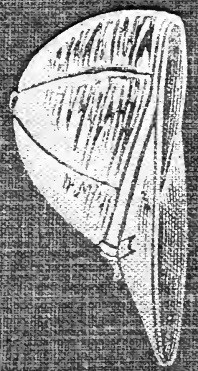

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SPORTING REMINISCENCES

TO

JOHN ADRIAN LOUIS

EARL OF HOPETOUN, P.C., G.C.M.G.

ETC., ETC.

Late Governor of Victoria

THIS VOLUME OF

Reminiscences

IS (BY PERMISSION) MOST RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR

LONDON, *January* 1898


Yours faithfully
Wm Hanford
LEMERCIER Sc.

SPORTING REMINISCENCES

By

THOS. HAYDON

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BLISS, SANDS & CO.
12 BURLEIGH STREET, STRAND, W.C.
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PREFACE.

IT has been suggested to me over and over again that I should commit to print some of my reminiscences, and whilst I am fully aware that the said reminiscences can interest but a very limited section of the community, I have at last yielded to the persuasive eloquence of an old friend, and jotted down some of my experiences.

I claim no literary ability, and this volume is launched with all its imperfections, its author simply trusting to receive the indulgent criticisms of the many friends of long ago.

T. H.

LONDON, *January* 1898.

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FLEMINGTON.

(AUSTRALIA).

CHAPTER I

AMONGST the many hundreds of Englishmen who have visited Flemington, few will, I think, question the statement that as a race-course it stands almost unrivalled with regard to the provisions made for the comfort and convenience of the public.

There can be no doubt that of late years the improvements effected in race-course accommodation in England have been very great, and I am rather disposed to think that the Australian example is being gradually followed; but in no other department of sport is conservatism shown in such a marked degree as in the unwillingness of English race-course managers or stewards to adopt suggestions whereby improvements might be effected, or the public convenience studied.

They have hitherto appeared supremely indifferent; having rested on their oars, arguing that what was good enough for our grandfathers is good enough for us, and, as I have remarked, until quite recently the old order of things remained. Sandown and Kempton have been the pioneers, the *avant-couriers* in making decent provision for the racing public, who, when all is said and done, actually find the

sinews of war, with the result that both these courses are highly prosperous and paying concerns.

This is all *apropos* of the marvellous convenience and, I may say, the luxurious accommodation provided at Flemington, in comparison with what was met with at the ordinary race-meetings of a few years ago.

My memory takes me back to the Derby of Daniel O'Rourke, a wet Derby Day. I was a boy at school near Epsom then, and Derby Day meant a holiday. Seats were erected along the school garden wall, and all of us were arranged in rows to see them "come" and see them "go." These were the days of turnpikes, when the whole of the traffic could only proceed at a walking pace miles before reaching the course, so great was the block. There was then no rail to the course; footpads from London tramped to Epsom the night before to get their supplies of "Dorling's Correc' Card," and then tramped back along the route to sell them.

The telegram was unknown, and the news of "What won the Derby?" was disseminated by means of the carrier pigeons. The flight of hundreds of these birds directly the winner had passed the post being quite a novel sight.

Rotten eggs, bags of flour, pea-shooters, pin-cushions, money-boxes, and dolls were the "confetti" of those days; and when the fun was a bit too furious, many a battle, without gloves, between swell and coster was fought alongside the hedgerows. The Greyhound and the Cock at Sutton, and the Woolpack at Banstead were amongst the favourite stopping-places, and the fun (?) of the road, especially on the homeward tack, was, to put it mildly, a bit sultry.

I suppose one's associations in early years have a good deal to answer for as regards the development of one's tastes. I was, unfortunately, a very delicate boy, and was a source of considerable anxiety to my parents and our family doctor, when, at a very critical period of my youth, there arrived on the scene as assistant to the said doctor no less a personage than Dr Shorthouse, who then took me in charge ; and after undergoing a somewhat severe ordeal—for the doctor, I fancy, believed in the kill-or-cure principle—pulled me through. We became great friends, for I was always looked upon as one of his "perfect cures." Racing and the pedigrees of race-horses was with him a perpetual theme, and before long the doctor had every opportunity for airing his theories, as he started and edited the *Sporting Times,* now called the *Pink 'Un.* He argued theoretically that Maccaroni from his breeding would beat Lord Clifden and all the others opposed to him in the Two Thousand and the Derby, and, strange to relate, the doctor's arguments proved correct, and, if my memory serves me, it was this fact which brought him into prominent notice as a racing authority.

The various articles and paragraphs partook largely of the "spicy" character, and one column—"On the Gridiron," I think it was called—brought him into collision with Sir Joseph Hawley, to whom he referred in libellous terms as "Sir Joseph Scratch-Crawley," with the result that the old doctor had to spend some time in Holloway Gaol. He did not lack "medical comforts" during his rustication, for he had many friends who admired him for his numerous good qualities and great abilities, and they stuck to him to the finish.

I am merely mentioning these facts to, in a great measure, account for the possession of keen sporting proclivities, which were, so to speak, developed by the very air I breathed. This ruling passion has been strong with me ever since, and it was not to be wondered at that in 1870, the year I arrived in Melbourne, I should be found amongst the great concourse of people who wended their way to the "Melbourne Cup."

There is rather a peculiar personal incident with reference to my first Melbourne Cup, inasmuch as on the opening day of the meeting, a handicap—the Hotham Handicap it was called—was run, and my attention was directed to a horse carrying the colours of George Hodgman. I was then a new chum, and knew nothing whatever of the merits of the horse carrying the said colours. He was called "Nimblefoot," but the familiar violet jacket and orange cap so often carried to victory by Vixen and other V's attracted my notice, and for luck I had my modest investment on him at 8 to 1. To my intense delight Nimblefoot won, and I then confidently expressed my opinion that he would win the Cup, which assuredly he did; consequently I became for a time quite an authority, and gained credit for a knowledge of form which I certainly did not possess.

Another peculiar feature of Nimblefoot's Cup was the fact that his owner, a Mr Craig of Ballarat, had dreamt that he would win the Cup, and that his jockey would wear a crape band on his arm, Craig having a presentiment that he would not be alive when the Cup was run. Old Slack, the great double-event bettor of the day, to whom he, amongst others, related his dream, offered to lay him £1000 to eight

drinks that a horse called Croydon did not win the Metropolitan stakes, run for at Sydney, and that his dream did not come true. The wager was booked, and the drinks were consumed in advance, but the double came off: Croydon won the Metropolitan, and Nimblefoot won the Melbourne Cup, his jockey wearing the crape band, Craig's death having taken place ere the Cup was run. To old Slack's credit be it recorded, he paid the widow £500. He was not of course bound to pay a penny.

To English readers it may be necessary to explain that in Australia the death of an owner does not render the nomination of a horse void.

I think it was at this meeting I saw the Duke of Edinburgh strolling on the lawn with Mrs Charles Matthews, who with her husband came out under engagement to Geo. Coppin, the proprietor of the Theatre Royal, Melbourne.

Nimblefoot's was my first Cup, but I never missed seeing the Cup run for twenty-five years. I have seen it run in all weathers—sometimes under a blazing sun, the thermometer registering 100° in the shade; and occasionally in a deluge. I have seen some hot favourites get home, and I have seen hot favourites that did not get home. The hottest favourites to catch the Judge's eye were Don Juan and Carbine, and the rankest outsiders were Pearl and Zulu.

Assyrian's year (1882) was an experience. The morning opened with a raging hot wind, but before the Cup was run the wind shifted to the southward, and the rain came down in torrents. There was not sufficient shelter for the enormous crowd, and the silks and satins, which had early in the day made the lawn resplendent as a rainbow, wore a woeful and bedraggled

appearance as the hundreds of drenched women-folk wended their way homewards.

I suppose the most sensational Cup I saw run was in 1877, Chester's year. This horse, the property of the Hon. James White, had on the opening day of the meeting won the Derby, and he was naturally much fancied for the Cup; but if little Savanaka had not stumbled at the turn, owing to a horse called Waxy falling in front of him, Chester would never have won, and one of the greatest and most cleverly-planned *coups* of famous old Jim Wilson would have come off. It was hard lines for that good all-round sportsman, Mr Herbert Power, the owner of the gallant little grey, to have victory so nearly in his grasp, and to be cheated out of it by a piece of right-down bad luck. Chester won by only half a head from Savanaka.

I think that the horse backed for most money for a Melbourne Cup was First Water. The Commission was sent in during the absence of the majority of the Melbourne bookmakers in Sydney; but it was to be worked simultaneously in Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide. The horse was not fancied by the public or the "Bookies," and the liberties that were taken by some of the smaller fry were enough to raise doubts as to whether the horse was not metaphorically and practically "dead." Men who were usually content with making a £200 book laid £500 against him, the £500 "Bookie" laid £1000, and so on, and as fast as they would lay, so the commissioners would put it down. The Commission was unlimited.

I was in Melbourne at the time, and well remember the Melbourne Commissioner—a thorough little gentleman, not perhaps particularly well versed in the art of executing a commission—complacently entering his

wagers, utterly regardless and quite ignorant of the amused and astonished expressions on the faces of some of the bystanders, as he, "childlike and bland," entered bets, which, had the horse won, would probably have, in the language of the Ring, turned out "cronk 'uns."

When the eventful Cup was run, and First Water was showing a bold front at the turn for home, some of my friends who had punched him so freely must have quaked in their shoes. He was only beaten by a little over a length. If First Water had won, there would have been consternation in the pencillers' camp, and from many quarters the "whisper" would have gone round.

Haricot's Cup (1874) was peculiar. The horse was supposed to be a non-stayer, but when the flag fell he went off at score, and was leading by many lengths six furlongs from home. Shouts went up, "They'll never catch him"; others said, "He'll come back to them directly"—but he never did come back, and they never did catch him, for he passed the winning-post a winner by four lengths.

The most meritorious win was in the Cup of 1890, when Carbine, carrying no less a weight than 10 st. 5, ran the two miles in 3 minutes 28¼ seconds. I don't think, with the exception of the Prince's Derby, I have ever seen more excitement or more genuine enthusiasm displayed on a race-course than on this occasion. My old friend, Donald Wallace, his owner; Walter Higinbotham, his trainer; and Bob Ramage, his jockey, were the heroes of the hour; they were cheered to the echo again and again, and the old horse became positively a public idol.

Carbine's performances are so well known, and have

been so frequently referred to, that any detailed account of them is not necessary here; but what emphasises his excellence in the very highest degree is the fact that Highborn, who ran second to him in this eventful Cup, carried the feather-weight of 6 st. 8; but later in his career he, with upwards of 9 st. on his back, won several important handicaps, both in Australia and India.

Carbine, as everybody knows, is now doing stud duty in England, having been purchased for £13,000 by the Duke of Portland. That he will prove a valuable addition to the Duke's stud is almost certain, for he combines those two essentials which make a race-horse: he could go fast and he could stay. Whether he will transmit these qualities to his progeny remains to be seen. The probabilities seem favourable, as those of his get which have raced in Australia seem endowed with both speed and endurance. I was present when he was shipped for England, and hundreds and hundreds of people flocked down to the pier to have a last look at their old favourite.

During the twenty-five years which I spent in Australia, I have been thrown in immediate contact with all classes of the racing community — from their Excellencies the Governors to the "touts, tipsters, and know-nothings," and that miscellaneous crowd which goes to make up the outside fringe of race-course society. Strangely enough, whilst our Victorian Governors—I refer particularly to those who held office during my residence in Melbourne, viz. Viscount Canterbury, Sir George Bowen, the Marquis of Normanby, Sir Henry, now Lord Loch, and the Earl of Hopetoun—were great patrons of and constant visitors to our race-courses, I don't

think any one of them ever ran a horse. New South Wales, on the other hand, had staunch supporters in Sir Hercules Robinson (now Lord Rosmead) and Lord Carrington, whose colours were seen at the principal meetings both at Melbourne and Sydney, and the keenest satisfaction was evinced when their representatives got first past the post.

The Governor, for the time being, of Victoria keeps open house during Cup Week, entertaining the Governors from the other Colonies, and any visitors of distinction who may be making the grand tour at the time. They drive up the course in semi-state, after the Ascot style, the band playing the National Anthem as they alight from their carriages, and occasionally a guard of honour, composed of a detachment of the Mounted Rifles, will accompany them, in addition to the usual body of mounted troopers.

Lord Hopetoun, however, eclipsed all his predecessors in the matter of style and pomp, his carriage, with four magnificent horses and postillions, being quite a novelty to many of the Colonial born. Following the example of the Prince of Wales in entertaining the members of the Jockey Club, his Lordship entertained at dinner on Derby night the members of the Committee of the Victoria Racing Club, and all the prominent racing people in the Colonies who were in Melbourne at the time. It was my privilege to be one of the guests on these occasions, and no function was more eagerly looked forward to than the Cup Dinner at Government House.

Lord Hopetoun, a thorough sportsman himself, appeared, I think, in his happiest mood when surrounded by hunting and racing men. A more genial host never presided at a banqueting table, and

both he and the Countess were positively beloved by every one who had a drop of sporting blood in their veins. I don't for one moment wish to convey that this attachment was confined solely to the sporting community, *tout au contraire*, for I don't suppose any previous occupants of Government House ever endeared themselves in a greater degree to the high, low, rich or poor, as did Lord and Lady Hopetoun; but on the principle of the "one touch of nature" the sporting element in the community, I fancy, appealed more strongly to their tastes than any other.

Lord and Lady Hopetoun's arrival in and departure from Melbourne will never be forgotten by those who witnessed these quite state ceremonials. The warmth of the welcome was only eclipsed by the genuine and heartfelt regret at their departure. They certainly came as strangers, but I can safely say that their leave-taking was the parting of friends. It scarcely comes within my province to describe state ceremonials, but Lord and Lady Hopetoun's arrival and departure were somewhat unique in the enthusiasm with which they were greeted, and the genuine and widespread regret which was associated with their farewell. The whole route from Government House to the railway station was lined with thousands of people, all anxious to bid an affectionate adieu to the most popular of Governors.

CHAPTER II

FLEMINGTON RACE-COURSE is, without doubt, one of the show places of Melbourne, and justly so. Not that its surroundings are picturesque, or the drive to it attractive—it has absolutely no natural beauties—but the appurtenances, if I may use the word, in the shape of stands, refreshment rooms, beautiful lawns and flower-beds, far surpass anything in England. The weighing-stand, casualty-rooms, lavatories, jockeys' dressing-rooms, down to the minutest details, have been rendered well nigh perfect, and nothing is wanting that human forethought could devise to make it complete.

Some reference here may not be out of place to the race-course itself. It has, as I have already stated, no attractive surroundings such as we have in England, the glorious foliage of elms, oaks, and chestnuts, being almost entirely absent. It is true, English trees, principally elms and oaks, are planted in the paddock and approaches, and they thrive wonderfully well, becoming, under the genial climate, almost evergreens, but the lovely landscape and natural beauties of rural England are not to be found in Australia. The gum trees which abound do not lend themselves to the picturesque, and the proximity of a boiling-down establishment and a bone-mill do not, when the wind is in a certain quarter,

emit a fragrance which can by any stretch of imagination be termed balmy. This disagreeable feature, however, is not often in evidence.

The race-course has this enormous advantage, however, in being dead level, is about a mile and a half in circumference and has a straight six furlongs. The horses are never out of view of the spectators; no vehicles are allowed within the ring fence—foot passengers only being admitted to what is termed the Flat, the admission to which is free. At the back of the Grand Stand there is the Hill with stands, etc. This hill, which is some acres in extent, accommodates thousands of people, and the view of the various races from its summit cannot be surpassed. The admission is half a crown, and Mr Secretary Bagot always called it the "Pit," so considerable was the revenue derived from the Hill. There is an extensive Birdcage, and the refreshment bars round the paddock and under the stands would measure some hundreds of yards.

Whilst on this topic of refreshments it might be mentioned that the whole of this department is controlled by Mr Henry Skinner; he has often been termed the Prince of Caterers—a cognomen he certainly does not discredit. Until his advent, the catering for the enormous crowds on Cup Day had been rather a difficult problem to solve, and was one of the things that worried Bagot more perhaps than anything else, but Mr Skinner is a born organiser, and the system inaugurated by him works with the utmost smoothness, and complaints are now few and far between.

The necessity for not obstructing the view of the Hillites made it requisite that the Grand Stand

should be so constructed as not to in any way interfere with the general *coup d'œil*, and hence its low, long "cowshed" appearance, but the arrangements for the comfort of the members beneath the long dwarfed-looking roof cannot be surpassed.

The Governor's rooms are decorated and furnished in princely style; the painted panels on the walls were executed by Mrs Rowan, a lady who has made a European reputation as an artist, and are some of her finest examples of the Flora of Australia. The ladies' retiring rooms are also marvels of comfort and convenience—curling tongs, scent sprays, powder puffs, hairpins, needles and thread, and the thousand and one things which are nowadays necessary to complete a lady's toilet, being supplied *ad lib.* These brief references to details will, I think, convey to strangers some slight idea of famous Flemington. In a lesser degree they apply to nearly every race-course of any pretensions throughout Australia.

A rather interesting incident occurred not many years ago. One Cup Day a lady gave birth to a little girl in one of the dressing-rooms. The mother and child received every attention, and after the day's racing was over were sent home in the ambulance waggon as if these occurrences were not at all unusual at Flemington. I think the child was called Patrona after Patron, the winner of the Cup.

Another feature which is worth more than a passing reference is the casualty-room and the provision made for dealing with accidents. A horse ambulance is driven round the inner ring whilst a race—flat race or steeple-chase—is being run, so as to be handy in case an accident should occur. Every course has its Honorary Surgeons, and the casualty-room is in

charge of a hospital dresser. These casualty-rooms are fitted up like hospital wards, and the dressers' duties are, I regret to say, frequently no sinecure, but the prompt attention given to the injured minimises considerably the after effects of injuries, be they slight or serious.

The Australian racing public are great believers in the time test. I know in England not much reliance is placed on the watch, but the faith in time trials in Australia is unbounded and everywhere prevails. To accurately time the races at Flemington a huge chronograph has been erected immediately behind the judge's box, and this is connected with the various starting posts by electric wires, so that by simply pressing a button which is fixed to each post, the clock is set in motion, and by pressing another button in the judge's box as the winner passes the post, the clock is stopped and the official time recorded.

The manufacture of this huge piece of mechanism was not undertaken without considerable trouble. Mr Gaunt the maker, who, by the way, presented it to the Club, told me that the clock itself was simple enough to make, but his difficulty was to get material for the hands which would stand the sudden jar each time a quarter second was recorded, but after many failures he at last hit upon the idea that the quills of the peacock's feathers would stand the strain. He tried them, and found them answer admirably. Few people, when watching the chronograph, ever dream of what the hands are made.

Timing trial gallops on the training track is positively brought to a science, and I am confident that, according to the population, more people carry stop watches in Australia than in any other part of

the world. It is quite amusing to meet with the touts and timeists at early morn on the training ground at Flemington whilst a gallop is in progress. No one would suspect that amongst the miscellaneous great-coated and muffled-up groups that are dotted about the tracks you could find half-a-dozen watches, but it is after a rattling good go that from out of nearly every pocket comes the clock, and the queries follow: "What did you make it, Jim? One-twenty?" "No, I made it a tick over," and so on. Then, "Did the prad have his shoes on? What weight had he up?" "Oh, young So-and-so only weighs so much." "Yes, but did you notice what a thunderin' big saddle he had?" "I don't think much of the go," says one; "he had the wind behind him, the inside runnin', and he skimmed every bloomin' post like a swaller." "Well," says another, "I think he'll jolly well walk in; I shall have my bit on." "You do as you like; he won't carry a bob of my money." And so on, till another gallop is in progress, when similar conversations can be heard until breakfast-time.

The training tracks at Flemington are extensive, and cost an immense amount of money to maintain. They are the sinking fund in the Balance Sheet. The maintenance account, to those unacquainted with these matters, being the item about which the members at the Annual Meetings want to know. The principal tracks are three in number, viz. the sand gallop, the cinder track, and the tan track. In ordinary weather and for sound horses, the sand gallop is the one principally used, and the mile, the furlong, and half furlongs are duly denoted by posts as on the race-course proper. The cinder track, as its name implies, is made of fine cinders, and is excellent going when

the weather is wet, and the ground holding. The tan track is for horses with tender feet or those with questionable understandings. The whole of these tracks are kept in perfect order, and were it not for those "infernal touts," the tracks at Flemington would be a veritable trainer's paradise.

There are so many things in connection with race-course management in Australia which compare favourably with the prevailing order of things in England. Many, perhaps, are mere details, but these very details all go towards rendering the management and the whole surroundings complete. Take, for instance, a very minor detail perhaps, the Australian Clerk of the Course (not the Secretary). This official, turned out in proper hunting costume, scarlet coat, velvet cap, boots and breeches, etc., after having seen the jockeys weighed out, precedes them to the starting post, and there, under the starter's orders, takes notes of fines, etc., and acts as a sort of *aide-de-camp* to the man with the flag or the man in charge of the Starting Gate. Immediately the field has been despatched on their journey he returns to the winning post, and there learns from the judge the name of the winner whom he then escorts to the weighing enclosure. This may be regarded as a useless and unnecessary innovation, but all these little details help to give a finish and completeness to the general picture.

The Stipendiary Steward is also an official, of whom English race-course *habitués* have possibly never heard. I do not say such an appointment is necessary in England, because men of means and of good social position can always be found willing to accept office as stewards, and who, by their early training and experience, are well qualified for the positions.

Not so, however, in Australia. It must not for one moment be supposed that there are not plenty of men capable of filling the positions, but they have not the leisure to devote to it, and, moreover, in a small community, business connections and a thousand and one things prevent many a man from accepting the office of steward, with its accompanying responsibilities. Hence the creation of a Stipendiary, or paid steward. The duties of the official in question are to attend all race meetings under Victoria Racing Club Rules, assist the local stewards, and report to the authorities any cases of inconsistent running or doubtful practices which may come under his ken.

This creation of the office of a Stipendiary Steward was considered by those qualified to judge a step in the right direction, but I strongly advocated, and my views met with a considerable amount of support from leading racing men, that the Victoria Racing Club did not go quite far enough. The plan suggested was that there should be not one but three paid stewards, under whose control the various race meetings should be. Doubtless in England the same necessity does not exist; nevertheless, for reasons I have already adduced, if racing is to be kept free from scandals and the constantly recurring charges of "stiff" running, the extension of this system of control is highly desirable. I do not suppose for one moment that "stiff" running is more prevalent in Australia than it is in England, but somehow or another it is not, shall I say, so artistically practised. In Australia it is occasionally patent to the most ordinary observer, but still the stewards are slow to take action unless stirred to it by some noisy demon-

stration on the part of those who have backed the supposed "stiff 'un."

Then, to my mind, the fatal mistake is so frequently made in calling evidence. When malpractices, such as a gentle squeeze on the rails, or a deliberate and wilful foul or cross, or the exhibition of unmistakable pulling are inquired into, *mirabile dictu*, the farce of calling evidence is resorted to, whereas, had the stewards been watching the race, no evidence but their own eyesight would have been necessary. But once evidence is called, how is it manufactured? Faked cash betting tickets are produced, and those in the know are pressed to come forward to screen the offenders, and volunteer statements that they saw —nothing, and upon such material, judgments are pronounced! With professional and paid stewards who understood and attended to their duties, no opportunities would be afforded for this manufacturing of evidence, and the penalty for wrong-doing would be prompt and severe. Have your ornamental steward by all means. Let him preside at the luncheon table, receive vice-royalty, and attend to all these little social details, but let the management of racing, and all that appertaineth thereunto, devolve upon men who thoroughly understand the ins and outs of the game.

The necessity for some change in this direction is still existent, as I see by the *Australasian* of so late a date as 10th July 1897, the following paragraph: "Some very strong comments have been passed on the running of a certain animal in the Winter Handicap. Few people *save the Victoria Racing Club Stewards* failed to notice the performance." Remarks of this character appearing in the leading

sporting journal, and written by a man whose faults, if any, are in the direction of smoothing over difficulties, simply support my contention that, with all our boasted supremacy in race-course management, there is still one very important factor needed before we can afford to rest content.

I am quite prepared for English critics to join with Anthony Trollope, who said: "We could wallop the whole creation at blowing," but, notwithstanding many errors of omission and commission, race-course management in Australia is not unworthy of being imitated.

Then, look at the cards of the races. I don't suppose it will be contended that Australia has not set an example which, it is satisfactory to see, is being followed in England by the recently formed racing clubs, such as Kempton, Sandown, Lingfield, and a few others. But dear old Epsom can't part with its Dorling's Correc' Card, and Royal Ascot sticks to a similar sheet, which is nothing more or less than a monstrosity. The *laissez-faire* system is carried out with a vengeance in this particular detail.

CHAPTER III

ONE of the features of nearly all Australian race-courses is the weighing-stand, which is fully open to the public view, the business of weighing-out and weighing-in being regarded as part and parcel of the day's show. So different from the English system, where the jockey and his trainer disappear mysteriously into a small room, and are for a time invisible to all but a few interested individuals. I feel convinced, if the system of permitting the public to view this weighing-in and weighing-out was adopted, it would be appreciated by all English race-goers, especially those who go for the pleasures of racing, and take an interest in all the various details connected therewith.

There is another innovation which might be adopted with advantage—an innovation suggested by my old friend, N. R. D. Bond—viz. the numbered saddle-cloth: a light saddle-cloth with the number of the horse, worked in coloured braid, corresponding with the number on the card. Every one knows how difficult it is at times to determine the names of the horses as they canter by. The reference to the card is difficult, because the variety of the colours of hoops, stripes, cuffs, etc., is positively confusing, whereas, by the use of the numbered saddle-cloth, the names of the horses are easily found. This system or something

approaching it, is, I find, being adopted on some of the newly established courses.

There is another Australian invention which has recently attracted some notice in England. I refer to the Starting Gate; but opinions as to its utility and practicability appear to be somewhat mixed, at least as far as English critics are concerned. I do not exactly know whose patent it is that has recently been tried, but I can speak with some authority as to the unqualified success of the Starting Gate in Australia, inasmuch as I was Secretary and Manager of the Sandown Park Race-course (Australia), upon which the machine was first publicly used. It had been worked, it is true, at two or three unregistered pony race meetings, but the registered courses under the Victoria Racing Club *régime* would for a long time have nothing to do with it; nearly all racing men in Melbourne—myself included—having a strong prejudice against the machine, which in our then opinion could never supersede the man with the flag.

However, I was induced by a friend to pay a visit to a pony meeting and see the Gate in operation, with the result that I became a convert and a strong advocate in its favour. My colleague, Mr H. Skinner, was equally impressed, and we determined to erect one of the Gates at Sandown Park. I might, in fairness to the inventor of this particular machine, Mr J. B. Scott, state that it was his patent which was thus first publicly exhibited. I say "publicly exhibited" advisedly, the pony race meetings being unregistered; the regular and the better class of racegoers did not patronise them. The Victoria Racing Club, whose powers are somewhat similar to those of the English Jockey Club, disqualified all horses

running at them. No licensed jockey was allowed to ride, and various other pains and penalties, too numerous to mention, were inflicted upon those identified with them. Thus were the pony meetings tabooed by the authorities, and to the majority of racing men the Starting Gate was as a thing unknown.

A revulsion of feeling, however, came over the racing community after the trial of the Gate at Sandown Park. Loud cheers went up from the spectators as some nine or ten horses, which had never before seen the machine, jumped off the mark like a cavalry charge, and the man with the flag from that day was doomed. One club after another adopted the Gate—in fact, owners and trainers were very chary about entering at a meeting where it was not in use —and I may say that it is now universally adopted throughout Australia. Many improvements in the original Gate were suggested and utilised, and I unhesitatingly say that if the racing authorities in England would give it a fair trial, it would become extremely popular and its success assured.

Its advantages over the man with the flag are incalculable. There are no false starts; there are no vexatious delays. A fractious horse is not beaten before the flag falls owing to his repeatedly breaking away—but really it is unnecessary to detail the advantages; they are too obvious. The main objections to its introduction were that it would frighten the horses; there would be dreadful accidents, etc. These objections were, however, soon silenced, even amongst a racing community where horses frequently only half broken in are sent out with the colours up, yet no serious accident that I am aware of has happened.

What would the result be in England, where so much care is taken in having a horse thoroughly broken in before he is allowed to face the starter? Why, all difficulties and all objections would, I feel convinced, vanish, and nothing but satisfaction would prevail. My experiences of racing and race-courses in Australia extend over a period of a quarter of a century, so I trust that I may be credited with knowing something of the subject upon which I am writing.

Since my return to England I have not had many opportunities of attending race meetings, but the few occasions permitted me, simply strengthen my argument. One day, at Epsom I think it was, the number of false starts were so frequent that the last race was started more than an hour behind time. With the Starting Gate such a thing would be next to impossible.

I cannot conclude this reference to the Starting Gate without relating a somewhat amusing episode at the trial of the machine at Sandown Park, Victoria. His Excellency the Governor, Lord Hopetoun, and all the leading racing authorities were invited, and the keenest interest was evinced. During the afternoon Lord Hopetoun expressed a wish to closely examine the machine and see it in operation, and I had the honour of accompanying him to the six-furlong post where it was erected.

Mr Scott, the inventor, was in charge, and came towards us as we approached, and I introduced him to his Excellency the Governor, who shook him warmly by the hand, and congratulated him upon the success of his invention. Mr Scott was all smiles, but made occasional and furtive glances at me as if something was amiss, and ere we wished him "Good-

day," quietly beckoned me on one side, and said, "I think you're a-havin' of me; that ain't the Guv'nor!" I assured him it was, and then rejoined his Excellency, and walked back to the stand, telling, as we went, the doubts expressed by Mr Scott as to his identity, at which he was highly amused. I am under the impression that good old Scott expected the Governor to wear some sort of uniform or a cocked hat when he inspected starting machines.

A good deal might be written of the celebrities I have met at Flemington, as at Cup time visitors flock from all parts of Australia, and English visitors of distinction have a free *entrée*—in fact, they are made the guests of the Victoria Racing Club—officers in the army or navy, *litterateurs*, war correspondents, *et hoc genus omne;* in fact, if a man is only introduced as a "friend from England," he is sure of a hearty welcome.

It has been my privilege to have been introduced to most of the celebrities visiting Flemington, but one little episode is pleasantly impressed upon my memory, owing to the eminent position and popularity subsequently attained by the celebrity in question. It was on the occasion of Lord Rosebery's visit to Flemington. A steeple-chase was about to be run, and I suggested to him that the top of the Grand Stand was the best place from which to view it. We accordingly climbed to the topmost seats, and he expressed himself as being delighted at having such a good view. During our chat I mentioned to him that I knew the Durdans at Epsom, and had seen Beeswing's grave. He remarked that it was somewhat of a coincidence that on his visit to Flemington—the Epsom of Australia—he should have been shown

round by a man whose schooldays were spent so near his English home.

The chief merit of making Flemington what it is to-day belongs to Robert Cooper Bagot, who was for many years Secretary to the V.R.C., and the title of "The Indefatigable" was never more deservedly bestowed upon any man. I frequently, while the Grand Stand was being built, made early pilgrimages to Flemington, and had breakfast under a tarpaulin with "Old Bags," as he was familiarly called, and watched the building from its very foundation.

Bagot was, by profession, an architect and surveyor, and the whole of the improvements were designed and carried out by him. The Grand Stand was irreverently termed the "cow-shed." Viewed at a distance, it appears to be a long, low building with no architectural pretensions whatever; but on closer inspection, especially when packed by a gaily-dressed crowd, it is far from being the ugly structure which a first impression might convey. One would imagine that "Old Bags" was building some kind of a fortification, so massive was the masonry, and so enormous were the girders; but he did not build for an age, he built for all time, and many and many a generation will pass away, but the Grand Stand at Flemington will remain.

Bagot, strange to say, was not a racing man. His racing critics called him a showman. I really think that he did not know the difference between a W.F.A. race and a handicap. All he wanted to see at Flemington was a crowd, and he knew how to manage one, and how to make provision for their comfort and convenience. He was never at rest; he had always some further plans for the extension of

the premises, and his whole heart and soul were bound up in Flemington.

He had, however, the enormous advantage of having associated with him men who did understand racing. I refer more especially to the late Captain Standish and Mr A. K. Finlay, who had for their coadjutors Messrs C. B. Fisher, Herbert, and Robert Power, A. W. Robertson, George Watson, W. Leonard, and others—good men and true, who all worked with a will to make Flemington what it is, and to raise the tone of the sport from mere leather flapping meetings to meetings with which a man might feel proud to have his name associated.

The Melbourne Cup, under this management, became the great racing event of the year, and the value of the added money rose from £300 in 1870 to £10,000 in 1890, making it at that time, I think I am right in saying, the richest handicap in the world. The entrance money and subscription did not then go to the funds of the club; it was divided between the first, second, and third, the absolute stake paid to the winner in 1890—Carbine's Cup—being £10,230.

One element which largely contributed to its almost world-wide popularity was the fact that Melbourne Cup Sweeps were established, and permitted by the authorities, the first promoter of these Sweeps being J. J. Miller. It became quite the fashion in these days to have a ticket in Miller's Sweeps; and from the Gulf of Carpentaria to Wilson's Promontory there was not a selector's hut or Bush-shanty but the occupants had an interest in a Melbourne Cup Sweep. The one aim in life of the young fellow from home, gaining Colonial experience on a sheep

or cattle station (he is called in the vernacular a "Jackaroo"), was to get leave to visit Melbourne at Cup time, and then back his fancy, and, win or lose, proceed to knock down his cheque as quickly as possible.

The business of the Sweep promoters became quite a gigantic affair; but in due time an anti-gambling crusade was inaugurated, and the Government of Victoria declared Sweeps illegal, with the result that the principal operations were transferred to Sydney,* and "Adams' Tattersalls' Sweeps" became quite a national institution. Money for tickets was forwarded from all parts—if I say of the world, it is scarcely an exaggeration—and as an evidence of the confidence reposed in George Adams, he has on many occasions held as much as £250,000 of public money. Little wonder, then, that the Cup became of world-wide interest.

In what is termed the "good old days," no sooner was the race decided, than books were opened on the next Melbourne Cup. Double-event betting has always been a favourite mode of speculation with Australians, and the V.R.C. Derby and Cup was the principal medium. Double-books on the Derby and

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* Tattersall, or, in other words, George Adams, and his Sweeps were also suppressed by the "unco guid" legislators of New South Wales, and he packed off to Queensland, where the same relentless fate pursued him. But little Tasmania welcomed him with open arms, and he was entrusted with the conduct of the lottery which the Tasmanian Parliament legalised for the distribution of the various properties which formed so large a portion of the assets of the Bank of Van Dieman's Land, and he has since become permanently located in the tight little island, and is permitted, on consideration of his depositing the sum of £10,000 with the Government, as a guarantee of good faith, to conduct his Sweeps unmolested.

Cup were started as soon as the entries were out, frequently before, and betting was brisk all through the winter.

The added money to the various events went up by leaps and bounds, until, as I have already stated, the amount added to the Melbourne Cup reached the colossal proportions of Ten Thousand Pounds. It does not seem much in these days, perhaps, to Englishmen, but when one takes into consideration the population of the Australian Colonies, it must be admitted that the racing-boom attained, for so small a community, somewhat phenomenal proportions. Sad to relate, with the collapse of the land-boom, the failure of the banks, and the general depression which subsequently followed, the turn of the tide affected most seriously the fortunes of the V.R.C., and a system of retrenchment was of necessity inaugurated, and the modest sum of £3000 forms the added money to the Melbourne Cup of 1897.

That the depression is but temporary, no one who has any idea of the recuperative powers of the Colonies will question. We went the pace a bit too strong, and we have now to "gang warily" for a year or two, and trust to the good time a-coming. Under the existing management I am convinced that the good time will come, because the experiences of the past will not be thrown away.

Under the able chairmanship of such an ardent supporter of the turf as Mr Septimus Miller, the fortunes of the club should soon revive, and marvellous Melbourne and famous Flemington should once again deserve the encomiums so lavishly bestowed upon them. Mr Miller is a member of the Miller family, whose colours are popular wherever

they go, and they go everywhere; you find their representatives competing for a £10,000 stake, and you find them contesting with as much zest and keenness for a £20 handicap. They race for sport, and the public back the colours with the full conviction of having a genuine run for their money. More's the pity that the turf in Australia has not many supporters of similar stamp.

The Victoria Racing Club was fortunate in securing, on the death of R. C. Bagot, a man of such all-round excellence as H. Byron Moore. He, like his predecessor, came in for a good deal of adverse criticism, as he was in no sense a racing man; but he was in every sense a gentleman, and by his uniform courtesy and unfailing attention to all with whom he was thrown in contact, soon silenced the murmurs of discontent, and is now, I verily believe, as popular and as well liked as his predecessor. May he live long to enjoy his popularity—he deserves it! I feel convinced that many of the English visitors who have been to Flemington will endorse my opinion of Byron Moore.

CHAPTER IV

THE Scratching Board, of which on the principal courses there are some two or three, is, I suppose, a thing almost unknown on English race-courses, but that it is a useful contrivance cannot be gainsaid. It is simply the programme for the day exhibited in prominent positions, displaying, instead of the horses' names, the numbers of those coloured on the card. Immediately a horse is officially scratched his number is taken down, or is made to disappear, and approximate estimates can be made of the strength of the various fields prior to the weighing-out and the hoisting of the numbers, which would be impossible under the English system.

Betting on Australian race-courses commences immediately the bookmakers arrive on the scene; they do not wait until the horses are weighed out and the numbers displayed. They, and the public too, have a pretty shrewd notion of how many runners there will be, the Scratching Board having given them a fairly good indication. Where double-event betting is not so freely indulged in, the necessity for this means of giving information may not be so essential; but, as I have already mentioned, double-event betting is extremely popular throughout Australia, and the punters, immediately they arrive

on a race-course, gather round the Scratching Board, compare notes, mark their cards, and then try and pick a double. "This and the next" is the prevailing cry of the penciller, or "The Two Handicaps," or "The Hurdle and Steeple I'll bet on," come from the stentorian lungs of many a score of double-event "Bookies," who, as a rule, flourish exceedingly. Your shrewd old-time punter is content to try and find one winner, but the odds against picking a double-event appear tempting, and the unwary fall into the trap, but they, nevertheless, come up smiling time after time, always hopeful, some day or another, of downing the "Bookie."

It may be interesting to English readers to know that there is scarcely a programme issued for a day's racing in the Colonies—I refer more particularly to Victoria—unless there is included amongst the various items a Hurdle Race and Steeple-chase, and this system, be it understood, prevails all the year round.

There are no Tattersall's Rings in Australia, as we understand the Ring in England, that is to say, there is no enclosure especially reserved for betting, where an extra charge for admission is made, but the trysting place is round about the Scratching Board, and it is here that backers and layers try conclusions.

The bookmakers, at least a great many of them, have their "pitch," and once a man has taken up a position he holds it for all time by a sort of unwritten law, which is universally respected. There are others, the double-eventers more particularly, who adopt the *rôle* of the roving commissioner, and dodge round here, there, and everywhere, attracting the attention of their clients by the noisiness of their invitation to "back a double." The position assigned for the transaction of betting is

on the majority of the courses most unsuitable, and should the starting-bell fail to ring, or should it be unheeded, betting occasionally takes place after the horses have passed the post, as it is impossible from the positions of the Ringmen to see one yard of the race, unless they leave their places and go on to the lawn in front of the Stands, where, usually, betting is prohibited.

This must sound strange to English ears, and is an innovation which I certainly cannot support, yet at the same time it is not altogether so absurd as it may appear, considering the general surroundings and arrangements which are usually found on the principal courses.

In England the bookmakers and betting are concentrated at certain points and within certain enclosures. If people do not care to rub shoulders with the "knights of the pencil," they are not obliged to do so, but when the "Bookie" is free to roam wherever he pleases, some restriction is, perhaps, desirable. But from a purely racing point of view the men who "lay" and the men who "take" should be in a position to see the race from flag-fall to winning post. Little wonder then that, as a rule, betting ceases when the race begins, for no one can see the course from the so-called Ring, and if the "Books" seek a position from whence they can get a view, they probably are not allowed to bet. They manage this part of the business better in England.

The Scratching Boards are of various designs; some are of the most primitive character, whilst others are quite ornamental, and their mechanism scientific. The most primitive constructions are simply huge black boards, upon which painted tin numbers are hung in

perpendicular lines, the different events being divided into first, second, or third race, as the case may be, according to the programme of the day.

On the principal courses they are much more elaborately constructed, that at Flemington being the most perfect and the most expensive also, this latter feature preventing its more universal adoption. It is worked by electricity and is patented by Messrs Gaunt and Haydon, the inventors. Its chief merit consists in the fact that no matter how many Scratching Boards there may be—they are all connected by electric wire—the number of the horse scratched disappears from all the Boards simultaneously, so that the whole crowd, no matter where located, are informed of the fact. Prior to the scratching, a bell rings to call attention to the fact that, in the parlance of the course, "Another one's gone!"

This Scratching Board business is, of course, but little known in England. It has its advantages nevertheless.

Another thing which must strike an English visitor to Australia is the moderate charges for admission which everywhere prevails. At Flemington, for instance, the cost of the journey by rail from Melbourne and admission to the Grand Stand is but thirteen shillings; beyond this there is one additional charge, viz. of half-a-crown for the saddling-paddock. The admission to the Grand Stand means that the visitor is free to roam at will over the lawns and terraces, mingle with the bookmakers, back his fancy, and then select a good seat to watch the racing. He can obtain first-class refreshments without being nearly crushed to death in his efforts

to obtain them, and a visit to Flemington on a race day can be indulged in by people who may have frugal minds, without taxing their pockets unduly.

The members' subscription is but five guineas per annum, and for this sum a member has the privilege of free admission to all meetings and extra tickets for two ladies. He can drive his own carriage into the enclosure, stalls are provided for his horses, tables under an awning for his luncheon, and every little want is attended to. Should he wish to travel by rail, the presentation of his ticket at the station enables him to go there and back free. Considering that there are some fourteen or fifteen days' racing per annum, a member, it must be admitted, gets good value for his money. The secret of the success of the system appears to me to be that race-course managers in Australia cater for the "masses" and not for the "classes." The propriety of the extension of this system is, I think, gradually dawning upon our English *confrères*.

With many of the legislative acts of the Committee of the V.R.C. I totally disagree. I don't wish for one moment to set up my individual opinion against the combined wisdom of the Committee, but I claim that, considering the position I have occupied for so many years, during which I have been in such close contact with the sporting community, my opinions are not altogether unworthy of consideration.

With the principle of licensing bookmakers, the Committee and I are somewhat in accord, but with their method of carrying out the system I find myself utterly at variance with them. The licensing system was, I presume, inaugurated for the purpose of estab-

lishing a control over the Ringmen, and to restrict the number of bookmakers who should be licensed to ply their vocation in the various enclosures. The policy adopted of late years by the V.R.C. seems to me to partake very largely of the principle that there is safety in numbers, or of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, in such a haphazard manner have the licenses been granted. I may be wrong, but I will, from my point of view, put a parallel case.

The licensing laws with regard to public-houses are applied with the manifold object: 1st, of seeing that the premises are suitable; 2nd, that the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a license; and 3rd, that the house is requisite for, and will not prove a nuisance to the neighbourhood. Now, I will ask with all deference, have similar ideas been uppermost in the minds of the Committee when applications from bookmakers for licenses have come before them? Has the question of demand and supply been considered? Has it ever occurred to the Committee that licensing bookmakers wholesale may be very detrimental to the true interests of sport? Is it fair to place them all on an equality? for the holder of a license, no matter how small his capital and how limited his experience, is placed upon a par with men who have worked their way to the front, and are what are termed "tried" men.

The illogical conclusions arrived at, by the thick and thin supporters of the licensing system, were that the competition created amongst the bookmakers would enable the public to get better prices. These arguments are fallacious and untenable, especially when applied to so small a racing

community. The genuine layer of the odds, if he is honest and knows his business, does his best to bet round—in other words, to bet to figures. How can he possibly do this when the floating capital of the betting public is of such a limited amount, and so many striving to get it? I don't advocate a monopoly, or the throwing the whole of the business into the hands of a few, but "fair trade" in this particular business is more likely to produce satisfactory results than "free trade." How would this system succeed if it were applied to public-houses? There may be a distinction but not much of a difference in this parallel, and the answer is not far to seek.

Before I left Australia, the general feeling was, that providing a man has respectable references and can pay the fee demanded, his application has not been refused. The question as to the desirability of increasing the number of Ringmen was not apparently considered at all. Consequently, we occasionally see more layers than backers in the paddock, at some of the smaller meetings, and no matter how industrious a man may be, he can, as I have already stated, rarely bet round.

There is not to my mind the slightest reason why the avocation of a bookmaker should be less reputable than that of a stockbroker; they are both the medium through which the speculating public speculate, but I unhesitatingly aver that the indiscriminate licensing of bookmakers by the V.R.C. Committee has brought about a condition of affairs that is not likely to advance the prosperity of the Turf in Australia.

These ideas were not formed yesterday, but are the

outcome of years of observation, and I did my best to impress them on the Committee, but without avail.

The same arguments hold good with regard to granting applications for holding meetings sent in by the various racing clubs. Although I was personally interested in one of the suburban courses, I did my best to check the evils of too much racing, by strongly urging that fewer fixtures should be granted to each and all of us, but the powers that be were too strong, and I was overruled. Perhaps the Committee thought that I had an axe of my own to grind; if they did think so, they were absolutely wrong, for, strange as it may appear for me to say so, I was honestly striving to bring about the greatest good for the greatest number. As matters at present stand, there are too many bookmakers and too much racing for such a limited community.

That the totalisator will be adopted in the near future is almost certain, and no matter how we may argue from a theoretical point of view in its favour, it has yet practically to be demonstrated that its introduction will be a good thing for racing. However, these are matters where local influences have such an important bearing, that what may be a good thing for racing in Tasmania, New Zealand, or South Australia, our smaller Colonies, it is highly questionable whether it would prove of equal benefit either in New South Wales or Victoria.

My reminiscences of Flemington would be incomplete without some reference to the steeple-chase course, which is, perhaps, the stiffest in the world, the obstacles being either stout timber fences, ranging from 4 feet 3 inches to close upon 5 feet in height, or massive

stone walls or log fences of equally formidable proportions.

The Grand National Course is 3 miles and 342 yards, yet, notwithstanding its formidable characteristics, so perfect are the Australian "leppers," that they encompass the distance, as a rule, under seven minutes. The fastest time I saw recorded was when Redleap, carrying the crushing impost of 13 st. 3 lbs., got over the distance in 6 minutes 45¼ seconds, a performance which is likely to stand as a record for many years to come.

In conclusion, a retrospect of my experiences and associations with Flemington are of the most pleasant character. I have received at all times the most courteous treatment from the Chairman of Committee down to the humblest gate-keeper. I have been granted privileges innumerable, which I have valued beyond measure, and I take the present as a fitting opportunity to publicly express my grateful thanks to the men who, through good report or evil report, in prosperity or adversity, have ever extended towards me the hand of friendship, and I trust that my comments on Flemington and its management will be accepted in that sportsman-like spirit which thrives apace under the genial skies of the sunny South.

SUBURBAN RACE-COURSES

SUBURBAN RACE-COURSES

CHAPTER I

MOONEE VALLEY AND CAULFIELD

IN the early seventies there were few race-courses other than Flemington in the neighbourhood of Melbourne, and the racing public were content with the meetings of the V.R.C. and occasional visits to up-country townships, such as Ballarat, Geelong, Warrnambool, Hamilton, Bendigo, and Kyneton, but as Melbourne expanded and the population increased, so did the love of sport, racing in particular, and race-courses, well laid out and properly appointed, sprung up in every direction.

At the time above referred to, early in the seventies, there were, besides Flemington, but two courses, viz. Croxton and Kensington Parks, which made any attempt to cater for the racing public of Melbourne, but they, in these days, would be regarded as very "small potatoes." The management was held in anything but high esteem, and occasionally some exciting scenes might be witnessed, when some flagrant case of pulling or roping took place. These courses, however, soon died a natural death, but the proprietor of the last-named place,

Kensington Park, old Sam Cox, moved a bit further on, and laid out a course at Moonee Valley, where everything was conducted strictly *en règle*, and fortune soon smiled upon him, and he made heaps of money.

The place, as its name implies, is situated in a valley, and the course, of a soup-plate pattern, is just about a mile round. Being within two miles of the Melbourne General Post-Office, it is easy of access, and the meetings at Moonee Valley are highly popular, excellent accommodation being provided for the public, and the best stables send horses to compete for the fairly liberal prizes offered for competition.

The Moonee Valley Cup is the *pièce de resistance* of the year, and is frequently productive of heavy betting, great public interest being always centred in it. The meeting is held just after the Caulfield Cup and prior to the Melbourne Cup, a time of year when the Sydney and Adelaide contingents are all located at headquarters, and the gathering of representative racing men in the stewards' enclosure on Cup Day partakes of quite an intercolonial character. I am referring thus early to Moonee Valley because it is simply Kensington Park under improved management, a new name, and a change of location, not that it is the principal suburban course by any means, for amongst suburban racecourses Caulfield stands *facile princeps*.

No one would recognise in the Caulfield of to-day the Caulfield I knew in 1873, when Don Juan won the Caulfield Cup. I am not quite sure whether it was called the Caulfield Cup or the Caulfield Handicap, but I remember perfectly well the race referred

to, because the same Don Juan afterwards won the Melbourne Cup for Joe Thompson.

Caulfield is now dubbed the "classic" heath; there was nothing classic about it in these days. A track had been cut on the heath, it is true, and it was marked out by whitewashed poles, and the run-in was protected on either side by a few panels of post and rail fencing. Cabs and vehicles of all sorts were ranged in line about the winning-post, and these formed the only "Stands" available.

I was invited to view the race from a drag, driven and owned by a Government official from the Lands Department, who, afterwards, I regret to say, "outran the constable," and subsequently did "time" for embezzling some thousands of Government money. He always represented that he had abundant private means, and the discovery of his frauds came as a great shock to a large circle of friends.

Caulfield of to-day is a most perfect race-course, and equipped down to the minutest detail, in every way equal to Flemington. It has the great advantage of a light, sandy soil, upon which couch grass flourishes amazingly, so that no matter what the weather, the going is always good.

The club—under whose management the course has expanded from the crude track I have referred to into the magnificent course that it now is—is called the Victoria Amateur Turf Club, and was founded by a few of the young bloods of those days to whom money was of little consideration, and to whom sport was everything. The original idea was to encourage amateur riding, and they selected Caulfield Heath, a Government reserve, as a fitting place whereon

to establish their headquarters. Applications were lodged at the Lands Office, and the necessary formalities being complied with, the lease was granted. The subscription to the club at its inception was fixed at, I think, fifty guineas per annum, and the boys of those days made things "hum."

More fearless or dashing riders than the Powers, the Penders, the Wilsons, the Chirnsides, the Inglis's, the Smiths, and many of that ilk, could not be found anywhere. A good, jovial, genial Irishman, E. C. Moore, was their first secretary, but he, like a number of good men who have gone before him, could not face adversity, and when fortune frowned on him, he sent in his resignation by putting a bullet through his brain. Tom Fenner succeeded him, but whilst he was a thorough judge of racing, he was not a good administrator, and Bagot was called in to assist in putting matters right, and Fenner resigned. It was during this interregnum that poor old Bagot died, and N. R. D. Bond, who was then sporting editor of the *Leader*, was appointed to the position.

Under this *régime* Caulfield emerged from all its troubles, and the Caulfield Cup is now as much talked about, and has obtained a prominence little inferior to that of the Melbourne Cup. It is run about three weeks prior to the big race, and the distance being half a mile shorter, a pretty good idea of the form of the various stables can be gleaned, and backers generally get a good line as to what to plunge upon in the Melbourne Cup. The winner at Caulfield is heavily penalised, and I don't think since its establishment any horse ever won the two Cups, Caulfield and Melbourne.

There was one animal which ought to have won

both, and that was Grace Darling. But owing to her rider being over-confident, or making his run a bit too late, she just missed pulling off the double, being beaten by Sheet Anchor. Her owner and trainer, Josh Duffett, who was, by the way, a duly qualified veterinary surgeon, and the son of one of Melbourne's most respected solicitors, never seemed to get over the disappointment, and, poor fellow, was one day found in an outhouse with his brains blown out.

Poor old Secretary Bond fell into bad health, and died a few years ago. He was a courteous, genial sportsman of the old school, and his death was greatly regretted. Bluff Harrie Smith succeeded Bond, and skilfully piloted the club along its prosperous career until the old Scythe-man gathered him in. Although rough and rude of speech, he was in reality a kind-hearted fellow. It is somewhat strange that death should have been so busy in the ranks of the Caulfield Secretaries. It is to be hoped, however, that there will now be a long interregnum, and that the present occupant of the office, Tom Moule, will live to establish a "record reign."

Caulfield has been the scene of great gaiety, but terrible accidents have on more than one occasion marred its otherwise brilliant career. During the visit to Melbourne of the two young Princes, the late Duke of Clarence and the present Duke of York, the Caulfield Club had the distinguished honour of entertaining them, and there was an enormous crowd present, anxious to get a look at our future king. Vice-royalty is generally represented at the various meetings, and Society is always largely *en evidence.*

The surroundings at Caulfield are much pleasanter and much more picturesque than at Flemington. The

drive from town takes you through the wealthy suburbs of South Yarra and Toorak, and stately mansions and beautifully kept gardens are dotted pretty plentifully along the whole route, and round about the course itself. The enclosures and Stands are not of the magnitude of Flemington, but they are, if anything, much prettier and more artistic in their construction. The nature of the soil also is of such a character that trees, shrubs, and flowers thrive splendidly, the lawns being like velvet-pile carpet, and Caulfield on a nice cool day in spring is simply charming.

When a description of one of the leading race-courses in Australia is penned, the remarks apply with equal force to nearly all the others. The same routine is adopted, the same provision made for the comfort and convenience of the public, and the same attention to the smallest detail is everywhere observable.

I have referred to my first visit to Caulfield in 1873, when the heath was in a state of nature, and everything connected with the Annual Race Meeting was primitive in the extreme. This condition of affairs continued to exist for some few years, but in 1881 the first Caulfield Cup, under the management of the V.A.T.C., was run, and its prestige and importance dates from that particular year. I have never missed seeing the Cup from its inauguration to that won by Paris in 1894. There have been some sensational Cups run in these years, the sensations being brought about by various causes.

The first rather startling episode was in 1881, Master Avenel's year, when ninety-nine out of every hundred men were convinced that the wrong number was hoisted, but the judge was positive, and there

was, of course, no appeal. Old Tom Ivory, the owner of Master Avenel, was as much surprised as most people, but the followers of the stable of Tommy Jones were not so amiably disposed, for they asseverated in rather forcible language that their horse Woodlands unmistakably got home. There was a bit of a rumpus, and the amateur judge did not officiate again.

Another Cup episode which partook of the tragical order was in 1885, when a horse named Too Too fell at the turn into the straight, and brought fifteen others to grief.

The scene that followed can more readily be imagined than described. For a time a perfect panic prevailed, as riderless horses, some almost mad with fear, and others maimed and limping, passed the Stand. Women shrieked and fainted, as one after another the injured jockeys were carried, some insensible, and some with broken limbs, to the casualty-room, and the extent of the calamity could not be gauged for some time. However, plenty of medical assistance was at hand, but when the roll was called, one poor lad, Donald Nicholson, failed to answer the summons. He was killed outright. He was one of our best light-weights, was a respectable and a much respected jockey, and his death cast a gloom over the subsequent proceedings, which, unfortunately, did not interest him any more.

I don't suppose such a disaster on a race-course has ever before or since been witnessed. The jockeys and horses were hurled hither and thither in appalling confusion, and it was many months before the injured boys were able to ride again, and certainly many of the horses never raced afterwards. One of the

lads named Trahan had a marvellous escape. He was riding a horse called Claptrap, and was one of the first to come to grief; he, however, managed to emerge from the fray uninjured, and was able to ride and win the last race of the day on a horse named Merrimu, belonging to the same owner, Mr John Whittingham. It was as much as they could do to get Claptrap to his box, the poor brute was so terribly knocked about. This horse was backed for a big stake, and looked like coming home a winner, when the accident occurred. In the opinion, however, of a great number of people, the result of the race would have been the same, Grace Darling's subsequent running in the Melbourne Cup greatly supporting this view.

There was some talk at the time about the turn into the straight being dangerous, etc., but, personally, I don't think it had anything to do with the accident, for with big fields, and with so many jockeys adopting the questionable tactics of hugging the rails, I have often wondered that accidents are not more rife; the slightest stumble, or a bump may bring a field to grief at any moment.

It might not be out of place to mention here that the average number of starters for the Caulfield and Melbourne Cups is between thirty and forty. In this particular race forty-one horses faced the starter, so when it is considered that these races are run on oval or pear-shaped courses, the risk of accidents such as I have attempted to describe is quite manifest.

In 1886 the Cup was won by a horse—I refer to Ben Bolt—whose chances of success were considered very remote by a big section of the Ring and the public

too, but his trainer, Kelly, and a few friends of the stable were quietly confident, and by his victory netted a good stake. He was voted as big as a bullock, and if he won he was to be eaten, hoofs and all, by some of the "Bookies," who were never tired of laying against him. It was, however, an expensive prejudice, and many of them rued the day that they took liberties with Ben Bolt.

A horse, now in England, called Paris III., distinguished himself by winning the Cup twice, in '92 and '94, carrying on the last occasion the very respectable impost of 9 st. 4 lbs. He subsequently ran fifth in the Melbourne Cup of the same year, carrying 9 st. 12 lbs., and the going was particularly heavy. This, it must be admitted, was a great performance.

CHAPTER II

CAULFIELD—*continued*

ONE of the greatest *cause celebre* in connection with a Caulfield Cup was so recent as 1893, and will always be known as "Tim Swiveller's Cup," although his owner, the late Hon. George Davis, did not get it, and I, personally, think he had no right to get it. There are many of my Australian friends will join issue with me on this point, but I expressed this opinion immediately the horses passed the post, and I have never had reason to change it.

To briefly describe the imbroglio: As the field rounded the turn for home, and when within a hundred yards from the winning-post it seemed as if the finish would be fought out by two horses, Oxide and Sanfoin, when all of a sudden Tim Swiveller came with a tremendous rush on the outside and swerved right on to Oxide, who in turn cannoned against Sanfoin. Had this collision not occurred, I am firmly convinced Oxide would have won. As it was, Tim Swiveller passed the post first, Sanfoin second, and Oxide third. So patent and palpable was the cross, that I turned round to a friend alongside me, and said: "By Jove, there will certainly be a protest!" and sure enough, when the horses returned to the weighing enclosure, a protest was duly lodged by the owner of Sanfoin, which, after a lengthy

enquiry, was dismissed. However, according to the Rules of Racing, the aggrieved parties had the right of appeal to the Committee of the V.R.C., and of this right they speedily availed themselves, with the result that the ruling of the Caulfield stewards was upset, and the race awarded to Sanfoin, who ran second.

This question of over-riding the ruling of the stewards on a matter of fact was very adversely commented upon at the time, the argument being that the intention of the rule regulating appeals was, that moot points as to the interpretation of racing law should be remitted to a final tribunal, but that questions of fact should not be so relegated, but that the decisions of stewards in all such matters should be final.

To thoroughly understand the awkward predicament and the subsequent friction which arose, it must be borne in mind that the stewards of Caulfield are gentlemen of high position — men of experience, many of whom have both owned and ridden race-horses, and they naturally were much incensed at the rather serious snub which the Committee of the V.R.C. thus administered. I don't think they have quite got over it to this day. My opinion is that they were wrong to start with; their own eyesight, if they were watching the race carefully, should have been sufficient for them to have dealt with the case on its merits, but, as usual, evidence was called. My views about evidence have been expressed elsewhere.

Since writing the above, I notice in the Australian papers that another *casus belli* has arisen between the two clubs, and I fear the breach is likely to be further widened, which is a pity. It appears that a

jockey named Hayes was disqualified or suspended for some cause or another, and that the V.R.C. had drafted a regulation, making it compulsory for a disqualified or suspended jockey to re-apply for his license at the expiration of his term of disqualification. This rule, it appears, although drafted, had not been actually adopted by the club, and when Hayes presented himself at the scales at Caulfield to be weighed out, the stewards present, although fully aware of the proposed new rule, did not consider they legally had the power to refuse Hayes permission to ride, his term of suspension having expired. This led to some rather injudicious criticisms in a portion of the press, insinuating that the Caulfield stewards had deliberately and intentionally cast a slight upon the paramount authority, viz. the Committee of the V.R.C. The tone of the criticisms was of a somewhat obnoxious style, which the stewards resented, and the offending papers had to back down. Whilst it is highly desirable to cultivate and foster a spirit of friendly rivalry, it is equally essential that the fomenting of discord should be discouraged, and one always feels a certain amount of regret when a high-class journal has to sing *peccavi*.

With all its brilliant gatherings, with all its hospitality, with all its pleasurable excitements, Caulfield is associated with a melancholy interest which I cannot altogether discard, inasmuch as it was at Caulfield my little friend, Tommy Corrigan, met his death. He was riding a horse called Waiter in a steeple-chase. The horse was infirm, but Tom had promised to ride him, and he never went back on his word, and the result was fatal.

A few words about Tommy Corrigan may not here be out of place. He was one of the best, if not the best, cross-country riders of his day; I doubt if in England there is his equal: I am confident there is not his superior. He was only a little chap, but was very strong; a horse had to rap a fence pretty hard before it unseated him, and I have seen him manage some nasty brutes who would run down their fences and jump any panel but the one they were put to. Add to the fact of his being a most accomplished horseman his unfailing good temper, his merry smile, and an honest career, it will not be a matter for surprise to read of his great popularity. His funeral was a most extraordinary spectacle, the route along which the *cortège* passed being lined with crowds of people: a stranger would have imagined that the remains of some great Warrior or Statesman were being conveyed to the grave. The procession of carriages extended over a mile in length, and poor Tom was followed to his last resting-place by all the leading racing authorities, from Chairmen of Committees down to mere stable lads, amongst all of whom he was greatly respected and admired.

Tommy Corrigan was an institution; the first query backers would make on their arrival at a race-course would be, "What's Corrigan riding?" Having satisfied themselves on this point, no further enquiry was necessary—they straightway went and backed his mount. I have frequently heard the suggestion made, "Why not put Corrigan up?" "My dear fellow, I should be only too glad to put him up, but I should get no price about my horse; the public will follow Tom's mounts," would be the reply.

Corrigan's greatest successes were achieved when

he rode for the big Irishman, as his patron, Martin Loughlin, was called; and the combination of Martin Loughlin, owner, Tommy Wilson, the trainer, and Corrigan, rider, was well-nigh invincible, and many were the good things this Ballarat trio brought off. But during the later years of his life Corrigan settled at Caulfield, having previously got married, and started training on his own account.

I had an interest in a steeple-chaser called Peter Osbeck, a horse imported from New Zealand, where he had won a few good races. Peter Osbeck was very much out of condition when I placed him with Tom, who suggested a long spell, so as to build him up a bit. I put myself unreservedly in Tom's hands, and Peter under his care improved beyond our expectations. He was duly entered for the Grand National Steeple-chase, and being trained upon a public course, the usual thing occurred—his gallops and condition were noted, and the public sneaked their money on Corrigan's mount. We had one or two trials in which the old grey displayed wonderful form, and when the weights came out, Corrigan was confident he would win, not only the Flemington, but the Caulfield Grand National too. "He's a second Lone Hand, sir, and I never in all my experiences knew a horse 'come on' as he has done, but I think we'll give him one more go over the big fences before the day. You ask Mr Willie Power if he will let old Flashlight have a trial with him." I broached the subject to Mr Power, who readily consented, as he said, "If Peter is better than the old horse, he must have a great chance."

In due course the trial took place at Elsternwick Park. What a pace they did go, and how they did jump! Mr Power remarked to me, "I say, old man, this isn't

steeple-chasing; this is Melbourne Cup form." "Yes," I replied, "but my luck is just now so bad I fully expect Peter to fall and break his neck." The words had scarcely passed my lips when we noticed Tom take a pull at his horse, and I remarked, "By Jove! something's up!" and we ran over to find out the cause. By this time Corrigan had dismounted, but before we reached him Peter reared up and fell back —dead. Corrigan was bespattered with blood, and a more down-hearted, miserable group never stood by a poor dead beast than that which we presented on this, to me, memorable occasion. It seems the horse, being very fresh, overjumped himself, broke a blood-vessel, and choked. It was a bitter disappointment to us all, but poor Tom felt it more keenly than any of us, as he reckoned upon making a little fortune with Peter.

I became very much attached to Corrigan, and I felt, when I accompanied Dr, now Sir Thomas, Fitzgerald to the casualty-room on the occasion of his fatal accident at Caulfield, an overwhelming sense of sorrow when, from the doctor's diagnosis, I was convinced Tom had had his last ride. Exit Corrigan.

A subscription was at once started for Tom's widow and children; a benefit race-meeting organised, and an art union arranged. Money came flowing in from all quarters, enabling the Committee entrusted with the management of the fund to invest a considerable sum for the benefit of Mrs Corrigan and her two little children.

The foregoing pages form my reminiscences of Caulfield, truly a mixture of grave and gay.

CHAPTER III

ELSTERNWICK PARK

I THINK it was early in the eighties that a few trotting enthusiasts met together and founded the Victoria Trotting Club, and they, after casting about for a site for some time, at last fixed upon the Elsternwick Swamp, a piece of waste land belonging to the Crown, which they leased from the Government for a period of ten years. The lease was granted upon the condition that the swamp should be reclaimed; that the public should have free access to the enclosure at all times, save and excepting so many days in the year when trotting or racing meetings were being held; footpaths should be made across it and maintained in good order, and the place should be beautified by tree-planting, etc. The rent was to be of almost a peppercorn character, and what was so paid should go to the Borough of Brighton, in which district the land was situated. Providing that these conditions were faithfully fulfilled, there would be no difficulty in securing a renewal of the lease; so said the then Minister of Lands.

These conditions were accepted and carried out by the club with the utmost good faith. Fully ten thou-

sand pounds were spent in reclaiming the swamp and forming it into a park, which in due time became an ornament to the neighbourhood and a most attractive pleasure-ground; but because two or three "goody-goodies," backed up by a Member of Parliament, of "high tone," objected to the traffic on race-days temporarily interfering with their comfort and convenience—they resented these "racing people" coming "betwixt the wind and their nobility"—they, in most intemperate language, opposed the renewal of the lease, and, shameful to relate, were successful in so doing, and the Park has now been dismantled and is fast returning to its original condition—a swamp.

Never was a grosser breach of faith perpetrated by any Minister of the Crown. Petitions to the Minister of Lands, largely signed by the immediate residents in the locality in favour of the lease being renewed, were presented and supported by members of both Houses of Parliament, but all their arguments were ignored, and the mysterious influence of the one member in opposition prevailed. Not content with having gained their point, the aggressors further harassed the club by raising objections to the caterer being granted the customary license to sell wines and spirits; here again they were successful. Their opposition was universally condemned, but by straining every legal point and insisting on the letter, not the spirit, of the law being carried out, they triumphed, with the result that the club had to shift its quarters, and leave but "a wreck behind."

The intentions of the early promoters, as the name of the club implies, was to foster the sport of trotting, and the course—a perfect oval exactly a mile round—

was laid out in most approved American fashion; the turns were graded, and a more perfect track was never constructed. This track was kept in order by a most ponderous and expensive track-making machine imported from the United States, and no stone was left unturned to bring the course and its surroundings up to date, and everything bid fair for a successful career, but whilst a very large percentage of Australians are fond of a good buggy horse which can "hurry up a bit" when wanted, trotting as a sport did not take on. The club's funds were exhausted, and the directors became each personally liable for an over-draft at the Bank for some £3000, the original capital of £5000 not being sufficient for converting this swamp into a decent racing track and the building of Stands and other accessories.

It was at this particular juncture in the career of the club that I was appointed secretary, and my instructions were to get the club out of debt by hook or by crook. The undertaking at the time did not look over-promising, but, backed up by the directors in no half-hearted manner, the almost hopeless task was accomplished. Not the acclimatising of the sport of trotting, be it understood, but the paying off the debt, and, above all, returning to the shareholders their capital in full.

All this was not done without some considerable difficulty. In pursuing the very laudable ambition of endeavouring to bring the sport of trotting up to the American standard, and thereby improving the buggy horse or roadster, the directors were getting further and further into debt. The meetings were poorly patronised, and the sport languished. The occasional introduction of a horse-race did not much improve

matters, as the course, being absolutely devoid of grass, was cut up dreadfully by the gallopers; it became almost a quagmire in wet weather, and in mid-summer the dust was blinding.

The crucial question had at last to be put. Were the directors willing to sacrifice so much per annum in bolstering up a sport which the public did not patronise? "Certainly not," they said. "We want to get out of debt, and we want our guarantees back." "Well, then," I rejoined, "if the public won't take on to trotting, let us introduce horse-racing, hurdle-racing, and steeple-chasing." "Do as you like, Mr Secretary, only get us out of debt," was the reply.

From that time forth the track-making machine was discarded, couch grass was planted, and the course gradually became like a carpet. Race-horse-owners liberally supported the meetings, large entries always being forthcoming for the various events, and trotting had to take, metaphorically speaking, a back seat; one, sometimes perhaps two, events in the programme being all that would be allotted to trotters and pacers. This change of front went very much against the grain of the trotting enthusiasts. They could not possibly make "record time" on grass; it would not be worth while to keep horses in training; and a thousand and one objections had to be overcome before the commercial aspect of the case would be accepted.

A steeple-chase course was, however, soon laid out; mud walls, post and rail and log fences formed the obstacles, eight jumps having to be negotiated in "once round." The quality of the competitors, both in flat races and "over the sticks," was of the highest class, the principal stables always sending repre-

sentatives, and from being a place but poorly patronised, the visitors at the various meetings in a very short time could be reckoned up at thousands. Additional Stand accommodation had to be provided, and the management, trusting to the good faith of the Government in the matter of the renewal of the lease, spent money most lavishly. Beautiful buffalo grass lawns, ornamental shrubberies, and flower-beds were planted, and, like the Rosherville of old, Elsternwick became the "place to spend a happy day." Vice-royalty could frequently be counted amongst its patrons, and visitors of distinction were entertained with the same cordial hospitality as prevailed at headquarters. Valuable trophies were given, and there was a go and aplomb about the meetings which rendered them particularly enjoyable, and there was general regret expressed when the unjust ukase went forth, and the place was doomed.

As upon other race-courses, there were occasionally "scenes," and the rowdy element—if anything occurred not to their liking in a race, or if they had backed a supposed "stiff 'un," and had not got a run for their money—made the air resound with cries of "Rub 'im out," and, strange to say, they would occasionally suggest to "Run it over again." These eccentricities were not by any means confined to Elsternwick, but were indulged in at nearly every suburban course in the early days. During later years, I think, however, the "outside fringe" has become more civilised, and less rowdyism now takes place.

On one particular occasion, however, matters assumed rather a serious aspect, one indignant outsider suggesting that the "bloomin' place ought to be pulled deown." The reason for this proposed act of

Vandalism was a decision given by the judge which did not please the said outsider, nor, strange to say, any one else. It was one of those unaccountable things for which explanation seems impossible. The judge was a man of very great experience, and no one ever questioned his honour or integrity in the slightest degree. But, singular to relate, in this particular race, where there were but four or five runners, the number of a horse was hoisted which, in the opinion of everybody—at least, I never heard any one express a contrary opinion—did not even get a place.

Every one thought it was an error which would be promptly rectified, and the judge was interviewed by the stewards to give him an opportunity of amending his, to their ideas, palpable mistake. But he maintained that his judgment was correct, and refused to alter his verdict. The anger of the crowd was somewhat bitter, and it was thought desirable that the judge should go home under friendly escort to protect him from probable violence. I mention this case as it is one of those occurrences which no "fellah" can understand.

In contradistinction to this turbulent scene may be mentioned the incident when Mr Ernest Benzon, the Jubilee Plunger, was in Australia. He was most anxious to have a ride, and offered to present a Silver Cup, if I could get a race for amateur or gentlemen riders inserted in the programme. This I managed to do. The next thing, however, was to get him a mount. After making enquiries amongst my friends, I at last persuaded one to enter a horse, and let Mr Benzon ride.

I shall never forget on the day of the race the childish glee with which he donned the black jacket,

gold seams, and cap. He was dressed some time before it was necessary to weigh out, and was rehearsing his ride and demonstrating to every one he met how he would just "diddle" the favourite on the post.

Before mounting, Mr Benzon was implicitly warned that the horse was short of a gallop or two, and that his only chance of winning was to ride a waiting race, and not to attempt to come to the front until well round the turn for home. To all these instructions he listened most attentively, and promised strict compliance. He was heartily cheered when he took his preliminary canter, and seemed thoroughly at home with his mount.

I formed one of a group of three to watch the race, my two companions being the owner and trainer of the horse Benzon was riding. After one or two false starts, in which he was always prominent, down goes the flag and away goes Benzon. Before he had gone a quarter of a mile—it was a six-furlong race—he was leading by some lengths, and riding as if "Black care sat behind the horseman." The comments of my friend and his trainer were not complimentary to the Plunger. "Look at the fool," said the trainer; "he's doing the very opposite to what I told him. He'll ruin the horse and he'll come in last," a position which assuredly he did occupy. Derisive cheers this time greeted Mr Benzon, and one "Bookie" shouted, "I'll take a hundred to five he falls off!" "Oh, hang it!" said another, "he won't fall off; I'll lay you." But poor Benzon was so done up with his ride, that on pulling up, just past the Stand, he overbalanced himself, and down he went. He took his mishap with the greatest good humour, but I don't think I ever heard such a

shout of laughter as when the poor Plunger kissed Mother Earth.

The late Sir William Clarke travelled to England by the same steamer when Benzon returned home, and he told me he found him a most agreeable and lively fellow passenger, but a great disappointment befell Benzon as he neared Plymouth Harbour. He had, it appears, telegraphed for a steam-launch to put off to meet the mail-steamer, so that he could proceed to London with as little delay as possible, but the Court of Chancery, of which he was a ward, had been advised of his escapades in Australia, and two officers were deputed to meet the boat and take Mr Benzon ashore—but not to London.

The steam-launch first to come alongside the P. and O. liner contained these officers, Benzon's boat following closely in its wake. Benzon was on deck, all his luggage ready to be transhipped, when two highly respectable-looking men boarded the vessel, and requested the pleasure of Mr Benzon's company to some island off the coast of Cornwall. He was a bit nonplussed at this contretemps, but putting out his hand, said to Sir William Clarke, who was standing by, "Only beaten by a head, Sir William, after all. Good-bye."

One of the trophies which formed an attractive item in the programme on one occasion at Elsternwick Park was the valuable Hopbitters Cup, presented by Mr Van Bergh, the agent for the American Hopbitters Company. This trophy was handed to the owner of the winner by Colonel Morgan, the then American Consul in Melbourne, who in so doing made a most humorous speech, in which he dilated at length on the marvellous merits

of these wonderful bitters. "It would cure," said he, in conclusion, "all the ills that flesh is heir to, and so powerful is it that, if properly applied, it would make hair grow on a stove-pipe."

The chairman of the club, Stratford Strettle, and Colonel Morgan were once interested in a wonderful pony which could break three-minute time. The Colonel called it "Whisky," because, he said, it went so fast. This pony was put into training, and duly entered for a trotting event, which all connected with him said he could not possibly lose. He was backed for a considerable sum of money, and duly came in first for the race, and hearty congratulations were exchanged right round; but the driver had, wilfully or accidentally, dropped his lead bag, and could not therefore draw his weight, and Whisky was ruled out. It was the very general impression that the Colonel and his friends had been got at.

Amongst the greatest of the trotting enthusiasts, if one may call a little man great, was Mr J. J. Miller, who imported, at considerable expense, some of the best blood from America, and he certainly did everything in his power to popularise the sport; and although success did not immediately crown his efforts, there can be but little doubt that the infusion of the blood of such sires as Honesty and Contractor (Mr Miller's importations), with well bred mares, will have a marked effect in years to come on the style and pace of the Australian buggy horse, and Jimmy Miller's name will always be honourably associated with this enterprise.

The docility of the American trotting horse is remarkable, and this characteristic seems to be transmitted to their progeny in a most pronounced

degree, rendering them well-mannered and perfect roadsters.

I remember paying a visit to Mr Miller's stud-farm with a friend who wanted a quiet horse for his wife to drive. After being shown round the stud, we selected a beautiful pony, a rare mover, for which he gave two hundred and fifty pounds; but there was another animal in the stable which took my friend's eye, and which he was determined to purchase before leaving. It was an imported grey mare called Lucretia. Mr Miller was not at all anxious to sell her, but the price offered—eight hundred guineas—tempted him, and he let her go. She was one of the most beautiful animals that could be seen in a day's march; a fine, upstanding mare, full of quality, and such a goer. She was then in training, and it was agreed that she should fulfil her engagements before being driven in my friend's buggy; but, strange to relate, although backed on more than one occasion for pounds, shillings, and pence, I don't think Lucretia ever won a race in Australia. That visit to Mr Miller's stud made a hole in my friend's pocket to the tune of some nine or ten thousand pounds.

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CHAPTER IV

WILLIAMSTOWN, MENTONE, SANDOWN PARK, MORDIALLOC, ASPENDALE, MARIBYRNONG

ONE of the best appointed of the suburban courses, save and excepting Caulfield, is undoubtedly Epsom. It is situated near the favourite seaside township of Mordialloc, and formerly belonged to a young fellow named Jenkins, who made a good deal of money during the land boom; and he spent a little fortune in laying out and equipping Epsom.

Jenkins was of that sanguine temperament which never contemplates failure, and his ideas were that his course would attract people in their thousands. If the building of a magnificent Stand, with its Governor's rooms, ladies' tea-rooms, and other etceteras, would attract, he surely left nothing undone in that direction. Money, apparently, was of no object to him, and the thousands he spent suggested the idea that he had sojourned for a time in that mystic country known as "Tom Tiddler's Ground."

During the progress of building operations I occasionally visited the place, and remarked to Jenkins that it would take a little fortune to paint the wood and iron work alone, and I ventured the query as to how often he expected the Stand, which

was large enough to accommodate some thousa[illegible] of people, to be filled? His notion was that [illegible] consummation of his day-dreams would frequen[illegible] be accomplished. He was, however, doomed to b[illegible] disappointment, for no sooner was the place ope[illegible] for racing than the disastrous collapse of the la[illegible] boom occurred, and, sad to relate, [illegible] was travelling His case was only one of many.

Epsom is a most perfect race-course, be[illegible] reached a light, sandy soil; couch and buffalo grass co[illegible] station-track and enclosures, and the going is at all[illegible] e line excellent. It is now under the management [illegible] a-my friend, George Mayger, and in these days [illegible] t. Australian depression just about holds its own. [illegible]

Mentone Race-course is another of the product of the land boom. It was purchased and laid out by a syndicate, and is similarly, but not so expensively fitted out as Epsom. It is situated in the same locality, and has the advantage of excellent going in all weathers.

Sandown Park, another really beautiful place, was laid out by a Mr Cullen, who had made a considerable sum of money out of a pony race-course at Brighton, but, his lease running out, he had to shift farther afield, and he certainly fixed upon a most beautiful site for his new venture. Here, again, money was spent in a most prodigal manner. The ground was rather heavily timbered, and the expense of clearing it alone must have been enormous, but a beautiful course, close upon a mile and a half round, was laid out, Stands and all necessary conveniences erected, a special railway-siding constructed, trees, shrubs, and flowers were liberally planted, and Sandown is really a delightful place. The scenery adjacent is more

than usually good, the Dandenong range of mountains forming an interesting feature in the landscape.

Misfortune, however, overtook Mr Cullen, and the Victoria Trotting Club became the proprietors of Sandown Park—it was called in Mr Cullen's time Oakleigh Park. But the turn of the tide had set in, and no more capital being available, the club had to liquidate, and the course now belongs to Messrs Henry Skinner and David Boyd. I may repeat here that the original capital was returned to the shareholders on quitting Elsternwick, and they declined to subscribe again.

It must seem odd to people who were not in Australia at the time—this craze for building race-courses—and it can only be explained by the fact that the success attained by both the Moonee Valley and Elsternwick courses fired the ambition of speculators, who wished to share in the supposed good things.

Other courses were also laid out at Mordialloc, Aspendale, and Maribyrnong, the former being managed by Mr Bradshaw, or "Braddy," as he was generally called. "Braddy" was a journalist of no mean ability, but had a sort of bee in his bonnet, which seemed to urge upon him the maxim that life was not worth living unless one kept a race-horse. Well, to a man not overburdened with this world's riches, the keeping a race-horse can be no joke, but the story is told of "Braddy," when he lived up-country, that he absolutely kept one in his kitchen, no stable accommodation being available at the quarters assigned him by the Government; he was then postmaster in a little up-country township.

I met "Braddy" in the seventies, when he first came

to Melbourne, and mainly through the kindly offices of a mutual friend, he obtained an appointment on a Melbourne newspaper. He made a fairly good position, but was unfortunately smashed up in a terrible railway accident near the Werribee.

The line between Werribee and Geelong is a single one, and the train in which "Braddy" was travelling was coming from the latter place, and had reached a station, called the Little River, safely; the station-master had telegraphed Werribee to know if the line was clear, and having received a reply in the affirmative, had given the signal for the train to start. Some unaccountable blunder, however, occurred. The message should have been sent "Line not clear," for, as a matter of fact, a train had only just left Werribee for Little River. The two trains met, fortunately not travelling at full speed, and how any of the passengers escaped is a mystery. I don't remember how many were killed, but "Braddy" managed to get off with a terrible shaking and some injury to his spine. He brought an action against the Railway Department, and his woebegone and delapidated appearance in the witness-box, and the tale of his sufferings touched the hearts of the jury, with the result that "Braddy" was awarded a considerable sum in damages. His condition and appearance before and after the verdict presented a remarkable contrast.

"Braddy" was very near-sighted, but has at times been pressed into the service as Starter at some of the country meetings, and they do say that he has used strong language at the Starting Post to the mounted trooper and Clerk of the Course because they would not come into line.

"Braddy's" experiences by flood and field have been of the most diversified character; he was nearly annihilated in the railway accident referred to; and a few years ago he had, owing to a very heavy flood, to be rescued in a boat from a loft to which he had to retreat to avoid being drowned, and where he had spent some time without food.

The last time I saw him was in the Melbourne Hospital with a broken leg, having been thrown out of a dray in which was a large iron tank—the said tank falling on "Braddy" and pinning him down. He was some hours in this predicament before assistance arrived, the accident having occurred on a bush track very little frequented. On the occasion of my visit to the Hospital he was, however, all smiles—said it might have been worse, spoke gratefully of the doctors' and nurses' attentions, and not one word of repining at his cruel fate.

An extraordinary character is "Braddy"; he, however, nearly got into trouble with the V.R.C. authorities once by resorting to a little bit of dodgery to enable him to evade one of their rules. It was in this wise: The Rule laid down that a certain sum of money, some £300, I think, must be given in stakes for any one day's racing. Bradshaw's race-course was a bit out of the way, and rather difficult of approach, and the public patronage was not sufficiently bountiful to enable "Braddy" to comply with the rule and yet make a profit. He therefore included in his programme a Produce Stake of some £200 for colts and fillies, the produce of a horse of his own named Sinking Fund. As no one but "Braddy" used Sinking Fund for stud purposes, it naturally followed that this stake would never be

competed for by any one but Mr Bradshaw, as Sinking Fund did not acquire very great distinction on the turf, and the whole thing would become a paper transaction. I think, under friendly advice, this item in due course disappeared from the Mordialloc programme.

Aspendale is a bijou race-course in the same district as Mentone, Epsom, and Mordialloc. It is situated in the thick ti-tree scrub which here abounds, is not quite a mile in circumference, and is covered with a perfect carpet of buffalo grass. Compared with its neighbours, it is all neatness and simplicity. The proprietor, Bob Crooke, is a man of modest tastes and moderate ambition. The Grand Stand and all the necessary offices are compact, and fulfil all needful requirements, and no pleasanter outing can be wished for, especially in early spring, when the ti-tree and wattles are in bloom, than a visit to the Aspendale Park Races.

The name given to the Park serves to perpetuate one of Mr Crooke's many successes on the turf, when he was a partner of Mr John Whittingham's, and managed his stud, as he, two years in succession, won the principal sprint race of the year—the Newmarket Handicap, with a mare called Aspen.

Mr Crooke is a bit of a ventriloquist and mimic, and many and many a time have I assisted him in some impromptu entertainment, with most amusing results.

On one occasion a party of racing folk were travelling by rail from a place called Bacchus Marsh, when all of a sudden the attention of every one in the carriage was directed to a violent quarrel (an imaginary one of course) in the next compart-

ment. Language of the most turbulent character was being used; oaths and imprecations were exchanged with alarming vehemence. I looked out of the window and shouted to the supposed brawlers, begging them to desist, and threatening to punch all their heads when the train reached town. My pugilistic and defiant abuse created considerable amusement, as I am absolutely ignorant of the way "to put up my hands," and physically incapable of attacking anything stronger than a mosquito, and I was warned I should get into trouble at our journey's end. Having reached our destination, every one went to look into the adjoining compartment with the view of seeing what our rowdy fellow-passengers were like; to the astonishment of them all the compartment was empty. Crooke's ventriloquial powers had cheated them.

On another occasion a party of us had just finished dinner at a well-known restaurant when it was suggested that Crooke should give us an imitation of a dog-fight, a leading feature in his little entertainments, and which he did remarkably well, but on this occasion it had an extraordinary effect. The landlord and landlady kept a few dogs in their backyard, and no sooner did they hear the din of battle from afar than the whole pack rushed headlong into the dining-room, followed by Madame and Monsieur and two or three French cooks and sundry waitresses, all armed with broomsticks, and all equally determined to quell the disturbance. We were upbraided for bringing nasty fighting dogs to a respectable restaurant, and creating such disorder in the otherwise well-regulated establishment—the Maison Dorée. It was some time before Madame could be

convinced that the demure-looking Mr Crooke was solely responsible for the riot.

Williamstown, the little fishing village near Melbourne it used to be called, but now a moderate-sized borough, can boast of an excellent race-course, which has emerged from its primitive stage into all the customary grandeur which prevails at nearly every suburban course. It is one of the oldest established race-courses round about Melbourne, and is a favourite resort of the racing public. It is quite on the coast, and many visitors, apart from the racing attractions, patronise it for the purpose of getting a "whiff of the briny." The full force of a "southerly buster" is occasionally felt here, and I have seen, when a sudden change of wind took place, the refreshment booths and temporary Stands levelled to the ground.

A peculiar accident happened here in a race one day, long before the expensive improvements were effected, and the course railed in. As the field approached the home turn, a bit of a scrimmage occurred, and several jockeys were unseated, but no one was, I think, seriously hurt. The loose horses free from control galloped into a large swamp or lagoon, where they nearly got bogged, and some had to be rescued by men in boats.

Williamstown race-course reflects the highest credit upon the management of the Messrs Sutton, *père et fils*, who have been at the helm of affairs for so many years.

The Maribyrnong course—about three miles from Melbourne — is situated on what may be termed classic ground. It was here that the Messrs Fisher established their famous stud-farm, where Fisherman, Marchioness, and other celebrities, imported from England, were located.

The race-course was established during the boom period by "Cox, of Moonee Valley," but it is not very convenient of access, and, although an excellent race-course, it really was not wanted.

From the foregoing it may be gathered that, considering the population of Melbourne and its suburbs, there are too many race-courses, and there is too much racing, and the various courses can never be made prosperous or paying concerns until the number of fixtures are reduced.

It is to be hoped, for the benefit of all concerned, that the Victoria Racing Club authorities will take this matter seriously in hand, and not encourage a system which can only injure the true interests of the sport over which they have assumed the absolute control. Let the members of the Committee put down with a strong hand all attempts at log-rolling, and let them not be scared by the ghosts of vested interests, but let their legislation be bold and fearless, always aiming at securing "the greatest good for the greatest number." If such a policy is adopted, there need be no fear respecting the future success of racing in Victoria.

UP-COUNTRY RACING

UP-COUNTRY RACING

EVERY little bush township in Australia has its race-course, if one can dignify with that name the various tracks cut through scrub and bush, upon which the residents of the district gather once a year and hold high festival. Most of the horses competing for their Cups (value about £10) have never known the taste of corn, and the prizes usually are saddles and bridles. Of course there is any amount of fun, the affairs being generally regarded as huge picnics. I have attended a few of these so-called race-meetings, and have thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

One pleasantly situated meeting, but conducted in quite a civilised manner, was that held annually at Cranbourne, a little township at the foot of the Dandenong ranges, some twenty-five miles odd from Melbourne. A friend of mine, Stratford Strettle, had a charming property in the vicinity, and on the occasion of the Cranbourne Race Meeting, entertained all and sundry in most princely fashion. Cranbourne, then, was not on the railway line, and most of the journey had to be accomplished by coach or buggy, and a very pleasant drive from Melbourne it was.

Arrived at the course, the scene to an Englishman was somewhat of a novelty. The country visitors, male and female, nearly all came on horseback, the men—at least a goodly number of them—in their red shirts, and breeches, and boots, regular bush fashion, and the ladies, of course, in most approved riding-habits. Then there was such a collection of conveyances, from the squatter's smart buggy and pair, with a black groom in attendance, to the tilted cart of the selector or cockatoo farmer; such a mixed lot of vehicles, some of them absolutely impossible to describe; they might very possibly have come out of the Ark, so antiquated were they in shape and design. But everybody came to enjoy themselves, and the greatest good humour and hilarity prevailed, and the hospitality extended to a stranger was unbounded.

One of the specialities of the Cranbourne Meeting was a Bare-backed Hurdle Race, an event which evoked no end of interest, and which generally was won by one of the Watson boys, who were great favourites in the neighbourhood. The Watson boys were sons of George Watson, the Master of the Melbourne Hounds, and, as he is ofttimes designated, the Prince of Starters.

On the occasion of my first visit to Cranbourne I made several suggestions whereby certain improvements might be inexpensively effected, and the stewards gladly availed themselves of my advice, building a neat little Stand and weighing-room, rounding off awkward turns on the course, and a general tidying up all round.

Whilst these improvements were in progress I made more than one journey to Cranbourne, and had many

a yarn with some of the old identities who had lived in the neighbourhood for more than half a century. It was most interesting to listen to their recitals of "When there was nothing but a bush track from Melbourne, sir, long before roads were made or bridges built," and when the Dandenong Creek was in flood and overflowed its banks, how traffic for a time was absolutely impossible. How the bullock teams would be camped on the other bank of the Creek waiting for the waters to subside. How the "bullockies," *i.e.* bullock drivers, killed time by yarning round the camp fire and consuming rum in enormous quantities.

One old fellow named Poole related an amusing incident in connection with the detention of the "bullockies," by reason of a flood. He said: "There was only one pub in the neighbourhood, and those who could afford to patronise it had to wade some distance, and when they did reach the bar, found the water running through it some inches deep. But a gang of us, determining to make a night of it, sat about on forms, and kept our feet out of the water as best we could, and we started drinking rum out of tin pannikins. We had several rounds, and one poor little fellow—he was a bit of a hunchback, with a squeaky voice, got very drowsy, and when called upon by a big hulking fellow to drink again, refused, for the simple reason, as he alleged, he was 'full.' 'Be a man, Billy,' said the big fellow, 'and take your turn.' 'I can't,' replied the little fellow; 'I'm full.' 'Be a man, Billy, I say, and don't refuse, or I'll drown you, you little devil.' In his despair, the little imp plaintively replied, 'I can't drink any more, but if I must take it, pour it in my ear.'"

Old Poole also told me how such places as "Brandy Creek," and "Whisky Gully," derived their names. He said that on long stretches of their journeys, where there were no grog shanties, the teamsters had hiding-places, such as hollow logs or holes in the banks of a creek, where a small supply of grog could always be found, it being a matter of honour for any "bullocky" to replace on his return journey what he had taken on his outward one; and this rule, he remarked, was most religiously adhered to.

Kilmore was another little township, which had its Annual Race Meeting on St Patrick's Day. (I might here explain that in England we should call these townships villages. They consist of a few straggling houses, a bush pub, a general store, and a church.) Most of the residents of the district were of Irish extraction, and their fondness for "lepping" was, as is usual, most pronounced, and the steeple-chase was always the great attraction.

On one occasion, a group of the sons of Ould Ireland had planted themselves in as favourable a position as was to be got, in order to obtain a good view of the steeple-chase, and to further enable them to know the positions of the horses when they for a time disappeared in a dip, they had hoisted one of their number upon the shoulders of the tallest man. They had all backed, it appears, a horse called Shamrock, and the man thus hoisted had to describe the race with its varying incidents. "Where is Shamrock now, Mike?" said one. "Oh, he's ladin' foine—oh, begorra, now he's down!" "Yez don't say so?" "No, bejabers, he's all right, he's up again. Hooroo! and he's ladin', the beauty!" After a pause: "Where is he now, Mike?" "Bedad, he's ladin' still."

"Begorra," said one, hitting his mate on the back, "if he maintains it, he'll win!"

At one meeting, a couple of bookmakers, both of the Jewish persuasion, but one of a very pronounced type, took up a horse to win the steeple-chase, and thinking to curry favour with the Irish patrons, called their horse Shamrock, and they put up "all green" as their colours. The name on the card, "Shamrock, all green," naturally attracted the attention of the Mikes and the Pats, who crowded round whilst Shamrock's toilet was being completed. But when the owners arrived on the scene, the fat was in the fire, for one of the bystanders, who had taken in the situation, remarked in sneering tones, "Jew's horse," and the crowd dispersed, and Shamrock was, like the last rose of summer, left blooming alone.

Nearly all these up-country meetings were considered incomplete unless the proceedings were wound up with a Race Ball; the high jinks carried on at these festivities were remarkable for their thorough abandon at night and prevailing headaches next day.

I once overheard rather an amusing soliloquy in one of the weighing enclosures at an up-country meeting. A horse, belonging to a South African diamond merchant, a contemporary of the famous Barney Barnato, opened a very strong favourite for a race, but from some unaccountable reason, the odds became longer and longer, until his backers began to realise that the horse must have had a bad night, or something unforeseen had occurred. From being an even money favourite, to recede to 20 to 1 offered, did not augur well for their prospects, but notwithstanding these ominous forebodings, the horse ultimately won his race, somewhat easily, too. His

victory was loudly cheered by the Ring, and by those fortunate backers who were unable to shift their money. Owners as a rule smile blandly when they are hailed as winners, but the cheers of the crowd and the congratulations of his friends had a contrary effect in this instance, as Mein Herr,

"Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,"

sought solitude. He wished to commune alone, but he thought aloud, and this is what I overheard him say—to himself: "Vell, vell, horses are rum critturs; a big bucket of vater before the race, and four thunderin' big shoes on him, and yet the beast vins. S'help me, I can't believe it!" "Pipe his chevy-chase," said one of the crowd. He simply told them all to take a "Meissa Meshuma," which in other language is equivalent, I believe, to "Go to the deuce."

The race-courses of the principal country towns, such as Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Kyneton, and many others were properly managed, and every possible provision made for the due conduct of the racing and the convenience of the public, and they differed only in degree from their Metropolitan neighbours. Ballarat was, however, famous for its beef and bracing air; Bendigo for its beautiful avenues of English trees and red dust; Kyneton for its pretty surroundings and the fernery in which lunch was served; and Geelong for its steady-going, don't-hurry-me sort of feeling, which pervades not only the race-course, but the town also.

RANDWICK

RANDWICK

WHAT the Flemington Race-course is to Melbourne and the Colony of Victoria, so is Randwick to Sydney and New South Wales. But here again, Flemington suffers by comparison when the site and locality are considered. I have elsewhere described my first impressions of Sydney and its picturesque environs, so it is unnecessary for me to further dwell upon the enormous advantages possessed by the parent Colony. In this particular Randwick is, without doubt, one of the most beautiful race-courses in the whole of the Australian Colonies. Nature contributed with no unstinting hand her share, and the management, led by my friend, Tom Clibborn, did the rest.

Strange to say, Clibborn and I were fellow passengers from England in 1869, and our friendship, commenced on board ship, has continued, I am glad to say, uninterrupted for many years. We, by some queer fate, both drifted into the same groove in life, but his capable and far-seeing management whilst Secretary of the Ballarat Club, secured for him the position of Secretary to the Australian Jockey Club, and he migrated to Sydney, whilst I made Melbourne my home.

Randwick in these early days was in what may be termed the chrysalis stage. The Grand (?) Stands were built of square timber and saplings, and the floors were carpeted with tan bark. The club was in debt, and everything wore a languishing and unprosperous appearance.

Flemington, on the contrary, under Bagot, was forging ahead, and the Sydney folks, always slightly jealous of the rapid strides which Melbourne was making, had to set about getting their house in order to dispel the reproaches which were constantly levelled against them, the comparisons between Flemington and Randwick not being at all palatable. They thereupon consulted Bagot, and he strongly urged the Committee to adopt a go-ahead and a vigorous policy, and recommended Clibborn as the man who could steer them clear of their difficulties, and render Randwick Race-course a credit to their Colony.

That Bagot's predictions have been amply verified goes without saying, as Randwick is, as I have previously stated, one of the most perfect race-courses in the Colonies, little, if at all, inferior to Flemington in its appointments and general completeness. Tom Clibborn, who, by the way, is a relation of the Bagots, and comes from a very old Quaker family, was staunchly and loyally supported by his Committee, notwithstanding the fact that the appointment of a Melbourne man to the Secretaryship was viewed in many quarters with considerable disfavour, but broad-minded and far-seeing men like Messrs H. C. Dangar, Walter Hall, Edward Lee, Stephen Campbell Brown, Henry Austin, Judge Cheek, and Sir E. Deas Thomson soon appreciated the ability of the man they had

selected, and Randwick quickly emerged from th depression and gloom which for a time enveloped it, until it has now become one of the many attractions of beautiful Sydney.

This marvellous transformation was not accomplished without the expenditure of large sums of money, and to enable the Committee to borrow the necessary capital, a special Act of Parliament had to be passed for the purpose. Large and commodious Stands were built, no less a sum being expended in various improvements during the last twenty years than £105,000. One Stand alone—I am told the largest in the world—is 150 yards long, and capable of holding 8000 people.

Whilst everything was being done to attract public patronage, horse-owners were by no means neglected. The system of making the nomination and entry fee for the various events the minimum charge of £1 only, for all except the classic races, was inaugurated, and caught on immensely. No deductions were made from the sums subscribed by owners of horses, the entrance money and subscriptions going to the stakes, and not to the Race Fund. Such a liberal policy met with its reward. The club received the support and patronage of the racing public in such a splendid manner, that the amount paid over in stakes since 1873 totals the magnificent sum of £340,000. These facts and figures combined go to show what a forward policy will do, and they speak trumpet-tongued for the skill and energy of Mr Secretary Clibborn.

The fact of the then Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, owning and running horses, doubtless gave the sport an immense fillip, but to libel the pioneers of

the turf in Australia, as was recently done in an obituary notice of Lord Rosmead in a London newspaper, is not altogether fair to many men who might not have the same prestige as His Excellency the Governor, but who were at least quite as keen in maintaining their honour and reputation as sportsmen. Were Lord Rosmead now alive, I am convinced that such unwarrantable reflections as is contained in the following extract would be condemned by him as unmerited and untrue. There is so much, nevertheless, in the notice referred to in praise of Sir Hercules, which every Australian sportsman will cordially endorse, that I quote the reference to his career as a Racing Governor in full :—

"Sir Hercules was a true lover of horses, and when from 1872 to 1879 he was Governor of New South Wales, he found that horse-racing—which has since become the pride and chief enjoyment of Australians of both sexes all over the Island Continent—was in a parlous condition in the Colony immediately under his sway. The supporters of the turf at that time were men of *small fortune and still smaller character*, who could not afford to keep race-horses without making, or endeavouring to make them pay. It became abundantly evident to Sir Hercules that unless patrons of the turf of a higher and purer class could be tempted to own and run race-horses, the noble sport in question would soon degenerate into open, undisguised brigandism, and would end in being swept away by the indignant public opinion of a vast majority of the inhabitants of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Brisbane, to say nothing of New Zealand and its numerous cities, and of the other islands which make up the Australasian group.

"Under these circumstances, Sir Hercules, being an excellent judge of horseflesh, and, like most Irishmen, ardently attached to all kinds of sport, came to a conclusion which has since proved fertile of blessings to the growing cities and populations of Australia. He made up his mind that he would himself buy and breed some race-horses, and that, for the first time since, much earlier in the century, Lord Charles Somerset was Governor of Cape Colony, the colours of a Colonial Governor should be seen on the race-courses at Randwick, near Sydney, and at Flemington, near Melbourne. The beneficial consequences which have arisen from this wise policy it would be difficult to exaggerate. The Governor's 'white and red spots'—the same colours that the late and present Lords Zetland have long made familiar in this country, and which became universally popular when Voltigeur won the Derby and St Leger in 1850—were often carried to victory, and the triumphs thus achieved were enthusiastically greeted by the teeming crowds assembled at Randwick and elsewhere. Sir Hercules became—and so remained until he finally bade farewell to Sydney—the most idolised Governor that Sydney had ever known. His sporting example was followed by other men of wealth and high character, with *the result that race-horses are now no longer owned and manipulated by the dregs of the Australian population*, but are in the hands of some of the wealthiest and most high-minded families that dwell under the Southern Cross. As a reward for his valuable services to the turf, the English Jockey Club made Sir Hercules an honorary member, and it was generally understood that all his opinions about the disadvantage of continually recurring sprint races,

and as to the fatal effects thereby produced upon the breed of English race-horses, were the same as those held by Lord Coventry and Mr James Lowther, and repeated still more emphatically by Mr John Porter in his latest work."—*London Daily Telegraph*, 30*th October* 1897.

The statement that "race-horses are no longer owned and manipulated by the dregs of the Australian population" is coming it a bit too strong, and is altogether of too sweeping a character. If the writer would only look back to the records of racing, he will find there, long before Sir Hercules' arrival on the scene, the names of some of the most honoured families in Australia.

You can't very well class the following as belonging to "the dregs of the Australian population"—viz. the Fishers, Powers, Hentys, A. K. Finlay, Coldham, Phillips, W. J. Clarke, Patterson, Tozer, Crook, Goyder, Cowell, Robertson, Wagner, Petty, Dr Baths, George Watson, Wakley, Haines, Bowler, and many more of similar class, representing horse-owners in Victoria; and in New South Wales the names of Messrs E. K. Cox, John Eales, De Mestre, John and Edward Lee, Kent, Rouse, Andrew Town, W. A. Long, W. R. Hall, C. M. Lloyd, Winch, and Tait occur to me as representing horse-racing in that particular Colony. It therefore goes without saying that the random statement I have referred to is libellous to a degree.

New South Wales has had for years the proud distinction of producing some of our best race-horses. The breeding establishments of the late Andrew Town, Hon. James White, Hon. John Eales, and James Mitchell having for years had the field to themselves, the only establishment of any

note in Victoria rivalling them to any extent being that of Mr W. R. Wilson, of St Albans, near Geelong.

Tom Clibborn not only is the presiding genius at Randwick, but he is the "Tattersall" of New South Wales, and the yearling sales conducted by him are one of the features of the racing year, attracting as they do a goodly crowd of visitors from all the neighbouring Colonies.

As in England, it seems as if the day for phenomenal prices had gone by, but a well-bred, shapely yearling generally fetches a fair price. I have attended yearling sales in England at Middle Park in Mr Blenkiron's time, and have listened to Mr Edmund Tattersall when coaxing thousands out of the young bloods, who from the tops of their coaches would do battle royal for the possession of some aristocratic youngster, and I have heard my friend Clibborn in Australia expatiate in a most eloquent manner on the pedigree and make and shape of the various lots submitted.

The principal sale of the year was that held at Hobartville, New South Wales, the stud farm of the late Andrew Town. The rostrum was placed under the shade of a magnificent English elm, and the youngsters were walked up and down one of the most beautiful avenues of English trees to be found in all Australia. Andrew Town was a typical Englishman, and he so arranged his home and all that surrounded it, with the view of rendering it English-like in every possible particular. The paddocks were laid down with rye-grass and clover; elms and oaks were dotted here and there, and under their pleasant shade would be grouped the mares and their foals, studies worthy of a Herring. A visit to Hobartville in congenial company

in the early spring was an experience which will always be associated with pleasant memories.

At one of the annual sales, a friend of mine was bent upon securing a youngster, which had filled his eye when making his customary inspection prior to the sale commencing, but he was desirous that his wish to purchase the colt in question should be kept secret, and he arranged with the auctioneer that he was to advance twenty-five guineas upon any one else's bid, so long as he stood in a certain place, and "kept his thumb in his waistcoat." The particular yearling was in due time brought into the Ring, and to my friend's surprise, was started at one thousand guineas. The auctioneer, as arranged, called, "One thousand and twenty-five guineas I'm offered." "One thousand five hundred guineas!" said my friend, to the astonishment of the auctioneer. Other bids followed, but they were all topped by the pre-arranged twenty-five guineas, until an offer of one thousand seven hundred and fifty guineas was reached, when my friend, in his eager excitement, forgetting all about the arrangement of "his thumb in his waistcoat," and his bids of twenty-five guineas, made one offer of two thousand guineas, at which price the colt was secured. After the sale he discovered, much to his chagrin, that he had paid two hundred and twenty-five guineas more for the youngster than he need have done, had he but remembered "his thumb in his waistcoat."

Oddly enough, whilst New South Wales produces some of the best flat racers to be found in all the Colonies, the best steeple-chase horses are nearly all bred in Victoria or Tasmania, and steeple-chasing, from some cause which is somewhat difficult to divine, has never been such a popular branch of sport in Sydney as it is in Melbourne. It is only quite recently that a

Grand National has been established, but the enthusiasm displayed over jumping events is lukewarm in the extreme, and nearly all the "hurdles and steeples" are won by horses from the other Colonies.

This is much to be wondered at, as Clibborn, like most of his countrymen, dearly loves to see a bit of "lepping," and years ago, when he belonged to the Ballarat Brigade, owned a jumper called Tell Tale, which Tommy Corrigan, when a lad, used to groom. Tom was then such a brat of a boy, that it was necessary for him to stand upon a gin-case to enable him properly to perform his duties. The fact, nevertheless, remains that, notwithstanding Clibborn's influence and predilections, steeple-chasing is only supported in a half-hearted manner by the New South Welshmen.

A rather novel, but at the same time a most sportsmanlike incident arose in connection with a steeplechase run at Randwick. Two young squatters owned respectively the winner and the second in the race, but the owner of the beaten horse disapproved of the way in which his horse was ridden, and considered that, had his instructions been carried out, the positions would have been reversed. To settle the point at issue a match was made—this time, owners up. In this race they galloped side by side, neither one or the other of them being able to gain any decided advantage; they flew their fences together until the last but one from home. Here one of the horses rapped pretty hard, and the rider lost his seat. His opponent, instead of taking advantage of the mishap, pulled up, went down the straight, found his friend to be uninjured, waited until he remounted, and then said, "Come on, we'll have a fair flutter home." A trifle quixotic, it is true, but the hearty cheers which greeted him when he

passed the post, a winner by a length, must have been very pleasant music for him to hear.

Some of Carbine's best performances took place at Randwick, but he once suffered defeat here also. This was brought about by the fact that his jockey, Mick O'Brien, was too ill and weak. He was suffering from a bad attack of asthma, and was unable to do his mount justice, and Abercorn, the property of the Hon. James White, gained the verdict. I suppose Abercorn was one of the handsomest horses that ever looked through a bridle. He was a bright chestnut, with white stockings, and his coat used to glint in the sunshine like burnished copper. To my mind, he was the most beautiful race-horse I have ever seen. His performances, too, were in every way commensurate with his looks, for he was the best horse of his day in New South Wales.

I have so far in my scribbling made very few, if any, reference to our Australian jockeys, but the mention of Abercorn brings to my mind the man who rode him so frequently to victory—Tom Hales. Now, I am not a great admirer of Australian jockeys as a rule; there is frequently too much of the butcher boy about them, but Tom Hales was in his day fit to take his place alongside the English Archers, Loates, Woods, Webbs, and Watts of to-day. He had perfect hands, a good seat, and was a great judge of pace. How, many a time and oft, has he timed his run so as to turn what would seem hopeless defeat into a brilliant victory. The manner in which he fairly outrode Derritt in the Melbourne Derby of 1888, when Carbine's victory was loudly proclaimed, but Hales, amidst tremendous excitement, brought up Ensign with a terrific rush, like a bolt from the blue, completely flabbergasted Derritt, and won, by sheer

jockeyship, on the post by a head. The best three-year-old did not win the Derby that year.

It was at Randwick that Carbine scored, to my mind, his most brilliant victory. It was in a weight-for-age race of, I think, a mile and a half, that a horse, named Lochiel, one of our most brilliant sprinters, went off at score, and placed such a gap between himself and the rest of the field, that pursuit seemed hopeless, Carbine pottering along a considerable distance in the rear. When about half a mile from home, O'Brien, on Carbine, seemed to realise that it was time to be moving: he then set down like a workman, drove the old horse along, and passing his field one by one, managed inch by inch to overhaul Lochiel, and win. I have heard men of the greatest experience say that this was the most brilliant, as well as the most extraordinary performance they ever witnessed.

Pages could be written concerning the numerous successes of the Hon. James White's stable, under the "two Toms," Payton and Hales, but they are largely enough written in the records of the Australian Turf to need little but passing mention here. The stable for some few years was well-nigh invincible, and never were colours carried first past the post more popular than the blue and white jacket of the Hon. James White.

To dilate upon the brilliant gatherings at Randwick is unnecessary. The fact that they have almost a world-wide interest cannot be questioned, and the parent Colony may well be proud of the position the sport of racing has attained under the management of the Committee of the Australian Jockey Club.

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During one of my visits to Sydney, I had the

honour of being introduced to the Hon. W. Bede Dalley, an orator and a statesman of the first rank, and whose action, when Premier, in despatching the Australian Contingent to the Soudan, will ever be remembered as a bold stroke of policy, proclaiming as it did to the world that the attachment of the Colonies to the Mother Country existed not only in name, but that it was a living sentiment, which, should occasion arise, would rouse Old England's sons across the seas, and show her enemies that they were ever ready to stand, shoulder to shoulder, with the Boys of the Old Brigade, in defence of the Empire. A more charming personage than Mr Dalley it would be impossible to meet. He was affability itself, and I treasure up in my memory the hour I spent with him, discussing various topics, over an excellent bottle of claret, in his bijou residence, overlooking Sydney Harbour.

Another remarkable man was old Sir John Robertson. It was he who described Victoria as only a "cabbage garden," and really, compared with the vast area of the other Colonies, the term was not, after all, so very much misapplied; but Sir John was soundly abused by some few irate Victorians for making this, to them, disparaging allusion. A good many quaint sayings are attributed to Sir John Robertson, and after spending a few hours in his company, it could readily be conceived that the quaintest sayings imaginable would not be altogether too improbable for this eccentric, but clever old gentleman to utter.

The old Reform Club, of which he was President, was his happy hunting-ground, and he was surrounded by some of the very best men in Sydney, and a

visitor was always assured of the heartiest of welcomes. Charles Goodchap, the Commissioner for Railways, was another leading spirit, who would arrange excursions, luncheon parties, and dinners, leaving no stone unturned to render one's holiday enjoyable.

I recently met a much travelled American. He had just returned from making a tour round the world, and when discussing the countries he had visited, and the people he had met, he said: "There's no possible doubt that for pure and unstinted hospitality, Australians are easily first. I regretted leaving Australia more than any other place I went to, for I felt I was leaving friends behind." In casting my mind back over what I have written, I find that the word "hospitality," accompanied with some laudatory adjective, is frequently used, and I gladly quote the American gentleman's opinion, because it so thoroughly coincides with my own. This is, however, by the way, and I simply introduce the reference, because I do not wish it to appear that I in any way unduly belaud a most marked and much-to-be-admired characteristic of our friends, "down under."

Judge Forbes, with whom I became on very friendly terms, was a marvellous specimen of the young-old gentleman one occasionally meets. He was a good all-round man. Although very slight, he was very agile, and could take his part with credit in a rough-and-tumble, and was, for his years, seventy or upwards, the best billiard player I have ever come across. No matter how many young fellows might be playing "Pool" at the club, the invitation, "Take a ball, Judge?" was never refused, and I have seen him make some remarkably good shots. His experiences on the bench extended over a period of more than thirty

years, and it was a genuine treat after dinner to get the dear old gentleman to recount his adventures.

One of his summings up is unique in its way. At one of the Assize Courts, held in an up-country township, a man was placed in the dock on the charge of theft, and when interrogated by the Judge's Associate, "Prisoner at the Bar, how do you plead?" replied with a regular hang-dog look, as he touched his forelock, "Guilty, your Honour." No sooner had this plea been uttered than one of those dilapidated ne'er-do-well briefless old barristers, who haunt police courts, courts of assize, or any place where there is a chance of picking up a stray guinea, jumped up, and said: "I beg your Honour's pardon; he intinded to say 'Not guilty.'" Old Judge Forbes looked over his *pince-nez*, and said: "Oh! then let the case proceed." Evidence of a most damaging character was called, but the eloquence of the Irish advocate was absolutely irresistible. He depicted in most eloquent and graphic terms the ruin of a bright career, the blasting of a happy home, the suffering wife and helpless children (the blank astonishment on the "mug" of the prisoner as he heard all these pathetic pleas on his behalf was a study), with the result that the hearts of the jury were melted; and animated by nought but sympathy for the poor, misguided wretch who stood before them, they, without hesitation—without even leaving the box—returned a verdict of "Not guilty." Judge Forbes's face is now a study as he settles himself in his chair, and with eyebrows raised, and a look of puzzled astonishment, thus addresses the culprit. He said: "Prisoner at the Bar, you admit you are a thief; the jury say you are a liar—you can go."

THE VICTORIAN CLUB

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CHAPTER I

THE Victorian Club was established in 1880. Its functions were precisely similar to those of the English Tattersalls, as far as the settlement of betting disputes and other like matters were concerned, but it combined with these a social status, to which I will refer later on. There had for years been a "Tattersalls" in Melbourne; in fact there was a "Tattersalls" existent in the year referred to, but it did not last long after the establishment of the Victorian Club. The circumstances which brought the new club into existence, and which were responsible for the downfall of Tattersalls, arose through the Committee of Tattersalls and the leading bookmakers getting to loggerheads, with the result that the principal metallicians resigned their membership, and then set to work to found a new club, which was called the Victorian. The "Bookies" must have had considerable justification for making the move they did, as the new club received the countenance and support of the principal racing authorities, and rapidly gained a prominence and prestige which was not accorded the old Tattersalls.

Amongst the earliest Committee-men of the new institution might be found the names of Captain

Standish, the Chairman of the Victoria Racing Club, Messrs A. K. Finlay, Robt. Power, Herbert Power, Donald Wallace, A. W. Robertson, J. L. Purves, W. Leonard, John Whittingham, Hon. Wm. Pearson, and men of that class, and all, by the way, at one time or another, members of the Committee of the Victoria Racing Club—men who could with justice be designated pillars of the Turf. Under such auspices it was not surprising that the club prospered exceedingly. The Committee's decisions, when it was a question of thousands and thousands of pounds being at stake, were cheerfully complied with, and no man, whatever his grievance, ever questioned the justice of the awards.

In a young community, such as Melbourne, where the major portion of those with "sportin' blood" in their veins have had but little experience, disputes and misunderstandings are doubtless of more frequent occurrence than in England, but, at the present time, the judiciary powers of the Committee, and their interpretation of racing or betting laws, are rarely called into requisition.

The members' roll increased year by year, and the club soon had a considerable cash balance to its credit. So prosperous, indeed, was it, that when some few years later the opportunity came for shifting into more commodious premises, the Committee at once embraced the idea, and rooms were specially designed and built for the accommodation of the members.

The club was most luxuriously furnished, and became the rendezvous, not only of the leading sportsmen of the Colonies, but business and professional people, who did not come within the category of sporting characters, joined, as there was

always something amusing and interesting going on at the Rooms.

The better-class bookmaker—and the majority of the pencillers who virtually founded the club belonged, I can safely say, to that class—is generally a well-informed man, and often a most amusing *raconteur*, and to spend a few hours of the evening at the Club Rooms became quite the vogue. Doctors, lawyers, barristers, and leading merchants were frequently to be found discussing — not always racing or sporting topics, but topics such as politics, parliamentary, hospital elections, etc., would form the subject matter of many and many a debate. The "Bookies'" votes were reckoned of considerable moment, whether the candidate was seeking a seat in Parliament, the City Council, or a place at the Hospital Board. Not only were their votes sought for by the various candidates, but their interest also, which perhaps meant more than their individual votes, for when once the bookmakers took sides, they proffered their help in no half-hearted manner. If they had not carriages of their own, they hired them, and brought up voters to the poll by the score, and I must say they generally got their man in.

The opening of the new club-house was honoured by a visit from Sir Henry, now Lord Loch, the then Governor of Victoria, and Lord Carrington, the Governor of New South Wales, and its prestige reached a very high standard. The late Governor, Lord Hopetoun, made frequent visits, especially when the Annual Billiard Tournaments were in progress.

Some exciting scenes were occasionally enacted at these billiard tournaments, and some ludicrous incidents occurred. The betting outright on the

different handicaps, as also on individual games, was sometimes rather heavy, and it was no slight ordeal for a man, unaccustomed to appear in public, and whose skill as a cueist was not above mediocrity, to face the music and "cock a deaf 'un" to the running fire of critics, whose remarks were not of too choice or flattering a character. "Order on the stroke!" was a fatal announcement to a nervous man. Ordinarily, a fair all-round player, when not the cynosure of all eyes, he absolutely collapsed when "in the pit." I have seen men who would, under ordinary circumstances, exhibit any amount of nerve, become so fogged that they did not seem capable of distinguishing the red ball from the white.

When once the date of the Billiard Tournament was announced, the principal competitors went, so to speak, into training, and "trial gallops," and private lessons became the order of the day, but the nervousness to which I have referred simply unmanned many of them, and they went down before players much inferior to themselves in skill, but whose nervous susceptibilities were less acute.

Many of the players were most punctilious with regard to their get-up; others, on the contrary, were peculiar and eccentric. I shall never forget one man coming into the room when his game was called, enveloped in a loud-coloured dressing-gown, like Joseph's coat, of many colours. His appearance was greeted with an outburst of laughter, and the scene was ludicrous in the extreme; it was certainly calculated to disconcert his opponent, had he been other than an old warrior at the game. It was some little time before order was restored, and the objectionable garment relegated to the cloak-room.

Another player came, not by any means an unusual thing, in spotless evening dress. He had, I think, been a sailor man, as he certainly started chewing "a quid," and fortifying himself ever and anon with nips of rum. Of course he carried, as is customary with players of consequence, his own chalk, but his difficulty as the game progressed was to find a pocket to put it into, and quite oblivious of the fact, he, in his vain endeavours to find the said pocket, kept chalking his clothes all over, until towards the finish of the game he might have been taken for a miller. He had, in fact, hocussed himself, for in tossing off a glass of rum, he swallowed with it his quid of tobacco.

The fun and genuine enjoyment got out of these Annual Tournaments would fill far more space than can well be afforded, and could only possibly interest those immediately taking part in them. Who, for instance, could ever forget little Kelly M——, or the tragic earnestness with which he entered the lists, and his indignation if, whilst in the act of making a stroke, an onlooker happened to cough or make a remark sufficiently loud for him to hear. I have often heard him say to the biggest man in the club, "I'll fight you, sir," and he looked as if he meant it, but he soon cooled down, and the utmost good-humour as a rule prevailed.

No little credit for the success of these tournaments is due to Joe Byrne, the handicapper, and the Secretary's factotum. The members have implicit faith in his judgment and thorough honesty, and although mistakes might occasionally creep in, his efforts to bring the players together were in the highest degree successful, and it was not at all

an unusual thing for a game of 250 up to be called 249, all.

Joe Byrne is deservedly a great favourite. He has been connected with the club in various capacities some seventeen or eighteen years, and no matter what the position occupied, he has served it faithfully and well. Byrne was at one time champion billiard-player of Australia, but he never could, in public, approach his private form, his hypersensitive nature preventing him doing himself justice. He was not afraid of being beaten, but he fretted about his backers losing their money. A more attractive player never handled a cue, and it was always a treat to watch Joe playing with such men as Sam Grimwood (amateur champion), Phil Glenister, Harry Haines, or little Johnnie Colman—giving them always half the game.

I am under the impression that the originator of these tournaments was Barney Thompson, who, years ago, presented a handsome silver cup for competition; and this was won, I think, by Sam Grimwood. In those days, however, the contestants were principally bookmakers, but by degrees the lay element began to take greater interest in these annual tournaments, until the number competing would sometimes exceed one hundred. Leading barristers, lawyers, doctors, young squatters from the adjacent Colonies, would enter the lists, until the Victorian Club Billiard Tournament became quite an intercolonial affair, and the talk of the town. "Standing room only," would be the announcement when any of the crack players met to try conclusions. Valuable prizes were presented, and the keenest interest was evoked.

For many years it was the custom to have a banquet, at which the presentation of the prizes would form quite a leading feature. This dinner was an event, and I really think it was an excellent thing in its way, as it brought the members together, and helped to maintain the social aspect of the club. The whole function resolved itself into quite a variety entertainment. The theatrical profession lent their aid, and variety artistes were ever ready to do a turn. Add to the professional element the amateur musician and vocalist, of whom there were not a few, and it can well be imagined that we all had a good time. But woe betide the amateur who was not quite up to concert form; ominous murmurs of disapproval would reach his ears, and "thumbs up" would be the decree.

In lieu of these dinners smoking concerts are now given in the large room, and they, too, are in every way great successes, and help to maintain that *entente cordiale* which it is so desirable to foster in institutions of this class.

Of practical jokers we had a fair percentage, but whilst the temper of the member experimented upon might occasionally be sorely tried, I don't think I was ever cognisant of practical joking being carried to any cruel or vicious extent. If a man had any little weakness or failing, it did not remain undiscovered long, and woe betide him if he cut up rough, and resented the chaff. If, however, he good-humouredly submitted to the jokes played off at his expense, he was not interfered with to any extent, but the manner in which some of the men were "kidded" is almost beyond credence. The billiard-room was the favourite resort of the members of the

"kidding brigade," who, if they could only get a couple of moderate players who fancied themselves a wee bit to take a cue, would commence betting on the result of the game. A modest fiver would be perhaps invested on A, when B's friends would gather round, until tenners, "double fins," and even ponies would be laid and taken all round the room. On such occasions intense nervousness would completely nonplus some of the players, and "I wish you fellows would not bet on my game," would be the plaintive remark of one of the victims to the "spoof." The application of a little soap to the tip of his cue did not improve the nervous man's stroke, and all his backers would proffer another with, "Try this one, Mr So-and-so," but the result would be all the same. Remarks would be made loud enough for the poor bewildered man to hear, such as, "Are we getting a run for our money?" "Is he a trier?" and such like comments, that stung the poor fellow to the quick, and he, under the circumstances, could not make the most simple strokes, and would be badly beaten. Perhaps two or three hundred pounds would change hands, all the wagers being what is termed "schlenter."

There are doubtless bookmakers and bookmakers, but speaking from an experience of some fifteen odd years, during which period I was daily thrown in contact with them, I think the bookmaking members of the Victorian Club would compare favourably with their *confrères* in any part of the world. We had some objectionable characters, it is true, but the bulk of their number were kind-hearted and generous fellows. No one ever appealed to them in vain in the cause of charity. They were good husbands and good fathers.

No matter what their antecedents and bringing up might have been, their children's education was their first care, and the best schools and colleges were not too good for them.

We had some comical characters amongst them, and a good many what is termed "bush lawyers." This latter class would argue for hours over any conceivable subject, if they could only get an audience patient enough to listen to them. The greatest—I was going to say—offender in this respect was Teddy Sampson, but that term would not be justifiable in his case, because he was undoubtedly a well-read, educated man, and as a rule knew what he was talking about. Teddy Sampson was a cousin of "Pendragon," the founder of the London *Referee*, and was naturally proud of his kinsman, and I must say I was delighted when, on his visit to Australia, Teddy introduced him to me. Poor Teddy battled hard against the ill-luck which befell him in his latter days. He was, I think, more than ordinarily successful on the turf, owning in his time some good horses, and winning some good races; but during the closing years of his lifetime nothing would go right with him, and rather than be unable to face the music on settling day, he preferred to risk another settlement—so blew out his brains. Every one was sorry for poor Teddy Sampson, and many of his colleagues would have held out a helping hand—with something in it—but he was too proud and too sensitive to ask assistance.

I suppose Joe Thompson is now as well known amongst sporting circles in England as he was throughout Australia, so when I say he was a prominent character, not only on the race-course, but also at the club, the statement will be received

without question. He was known by the title of the "King of the Ring," and the title was not misplaced, for he is no doubt a far-seeing and very clever man; and had the Fates so ruled it, and Joe had been destined for another career, he would certainly have made his mark. He is irrepressible, and, I was going to say, immortal—those who know him well, say you could not kill him, even with a meat axe—for I don't believe there is another man living who can present such a healthy and youthful appearance after so many years of "battling," and its attendant excitement. His ready wit and quaint sayings have been a source of infinite amusement to me for years.

Irrespective of these qualities, however, Joe Thompson was remarkable for his wonderful judgment of character. Many a time I have seen a man enter the club in a sort of nonchalant way, pick up a daily paper, commence to whistle, his thoughts apparently dwelling upon the prospects of the harvest or the price of silver, or any subject save horse-racing. Joe would remark to me: "I wonder what he wants to back? I must find out. I'll ask him to come up to the crow bar and have a 'tiddly.'" Before that man left the club, Joe had probably laid him a £20,000 wager, or had got the strength of some particular stable.

I well remember the Derby of 1881. A colt called Somerset, the property of Mr Edward Lee, of Sydney, but an inmate of old Jim Wilson's stable at St Albans, had been a strong favourite all through the winter, and his arrival at headquarters was looked forward to with considerable interest, as the stable, when they planked down the dollars, made few mistakes. When, however,

the team reached the training-ground at Flemington, Thompson and some of his immediate friends were there, just to have a look, "don't you know," with the result that the inspection was unfavourable. The horse had gone off, and the stable connections were anxious to get out of their money, but Joe had no love for old Jim Wilson in these days, and when the business of the evening began, he was determined that neither he, nor any of those connected with him, should hedge a shilling. He was as good as his word, and peppered Somerset to such an extent, that they had no help for it—they had "to carry the baby."

Ben Bolt's Caulfield Cup was, however, quite another "pair of shoes." If he won the Cup, Joe was going to eat him, hoofs and all, so he peppered him accordingly. Ben Bolt, did, however, win, but Joe dined *en Prince*, as was his wont, at home, and the *menu* contained no reference to "*Pieds de Cheval a la Ben Bolt.*" Joe Thompson, besides being dubbed "King of the Ring," ought certainly to have had the additional title of the "Godfather of the Ring," inasmuch as few escaped some *soubriquet* or other bestowed upon them by him. Some of the men took their nomenclature kindly, whilst others rather resented the liberty, but the names thus bestowed stuck to the men ever after.

I was present one day at a lunch party, when Joe was invited, but he never ate lunch; his breakfast usually lasted him until dinner time, but he joined the party later. Amongst the company was the late Sir William Clarke, and most of the leading racing men in Melbourne. The conversation on Joe's arrival turned naturally to turf affairs, and "honest"

and "stiff" running came in for its share of comment, when Sir William, the most amiable of men, remarked that "he was always only too pleased to win, no matter how small the stake," and "I never bet, Mr Thompson." Joe replied in his blandest and most fetching style: "Ah but, Sir William, you know we all look upon you, sir, as the Lord Falmouth of the Sunny South." A heartier burst of laughter was never heard within four walls than that which greeted Joe's quick-witted reply.

However, I must remember I am not writing the Life and Adventures of Joe Thompson. Such a book would, I fancy, furnish some rather interesting reading, but he was such a conspicuous figure in all sporting circles, that he fills up a very large space in my "Reminiscences."

One more little incident that is much impressed upon my memory, as I happened to be one of the principals engaged. During one of the Billiard Tournaments I was drawn against a leading double-event man, towards whom Joe Thompson did not entertain a particularly friendly feeling, and whose prowess in the pit, as he termed it, he somewhat doubted. The eventful evening arrived, and the betting opened. My opponent was a strong favourite, 7's to 4 and 2's to 1 being freely laid on him. He was backed by one of the most respected Ringmen, who was himself a first-class player, and who had been coaching and giving him trial gallops for some weeks previously. Excitement ran high, and thousands of pounds were wagered on the game. Previous to the game commencing, I was cautioned in a most friendly way not to lose my own money, as my opponent would be sure to "down me." After an unusually tough game, I won, Joe

Thompson's estimate of the fortitude of my antagonist proving correct. At the conclusion of the game I received congratulations all round, my backers being jubilant, but Joe, who had won a good stake, capped everything by slapping me on the back, remarking, "By Gad, Boss, you played like a bloomin' archangel!"

Joe Thompson's bosom friend was, and is still, I suppose, Alfred Joseph, a man of quite a different stamp, a big bettor, but he has a much milder manner, uses his persuasive eloquence when dealing with a client, and during business hours rarely uses a big, big D. Mr Joseph was, prior to his taking up his residence in Melbourne, a councillor and leading citizen of Bendigo, the great mining centre; he is now looked upon as the leader of the Victorian Ring, but his opportunities for displaying his powers of generalship are not many, as the good old days, when money was plentiful and betting was big, seem gone probably for ever.

It is not my intention to go through the list of members of the club *seriatim*, but I must not omit referring to another prominent man, the "Count." He is not only prominent, but he is popular. There is a story told about him, the truth of which I don't think he denies, to the effect that he and a friend went out driving one day, but before going far on their journey, the horse suddenly developed lameness. "Count's" friend, who was handling the ribbons, said, "Get out, Nat, I think he's picked up a stone." "Count" jumped out, and went to look in the horse's mouth, and said, "he couldn't see one." "Count" has always openly averred he knew nothing, and did not want to know anything about horses.

and ng up his pencil, he would say, "This is good angh for me."

a/f course many of the Ringmen have risen from ry obscure and humble beginnings, and have attained to fairly good positions in life without the aid of a College Education; but the fact that the non-evelopment of some of Nature's attributes gives a itional keenness to the others is never more ncibly exemplified than in the case of illiterate men who have a fancy for figures. They arrive, so to speak, at perfectly correct conclusions, without knowing the why or the wherefore, but they say, what does it matter, if it "comes out all right in the wash."

The names of two men, both moderately successful, recur to me, whose mastery of "English as she is spoke" was not their strong point. Strangely enough, they were both short and stout, one of them having particularly short legs; it was quite amusing to see him sitting on an ordinary chair, his feet dangling some few inches from the ground. He was not a bad sort of fellow at all, but was a bit superstitious, and occasionally, on the eve of a big race, used to consult a fortune-teller, in whose predictions he had great confidence, as he used to relate that on his first interview, she had remarked that she could tell "I was a 'widder.'" He on one occasion visited the theatre, and when asked what part of the house he went to, said: "Oh, I had a couple of seats in the oyster stalls."

When the news of the successful *début* of a young Australian actress reached Melbourne, great satisfaction was expressed at her favourable reception in London, and the matter was being commented upon by a *posse* of the members, when Geordie remarked that, "These 'ere Australians are comin' to the front,

and no mistake. What with rowin', cricketin', to fightin', they're first on the rank (he had been a the man), and now we has this ere young lady takin front seat. Well," he says, "my gal 'll make 'em sit up one of these days too." "Indeed," remarked one of the group, "what can she do, Geordie?" "Why lor bless yer, she's goin' to make her mark dancin'." "You don't say so!" said one. "Well," he says, "her ought to see her dance the 'Hornpike,' they can play the bloomin' peeanner fast enough for her, and as for the 'Mineray'—well, you ought to see 'er, and then you'll believe me, when I says Australia's comin' to the front!" He then smole such a smile of satisfaction, that we one and all expressed the hope that the future of his "gal" might be as successful as he predicted.

One very sultry night, when every one was palpitating and perspiring, owing to the unusually, even for Sydney, oppressive heat, some one emptied half a tumbler full of water into the side pocket, which contained his handkerchief. A little later he was accosted by a fellow member, with the remark that these were melting moments. "Yes," he replied, as he pulled out his wet handkerchief; "it's runnin' out o' me in bucketfuls." He was very jealous of Joe Thompson's position, and occasionally "took the floor." He made things lively for the time, offering to lay thousands "agin' anythink." I always feared that during one of these heroic fits he would break a blood-vessel, as his face became scarlet, and the veins on his forehead stood out like knotted whipcord. He was a martyr to the gout, poor fellow, and the last time I saw him he was unable to walk.

My other little friend, was as merry as a cricket,

and would laugh and smile the livelong day, and would quite unconsciously join in the laugh against himself, utterly oblivious of the fact that his many *faux pas* were the cause of much of the merriment. His malapropisms are, I think, too good not to be recorded.

One day at the railway ticket-office he was quite at a loss to remember the word, "return tickets," and after repeatedly asking the booking-clerk for a "couple on 'em," "A couple of what," said the clerk. "You know," he said; "I want a couple of what-you-call-'em;" then suddenly thinking he had got the right word, he said, "Give me a couple of comebacks." On another occasion he was recommended to get some "Fuller's Earth" for some purpose or another, but once again his memory failed him, and he astonished the chemist's assistant, by asking for a box of "Asphalt." At a race-meeting in Sydney, a commission was sent into the Ring to back a horse called Respiration. When approached by the commissioner, and asked, "What price Respiration, Joe?" he replied, "You may well ask what price! It's simply rollin' off me," as he mopped his manly brow. I met him early in the club one morning, and thinking he looked remarkably well, asked him how it was that he always managed to preserve such a rude state of health. He replied that he was sorry to say that he was not in good health. "In fact," he said, "I'm not at all well, and have just come from the doctor's, and he's given me a certificate." "A certificate!" I remarked; "you mean a prescription." "Well, I don't know what you call it; there it is." I looked over the prescription, and said: "I am sorry to say you must be in a bad way, for the doctor has prescribed so many drops of this, and so

many drachms of the other," and I was proceeding to enumerate the various items which made up the prescription, when he interrupted me by saying, "Now, you can't read that." "Oh yes, he can," said two or three, "don't you know, Joe, the Boss was brought up to be a doctor?" "Oh, indeed!" said the little fellow; "then you've got your diplomacy."

One man, he was of the Jewish persuasion, rather prided himself upon his artistic tastes, and his house certainly was furnished in excellent style, his grounds being also beautifully laid out and well kept; but on one occasion he could not resist a bargain at a sale by auction. It was a large plaster cast of a Madonna which he bought, and which he thought was a statue of Venus. He placed this *objet d'art* in a rather prominent position in his garden; but his neighbours did not appreciate this addition, and one morning he awoke and found his Venus coated with tar. The statue has since been relegated to an outhouse, and the reference to his Venus is rather a sore subject.

Soon after the Messagerie Line of Steamers commenced running to Australia, a party of bookmakers took passages by the outward bound vessel to South Australia, the excellence and variety of the *cuisine* on board being the great attraction, and, moreover, being highly appreciated. One of the men travelling by this route—his first experience—was a regular outsider, and a coarse and vulgar fellow into the bargain; he was really only half civilised, but had been attracted by the liberality of the fare, and he determined to have value for his money. The various dishes at dinner were handed round in the usual orthodox fashion, and he never let one pass him. So copiously did he assist himself that, crowding on all sail, he could not keep

pace with the *service*, and had not finished his *fillet de bœuf* when the ice pudding came upon the scene, and was handed round. He was under the impression that the dish contained mashed potatoes, and calling the waiter, said he would have some of "that there." The waiter, with all politeness, suggested getting him a fresh plate, but he said the plate he had would do well enough. It was filled already to overflowing, and, to the waiter's intense astonishment, he proceeded to assist himself to what he supposed was the *pomme de terre*. When he discovered his mistake, and found it was ice pudding, and not mashed potatoes, his face was a study, as he blurted out in coarse language his detestation of foreign cookery.

It reminded me very much of Robson as Pawkins, in the farce of "Retained for the Defence." Pawkins had never tasted an ice, and the look of agony on his face after the first spoonful, as he danced round the stage, his hand on his cheek, shouting, "Oh my 'Oller! Oh my 'Oller! Guv'ner, guv'ner, don't you think they'd be better biled?" was inimitable, and the whole situation intensely amusing.

The "Power" family have always been prominent where sport was to be obtained. It mattered not whether it was racing or coursing, boxing or shooting, one member or another of the family would always be found amongst its votaries. The name of the "Powers" has for years always been popularly and honourably associated with sport in all its branches, and it is indeed a veritable household word in all sporting circles. This is prefatory to the following little incident. Two members of the club were discussing some subject or another, when one of them made use of the term "arbitrary power." A man

standing by — he was a well-known trainer — said: "Excuse me, sir. I knows Mr Robert and Mr 'Erbert and Mr Willie, but I never heard of 'Mr Arbitrary Power.' Is he another brother?"

The recital of the dilemmas some of the small outside "Bookies" get into, and their marvellous ingenuity in escaping therefrom, would form interesting and amusing reading, but a couple of incidents will, doubtless, here suffice. Half a dozen outsiders met together after the races near the railway station, to hear how they, severally, had got on. Each had, however, the same sad tale to tell, they were "stone motherless broke," and how to get back from Ballarat to Melbourne, except on "shank's pony," was rather a difficult problem to solve. It appears that one of the "Stony-Brokers" had a half-a-crown, but what was that amongst so many? "Lend me the half-crown," said one *Chevalier d'industrie*, "and you shall all ride back to Melbourne like toffs—first class." This fellow's ready resources had many a time and oft stood him in good stead, and he was handed the half-crown, with the utmost confidence that, by some mysterious means, he would fix things up satisfactorily. A train was ready at the platform waiting for the signal to start, when our noble explorer approached a railway porter, and asked him if he wanted to earn half-a-dollar. "Rather," said he. "Well, then, lend us yer cap for five minutes, and I'll give it yer." To this, naturally, the porter agreed, so exchanging hats, he marched on to the platform, boldly went to a first-class compartment with, "All tickets here, please." The occupants, seeing the official cap, unsuspiciously handed up their tickets, the porter got his cap returned, and the broken "Bookies" did not walk home.

On another occasion a similar calamity befell a party not quite so down on their uppers, but still the amount of "ready" had run very short, and the necessity of making a rise became essential. They bethought themselves of all manner of schemes, until at last the happy thought struck one of them to promote a Lottery and Grand Prize Distribution. They therefore despatched one of their number by coach to Melbourne, where bills were printed announcing that on such a day a Grand Prize Distribution, consisting of gold watches, diamond rings, diamond studs, diamond horse-shoe pins, and a number of ladies' charms, would take place at the well-known hostelrie, "The Miners' Rest," Dead Dog Gully, and that tickets entitling the purchaser to a chance in this unique distribution could be had for half-a-crown.

The bills were posted on trees and fences all over the neighbourhood, and the man from Melbourne in due time returned with a box of "ladies' charms," *i.e.* trinkets on cardboard purchased for a few shillings a gross. Some of these, with the watches and chains, rings and pins—the last-named belonging to the hard-up "Bookies"—were deposited with the landlord of the Rest, and were always available for inspection. The district was canvassed for miles round, and the half-dollars came rolling in, and great excitement prevailed in the little township when the eventful day for the distribution came round. The largest room in the pub was altogether too small for the crowd, and many of the selectors and their wives and daughters had to be content with seeing what could be seen through the windows, as they all pressed round with their tickets in their hands.

Everything being in readiness, the spokesman of the party addressed a few words to those assembled, and suggested that a lad, blindfolded, should draw the numbers. This suggestion met with general approval, and set the seal of the utmost fairness upon the whole thing.

Now, out comes the first number, which is duly handed to the presiding genius, who announces in a very loud but grandiloquent tone of voice: "Number 2403, a lady's charm." A murmur of approbation goes round, and the young girl who is the fortunate winner is congratulated and envied. Several blanks now follow, but at last comes the announcement that "9495 has drawn a massive gold chain." A gentleman dressed in bush costume steps forward, hands up his ticket, and receives the prize amidst cheers from the envious bystanders, as they feel convinced that they still have a chance for some of the diamond jewellery. Ladies' charms, remarkable to relate, however, crop up rather frequently, and it is always a stranger who receives the coveted prizes—the diamond rings, etc. The distribution, which took some time to complete, was at last over, and when neighbours and friends came to compare notes, they thought it singular that all the good things had gone to the mysterious strangers, and all the consolation left them was the contemplation of "Ladies' Charms." The promoters of this lottery did not again put in an appearance at Dead Dog Gully.

Strange to relate, many men—I am not now referring to bookmakers particularly—who could positively neither read nor write, made large fortunes, some of them in mining, and others in pastoral pursuits; but no matter in whatever walk of life

they succeeded, they were generally fond of a bit of sport, and were to be met with on a race-course.

One man in particular, I remember, who kept a fairly large stud of jumpers, but had had by no means a college education, made his pile as a miner, but, unlike a lot of ignorant men who make their fortunes, there was no trace of vulgarity about him whatever. He used to dress in excellent taste, and recognised the wisdom of the aphorism that "silence is golden." He was not a morose or a taciturn man by any means, but rarely spoke unless spoken to. I greeted him at a race-meeting once with, "Hulloa, old man, what are you doing here? You have no horses running?" "No, me bhoy," he replied; "I'm just here as a 'spectacle.'" After a visit to Europe, he was relating to some friends his experiences, and telling them how he enjoyed his long stay in Paris, when one of them remarked, "I suppose you talk French like a native." "Yes, me bhoy," he said; "I became quite a 'parasite.'"

Another man, a squatter, could not read, and he was very anxious to hide this serious defect. All his correspondence was done through his agents, but when a telegram of any particular importance arrived, he was very fond of taking it with him to the club, and with his *pince-nez* duly adjusted, would pretend to be reading it, and would then say to his nearest neighbour, "See, we've had splendid rains at Pigface Downs." The telegram was more frequently than not held upside down. Another old fellow would not let a friend write a telegram for him because his wife wouldn't recognise the writing.

In one of the up-country towns, a meeting was called to raise subscriptions for the purpose of improving and

beautifying a lake, just on the outskirts of the town, and it was suggested that some eight or ten gondolas should be purchased, when one of the leading men of the district objected, on the grounds that to buy so many would run into a lot of money. It would be far better to simply buy two, "a male and female, and let Nature do the rest."

When I first became connected with the club, I fear I must have been regarded as a bit of a Juggins by many of the bookmaking fraternity, their ways and sayings at times completely mystifying me, but gradually I mastered in a moderate degree some of their back slang and rhyming slang, which mode of speech was in those days much in vogue with the old-time "Bookie." One would occasionally overhear conversations in the following style:—

[SCENE—ENTRANCE TO THE CLUB.]

(*Two Past Masters of the art of rhyming slang meet.*)

"Halloa, Bill, who's the pot and pan going up the apples and pears?"

"Oh, that's the heap of coke I met down the frog and toad. Ever seen his Scotch blister?"

"No."

"Lovely fal-de-ral."

"Well, let's go up to the crowbar and have a tiddley. Now I come to pass my bag of sand round my out-and-in, I think I want a mariner's grave. Half a mo while I pop over the field o' wheat and buy a happy half-hour to put in my I'm afloat."

"How do I Captain Cook now? Like my round the houses? Nice pair of daisy roots, ain't they?

Bought them at the Can't Stop round the Johnny Horner. Paid twenty-seven touch-me-on-the-nob for 'em."

"Who's the heap of coke with the tall beef and fat? Looks as if he hadn't been first of October for a bubble and squeak. Don't suppose he's had his lump of lead on the weeping willow all night. They tell me that he's lost his raspberry tart to a twist and twirl on all the rage."

"What do you say to some soap and twine?"

"No."

"Then we'll have a drop o' gay and frisky and some son and daughter."

"Rather have some in-and-out, it's better for the Teddy Royce."

"Then we'll get a close and muggy and go for a dead and alive through the after dark."

"Pipe the profit and loss coming in his white cady. One would think by the quarter mile on his chivy-chase that he'd just backed a saint and sinner for a monkey."

The above conversation to the uninitiated is, doubtless, absolutely incomprehensible, but in plain English it reads as follows:—

"Hulloa, Bill, who's the man going up the stairs?"

"Oh, that's the bloke I met down the road. Ever seen his sister?"

"No."

"Lovely gal!"

"Well, let's go up to the bar and have a drink. Now I come to pass my hand round my chin, I think I want a shave. Half a moment while I pop over the street and buy a flower to put in my coat."

"How do I look now? Like my trousers? Nice pair of boots, ain't they? bought them at the shop round the corner; paid twenty-seven bob for them."

"Whose the bloke with the tall hat? Looks as if he hadn't been sober for a week. Don't suppose he has had his head on the pillow all night. They tell me he has lost his heart to a girl on the stage."

"What do you say to a glass of wine?"

"No."

"Then we'll have a drop of whisky and water."

"Rather have some stout, it's better for the voice."

"Then we'll get a buggy and go for a drive through the Park."

"Look, here comes the boss in his white hat. One would think by the smile on his face that he'd just backed a winner for five hundred pounds."

. . . . . .

One of the most popular members of the Ring was, I think, the late Jack Thompson. He came home with Trickett when he was defeated by Hanlan on the Thames, and from all I hear, was very much liked and respected in England. He had a giant's strength, but I really think he had a woman's disposition, so kindly and gentle was he. Many and many a time has some poor fellow in distress been unostentatiously assisted by "big Jack." He never let his left hand know what his right was doing, and I never heard of him using his strength except in the defence of the weak. He was once induced to fight a man, his inferior in strength and stamina, much against his will, and to his lifelong regret, and he has often told me how it went against the grain to hit his opponent, who, by the way, had provoked the quarrel, but who was physically incapable of withstanding Jack's

superior strength. "I felt," he said, "I was so much stronger than he was; but what was I to do? If I didn't punch him, he would certainly have punched me." Jack Thompson died of typhoid fever, comparatively a young man, and more genuine or heartfelt sorrow was never exhibited than at his funeral. A magnificent monument marks poor Jack's last resting-place in the cemetery at Waverley, near Sydney.

Another good old soul and all round sportsman was Bill Branch. He owned some rare good horses in his time, such as Royal Maid, Richmond, and Progress. The last-named had the ill luck to be foaled in the same year as the unbeaten Grand Flaneur, for in all the classic races in which they met, Progress had to take second place. The all white jacket and cap of Branch were popular colours, and the public followed them because they got a run for their money.

Branch was very proud of being a Cockney and a livery man of the city of London, and his cheery face would brighten up when it was jocularly asserted that he would certainly have been Lord Mayor had he remained in England.

One old gentleman was very much attached to Branch, and it was most amusing to watch the two of them when they sat down in the club to yarn. The jovial English-looking gentleman, as he was called, who occupied a good social position in Melbourne, would suggest in the most dignified way that Mr Branch would do him the pleasure of taking a glass of wine, to which Branch readily consented. After a glass or two, it would be, "Let's have another, Branch." Later, the invitation would

be addressed to "William," then "Bill," and finally, after a good few glasses, it would be, "dear old Bill"; and as they were leaving the club one night affectionately linked arm-in-arm together, Branch was overheard to exclaim, "I would like to call you Charley, but I don't like to."

Poor old Branch, from being a portly, robust man, gradually began to show failing health, and he died a few years ago. On his tombstone are the simple words, full of meaning, however, "Staunch and true." They aptly describe his character.

As I have previously remarked, betting in the early days was brisk all through the winter, and books were opened on all the principal up-country events. There were fewer meetings then, and naturally greater interest was taken; thus the Ballarat, Bendigo, and Geelong meetings, amongst some few others, had their Cups and Handicaps, and their Hurdles and Steeples, and the various candidates were backed with any amount of spirit immediately the weights were published; but antepost betting is almost a thing of the past, only one or two of the principal Handicaps, such as the Melbourne and Caulfield Cups, receiving, in a mild degree, any attention.

A variety of causes has brought about this condition of affairs, principal amongst them being the popularity attained by Adams' Sweeps, and the immense amount of money which comes into the market on the eve of any big event, many owners, before making any attempt to back their horses with the bookmakers, preferring to wait until the Sweep money comes in.

It may be as well to explain that any one fortunate

enough to draw a horse which has any pretensions for Cup honours, in a ten or twenty thousand pound Sweep, can well afford to hedge and lay the owner a point or two over the market odds, and thus be sure of making a decent stake, whether the horse wins or loses.

When as much perhaps as a hundred thousand pounds of Sweep money is put into the market, it certainly places the bookmaker in an unfavourable position. But, on the other hand, these Sweeps help to swell the field, inasmuch as horses with no possible chance are started because their owners are laid so much to nothing by the Sweep ticket-holder. This system is likely to exercise a permanent influence on racing, as Adams is now firmly established in Tasmania, and his business can now be carried on without let or hindrance.

Cash betting on race-courses approaching anything like an extensive scale was unknown until the last eight or ten years, the pioneer in this particular branch of betting being Robert Sutton, who for a time did an enormous business; but nowadays the man with the bag is in the ascendant, and many of the veterans have had to adopt the cash system, as the younger men were by degrees gradually elbowing them out. How they will all manage to subsist when the totalizator is introduced it is difficult to say.

CHAPTER II

THE scene in the Victorian Club the night before the Melbourne Cup is a busy one. Representatives of all branches of sport from all the Colonies muster in great force. Men whose homes are in the bush meet annually at Cup time, and then return to their solitary vigils o'er flocks and herds in the far interior, where the face of a white man is but seldom seen. Old friendships are renewed, old memories are revived at the club the night before the Cup, and amidst the uproar and din of "Monkeys on the Field" many friendly greetings are exchanged betwixt men who meet, perhaps, but once a year. It is just the same at Tattersalls' in Sydney before the principal race-meeting of the Australian Jockey Club. At these times all Melbourne flocks to Sydney, as all New South Wales—I might say all Australia—seems to migrate to Victoria to see the race for the Melbourne Cup. Pressmen from the various Colonies, representing the principal daily and weekly papers, join the glad throng, and one could readily imagine that some great Congress had been summoned together to discuss matters solely appertaining unto "ye old British sports and pastimes," so various and representative are the gatherings referred to.

Tattersalls' clubs, formed on similar lines to the

Victorian Club, exist in all the Colonies, one of the oldest and most important being that established in Sydney. Tattersalls at Sydney had opportunities of raising revenue, other than by members' subscriptions, which like clubs did not possess, inasmuch as the governing powers promoted race-meetings at Randwick, and had the good-fortune to obtain permission to hold these said meetings on public holidays, and were thus assured of a good gate. By these additional means, therefore, funds accumulated somewhat rapidly

For many years the members were content with the accommodation afforded by a long, narrow room adjoining Adams' Tattersalls' Hotel, but the establishment of the Melbourne Victorian Club in such comfortable quarters as the Bourke Street premises caused comparison to be made not altogether complimentary to the management of the Sydney Club. Spurred on by that spirit of rivalry which is always in evidence between the two Colonies, the members of Sydney Tattersalls' went one better; this they were well able to do, as they had plenty of money available, and they have now built a Tattersalls' Club which has no equal in the world. The principal room, with its domed roof, is of splendid proportions, most luxuriously furnished, and there is daily laid out a free lunch, which is largely and liberally patronised by all classes of the members. Card-rooms, billiard-rooms, bath-rooms, and all necessary conveniences are fitted up with the same disregard to cost, and the club flourishes as it deserves to do.

Sydney was long regarded as a bookmakers' Paradise; the public gambled upon anything. Foot-racing was a favourite medium, and lads who could "scoot a bit" were taken in hand by the patrons of

pedestrianism, and it was common talk that So-and-so had a boy in his "stable" who could break record time, etc. Betting on the Botany Handicaps would commence as soon as the entries were published, and the sayings and doings of the peds were for a time the talk of the town. Meetings were frequently held at night-time, the running track and its approaches being brilliantly lit up with the electric light, and the sport was patronised by all classes of the community, the people flocking in thousands to the charmingly-situated Botany Gardens; but in time scandals began to creep in—"stiff" running, non-tryers, flagrant cases of reversal of form ("rehearsal" of form, one of my friends used to call it), with their accompanying disputes, soon brought the whole thing into disrepute, and the inevitable result followed; pedestrianism, not only in Sydney, but in the Colonies generally, now being a comparatively extinct sport.

Pony-racing, however, came strongly into favour, and, for a time, found an outlet for the gambling propensities of the Sydneyites. Pony Meetings were held weekly; sometimes there might be even two or three meetings fixed during that period, and the fields for the different events would assume very large proportions, as many as from thirty to forty ponies weighing out for, perhaps, a £50 prize.

Melbourne was quickly inoculated with the pony fever, and the dodges and trickery practised to get a 14-hand pony into a 13.2 class were extremely amusing. Hoofs would be pared down as thin as paper; and the pony would be taught positively to stoop when under measurement; but this class of sport soon degenerated, and pony-racing is now but poorly patronised. It must be admitted, however,

that it brought to light some extraordinary ponies —marvellous weight carriers, and some as fast as the wind; in fact, many retired from the illegitimate, and won good handicaps when pitted against thoroughbreds.

Heavy sums were wagered on the various events, and betting for a time ran riot in Sydney. Numerous betting shops were opened, where it was just as easy to invest a hundred pounds as it was a shilling, and the noble army of punters gained recruits daily; the office boy had his "bit" on, and so did Mary Jane, the servant. The matter became so serious that the authorities stepped in, the shops were closed, and betting was declared illegal; this law remained in force until the "Dunn" case was finally disposed of by the English Law Courts, when it was revoked, and betting is again in full swing, but shop or list-betting is still disallowed. But to return to Sydney Tattersalls': it will readily be conceived that, in a city where so considerable a proportion of the community have the gambling instinct so largely developed, an institution such as Tattersalls' should be highly prosperous and possess a very heavy members' roll.

The most prominent and most popular amongst the Knights of the Pencil is Humphrey Oxenham, who, I suppose, makes the biggest book of any man in Australia, and holds the proud position of being the leader of the Australian Ring. During the time when the principal race-meetings are being held at Randwick, his palatial residence, overlooking the course, is the rendezvous for all the leading sportsmen of the Colonies, and he, assisted by his good wife, dispenses hospitality in no niggard fashion. Oxenham is one

of the most charitable of men; his good deeds are done without any ostentation, and many a "worn and weary brother" has been assisted in battling against adversity by good-natured "Oxy," as he is generally called by his intimate friends. The Deery Brothers are also big bettors, and are all highly respected. Jack is the pride of the family, and is noted for his great "staying" powers. No day's too long, and no night's too long for this old warrior, and the man who can stay the last furlong with Jack Derry can boast of a rare constitution. Phil Glenister, an old and respected Melbourne identity, is *the* commissioner, but when diplomacy or *finesse* in the very highest sense is required in working a commission, commend me to old-fashioned, quaint Sam Bradbury. It requires a very keen and penetrating glance to get between the joints of his armour, Sam's "phiz" being a perfect and impenetrable study. There are some capital fellows in Sydney Tattersalls', and an occasional smoking concert gives many of them opportunities of displaying their vocal and histrionic abilities.

That the club is a huge success is in a great measure due to the committee of management, the members of which have at all times evinced the keenest interest in maintaining its good name and prestige upon all occasions. These remarks apply with equal force to the committee of the Victorian Club, and, in fact, to the committees of all the clubs. It is a good thing for sport in the Colonies that men of position are always to be found ready and willing to devote their time and attention to regulate the all-important business of wagering and its attendant disputations.

There is one very old friend of mine who is deservedly popular both in Melbourne and Sydney, and who at Cup times can always be found either in the club or on the verandah at Petty's Hotel, descanting upon the merits or demerits of his own as well as his neighbour's horses. He is under the impression that handicappers were sent into the world simply to plague and annoy horse-owners, and that, by some inscrutable decree of Providence, he has been selected as an especial victim for all their malevolent designs. Some men, were they to adopt a similar *rôle*, and hurl all manner of imprecations against the heads of these worthy officials—whose task, be it said, is at all times a most thankless one—would be taken seriously to task; but when we recognise that this outpouring of wrath comes from the lips of dear old Sam Cook, the sting of the anathema is wanting, as no one would accuse my old friend of harbouring an unkind thought against any living soul. "The Squire of Pytchley," as Sam is frequently called, was originally one of the "Sons of the Brine," but like "The Admiral" in England, developed a marvellous taste for horseflesh, and he now devotes his whole energies in superintending the breeding and training of thoroughbreds. A very large amount of success has attended his efforts, many of the principal classical races being annexed by the "Maroon and Silver," but principal handicaps, hardly ever; yet the sideboard at Pytchley Lodge at a full-dress dinner is somewhat crowded with trophies captured in races of all descriptions, at one time or another, by the gallant Sam. Like a good many sailor men, our Sam can pitch a yarn, and the mute astonishment on the face of a newly-found friend is a study when the gallant skipper

holds forth, and recounts, with graphic gesture and fire in his eye, of doughty deeds, hairbreadth 'scapes by flood and field, all of which probably existed in his imagination only. A more imaginative or harmless tale-pitcher never let his fancy gain such a complete mastery over him as did this good old hero.

A visit to the Pytchley stables was always a most agreeable experience. Everything about them was kept in the most perfect order, and discipline of the strictest character was always maintained amongst the numerous *employés*. The orders, well, orders scarcely convey what I wish to say — words of command more aptly describe the tone in which the simplest instructions were given. One had only to close his eyes, and the smell of tar, the rattling of rigging, the flapping of sails, and all the concomitants of "Tacks and Sheets" would come like a vision, as one heard in stentorian tones some such order as "Remove this quarter sheet," and the responsive, "Aye, aye, sir."

Happy hours have I spent with my old friend. May good fortune be his lot is the wish of the unworthy scribe who has had the temerity to refer even thus briefly to those characteristics which so well become this Ancient Mariner.

Even little Perth, the capital of the Golden West, has its Tattersalls, and thither have migrated many of the sporting community of Victoria, who combine bookmaking with a variety of other businesses, and they, one and all, seem to prosper. Amongst the most prominent are Sam Grimwood, who runs the Horse Bazaar; Jack Giles, who bosses the principal hotel; Harry Haines, who has engaged the most expert

tonsorial artistes to attend to the wants of West Australians, and who has for his sign: "Now, what do you think? I'll shave you for nothing, and give you some drink;" and George Nobbs, who supplies the nobblers of the finest brands only. The latest recruit, Harry Moses, exercises a general supervision, and daily expects to be requisitioned by the Government to furnish it with a brand new code of laws. In fact, I'm told that, in strolling down the principal street in Perth, one could quite imagine oneself in Melbourne, so many expatriated Melbournites are to be met with. Victorian merchants, squatters, stock and station agents, stockbrokers, and, in fact, "brokers" representing all classes, have shaken Victorian dust from off their feet, and thrown in their lot with the youngest sister of the family, Miss Westralia. And wise are they in their generation; they are simply exhibiting that same enterprise, the same indomitable pluck, which distinguished their forefathers, and which is so largely in the ascendant when a genuine Australian gets cornered.

I don't want to write a political essay, but, if I dared venture into the domain of tariffs, I don't think it would be difficult to demonstrate the causes which have led to the disasters which have befallen marvellous Melbourne, whose losses, however, have so largely contributed to the gains of her neighbours—the latest Colony to benefit thereby being Western Australia.

AUSTRALIAN HORSES

AUSTRALIAN HORSES

COMMENTS now and again appear in the English Press regarding the quality of our Australian horses, and from the tone of many of the said contributions, it is evident in some quarters that anything but a high opinion is formed concerning them. The drift of the arguments brought forward tend in the direction of disparagement, and a warning note is sounded about being led away by a "boom," and that there is "interested advertisement at the bottom." To say the least of it, the comments are not of that generous nature one might expect to hear from English sportsmen.

The deteriorating effects of the lengthy and trying voyage from Australia to England are overlooked, and the equally well-known fact that the best horses have not been sent home in their prime is altogether ignored. The latest arrivals, Merman, Maluma, Acmena, and Newhaven are certainly exceptions to the rule, but the effects of the six weeks' voyage are not easily eradicated, and it must of necessity take horses a long time before they thoroughly regain their true form, but I feel sanguine that before very long the above-named quartette will justify all the high encomiums bestowed upon them.

With horses for stud purposes, of course, matters shape differently, and I think the purchase of Carbine will undoubtedly prove to be England's gain and Australia's loss. It is the performances of horses of this class which have attracted the attention of English racing men, who are now evincing a desire to recover from Australia strains of blood which have proved to be more than ordinarily successful, and which are, so to speak, running out in England. It was never pretended that Ringmaster, Lady Betty, and others, were anything approaching first class. They were good handicap animals, considered capable of winning in England amongst moderate second-raters; but if horses like First King, Commotion, Grand Flaneur, or Carbine could have been landed in good condition and none the worse for the voyage, when they were in their prime, I am fully convinced they would not have discredited Australia when pitted against Persimmon, St Frusquin, & Co. Australians, as far as I know, frankly acknowledge the fact that it is owing to the importation of the best English strains of blood, coupled with a more favourable climate, which accounts for the high quality which Australian horses undoubtedly possess.

With regard to Australian hurdle-racers and steeple-chasers, the conditions under which they race are so utterly different, that it is not to be wondered that they do not succeed when competing with first-class company in England. It must not be forgotten that in England a steeple-chase horse jumps *through* his fences, in Australia they jump *over* them; that's where the difference comes in.

The Australian fences, it must be remembered, are of stiff post and rails, varying from 4 feet to 4 feet 8

and 10 inches in height, log fences, and stone walls, all of equally formidable proportions. There is no getting through such obstacles as these. In England, on pretty well all the fences, there is generally some foot or two of brush which the jumpers go through. Looking at an Australian horse through English spectacles, he appears to "prop" over his fences, and, as a rule, does not lay a toe on them, his Australian schooling having taught him to get over and not through them. Trainers always expect when schooling their jumpers that they will have a fall or two; in fact they rather wish it, as I have frequently heard them say, "It makes 'em careful."

The first Australian jumper of any note to be sent home—it's many years ago—was a horse called The Dutchman. This horse and his owner were disqualified for malpractices by the stewards of the Victoria Racing Club. He was then sold and sent to England, his purchaser believing that the authorities would not raise any objection to the horse racing, but they reckoned without their host, and The Dutchman was not allowed to sport silk on British soil. He was ridden to hounds for a season or so, but, as a friend wrote out to me asking, "What is the use of them sending horses home of that description? The Dutchman is as slow as a hearse horse, but I verily believe he could pound any horse in England." That description will apply, I think, to most of our Australian steeple-chasers. They have to jump, they cannot run through the stout timber fences or knock down stone walls; these are the obstacles met with in a fair, Australian hunting-country. The sneers about the "boasted" Daimio

are ungracious and misplaced. Is there any one in England game enough to emulate the sportsmanlike spirit of my friend Gibson, and send a "Cloister" or a "Lamb" to compete for a Grand National in Melbourne? I trow not. Ebor, who has won a few steeple-chases in England, was a hurdle-racer in Melbourne, and a good one too. My contention has always been that horses of his quality might win steeple-chases in England, but it was wasted energy and enthusiasm to send steeple-chase horses home with the idea of winning steeple-chases. They have to learn the business over again; they resemble first-class hunters, not chasers, according to the English model.

A steeple-chaser which might possibly have been able to hold his own in England was a horse called Sussex, who was not only good on the flat, making in his day a record for, I think, it was a mile and a quarter, but he was a great jumper too, winning a Grand National (1881), with over 13 st. on his back; but what is so vividly impressed upon my memory is his style of jumping. He literally flew his fences like a bird—there was no "propping" with him, he took his fences in his stride, and was a beautiful mover; but his deeds are quite overshadowed by those of Mr Miller's horse Redleap, which could not only get over country, no matter how big, but had any amount of pace too, as his record most unmistakably proves. As a four-year-old he carried off the Grand National Hurdle Race, three miles, and three years later (1892) repeated the performance, carrying 11 st. 12 lbs., beating twenty-two others, in the excellent time of 5 minutes 58¾ seconds, following this up by winning during the same week, from

nineteen others, the Grand National Steeple-chase (three miles), with 13 st. 3 lbs. on his back, in the record time of 6 minutes 45¾ seconds; and then to crown all, a month later he carries no less a weight than 13 st. 12 lbs. to victory in the Caulfield Grand National Steeple-chase over four miles of country, possibly as stiff as that at Flemington. This is a record that certainly has never been beaten, nor is it likely to be for many a long year to come.

Redleap's performances attracted at the time considerable attention in England, and I was commissioned by a leading English sportsman to purchase him, but Mr Miller would not part with his old favourite for love or money, and I don't blame him. What with Carbine on the flat, and Redleap over the "sthicks," Australians may well blow a wee bit when Australian horses put up a world's record.

With regard to the general excellence which Australian horses have of late years attained, no surprise need be expressed, when one takes into consideration the stock from whence they spring. It will be admitted that the best blood has been imported from England, and it would indeed be strange if results were otherwise, when the names of such horses as Fisherman, Panic, Musket, The Marquis, Gang Forward, and Tim Whiffler figure amongst the sires of years ago. The Messrs Fisher in the early days spared no expense in procuring the best blood available for the Colonies, importing high class mares, such as Marchioness, winner of the Oaks, as well as sires, amongst them being that "farmer" of Queen's Plates, Fisherman, and Mr W. R. Wilson is at present strengthening his stud by occasional impor-

tations of the most successful strains extant. Little wonder that, under circumstances such as these, the high standard of Australian horses is attracting the attention of breeders in all parts of the world. India is a good customer, and so is America.

The particular strain of blood to which attention has so recently been drawn is undoubtedly that of Musket, who was imported to New Zealand, his stock having carried all before them in that Colony, but the doughty deeds of famous old Carbine have emphasised the excellence of the strain in such a marked degree that the popularity gained for the Muskets is easily understood.

One of the earliest importations from England was a horse which rarely had the chance of being mated with any but half-bred mares. I refer to Panic, sent out to Tasmania by my friend, and at one time colleague, George Browne, "Bruni" of the *Australasian*. Panic certainly put the "guinea stamp" on his progeny in a most pronounced fashion, and I think I am well within the mark when I say that nearly all our best jumpers were descended from him, but he was also the sire of that great horse Commotion, who won innumerable classic races, including two Champion Stakes (three miles), as a four- and six-year-old respectively; ran third for the Melbourne Cup in 1883, and in the following year ran second to the "Mighty Malua," the sire of Malvolio, a Melbourne Cup winner, Maluma, now in England, and many other winners, conceding him 7 lbs. Old Commotion was in these days as great a public idol as was Carbine subsequently. The least successful, I think, of the imported sires was The Marquis. I cannot at the moment recall

the name of any of his progeny that approached first-class form. The Marquis was brought out to Australia by the Messrs Dakin Bros., both enthusiastic students of breeding and pedigree, but from some cause or another he failed to make a reputation as a sire.

The last time I saw The Marquis was in a box at Kirk's Bazaar, Melbourne, a hollow-backed, infirm old savage; with increasing age he had developed a devil of a temper, and no stranger dare go near him. Tim Whiffler's record was much better, his stock being able to go fast and stay too. I was at Ascot in 1863, and saw Tim run his famous "dead heat" with Buckstone in the Ascot Cup. Gang Forward, imported by the late Sir Thomas Elder, has made his mark in South Australia, and it may safely be said that no matter which Colony one may look to, we see the same spirit predominating, viz. the securing of the best English blood for stud purposes.

Australian horses have for all time been noted for their marvellous powers of endurance, and the distance bush horses, grass fed, will cover in a day, is almost incredible. There must be great sustaining power in the natural grasses, but the fact of it being partly dried, a sort of growing hay, accounts in a great measure for the horses not being as soft as they would be in England, if taken off an ordinary pasture.

From the foregoing cursory and very imperfect reference to Australian horses, it may readily be understood why they attain their undoubted excellence, for when all is said and done, Australian horses are English horses, the same as Australian men and women are English men and women; they have one

and all simply been transplanted to more congenial climes.

Note.—Since the above chapter was written Merman has distinguished himself by winning the long distance handicap of the year, the Cesarewitch, beating a field of twenty-one runners.

TASMANIA

TASMANIA

"THE tight little island," "the garden of Australia"—such are the titles bestowed upon one of the most charming spots over which that beautiful constellation, the Southern Cross, sheds its rays. A more delightful or more picturesque country it would be difficult to find. It has not the grandeur of the scenery of New Zealand, but its hills and dales are quite like bits from a Scotch or English landscape. Rugged mountains and beautiful rivers abound, and the climate is healthful and invigorating. Fallow deer thrive in the hills and English trout in the streams, and although Tasmanians are supposed to be lacking in those go-ahead characteristics which are associated with Melbourne, the warmth of welcome extended to a visitor, especially if he is fond of sport, knows no bounds. Shooting, fishing, yachting, it matters not what, facilities to indulge in any kind of sport are offered on every hand, and my experiences during my various visits to Tasmania are crowded with pleasant memories.

The trip across Bass's Straits by the s.s. *Pateena*, commanded by that good fellow, Captain Sams, can at times be anything but pleasant for a bad sailor, but, fortunately, it is but of short duration, and the trip up the River Tamar, to Launceston, passing,

as one does, through charming scenery, soon causes the memories of *mal de mer* to fade away. A visitor from Melbourne is immediately struck by the green meadows and green hills. The environs of Melbourne in summer may be parched and brown, but Tasmania might well be called the Southern Emerald Isle, so verdant are its pastures and English-like its surroundings.

Launceston, a fine town and a great agricultural district, can not be compared with Hobart in regard to its picturesque situation. Hobart is connected with Launceston by a line of railway, narrow gauge, which twines and turns round hills and mountains in a most remarkable manner; the curves at some points are so sharp, that one can, if in the front part of the train, almost, metaphorically speaking, shake hands with a friend travelling in the hindermost part. Necessarily, the speed attained is not high, and it used to be satirically remarked that if you are in a hurry don't go by train —walk!

When once clear of Launceston, the agricultural aspect of the scene changes; the extensive and well-cultivated farms which greet the eye for the first few miles of the journey give place to more wild and rugged scenery, with here and there deserted and dilapidated homesteads, the original occupants, evidently owing to the rabbits or some other cause, having failed to make farming pay, and the trim hedges, after English fashion, are no longer visible, and there is a general look of neglect and decay. The air is laden with the scent of the sweetbriar which, originally planted for hedgerows, overruns thousands of acres, and forms a well-nigh impregnable refuge for

the rabbits which, whilst nothing nearly so plentiful as in Victoria and New South Wales, are yet in sufficient numbers to become a serious nuisance.

The fecundity of the rabbit in the warmer regions of Australia is, indeed, prodigious. I well remember, some years ago, a squatter telling me that rabbits had been seen on his run in Riverina; that he intended taking time by the forelock, and had sent up some twenty trappers and dogs to eradicate them forthwith. More easily said than done, as subsequent events proved. The trappers killed a few, and my friend was under the impression that he had nipped the evil in the bud, but "bunny" was not to be so easily wiped out. By degrees the death-roll increased—but so did the rabbits, notwithstanding trappers, dogs, and poison combined, until, in one year, the number destroyed totalled half a million. Miles upon miles of wire-netting had to be put down, and the only consolation in a long drought, whilst sheep and cattle might be dying in thousands, was the thought that rabbits were dying also. Poisoned water in troughs was placed alongside dried-up water holes, and the rabbits would perish in thousands, the stench from their dead bodies being noticeable for miles round.

But to return to Hobart, quite an English-looking town, nestling under the shadow of snow-capped Mount Wellington, with the River Derwent, wide and expansive, flowing past it—truly a more delightful place it would, indeed, be difficult to find. It seems somewhat strange that the British Government should have selected such lovely spots as Botany Bay in New South Wales, and Port Arthur in Tasmania, whereon to establish convict settlements, yet, it is no exaggeration to say that the places mentioned are

veritably the beauty spots of the two Colonies referred to. In Hobart, as in Sydney, little remains to remind one of the unhappy past, and few, if any, traces remain of the taint of convictism ; but there is an especial halo of romance about the prison at Port Arthur, owing to the fact that the principal scenes, so vividly and graphically depicted by Marcus Clarke in his book, "For the Term of His Natural Life," were here enacted.

My trip to Port Arthur is indelibly impressed upon my mind, inasmuch, as in all my travels by land or sea, I was never so near being sent to my last account.

Port Arthur is reached by a small trading steamer, sailing twice a week, and the voyage occupies some eight or ten hours, according to the weather one meets with. On our way we pass a high cliff at the mouth of the Derwent River on which stands a neatly built cottage, with flagstaff for signalling, etc., after the style of a coastguard station. This cottage occupies the site of a bit of a shanty, where resided, in the very early days, an old salt who used to make a considerable sum of money by piloting vessels up the river. He was a semi-Government official, and the boat in which he used to put off was manned by a convict crew. When business was brisk he treated these poor wretches fairly well, but when trade was bad, and his earnings light, his temper was most violent. He would roundly abuse his crew, making use of the most horrible language.

His first enquiry of a morning would be: "Any ships in sight?" If the answer was "No, sir," then would come a volley of oaths, and he would call them "lazy land-lubbers," and declare that he did not believe they ever looked for ships, and, "shiver his timbers," he was fully convinced that several ships

had entered the port but they were "too infernally lazy to look for them." This kind of thing was of no infrequent occurrence, but one of the convicts suggested to his mates that if he could sneak the "old 'un's" telescope he should see ships, right enough. The opportunity offered, and the telescope was sneaked, sure enough, and a ship in full sail was painted upon the glass at the end; it was then replaced in the locker. Next day the "old 'un's" temper was, if anything, worse than ever. "No ships, you lazy scoundrels?" was his greeting. "No, sir." "Here, Number Four, give me my telescope." "Ay, ay, sir." And the telescope was duly handed up to him. Raising it to his eye he said, in a tone of intense surprise: "Why, here's a ship!" And then looking to another point of the compass, said: "And there's a ship!" And again scanning the horizon he said: "By heavens, the bloomin' ocean's full of ships!" Then turning round to see if smoke was coming from his cottage chimney—an indication that his breakfast was being prepared—he exclaimed, as he again raised his telescope: "By the Lord Harry, there's a bloomin' ship on the top of my chimney!"

On this particular outward journey we met with fine weather, although the sea was a bit "lumpy," and we passed that peculiar geological formation, Cape Raoul, more generally called the "Organ Pipes," owing to the pipe-like appearance of the perpendicular corrugations which are so singular. The cliff, or point, is of considerable height, and the regularity of the "pipes"—there must be, I should say, some hundreds of them—have the appearance of being artificially produced, instead of being the handiwork of Nature when in a highly artistic mood.

After rounding this point we soon steam through the narrow entrance leading to Port Arthur, which for all the world resembles a Scotch or English lake with its little inlets and islands. The site whereon stood the Model Prison is simply charming, but there is an indescribable sadness about the whole surroundings which the natural beauties of the place fail to eliminate.

Notwithstanding the gloom and oppressiveness which seem to haunt the place, there lived, in a quaint, English-looking cottage, all covered with flowering creepers, an old gentleman who was so charmed with the spot that he bought from the Government the old Model Prison, and was, at the time of my visit, having various alterations made with a view of turning it into an hotel or lodging-house. Rather a gruesome idea this, breakfasting under the shadow of the gallows' tree, or having one's bath in what had previously been a padded cell; but no such absurd sentimentality oppressed this old fellow. He was full of his project, and dilated upon the delightful coolness which could be enjoyed on the hottest day in summer in the inner rooms, the walls of which were so thick, and "how secure one would be in a burglary boom." He was a most obliging cicerone, and pointed out to us all the places of interest in the neighbourhood, but I fear his description of the Model Prison, with its terrible past, was not conducive to his prospects in getting customers for his model lodging-house or hotel. (I have recently heard that the whole building has been destroyed by fire.)

We met the only convict who still lives, or rather did live, in the neighbourhood—he must have died

long ago, for he was very bent with age and terribly feeble—and his description of the horrors of prison life at Port Arthur was enough to make one's blood run cold. According to his version, the accounts related by Marcus Clarke in "His Natural Life" are not by any means exaggerated or too highly coloured. There can be no possible doubt that prison discipline, as practised in those days, was closely allied to barbarism. Hangings were of frequent occurrence, and floggings were administered daily for the most trifling breach of the rules and regulations. The beam for executions was of unusually large proportions, capable of accommodating, as the chaplain was wont to say, "five comfortably," but "six was a little crowded." Many men murdered their mates, or committed some crime punishable by hanging, in order to escape from a life of torture and misery.

The yard where the triangles were situated must have been the scene of untold horrors—blood streaming from the backs of the poor wretches with each stroke of the merciless cat, and little trenches had to be cut to enable the blood to run quickly away. A friend of mine, who was an officer in the Commissariat department, was an eye-witness of many of these blood curdling scenes, and from his own lips have I heard him describe horrors revolting and unspeakable.

Point Puer, a lovely little headland, was the site of the boys' prison, and many a youngster has from it jumped headlong into the sea, driven to desperation by the harshness of the gaol discipline. Not far from the mainland is a prettily wooded island which was used as a burial-ground, and was called Dead Island.

The English church, which was burnt down some years ago, must have had, judging by the ruins, some

architectural pretensions of no mean order. It is now all ivy-clad, and forms quite an old-world looking ruin. This "old-world look" is almost non-existent in Australia; wherever one goes, and whatever one sees, everything seems new. There is no past to reverence, no ruined abbeys or castles to bring to the mind the memories of long ago. Everything is of yesterday. It may therefore be readily understood that an ivy-clad ruin of a church comes rather as a novelty to those who have passed many years of their lives in the Colonies. As I have previously noted, despite the unusually beautiful situation and surroundings, Port Arthur is so frightfully steeped with horrible and painful memories which will, I fear, cling to it for many generations to come, that all the schemes of the dear old gentleman to render it a place of residence will be unavailing.

It must be remembered that many of the unfortunate wretches sentenced to transportation had been guilty of the most trivial offences, and the treatment accorded them simply made their last state considerably worse than their first. They were obliged, no matter how paltry was their crime, to consort with criminals of the deepest dye; thus the man who had merely shot a hare was sent out with some scoundrel who had perhaps well-nigh committed some diabolical murder, and had narrowly escaped the gallows. Things, happily, have changed since then, and more humane methods are adopted when dealing with criminals, be they first offenders or "old hands."

We were not sorry to leave the place and journey back to Hobart. When we went on board the *Yolla*, a name I shall never forget, the sun was shining

brightly, but there was a stiffish breeze blowing, and "white horses" were tolerably plentiful as we steamed out of the harbour, and I predicted a roughish trip back. The skipper said he "did not think it would be so." I am not a bad sailor, nor am I what may be termed a good one, but if there are big seas about, I like a big ship, after the pattern of a P. and O. liner, so that when we got fairly outside, and our little cockleshell of a boat began to cut capers, and be "rocked by the billows to and fro" in rather a perilous manner, I regretted we had not walked home, but when, after steaming hard against wind and tide for some hours, we got abreast of Cape Raoul, I certainly thought the jig was up. A bit of a sail, the size of a pocket-handkerchief, was run up, "just to steady her," but for some time, during which we got dangerously close to the shore, we made no headway at all, and we became very much alarmed, and began to talk about "messages for home," should any of us escape drowning.

However, our little boat at last rounded the Point, and we got safely into Wedge Bay, so called on account of a huge wedge-shaped rock being situated just outside the entrance. Once inside this land-locked harbour we breathed again, but only half our journey was completed, and we were to be entertained at a banquet that night at Heathorn's Hotel. Should we ever get there? The skipper said he thought the gale had blown itself out, and that the rest of the passage would be safely and comfortably completed. But once outside again, how it did blow! The wind fortunately, however, was behind us, and we made the fastest trip on record from Wedge Bay to Hobart, where on our arrival we were greeted by our friends

with: "How the dickens did you manage to get back?" Not one of them ever dreaming that the little *Yolla* would put to sea in such a gale. It is on occasions such as these that one agrees with Mark Twain, that the man who wrote "A Life on the Ocean Wave" was a fool.

If our experiences were uncomfortable on sea the warm welcome of friends ashore fully obliterated all *désagrement*, for kinder-hearted men it would be impossible to meet. Those who know what Hobart hospitality means will comprehend what I say, when we were taken in hand by men of the class of dear old Miller, Jack Hayle, Jack Curran, Charley and William Davies, Oscar Hedberg, Billy Ikin, and others. My readers may well remark there is nought of the sporting reminiscence about all this; quite true, but the reminiscences are so pleasant and interesting for me to recall that I trust I may be forgiven.

Although I have always visited Hobart with the object of getting a little rest and mild recreation, it has somehow or another happened that a race-meeting would be in progress, and that I should find myself a guest of the stewards at Elwick Race-course. Here again is an opportunity to enthuse over the delightful surroundings, the view from the Grand Stand being superb.

It was at Elwick Race-course I first saw a Totalizator in actual operation. I had seen the Pari Mutuel at Longchamps, but never had I seen the mechanical Tote at work. There can be no doubt of the fact that it is very popular with the general public, and very profitable to the club, the percentage deducted over the day's transactions amounting to

a considerable sum, thus enabling the executive to give fairly good stakes to be run for, which, without the Tote, in such a small community they could not possibly do. There are only a few bookies who run in opposition to it, and they have to pay rather a stiff licensing fee.

The peculiar stillness which prevails in the paddock and round about the enclosures is most striking. There stands the Tote, a mechanical recorder, a faint tick being the only sound emitted when the ticket is stamped and the investment registered. The voices of the few bookies as they shout "odds on the field," seem altogether out of place, and, as a Melbourne visitor remarked, "Quite a holy calm pervades the course and its surroundings." To any one accustomed to the ordinary din and turmoil of the Betting Ring the contrast was very remarkable. Without the Tote, the authorities say, racing could not be carried on, but whilst that statement may, in substance, be true, there can be but little doubt that there has been, owing to its introduction, some slight loss of prestige, as the principal events do not now attract horses from the sister Colonies to the same extent as formerly, and the intercolonial character of the various meetings is not so well sustained.

The Tote, whatever its merits may be, is certainly not popular with the majority of horse-owners. A man likes to back his horse, and he likes to know what price he is getting. If he takes fifty to one from a bookmaker, the fact of his horse subsequently starting an even-money favourite does not affect his wager, but in the Tote his odds vary in proportion to the estimation in which his horse is held by the public, and he has to accept the same odds as the

man who does no more than pay a small fee for admission to the course, and there ends his responsibility. The owner of the horse, however, stands entirely in a different position. To keep up even a small stud of race-horses entails an enormous expense, to say nothing of the risks of accident to which equine flesh is prone, and yet he has to share and share alike with every Tom, Dick, or Harry who puts his money in the Tote. This he naturally argues is the doctrine of equality with a vengeance.

There are doubtless many men so constituted, in whom the gambling spirit is in no way developed, but they form a very small proportion in the ranks of owners of horses. Men of fabulous wealth race horses not for the purpose of gain, but for the love of sport, but they, with but few exceptions, like to back their fancy. This gambling spirit is inherent in the human race, and the Tote does not offer facilities for its indulgence. There is no fascination in betting with a machine.

Tasmania has been the birthplace of some of our best horses, and one of the greatest racing enthusiasts, and a student of pedigree and form was Archdeacon Reiby, who was the sporting parson of the Colonies. It was he who bred Malua, the sire of Malvolio, Maluma, and others, and no visitor to Tasmania, fond of sport, considered his holiday complete unless he met and yarned with the Archdeacon. Another old celebrity was Tom Jennings, a man of over twenty stone, whose countenance, one could very well imagine, might have inspired Tenniel when depicting the typical John Bull, so much was he a counterpart of the John Bull of London *Punch*. Jennings kept a little roadside inn, just outside Hobart, and was quite

a popular character, for he was a sportsman of the old school.

Amongst the various products which Tasmania supplies, apples have become celebrated the wide world over, but to a Victorian the greatest treat is the delicious fish which abound in the sea and rivers. As every one knows, the fish caught in warm climes is not in any way to be compared with that netted in the more temperate zones, but the king of all the fish caught in the waters which encompass the Australian Colonies is, unquestionably, the Hobart Town Trumpeter. Of late years the English trout and English salmon have thriven apace, and before long there is every reason to believe they will be sufficiently plentiful to justify the withdrawal of the law prohibiting their being caught, and salmon cutlets and grilled trout will be no uncommon item on the bill of fare at Heathorn's hotel.

To any one fond of a quiet life, Tasmania offers no end of attractions. A genial climate, inexpensive living, rural and English-like scenery, and a people, descended many of them from good old county families, whose hospitality is boundless, and whose kindly instincts are ever in the ascendant.

COURSING

COURSING

CHAPTER I

I SUPPOSE no sport made greater or more rapid strides than did the sport of coursing in Australia. It became for a time almost a mania. Up to 1873 hares (imported game) were protected; that is to say, there was no open season. It was a punishable offence to kill one, a heavy fine being imposed upon any one having a dead hare in his possession. But before the period named hares had become fairly plentiful near Melbourne, and many little poaching parties were organised for the purpose of having a trial with the longtails. We had to make an early start, and great care had to be taken when passing a Police Station for fear our poaching excursion should come under the ken of some active and intelligent officer.

The buggies in which we drove to the appointed tryst were not particularly well adapted for carrying the dogs, and how to make them lie low, and steer clear of observation, was a matter of no small difficulty. But once we got into the bush we were comparatively free from molestation, and then came the difficulty of finding the hares. However, we were satisfied with small mercies, and so long as we

managed to get three or four trials were amply repaid for any trouble we had taken.

The genial climate of Australia seems particularly favourable for breeding almost anything, and hares in a very short time increased and multiplied amazingly. They are now so numerous in some parts of Australia as to be almost a nuisance, especially where orchards are being established, their great attraction being the bark of the young fruit trees, which they gnaw completely round, and thus destroy them wholesale.

Of pure bred greyhounds in those days there were but few, but kangaroo dogs were common enough. These kangaroo dogs were mongrels of a most pronounced type, but all had in them a strain or so of the greyhound or deerhound to give them pace enough to overhaul the bounding kangaroo. An old kangaroo dog could show as many scars as any grim old human warrior who had been slashed and cut by sword or sabre, for an old man kangaroo when stuck up, his back against a tree, can deal out fearful punishment to his pursuers with those hind legs of his, tipped as they are with sharp and horny hoofs. I have often seen dogs with their shoulders ripped open with the downward stroke of an "old man's" hind leg. These kangaroo dogs had to have moderate pace to overhaul an "old man," and wanted plenty of courage to get to close quarters with him when even they had "stuck him up."

But this has really nothing to do with coursing as we in England know it, but there was coursing in Australia before the English hare was acclimatised, the quarry being the wallaby, or Paddy Mellon, a diminutive kind of kangaroo that could, as the Yankees say, skip a bit and "twist and turn

like a weather-cock," but they lacked the endurance and pace of the hare. The headquarters of this wallaby coursing was at Narracoorte, on the borders of South Australia and Victoria, and they used years ago to run a Waterloo Cup, but naturally, when hares became sufficiently plentiful, this style of coursing died out.

It was in Victoria, early in 1873, that the restrictions with regard to the coursing or shooting of hares were relaxed, and it was then that those who took an interest in the sport began to bestir themselves. A club was formed, the Victoria Coursing Club it was called, under the patronage of the then Governor, Sir George Bowen. The late Sir William J. Clarke was the President, and the committee and stewards were selected from the most prominent and influential citizens, Members of both Houses of Parliament, leading squatters, merchants, doctors, barristers, lawyers; in fact there was not a class in the community which was not represented on the roll of members. For this out nearly every vessel arriving in Melbourne from England brought a consignment of greyhounds for some one or another, the blood from all the principal kennels in England being fairly represented. Amongst the first distinguished arrivals were Pell Mell, from the late Mr Saxton's kennel, and Cumloden, from that of Mr M'Connochie. I especially mention these two dogs, because their own and their progeny's merits formed the subject of many a heated debate, and over their breeding and pedigrees many a hard word was said and written by their respective partisans. Soft spots were discovered on the side of their dams or sires; they might have pace, but assuredly no dog with such and such a strain of blood could possibly stay,

and so on, *ad nauseam*. The whole controversy bore a striking resemblance to the wordy warfare which raged for some time years ago between my old friend Dr Shorthouse and Harry Feist of the *Sporting Life* anent the merits of the "Accursed Blacklocks." I refer to the days of Maccaroni and Lord Clifden, when the merits of these equine celebrities were the subject of much discussion and heated debate.

Those of us who are alive and remember the somewhat acrimonious controversy relating to the merits of these two dogs a quarter of a century ago, must smile, and wonder why we "fashed" ourselves so much, over so little; but we were terribly in earnest in those days, much ink was spilt, and much bad blood engendered, but the principal combatants lived long enough, I am glad to say, to shake hands and bury the hatchet.

The first public coursing meeting held in Australia under National Coursing Club rules took place at Sunbury, on the estate of the late Sir William J. Clarke, in May 1873, and a memorable meeting it was. Dick Tattersall, a cousin of Edmund Tattersall, of Albert Gate, was the judge, and a keen little Irishman and thorough sportsman, Mickie Whelan, was the slipper. Sir George and Lady Bowen and all the Melbourne aristocracy were there, and the confusion that prevailed ere we made a start was something to be remembered.

The paddock, where the beaters were ranged in line, was full of high tussocky grass and crab holes, the said crab holes being full of water. The high grass tussocks undoubtedly made fine shelter for the hares, but they, nevertheless, somewhat obscured the view of the greyhounds. The consequence was that

we were continually having "no-goes," but when once fairly on the scut, the way puss and her pursuers made the water fly as they raced round the tussocks and through the crab holes was a sight to see. The judge galloped fearlessly through this almost inland sea, followed by Sir George and Lady Bowen and some of the stewards, who were privileged to see the fun, and the state of mud and splash which ere long covered the riding-habit of the lady and the boots and breeches of the swells was a caution.

Poor Whelan, the slipper, was a little man whose great *forte* was soho'ing, and he, regardless of the plan of campaign, was continually off on his own account looking for a likely tussock which might possibly hold puss in her form. How on that eventful day he did not meet with a watery grave I do not know.

Later on, however, we managed better, and had good times. The Waterloo Cup—commencing with the modest entry of, I think it was three guineas, and for thirty-two dogs only—gradually assumed the same dimensions as its English prototype, and became quite an intercolonial affair. We paid Warwick the judge a high fee to come from England to judge for us; and I am sure I shall re-echo the sentiments of many an Australian when I say those were happy days. My reminiscences of the coursing field would really make quite a respectable volume, but I fancy a general reference will be more acceptable to the casual reader than if I went into details, which might only possibly interest those who took part in the proceedings I have here briefly related.

I cannot, however, dismiss the subject of our early coursing experiences without referring to my many yarns with old Warwick. He was a genial old soul,

and, when fairly on the job, would rattle off some of his early experiences, to all of which I was a most attentive listener. He used to chuckle immensely over the following little episode:—On one occasion, when he was judging at a meeting of the South of England Club, Lord —— had a dog running, and when the particular trial came on, his lordship rode and picked up his dog. The verdict, however, was unfavourable, and he asked Warwick if he noticed his dog fall, which Warwick admitted. He then asked the old man what he allowed him for the fall. Warwick's reply was, "I allowed him to get up again, my Lord," and then rode away.

Warwick's references to old Nightingale, the judge, were most amusing. Nightingale's language was largely interspersed with many forcible epithets which will scarcely bear repeating on paper, but Warwick always wound up any little anecdote with the apologetic remark that "he was a terrible man to swear, sir." I could reproduce many of the old man's yarns and sayings, but will content myself with relating an episode which has, doubtless, been frequently recorded, but as I heard it from Warwick's own lips, I must run the risk of it proving a "chestnut."

"One meeting, sir," he said, "hares had not been over-plentiful, and we did not finish until late on a Saturday, which prevented those particularly interested in the last ties of the various stakes from starting for home until the following Monday. Many of the coursing folk were thus thrown on their own resources to get through as best they could a Sunday in the old town of Shrewsbury, where you know, sir, I kept the Greyhound Inn.

"In the course of the evening they said, 'What can we do with ourselves to-night, Warwick?' 'Well,' I said, 'gentlemen, the Rev. Mr Brown preaches at St Paul's to-night, and he is well worth hearing, as he talks for about three-quarters of an hour, and never refers to a note or a book.'

"The idea of listening to so voluble a parson seemed to take on, and they all went to church, and I followed later, but found, not an unusual occurrence when the Rev. Mr Brown preached, the church packed, and people standing in the aisles spellbound by the eloquence of the preacher.

"He wound up, sir, a most beautiful sermon with these words. He said: 'Brethren, there are two courses yet left—one leads to Heaven, and the other to Hell; it is for you yourselves to decide.' Well, sir, I was standing listening most attentively; there was a pause, but in a voice loud enough to be heard some distance down the aisle came the words from old Tom Smith, as he looked round and saw me: 'Undecided, by G—!' he exclaimed; 'there's old Warwick with his hat off.' You may imagine the effect, sir. We all had to get out of the church as quickly as we could, and I never saw such a change from grave to gay in all my life, as we were convulsed with laughter."

For the information of readers not well versed in coursing laws, it may be as well to state that when a course is pronounced "undecided," the judge indicates the fact by taking off his hat.

Poor Frank Gardner came out after Warwick, and created a very favourable impression, as he was a fearless and most accomplished rider, but he had no tact, and he soon came into collision with some of the

owners, his outspoken and brusque manner giving great offence. Poor fellow, those who knew Gardner intimately overlooked his faults, and respected him, for they knew him to be an upright and honest man. His irritability of temper may be fairly excused, for he suffered from some internal malady, and died after a long and lingering illness.

There was a most marked difference in the manner of these two men. Warwick was courteous to a degree, and when questioned, with the utmost deference be it said, by some enthusiastic courser as to what he, Warwick, thought of the red dog that stopped at such and such a fence, etc., Warwick would look as grave as a judge should look, and say, "Oh, yes, I remember the dog quite well; he was going strong until we came to the fence, but there he stopped. He wants practising over fences, etc., etc., and he will win you a stake some day." The enthusiastic courser would go away quite satisfied, and tell me later that he had a very high opinion of Mr Warwick. On the other hand, when Frank Gardner was consulted under similar conditions, he would say, "Now, sir, do you want my opinion about your dog?" "Yes," the enthusiastic courser would say; "certainly, Mr Gardner." "Well, sir, the best thing I could recommend you to do is to hang him, sir." Warwick's style encouraged the "young idea." Gardner's style damped his ardour and hurt his feelings. As the copy-books say, "the dog is the friend of man," and the feelings of many of my Australian coursing friends were bitterly wounded when their favourites were thus unceremoniously damned.

Besides these two English judges, we had, as I have already stated, Dick Tattersall, who died some

years ago, Donald Bantock, whose brother is a famous London physician, and James Johnston. Their position was anything but a bed of roses, and they had much to contend with, as the majority of the coursing men in those days really did not understand the rules, and many an indignant owner wanted to know what the judge meant in deciding against him as "my dog killed."

We did not import a slipper, although Kerss came out as trainer to the Hon. W. M'Culloch, and accepted an engagement or two as slipper during his sojourn in the Colony. I think it was at Ballarat, the weather was exceedingly warm, and snakes were rather numerous—more plentiful, in fact, than hares. Kerss was jumping about in the long grass like a cat on hot bricks, and remarked to me that he came out from England to course hares, not snakes.

Our slipper for years, after Whelan retired, was Dick Banner, who earned the encomiums of both Warwick and Gardner, they always averring that he was quite capable of taking his place alongside Tom Raper, Kerss, and the best of them. A more hard-working, painstaking man I have never met—no day too long, never a grumble out of him, but as staunch and loyal an *employé* as ever man had. Another Australian slipper was George Bignell, who was a smart, active man, and our last judge, one of the most popular of all, was "Billy" Pitt, now the Hon. William Pitt, M.L.C. Lots of trainers came out and were paid handsome wages, and many have since settled in the Colonies, and, taking them all in all, they were a decent set of fellows.

One "new chum" trainer, a Geordie, used to get no end of chaff from his *confrères*. He was not lucky;

his dogs would frequently lead in the run up, but something would then happen, and he could not hoist a winning flag. His ill-luck became proverbial; he, however, made a bold bid for victory in a course one day, but no, the wrong flag again went up. His mates condoled with him, and the general comment, when he returned with his charge was, "I tho't you won that, Geordie." "Nay, nay," he said; "in Hengland, I could beat Lords, Dookes, and Hurls, but, hang me, I can't beat you bloomin' Colonials!"

CHAPTER II

THE fact must not be overlooked that, whilst many of those connected with the club had seen coursing in England, but very few had ever taken part in the management of a meeting. Consequently, nearly every one who accepted office had, in a manner of speaking, to be broken in. Thus, amongst others, the flag-steward had to be coached as to his duties, but our first flag-steward was a victim to nervous excitement, and made an occasional mistake, and when remonstrated with, keenly felt the reproach, but determining that it should not occur again, he on one occasion—and it was his last appearance—rode off, muttering to himself over and over again as a red and a blue dog were placed in the slips, "The blue dog's red and the red dog's white," yet notwithstanding this dirge-like refrain, the wrong flag again went up, and my good old friend, as they say in sporting parlance, "declined the office," and never acted as flag-steward again.

As secretary I came in for no end of adverse criticism, but by degrees things, as we say in Australia, "panned out" all right, and, upon the whole, I can look back upon my connection with the coursing people of Australia with infinite pleasure.

At the very outset of my career as a coursing

secretary one of my severest critics was an old veterinary surgeon named Mick Rowell. He was quite a character, not only in manner, but in appearance also. Although well advanced in years, he was as upright as a dart. He stood close upon six feet, his hair was black, and his beard closely cropped. He always wore a tall hat—they call them bell-toppers in Australia—the said hat being worn a bit on one side, and much the worse for wear, but withal shiny. His coat—in all the years I knew him he only had this particular one—was very long, and he wore it "all buttoned down before," and buttoned closely round his neck too. It was of that peculiar nondescript hue—it wasn't yellow and it wasn't brown; it was described as a dandy-grey-russet colour. He carried a staff "like unto a weaver's beam," and his office or location was the window-sill of an hotel which faced the horse sale yards, Kirk's Bazaar.

He was always to be found there towards midday, summer or winter, and from the number of his clients one would have imagined him to be a fairly well-to-do man; but I fear this was not the case. His manner at times was particularly brusque, at others it was courtesy and amiability itself. With all his faults, however, he was very much liked, and his reputation as a vet stood high with all the principal horse-owners.

Dick Tattersall was a great friend of his, as he was of mine, and Dick upbraided him for the unkind and really unjust criticisms with which he assailed me, the result being that the old fellow recanted, and one day begged Tattersall to take him to my office. I must admit I was immensely surprised

at the visit, but before I could utter a word he, standing hat in hand, said, "Sir, I have come round to make the *amende honorable* (pronounced Anglice), for I find you know a d—d sight more than ever we gave you credit for. There's my hand!" His quaint apology was frankly accepted, and Dick Tattersall invited us to the nearest hotel, where we pledged one another in sparkling Moselle, and from that day I never had a stauncher friend than old Mick Rowell.

He used to attend some of our earlier meetings, but ill-health overtook him, and not having the best of constitutions, he passed in his checks. R.I.P.

Our first slip-steward was dapper little Sam Waldock, who was Master of the Flemington Hounds, and a good all round sportsman into the bargain. He always had a few horses in training, but was not over successful on the turf. Little chap though he was, he knew how to put up his "bunch of fives," and many a man double his size has had to bite the dust when tackled by little Sam, for he was as game as the proverbial pebble. When he "shuffled off" he was succeeded by another little fellow, George Mayger, who was as neat and natty as his predecessor, and was never absent from his post a single day during many seasons. He accidentally misplaced an H one day, calling a dog to slips by shouting, "Where's the H'admiral?" He was never allowed an opportunity of forgetting his blunder, for "Where's the H'admiral," I'll warrant, re-echoes in his ears to this very day. Coursing was sport in those days, and the season had no sooner closed than we were looking forward with pleasurable excitement to the opening of the next.

The rearing and training of the puppies was a source

of never-failing interest, and their make and shape and style of going formed the topic of discussion on many a summer evening. The leading coursing men built most elaborate kennels, all the latest improvements, sanitary and otherwise, being adopted, regardless of expense. The trainers were most comfortably housed, and to a man fond of his dogs and fond of the sport, his life was quite to be envied. The owner would pay periodical visits accompanied by a few friends, and many a pleasant hour have I spent discussing the prospects of the saplings and the past deeds of the veterans in some cosy cottage, or under the shade of some broad verandah, "eating cake and drinking wine."

Who will ever forget the Stormont kennels, and old Josh, Mary Ann, his wife, and Arny, their youngster? No hard and fast rules were laid down here. The kennel was part and parcel of a well-built brick villa, and the greyhounds were housed and fed far and away better than many a so-called Christian; and many a night after dinner have we, at the request of the "squire," visited the kennels and inspected their occupants by candle-light.

Josh, Mary Ann, and Arny were all pressed into the service, holding candles here, there, and everywhere, whilst the master dilated upon the development of muscle and the general merits of the animals thus ruthlessly disturbed from their slumbers. That these rude awakenings were not productive of evil effects may be gathered from the fact that the kennel was credited with no fewer than three Waterloo Cups, besides many valuable stakes and trophies. Old Josh was a bit of a character. He worked night and day, but was very downcast when one of his

charges got beaten. His employer always said it was quite unnecessary to watch which flag went up. Josh's demeanour when picking up his dog was a sure indication. "Hulloa," he would say, "we're beaten. Josh is travelling as if something had happened, or he was going to a funeral." But many a time has the old trainer remarked that he "did not think he was 'baten' fairly."

These kennel visits could be enlarged upon, but sufficient has been said to indicate the almost youthful enthusiasm that everywhere existed amongst the men who loved the sport for sport's sake.

The quantity of whisky consumed at our early coursing meetings by some of the "Boys of the Old Brigade," was prodigious. Their flasks were of such proportions that if need be they could very well be utilised as warming-pans—when not otherwise engaged. The effects produced by frequent libations were in some instances comical, but in one case, I remember, tragical.

It was on a bitter cold day—we were coursing in the vicinity of Geelong—when occasional nips were necessary to keep up the circulation, that one poor fellow carried the pitcher to the well once too often. He became a bit unsteady and wandered off on his own account, never reached his hotel that night, and was found the next day sitting under a tree, stone dead. He was absolutely frozen to death.

Another ardent supporter of the sport, and the bottle, and a great believer in "doubles," had stated at the draw—the card consisted of two thirty-two dog stakes—that he wanted to back a double, namely, Pell Mell for the first event, and Pearl, his own dog, for

the second; and this double, Pell Mell and Pearl, was ever present in his mind. But on the following day when his dog was called to the slips, neither dog nor owner could be found. After searching for some time the old fellow was discovered sitting on a log, half-dazed, muttering to himself, "The two P's, gen'elmen, the two P's—Pell Mell and Pearl." His prediction, however, was not verified, and the double did not come off.

Other enthusiasts, and I may say connoisseurs, used to take with them a supply of chops and steaks, and a gridiron was quite a necessary adjunct to their outfit. A keen old sportsman named Joe Harper was always thus equipped, and I certainly think I never ate with greater relish a chop or steak thus grilled in the open over the embers of a wood fire. It may sound like damnable iteration, but I cannot refrain from emphasizing and dwelling upon the thoroughly sportsmanlike spirit which abounded in these halcyon days. The tedious journeys, the tramping miles upon miles o'er hill and dale behind the beaters in search of game were all undertaken with the utmost cheerfulness, and the utmost good humour ever prevailed.

Hares, as I have already remarked, increased so rapidly—they breed all the year round, and frequently produce four and five at a litter—that Coursing Clubs were formed in all parts of the Colony, Geelong, Ballarat, Hamilton, and other up-country townships quickly following in the wake of the Melbourne people, but in many instances game was not sufficiently plentiful to justify the holding of a public meeting; but so keen was everybody for the sport that, quite undaunted by the fact that occasionally

the number of trials totalled did not reach a dozen, plenty of entries were forthcoming, and the clubs prospered.

Amongst the curiosities of coursing literature was a rule of one of the country clubs to the following effect: "That any dog running by 'smell' (*sic*) shall be disqualified."

Many of the Press men told off for duty in these early days had very slight, if any, experience of the sport, and their descriptions of the various trials were somewhat amusing, the language adopted being quite novel when compared with that in ordinary use in coursing chronicles, but the following few lines concerning the scene at the railway station on the morning of our first meeting is worth repeating:—"A special train was provided for the members of the club and the public who wished to take part in the sport, and as the time of starting drew near the Spencer Street Station presented a very curious and interesting appearance. In every direction were to be seen men leading highly-bred and carefully-prepared greyhounds clad in all the coxcombry of dog clothing. These animals were subjected to a good deal of criticism by the persons present, the proper thing apparently being to run the hand slowly along the dog's back and say he was very fit. The dogs must have been in good condition, for it was rarely that any one ventured to give an unfavourable judgment."

But so important a feature in our sporting life did coursing become, that special reporters were engaged in England by some of the leading papers. Principal among those so engaged was my friend W. F. Lamonby, "Skiddaw," of the London *Field*, and now keeper of

the "Stud Book." His article published in vol. vi. of the "Stud Book" on "Coursing in Australia," is well worth reading, dealing as it deals in detailed fashion with the ups and downs of the sport at the Antipodes.

At Sunbury Sir William Clarke—he was not Sir William then—used to entertain at luncheon, in most sumptuous style, the members and their friends each day of the various meetings, but his hospitality was soon abused, and the stewards, when they found that a crowd of people attended the meetings, not so much for the sport as for the free feeding, persuaded him to discontinue the entertainments. But once during the season, on the occasion of running for the West Bourke Plate, to which Sir William always added a Fifty Guinea Cup, the same lavish hospitality was in evidence.

Private coursing parties were frequently organised, at which all the greyhounds would be nominated by ladies, when bracelets presented by the host would be run for. This style of coursing meetings became so popular that an Amateur Coursing Club was started, to which only the upper ten could gain admission, and which was managed by an entirely honorary staff. The meetings of the club were largely patronised by ladies, and the programme for the Bracelet Meeting was framed on similar lines to the Waterloo Cup, there being a Purse and Plate for beaten dogs, the prizes being bracelets of different values. The principal prize was worth a hundred guineas, and all the dogs were nominated by ladies. From all this may be gathered the extraordinary popularity the sport attained after the first few years of its introduction.

CHAPTER III

I DO not think I can better convey the idea of the discomforts we went through in the early days, than by reproducing an article I wrote in 1876, which really is a very fair sample of what frequently took place at many of the early meetings. Taking a retrospect, it has often been to me a matter for surprise that we were not, all of us, at some time or another, prosecuted for cruelty to animals. In England if there is a frost the meetings are postponed; in Australia if there was a drought and the ground as hard as adamant the meetings were not postponed, and I have seen dogs after a course return with their pads taken off as if with a knife. No trainer's outfit was complete unless he carried with him a miniature doctor's shop.

The article I refer to (reproduced by permission of the proprietors of the *Australasian*) was headed:—

"A TRIP TO TRAWALLA:

"OR, COURSING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

"I am most anxious at the very outset to let it be thoroughly understood that I have not the

slightest wish to criticise unfairly in any way either the Ballarat Coursing Club or its management, nor do I wish, even had I the power, to damp the ardour of those owners of greyhounds who so pluckily and perseveringly patronise the different meetings, and, in a manner of speaking, "come up smiling" time after time, notwithstanding repeated disappointments, and are ever ready to rally round Judge Johnston when he dons the scarlet; *tout au contraire*, I am desirous to award them the very highest meed of praise for their indomitable adherence to a sport which has this season, with them, been carried on in the face of unusual difficulties. If the members of the Ballarat Club are a fair sample of the Australian coursing community, there is little fear of the interest in the sport waning whilst this Mark Tapley characteristic so strongly predominates.

"My simple reason for penning these lines concerning my visits to Trawalla is to give an idea of the nature of the peculiar difficulties that have attended the two coursing meetings at which I was present.

"On the first occasion (the Ercildoun Cup Meeting) the heat was so intense as to place many a greyhound *hors de combat* before being put into the slips, and it is a matter of wonderment, considering the hardness of the ground, and the scorching rays of the sun, that either man or dog escaped without some really serious injury. The visitors on foot were clustered under what little shade the gum-trees afforded, and an umbrella was regarded with envious eyes by those not fortunate enough to possess one. The scarlet of the judge's coat was painful to gaze upon, and Banner, the slipper, with a pugaree, was an object of

pity. Such were the circumstances that attended the opening meeting of the season.

"The second meeting of the Ballarat Club was held at Ascot, under equally disheartening circumstances, though the drawbacks were of a totally different character; rain, hail, and snow fighting for the mastery, and both biped and quadruped underwent hardships indescribable.

"The third of this club's meetings, held at Trawalla, could boast of no better treatment at the hands of the clerk of the weather, for the Thursday morning opened with a heavy downpour of rain and a wretched cold, biting wind, which put to a most severe test the enduring powers of these hardy Norsemen.

"Owing to the exorbitant and preposterous terms demanded by the railway department, the club were unable to make arrangements for a special train; so the journey to Trawalla had to be made overnight to enable me to be at the meeting-place at the appointed time the following morning.

"The train landed us (myself and friend) at Trawalla between 12 and 1 o'clock on Wednesday night, and we immediately made tracks for the hotel close by, where we discovered, much to our consternation and disgust, that every bed was occupied, some two deep.

"There were, however, a couple of shakedowns made up in the dining-room, and as it was a case of Hobson's choice, we readily availed ourselves of them, and prepared to turn in for the night, in the hope of getting at the least a few hours' refreshing sleep. But all such hope was quickly extinguished, for the inmates of the hotel were little disposed to indulge in any such peaceful diversion. The restless

passe[illegible] some of them seemed unquenchable (literally pe[illegible]guratively) and the persistency with which one [illegible] their number in an adjoining room made known in [illegible] very loud key his desire to "lay fifty to forty and [illegible]ost the money" became wearisome. He seemed to [illegible]e the most speculative of the party, as in spite of his frantic efforts to lay (I wish he had laid and shut up), he found few to respond.

"In harmony (?) with the shouts of the aforesaid maniac, came ever and anon outbursts and exclamations from a loo party hard by, and the utter bewilderment of the man who was looed with two trumps in his hand was frequently and forcibly alluded to in terms the very reverse of parliamentary. Add to this the occasional moaning of some poor wretch of a greyhound, and the chorus of his companions, our night at the Trawalla Hotel was anything but pleasant.

"There was a capital fire in the room, but to our dismay, instead of it being the comfort we had looked forward to, it turned out to be simply a nuisance, as the continual tramp of unsteady visitors to the kettle on the hob only rendered matters more unbearable. Remonstrance was in vain, as the demand for toddy hot, strong, and sweet, was incessant and irrepressible, and was kept up without intermission until we were politely informed by the landlord that we must turn out, as they wanted to lay the breakfast table ready for an early meal. There was nothing for it but compliance with this unwelcome mandate.

"After completing a somewhat hasty toilet, as the phrase goes, we had just sufficient leisure to take a look round before breakfast. On our way we were

very nearly capsized by a trainer in hot [illegible] of a greyhound that had escaped from his custo[illegible] and was endeavouring to bolt a large piece of ra[illegible] meat which he had stolen from the cook. Othe[illegible] trainers were busy preparing for the start, and on all their faces were plainly discernible traces of the anxious and watchful night spent in anticipating their probable chances in the day's contest, and the astonishing confidence expressed by each and every one that their several charges would utterly annihilate their adjective opponents was marvellous in the extreme.

"During breakfast the rain, which had been threatening, came down in torrents, and continued unceasingly for more than two hours, but as it was announced that the first brace of dogs were to be in the slips at the home station punctually at nine o'clock, and considering that a distance of over four miles had to be traversed, a move in that direction was deemed advisable.

"On our arrival we found a small muster of half-drowned coursers, who had, like ourselves, journeyed from afar, but the kindly hospitality of Mr John Wilson was extended to us in such a manner as to make us forget our dismal experiences of the preceding night.

"It was half-past ten o'clock before operations commenced in earnest, but the hares had evidently been advised of our coming, as they had studiously forsaken their accustomed haunts, and beat after beat was taken, yet only two courses were run up till three o'clock.

"Mr Johnston looked grave, and a peculiar sadness overspread his classic brow as the dreary hours

passed slowly by. Banner's countenance was a perfect puzzle, and the look of his "mug," as his face was irreverently termed by an unclassical bystander, was the subject of much speculation. Up and down those hills he tramped, and occasionally where they were most steep took a run, and gazed scornfully upon the beaters for their unsuccessful efforts to find him a hare.

"The stewards, as a rule a jovial set of fellows, looked mournful and miserable, and the honorary secretary, on ordinary occasions a perfect host in himself, was subdued and sad; but the sadness of the secretary, the gravity of the judge, and Banner's scorn were unavailing, for on looking over our card at night we failed to discover that we had run more than six courses throughout the entire day.

"A pleasant evening was spent at the homestead, which had the effect of somewhat obliterating the disagreeable impressions of the night before.

"In conclusion, I wish the Ballarat Club every success, to ensure which a more plentiful supply of game is all that is necessary, as the members are undoubtedly coursers at heart, and are not easily daunted by ordinary difficulties."

CHAPTER IV

THE coursing fever soon spread to New South Wales, South Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania, and for the former Colony I held an unlimited commission to purchase live hares at five shillings per head, and I sent over some hundreds.

Meetings were first held on the famous Bathurst plains, and the Bathurst Cup became second only in importance to the Waterloo Cup in Melbourne. Later, however, the meetings of N.S.W. Club were held on a lovely estate not many miles from Sydney, the property of Mr Lamb, at Rooty Hill. These meetings were of a most enjoyable character, the Melbourne visitors especially being treated with unbounded hospitality.

My first visit to Sydney was made on the occasion of the opening meeting at Rooty Hill, and my experiences will ever be remembered with the liveliest satisfaction. Our party numbered about a dozen, and from the representatives at Government House and the leading people in Sydney, we received nothing but kindness. Picnics and excursions were organised for our benefit, and to many of us it was like the opening up of fairyland, so charming was the scenery and so cordial was our reception.

The praises of Sydney Harbour have been sung so often, but no language can be of too eulogistic a

passed on describing its beauties. I wish I had the power to even faintly depict its manifold attractions. Coming from Melbourne, where the scenery is not particularly interesting, and travelling through miles inexhaustible almost interminable gum forests, with their gaunt, skeleton-like, and grotesquely-shaped trees, it was, indeed, a contrast when we reached the old-fashioned, English-looking town of Sydney, with its quaint, narrow streets, and gazed on "our Harbour." Whilst on this topic of scenery I cannot do better than quote a description of the Australian Bush, written by my friend, the late Marcus Clarke, who wrote, as everybody knows, that wonderful book, "His Natural Life."

He says: "The Australian mountain forests are funereal, secret, stern. Their solitude is desolation. They seem to stifle in their black gorges a story of sullen despair. No tender sentiment is nourished in their shade. In other lands the dying year is mourned, the falling leaves drop lightly on his bier. In the Australian forests no leaves fall. The savage winds shout among the rock clefts. From the melancholy gum, strips of white bark hang and rustle. The very animal life of these frowning hills is either grotesque or ghostly. Great grey kangaroos hop noiselessly over the coarse grass. Flights of white cockatoos stream out, shrieking like evil souls. The sun suddenly sinks, and the mopokes burst out into horrible peals of semi-human laughter. The natives aver that when night comes, from out the bottomless depth of some lagoon the bunyip rises, and, in form like monstrous sea-calf, drags its loathsome length from out the ooze. From a corner of the silent forest rises a dismal chant, and around a fire dance natives, painted like skeletons. All is fear-inspiring

and gloomy. No bright fancies are linked with memories of the Mountains. Hopeless explorers have named them out of their sufferings Mount Misery, Mount Dreadful, Mount Despair. As when I am among sylvan scenes in places seen in

> 'Made green with the running of rivers, ing
> And gracious with temperate air,'

the soul is soothed and satisfied, so, placed before the frightful grandeur of these barren hills, it drinks in their sentiment of defiant ferocity, and is steeped in bitterness."

This picture of the Australian Bush is not attractive, but it is, nevertheless, graphic and true. It may, therefore, readily be conceived with what pleasurable emotions we feasted our eyes upon the lovely scenery with which Sydney is surrounded.

But, to resume. This chapter, I must remember, is supposed to be devoted to coursing experiences, but I could not resist the temptation to record the never-to-be-forgotten pleasures of my first visit to the metropolis of New South Wales.

The sport, as in Victoria, became immensely popular, and the interchange of visits by the leading coursing people was one of the most agreeable features of the season.

. . . . . .

The meetings of the Hamilton and Western District Coursing Club (Victoria) were run over quite park-like lands, and were most enjoyable, and I shall always look back with especial pleasure to my connection with them. The pleasure, however, is largely tinged with regret, inasmuch as my great friend, Henry Beresford de la Poer Wall, the principal of the Hamilton College, and whose guest I always was, is now no more. His

colleague, and also my good friend, J. A. Pickup, is at the English Bar, and when last I saw him, was in the best of good health.

Reminiscences of Hamilton!—well, they are almost inexhaustible. Poor old A. P. Rudd, the classical if somewhat dilapidated Pop Seymour, the Hon. Thos. Bromell, O'Connor (judge and journalist, who had but one eye), Alfred Tennyson Dickens (son of the Charles Dickens), and many other good men and true. I could well say—What nights!!! and they would know what that means.

I don't think it necessary, nor would any good purpose be served at this period of time, to make reference to the troubles and bickerings which occasionally arose, and which subsequently led to a split in the Victoria Coursing Club. These matters we can well afford to bury in oblivion, but one of the results of these dissensions was the opening up of the Werribee Plains and the establishment of the Australian Coursing Club.

Coursing reached its very heyday of prosperity when the Messrs Chirnside threw open the famous Werribee Plains, upon which the Australian Coursing Club (previously referred to) established their head-quarters. The only drawbacks here were the wire fences, but they were few and far between, and by degrees the greyhounds, owing to their being taught whilst puppies at walk to know what wire fences meant, were not such a detriment as one might at first suppose. This estate, Werribee Park, comprised no less an area than 90,000 acres of freehold land, the greater portion of which was beautifully grassed, and such a contrast to most of the coursing country—free from stones. I don't suppose better

coursing has been seen in any part of the world than was witnessed here, but the Plumpton craze took on, and dog-racing became the order of the day, and it seemed as if the sport of coursing was doomed from the first introduction of this enclosed system. I am not quite sure if the same results have not arisen in England. From being a healthy and invigorating exercise, it became simply a medium for betting. Dog-stuffing (an expression incomprehensible to the old school of coursers) and such like practices were indulged in, until the sport, as we used to know it some twenty years back, is almost as extinct as the Dodo—more's the pity. When I cast my eyes back upon those days, and think of the men who were its warmest supporters, I again say—more's the pity.

Irrespective of this dog-stuffing business, the knowledgable qualities of the greyhounds became developed in a very marked and undesirable degree. Many a third-season dog has shown no disposition to keep to the line of his game; he has headed in the direction of the "home," being fully alive to the fact that he would meet puss sooner or later. It was highly amusing to watch an old stager standing off in this way, but it was not by any means "according to Cocker." One by one the principal supporters retired; first one club then another became extinct, until at the present day the sport, which at the outset flourished in such a remarkable manner, is now in very low water indeed.

The general depression, the failure of banks and building societies would, doubtless, have checked its career in some measure; but certain questionable practices crept in, and the inevitable result followed.

I don't think coursing died a natural death. It was murdered.

There was one little club which struggled bravely to keep open coursing alive. I refer to the Fitzroy Club, whose leading spirit was Joe Brennan, a brother of the man who invented the Brennan Torpedo. He was a most enthusiastic supporter of the sport, and, by the way, was a bit of inventor too, for he designed and had constructed a machine, like a good-sized watch, to be carried in the pocket, for the purpose of registering the points scored in a course by a pair of greyhounds. As far as I can remember, there were two hands, one representing the red, and one the white collar, and by pressing a spring, the number of points as they were made were recorded in favour of the respective dogs, so that at the conclusion of the course, the register showed which collar had most points to its credit. It was very ingenious, but I don't think any of the judges adopted it.

The meetings of this club, managed by Joe Brennan, were held either at Sunbury or at the Werribee, both Sir William Clarke and the Messrs Chirnside offering every facilities for open coursing, and many a pleasant day have I spent with some of the old school tramping behind the beaters, and getting sport as in the days of old.

In the foregoing pages I have endeavoured to depict some of the ups and downs of coursing as I knew it a few years ago in Australia. To some of my readers the perusal of them will, I feel convinced, bring back pleasant memories, and many will join me in sighing for the days that are gone. I have not attempted to make these chapters a statistical record, but I have touched lightly upon incidents

which will certainly interest those who were my contemporaries, and they may possibly help to while away an hour of the casual reader, who may, in some way or another, have interests or connections in far-off Australia.

ATHLETICS

ATHLETICS

CHAPTER I

THAT Australia has produced some wonderful athletes goes without saying, and I have had many opportunities of witnessing their prowess in the various branches of sport they respectively represented, before they became famous. In rowing Trickett, Beach, and Searle made world-wide reputations, but the early demise of the latter, when just entering his prime, brought to an abrupt termination a career which seemed destined to eclipse that of any of his predecessors.

The following acrostic, written by my friend, H. V. Thompson, lately a journalist in Melbourne, but now on the staff of the *London Daily Mail*, appeared in the *Sydney Bulletin*, and most pathetically embodies the feeling of profound grief everywhere expressed for Searle's untimely death :—

"S peak softly, lads, our hero's gone
E re we could shake his hand upon
A well-earned victory. He'll never hear
R esounding loud the welcome cheer
L et loose from manly throats. He sleeps
E ncircled by his fame. Australia weeps."

With regard to rowing Melbourne has not the great advantages which belong to Sydney, inasmuch as the

Yarra and Saltwater Rivers are not to be compared with the Paramatta and the Nepean, and the honour of giving to the world such champions as I have mentioned belongs to New South Wales. Rowing and rowing men are naturally therefore not so much in evidence in Victoria as they are in the parent Colony, all the great boating events being rowed on the Paramatta River. Still, the Melbournites evince a keen interest in the doings of the Sydney boys, and they flock over in goodly numbers to Sydney when any event of importance is to be decided.

Hanlan was made much of on his first visit to Australia, and I had many chats with him; the current gossip that he had some mysterious mechanism which helped to propel his boat afforded him no end of amusement.

Considering that nearly the whole of the quarter of a century which I spent in Australia was passed in Melbourne, rowing, it may be gathered under the circumstances, occupies but a very small space in my "Reminiscences," although frequently thrown in contact with rowing men, amongst whom I number a great many friends.

Boxing has always been a favourite amusement in Melbourne, and I have generally managed to be present when any event of importance was on the *tapis;* but before boxing, as now practised, under the Marquis of Queensberry Rules, there was some desperate fighting, as they say, with the "raw 'uns." But during my time people were becoming more civilised, I suppose, and prize-fighting was suppressed by the authorities, but, notwithstanding all the vigilance of the police, fights were occasionally brought off, the last one of any importance being

between Abe Hicken, of Melbourne, and Larry Foley, of Sydney.

Jem Mace's arrival in Australia gave boxing a bit of an impetus, and sparring matches were not of unfrequent occurrence. Jem Mace, although he was then getting on in years, still retained his marvellous quickness and judgment of distance. I have seen both professionals and amateurs in an exhibition spar try to hit him, but they nearly always failed to get home anything but the faintest of taps. One of the most amusing exhibitions of boxing I ever saw was at the old Princess' Theatre, Melbourne, when Jem Mace put on the mittens to box old Harry Sallers, a coloured gentleman, a rare battler of the old school, and the darky's frantic but futile efforts to get home on old Jem were highly ludicrous, and were greeted with shouts of laughter.

Since writing the foregoing, I see that Jem Mace has absolutely entered the Ring again, to box a man named Donovan six rounds, for the veteran championship of the world. The ruling passion must be strong indeed, when Mace, who is now in his sixty-seventh year, is once again seeking glory as a veteran champion. Paragraphs appeared in the London sporting papers describing in detail the work Jem was doing; what he had for his breakfast, and what was provided for his dinner; but, notwithstanding all his training, Nature can't be trifled with, for I see that the two veterans could only box three rounds; it was then a case of "bellows to mend," and the referee humanely called a draw.

There has always been, and is to this day, a keen rivalry between the Sydney and Melbourne boxers, but a contest which created tremendous excitement

was that between Larry Foley, of New South Wales, and Peter Newton, of Victoria. I had seen, previously to this, many a merry set-to in back rooms of pubs, but this was the first public exhibition of the "noble art" at which I was present, and which was patronised by swells from the Melbourne Club and the leading sporting people of Melbourne. The match took place in a large hall adjoining Tattersalls Hotel, and the arrival of the "Bon tonners," headed by no less a personage than Captain Standish, the Chief Commissioner of Police, was greeted with loud applause by the "great unwashed," who were largely in the ascendant. The appointments of referee and time-keeper were not accomplished without considerable disorder, one section declaring lustily for Joe Thompson as referee, and another section being equally emphatic in denouncing him. For a time it was a perfect pandemonium, but when the "gentlemen of the fancy" had shouted themselves hoarse, the adherents of Joe Thompson prevailed, and the fight began.

I won't attempt to describe it in detail. It was, however, a desperate go. Considerable amount of feeling prevailed, and it was impossible to suppress the frantic yells of "Go it, Peter," or "Bravo, Larry," when either of the combatants were successful in landing "a beauty on the boko," or dealing out a "lovely stab in the bread-basket." I don't remember how many rounds were fought, but they went at it hammer and tongs to a pretty lively tune, until the exuberant spirits of the rowdy element got beyond control, and the fight was stopped by the police.

I must not omit to mention that the Master of the Ceremonies on all these occasions was a man named

Ned Bitton. He was the proprietor of a fried fish shop, and was a most pronounced "Sheeny" in looks and language, but he fully recognised the heavy responsibilities of his position, and the air of importance he assumed on these occasions was highly amusing to witness; he was very stout, and always arrayed himself in black clothes, but when addressing his audience, or introducing the combatants—"The Portland Puncher and the Collingwood Chicken, two game lads, gents, and all I ask is that you'll give 'em fair play. *Time.*"—Ned, in his shirt sleeves, and with a towel over his arm, had a most business-like look about him. During the progress of the bout, an occasional "Go it, Puncher," or "Let go with yer left, Billy," and "Now you've got 'im," would be heard from some enthusiastic supporter, who was immediately reproved by Bitton with, "Order there; can't yer give the lads a chance?" These were the customary incidents at ordinary "spars." On this particular and important evening it is needless to say Ned officiated with a dignity befitting so momentous an occasion.

The skill and stamina displayed by Larry Foley in this particular set-to caused his Sydney friends the greatest glee, and before he returned home he was matched against Abe Hicken, one of the most perfect models of a middle-weight pugilist that ever stepped into a ring. This fight came off at Perricoota, a station on the New South Wales side of the River Murray, and resulted in the victory of Foley, after a desperate battle, which lasted over an hour. I think I am correct in saying this was the last prize-fight of any note that took place in Australia.

The adoption of the Marquis of Queensberry's Rules

for glove-fights followed, and the Melbourne Athletic Club was formed, and for a time prospered immensely. Why it should not now be a flourishing institution I cannot comprehend. The premises occupied by the Club were large and commodious, and were fitted up with all the latest details necessary for a first-class gymnasium. The president was Sir John Madden, now Chief Justice of the Colony, and the manager Professor Miller, one of the most courteous of men, and it seemed safe to predict, from the *personnel* of the club, that a long and prosperous career for it was assured. But although everything at the start seemed so propitious, the interest after a few years began to flag, and the Melbourne Athletic Club has now, I believe, ceased to exist. I am afraid my sporting friends in Australia are a wee bit capricious and inconstant; but to "return to our muttons," and the boxing at the Athletic Club, some rare sport and exciting scenes have been witnessed within its walls. I will but briefly refer to one or two of the fights which aroused a vast amount of interest.

I suppose that between Joe Goddard, the Barrier champion, and Joe Choinski, of San Francisco, created the greatest excitement. I don't think there was much difference in their respective weights, but their style of fighting was somewhat dissimilar. Goddard was essentially a fighter, Choinski was a most scientific boxer, and seemed to somewhat underrate his opponent, with the result that he could not withstand the terrific rushes of Goddard, who, before many rounds had been fought, landed a blow on that fatal spot, the point of the jaw, and Choinski was counted out. Goddard, however, did not escape without punishment.

Whilst from a patriotic point of view, most people wished the Australian to win, much sympathy was felt for Choinski, who, by his quiet and gentlemanly demeanour, had made many friends during his short stay in the Colonies.

A contest which created wide-spread interest, and drew an enormous house, was that between Burke and Slavin. I am sure I am well within the mark when I say that several hundreds of people were unable to gain admission. This fight took place whilst the Marquis of Queensberry was on a visit to Melbourne, and at which he acted as referee. He, however, was rather late in putting in an appearance, the consequence being that he was unable to get near the entrance to the hall, the crowd being so dense, and he subsequently was hoisted on a man's shoulders, and hauled up through a side window, his advent under such circumstances being loudly applauded.

Another fight which attracted considerable interest was that between Tommy Williams, of Victoria, and George Dawson, of New South Wales. This match took place on the night of the Melbourne Derby, and the partisans of the two lads mustered in full force, the Melbournites swearing by Tommy Williams, and the Sydneyites believing the defeat of Dawson impossible. The term "game lads" was never more appropriately applied; both had any amount of science, but Williams was the hardest hitter, and before many rounds were over, it was pretty patent with whom victory would lie, Williams having frequently landed home some heavy blows ere administering the fatal "knock out."

I was present at the National Sporting Club, in

Convent Garden, to see Williams box Tracy, and was very much surprised to see him get his quietus in the first round.

Prior to leaving Australia, the great Peter Jackson took part in an entertainment given at the Club, and put on the gloves for an exhibition spar with a young amateur only about half his size and weight. The youngster was rather nervous, but somewhat proud of being selected to spar with the renowned Peter, and he shaped remarkably well, so well that when an opening occurred he got home on Peter's "kisser," and made his lip bleed. Peter did not relish this tap, and immediately went for the youngster, who was terribly scared when he saw that the coloured gentleman was in earnest. However, Professor Miller, who was general M.C. and Referee, interposed, and Peter had to modify his ardour, but not without an emphatic protest against the young fellow's idea of an "exhibition" spar. Peter certainly made a mistake when he lost his temper.

Another unequal match was between Sydney Reed, a young solicitor, and at one time amateur champion middle-weight boxer of England, and a young squatter named Ricketson. It looked like another case of David and Goliath, but David, as personated by Sydney Reed, had left his sling and stone behind him, and with it he apparently left the only chance of downing the big fellow. But one never can tell. Although Reed was once knocked clean out of the Ring, he showed any amount of pluck and science, which in the end prevailed against his huge and powerful opponent. The spar lasted four rounds, Ricketson failing to come up to time, Reed was awarded the verdict.

There was a big fight on one night, an immense crowd being present both inside and outside the club. I cannot recall the names of the boxers; they were two well-known men, however, but they both seemed afraid of each other, and for some rounds I don't think really a blow was struck; they certainly did nothing but "spar." It was evident they did not wish to hurt one another. They danced round the Ring like a couple of kangaroos, notwithstanding that several hints were thrown out to "Get together, boys." Some of the old members became a bit fidgety, and one declared he could stand it no longer, and went out. When interrogated outside as to the progress of the fight, he said, "I really don't know, but I think Jones," or whatever his name was, "is about three laps ahead," rather a curious commentary on a glove-fight.

I was introduced to the great John L. Sullivan when he arrived in Australia, the committee of the club welcoming him most cordially, and he was duly toasted in bumpers of champagne. To my mind, John L. was not by any means a nice man. He came to Australia under engagement to Messrs M'Mahon Brothers, the theatrical *entrepreneurs*, to appear in a drama called, "Honest Hearts and Willing Hands." On the opening night, the theatre was packed from floor to ceiling, the sporting world of Melbourne being anxious to see how John L. shaped both as a mummer and a boxer. He was greeted on making his appearance with rounds upon rounds of applause, mingled with any amount of good-humoured laughter. The scene was a blacksmith's forge, in which John L. appeared as the blacksmith. He was clad in black knee-breeches, silk stockings, low patent leather shoes

with silver buckles, and wore the orthodox leathern apron. This get-up somewhat aroused the risible faculties of the audience, and his unsteady gait, the result presumably of his not having quite lost his sea-legs, caused the gallery boys to give him a turn. This riled the hero considerably, and forgetting for the time all stage etiquette, he advanced to the foot-lights, sledge hammer in hand, and told the gallery boys that if they did not behave themselves, he would "put a tail on some of them." I have seen some funny things in my time, but John L.'s first appearance on the stage in Melbourne takes some wiping out.

To any one fond of boxing, the representation of the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight by the cinematograph is most interesting, as, irrespective of the life-like aspect of the fight which it exhibits, it sets one wondering what will not science do for us next. The fight and its preliminaries are shown with startling reality, but the silence—the lack of noise—has a most strange and peculiar effect. It seems odd not to hear the time-keeper call "Time," or the referee's injunctions to "Break away, lads," an order which must frequently have been given during the progress of the bout, as there was evidently any amount of clinching, so much so, that on the occasion of my visit, a pugilistic enthusiast in the gallery called out, being quite carried away by the illusion, "Why don't you kiss him?" and again, whenever a telling blow was administered, there would be many an exclamation of, "That's a beauty!" and so on. The exhibition attracted large crowds daily, a good percentage of ladies patronising the show.

CHAPTER II

WRESTLING, too, had its day in Melbourne, and Whistler, when he arrived, was the hero of the hour. It seems to be admitted on all hands that Whistler has had no equal as a wrestler in any part of the world, but, as the old saying goes, he could not stand corn. He kicked over the traces, and used to exhibit his marvellous strength in the most idiotic fashion, lifting dining-room tables with his teeth, chewing and eating up glass tumblers, and such like insanities, with the inevitable result, he went under; broken glass, although washed down with champagne, not being good for the digestive organs. You see he had not the stomach of an Emu, to whom nails and pieces of iron-wire rank as delicacies.

Donald Dinnie and Professor Miller, both remarkably powerful men, with world-wide reputations, had many a bout, but wrestling never became so popular as boxing, although it must be admitted that in its day it created an enormous amount of enthusiasm, and I have seen the Exhibition Building packed with most enthusiastic crowds when any special match was set down for decision, that in which the two above-named champions met being productive of intense excitement. But it was not a pleasant sight to see Donald Dinnie get a half-Nelson hold, I

think they call it, on the Professor, and nearly twist his arm out of its socket, which was what occurred in the match referred to, and the Professor had, perforce, to yield.

We had a great night once with the wrestlers. It was during the time the contests took place between Cannon and Connor. At the conclusion of one of their bouts, an ardent supporter of wrestling invited a number of his friends to partake of refreshment (the brandy at the club was old and curious), and meet these two athletes. A goodly crowd responded to the invitation, and the wrestlers being obliging, the intricacies of the "hammer-lock," the "half-Nelson," and other wonderful holds were explained and expatiated upon until the "wee sma' hours," everybody being delighted, and everybody, moreover, going to bed fully believing they were perfectly conversant with the Græco-Roman, Cumberland, and catch-as-catch-can styles, so very obliging were the professionals in demonstrating how it was all done. At breakfast, a somewhat late one, on the following morning, wrestling was again the one absorbing topic, and many asseverated most emphatically Connor could not be beaten. "No," said one of the guests, "Connor's very good, but Henessey beat you all last night." "Henessey—Henessey—I don't remember any one of that name being present," said the chairman. His friend simply pointed to a bottle of "Three Star,"—and the band played.

It was here at the Melbourne Athletic Club I first heard Harry Atkinson, now dubbed in London the "Australian Orpheus." His imitations were looked upon as very unique, and when one day he performed before dear old Johnny Toole, he listened to and

accepted the old chap's advice, resigned his position as accountant to a leading firm of merchants, and came to London, where his remarkable gifts have been duly recognised and rewarded.

I have been present at all the principal cricket matches played on the Melbourne ground, from that between W. G. Grace's first team to those recently played with Stoddart's Eleven. I think, notwithstanding all the extraordinary enthusiasm over the last test matches, the first arrival of the great W. G. evoked even a greater amount of enthusiasm, and was looked forward to with the keenest possible interest. I well remember the day that Grace and his team landed. There was a match being played, South Melbourne against East Melbourne, at the first-named place, and the English team were driven on to the ground by Jimmy Garton, in one of his four-in-hands, and they met with a particularly hearty reception.

These matches between East and South were productive of intense excitement, and party feeling occasionally ran very high. On this particular day the roughs, for some cause or another, absolutely pelted the visiting team with road metal as they were leaving the ground.

The members of Grace's team, on making their appearance on the Melbourne Cricket Ground, on the occasion of their first match, were greeted with round upon round of cheers from the thousands assembled, and when in due time the great W. G. appeared at the wickets, bat in hand, excitement reached the highest pitch. How was he to be got out was the question. The coveted honour of disposing of the great man fell to the lot of J. Allan, who was dubbed "the bowler of a century," who, when he accomplished

this all-important feat, immediately executed a sort of *pas seul*, so greatly did he rejoice.

The final test match with Stoddart's team will long be remembered by those fortunate enough to witness it. How the hopes of England fell when Stoddart was given out leg before, the first ball bowled, I think on the second day! How young Australia was jubilant, but how, when Ward and Brown got together, they played such cricket and saved the day! I have seen a good deal of cricket in my time, but such "attack" and "defence" has never been excelled. The bowling and the fielding was superb, and the tension for a time was positively painful.

Ladies did not patronise cricket so much in the early days as they do now, and were not so *au courant* with the intricacies of the game; consequently their comments are not now so ludicrous. We don't overhear remarks about the laziness of those two men in long white coats; they never try to stop a ball, etc., or remarks of the short-sighted lady, who said, "What a long time Mr Saunders has been in!" she mistaking "Sundries" for "Saunders." No; the up-to-date ladies know what cricket is, and also how to play it.

Amongst the Knights of the Trigger, Australians have been more than able to hold their own, the most recent visitor from Australia game enough to enter the lists against English and foreign shootists being Mr Donald Mackintosh,* whose performances at the English Gun Club, Monte Carlo, Brussels, and other places where shootists most do congregate, will bear

* Mr Mackintosh won no less a sum than £3500 in stakes and trophies during his recent visit to Europe.

favourable comparison with the crack-shots, from whatever portion of the globe they may hail.

In the early days, old Tom Grimwood and William Sayer were almost invincible at the traps; but amongst the latter day champions must be mentioned such experts as Leander Clarke, who tied in a match with the celebrated American shot, Captain Brewer, each killing ninety-five birds out of a hundred at thirty yards' rise; J. L. Purves, Q.C., W. T. Coldham, and many of the younger generation, who may be classed as good all-round men.

With regard to billiard players, it is true we have not yet unearthed a Roberts, but young Charley Memmott takes some beating when in good form, and holds his own with most of the best in England.

Enough has, I think, been written to demonstrate that, no matter what branch of sport we may turn to, Australia has the distinction of producing many champions, of whom she may justly be proud.

THEATRICAL MEMORIES

THEATRICAL MEMORIES

THE very first theatre I ever visited was the Old Surrey in Blackfriars Road; it must have been in 1850 or 1851. The piece played was called, I think, "France in 1790." It certainly dealt with incidents of the great Revolution, and the guillotine was shown upon the stage, but not in actual operation, as the curtain descended before the victim met his fate. The unpleasant impression created upon my youthful mind by this piece of realism was not eradicated for many a long day. As I grew older my favourite theatre was the Olympic, when little Robson was in the heyday of his prosperity.

Frequent reference is made to Robson's abilities in nearly all the dramatic journals of the day, but, no matter how facile the pen or gifted the writer, language cannot adequately convey the effect which his marvellous faculty of depicting both grave and gay produced. Take his Jacob Earwig in "Boots at the Swan," "Jem Baggs, the Wandering Minstrel," Pawkins in "Retained for the Defence," and many other plays and farces where his comicality was as quaint as it was irresistible. On the other hand, his pathos in the "Porter's Knot" and plays of a like character, was touching to a degree. It was impossible

to spend an evening at the Olympic without shedding tears; one moment they would be drawn from you with laughter by some indescribable look or gesture, and in the next grief would gain the mastery, as Robson, with broken accents and tears in eyes, made some touching appeal.

I shall never forget Robson one evening. He was playing in a piece called "Camilla's Husband"; the part he enacted was that of a travelling tinker, and a real live donkey was introduced in one of the scenes. From some cause or another Robson became tongue-tied, and there was a very awkward wait, during which Robson's "phiz" was a study. The actors and actresses on the stage were in a bit of a dilemma; the cue was more than once repeated, but for a few seconds—it seemed minutes—a most embarrassing silence prevailed, only to be broken by Robson, who, with a look indescribably comical, asked his nearest colleague, in a voice just loud enough for the house to hear, "Have you got a cough lozenge?" There was such a peal of laughter at this unlooked-for interpolation. The lost word was, however, soon recovered, and the play proceeded.

Robson was a great friend of a friend of mine, to whom he one day mentioned that he had engaged a young fellow who, he thought, would make his mark on the London stage, that young fellow being Henry Neville.

The pit at the Haymarket during the Buckstone *régime* was another of my favourite haunts. I well remember one night particularly, when there was indeed an attractive Bill, the two plays represented being the "Overland Route" and the "Critic," Mr and Mrs Charles Matthews, Buckstone, Compton, and

Chippendale being in the cast. It was here, too, that I saw Sothern as Lord Dundreary in "Our American Cousin." Charles Matthews stood alone as a comedian, and no one has ever, I think, filled his shoes. There was a burlesque in which both he and his wife appeared, and which is indelibly impressed upon my memory. It was called "Jason, or the Golden Fleece," and in it Mrs Charles Matthews uttered a mock curse with such tragic vehemence that it was enough to make any one "sit up."

At the Adelphi in Ben Webster's time I have seen, amongst others, Mr and Mrs Boucicault in the "Colleen Bawn," and Johnny Toole and Paul Bedford in the "Area Belle," when the dear old chap warbled forth a "Norrible Tale." I was present at the Princess in George Vining's time, when the drama, "It is Never too Late to Mend," was first produced. There was a tremendous uproar when in the prison scene a boy, personated by either Miss Louise or Miss Nellie Moore, I forget which, was apparently subjected to some harsh and brutal punishment, which piece of realism the house vigorously and noisily resented, and the thing had to be toned down considerably.

I remember seeing Henry Irving at Manchester or Edinburgh—I am not quite sure of the town, it's so long ago—when he played in a piece called "Hunted Down," and at the same time Lydia Thompson, the most charming of charming burlesque actresses, played the "Middy Ashore." I have seen the late Edmund Phelps in most of his principal characters; the one that had a peculiar charm for me was his Sir Pertinax Macsycophant in the "Man of the World." The greatest Shakespearian production I ever saw was "Julius Cæsar," at Drury Lane, when Phelps,

Walter Montgomery, and Anderson were in the cast. Fechter was all the rage then at the Lyceum, his "Hamlet" being diversely criticised, but in "Bel Deminio" and the "Duke's Motto," he came in for unstinted praise.

I have heard Charles Dickens read his "Christmas Carol" and "The Trial from Pickwick." It was at St James' Hall, and I well remember the dignified reproof he administered to some late arrivals, by simply pausing in his reading, and waiting until they were seated. His pathetic rendering of the story of "Tiny Tim" was unapproachable, and during its recital there was not a dry eye amongst that packed assembly. I think I have heard more than one amateur excel him in the description of the trial "Bardell *v.* Pickwick."

The greatest master of the art of elocution I ever listened to was the Rev. J. M. Bellew. I have "sat under him" at the old Bloomsbury Chapel, and I have heard him lecture on Shakespeare and other subjects. His dignified presence, his mellifluous voice gave an inexpressible charm to his oratory which I have never known excelled, notwithstanding the fact that I was a frequent visitor to the Strangers' Gallery at the House of Commons, and have heard in my time such celebrities as Lord Palmerston, Lord Beaconsfield, John Bright, Mr Gladstone, and others in more than one debate.

When occasion offered, I have found my way to the gallery when grand opera was produced at either Her Majesty's or Covent Garden, and I have heard Guiglini and Santley, Mesdames Titiens, Patti, both Adelina and Carlotta, Parepa, and other stars, and I happened to be at Her Majesty's the very night be-

fore it was burnt down in 1867, when "Don Giovanni" was produced, with Santley in the title *rôle*.

In these days a "night out" was not completed without a supper at "Evans," when Paddy Green held his sway, and where we would, over a devilled kidney and a tankard of nut-brown ale, discuss the topics of the day, and listen to glees and part-songs rendered by a choir of boys in faultless fashion. Comic singers would do their turn, and general merriment prevailed. Herr von Joel would hand round the cigars; his powers of mimicry of the feathered tribe having with increasing years failed him. He was, however, "retained on the staff"—so the Bills had it—in recognition of "valuable services rendered."

Music-halls were not so plentiful thirty years ago. Weston's (now the Royal) in Holborn, and the Canterbury over the water, being those most frequented. I fancy the Oxford was a comparatively new venture, and the Alhambra was then called the Panopticon in Leicester Square, the centre of the said Square being then covered by the Great Globe.

I suppose our tastes have improved since those days, yet I don't know that any negro delineator has ever charmed me as Mackney did; not that I would for one moment decry the merits of Eugene Stratton, who is an *artiste* to the tips of his fingers, and so was Billy Emerson, one of the most graceful dancers and refined singers in his own particular line. (I don't know whether "Billy" ever visited England.) But in the times I am writing about, songs such as "Villikins and his Dinah," "The Ratcatcher's Daughter," and "The Young Man from the Country," were the popular songs of the day, and were hawked about

by itinerant vendors with cracked voices, and played on German bands and street organs wherever one went. I suppose the present generation would call these "pop'lar songs" tommy rot, but I don't think "Tarrara-boom-de-ay" is a production that may be termed an effort of some mighty genius. Without doubt, the class of entertainment given at the Halls has improved almost beyond belief during the last quarter of a century, and there is no fear that the high standard attained is likely to be lowered, for the public taste, once whetted with first-class music and artistic performances, devoid of vulgarity, will brook no falling off in the quality of the entertainment submitted.

It savours, however, somewhat of an incongruity to hear, amidst the jingling of glasses, the fumes of whisky toddy, and clouds of tobacco smoke, a lady warble forth concerning "The Holy City," "Jer*oo*salem," "Hosannah," and the like, and to be then followed by an *artiste*, in very dilapidated garments, who chortles about "Doodle-doodle-doo, if you don't doo them, they'll doo you." I must admit it sounded somewhat odd, but enthusiastic applause greeted both singers, the taste of the vast audience being of a thoroughly diversified and cosmopolitan order.

Like a good many young fellows, my theatrical tastes developed in me the idea that one day I might possibly be an actor, and a little band of adventurous youths formed an Amateur Dramatic Club, and occasionally gave performances in schoolrooms or public halls in aid of some charitable fund or another. We certainly rather fancied ourselves, and emboldened with fairly moderate success, we allied

ourselves with the members of another Amateur Club, quite as bad as we were, and took for three nights the Cabinet Theatre. It was up King's Cross way, but has no doubt long been pulled down. I wonder it did not fall down, considering of what we were guilty. We did not, as may be conceived, play to very full houses. There was any quantity of paper about, but we managed to get out without any serious loss, a few pounds each being levied to meet the rent and the *costumier's* bill.

Considering the bent of my mind, it may naturally be assumed that I have seen the most important stage representations in Melbourne during my twenty-five years' residence in that city; and my statement will be borne out by the many English professional people who have visited Australia, that more critical or more generous audiences cannot be found in any part of the globe.

George Coppin is the oldest theatrical *entrepreneur* at present living in the Colonies, and he has a record which any one might envy. He has had his ups and downs, but has always been able to weather the storm, and is universally and deservedly respected by all with whom he is thrown in contact. He is now a member of the Legislative Council, representing an important constituency. In conjunction with his partners, Messrs Harwood and Stewart, tragedians of the stamp of G. V. Brooke, Walter Montgomery, and William Creswick were induced to visit the Colony, and, later, comedians of the rank of Mr and Mrs Charles Matthews played in the principal Colonial cities under their management. George Coppin was an actor of considerable ability, and shone to perfection in such parts as "Milky White,"

Chrysos in "Pygmalion and Galatea," "Paul Pry," etc. I first saw "Milky White" played at the Strand, London, with the author Craven in the title *rôle*, and it was in this delightful little play that Millie Palmer, afterwards Mrs Bandmann, made her bow to a London audience. Harwood, too, was inimitable in some parts, such as Mo Davis in the "Flying Scud," or Cabriolo in the "Princess of Trebizonde." On the retirement of this triumvirate, theatrical enterprise was developed in an extraordinary degree by their successors, Messrs Williamson, Garner, and Musgrove, who struck out in quite a new line, deserting what is termed the legitimate drama for the comic operas of Messrs Gilbert and Sullivan, and high-class comedy.

J. C. Williamson, the head of the firm, and his wife, Maggie Moore, who both came from America, had all Melbourne at their feet instanter, by their masterful performances of John and Lizzie Stofel in "Struck Oil." They did enormous business, and literally and figuratively "struck oil." A little later, Arthur Garner arrived on the scene with a Comedy Company, composed of actors and actresses of more than usual ability, the head and front of the said Company being the late Freddy Marshall. He, to my mind, was the nearest approach to a Robson I have ever seen, possessing, as he did, the wonderful faculty of causing "the extremities alike of joy and grief to find utterance in tears."

I feel convinced that it was with the arrival of this Company that stage mounting entered upon quite a new era, which one can safely say has in no manner retrograded since the "Firm" have taken the lead. Arthur Garner was a good man in what may be

termed domestic drama, and George Musgrove was the man of business.

This combination succeeded beyond measure; no expense was spared in mounting their productions, and the best talent was procured, regardless of monetary considerations, and although it may appear extravagant and boastful, I unhesitatingly affirm that some of the productions of comic opera, with Miss Nellie Stewart as *prima donna*, were in no sense inferior to those produced at the "Savoy" in London. I am somewhat overrunning my story, however, so must hark back a bit.

So deservedly prosperous was this triumvirate, that they secured a lease of the Old Princess Theatre, a building constructed almost wholly of galvanized iron, which they rebuilt on a scale of luxury and magnificence, which I have rarely in my travels seen exceeded. There may be hundreds of theatres larger, but there are none more elegantly decorated, more comfortable, or better ventilated than the Princess, Melbourne.

The principle of the sliding roof was here adopted, so that during the hottest nights, the theatre was always comparatively cool. The eye was gratified by the sight of little ferneries and trickling fountains. Refreshments were served in spacious balconies, and both in front of the curtain and behind it too, every little detail to ensure the comfort of those who amused, and those who came to be amused, was attended to. To a young Australian architect is the credit due for designing and carrying to completion one of the prettiest and one of the most comfortable theatres it has been my lot to visit. This architect's name is "Billy,"—I beg pardon, I knew him when a

boy in knickerbockers—I mean the Hon. William Pitt, M.L.C.

Comic opera was the standing dish at the Princess, but occasionally high-class comedy and even tragedy would for a time comprise the "bill of fare."

For some years past the comic operas have been produced under the stage management of Harry Bracy, who, with his wife Clara Thomson, were members of the Company. In the Press and everywhere, where theatrical gossip was the theme, but one opinion prevailed, viz. that Harry Bracy had no compeer in the difficult *rôle* of stage manager. The Bracys, as with the Broughs, were deservedly great favourites with Australian audiences, and a "Complimentary Benefit" had always a dual significance, a cordial reception and an overflowing treasury making manifest the high esteem in which these capable *artistes* were held by the Melbourne public.

It cannot be said that the "Firm" had not to contend with friendly, but at the same time rather powerful rivals in the shape of the Busy B's, viz. Messrs Brough and Boucicault.

Bob Brough and his wife were not long in Melbourne before they established themselves prime favourites. Brough made his first appearance as the Lord Chancellor in "Iolanthe," and Boucicault came out with his father when he made his tour of the Colonies, where the younger elected to stay. These two scions of families, whose names are as familiar as household words to playgoers all over the world, joined hands and presented high-class comedy as it was never presented before to Australian audiences. They allied with themselves many sterling comedians, such as Geo. Titherage, W. Anson, and Cecil Ward,

whilst Mrs Brough, Miss Tempest, her sister, Miss Romer (Bob Brough's mother), Pattie Brown, all actresses of recognised ability, enabled them to cast their various pieces with remarkable success.

Their home was the Bijou Theatre, and no matter how great the attractions elsewhere, the little house was nightly filled by enthusiastic audiences. The shekels rolled in, and if the Company presided over by the two Busy B's were rendered happy by the unstinted patronage of their Melbourne friends, their Melbourne friends were proud of their Company.

During the height of their success, however, a terrible misfortune overtook them, viz. the total destruction of the theatre by fire. Their wardrobes, their scenery, everything, was destroyed, and the honey so industriously stored by the Busy B's was thus cruelly filched from them. It was a terrible blow to all concerned, but the scene on the night of the opening of the newly-built Bijou must have compensated them in some measure, for they had, notwithstanding their great pecuniary loss, unmistakable evidence that they had not lost their friends, but that they still lived in the hearts of the Melbourne public.

Many touching evidences of this fact must be not only indelibly impressed upon their minds, but also upon the minds of those who assisted in giving outward and visible signs of their sympathy, when the opportunity occurred, viz. at a "Benefit."

There are, of course, Benefits and Benefits. Some Benefits take the form of charity, as in the case of a performance organised for the relief of any one who may have met with misfortune, and who may not have the wherewithal to withstand "the slings and

arrows," but many theatrical Benefits do not come under that category.

I am fully alive to the wisdom of the old saw that "fine words do not butter the parsnips," but at the same time many theatrical Benefits, at which I have taken perhaps rather an active part, have not been organised altogether on the plea of charity, and whilst I quite recognise the fact that the "tangible" Benefit is not to be altogether disregarded, the recognition of one's merits, social and intellectual, is really the greatest reward which such demonstrations can convey. Should misfortune overtake you, and your money has flown, there is some consolation in feeling that you still have the good opinion of your fellow-men. "Gently over the stones, Poll" (as the man with the pimply face said to his barber, when being shaved)—I fancy some of my friends, hauling me up with some such a comment—these rambling dissertations are not reminiscences. Quite true, but I think the remarks, nevertheless, are not altogether *mal-apropos*, as I certainly have assisted at Benefits where the paramount idea has been to testify in some form the esteem in which the *bénéficiaire* was held by his fellow-citizens, and mere pelf has been quite a secondary consideration, and has been very properly relegated to the background.

When one takes a retrospect of his journeyings to and fro on this wide world of ours, it seems a bit strange that I, as a youngster, should have sat in the pit at the Haymarket, and applauded to the echo Mr and Mrs Charles Matthews, and should have done ditto at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, some 16,000 miles away. That I should have seen Herr Bandmann and his wife, Millie Palmer, Henry Creswick,

Johnny Toole, and John Billington, Dion Boucicault, Miss Saunders (Lady Don), and some few others, whose names now escape me, all of them, I say, have I seen on both sides of the globe. One only has to travel a little to find out how small the world is.

I verily believe that no portion of Her Majesty's dominions is better or more reasonably catered for with regard to dramatic and musical productions than the Australian Colonies. It is rarely that prices are raised, no matter how great the "star" appearing. The ordinary prices of admission are 7s. 6d. for the dress-circle, and 5s. for the stalls. The visit of Sara Bernhardt and Mr George Edwardes' Gaiety Company were certainly made exceptions to this rule, and no one objected, for both entertainments, notwithstanding their diametrically opposite character, were well worth the extra charge.

The engagement of the "Great Sara" was looked upon as rather a risky experiment, but despite the fact that all her plays were spoken in the French language, intellectual Melbourne was to the fore, and there was never a vacant seat in the theatre. No greater treat has ever been provided for the Australian public, and if Messrs Williamson and Musgrove had no other claim upon the gratitude of the playgoers of Australia, they can, with certainty, look back upon their Bernhardt season with unbounded satisfaction, as they will long be regarded by the thousands, who appreciated the genius of the "Divine Sara," as public benefactors.

I have made a passing reference to the London Gaiety Company, but it brings with it sad memories, for does it not recall poor Fred Leslie, who was positively beloved by every man, woman, or child

who was privileged to know him; he was as great a favourite off the stage as he was on it, and his death was sincerely mourned by hosts of Australian friends and admirers. The Gaiety Company's first visit to the Colonies was made in 1888, whilst I was home in England for a holiday, but on their second visit I became very intimate with several members of the Company, and had more than one chat with Miss Nellie Farren, whom I had seen as Sam Willoughby, in the "Ticket of Leave," at the Olympic—well, politeness forbids me saying, how many years ago—but her sprightliness she still retained, and she and Fred Leslie will long be regarded as the standard by which all burlesque *artistes* will be judged. Then we had Sylvia Grey to charm us as a *première danseuse.* Comical Charley Danby, graceful Florence Levy, Harry Monkhouse, Teddy Lonnen, Freddy Kaye, Louis Bradfield, Decima Moore, Florrie Lloyd, not forgetting genial "Pat" Malone the manager, and many others whose fame and position in England are assured, but all of whom have, I doubt not, pleasant recollections of their trips to Australia.

Another great favourite who recently joined the majority, was dear old Charley Ryley. He was originally a member of the Princess Opera Company, and his singing, acting, and dancing in the "Gondoliers," soon placed him on a pedestal of fame from which he was never dethroned, and many a sympathetic tear was shed, I'll warrant, when the news of his death reached Australia.

I must not omit to mention a most tragic, and unlooked-for finale which occurred at the Princess one night. It was on the occasion of a representation of "Faust," wherein a most capable vocalist and actor

named Fredrici met his fate. The opera had gone particularly well this evening, and Fredrici, as Mephisto, had excelled himself, but his final disappearance down the trap amidst flames and red fire in the last scene, proved his final appearance on any stage, as he fell dead when he reached the basement, a heart affection being, I believe, the cause. The audience left the theatre quite unaware of the fate that had befallen poor Fredrici.

The largest theatre in Melbourne is the Royal, and, like the Adelphi or Drury Lane in London, has become associated in the public mind with melodrama. It is, except at the Pantomime season, generally tenanted by George Rignold and his Company, or by Bland Holt. Their audiences are much of the same character one meets with at the London Theatres above named; the villain gets vigorously hissed, and the hero is cheered again and again. Virtue triumphant and vice discredited can always be relied on to get their due share of applause from a "Royal" house.

A great favourite with Royal audiences was Miss Jenny Lee in her inimitable rendering of that hapless little waif, "Jo." This play had a long run, and the "Jo" Company did enormous business.

Johnny Sheridan, as the Widow O'Brien in "Fun on the Bristol," could always count upon an enthusiastic welcome, and during his season at the Opera House, money was frequently refused at the doors. Sheridan was, and I fancy still is, what is called a bit of a sport, and was a great favourite with the Melbourne public both on and off the stage.

Then Australia is not without its actor managers and authors, for have we not Leitch, Dampier, and

Darrell, the last-named combining all the virtues—a veritable *tria juncta in uno.* What an enthusiast is George Darrell, his heart and soul is in his profession, and his plays, such as the "Sunny South," and the "Double Event," have been more than ordinarily successful. The last-named, as a sporting drama, was a most creditable production, and had a fairly good run. The scene at Flemington on Cup Day, and the actual race for the Melbourne Cup, where some ten or a dozen horses finish on the stage in full view of the audience, was very favourably and enthusiastically received, as was also the scene in which the night before the Cup at the Victorian Club was so realistically depicted, all the prominent metallicians being introduced, their dress and mannerisms being most amusingly emphasised.

Dampier, in his particular line, had few equals, and George Leitch will always be remembered for his quaint and artistic rendering of "The Insect," in that ever memorable production of "Paul Jones," when the principal characters were represented by such talented *artistes* as Miss Nellie Stewart, Madam Marion Burton, G. H. Snazelle, Johnny Gourlay, and others.

Both English and Italian operas have been most creditably presented by companies engaged by the late W. S. Lyster and Martin Simonsen, and Melbourne audiences cannot, with justice, complain of the fare provided for them. Amongst the favourites who established themselves in the hearts of the Melbourne public, either on the lyric stage or concert platform, were *artistes* of the first rank, such as Ilma de Murska, Arabella Goddard, Sir Charles and Lady Halle, Santley, Foli, Newbury, Ketten, Mesdames Belle Cole, De Vere Sapio, Schiller, Camille Urso,

and many more, and in lighter work, Emily Soldene, Emilie Melville, the Linguards, Marie Halton, Charley Ryley, Joseph Tapley, Walter Brownlow, and several others.

Add to all this imported talent the names of the native born Australian *artistes*, and it will be readily admitted that there has been no dearth of high-class talent at the disposal of the artistic section of Australian society.

Most prominent of all stands Madame Melba, who is still affectionately remembered as Nellie Mitchell by a large circle of her Melbourne friends. Madame Frances Saville, a daughter of that thorough *artiste*, and most excellent of tutors, Madame Simonsen, Ada Crossley, Amy Sherwin, Nellie Stewart, Ethel Haydon, Florence Young, and many more who are at the present time upholding, in no discreditable manner, the fame and name of sunny Australia.

In drama and in comedy the very best exponents have been induced to visit Australia. Ristori and Bernhardt, Brooke and Montgomery, Charles Matthews and Edward Terry, Toole and Billington, and many lesser lights have trod the Australian stage, the results of their visits being of a most satisfactory nature to all concerned, the *artistes* carrying away with them agreeable memories of their visits to such a far-distant land, and leaving nought but pleasant reminiscences behind. May this pleasant interchange of visits become even more largely developed, as nought but good must accrue therefrom.

Of late years the so-called music-halls have seriously interfered with the general prosperity of theatrical enterprise, and this may be accounted for from a variety of causes. In the first place,

the collapse of the Banks and similar institutions curtailed in a great degree the spending power of the public, who, under ordinary circumstances, were regular patrons of the theatre, and they, doubtless, sought a cheaper form of entertainment, which the Music-Halls provided. Then, again, the quality of the entertainments showed marked improvement; the items were generally amusing, and people with business worries were glad to forget their troubles, if only for a few hours, and they would "just pop in" to hear So-and-so sing, or see somebody dance a jig. Anywhere for diversion, providing the cost was small.

I have made use of the expression "so-called music-halls," which may require some slight explanation. The music-halls in Australia differ in a very marked degree from those in England and elsewhere, as there are no promenades, and no refreshment is served except at the ordinary bars. The entertainments are similar in character, but to an English visitor the absence of the promenade and the whisky and soda seems, to say the least of it, peculiar; but there are many little eccentricities in Victorian laws and customs that certainly are difficult of comprehension. Thus, with regard to Sunday trains. It is quite proper to run trains to the suburbs, but outside that radius you cannot go by rail on Sundays; it shocks the "goody-goodies." Sunday concerts are held at the music-halls; almost similar programmes are rendered as on week-days, but a nigger minstrel must not put burnt cork on his face, or an *artiste* don a costume, and no charge must be made at the doors, but you "contribute" the customary fees—according to the part of the house you frequent—to sober, staid-looking

attendants, who hand round the plate! It's strange, but it's true.

The improvement in the style and quality of music-hall entertainments has been most marked of late years, and to the enterprise and keen judgment of Harry Rickards is this improvement largely due.

Harry Rickards' first appearance in Australia dates back a good many years, during which he has "taken fortune's favours and demands with equal grace," and after much buffeting about, seems now safely harboured in the Port of Prosperity. Frank Clark was in advance of Rickards in providing variety shows for the delectation of the Melbourne public, and many creditable programmes were submitted under his management, but Rickards, whose "turn of the tide" came at the Tivoli in Sydney, adopted the idea of running two shows—one in Melbourne and one in Sydney, being thus able, with a double company, to provide plenty of change and plenty of variety, and he has met with his reward, and the best turns on the English variety stage now frequently appear under his management "down under." What with the visits of Australian *artistes*, Australian cricketers, Australian horses to England, and English *artistes*, English cricketers, and English horses to Australia, the silken bond is becoming—no matter how insignificant the means or far-fetched the simile may at first sight appear—more and more an evidence of that tie which unites the dear old Mother Country with the Greater Britain of the South.

MELBOURNE MEMORIES

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WHEN I arrived at Sandridge (it is now called Port Melbourne) in January 1870, there was a fierce hot wind blowing, and the sand was driven about hither and thither in blinding clouds, and it appeared on landing as if we had by some mysterious means or another been transported to the deserts of Sahara. The place, Sandridge, was most aptly named, for it really seemed to be nothing but a ridge of sand, only a small fringe of low weatherboard houses lining the shore. The first mile or so of the railway journey to Melbourne failed to dispel this unpleasant impression, as whichever way one looked there was nothing but a sandy waste; the few gum-trees dotted here and there simply served to accentuate the dreariness of the prospect. When passing through the Suez Canal some twenty years afterwards, the early impressions of my arrival in Australia were revived, as, although the area was naturally not of such vast proportions, Sandridge to my mind then was a Sahara in miniature.

I lived, however, long enough in Melbourne to see this sandy waste reclaimed, and commodious houses and well-paved streets take the place of this apparently irreclaimable desert.

I have seen the piers at Sandridge resembling a perfect avenue or forest of masts, and scores of vessels at anchor, waiting for an opportunity to come alongside to unload, and twenty-five years after, I have seen, as was the case when I sailed from Australia in 1895, the principal pier with but a solitary vessel tied up. This remarkable change has been brought about by a variety of causes.

In the first place, the fiscal policy of the Colony —Protection—with its high and almost prohibitory customs charges, does not encourage importations, and the English merchant has to look for another market where duties are lighter, where Peace, Progress, and Prosperity go hand in hand, and where the antiquated and selfish policy of Protection is less pronounced. Then again, the magnificent work done by the Harbour Trust in widening and deepening the River Yarra, enabling vessels of considerable tonnage to come up to the wharves, almost in the heart of the city, has tended in no small degree in bringing about the deserted appearance which now characterises Sandridge, or, as it is now called, Port Melbourne. The large increase in the number of steamers, the opening of the Suez Canal, by which the length of the voyage to Australia was so materially lessened, were factors in driving sailing vessels, which could of course only traverse the long route, out of the Australian trade, and the whole aspect of the shipping at the Port has been completely changed.

Melbourne is, without doubt, one of the finest cities of the world, and its growth has been so remarkable that it seems incredible that there are numbers of people living who remember the principal streets when huge stumps of trees were here and there to be

found, and when occasionally bullock drays would be bogged in some "glue-pot" hole. A visitor to Melbourne nowadays would imagine that the city had been founded many, many years ago, and that the tales told by the oldest inhabitant partook largely of the "fairy" series; but it is not so, the growth of Marvellous Melbourne may be mushroom-like, owing to the rapidity of its development, but the streets, the buildings, and everything connected with it, are not of the fragile order of the ordinary fungus species, but are solid, sound, and sure.

During my quarter of a century of Australian experiences, I have seen many changes and marvellous progress, but many men who are now my intimate friends remember Melbourne when the township consisted principally of weatherboard or galvanised iron buildings or tents; in fact one of the principal suburbs, now called South Melbourne, was then known as Canvas Town.

When I arrived in Melbourne, the streets and footpaths were fairly well kept, but the open sewers, surface drainage it was called, running down the sides and across the principal thoroughfares, were somewhat of a novelty, and not altogether an agreeable experience, as the odours arising therefrom, especially on a hot-wind night, did not, in imagination "fancy free," remind one of "Araby, the Blest." Add to this the ravages of a fully developed mosquito of huge proportions, on the war-path, a night spent in meandering down Elizabeth Street had its terrors. Now, as with a magician's wand, Heigh Presto! all is changed. The introduction of wood-paving, the formation of the Metropolitan Board of Works (whose presiding genius is my dear old friend Edmund Gerald Fitz-

Gibbon, the lineal descendant of the White Knight of Kerry), have caused the whole aspect of the city to be changed.

Contributing in no small degree to this state of affairs was the introduction of the Cable System of tramways, whereby 'buses and cabs have been altogether superseded, particularly on the main routes, the consequence being that the streets along which the cars run are scrupulously sweet and clean. What a change has been wrought between 1870 and 1895! In 1870, there were no 'buses; the only public conveyance was a cab. These cabs were two-wheeled cars, not like the Irish jaunting-car with seats running fore and aft, but the seats were ranged *dos à dos*, and the occupants of the rear seats had to hold on like grim death, as the cars ploughed through the open gutters, which, after a fall of rain, became turgid torrents, so much so, that more than one life has been lost by drowning in the streets after exceptionally heavy rains.

The various suburbs, which really now form part of Greater Melbourne, were looked upon as being in the bush, and many a case of "sticking up" and highway robbery occurred within earshot of the Melbourne Town Hall. The building of the present Town Hall of Melbourne was not completed when I reached Australia, and the magnificent pile of buildings forming the General Post-Office was only partly finished. Parliament House was still in the hands of the contractor, and the banks and insurance offices were located in tenements, much more modest than those one sees to-day. The site of the splendid Eastern Market was an open space occupied by vendors of fruit and fried fish; here the corn doctor dilated upon the efficacy of his treatment, and hard by would be

a phrenologist expatiating upon the various bumps which seemingly exist in countless forms on one's cranium, and by which, if we can believe only half we hear, a just estimate of one's character could be obtained for some small consideration. At electioneering times this was a favourite resort of the stump orator, and many a man who has held high office in Parliament first sought the suffrages of the free and independent elector from the top of an upturned beer barrel in Paddy's Market.

Who, looking at the magnificent buildings which adorn the principal thoroughfares of Melbourne, would believe that this marvellous change in the condition of affairs could have been effected within the memory of men now living. The historian who writes of the rise and fall of Melbourne will have plenty of material upon which to point a moral or adorn a tale. I make use of the phrase, "rise and fall"—perhaps this last word is not altogether applicable. Melbourne has not fallen, but it is in check; the pace was too strong, the sanguine anticipations—I don't say of unprincipled speculators, but, to put it mildly, of over sanguine speculators—could scarcely, under ordinary circumstances, ever be realised within a reasonable period. Huge piles of buildings some eight or ten stories high, erected in the principal streets to supply office accommodation, remain all but tenantless, and in the suburbs there are rows upon rows of villas waiting for occupants that never come. Everything, doubtless, will come round all right one of these days, but there is enough office accommodation in the city, and enough houses in the suburbs for double the present population.

But to return to the streets and cable-cars. These

cars now run to all the suburbs, and in the summer-time those having their terminus at the sea-shore are crowded with people who merely go for an evening ride, so pleasant is this mode of travelling. Tree-planting, inaugurated by my old friend G. D. Carter, has been extensively carried out, and the avenues of English elms, which thrive amazingly, are quite a pleasant feature whichever way one turns. The fact of it being necessary to pave the centre of the streets, so as to form a permanent way for the tramcars, has rendered all the approaches to the city well-nigh perfect, and the reproach that the bad roads formed one of the "defences of Melbourne" no longer holds good.

Another feature which strikes a visitor is the large number of Chinamen everywhere to be seen; whether it be on the goldfields or in the cities, in the bush, or in the suburbs, "John Chinaman" is met with everywhere. "John" doubtless, has his faults, but in many ways he is almost indispensable. I really do not know what the great bulk of the population would do for vegetables were it not for patient, plodding "John." He seems a born hawker. He travels miles with his load of vegetables or fish, and is generally moderate in his charges. He works in his garden night and day, and is, as far as my experiences go, an industrious and inoffensive creature. A visit to the Chinese Quarter in Little Bourke Street in the evening is somewhat of a novel experience. There are gambling-dens where "fan-tan" is played, it seems, all day long, and all night too. There are opium-dens which reek with an odour indescribably foul and offensive, and there are filthy dens where some eight or ten miserable wretches may be sleeping, all huddled

together, more like animals than human beings, in an atmosphere poisonous and sickening. A turn round with a detective is worth experiencing—once. The authorities, however, have of late years insisted upon certain sanitary improvements, and many of these wretched hovels have been demolished, and "John" has become more civilised and amenable to cleanliness.

The all-round improvements, which have been carried out in Melbourne, in what seems such a brief space to look back upon, have indeed been remarkable. Hotel accommodation has increased in a marvellous manner, and with it the style and service have not been lacking, and I should think that in no part of the world is the *ménage* of Menzies or Scotts' to be beaten. The coffee palace craze got a tremendous hold of some of the people, who vainly think it possible to make people sober by Act of Parliament, and are under the impression that it is quite a legitimate enterprise to invest money in a coffee palace, whilst it would be a high crime and misdemeanour to have an interest in a public house. These good souls must many a time have bewailed their fate, as huge palaces in which they so freely invested their money, such as the Grand, the Federal, and others, are nothing more nor less than white elephants, which do not distribute dividends, and, wonderful to relate, efforts are now being made to get licenses for them, in order to make them pay.

Then French restaurants became quite the fashion, the pioneers in this branch of catering being the Lacatons.

I was one of their first customers when they started in a very humble way. Charlie was the cook, and

Madame was the waitress, assisted by a little girl. There were a few congenial spirits who first found out these worthy folk, whose fame soon spread, until commodious premises were taken, and the Maison Dorée became the place at which to dine. My first companions were Monsieur Charlie Brun, John Strachan, of Melbourne *Punch*, and Folingsby, the artist and the director of the National Gallery.

John Strachan was a remarkably clever man with a keen sense of humour, and his name will ever be associated with that memorable satire which did so much to wreck the Berry Ministry. It may be interesting just to refer briefly to this subject. I cannot quite remember the details, but the Government, of which Graham Berry was the head, had determined to send home to England, for some object or another, a deputation to the Colonial Office, the deputation to consist of Messrs Berry & Pearson. The scheme met with considerable opposition, but the Government majority voted solid, and the only way which suggested itself of bringing the thing into contempt and ridicule was the appointment, by the people, represented by Strachan and a few other wits, of a third ambassador, and their choice fell upon a black fellow named Henderson, more generally known as "Henderson Africanus," who, taking the proposal quite seriously, readily accepted the position. Subscriptions were invited to pay the expenses of sending the third ambassador to England, and they came in freely. A farewell banquet was organised, at which there was much speech-making and an enormous amount of fun. Henderson, who, by the way, was a fairly well-educated man and a very fluent speaker, had made all his arrangements

to go, but the P. & O. Company refused him his passage on account of his colour. This huge joke had its effect, however, and brought the whole thing into well-deserved ridicule. *Punch*, it may be added, issued a special edition, the frontispiece of which was a medallion, most artistically limned by Tom Carrington, on which were the three heads, two white and one black, of the three ambassadors.

This is a bit of a digression, but I never think of poor old Strachan without associating his memory with one of the cleverest satires of modern times. It was town talk for many a day.

Besides hotels, restaurants, and coffee palaces, there are wine shops where excellent Australian wine is retailed at very moderate cost, but colonial products, like prophets, are not much appreciated in their own country. Personally, however, I am a great believer in Australian wines when properly matured, and I have consumed my fair share without any unpleasant results. Many a yarn have I had with Marcus Clarke and old Birnie (the Essayist of the *Australasian*) over a bottle of rosy red or white Chasselas from the Yarra Flats.

One meets with quaint characters on our journey through life, and I only wish I had the power to sketch some of them and introduce them to my readers. Who, for instance, could ever forget John Edwards, the younger, the bosom friend of G. V. Brooke. Jack Edwards was a solicitor by profession, at heart a thorough Bohemian, a bit of an amateur actor, and a *bon vivant toujours*. He was a tall handsome fellow, with black curly hair, and I remember spending an afternoon with him in company with that celebrated barrister, R. D. Ireland. He was at the

time looking very ill, and as yellow as a guinea. I suggested liver troubles. He said: "Yes, my boy, it's liver, right enough, but I'm adopting a new system now. When my liver used to call out for Cockles I used to give him Cockles, but now I'm trying a different plan; when he calls out for Cockles I give him an extra dose of whisky, and say: 'Take that, you wretch!'" Poor old Jack did not live long under this regimen.

A rare wit and clever writer was Josh Pickersgill; his impromptu jokes and smart repartee has kept many a table in a roar, but necessarily most of our fun has so much local colouring that to the general reader it could possibly have no interest, but I must risk one episode which created no end of merriment.

There had been rather an important Masonic meeting, at which Sir William Clarke and all the leading Masons had been present, and whilst having a last glass in the smoking-room at the Masonic Club, it was suggested, it being rather late, that we might have supper before going home. One joker, noticing that one of the party had left the room to get his coat and hat, immediately in his name invited every one to supper. On his returning he wished all and sundry good-night, saying he must catch his last train. "How can you do that," said half a dozen in chorus, "when we are all going to have supper with you?" "Supper with *me!*" he replied in astonishment. "Yes," they said, "with you." "Oh, yes," said Sir William Clarke, "it's so kind of you, Mr B——; you are always so thoughtful." Poor old B——'s face was a picture of amazement, as unresistingly he permitted his hat and coat to be removed. "Yes," said every one, "it's so like old Charley." "There's some mystery here,"

he said, whilst others remarked that B——'s memory must be a little treacherous, as they distinctly remembered the invitation. In the midst of the discussion the waiter announced that supper was ready, and we all filed up the staircase to the dining-room. B——, all politeness, suggested that Sir William should take the chair. To this every one demurred, as Sir William, they protested, was, like the rest of the company, a guest, not the host, and it was the host's duty to preside. At last we all settled down in our places, but still there was a sort of unexplained mystery about the whole thing, when the culprit, who had, unknown to the host-against-his-will, bidden them all to the feast, uprose and spake somewhat as follows. He said :—

"Gentlemen, there seems, by the Chairman's countenance, to be an air of mystery pervading this supper, which perhaps I can in some measure explain. My friend, the Chairman, is so constantly springing upon us little surprises of a like character, that it is not at all to be wondered at that he occasionally forgets his many engagements. This supper was decided upon weeks ago." ("What an infernal lie!" interjects the Chairman.) "Gentlemen," continued the speaker, "I was warned beforehand not to heed these interruptions, they are part of the play." ("The man's mad," again interjected the Chairman.) "No, sir, I am not mad, for you, to the best of my belief, consulted my friend the Doctor opposite as to what in his opinion would tend to cement the bonds of brotherhood, and he suggested lobster, as we should all have nightmare." "I beg your pardon, sir," said the Doctor from India; "nothing of the kind occurred. I was never even consulted." Then said the speaker, "I must apolo-

gise," and he resumed his seat. The Doctor then said: "I must take the present opportunity of thanking Mr B—— for many acts of kindness and hospitality. Immediately on my arrival in Melbourne from India, I had the pleasure of an introduction to Mr B——, who asked me to come to his club, have a glass of sherry, and he would make me an honorary member, and," continued the Doctor, "I shall never forget the great kindness I have received since I have been here."

Josh Pickersgill had been listening to all with a merry twinkle in his eye, and it was now his turn. He said:—

"Gentlemen, I quite agree with the remarks which have fallen from the previous speakers regarding the proverbial hospitality of our Chairman, and I can well understand the Doctor, a stranger to our shores, being quite overcome with gratitude at the kindly attentions bestowed upon him by the Chairman, but the goodness of heart, the unbounded hospitality to strangers, so marked a characteristic of the Chairman, was not a thing of yesterday, for it was well within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, that when that renowned navigator, Captain Cook, landed on the shores of Botany Bay, Charley B—— was there to meet him. He greeted the great and worthy man with: 'How d'ye do, Captain? Come up to my club, we'll have a glass of sherry, and I'll make you an honorary member.' The same thing occurred, gentlemen, when the noble Batman navigated that pellucid stream—the Yarra. Charley B—— was there to greet him. So you see, gentlemen, the development of this grand and beautiful characteristic of our worthy friend is not the growth of yesterday, but has gradually expanded, until we find him reaching the zenith of his

fame in planning this magnificent function, and so modestly declining the credit due to him for his share in its organisation."

This speech was received with uproarious applause, and the whole evening passed off amidst the utmost conviviality. When my friend paid the bill, he smilingly remarked that he did not object altogether to the cost, but he thought it would be only an act of courtesy to him if we would give him a little notice when we wanted another supper.

We have had great nights at the same Masonic Club; we have entertained most of the celebrities visiting Melbourne, amongst the many being—Lord Caernarvon, George Augustus Sala, Edward Terry, Johnny Toole, and Jno. Billington. We had a high old time the night the two last named were entertained at supper. Toole sang a song, and John Billington pathetically recited, "Come home to the Childer and Me," and the Chairman told us how America was discovered by Christopher Columbus. This last yarn appeared, I think, in an American newspaper, called the *Danbury News*, and is, I think, well worth reproducing. It ran somewhat as follows :—

"It appears in some American schools, prizes are annually given for the best essay on the 'Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus.' Some of the essays written show considerable literary ability, whilst others, like many a board-school examination paper, are quaint in the extreme. The essay here brought under notice largely partakes of the latter character :—

"'There was once upon a time a man called Clumbus, and he wanted to discover America, so he went to the King of Spain, and said: "If you

please, Your Majesty, I want to discover America." So the King said to him, "All right, Clumbus, discover." But Clumbus said, "If you please, Your Majesty, I haven't got a ship." So the King turned to the man in charge of the ships, and said to him, 'Give him a ship." So they gave him a ship, and Clumbus put a lot of sailors on board, and sailed away over the vast expanse of the ocean. When they had been at sea many days, the crew mutinied, aud foregathered on the forecastle, and they said to Clumbus: "Whar are ye going?" And he said, "I am going to discover America." And they said, "Whar is it?" and he, with a graceful wave of the hand, said, "It is over there." With this very lucid explanation the crew were perfectly satisfied, and they fell to work as one man. However, after sailing on for many more days, one morning to their great surprise, the Pilot came on board, and approaching Clumbus, he said, "Whar are ye going?" and Clumbus replied, "I am going to discover America." And the Pilot replied, "Right you are, old hoss, sail on!" So they sailed on, and sailed on, until one morning land hove in sight, and Clumbus, gazing from the prow of his vessel, discovered a lot of niggers running about, and hailing the chief of the tribe, said, "What, ho, there! is this America?" The chief of the tribe replied, "It is. Are you Clumbus?" And Clumbus said, "I am." Then the chief of the niggers turned to the rest of the tribe, and said: "Boys, the jig is up, we are discovered!"

There can be no possible doubt whatever that we all had merry times. Everything and everybody seemed to flourish; money was plentiful and, I fear, it was a case of "easy come and easy go" with a

great many of us; but I fancy most of those of us who are left look back on the past with pleasurable rather than with regretful emotion. But to continue my Memories.

There was one hostelry which is, I think, deserving of passing notice, inasmuch as it was the last calling-place of the members of the Bohemian Brigade, who lived out East. I refer to the "White Hart," kept by the late Harry Edwards, not but what there were plenty of other places where the inner man could be refreshed; for instance, a supper at Jack Warne's —where fish was cooked to perfection, and where the very latest news of glove-fights and sporting matters generally could be gleaned from the ever-attentive Summer Boy—would probably be followed by a visit to "Her Majesty's", presided over by a man in every way worthy of dispensing hospitality in the Queen's name. Pollock, the proprietor, is, I suppose, the best-dressed man in Melbourne, and the value of the jewels which adorn his person would, were it possible to purchase them, deplete the coffers of a Rothschild, but the proprietor of "Her Majesty's" is a dignified, courteous gentleman, full of kindly instincts, and an ornament in more ways than one to his profession. Then there is the "Royal Mail," with good old Pat Reynolds with his rich Irish brogue, and but slightly further afield is the "Lounge," where the Gallagher girls break hearts and dispense the "best Scotch" only; close by also is "Kirk's," presided over by "one fair daughter," who gathers round her some of the best vocal talent Melbourne contains, and where one would occasionally hear a patron warble about "The Little Mud Cabin down the Lane," or Sims Reeves' double trill forth "My Pretty Jane." The

homeward tack was thus pleasantly varied until we arrived at "Old Harry's", the last port of call. One end of the bar was called the "dress-circle," and here, just before closing time, and for a matter, after closing time, would congregate the "late birds" for a "final" before making tracks for home. The jokes and the fun in that corner! Old Harry himself was a bit of a *raconteur*, and the latest yarns and latest scandals were discussed and debated until the curfew tolled, and they "doused the glim."

Railway construction has been in my time carried on with the same reckless extravagance that characterised office and house building, viz. with utter disregard as to whether the projects would pay their way or not. Political pressure is responsible for the present disastrous state of affairs, when expensively constructed lines are absolutely being closed because traffic receipts are not sufficient to pay for greasing the wheels. The Bill which authorised the construction of all these lines was well and appropriately called the Octopus Bill, that part "coloured red" of the enormous map which hung in the Legislative Chamber resembling a huge octopus, its feelers stretching out from its body (Melbourne) in all directions. My old friend, Richard Speight, was made the scapegoat for this insane legislation, the evil effects of which will not be obliterated for many a day to come.

The principal railway terminus at Spencer Street is a terribly tumble-down, rambling structure, but the Government offices alongside are quite palatial.

Two scenes, which I witnessed at this particular railway station, are very vividly impressed upon my memory. The first was the departure of leading police officials, and people attracted out of a love

of excitement and curiosity *en route* to Glenrowan, the little bush township where the Kelly gang of bushrangers was brought to bay.

Bushranging and bushrangers have been so truthfully and dramatically described by Rolf Boldrewood, in "Robbery Under Arms," and books of similar character, that were I sufficiently gifted, I should hesitate to attempt to describe with my 'prentice hand that which has been done so well by a master. But the doings of the Kelly gang, and the fact that some of their most daring exploits had been perpetrated within a comparatively short distance of Melbourne, rendered the excitement attending their every movement most pronounced, so that when the news reached town that the Kellys were themselves "stuck up" in a little bush hotel by the police, whose efforts to dislodge them had, for the time being, been fruitless, there was quite a rush of people at the railway station, all anxious to book for Glenrowan to witness the "siege."

It is all now a matter of history how the place was set on fire, and how the charred remains of some of the outlaws were found; how one mysterious figure for a time escaped, and stalked about, bearing, to all appearances, as Sergeant Steele, his captor, told me, a charmed life. Shots, however well directed, failed to take effect, until some one fired low and hit Ned Kelly, for it was no other than he, in the ankle. It then was discovered that Kelly was rigged out in armour made from ploughshares. Kelly's "coat of mail" and helmet (made out of a nail-can), are in the Melbourne Museum, and so heavy are they that to an ordinary man they take some lifting. But to return to the despatching of a strong

body of police to Glenrowan. The Kellys had, it appears, got an inkling of the departure of the train which was bringing up the troopers, under Mr Superintendent Hare, and they had proceeded forthwith to remove some of the rails near the approach to a rather dangerous curve on the line, and the whole train with its living freight would undoubtedly have been wrecked, had it not been for the ready resource and great courage of the local schoolmaster, who had overheard the diabolical proposal to remove the rails discussed by the bushrangers. How to leave the house and warn the driver of the coming train was the problem that faced him. He knew he would have been shot like a dog if any of the gang suspected him, but determining to risk everything, he sallied forth in the darkness on his somewhat risky errand. Then the difficulty arose as he heard the approaching train—How was he to stop it? This happy thought then occurred to him. He was wearing a tall hat, and his pocket handkerchief happened to be red, so he hit on the following expedient. He struck a match, held it in his hat, placed his red handkerchief in front, and this improvised danger signal proving effective, the train was stopped, and the lives of the passengers were saved. Curnow was the name of the schoolmaster. He was, of course, rewarded, but I always thought that sufficient credit was not given to him for his ready resource in a particularly trying situation.

Two absurdities strike me in connection with this excursion to the capture of the Kellys. A couple of friends of mine were passengers by the train. One claimed to have been in the wars in Canada—the time of the Rebellion, he referred to, I suppose—and

used to describe with great spirit how he was pressed into the service, and what a serious thing it was, being, as he proudly boasted, the sole support of a widowed mother and several sisters, but his patriotism was paramount, and the order for his uniform was given, the tailor having especial instructions to have a brass plate sewn in his tunic over the region of the heart, so that he might, as he described it, be impervious to the bullets of the enemy, the responsibilities attaching to the care of his widowed mother and sisters rendering the utmost precautions for his safety necessary. The uniform in due time was sent home, was duly tried on, and gave perfect satisfaction, but the one instruction *re* the brass plate had not been attended to; it certainly was not fixed to any part of the tunic, but was found in his nether garments. His indignation knew no bounds. He demanded from the tailor an explanation of his total disregard to instructions, and asked what the devil he meant by putting the brass plate there—pointing to what Hieland men do not wear.

"Well, sir," said the tailor, with a knowing look, "I guess that's where your heart will be when you go to battle." Ned Kelly's armourer was more considerate.

My other friend who accompanied this old soldier to the seat of war was what is termed of a rubicund appearance, and when lighting his cigar in the dusk, his "pink" complexion showed to advantage, and prompted the remark from one of the party that he would make an excellent living danger signal, as if he would only hold a lighted match in front of his face, it would stop any train.

On another occasion, the scene at the station at Spencer Street was a most distressing and painful one.

It was on the occasion of the return of the wounded from that frightful catastrophe, the Cootamundra Railway accident, the most serious which has ever happened in Australia.

It appears that owing to an unusually heavy fall of rain, a large culvert over which the line passed was washed away during the night, and no warning having been given, the train rushed at full speed headlong into the gap, with frightful results, carriages telescoping as they fell into the roaring torrent below, and how any escaped being killed or drowned was simply marvellous. The majority of the passengers were sporting people, amongst them being several prominent bookmakers, all bound for the Sydney Races.

Joe Thompson was a passenger, and his account is both graphic and interesting. When interviewed at the time, he said: "They have treated us very badly, but we are not dead yet, although Zucker and Cohen are bad, poor fellows. Oscar Barnett was standing alongside the conductor (Wilson) when the latter was killed, and never received a scratch. Fancy us lying out there in the dark and cold, and not a blanket to cover us until some bushmen lent us theirs! There never was such an experience. I'll tell you what happened. We were standing, or sitting, talking together, about the centre of the car, on the left hand side, and Oscar had just gone a little way apart to ask Conductor Wilson to make up his berth, as it was time (eight o'clock) for all to turn in. No sooner had he said this, when I heard a crash. I thought we were gone, and hoped it would soon be over. We were going round a curve, and when the engine went down the couplings broke, and enabled the second-

class car to forge ahead slightly. If we in the sleeping-car, which was next, had hit the second-class car end on, we should have telescoped it, and then there would have been no more of us. As it was, we struck the second-class car slantingly, and in turn were crashed into by the first-class carriage next behind, also in the same manner. The half of the left side of our car was torn open by the first-class carriage, and the roof burst open, the larger portion of it falling over to the right and giving us ample exit room. First of all I heard the two thuds made by the brake gripping suddenly, then a rush as of water, then the crash of the car behind driving into us, then the roof coming off, and we all found ourselves in the water.

"How I got free of the car I cannot tell, but I at once struck out up the stream, calling out to the boys to help themselves, as I knew that I could not. I believe I was the first to strike the shore, and then I felt my hurts for the first time. I believe a lot of poor fellows, who happened to be thrown out on the right side, floated right away and were drowned, and their bodies have not been found. You see I and those with me had the luck to be thrown out on the left side, where the water was, so to speak, dammed by the roof of the sleeping-car sticking up to make a sort of a break-water. This helped us a great deal I can tell you! Well, as I say, we lay there helpless and wounded on our backs in the rain, so I cannot tell you what was done with the poor creatures who had not got free from the cars. At last they got us up to Cootamundra, to the Albion Hotel there."

Some ten or a dozen people were killed outright, and many died subsequently from injuries received.

The wounded totalled close upon fifty, a majority of the latter being Melbourne sporting people. Naturally, therefore, excitement ran high, and latest bulletins were posted, and the condition of the sufferers excited the keenest sympathy in all quarters.

The accident happened on the Sunday night, but it was not until the following Wednesday that the train bringing back the maimed and wounded arrived at Melbourne. It is the arrival of this train at Spencer Street which I shall never forget; the platforms were crowded with relatives and friends of the injured passengers, who waited anxiously as if expecting some one back from the grave, so astounding was their escape from destruction. The scene was most pathetic, as one by one the injured were carried to carriages or ambulances, for conveyance to their homes, from whence it was many a long day before they were able to depart. Apparently most of the injured recovered, but upon many the effects of the accident were never obliterated, and they ultimately passed in their checks before the customary settling day.

HOME IMPRESSIONS

HOME IMPRESSIONS

I SCARCELY think it possible for any individual, unless he or she has gone through the experience, to thoroughly realise the feelings which are engendered when embarking on a voyage, be it outward or homeward bound. If, as in my case, "Outward Bound" meant a long sea journey of some 16,000 miles to a new country, new people, strange sights in strange lands; the picturing to oneself what sort or manner of people one would be thrown in contact with for some years to come; the kind of home one would build up; and a thousand such thoughts ever present in one's mind; I say, when the imagination

"Bodies forth the forms of things unknown,"

in such like manner, the feelings of intense expectancy cannot easily be described. When on the homeward tack, after a quarter of a century's absence, one nears the white cliffs of dear old England, and once again the eye feasts upon its glorious foliage, its emerald green, its red-tiled roofs of snug homesteads nestling amongst the trees, its running brooks and fat pastures, a big lump rises in one's throat, the tear will find its way down our cheek as the thought arises that possibly many a chair will be found vacant, many a kindly voice will long since have been stilled, and feelings and emotions arise which, I repeat, can scarcely be realised

except by those who have experienced the leaving of, and the returning to, Home.

This word "Home," is, I am glad to say, applied to England by every young Australian, whether he or she has ever visited the old country or not, and notwithstanding occasional references by some professional agitator, who hopes to gain a little cheap popularity by his prating about Freedom, and the determination of Australians never to be slaves, there is really no serious person nowadays who talks about "cutting the painter." Young Australia is by degrees beginning to understand and appreciate the country from whence his ancestors sprung, and after visiting England, whether in pursuit of pleasure or for educational objects, he returns home thoroughly loyal, and thoroughly embued with England's greatness. The Australian visitors to the Jubilee all returned to their respective homes impressed with feelings *ultra* loyal.

But to return to impressions. In previous chapters I have briefly referred to the great contrast which exists between Australian and English landscapes, and this contrast is most pronounced, especially if one leaves Australia during the summer months, when everything is parched and brown, and arrives in England in the merry month of May. The railway journey through Kent and Surrey is at all times, even to an Englishman fond of rural scenery, a delightful experience, but what a revelation it must be to an Australian, and what a delightful awakening of old memories to the returning Colonist! These sensations, so imperfectly described, simply overwhelmed me on my return home.

In Australia, everything is so vast and expan-

sive. The streets in the towns, the roads in the villages, are of enormous width from a chain (66 feet) to two chains wide; it can easily be imagined, therefore, how quaint and narrow the streets and roadways appear when travelling in the rural districts of England. But how charming is it all, and yet everything appears strange and puzzling. The village green whereon we played cricket we now look upon as a mere insignificant patch, whereas, in our young days, it was considered no mean feat to make a boundary hit, so extensive did it then appear. The old school-house—a select academy, it was called—now appears but a very ordinary country residence, whereas then it was surrounded with a dignity and significance which it is now difficult to reconcile. The rooms appeared large, now they seem particularly small; their low ceilings, with heavy oaken timbers supporting the storey above, strike one as being stuffy and depressing, compared with the modern houses with lofty and well-ventilated rooms built in the almost tropical climes of Australia.

Then the boys and girls one left behind have grown into men and women; the ruddy-faced youths have become almost greybeards; and the dimple-cheeked, laughing girls have settled down into fat and comfortable matrons, with grown-up sons and daughters, married and marriageable. It is a kind of Rip-Van-Winkle awakening, but, in many cases, a most pleasant one. My own experiences tell me that faces change, however, but voices do not. Many of the friends of my boyhood have become quite unrecognisable as far as outward appearances go, but I have been able to place them by the sound of their voices alone.

These experiences are, doubtless, common to many, but they nevertheless are striking and quite unknown to those who have never sojourned many a year amongst strangers in far-distant lands.

Since my return I have been more than once asked the question: What feature in London has struck me most? Well, the query is not easily answered. The vastness of London is simply bewildering. When I was a lad, a few miles of a journey out of London took you amongst green fields and country lanes; now the forest of chimney-pots has extended for miles and miles, the Iron Horse having opened up districts which were inaccessible to all but the leisured few who had no regular business to attend to. Omnibuses were then the principal, in fact, pretty well the only, means of communication between the city and suburbs.

I well remember my first ride in a railway train. It was in an open truck, third class, no covering or roof, and people had to hold on to their hats or bonnets as the train travelled along at the rate of some 15 or 16 miles an hour. What a change has been wrought during the last forty years in the means of locomotion! The speed attained and the comforts provided are remarkable. Still our American cousins say we don't yet know the A B C of the business.

Then, again, look at the quality of the horses one sees both in 'buses and cabs, and the cheap rate at which one can see London from the top of the said 'buses. When I first arrived home I, in a manner of speaking, lived for some time on the top of the 'buses, and spent days going here, there, and everywhere, and I found my journeyings most interesting and instructive. Most of the drivers, whilst still having a strong cockney accent, I found to be intelligent and

obliging men. They seemed to take a delight in pointing out places of interest to strangers, and their occasional chaff, not particularly refined perhaps with a "pirate," had generally some rough wit about it which was mostly amusing and clever.

I overheard an interchange of compliments between some of these fellows which partook somewhat of the retort courteous (?). What the nature of their argument was I can't quite say. One of the disputants, however, had a rather full and flowing beard, whilst the other was what is termed smock-faced, *i.e.* hairless; but the final touch was put to the argument by the remark made to the descendant of Esau, that it was useless talking to him, the hairless one, for anybody could see he was a fool, as hair didn't grow on wood.

On one occasion a stranger got on to a 'bus wishing to go to the Marble Arch, but by accident hailed a "pirate" going to Hyde Park corner. When the 'bus arrived at the Corner, the stranger innocently asked if he alighted there for the Marble Arch. "Oh yes, sir," said the conductor, "you git down here and just stroll across the lawn, and there you are!" A stroll of over a mile.

As a lover of dumb animals it has gratified me beyond measure to see how much more kindly dumb creatures are treated nowadays, and how rarely the whip is used on horses, and how even the coster's moke is persuaded to do his allotted task by kindly words instead of being belaboured with a club. To the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals this state of things is no doubt largely due, and all lovers of our four-footed friends and allies owe it grateful thanks. I think I am a bit of a maniac in my love for animals—dogs, perhaps, having the pride of place—and I shall never forget, when a

child, the pain it used to cause me when I saw some poor doggie drawing a little catsmeat cart, getting an occasional flick with a whip in order that he might bark or howl a bit louder, and thus announce to far and near the coming of the catsmeat man.

The new system of paving the streets with asphalt has its advantages, but in slippery weather it is very trying for the poor brutes of horses in making a start with a heavy load, but when once under weigh, however, the haulage is reduced to a minimum. Wood pavement is undoubtedly much superior, and now that Australian hard woods, such as Jarrah and red gum, have come into notice, I feel sure that they will elbow all the white wood out of the market, and Australian wood paving will be universally adopted throughout Great Britain.

The management of the enormous traffic is another feature of London life which must commend itself to strangers, and in the eyes of foreigners the power of the police in regulating it must cause them intense astonishment. The policeman's will is apparently supreme; and it is a remarkable and a most creditable phase in street management, that the enormous powers placed in the hands of a London Bobby are rarely, if ever, abused. The politeness and civility of the men on duty in places where the traffic is most congested call for unstinted praise; their attention to old people, be they gentle or simple, in assisting them across the streets, has frequently and favourably been commented upon, but to a stranger it is an agreeable and much-appreciated surprise.

What seems to me so incomprehensible is the fact that, notwithstanding new streets being opened, new bridges built, the extension of the underground rail-

way system, both steam and electric, the traffic in the streets seems as great, if not greater, than ever. I suppose it will be the same when the Central London Electric Railway gets into full swing. London is always growing.

I think one has only to take a trip down to Greenwich by a steamboat to thoroughly understand what the Port of London really is, the river traffic the same as the street traffic is so vast and apparently illimitable Steamers and sailing craft bound for the East or West meet similar vessels returning from all points of the compass. Huge barges, amongst them many "Maidstone Men of War," as the hay and straw sailing barges used to be called, float up and down the tide, in such countless numbers, that it is a marvel how they ever reach their various destinations.

Another feature which is so strikingly illustrated in the streets, in St Paul's Churchyard, and in many other places, is the tameness of the thousands of pigeons which strut about unmolested, and which, during luncheon hour, are fed by lads and youngsters from offices and factories with scraps from their luncheon bags or baskets. One time of day they would Shanghai them. The same thing is observable in the parks; children go in hundreds to feed the wild fowl, and even little cock-sparrow is not neglected. Thrushes and blackbirds are numerous, and in gardens within a twopenny ride of Charing Cross, you can, in springtime, hear them pipe as if in some country lane. This encouraging the young idea not to shoot at, but to be kind to animals and birds must have a humanising effect, and is an enormous advance in the right direction.

The cultivation of flowers, too, has made enormous

strides, and the parks and gardens round about London in spring, summer, and autumn are particularly and strikingly beautiful. The flowers and *boutonnières* vended in the streets are most artistically arranged by the girl-hawkers, who all dress in the same style as did their great-grandmothers years and years ago. They and their belongings may politically be radical, but the coster "bloke" and his "donah" are most conservative in sticking to old traditions, especially with regard to dress.

In Australia, horticulture has also made immense progress, and in no part of the world are more lovely public gardens to be found than in Sydney and Melbourne. The Botanic Gardens in Sydney owe a great deal to their naturally beautiful situation, whilst the sloping lawns and most picturesque landscapes to be found in the Melbourne Gardens have been artificially produced, under the guiding genius of the Curator, Mr W. R. Guilfoyle. I have visited the gardens at Kandy, Ceylon, and whilst one sees here the most gorgeous tropical vegetation, with flowering creepers of superb magnificence, and butterflies as big as birds, the natural beauties of the Sydney gardens render them, to my mind, from many points of view, the most beautiful.

London street cries, as a child, were always full of interest and wonder to me, but I miss many that used to be so familiar, but above the din of traffic comes ever and anon the dreadful newspaper boy with his: "All the Winnurs!" I have lived for the greater part of my lifetime in an atmosphere of sport; have been associated in some capacity or another during a long period with sport and sporting matters, and in a community, where it is considered that

too much attention is devoted to such so-called frivolities, but little did I think, when returning to London, I should find the air resound with the one absorbing cry: "All the Winnurs!" Earthquakes may take place, empires may be tottering, war and rumours of wars may be occupying the attention of statesmen and diplomatists, but what mattereth it to the noble army of punters? What's won, and what was the S.P.? is the one engrossing subject.

This picture is not a bit overdrawn; the fact is indeed continually being illustrated. Demand and supply, I suppose, govern the publication of the halfpenny papers, as in all other commercial matters, and the items which are the most attractive get the biggest headlines. You hear little rats of boys at street corners enquiring between their puffs at their cigarettes: "What's won?" and when supplied with the information sought for, remark: "That's a bit of all right; I had my bob on." The S.P. business is carried on in barbers' shops, swell offices, and bogus clubs to an enormous extent. The police occasionally make a raid, but it seems like pruning a tree; you may reduce its proportions for a time, but ere long it flourishes with renewed vigour. "Scotched, not killed," would be an appropriate sign for a bogus betting club.

I miss the street ballad singer of the Jem Baggs type, and one is struck by the comparatively few number of beggars met with when taking our walks abroad, but I fancy the use of blasphemous and filthy language is more in evidence. I am not over squeamish in these matters, but the language of the street urchin, both male and female, sad to relate, is enough to make an old Billingsgate fishwife look to

her laurels. There is another special 'dition cry which is heard no more. I refer to the "Last Dying Speech and Confession" of the felon when making his last public appearance "beneath the Gallows Tree." This "Last Dying Speech and Confession" used to be an attraction outside Newgate.

I have had many opportunities of seeing hangings both in England and Australia, but my courage always failed me at the last minute. A grand opportunity was once offered me of seeing five pirates hung outside Newgate, and on the Saturday previous I was pointed out the window, nearly opposite the prison, from which I would get a splendid view, but the outside preparations were quite enough for me.

The streets all round the prison were barricaded, and subdivided with stout timber, into what looked, for all the world, like cattle-pens. Even on this particular Saturday evening, many of the most depraved and horrible-looking creatures in human form had selected good sites, and had provided themselves with food and drink to sustain them until the eventful eight o'clock on Monday arrived, and the bell of St Sepulchre's began to toll. I was quite content to leave the rest to imagination.

The same feeling prevailed with me in Australia when invited to witness Ned Kelly, the famous bush-ranger, expiate all his crimes and misdemeanours in the Melbourne goal. In hot blood there are many men—perhaps amongst them I might possibly be found—who would not hesitate at dealing out lynch-law to some miscreant who had violated all laws, human and Divine, but who, in calmer moments, would say: "Let the law takes its course." No matter how great the criminal, or how heinous his offence, one

shrinks from assisting or officiating, unless stern necessity compels it, at last rites of this description.

. . . . . .

In the preceding chapters I have endeavoured to jot down little episodes which might prove of interest to many Australians, and even to those who may be termed Anglo-Australians. I have had to trust to my memory, as I now regretfully say, for I made no notes during my quarter of a century's residence in the Colonies, and there may probably be many inaccuracies, which, however, I trust may be pardoned. There are many facts and many episodes which I, doubtless, have overlooked. I have referred to no unpleasantnesses, which are inseparable from a life full of bustle and excitement, and I have made every effort to tell a plain, unvarnished tale, devoid of all malice or uncharitableness. I claim to be a thorough Anglo-Australian—English first, Australian afterwards, and I trust that whatever my shortcomings may be, they will be forgiven and forgotten, as I only wish to be remembered as—one who loved his fellowmen. With these sentiments uppermost in my mind, I affectionately bid my friends Adieu.

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