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Millie Bryant Godwin

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January 1st 1856

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THE "GOVERNOR" OFTEN WALKS FIRST IN HIS BROAD HAT AND BIG TROUSERS.

A

BOY'S ADVENTURES

IN THE

WILDS OF AUSTRALIA;

OR,

HERBERT'S NOTE-BOOK.

BY

WILLIAM HOWITT.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

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To

EDWARD HOWITT,

THE ASSOCIATE IN MANY OF THE FOLLOWING AUSTRALIAN
ADVENTURES,

Herbert's Note-Book

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.



P R E F A C E .

THE following narrative of a boy's adventures and experiences in the Australian bush was written amid the scenes and characters which it describes; and the intention of the author has been to afford to the cotemporaries of Herbert a reflection, as it were, of his great enjoyment.

MELBOURNE, PORT PHILIP, }
MARCH 12, 1854. }



A BOY'S ADVENTURES
IN THE
WILDS OF AUSTRALIA.

HÉRBERT'S NOTE-BOOK.

In the Bush, November, 1852.

I AM now separated by the length of the world from the old home. Our voyage is over, and we are in Australia. At this point I shall begin my diary, or rather my note-book. Strange it is, that while I shall be busy writing, the folks at home are all fast asleep in bed; but no wonder, for I am turned topsy-turvy on the outside of the antarctic end of the world. I shall note down things as I observe them; and, first of all, I remark, that things are very fond of flying in this country. The squirrels fly; the grasshoppers fly; the mice fly; and I see all sorts of seeds flying at a great rate. I shall, therefore, let my thoughts and observations fly on paper to Old England; for it is an old proverb that "at Rome you must do as the Romans do."

I shall put down, also, in my diary, all sorts of things that I see in the woods; and when I hear any good stories by our evening camp-fire, I shall write them

down too. I therefore think that I shall write an amusing diary altogether.

We are a very "jolly company," as we go travelling along through the wild woodlands of this country. First of all, there is my father; then, there is my cousin Harry; then, Mr. B., the "Painter," who makes sketches as we go along; and, lastly, my brother Alfred and myself.

If anybody could see us on our journey, they would see a very queer-looking but picturesque set of folks. There is the respectable "Pater," in dark-blue trousers, as wide as a Jack Tar's, a gray blouse, or "jumper," as they are called here, and a broad straw hat, very knowingly cocked up at the sides. People always take him for some great person on his travels; and diggers often ask if that "grave gentleman is not a magistrate;" and it was only this very day that one man said to another, "O, yes, we know him very well: it was the Chief Justice A'Beckett going up to judge the prisoners at the Diggings." And ours is always called "The Government Team;" I suppose because the horses look in such condition, and the cart is covered with a clean tarpaulin, and we go along so much at our ease. Beside which, we do things in style; when we camp we set down a pair of tressels, place on them a piece of stringy bark for a table, and sit there with plates, and tea-cups, and glass tumblers, at our meals, much to the astonishment of the diggers. We are first-rate! And what a jolly life it is!

Well, let me see: As we go along, "The Governor" often walks first, in his broad hat and big trousers; often "The Painter" walks beside him, in his glazed cap, blue jumper, and leather overalls, which come half-way

up his thighs, and with a courier-pouch by his side, full of all his sketching things; but just as often he is stalking far ahead of everybody; for he has a very long pair of legs, and they seem to carry him away involuntarily. Alfred is generally to be seen in a scarlet jumper, a brown wide-awake, with a brown veil wrapped round it, and a huge pair of boots on, driving the horses. My business is to look after the first horse, as the roads are very bad, and one must be on the look-out, because of stumps, and stones, and deep gulleys. I am grown a biggish fellow since I left England, and I may be seen any day in a white wide-awake, a blue shirt,—no, I mean jumper,—and corduroy trousers. Harry, who is a great chemist and natural philosopher, is somewhere about in a flat, cabbage-tree hat, a good deal the worse for wear, and ten to one but he will have a bottle of some of “his chemicals” in his hand, either to test the gold with which he may pick up out of the sand, or to help in preserving insects for his entomological collection.

Well, there we are, along with our blue cart, with its one blue wheel and one red one,—for we had to get a wheel mended up in the bush, and the wheelwright had no paint but blue,—but nobody stands on trifles here. This cart, as I said, is covered with a dark, shining tarpaulin, and is drawn by two horses. The one in the shafts is bay, and is called Ben; but nobody need call him Benjamin, out of politeness; for his full name is Bendigo, on account of a journey he once made to those famous diggings. The fore horse is a gray one, and is called Gray. Under the cart is a large black dog, with long, shining hair, and a bushy tail, that curls over his

back. He is just such a dog as one sees in pictures of the Esquimaux in their sledges drawn by dogs; and somebody who has been in the Esquimaux country insisted, the other day, that he was an Esquimaux dog. He has a longish pair of ears, which, when he pricks them up, give him very much the look of a bear. When he lays his ears backward he looks much better, and altogether he is a very fine fellow. Not far off may be seen a small, sleek, tawny bull-terrier. He is the little fellow that we brought with us from home. Prince was his name then, which was soon shortened in Prin; but of late we have taken a fancy to change his name all sorts of ways. Sometimes he has been called Pirn, then Prindex, then Perquin, then Perkin; to which names he at present answers, though Prin or Prinny, after all, are the most convenient, and, I fancy, most agreeable to his taste.

February (date unknown), 1853.

Here is a great gap in my diary! Well, I'll make another beginning; and as I was writing last about the dogs and horses, I will note down a few more particulars; for they all have their characteristics, and we have grown very familiar with them in our five months' travels.

Ben, the shafter, and Gray, the leader, are horses that do very well for riding-horses, and would make very good carriage-horses. Ben is a very knowing fellow, and excessively careful of himself. He is very fond of good living, and has a very wide range of taste. He eats heartily of the wild grass of the colony, whether green or dry; browses on the acacia-trees and the bitter

wild-hop shrub, and is very ravenous of oats. Bread is a delicacy that he delights in; he licks his lips over sugar, and he is very fond of tea-leaves; nor does he even refuse an occasional slice of salt beef. We have sometimes thought of inviting him to take tea with us; for he would enjoy, of all things, a bucket of tea well sweetened, and would despatch a few loaves cut up into bread and butter, and finish up by eating the tea-leaves! The Gray has not such queer tastes, but he is a horse of spirit, and enjoys nothing more than drawing a heavy load through a difficult place.

Now, as to the dogs, Prin has become a desperate hunter of opossums, and I am, I must confess, just as bad as he is. Prinny had not been long in the colony before he discovered what I suppose he took to be wild-cats, up in the trees. He was frantic to catch them, and when they were shot he thought them capital eating.

The opossums come about our tent every night, in the woods, making a queer, half-snorting, half-grunting noise; and the moment Prin hears them, out he rushes, and chases them up the trees. He then stands and barks at the foot of the tree till we go out and shoot the opossum. We kill a good many, both for their skins and for food for the dogs.

Opossums abound in this country. They are as large as hares, are covered with gray fur, have long, blackish tails by which they can hang on the boughs of the trees, and heads rather like cats than hares. But they live on vegetables, and are terrible destroyers of the settlers' peaches; so that they ought to be good eating — in fact, they are quite as good as hare. Prin thinks so; for he is quite mad about opossums, and often goes scouring

about the woods after them all night, and then next day is as sleepy as an owl. Prin is a capital water-dog too, and fetches out the ducks and other birds that are shot. He is very much admired by the gentlemen here, who recognize him at once as an English dog of a first-rate breed. He sleeps on my bed at night, and is a great favorite with everybody.

Poor Prin has nearly lost one of his eyes by the fly-blight. These wretched little black flies are the pest of this colony, and give almost every third person ophthalmia. Prinny's eye is so swelled up, and the pupil so affected, that we are afraid he may lose the sight.

I forgot to put down that we call our black dog Buff; not, of course, on account of his color, but because we believe him to have come from the Buffalo Mountains. He came, some months ago, to our camp, late one evening, and lay down by our camp-fire. He was lame of one leg, which it was plain to see had been broken not long before, and so worn out with travelling that it was two days before he recovered. At first we thought somebody would reclaim him; but nobody did, and I was very glad, for I took a great liking to that dog, from the beginning. He seemed just as well pleased with us, and our wandering life seemed just to suit him. Buff is not a dog of any great abilities; his long ears — poor old fellow! — show him to belong to the jackass species; but he is a very loving and good-natured creature. He delights in the horses, and lives under the cart, which I call Buff's castle. He is always glad to go out with one anywhere, but likes best the company of the horses, whose noses he licks as if he were kissing them with the greatest love.

Buff is just as crazy as Prin about opossum-hunting, only he never barks at them, though he runs frantically after magpies, and barks furiously at them in the tree-tops. He is so fond of opossum-flesh that he will eat up a whole one for his supper. He has one very queer habit; as we travel along he always goes the distance three or four times over: for he first goes under the cart, then he runs a-head a few hundred yards, then comes back again, as if to see that all is safe, and then, having ascertained that important fact, again he sallies forth his two or three hundred yards, and then back again under the cart. This he keeps up all day long, and nothing but chaining him up could possibly stop him; if you call him to come on, he immediately takes the alarm, fears you want to separate him from his beloved cart, and runs anxiously back again. To-day I stopped him from running back, but he was so distressed that I soon let him have his way. He, however, would not come near me again through the whole day until he saw us safely camped for the night.

One day, when we were in the woods beyond the Buffalo mountains fetching up the horses, poor old Buff was bitten in the ear by a snake. We thought he would have died. He became very heavy and stupid. When we spoke to him he took no notice and did not understand us, and he seemed to stagger as if his head were too heavy for him. At length, however, he got over it, though he often droops that ear still.

One day, a very fine dog, belonging to a gentleman, was bitten by a snake near our tent, and died on the spot.

Prinny's eye is getting better of the fly-blight. I do not think he will be blind.

There, now : I think all at home can fancy us with our cart, our dogs and horses, travelling through the woods. There never was anything so pleasant as travelling in this way through the woods.

We have been all the way across this colony and into that of Sydney ; we ought, therefore, to have seen something. I shall put down a few of the curious things which we have seen.

I think the birds of Victoria are the most interesting of its wild creatures. I shall have a deal to say about birds. Our journey is just like a long picnic. What great fun anybody would think it in England, to take a tent in a cart, with provisions and everything one can want for cooking and eating, with beds and blankets for sleeping, and set off right away into some forest, and there camp ! What a fine thing to make a fire of the dead wood that lay about, and bake bread in one camp-oven, and roast a joint of meat in another, and boil a pudding in one pot and potatoes in another, and then dine under the green trees, and then stroll out into the woods ! Then get your tea in the same way, and afterwards sleep in the tent ! What fine fun it would be ! Well, that is just the life we lead, and the picnic that we have for months together as we go travelling about.

The weather here is very fine and warm, though the nights are often very cold ; but then we are all snug in bed among the blankets, and the moment the sun is up it is warm again.

I have just heard an extraordinary story, which I shall put down. It is about

STOCKMAN STILL.

The shepherds and herdsmen of this country are called Stockmen. They often live far away up in the woods, — or the bush, as it is called here, — scores and hundreds of miles from any town, and frequently see nobody but the man who brings their weekly rations; that is, their week's allowance of provisions. They wander through the woods and among the hills after their sheep and bullocks, without anything to employ their thoughts; they are not like the jolly shepherds of old, as represented in the Idyls of Theocritus and the pastorals of the poets. They have no chance of meeting with any Dorises and "neat-handed Phillises," and of lying and playing on pipes "*sub tegmine fagi*," — that is, under the shade of the beeches. Beeches there are none here; the trees cast no shade, and, if they did, they would find no pastoral shepherds and shepherdesses to overshadow. The thin-leaved, straggling gum-trees of this country do not witness any of that old-world sort of poetry and poetical doings.

It is under trees like these, if there are any trees at all, that the solitary stockman wanders from week to week, and month to month, without a soul to speak to. Formerly the natives gave him a little diversion, such as it was, by coming and darting spears at him, and causing him, if not killed at once, to flee for his life. But these black fellows, as they are called, have either quite gone away out of the path of the white man, or have learned that it is useless to attack him. . At least, they have varied their modes of attack; they no longer cast

spears or boomerangs at him, but attack his benevolence for "white money" to buy rum with.

Well, these poor shepherds often go mad with the effect of their monotonous life, and their profound solitude. A squatter, — that is, a gentleman settler, often with fifty or a hundred thousand pounds, but still delighting in the name of squatter, — well, a squatter told us that he had had several shepherds go stark mad in a very few days after coming from social life and entering on their dismal solitude in the woods. We saw a mad shepherd at one station. He had been so long in the service of the squatter there, that he kept him about the place, though quite useless. This man was leaning over a gate, and singing in the morning sun. It was a strange, wild chant, which ever and anon changed into an oration. He continued to make speech after speech, and then to sing again. It seemed as if he had in his sane state suffered so much from his thoughts being pent up in his own heart, that he could not now give vent enough to his emotions.

But the shepherd that I am now going to speak of was a very different man. He seldom or never spoke. We were camping for some days in a valley in the forest near where this man kept his sheep. Suddenly, one evening, we saw a young man, in a long, rough coat, and with a broad cabbage-tree hat on his head, come out from the bush near our tent, give us a nod of recognition, but without saying anything, and then take his stand by the fire. There he stood for about an hour, uttering no syllable except "Yes," or "No," in reply to our questions; he then made another nod, by way of adieu, and once more disappeared in the wood.

For the whole time that we staid there, it was the singular pleasure of this silent individual thus to come and stand for hours. On two occasions it was raining heavily, but that made no difference. There he stood, as if unconscious of all around him. It could not be for any pleasure of conversation or intelligence that he came, for he said nothing, and asked for no news. Yet it was plain that he took a quiet delight in being thus near to some of his fellow-creatures. That he was of a kind disposition we saw clearly enough; for he brought us kangaroo rats, which are good eating; and, in his monosyllabic way, directed us to the best water, and the way to the station where we could procure fresh meat.

From the hut-keeper where this shepherd was located we learned that he was called, from his silent habits, Stockman Still. The bullock-drivers, who went up and down the road with dray-loads of provisions, gave him that name. He was sure, if any of them camped near where he was, to come out and thus enjoy their neighborhood while they staid, in this silent manner. When any stranger, astonished at this strange apparition, asked who he was, they replied, "O, it's only Stockman Still!" and, pointing to their heads, they would say, "just a screw loose there—but all right here;" putting their hands on their hearts. We have, since then, learned from a gentleman settler the real story of this silent man.

His name was George Smithson, and he was a native of Kent. His father was a substantial shopkeeper in a pretty and considerable village not far from Canterbury. George was his only child, and his father had given him a good education, hoping to see him rise in the world. George was of a cheerful and even gay character, and

was going to be married to a very pretty young woman named Mary Liardet, — pronounced Lee-Hardy, — who was also the only child of the wheelwright of the village; a merry, good-hearted old humorist, who had made a good property. The fathers of George and Mary were old friends, and had been constant companions from boyhood. They were very glad that their children were going to be married.

When the Canterbury railway was opened, a gentleman, who was a friend of the family, gave George the post of manager at a chief station. He thought that it would be well for him to be engaged in an active pursuit, that required a man to exert all his faculties as well as judgment. It was a fatal day for him when he accepted the situation. For a time all went well. He discharged the duties of station-master to everybody's satisfaction; and the next spring he and Mary Liardet were to be married, and to live at the station in a nice little white stone house, with the nice garden extending from the railway bank down into the level where the house stood.

But, in the mean time, during a thick fog, a concussion took place in a train just at the entrance of the station; and George was severely blamed by the board of directors for what they believed to be some neglect on his part. George Smithson, who knew himself blameless, at once threw up the situation, and returned to his father's. From this time, however, he became restless, moody, and hot-tempered. It was in vain that public opinion exculpated him; in vain that his father and old Abraham Liardet told him that he had no occasion to care about it: he had enough without. In vain did Mary Liardet endeavor to convince him of the same

thing, and beg him to be contented with managing their land, which would make a pretty little farm. George was no longer the same man. He went often to Canterbury, on the plea of clearing up something about the concussion; but it was not long before the two old men observed, with deep concern, that he came back frequently in a state of intoxication. Mary was struck with horror at the same discovery, and many were the pleadings and the tears that she used to awaken him from his perilous course.

George made many promises, but they were not kept. The dread of having lost his good name drove him again and again to the same miserable means of forgetting his sorrow. It was on one of these occasions that he found Mary sewing in a pleasant arbor, one evening, close to a little stream, which ran at the bottom of the garden, and which was only separated from the fields beyond by a small, neatly-clipped hedge, with a little white gate in it, and by a little foot-bridge leading into the meadows. George was in a strange state of excitement; Mary was, on the contrary, very serious. George's conversation was so extravagant, and his manner so painfully unlike his sober self, that Mary suddenly rose, and said, "George, if you valued my affection, you would not be as you are now." With this she put her work into her basket, and turned to go out.

"What do you mean, Mary?" asked George, also rising, and now as suddenly becoming serious.

"I mean what I say," replied Mary, with tears in her eyes; "and, if I cannot see you behaving as becomes your education and your native good sense, I had rather never see you again."

“Do you say so?” said George, with a look of indignant astonishment; and, after a pause, added, “then you never shall!” With that he sprung suddenly across the brook, leaped over the little clipped hedge, and was out of sight.

“George! George!” exclaimed Mary, in affright. But no George returned, and Mary, hurrying up to the house, told her father what had occurred, and begged him to go after him. The old man went into Mr. Smithson’s; but George was not there, and he communicated the affair to his father. But old Mr. Smithson bade him tell Mary not to alarm herself, for that he would answer for it that when George was sober he would soon come back. He declared that he was much obliged to Mary for her conduct. But this message did not lessen Mary’s fears. She begged her father to go, the next morning, and try to find out George.

The old man traced him by the railway to London; and, on arriving there, to the East India Docks; where, to his great surprise, he found that he had, that morning, sailed for Australia in a vessel that was going straight out to sea, without touching anywhere.

Mr. Liardet took the first steamer to Gravesend, in the hope of overtaking the vessel. In vain. It was just gone. The old man returned, in deep trouble, to his home. He was overwhelmed with the news which he had to carry. But he was spared its communication. A letter from George had already reached Mary, in these words:

“DEAREST MARY: You are quite right. You are too good for me. I do not deserve you. I am a ruined man.

I have but one hope. I will bury myself in the woods of the antipodes, far from men and temptation ; and, as God hears me, I vow never, never again to touch any spirituous liquors. Tea, the great beverage of the Australian bush, shall be my strongest potion. If you can forgive the past, — and I know you can, — if you can hope for the future, wait for me for three years. If I am alive, then I shall return (or I never will return) once more your own, temperate, and true,

“GEORGE SMITHSON.

“P.S. — If you are good enough to send a line, direct it for me at James Brown’s, Hair-dresser, Elizabeth-street, Melbourne.”

When poor old Abraham Liardet reached home, he went in as silently as if he feared to awaken some one, though it was three in the afternoon. There was nobody in the sitting-room, but he saw the door of Mary’s bed-room — a little parlor — standing ajar, and, looking in, he beheld Mary on her knees on the floor, busily packing a trunk.

“What are you doing, Mary?” said the old man, struck with a fearful apprehension.

Mary started up, and, without speaking, flung her arms about her father’s neck, and began to sob and weep bitterly. At length she said, “I am going, father ; you must let me go, or I cannot keep my senses.”

“Go where?” asked the old man. “You cannot overtake George, — he is already off to Port Philip.”

“I know it, father : see here,” and she gave him George’s open letter. Her father read the letter, and trembled in every joint.

“But, Mary, you cannot go to Australia?”

“I can, father; I must!” replied Mary, standing and looking very pale. “I have been too rash; and I shall never rest till I see George, and tell him so.”

“Well,” said the old man, “write and tell him so. That will do as well; or, much better. Tell him to come home, and not make us all miserable, and that all shall be forgiven.”

“I have written,” said Mary, in the same sad but firm tone; “that does not satisfy me. My head seems to burn, and I cannot rest till I am on the way.”

The old man sunk into his chair, and covered his eyes with his hand. Mary rushed forward, clasped her father's knees, kneeling herself on the floor, and kissed them, and wept abundantly. But the end of it was, that, in a fortnight from that time, Mary Liardet was on the ocean, steering towards the antipodes.

George Smithson reached Australia, and, without a day's delay, advanced into the bush. Here he had been shepherding for five months, but with his memory forever busy with the picture of those two neighboring cottages in the old village in Kent, the pleasant garden, the little stream, and the sweet little arbor near the low clipped hedge. He was one day crossing the wood with his flock, when he saw a piece of a Melbourne newspaper lying near a deserted encampment of some travellers. He picked it up to glean some scraps of intelligence from the world he had deserted, when his eye caught his own name in an advertisement, thus: “If this should meet the eye of George Smithson, late of Kent, he will hear of a letter and good news by applying at

James Brown's, Hair-dresser, Elizabeth-street, Melbourne."

The advertisement was some weeks old. George at once jumped to the conclusion that the letter and good news were from Mary Liardet. He sprung away to the head station, and asked leave to go down to Melbourne. His master could ill spare him, but the case was too strong to refuse; and away George went. Day and night he posted along, almost without food, and totally without sleep. When he reached the hair-dresser's, James Brown was busy upon the head of a customer. He looked at George, as George thought, with anything but a welcome in his face. However, George lost no time in inquiring for the letter, which the hair-dresser handed him from a drawer. George sat down and read. It *was* from Mary, and ran in these words :

"DEAREST GEORGE: O, how could I ever use those wicked words? How could I say what I did? I shall never forgive myself till I overtake you, and show you that I am yours forever. I am just going on board ship, but I put this into the post because the mail may, by chance, reach sooner than I do. Till we meet, never again to part, your ever-loving MARY LIARDET."

"Then Mary is come! come already!" exclaimed George, springing up from the chair. The hair-dresser had finished with his customer, who had gone out, and he stood looking at George with a strange look, and appeared as if frightened. "Then Mary is come!" cried George. "Tell me where she is!"

The hair-dresser gave a shake of the head, seemed as

if he could not speak, but suddenly turned round and began busily combing out some false curls on a block. George's heart smote him with a dreadful misgiving; and, seizing the hair-dresser's arm violently, he cried, "What! is she *not* come, then?"

The hair-dresser turned round, his face was like that of a ghost; and, as if the words were forced from him against his will, he said, in a low tone, "No, nor ever will!" With that, he handed to George another letter, addressed in a strange hand. George tore it open, in great agitation. It was also in a strange woman's hand, but signed by Mary. It ran thus:

"MY BELOVED GEORGE: They say many a word spoken in jest ends in earnest. But, O, how often do words spoken in anger bring a punishment! I said I would never see you again, and you repeated my words. Alas! God heard them, and they are coming true. Dearest George, we shall never meet! We have fever in our ship, and the doctor tells me I have not many hours to live. May God forgive us both, and send you comfort! O, George, return home and comfort those two poor old men! Do it for my sake. They won't live long, and all is yours. They told me so, and I have brought five hundred pounds with me to buy land, if I could not persuade you to go back soon. May God Almighty bless you, as I believe he will! I am sure you will keep your word. And endeavor to—no, I cannot say it—no, *never, never* forget me, but think of when we shall meet in *heaven*. Amen! MARY LIARDET."

The hair-dresser was still combing away at the false

locks when he heard a heavy fall on the floor. It was George Smithson, who lay on his face, with the open letter in his hand. James Brown ran and called his wife, and they carried in George and laid him on a bed, and then the hair-dresser ran for the doctor. The doctor came, heard the story, bled the patient, shook his head, and went away. For several days George Smithson lay in a state of profound stupor; then he went into delirium, and afterwards fell into a condition of weakness and silence. After some weeks he again arose; but he did not seem in his right mind, and the doctor said that his brain had had such a shock that it was doubtful whether he ever fully recovered.

Soon after, however, the hair-dresser missed George one morning, and found the following note on his counter

“WORTHY COUSIN: May God bless you for your care of me! I am off again to the bush. I feel that I am not all right. I don't think I ever shall be again. But there is thirty pounds under my pillow. Keep it, and pay the doctor out of it. And write home to the old folks, will you? — you *can* do it. I cannot. Tell them all about it, with my love.”

Here the writer's hand evidently became violently agitated; there was a blurred place, and a strange, odd flourishing or scrawl, that was meant, no doubt, for his name.

George Smithson was again in the distant woods. He had become the silent man that we had seen. He was Stockman Still. He never, however, remained

long in one place. In truth, he was a very indifferent shepherd, for his memory was always busy with other and sadder things. Meantime, his sheep often wandered wide away from him, and sometimes became the prey of wild dogs. Then Stockman Still was dismissed, and wandered on in search of another place. This was not hard to find, for shepherds are scarce, and Stockman Still became the wonder of travellers through the woods in some new scene. Everywhere, however, he was liked, for he was ready to point out good food and good water, would bring them in opossums for their dogs, and would occasionally knead a damper for "new chums," — the inexperienced, — or show them the best track through the woods, so as to avoid difficult gulleys and ranges.

That is the history of poor Stockman Still, as a gentleman told it to us by our evening fire; and I now write it down because we have just heard that he is dead. He was found, as if asleep, under a mimi that he had raised in the bush, by the hut-keeper, who went out in search of him, because he did not return home at night, — and he was quite dead.

Before I go on speaking of the birds, I had better make a few memorandums about the country and the trees which they inhabit.

The summer here is warm and long. They say that this summer has not been so warm as usual; and, indeed, the heat has never been very oppressive, but it has been warm enough to dry up the country, and wither away many lovely flowers that grow wild in the bush. I must not omit to mention the flowers, and I must say it

is quite a mistake for people to suppose, as we did before we came, that the flowers had no scent. They are in general small, but many of them very sweet. There are many lovely orchises, some of which are not at all like our orchises, but are delicate flowers, one on a stem ; others are like splendid hyacinths. Mr. B. is always painting the flowers in his sketch-book ; and Harry, who is a botanist, is making a collection of them. Some of the violets are very sweet, but have quite a different smell to English violets. There is a purple flower which they call here cherry-brandy, with a smell like heliotrope, and another like our meadow-sweet. The beautiful crimson mesembryanthemum, which we grow at home in pots, grows wild here. But in this country they give the queerest names to things ; and so they call this pretty flower "pig's faces," but why they do so I can't tell. And that reminds me of a very strange association of names which we met with the other day. There were two squatting stations, the one belonging to a man named Hogg, the other, Bacon ; both were situated on Pig-face plain ; the carter at one station is named Ham, and the stockman on the other Brawn ; and Mr. Hogg's daughter, who is reckoned a great beauty, is called Miss Julia Black Hogg, because her mother was a Miss Black.

These gentlemen, Hogg and Bacon, once, when on their way to Melbourne, stopped at the inn at Kilmore. They stayed there all night, and had all that was necessary for "man and horse," but on going away found they had, neither of them, any money. To remedy this, they gave the landlord an order on their banker, signed Hogg and Bacon. On seeing this, the landlord thought he was

going to be cheated, and, giving them the paper back, said, with a laugh, "This may be a very good joke, gentlemen; — Hogg and Bacon! A very good joke indeed; but it won't do for me; you must pay me the money." It was in vain that Hogg and Bacon protested that these were their real names, and that they had no money with them; the landlord would neither believe them, nor yet take their order. And what the end of it would have been I cannot tell, if a gentleman had not just then come up who knew the Messrs. Hogg and Bacon, and satisfied the inn-keeper.

Among the trees, too, there are many of the acacias which have very sweet flowers. This class of trees is numerous in this country. Some have winged leaves, like the sensitive plant; and others have simple ones, like our willow. Others, again, have, on the same tree, leaves of both kinds, — first one and then the other. The commonest acacia here is a handsome tree, with winged leaves, and in spring covered with yellow flowers that are very sweet; and we have travelled over vast extents which are overgrown with the sweet acacia, which grows at home in greenhouses. I thought how the nurserymen in England might be set up for life with plants, if they could only have been there.

But the greater number of the trees are of the number Eucalyptus, or gum-tree kind. They are all evergreen, or rather ever-dusky; for they are much duller here than our evergreens. When one comes upon a garden in the midst of the bush, one is quite astonished at the bright, clear green of the European fruit-trees. The gum-trees, at first sight, look all alike. They look like willows or ash-trees, from the shape of their leaves; but you soon

get to see that there are several kinds of them. There is the red gum, which has red wood, but a white bark. This tree sheds its outer bark twice a year, spring and autumn. They do not shed their bark in the patchy and ragged way that the plantains do with you, but it strips itself all off, as clean as possible, from head to foot. When the bark is newly shed the trees seem to be stripped into their shoots. They are clean and fresh from the root to the topmost branch, and look as if they were painted with a single coat of white paint, through which you could see the darker stains of the old wood. Some of the young ones look so white and fresh that had they their heads cut off, and a black stick for wick stuck in their top, they would look exactly like tall tapers in a Catholic cathedral. The bark which peels off lies all about the trees, and is a famous thing for kindling fires with. Then, there are the blue gum, the box gum, the yellow-box gum, the stringy-bark gum, the iron-bark gum, and others. The stringy-bark gum has a bark often two or three inches thick, looking like a warm, soft-coat in which it is wrapped. It is so called because it separates in fine fibres, or strings; and it is one of the most useful trees in the colony. The settler peels off the bark to make his hut of. The bark is also used for roofs when the walls are made of slabs. The bark serves as carpet for the hut, is used for tables, and for boats even. The wood, too, splits up easily, and so is in universal demand for all purposes. The iron-bark is a large tree, resembling a burnt cork-tree. Its bark is full of lumps of gum-resin, and is ploughed into deep furrows. The wood is very hard.

Besides these trees there are the shiock, commonly

called the she-oak, like a large broom-tree ; and the hiock, also something like it, but still more like a pine ; and the banksia, a scrubby, odd sort of tree, like a thick-leaved fir-tree, all over yellow bottle-brushes. They call it the honeysuckle tree, one of their very odd names ; the bottle-brush-tree would have been much more appropriate. But they are very fond here of giving the most inappropriate names possible to things. They call a tree, very much resembling the arbor-vitæ, a cherry-tree ; and its berries, not half so good as our English yew-berries, cherries ! This is the *Exocarpus cupressiformis* of botanists.

Well, many of these gum-trees are very tall, and others very large, and most of them exude the red gum-resin sold in the druggists' shops under the name of kino. The acacias, or wattles, as they call them, exude gum-arabic ; and hundreds of tons of that gum might be collected in the bush. But, everywhere that you go, still it is the gum-tree that is the common tree of the woods. Forever and forever it is the gum-tree, gum-tree, and still gum-tree. This makes the forest very monotonous, but the birds do their best to give life and variety to it. O ! there are hundreds of different kinds of birds, and many of them very beautiful. Parrots, blue, green, gray, and red ; rich-coated little paroquets ; cockatoos, white and gray ; cranes, pelicans, turkeys, wild ducks and geese, black swans, and emus, — these are some of the feathered citizens of the Australian woods ; and what I like in the birds is, that except the more-pork, a small owl, the curlews, and a few others, the birds all come out in the day-time, while, oddly enough, nearly all the animals of Australia are nocturnal. Besides the kanga-

roos and kangaroo rats, nearly all the animals only come out in the night.

But of all the birds the most amusing are the piping crow, the leatherhead, and the laughing jackass. These three birds are the universal companions of travellers. Everywhere they greet you, and everywhere are most amusing. There is a piping crow and a laughing jackass in the Zoological Gardens, in London; and I used to hear the latter ha, ha, ha-ing! when I crossed the Regent's Park. But it is only in the Australian woods that one hears them in perfection. There they are jolly, and full of fun. There you see their antics, and hear their merry, quaint voices, in all their fulness and variety. These birds awake you at the earliest peep of day, and by the time the sun rises there is a general chorus of them all around you. The piping crows, or, as they will call them here, the whistling magpies, — though to my eye they have nothing of the magpie but their pied feathers about them, — whistle away like a lot of school-boys, only with much deeper and more musical tones. Their warbling is the oddest thing in the world; part of it so rich, so mellow, so melodious; and then again such an outbreak of croaks, and screeches, and *crowish* noises! But they seem delighted with their own music, and do not sing, like our birds, only while the hen-bird is sitting, but all through the long summer, and, as I am told, through the whole year. There are thousands of them all over the colony, and their black and white colors give a liveliness to the dim woods. They have none of the tail-flirting motions and jaunty ways of the magpie, but are about the size, and much the same shape, as our wood-pigeons. They have a

sober and somewhat heavy flight, but I am told have many odd ways when tamed and left to run about near a house. One gentleman told us that one that he kept used to amuse itself by offering to the cat a piece of the meat given to it, and when the cat attempted to take it pulling it quickly away again, with evidence of vast delight. It would tease the cat thus for hours, but always ended by generously giving it the meat, at last.

The leatherhead is a very odd bird. It is as large as a fieldfare, with ash-colored back and whitish stomach; but the singularity of it lies in the head, which is destitute of feathers, and covered with a brown skin, resembling leather, — whence its name, — drawn tight on its skull. As you see it sitting, its head and beak look like a brown pointed stick, and it opens its beak wide, and makes the most odd gestures, when it utters its various strange notes. It is evidently a bird of imitative powers, and the variety of its notes is endless. Near Kilmore you hear it continually crying, “Kilmore! Kilmore!” a word that it must have picked up there from constantly hearing it. You never hear the leatherhead say “Kilmore” anywhere else. At Spring Creek, at the Ovens, there was one that was constantly crying, “Quite well! quite well!” It said this as distinctly as you could do, and another answered, “Quite! quite!” One day we heard one there trying to say, “Quite correct!” but it did it with difficulty: “Quite cor — cor — quite correc — quite correct!”

These words and notes it utters in a soft, shrill voice, like that of a child calling from a distance; but it has a number of notes that are much harder and odder, and that seem to come out of an instrument that moves with

some difficulty. Yet at the same time these notes are very jovial: "Ry tockede rock, ick de dock, rytick de rock de rock." I think these birds must speak the native language, they talk away in so odd and grotesque a style. Sometimes I could fancy they had translated "Hickory, dickory dock" into that language, and were saying it:

"Hickory, dickory dock,
The mouse ran up the clock.
The clock struck one,
The mouse was gone, —
Hickory, dickory dock."

This is exactly in the style of the leatherhead. His performances are always in the jolly and comic style. Occasionally both he and the piping crow bark like dogs, to their own great delight; and the laughing jackasses look out and laugh at them altogether in a most hearty "Ha, ha, ho, hoo, hoo, hoo!" and with a vast deal of chuckling and giggling in a lower tone amongst themselves. I have heard of a shepherd who, on first going into the bush, was confounded by the sudden wild outburst of the laughing jackasses, and ran to the station for his life, declaring that the natives were in full chase after him, and had been hooting and laughing in his rear, in the wildest and most frightful manner, all the way. These are preëminently the merry birds of the Australian bush, and just such as in fairy tales you hear of as talking, and some privileged person understanding them.

There are other magpies, or crows; — for they are more like the latter. There is the gray magpie, which, they say, learns to talk well when tamed; and there is

the black magpie, with some white on its wings. These birds haunt together like rooks, and make the most dismal wailing, something like our starlings. They build, also, the oddest nests, — exactly like black hats with the brims cut off. These they balance, in some extraordinary way, on the boughs of the loftiest trees. They are made of mud, and stand erect on the boughs, for all the world like hat-crowns.

Besides these, there are the carrion crows. These birds are my aversion. They resemble our carrion crows in appearance, but they have a cry just like a spoiled child, “Ha, ha, ha!” ending in a most pathetic and dolorous long-drawn “ho!” — “Ha, ha, ha, ho!” You would think them the most injured of individuals. Never was anything so mock-heroically pleading and complaining as their cry. We often could not refrain from laughing at the sound of it. Yet they are by no means sentimental creatures; on the contrary, they are amongst the most cruel and mischievous birds in the colony. They pick out the eyes of young lambs the moment they are dropped, and are detested by the squatters. Neither are they very nice in their food. They are the real scavengers — the vultures — of Australia, and snuff up in a moment the least or most distant scent of putrescent meat. Nay, they scent out good meat too, and come flying from all quarters, led by the savory odors of our camp-oven, or our steaks in the frying-pan. One day we hung a quarter of mutton on a tree. At that time not one of these birds was to be seen or heard; but in a few minutes they were heard cawing in the distance, and came right on to the tree, where they settled in numbers, making the most pathetic appeals to us to

go away and leave the mutton; but as these crows had neither bought it nor paid for it, while we had, we declined to comply. Frequently Alfred amuses himself by imitating their lack-a-daisical note, and brings them in scores about us on the trees. Their anxious and inquisitive looks, on such occasions, are very amusing. They evidently think that we have got some one of their amiable community in captivity, and hang on the boughs around, and turn down their black heads, and their black, sparkling eyes, in the most impish and uncanny way.

My father always says these birds are like people who, though very fond of doing mischief, always pretend to be the injured party, and make pathetic speeches and pitiful gestures all the time that they are tormenting some innocent person. They are like

THE ROGUE PURSUED BY THE OLD WOMAN'S GOOSE.

A rogue, who was passing over a common in England, saw a beautiful flock of geese feeding there. Immediately conceiving a great desire to get one of them, he drew out of his pocket a long piece of string, fastened to it a crooked pin, baited it with a bit of bread, and began to angle for a goose. It was not long before he had hooked one, which, as soon as it felt the man pull the string, and prick its throat with the pin, began to run after him, flapping its wings, and cackling with all its might. Away the fellow ran, and after him fluttered the goose, with its wings in full flap, and its cries as loud as it could make them. When the old woman heard this screeching of one of her geese, she came out

of her cottage, and was astonished to see the goose rushing madly after the man, and the man appearing to fly from it as fast as he could.

"Mother, mother," cried he, "take off your goose! take off your goose!"

"O, good man," said the old woman, "don't mind it! it won't hurt you."

"It will! it will!" shrieked the man; "it will! it will! take it off! take it off, I say!"

And so the man ran on, and the goose continued to run, screeching, and flapping, and cackling, after him. The old woman, in great amaze and fear, lest her goose was suddenly gone mad, hastened, as well as she could, after them; but when she came to a turn of the road, at the end of the common, neither man nor goose could be seen; for so soon as he was out of sight he whipped up the goose, popped it into a bag, and disappeared among the bushes.

March, 1853.

We have been at Mr. Barlow's, on the Plenty; and there Buff has behaved very disgracefully. As there were no longer any opossums to hunt and eat, he made an onslaught on the barn-door fowls. I suppose he mistook them for magpies, which he is so fond of chasing; but let that be as it may, he killed two hens and a duck, and had eaten a good part of them before he was found out. And now, this very day, he has killed another, which was worth twelve shillings; for poultry is very dear here. It is very plain that, though he is such a capital fellow in the bush, he is not fit to live in civilized society. We always, now, chain him up to the cart, when we stop at any stations, and only take him out

now and then for a walk. He does not like it, but we cannot help that.

I have been told a good way of preserving opossum-skins; and now, instead of letting Buff skin them for himself, we shall do it. I mean to make a grand opossum-rug. Alfred will sew the skins together, when I have dressed them.

We have had a gentleman at our tent who has been talking a deal about bush-fires. They are very common here. For above a hundred miles up the country where we have been travelling the country was all burnt up, on one side of the road or the other. The grass is as dry as tinder, and when people leave their fires, as they do, the wind is very likely to carry flame or sparks to the dry grass; and then it catches the shrubs and the old dead trees that lie on the ground; and so it runs and leaps along from place to place, and in a few hours miles of country are in a blaze; nay, it even sweeps along the hills and the mountains to the very tops, — if there is either grass or shrubs upon them, — till all are burnt quite bare. Unless the fire is very bad it does not kill the trees, though it scorches their bark quite black, and singes their leaves till they are as brown as our oak-leaves in winter. But whenever it comes to an old dead tree, it climbs up the old dry bark, and the whole tree becomes a tree of fire and flames, and rages till the trunk stands like a pillar of red-hot metal. It must be very grand and dreadful, and I hope that in our travels we may happen to see such a sight; for what is the use of travelling, if one cannot see all that is to be seen?

The parrots are a class of birds that would amuse anybody. There are a good many sorts of them. We have seen green and blue ones that are very gay, which colors have red and yellow also plentifully scattered about them. I have never seen them, as I had heard them described, in such large flocks as to color the trees, but I have seen them in considerable quantities. They are not very wild, but are difficult to shoot, the shot often seeming to take no effect on them; and I dare say that you folks at home will be glad of this, as you are all so tender-hearted. Well, I don't think so many of them are shot as you might suppose, for we used to hear that parrot and damper was a favorite breakfast in this country. I have never seen the diggers eating such a breakfast, though they do occasionally roast parrots, but can any day see them breakfasting on damper and mutton. We have seen thousands of small green paroquets, which they call leeks, but which name others say belongs to a large species of green parrot, which is only seen on the Sydney side. We saw one in a cage, which the lady of the house said was exactly the same age as her youngest son, — seventeen, — yet it appeared very lively, and had no look of age about it. We saw many of them near the Murray, on the Sydney frontier.

The small paroquets which I mentioned are very active birds, and are gay with red and yellow about their heads. They build in hollow trees, and when their family rearing season is over, they fly about in great numbers in flocks, all crowded close together, as starlings fly in England. They fly over the tops of the trees at a very rapid rate, and forever making a sharp twittering noise as they speed along. They are as noisy

as sparrows are in England, and everywhere in the woods as common. They are easily tamed, and I mean, next spring, to take a nest of young ones, and see if I cannot bring them home. The blue mountain parrot is a fine fellow, and so is the king parrot. In the trees they look very much like other birds, and do not seem to have so many of those odd, sidling ways, and cocking of their heads in odd positions; but perhaps that may be owing to the distance we see them up in the tall gum-trees. There are three sorts of cockatoos that are very common. The white cockatoos, which you see so often in England, abound here in flocks, as large as rooks. They look very well as they fly in the bright sunshine, like birds of snow; but they are noisy creatures, and have the harshest voices, I think, of any birds in the world. They are always crying "scrape! scrape!" and they seem to scrape your very ears. You may imagine what is the scraping, deafening din and clamor when some thousands are going over your head. They are terrible fellows among the settlers' corn. I have seen thousands at a time plundering a wheat-field when it was just ripe, — sparrows are nothing to them.

There are gray cockatoos with red heads, that are not so numerous. They fly along, making a creaking noise, like an old gate on its hinges: and there are black cockatoos, that are regarded as proclaimers of rain. And, truly, when we have heard these black birds come screaming over the woods, rain has always followed very soon. They fly very high. They are apparently as large as pheasants, and have very long tails. They are seldom seen except in solitary pairs. You would wonder how they managed to be always flying before

the rain ; and would begin to think that they must build in the thunder-clouds. But perhaps they are present in most parts of the forest, but only scream "calao ! calao !" on the approach of wet weather, and thus become noticed.

But if I were to write about all the Australian birds, I should never have done. I must, however, say something about the honey-birds, which suck the flowers like humming-birds ; about wattle-birds, wild ducks, geese, black swans, etc. etc. We have killed and eaten a very beautiful kind of crane, of about the size of a small heron. It was of a beautiful French gray ; had the softest plumage, — that on its back being like small ostrich-feathers ; it had long yellow legs, long neck, and very sharp beak. It had plenty of little fish in its crop, but did not taste at all fishy. We also shot a very large kind of plover, with the softest and most delicate plumage, which was as good as partridge. But we have never been able to kill any of the wild turkeys, or rather bustards, for they are a species of bustard, and about as large as turkeys. We saw some that a settler had shot. But you cannot think what crowds of birds there are all about the river Murray, the largest river of Australia. One night, as we camped near the river, we several times thought there must be great meteors going through the sky, there was such a rushing noise ; but it was only the wild ducks and geese that were flying along over the water in the moonlight. Do you know they have ducks here that settle in trees until dark ? We have also seen pelicans and eagles, but not yet their ostrich, the emu, nor the beautiful lyre-bird, though it is found in the Dandenong Hills, near here. There is an odd brown little

owl, or, as it is often classed by naturalists, a night-jar, which you hear in the woods every night, making a noise something like a cuckoo. At first we thought that amongst their curiosities they had a nocturnal cuckoo; but they call it the morepork, because it seems to cry, "more pork! more pork!" We used to say that it was much better off than we were; for, as it cried "more pork," it was a proof that it had got some pork, while we had none at all.

They have many very beautiful smaller birds. There is a black-and-white bird which they call the magpie-lark. To me it more resembles a small, gentle dove, only it has not pigeon's legs. The colors are very delicate and clean, and its manner very gentle. It is always found near streams, and is very tame. It makes a ringing cry of "chain! chain!" and looks very beautiful on the boughs of the green trees. There are fine pigeons also, called the bronze-winged pigeons, and a host of birds making the oddest noises. One has a note just like a cart-wheel that wants greasing, and another like a wheelbarrow that wants greasing; another, called the whip-bird, seems always to be switching a whip-lash about with the sharpest whip-cord on it. There are tree-creepers, too, that make a "pee! pee! pee!" that never ceases. You cannot tell when the bird takes its breath, for it never pauses for a minute for a quarter of an hour together. Very amusing birds, too, are the razor-grinders, a species of black-and-white fly-catchers, with long tails that they flit about in the oddest way. These birds are very familiar, and hop about the horses as they graze, often flying at their noses, — I suppose to catch flies, — and the horses never attempt to hurt them.

But amongst the most beautiful of small birds is the Australian robin. This robin is less than ours, and is a bird of much gayer colors. On the back he is more like a chaffinch, and the red on his breast is of a very light and brilliant color.

There is a very brilliant little bird, too, called the superb warbler. The cock bird is about the size of a tomtit, or rather larger, and is a very splendid fellow. His head and neck are of bright and glittering blue, with lines of black on each side of his head. His back, wings and tail, are brown. As he flies about, he looks like a flying gem. The hen bird of this gaudy little fellow is of a sober brown, and her breast and stomach of ash-color. She is very like some of our willow wrens. Well, do you know, a pair of these birds had built by a brook where Alfred and I were digging for gold? They built in the sedge a little covered nest, like those of the willow wrens. Now, this nest was exactly in our way: we knew that there was gold under it, and yet, as there were young ones in the nest, we could not find in our hearts to destroy it. Luckily, before cutting up this sedge, I saw this brilliant blue bird going several times into it; so I looked, and there was the nest. The old bird sat on a stick within a couple of yards of me, and, looking at me, he seemed to say, as plain as possible, "There, I see you have discovered our nest; but I trust now you will have respect for our parental feelings, and compassion on that tender little family of ours, and spare that tuft of sedge." With that, he made a profound bow, with all the grace of an old French nobleman of the *ancien régime*, and flew away.

After so strong and polite an appeal, I could do no

less than comply with so reasonable a request; and, therefore, though we must sacrifice probably some half-ounce of gold, we resolved that the nest should stand. It was very much in our way, it is true; but we went round it, and, in order that we might not frighten the honest couple with our picks and spades, and throwing up of earth, we stuck down the boughs of a tree between us and the nest. Every day, for a week, we saw this couple busy feeding the young ones; and, what was odd enough, there was not one hen that assisted to feed the young ones, but three! We concluded, therefore, that this gaudy little fellow had three wives, and contrived to keep them in good humor with each other. Perhaps, we said, he was a terrible fellow, that made them all afraid; and so we dubbed him BLUE BEARD, and the little brown hen LITTLE BROWN BETTY, after Little Brown Betty who lived under a pan. And thus you can read the nursery-rhyme in Australia:

“ Little Brown Betty lived under a pan,
And brewed good ale for digger-men.
Digger-men came every day,
And Little Brown Betty went hopping away.”

And so did this Little Brown Betty go hopping away as nimbly as ever the original one did. She was both bold and active, far bolder than Master Blue Beard, who was considerably of a coward. For, while Little Brown Betty flew boldly in and out of the nest, and had perfect confidence in us,—as well she might have, when she saw us not only leave the sedge, but set up a great bough behind it as a screen,—Blue Beard would fly near the nest, and then fly as fast back again, in a panic.

Then he would come hopping, by all sorts of side ways, through the sedge, stopping continually, and turning his glittering head first one way and then another. Then he would hop along a stick that lay in the sedge, till he got near the nest; and then, instead of flying up into the nest, about a couple of feet or so, he would take a fresh alarm, and fly quite away again. It was some time before even the brave example of his wife could inspire him with confidence.

But the oddity of it was, as I have said, not only this Little Brown Betty came out and fed the young ones, but two others did the same. We said one of the others must be "Sister Ann," but who the third could be we could not for the life of us tell. We concluded that perhaps it was some one of old Blue Beard's wives who was not known to northern story.

Last, after all, it occurred to us — and I am now persuaded that this was the fact — that the two other birds were not Blue Beard's wives, nor sisters of wives, at all, but only two elder daughters. Yes, that was it, no doubt of it. They were two elder sisters, just learning household affairs, and helping their mother to discharge the duties of the family. And when we came to look closer at them, then we saw that Little Brown Betty was more portly, more matronly, than the other two, — they had a slimmer, slenderer, more maidenly look. Good sisters! it is very becoming of them! And altogether it was astonishing what a quantity of caterpillars Blue Beard and his female assistants brought to that nest. All day they were flying in and out; and the young ones swallowed all, and were ready for more, and grew and grew, and became covered with feathers in a

most surprising way. Good luck to them all! We certainly were at much pains to insure their safety, and especially one day, when there was a great fluttering and screaming amongst the members of the family, and, on inquiring into the cause, we discovered a great black snake gliding from under a log near them; and, though we did not succeed in killing him, yet we put him to flight.

But, in another instance, we were not quite so merciful. There was a couple of hawks who had made their nests on the top of a tall tree, at least two hundred feet from the ground. It was a daily and hourly trial to my patience to see the old birds come to the nest with poor little birds in their claws. They would have carried off Blue Beard himself and his family, I dare say, had we not protected them. Well, every half-hour or so, one or the other went with some poor little wretch of a bird in his claws, totally regardless whether it were the father or mother of a family or not, and then would tear it limb from limb, and feed their young ones with it. I often begged Alfred to shoot them and their young ones, but in vain; and my father to cut the tree down, but he only replied that it was their nature, and that if we destroyed these hawks there would still be hundreds of others in the forests carrying on the same destructive practices. But I told my father that when on the road he used to kill, on calculation, five thousand flies per day, and we said it was no use, for that the country was full of them, and that it was a proverb, kill a hundred, and a thousand will come in their places, that this had no weight with him. He replied, "Very true," and so took the axe, and felled the tree. You may imagine what a crash so tall

a tree came down with. The young hawks — there were four of them — were flung out of the nest a long way, but they are such hard creatures they did not care for it. We took them up, and gave them to a digger near. He made a perch for them in front of his tent, and meant to rear them, and take them home. But it was a luckless family, and not destined to flourish. The old ones, though they soared round, and wondered what was become of the tree, never went near to the young ones to feed them; and soon some very odd accidents carried them all off. One was sitting on the ground, when the heavy lid of a camp-kettle fell upon it, and crushed it as flat as a flounder. Another attempting to take some meat from a dog, the dog snapped at it, and killed it. A third had its leg broken, — a cruel Irish lad, that was fond of all sorts of mischief, and the digger, brought it to our tent, saying something was the matter, — that it could not *roost*: he meant sit up. We saw that its leg was broken, and advised him to kill it. The fourth — unlucky hawk! — got hanged in the string that tied it to the perch; and so perished all that predatory family.

So much for birds. I could write a deal about their nests also, which are often very beautiful and curious. By the by, we have never yet seen the nest of the bower-bird, though they build in this part of the country; but we have seen one of the tailor-bird, suspended from the bough of a tree. We saw one with two entrances, a front-door and a back-door; and Mr. B. has one that looks at a distance like a porcelain cup.

The animals, as I have said, of Australia, are almost

all nocturnal. The kangaroos, kangaroo rats, and kangaroo mice, are nearly all those that show themselves by daylight. A very odd animal world it is, where almost everything shuns the bright and pleasant sunshine, sees, knows, and cares nothing for it, but comes out at night, and pokes about in the dark.

With kangaroos and kangaroo rats we have made little acquaintance, and, therefore, I have not much to say about them. They are growing daily rarer, nor did I know till I came here that there were such things as kangaroo mice. But I am told that there are, and that they are very funny little animals. Again, as to the wild dogs, of which we have heard so much, we have travelled all the way across the colony in one direction, and that across vast plains pastured with sheep, and have seen none. They cannot be very numerous here. We saw at the squatting stations their skins used as mats in the passages, and by bed-sides, so that they *do* still meet with a few of them. The Tasmanian wolves in the Zoological Gardens are the wild dogs of Van Diemen's Land; and I suppose are not very formidable, for a gentleman who used to have a station up the bush in that country told me that they used to be very numerous, and make havoc amongst his flocks, and that he used to hunt them down with dogs, and often caught them alive. He said that his shepherds used to boast of their chasing and killing them; but he very much doubted the fact, as he thought, were that the case, they would not come about so frequently. So one day he had run down one very near the shepherds' hut, and as it was evening, he tied a handkerchief round the animal's neck,

and dragged him up to the door of the hut as you would a great dog or a calf.

The shepherds were altogether very jovial over a bottle of grog. Very quietly he went up close to the door, quietly opened it, and taking the wolf, or hyena, as he called him, by the neck, he pushed him right into the midst of them, and shut the door again. No sooner did the shepherds see the great gaunt animal in the midst of them, than they showed how very courageous they were, for they began to shout out "thief! murder!" Never was there such a terror and hubbub. One man actually bolted up the chimney, and out on the roof. The others rushed out as fast as they could, while their master, who stood by the door laughing at their terror, as they sprang out one after another, kept saying, "So, so! that is the way you chase the hyenas, eh? That is your valor, is it? I see now why they come after the flocks so. It is because, instead of pursuing them, you let them pursue you."

From that time he took care to depend only on his own pursuit of them.

There is the wombat, an animal which appears to be something between a pig and a badger, and is very good eating. We were anxious to make acquaintance with him; but though we could find plenty of his dens, we never could find him, nor even the porcupine, which is indigenous; nor the bandicoot. We must wait the first opportunity.

But the opossums, the flying opossums, flying squirrels and flying mice, are very numerous and very curious. The opossums are, as I have said, as large as hares, and are in this country generally gray, though in

Van Diemen's Land they are of a rusty brown. They have a thick fur and long bushy tails. They sleep in the hollow trees in the day-time, as do all this class of animals. The natives climb up after them by cutting notches in the bark of the trees for their feet; which you see on the trees everywhere. I have sent home one of these foot-notches in a piece of bark. They then get them out of their holes, either by poking a stick down or by cutting into the tree just where the opossum lies, which they ascertain by knocking on the bark of the tree. I saw a shepherd-boy one day up in a tree with a long pole, which he was poking down the hollow till the opossum ran out, and he knocked them down. He said he had killed eight this way the day before, and had got nearly enough skins to make him an opossum-rug for his bed. He told me also that he had a few days before killed a sun-bear, a sort of sloth, which lives, too, in the ground, or in hollow trees; and a gentleman told me that one day he saw something coming along the woods towards him looking very black, and with something on its back. He thought it must be a native woman with a child; but when it came nearer he perceived that it was a sun-bear with its child on its back. On seeing him it made a hasty retreat into the scrub. Well, we mean to make more acquaintance with these creatures before long.

It is curious that these animals are not only nocturnal, most of them, but *marsupial*; that is, they possess *marsupia*, or pouches under their stomachs, in which they carry their young ones till they are capable of taking care of themselves, and to which they retreat in all cases of danger.

As to opossums and flying opossums, we have killed many. Our dogs are insane on the subject of opossum-hunting, as I think I have said before, and scour the woods furiously after them. As soon as it is dark you hear these creatures making a strange, uncouth sort of screeching, and you see on moonlight nights the opossum perched on the boughs of the trees, and the flying ones flying from one tree to another. It is wonderful how far they can fly, seeing that they have no wings, but only a loose skin which they expand by stretching wide their legs, to which the skin is attached. They are as large as cats, and have a fine fur.

The flying squirrels are much smaller, about the size of ordinary squirrels, and the flying mice are about the size of ordinary mice. They are very pretty little creatures, and easily tamed, as are opossums and kangaroos. Mr. B. has painted the portrait of a flying mouse which we caught: he is always making sketches; sometimes of our camp, or of places where we stay in the bush, or of flowers.

This flying mouse that he drew came out of the bushes, and began climbing up a young tree close to us, which was broken off at least four feet from the ground. On the top of this tree it lay down to sleep, and then we threw a handkerchief over it, and took it captive. We meant only to keep it till its portrait was taken, but the next day it died. It would eat neither bread, grass, leaves, corn, nor anything we could give it. I suppose it still depended on its mother's milk; and as, alas! we had no milk of flying mice, nor even of sober cows, that do not fly, it died. I shall try to get some and bring them home.

To-day Alfred found an American digger going down into a wombat-hole. It was circular and perpendicular, and there he was with his tin dish going down into it, supposing it to be a hole made by a gold-digger. "I guess," said he, "somebody has made a pretty considerable sinking here." When Alfred told him what it was, he hastened up out of the hole in very quick time. If he had gone down and alighted on the back of some great black beast, he would have been *rather considerable astonished!*

This morning we heard a great barking of dogs up in the woods, and went to see what was the matter. There were seven or eight of the dogs of our neighbors and our own barking furiously at the root of a hollow tree which lay on the ground. Feeling quite certain that there was either a wild-cat or a porcupine in it, I sounded the tree as the natives do, till I perceived where the creature lay. We then got an axe, and chopped a hole into the tree there. Some one saw something black and hairy. One cried, "It is a wombat!" Another, "No, it is an opossum!" Another, "No, it is a wild-cat!" And another, "No, it is a porcupine!"

"I will kill it," said Alfred, taking up the axe. — "No, no!" exclaimed others, "don't kill it; let us see it alive!" So they laid hold of it, and with some difficulty dragged it out of the tree, for it seemed quite fast wedged into it. And well was it that they did so, for what should it turn out to be but a capital little dog belonging to a neighbor, which had run into the hollow after something so eagerly, that it had jammed itself fast, where the passage was too narrow for it! The

wild creature, whatever it was, had gone out at the other end, for the hole went quite through the tree. We were very much astonished, and very glad, too, that we had not killed the dog. The other dogs were no doubt barking to give us notice that this little dog was fast. Had they not, it would have remained there and perished, for no one would ever have dreamt where it was. It was wonderful to see the joy and caperings of the other dogs, and how they caressed and jumped round the little rescued one.

Melbourne, June 1.

Here we are once more in civilized life; and, as I have plenty of time, I will put down a memorable adventure which we had on our travels, as well as the history of the DESERTED STATION.

It was growing rapidly dark, one evening, as we were travelling in the far-distant bush, and endeavoring to reach the station of our good friend Mr. Bonnegilla. But after a long day's journey we could neither reach this station nor find any water. There was the channel of what was evidently a stream during the winter season of the year; but mile after mile we had traced it, and there was not a single pool of water left. So onward we had been compelled to go, still looking for a water-hole or a brook, or Bonnegilla's station, but in vain. Night was fast gathering round us. As we were about to ascend a fresh hill, we saw something lie in the road before us, and, examining it, we found that it was a large, strong bullock, that was yet not entirely dead. It had apparently fallen exhausted by thirst, and the hard-hearted drivers had left it to its fate, fearing that if

they delayed their journey to render it assistance, they too should have to pass the night without water, and others of their team might perish.

Much as we pitied the poor animal, we were unable to do anything for it. We, too, were consumed with thirst, and our horses dragged wearily along their load, suffering much the like fatigue and want of water. It was evident that a few minutes would terminate the sufferings of the poor bullock, and we went on.

Shortly afterwards, to our joy, we perceived, on our right hand, at some distance, a station. "There," we exclaimed, "is Mr. Bonnegilla's house!" We took the road that wound off to the right, towards it, and soon drew near it. But, dark as it was become, as we approached the place there was something so strange and desolate in the aspect of the building, and the whole was so dark and so still, that we were struck with wonder. We peered through the gloom, to trace a column of smoke arising from one of the chimneys;—not a trace was to be seen.

"How? What can it be?" we exclaimed. We drew on. No dog barked; no form appeared; no light shone from door or window. We drew still nearer; and what an apparition stared upon us through the gloom of night!

It was the great skeleton of a deserted house, surrounded by the skeletons of its out-buildings and offices. Never was there such a scene of desertion and ruin. All around, on the ground, lay masses of loose timber, and great patches of shingles, which appeared to have been removed piecemeal from the roofs. There stood up extensive wooden walls, but destitute of doors and

windows, as well as of roof. The naked spars and joists alone stood up where the roof had been. Behind this was a whole group of other buildings in a similar condition of dilapidation and decay. In the front there was an open extent of level land, overgrown with a species of thistle, which was now dried into a white and also skeleton state. Behind rose a dense forest, in which the opossum and flying squirrels were making their riotous nightly sounds, and where the solitary morepork was repeating his dolorous monotone. Never was there a place which presented so complete a picture of desolation.

As we stood gazing in wonder at it, and wondering still more where, after all, we were to camp for the night, — seeing that we were so thoroughly deceived here, — we saw the figure of a man steal silently from one of the open doorways of the deserted house, and go, as if not noticing us, to a distance amongst the scrub.

“What place is this?” we cried.

“That is more than I can tell you,” answered the gruff voice of another man, who just then made his appearance.

“What are you doing here, then?”

“What should I be doing,” answered the man, “but camping?”

“Camping! What! will you camp in a ruin like that?”

“Ay, sure,” replied the man; “and you may do the same. There is plenty of room, at all events, and fire-places to boot.”

We then found that this was one of the bullock-drivers who had left the bullock to die on the road, and

who, on our urging them to try and save it, only said, "Save it be hanged! I reckon it is dead enough before now."

"But is there no water here?"

"Ay, water enough; — the creek runs up behind the house here."

With that, the man, not stopping to listen to our advice, to carry the bullock some water, gathered some of the old, decaying timber, went in, and soon had a famous blaze kindled in the old building, which only looked the more skeleton-like and dismal from the light cast within it. We turned our horses' heads in another direction, went to some distance up the creek, and encamped near a gigantic gum-tree. Anon we saw the blaze in the old buildings casting a still more vivid radiance, and could hear the voices of several men singing over their bottle, and occasionally talking in a loud tone, as if also quarrelling over their liquor. They kept up their revel till late, in the old ruins; then the light faded out, the sounds of voices died away, and all became silent and dark.

In the morning, on awaking, I was half inclined to think that I had dreamed of that old desolate place, fit spot for robbers or ghosts; but I looked out, and still it was there, appearing even more extensive, though not so wild and dismal as over night. After breakfast, we some of us strolled up to it. The bullock-drivers had disappeared at the earliest peep of day, and had left no traces of their sojourn but the still unquenched ashes, and a quantity of empty beer-bottles.

While we were preparing to pack our cart, and proceed on our way, a settler rode up near to us; and, going

up to him to ask how far we were from our friend Mr. Bonnegilla's station, we at once recognized the jolly face of his overseer, Micky Hicky. This was a welcome discovery. He informed us that we were only about three miles from the station, and said Mr. Bonnegilla had been expecting us for some days. We now asked Micky Hicky how this station had fallen into such decay. It looked, we said, as if some horrible deed had been committed in it; — that it was just the sort of place for robbery and murder.

“Well, don't you know the history of it?”

We said, “No.”

“Did you never hear of the two brothers Maclaclan who occupied this station? How they came out together, — the elder and a younger brother, — the one with money, and the other with none? How the elder, to persuade the youngest to come out with him, had promised him equal share of everything; but that he had taken this station in his own name, putting the younger brother off with all sorts of promises? That when three or four years had gone over, and the station was well stocked with sheep and cattle, and the bad times had been passed through, and everything was getting prosperous again, the younger brother had insisted that, on renewing the license, his name should this year be put conjointly? That the elder had solemnly promised to have it done, but had not done it; and said that the government had made a difficulty about altering the old form of the license, but that it was all one; — he would be as good as his word, and that the younger brother might consider himself joint possessor? That the younger brother, on learning this, became terribly enraged, and

that there were very high words between the brothers, and that the elder one, who was very tired with his long journey down to Melbourne to pay the license-money, said, 'Don't bother me any more; I want to sleep;' saying which, he threw himself on his bed, which was near the fireplace, and slept; whereupon the younger brother stood some time hovering over him, like a wild beast; then suddenly snatched up an axe, and clove the elder brother's head; and then fled out of the place, and was never seen after?

"Did you never hear *that*?" shrieked Hicky, laying a strong emphasis on *that*, as if every one ought to have heard it.

We said, "No, we never had heard it;" adding, what a horrible story it was! and no wonder the old place stood deserted.

"But why are you smiling, Hicky?" asked my father; for, on looking at him, instead of appearing impressed with the horrors of his own story, he had a curious twinkle in his eye, and seemed to be enjoying something vastly. "What are you smiling at, Hicky?" said my father. "That dreadful story is surely nothing to smile at."

"No, not if it were true," said Hicky.

"And is it not true?" we asked.

"Not a word of it," replied Hicky; "but I saw you were ready wound up for a dreadful story, — an interesting murder, or something of the sort, — as you thought it was just the place for robbers and murderers; so I thought I would treat you to a little romance." Whereupon Hicky laughed right heartily; for he loved a joke dearly.

“You are an incorrigible wag, Hicky,” we said. “So there was nothing unfortunate that occasioned this station to be deserted, and go thus to ruin?”

“Stop,” said Micky, again looking serious; “you are getting on too fast again. There was trouble enough which occasioned us to desert this station; and I will now tell you what it was.”

“But are you going to tell us facts, or fables again?”

“Facts, gentlemen, facts; what I tell you now is the sober truth. When we first came up into the bush, we were like thousands of others: we knew nothing whatever of the country, or of its peculiarities. We came up in the summer, and saw that all was dry, and burnt up. We saw, perhaps, a little brook, that we could stride over, winding down the valley, between deep banks, or a solitary waterfall, here and there, in its bed; and thought we could not do better than get as near it as we could. Here, however, you see, we did build on a slight elevation, and a hundred yards or more from the creek.

“Well, all went on very well during the summer; but one day in autumn there came a regular drenching rain. In the evening, as I looked out, I could see the creek actually running bank-full. ‘If there is much more of this,’ I said, ‘the creek will be over its banks before morning.’ But little did I then know of the sudden rise of these streams, after rain. There had, very likely, been much rain up amongst the hills where this creek took its rise, before it began to rain here. Be that as it may, however, about midnight my wife awoke me, saying, ‘Micky, what makes the sheep bleat so?’

“I had camped them — about two thousand in number — on that swell there in the bend of the creek, as a dry place, from its elevation. I listened, and sure enough there was a piteous bleating amongst the sheep. I listened a moment longer; for I thought I heard a rushing sound, as of a stream; and at once it occurred to me that the creek was out.

“‘Gracious heavens!’ I exclaimed, ‘it is water! There is a flood!’

“I sprang out of bed. Splash I went, up to the knees in cold water.

“‘What on earth is that, Micky?’ cried my wife.

“‘Water, wife! water it is, up to the very bed-stock! God help us! but we must look out pretty quickly.’

“‘O, my child!’ screamed out my wife. ‘Where is the cradle? Where is it?’

“‘Here it is,’ I said, ‘floating out of the door, like Noah’s ark, or Moses in the bulrushes;’ for I had opened the door, and there was, in reality, the wooden cradle, rushing out on the top of the eddying stream. My wife had sprung out of bed, and seized the cradle, with which she was hastening out of doors.

“‘Take care, wife,’ I cried, ‘what you are about! Give me the cradle, and follow me close round the house-corner, to the back; for if you go a few steps only forward, in the front, you may be carried away by the flood.’

“‘But the other children, Micky! the other children! They will all be drowned!’

“‘I hope not,’ I said; ‘I’ll fetch them; but first let us see how we can get out in the dark, and how far it is to dry land.’

“My wife came close behind me. It was pitch dark, was still raining very hard, and we had to wade some distance before we were out of the water.

“‘Here we are, Molly,’ said I, at length reaching yon huge old tree. ‘Here do you stay with the child, while I go and fetch out the others.’

“But my wife would not stay behind; she thought the children would some of them be drowned; so she set down the child in the cradle by the tree-root, and, taking hold of my coat-laps, followed my steps, through the roaring, rushing waters, towards the hut. We found the children fast asleep, — there were three of them, — though the beds were beginning to swim on the water in the room. I seized two, and my wife the third; and we made our way back again to the tree.

“‘Molly,’ I exclaimed, ‘listen to those poor sheep! I’ll lay anything they are surrounded on the mound by the flood; and it is so pitch-dark it is impossible to see them. What, in Heaven’s name, shall I do? Hearken!’ I added; ‘we must have a fire. We must have something to light it with; and what? All is wet here, and wet in the hut, too. What must we do?’

“My wife at once thought of an old box, on a shelf, containing sundries of little value. That we fetched out, and splitting it up, soon got a good blazing fire. By its light I could see a sight that made my heart ache. It was the whole flock crowded together on the mound, and totally surrounded by the waters, that were now rushing along, all muddy, and dashed with floating heaps of foam, and bearing along whole loads of dead timber.

“‘What, in Heaven’s name, can be done?’ I ex-

claimed, in agony. 'The whole flock will be drowned, if the flood rises higher. Molly,' says I, 'I must run for Gryce;' that was another shepherd, living in another hut, a few hundred yards further down. 'Meantime get what you can out of the hut; but take care to keep close round the house-corner, or you may be carried off.'

"Away I ran for Gryce. When I reached near to where his hut was, I could hear wild screams, and a mingled clamor of voices. The waters were all out round the hut, and it was only by shouting with all my might that I could make them hear me, they were making such outcries themselves.

"'Gryce!' I shouted; 'Gryce! here, man, here! the sheep are all drowning! Come! make haste!'

"'The sheep be hanged!' replied Gryce. 'Don't you hear that my family is drowning?'

"'Drowning! Where are they? Where is the hut? for I cannot see it.'

"'No, nor any one else; for the flood has swept it clean away. It is gone all to pieces, and is washed down the stream. Come on, and help me to save my family!'

"I pushed boldly on towards where I heard Gryce's voice; — the other voices now were silent, except some low cryings and whimperings; for they thought that help was coming.

"'Where are you, Gryce?' I continued to call, as I waded on till I was up to the middle; and he continued to repeat, 'Here, here!'

"Lord above! what a sight it was, when I got up to him! The hut was clean swept away, and everything

in it; and the wife and two children were somewhere, — I could not see where, but it seemed over my head, — now again crying, ‘O, dear Mr. Micky, help us! for mercy’s sake, save us!’

“‘Where are you?’ I cried, in wonder; ‘where are you?’

“‘There! there!’ said Gryce, pointing into a great gum-tree.

“And, sure enough, there I saw several figures, in white, clinging to a large horizontal branch.

“‘In the name of all that’s sacred,’ I said, ‘how did your wife and children get there, Gryce?’

“‘Get there!’ cried the poor man, half frantic; ‘why, they got first upon the top of the hut, but they very soon felt it going over; and on it swam till it dashed against this tree, and they luckily seized on that great branch, and so saved themselves.’

“‘Come down,’ said I, ‘and we will carry you out to our fire.’

“‘But how?’ cried the poor things; ‘how? It is too far to jump down; and there is no other way, unless we had a rope, or a ladder.’

“‘Then stay there a bit,’ I cried; ‘you are safe. We will bring you a rope, at all events. But first, Gryce, we must see what we can do for the sheep, or they will all be lost.’

“‘Sheep!’ cried Gryce. ‘What care I for the sheep? and you see where my family is!’

“‘Yes; but I see that they are safe for the present, and the sheep are not. Come along!’ But it was no easy matter to get Gryce away, or to persuade the inhabitants of the tree to let him go.

“‘Take us away with you!’ they screamed. ‘Take us along with you! We won’t be left!’

“‘With all my heart,’ I said, ‘if you will only tell me how to come at you. Jump down, Mrs. Gryce, and I’ll catch you.’

“But Mrs. Gryce only answered by a scream of horror, and said, ‘No, not for all the world! I should certainly be drowned!’

“As it was in vain to get them away, I persuaded Gryce, if it was only for a moment, to come and see if we could not save some of our master’s property. We waded away again towards the light of our fire. We found my wife and our two lads bravely fetching away everything they could out of our hut. The wife brought them out of the hut, and carried them as far as to where the water was shallow enough to allow the lads to move; and thus they carried the things out. Gryce and I waded onward towards the bleating flock. There was a hollow to pass between us and the mound, and the water there was already up to our chests.

“‘We must make haste, James Gryce,’ I said, ‘or we shall be too late. If we can push a few sheep across, the rest may swim after them. But in a few minutes, if the creek rises still, this hollow will be too deep for us to wade; and neither of us, unluckily, are swimmers.’

“We came up, now, with the outer ranks of the flock, which was closely crouched together, with the water up to the throats of those on the outside. We seized the first we came at, and, pushing them into the stream, with their heads towards the land, after one or two attempts to come back again, which we prevented, they swam right off. So far, so good. We continued to push one

after another; but few were bold enough to follow, of their own accord; others came back, spite of all our efforts; and others were too weak to battle with the current, and were swept down the stream, making the most lamentable bleatings. In fact, the whole flock kept up a most dismal and heart-rending clamor of bleating. I was almost beside myself. Such a splendid flock to be at the very brink of destruction, and which yet might, most of them, be saved, if they would only follow over those that we sent across!

“While I was desperately tugging at them, and forcing them into the stream, there came floating a large branch of a tree, full of leaves, and swept several away with it. At the same time Gryce screamed out, ‘Hicky! Hicky! I am drowning! Help! help!’

“The great bough had pushed him back into the hollow, and there he sunk over head. He was now beyond his depth. In trying to lay hold on him, I myself went down too. But at the same moment I had caught hold on Gryce, and instinctively I pushed him, as I had pushed the sheep, landward. I could see him floating, or rather floundering forward, and I made a desperate plunge after him. The water was still over my head, and running at a terrific rate. I began to think all was over, but I determined not to yield without a struggle, as I felt pretty certain that my face was towards the land. I still waded onward, though fast choking, and anon had the indescribable pleasure of feeling firm ground, and yet with my nostrils above water. At the same moment I again caught sight of Gryce, just by me, with his arms extended out of the water. I seized a hand, and dragged him along with me. Presently we were high enough to

pause and get our breath. The water was now only up to our chests. But what a situation! What were my sensations! There was that noble flock all left to inevitable destruction. The waters were still fast rising, and the bleatings of the sheep, which were continually washed down the stream, were to my ears agonizing.

“Gryce! Gryce!” I exclaimed, ‘what *must* we do? Cannot we do *something* yet to save them?’

“Though I had just *saved him*, yet he turned, gave me a look of *thunder, and said, ‘A pestilence on the sheep! Do you think there are nothing but sheep that want saving? Do not you think my wife and children are more to me than sheep? Do you recollect where they are? Do you remember that they are perching in a tree like a row of scare-crows?’

“‘Scare-crows don’t perch in trees, James,’ I said. I thought he would have knocked me down.

“‘But scare-crows shall perch in trees,’ he said, angrily, ‘if I please. I say, there they are perching in the tree like a row of scare-crows, without anything but their night-gowns on.’

“I could not help saying, for the life of me, ‘Scare-crows with night-gowns on must be worth seeing!’

“The shepherd stood still, up to the middle in water as he was. He was actually choking with rage. For a time he was quite purple-black in the face. At last he burst out: ‘Hicky,’ said he, ‘you are a villain! You have no heart in your bosom! You think more of sheep than of human beings,—all except your own family; and, as you have left them safe, it is all very well to joke at mine.’

“‘You are quite right, James,’ I replied; ‘I ought not

to joke under such circumstances, and I assure you I did not joke because I was merry. I never was so miserable! To think of all that fine flock——'

"Here Gryce uttered a little oath about the flock, and said, savagely, 'Will you help me to save my family, or will you not?'

"'With all my heart, James,' I said. 'I am going now, am I not? And I would have brought them away before, if they would only have dropped down; but I'll bet anything neither I nor you can climb that old giant of a tree. And, unless they will drop into the water, that we may catch them, for the life of me I don't know how we are to get them down!'

"Gryce went on in silence, as if thinking. At length he said, 'If we had a rope to throw them up, they might fasten it and come down it.'

"'But,' said I, 'we have not such a thing, — not a yard, that I know of. The ropes are all in the flood.'

"Gryce gave a groan, and went on again pondering. Meantime, we had reached the dry land, and followed the edge of the water hastily till we were opposite, as we thought, where Gryce's hut had stood. But it was still dark, and we could not see the tree where the unfortunate people were, nor hear them for the rushing sound of the water. We coo-eed lustily, and a faint reply came from quite another place than where we expected it. We waded at once into the water in that direction, coo-eeing as we advanced. But soon we found that the water was too deep for us. It was impossible to go on. 'God above help us!' I exclaimed; 'we cannot reach them, — what *shall* we do?'

"Here Gryce became outrageous. He swore and

cursed awfully, and accused me of being the death of his family. If I had not taken him away after the sheep, which he again wished at the bottom of the sea (and that was unnecessary, for they were now nearly all at the bottom of the flood), he should have got his family away.

“I was too sorry for the man to blame him ; so I said nothing till he had done, all the time my heart pulled in two, as it were ; for, on the one hand, I heard numbers of the sheep going down the flood bleating in vain for help ; and, on the other, I thought of the poor family of Gryce in the tree, and no means of coming at them.

“At length I said, ‘Well, James, let us trust in Providence. Your wife and children are safe, at all events. They won’t drown, and we must think of some way of getting to them.’

“‘Ay,’ said Gryce, bitterly, — nay, savagely ; ‘it is all very well talking so when your family is all safe, and at the fire-side. But, how *will* you come at them ? Have you a boat ? — have you wings ? — have you *any* means by which you can get at the poor creatures that you left so heartlessly, and all for the sake of brute-beasts — of good-for-nothing sheep ?’

“‘Good-for-nothing sheep !’ I exclaimed. ‘Do you call that fine flock of two thousand Saxon merinos good-for-nothing sheep ? I tell you, it makes my heart bleed to think of them !’

“‘Pshaw, man !’ he replied, furiously ; ‘I tell you my wife and daughters are worth more to me than all the sheep under heaven.’

“‘True,’ said I ; ‘I admit it, and I honor you for thinking so, James.’

“‘Pshaw, man!’ he said again; ‘honor! botheration! What will you *do* to save them?’

“‘I will sacrifice my life!’ said I, earnestly, ‘if I can be of any use to them,—but how?—only tell me how!’

“‘But he could not tell me how; no mortal *could*, for there was the flood running wide and headlong, and loaded with bushes and trunks of trees, enough to knock down and carry anything before it.

“‘They will perish of cold,’ said Gryce.

“‘I hope not,’ said I.

“‘But what signifies your hoping? They will, I tell you.’

“I said nothing: it was useless. At length we turned to wade out, and Gryce stood there as if he would stand till the flood swept him away. I said, ‘It will be morning soon; we can then see better what to do. Let us at least save ourselves, that we may save them.’

“Gryce then turned sulkily towards the land, saying, ‘It is all you, Hicky. You’ve done it. You’ve done for my family!’ and with that we waded on in silence. What a miserable morning that was! I shall never forget it, if I live a hundred years. There sat Gryce on a stump, now silent, now saying again, ‘It is all your doing, Hicky. You’ve done for me!’ There were the few faint bleatings of that once fine flock from the mound; and there, I knew, were Gryce’s poor wife and two daughters wretchedly starving in the tree, the waters rushing and roaring fearfully beneath them. Continually I kept straining my eyes to catch a sight of the mound, to discover what sheep, if any, still remained,—but in vain. At length it began to dawn; the light

rapidly increased, and I saw, to my astonishment, that only the head of one solitary sheep was visible upon the mound! There it stood, on the very centre of the mound, — all the rest were gone! If the waters rose, that would go too.

“With what anxiety did I watch the waters, whether they advanced or receded! I stuck down a stick into the edge of the flood; it, at least, appeared stationary. ‘There!’ I cried, ‘the flood is at its height, and in this country I have heard that floods fall as rapidly as they rise.’

“My wife said, solemnly, ‘Pray God!’ Gryce sat and said nothing. I still watched the flood with eyes that seemed to strain themselves in their sockets, and I soon saw that which made me clap my hands, and exclaim, ‘It sinks! it falls!’ All rushed to the stick to see, and all cried, joyfully, ‘Yes! yes! it is so!’

“New hope sprung up. In a few hours, at furthest, we could get to the tree to rescue the sufferers. In my joy I rushed into the waters, and got so far that I could make them hear the news, and bade them take courage and hold on fast, and we would reach them at the earliest possible moment. But how slowly did the flood sink! how slowly seemed to creep on the hours! Never did I experience such a forenoon; it seemed as if the sun once more had stopped at the command of some mighty enemy.

“Meanwhile, I busied myself with scheming how we might make a raft to sail to the sufferers in the tree. We could not get boards, but we could get bark; so we set to work, tied together four poles with some strips of sacking that we cut up for the purpose, laid other poles

over them, and then peeled off some large sheets of stringy bark, and, with each a pole for a boat-hook, set sail. It was all very well so long as we could reach the bottom with our poles; but when we came to the hollow between the alluvial mound and the main land, there we were out of reach of the bottom, and our raft whirled about, and darted off at the mercy of the stream. It was a moment of horror. We were in the utmost jeopardy. There appeared nothing for it but our being carried on, dragged by the current into the main stream, and speedily dashed against some tree and sunk.

“‘The Lord have mercy upon us!’ I cried. ‘Now we are likely to perish in earnest in trying to save your family, James!’ He sat holding his pole like a man stupefied.

“‘Rouse yourself, man!’ I cried; ‘don’t be lost without a struggle. See! there is the tree on which your family is right before us, some way down the stream; let us steer the raft for it.’ He rose up, and, after many vain attempts, we managed to run the raft so that we came slap into the branches at the end of the huge horizontal bough on which sat those miserable and starving creatures.

“‘Now for it, James!’ I cried. ‘Seize fast hold and sling yourself up upon the bough, — it is your only chance.’ I did this at the same moment, and was just in time to give James a hand, for he was not quite so agile as I was, and hanging from the bough more like a scare-crow than he had represented each member of his family to be. With a little struggling, there we were, now seated astride of the same bough on which were those wretched females. The raft and our poles were

carried away, and we were thus locked up in the same predicament that they were. But those poor creatures, who had been all night there with only their night-dresses on, were almost fainting with cold and terror. I pulled off my thick coat and gave it to the mother; Gryce did the same to one of his daughters, and I gave a waistcoat to the other. At the same time I bade them be courageous, for the flood was going down, and in a while we should be able to get them off. But hours went on before we could venture to try the depth of the water. I managed to cut a branch with my knife, and, going downwards to the end of the great bough, hung from it, and poked the stick into the water to seek for bottom. At length I was persuaded that I could reach it if I dropped off; so I committed myself to Providence, and down I dropped from the endmost branches.

“ ‘ All right ! ’ I sung out, joyfully. I alighted on terra-firma ! The water was only up to my chest. With some difficulty I got James Gryce to do the same, and with much more difficulty persuaded the wife and daughters to follow our example. But they were so benumbed and weak, that the mother, in attempting to move, rolled off the bough with a great shriek, and fell into the water. I was, however, ready to catch her, and carried her out and away to our fire, where I bade my wife wrap her in blankets, and give her some hot tea. Then I hurried back, and found James in vain endeavoring to persuade his daughters to come down. I joined my entreaties to his, but in vain. There was nothing for it but making James climb up again, and removing them forcibly, one at a time. They were girls of fourteen or fifteen ; but so frightened were they that it was

only with the wildest shrieks and struggles that their father could loosen their hold on the tree and drop them into the water. One after the other I carried them out, and had them put into warm blankets beside their mother. I then turned to Gryce, and said: 'Now, James, I hope I have done all that I could.'

"The poor man grasped my hand and tried to speak; but it was some time before he could say, 'Forgive me, Micky, — forgive me! but you know what I must have felt.'

" 'Ay, that I do right well,' said I; and I cast another rueful look across the water to the mound where that beautiful flock had so lately been. There was only that one old ewe remaining! She had stood out the whole flood by occupying just the one spot on the summit that allowed her to keep her head above water. And now she was grazing, with occasional bleats, on the bare ground that was gradually widening by the falling of the stream.

"To shorten a long story, James Gryce's wife and daughters were gradually restored. The old woman used ever afterwards to complain of aches and rheumatism, which she attributed to her exposure for about twenty hours on the tree. One of the daughters, too, she long said was going into consumption, from cold then caught on her lungs; but that turned out *rather* different, for the girl is now married, is the mother of three children, and one of the fattest women in the colony.

"But, O! what a heart-rending sight!" said Micky Micky, with a feeling that half persuaded me that James Gryce was not far from the truth in thinking that he felt

more for sheep than for human creatures ; though Micky Hicky is by no means indifferent to the welfare of his fellow-men. "O! what a heart-rending sight," said he, "it was, to go down the banks of that creek, when it had sunk, and see all those beautiful ewes and wethers lying in the mud, drowned, and others of them hanging dead, eighteen and twenty feet above my head, in the trees, where the flood had left them! Of the two thousand, there were eighteen hundred drowned. Two hundred only had escaped to land.

"You may be sure that we never ventured to live in that luckless hut again, but built another, in the paddock up near the chief station, where you will see it."

"But why did you not carry away these materials? That would have been much easier than felling and splitting new ones."

"Well, I don't know," replied Micky Hicky; "we seldom do that in this country. If a place does not suit us, we just leave it, and make another. Timber is always at hand here. And besides, nobody likes to have anything to do with what has been unlucky. But still, you see it is often inhabited. Bullock-drivers, and occasionally bush-rangers, I guess, take up their lodgings here. You may see the heaps of empty bottles they leave behind; and I constantly expect that some day, in their drunken carelessness, they will set fire to the place, and that I shall, some fine morning, find it burnt to the ground. Meantime," said Micky Hicky, with one of his humorous smiles, "it is a ruin,—an antiquity. We have not many yet; and so, for the sake of the picturesque, even we may love **THE DESERTED STATION.**"

August.

I am now going to put down my observations on Australian iguanos, lizards, and the like. The serpents, with a sprinkling of scorpions, centipedes, and such "ungeziefer," as the Germans call them, are the only things — bad men excepted — that you have much occasion to fear here. We can ramble day or night in the wild forest, and have no dread of lion, tiger, or the hyena, or any monster of that kind. We can lie down under the open sky, at night, and sleep, without any danger of being dragged off and supped upon by some of those monstrous cats or dogs. This is a privilege which Australia may justly boast. The things to be careful to avoid are snakes, scorpions, centipedes, and various venomous spiders. But, before I say more about these, I must tell you that I saw, the other day, near here, what they call an eagle-hawk. Why they add the *sobriquet* of hawk I don't know, except that they seem to delight to give absurd names. The bird was a genuine eagle, and a fine one. It was as large as a turkey, of a rich brown, and with very powerful legs. I have often seen them in the bush, but never had so good an opportunity of examining one at leisure. He was chained to a wooden cross-perch, near a cottage. They tell me that there is another genuine eagle, still finer than this kind.

I must remark — if I have not done it already — that some one brought out three fine European swans to be upon the water in the Botanic Gardens here. The gardens are large, and so is the water in it; — quite a lagoon, or lake, full of flags, rushes, water-plants, and a wood of the water-cedar, and tea-scrub: a very fine place for them, and abounding with wild ducks and

geese. But, alas! a dog got at them, and he killed two of them. It is a pity that they should have come the whole length of the globe to be devoured by a rascally dog! There were plenty of ducks, nearer, that he might have killed, and they could speedily have been replaced; but no! nothing would serve him but to destroy these beautiful creatures; such rarities, too, in this hemisphere!

But to our snakes: I have said that one day Buff had been bitten by one, and also that a gentleman's dog was bitten by one, near our camp, and died immediately. But I have not said anything about the big black snake that we killed close to a hole where we and the Popkins' were digging for gold. This snake was a large black one, at least four feet long. Prin found it, and began barking in the peculiar way he has when he sees a snake. It was in the scrub, close behind us. I seized a huge pole that lay near, and, going to where Prin was barking, I saw this big black serpent. I at once discharged a heavy blow upon its back, but it seemed to care nothing at all for it. It glided away, and came out near Alfred, at whom it made a spring; but he and several others of the party struck it with their spades, and endeavored to chop it in two; but it seemed as if made of gutta-percha; and, spite of these heavy chops, it sped along, and plunged into the water-course. There it dived, and went along at a great rate; but we still continued to chop it, till we at length killed it.

We have often seen these black ones about, and we always make war upon them. One good thing is, that all the snakes in this country creep into their holes and under logs at sunset; so that after sunset, and before

the sun has warmed the air in a morning, they are never out. I never hear of them creeping into houses and beds, as they do in India; so that we have no fear of finding them in our tent. We have seen carpet-snakes and diamond-snakes, so called from the colors and patterns upon them. The diamond-snake is, I believe, very venomous; and the carpet-snake is not, but is a species of boa-constrictor. Did I not tell you of the little whip-snake that one day was crawling between my feet, on the highway? It had a head nearly black, and I only saw that; for its body was the color of the dust. I thought the head was a beetle crawling, and was thinking of picking it up; but it was well that I did not, for it is very deadly.

The lizards are very numerous, — much more numerous than the snakes; and, what is better, few, if any, of them are venomous. The great lizard Iguana would astonish you. It is like a little crocodile, and runs up the trees. It is often four or five feet long, and as thick as your leg. It has a blue tongue, which it puts out and quivers as it goes, so that it looks very formidable. Its tail tapers off till it is as fine as a piece of whipcord. You generally find these creatures in the very hottest and most barren districts, and they seem well to accord with the scene. Like most lizards, they are very fond of heat, and bask luxuriously in it. Next to them there is a lizard about a foot long. It is light-colored, spotted, and generally very fat. It, too, has a blue tongue, blue as steel, and looks very uncanny; and one that Prin killed we thought must be very venomous, for Prin had a stuffing in his chest, and a difficulty of breathing, for a fortnight after. But the settlers say it is not venomous.

Be that as it may, we observed that where the dead body lay rotting in the sun not a fly or any insect would touch it, a sufficient proof that they knew that it was not very desirable.

There is a very funny little lizard, about as long as one's finger. It is gray, and has a big head, very disproportioned to its size. It runs up trees, and when it sees you it sits cocking up its head, looking steadfastly at you as long as you continue motionless. But the most amusing fellows are the water-lizards, or rather those that live about the creeks. These are, perhaps, ten inches in length, slender, and polished. They are olive-green, and spotted. They are very harmless and vivacious creatures. They live in the great hollow trees that lie about the creeks, and often across them; and if you knock on one of these trees, two or three are pretty sure to come out, and look about, as much as to say, "Who is knocking here?" Whenever we were looking about the creeks, these creatures were sure to be running out, and watching what we were doing. They would stand and look at us steadfastly for half an hour together, and we never molested them. But Prin was not so considerate: he took a desperate passion for hunting them about the old logs, and often killed them.

In the northern parts of the continent travellers describe alligators as common in the rivers and lagoons; but we have seen none. You know that the natives talk of a strange reptile which lies at the bottom of waters, and pulls people under when they are swimming. They call this the Bunyup, and are much afraid of it. According to them it must be very much like Sam Slick's Kentucky man, half horse and half alligator. No European

has, however, yet been able to find this formidable Bunyup, and many, therefore, think it imaginary. Some years ago, a skeleton of some considerable animal was found at the bottom of one of the Australian rivers, the Lachlan, near its junction with the Murrumbidgee, which the natives pronounced to be a piccinini Kianpraty, or young Bunyup, or Boy-nip. But Professor Owen, to whom Mr. Westgarth showed a drawing of it when in England, pronounced it to be the skeleton of a calf! Still the natives are firm in their assertion of the existence of the Bunyup, and we must suppose it to be the alligator which Leichhardt saw near the Gulf of Carpentaria, and which he says is a true crocodile. Another strange water animal, the duck-billed Platypus, I have frequently seen.

Everywhere almost in the creeks and rivers there are turtles, which at night make a great splashing, and strange, loud noises, more loud and harsh than the bull-frog. By the by, these bull-frogs are, in the spring, everywhere. They are keeping up their perpetual noises on the margin of every water. There are thousands and millions of frogs, of all sorts and sizes, everywhere. There are tree-frogs, little brown things, chirping cheerily in the scrub. There are also beautifully green little frogs in the marshes, just like them, except in color. The frogs are useful in one respect; they announce the approach to water, and that in all sorts of keys and choruses. Some are like packs of hounds barking; others are like peals of muffled bells, and are called bell-frogs; others seem to be playing on castanets, and others to be whirling wheels round all day. There was a very grave old fellow in the bank of a creek near where

we staid some time, that, at a certain hour of the evening, used to announce to his neighbors that he was come out for his evening gossip by a loud, solemn "Cackarack! Cackarack!" to which another old fellow near answered as solemnly, but more laconically, "Carack! Carack!" Whereupon there was soon a regular jargon of frogs, that joined in various tones.

As we came down the country in autumn, most of the waters were dried up where these jovial frog-concerts were kept up, and the poor, unfortunate wretches that remained alive sate dolorously croaking amongst the dry rushes. Yet we knew that there water might always be found by digging a few feet down.

I must not forget to remark that the craw-fish and fresh-water lobsters of this country seem to me more like reptiles than fish. There are craw-fish here of a light blue, with rows of prickles all down their backs, or rather down their tails. They were very troublesome to us when fishing for other fish, for they were always at our lines. However, they are very good eating, and so we excused them. They are large, — quite as large as the largest craw-fish in England. Besides these, up in the brooks near the Snowy Mountains, that flow into the Mytta-Mytta and Yackandanda, there are regular lobsters, some of them as large as the sea-lobsters, and quite as good. Often when the Popkins' were washing gold we found something very heavy and all alive in our bailer, — the tin vessel at the end of a stick that we scooped up water with, — and, lo! it was a great lobster, which we used to put into a bucket till we wanted him, for if we put him into a small water-hole he was sure to take a sly opportunity and run away. What was still

more odd, there were little craw-fish of a bright red, just, for all the world, as if they had been boiled. There were numbers of these, and we used to joke and say we supposed their ancestors had got boiled when there were volcanoes in these regions, as there have been. In Gippsland, only on the other side of the mountains, there are the remains of many volcanoes, but all now extinct, and many of them having lakes in their craters full of wild fowl, and others have woods growing in their craters full of birds.

In these creeks there were, too, abundance of leeches ready to lay hold of us if we went in ; but it was very odd they never meddled with the dogs, and I never perceived that they meddled with the horses or cows, which latter stand for whole days in the water in hot weather. But one day a great leech actually jumped several times out of the water at Abijah Popkins as he was washing gold in a tin dish, and tried to fasten on his hand.

Besides these creatures, in digging by the water-courses we often saw *blue* worms, being as blue and as bright as blue-bells. They were very odd-looking ; and there were also numbers of hair-worms, fine as hairs, and a foot long, and of a rose-color.

But I think I have said enough of the reptiles I have seen here. I shall, therefore, give the account of

THE FALSE GARDENER AND THE TRUE.

Mr. Curlewis had a fine station lying amongst the granite ranges beyond the Goulburn. His run, as it is called, extends for nearly forty miles between these ranges, within an area of ten miles from one range to

the other. The lands on his run are finely undulating, and not very thickly timbered, so that the greater part of his squatting station resembles an English park, and is scattered with herds of fine cattle. There is an excellent stream running down a valley between the ranges, which is never dry in the hottest summer. Mr. Curlewis' house stands on a fine swelling eminence, facing, at perhaps half a mile distance, one of the ranges, which, like all the hills there, is wooded to the top. Down in the valley before his house runs the stream I mentioned, or the creek, as they call it. The whole view is very fine. The park-like slopes descending to the stream; the scattered herds of cattle grazing on them; the stream widening out here and there into expanses like lakes, skirted by thick masses of mimosa trees, and beyond, the dusky forest stretching away to the foot of the wooded ranges. Such a place in England would be very much coveted by our nobility. Here, it is *rather* too lonely and distant from neighbors to please any but the confirmed squatter. But what I was going to tell you was about Mr. Curlewis' gardener. The garden is a piece of alluvial land lying on the other side of the creek, just sufficiently elevated to escape the floods. It is four acres in extent, and is only fenced in with posts and rails, for there is no fear of thieves, nor orchard-robbing boys; for there is no house nearer than the public-house, on the Sydney road, six miles off, called "The Friendly Halt." The next station is ten miles off, and villages there are none. All round, on three sides, therefore, lies the open, ancient forest, and on this side runs the stream, which, oddly enough, has no bridge over it for the family to pass at pleasure, and, therefore,

when the water is high, they are cut off from the garden, except they *ride* over to it.

Well, you must know this is a very nice garden. It is well stocked with all the useful vegetables that we despise at other times, but never at dinner-time, such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, and the like. It is well planted, too, with gooseberry and currant trees, with raspberry bushes, and strawberry roots, and in the summer is full of the fruit of these. Then, as to peaches, apricots, nectarines, not on walls, but as standard trees, all about the garden, I wish you could see the abundance in autumn, to say nothing of apples, pears, and plums. O, they are in such abundance, and rich, fine, luscious fruit! The grapes are equally plentiful and fine; there are at least a couple of acres of them; and we gathered bunches a foot long, and many pounds' weight. And such quinces! You would be astonished to see the quinces here. With us at home they are about the size of ordinary pears, and generally pear-shaped; but here they are more the shape of apples, and as large as the largest apples you ever saw. Many are as large as both my hands placed so as to make a globe. They are five or six inches across, and as golden in color as gold itself. There is also a fruit called the "Loquot," which grows on a tree very like the medlar in leaf. It is a Japanese fruit, and resembles a large yellow plum, but has a very different taste, and more acidulous. As to melons, they grow in huge quantities all about the garden,—there are thousands of them,—water-melons two feet long or nearly, and great golden gourds as large as the great stone balls you see on gentlemen's entrance-gate posts in England.

In the centre of this plentiful and pleasant garden

stands the wooden hut or cottage of the gardener; which, with its smoke curling up quietly in the clear air, looked very home-like and pleasant. But this gardener was a solitary man. He had no family. No wife to enliven his house, and now and then take a walk out and look at him at his work. No children to play along the wide walks, and send their shrill cries and laughter up amongst the hills and old forest trees, nor to help him occasionally at his work. This gardener, I am afraid, was what they call an "Old Hand;" that is, a man who has been sent out of "his own country for his country's good;" that is, has been transported to Van Diemen's Land, or Sydney, for some offence, and thence has made his way into Victoria, where there are no convicts but such as have got away from the colonies just mentioned.

This gardener, oddly enough, had the name of Joseph Tooth, but was more commonly called "Joe." Joe, or Joe Tooth, was a one-eyed man, and, if you believed him, also a one-eared man, for he professed to be very deaf; but, when you mentioned the cabalistic word "grog," or "nobbler," he heard you in a moment. He never "turned a deaf ear" to the sound of these words, or to the chink of silver that would buy it. If, on the contrary, you pronounced the name of everything in the garden that you wanted without first uttering one of those magical words, he was as deaf as a door-nail. In fact, Joe Tooth hated to part with any of his garden produce even to the family itself which employed him. Instead of a gardener growing fruit and vegetables for them, he seemed to be a descendant of one of the dragons which used to guard the golden apples in the

gardens of the Hesperides. He was a regular dragon, and grew quite fierce and spit-firish whenever they sent for vegetables or fruit for the table. The family of Curlewis were really grown quite afraid of the dragon Joe Tooth; and often did not venture to send down for even a cabbage or a turnip to their beef, because he chafed and scolded so. So there lay whole loads of fruit and vegetables, and rotted on the ground, or dried up on it.

"Why don't you send him off?" asked we, for the Curlewis family are good friends of ours.

"Because," answered they, "if we did, we don't know where to get another. The gold has drawn away all our men. The 'new diggings' at Mount Alexander and Bendigo have put an end to the old 'diggings' in gardens."

And it was only too true, and old Joe Tooth, well aware of this, knew where his strength lay, and relied on it. "If I don't please you," he was very ready to say, "suit yourselves; I had rather go than not." But as they could not suit themselves, so they tolerated the dragon, intolerable as he was. The man was a middle-sized, thick-set fellow, who evidently was very strong; and though he had not bad features, yet when he was angry it was awful to look at him, especially on the side of his face where the eye was wanting. The whole expression of that dim and dark profile was that of savage wrath and desperate self-will.

Yet this man pretended to be afraid of robbers. Mr. Curlewis was so provoked at his monopolizing disposition, that he at length determined to put an end to it, and to care nothing for his ill-humor; so he used to ride down every day with a large bass, and make him cut up

plenty of vegetables and gather plenty of fruits for the house. Sometimes Joe would *not* gather any; whereupon Mr. Curlewis gathered them himself, dug up potatoes, and scorzonera root, — the *Schwartz-wurzel* of the Germans, an excellent vegetable, equal or superior to sea-kale, — and pulling the very finest fruit that he could lay hands on. Joe Tooth used to rage and fume on these occasions like a bear, and swear that he would leave, but he did not. Soon after, however, he came up to say that the garden had been attacked and robbed by diggers, and that he himself had been shot at on going out of his house. The family had heard two or three shots down at the garden in the night, but they had taken no notice, supposing that Joe was shooting opossums that came to his peaches.

Mr. Curlewis expressed his wonder that diggers should come six miles out of their road to rob his garden; but Joe told him to come down and see where the shot had struck the hut, and had even cut up the walk near it. Mr. Curlewis went down, and actually saw such shot-marks, and, what was still more odd, they found several times, directly afterwards, shot in water-melons that had grown near the hut. They were, therefore, quite inclined to believe that diggers had made a nocturnal attack on the garden.

Some way, however, after that time, they fancied that the fruit and vegetables continued to diminish regularly and rapidly. When they mentioned it to Joe, "O!" said he, "no doubt. The rascals have found out now where they can supply themselves; and, as for me, I dare not venture out to watch for them. What am I to do so many? There were five or six great sturdy fellows

before. I saw them in the moonlight. If I came out, they would pop me off in a jiffey."

Joe professed to want some man to come and sleep at his hut, to help him to watch and catch the thieves. But he knew very well that there were no men,—that Mr. Curlewis himself was obliged to feed his own cattle. Unfortunately for old Joe Tooth, one fine Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. Curlewis were walking on the hill near their house, at a spot which commanded a full view of the garden, when, to their astonishment, they saw a cart, loaded as high as it could be piled with vegetables, slowly moving away from the direction of the garden amongst the forest trees. As there was no road near there, except their own track leading to the Sydney road, six miles off, it was clear that this must be some customer of Joe's, who had come on purpose for this load. As cabbages were selling at the Ovens diggings, fifty miles off, for three shillings and sixpence apiece, grapes at five shillings a pound, onions at two shillings and sixpence a pound, water-melons at four and five shillings each, and potatoes at one shilling and sixpence a pound, there was plenty of inducement for them to come so far for them. At once Mr. and Mrs. Curlewis saw the real cause of the steady diminution of their crops.

They stole quickly back amongst the trees, till they could return to their house unperceived, when Mr. Curlewis at once mounted his horse, and, taking a circuit, soon came near enough the cart to perceive that it was loaded most prodigally with his garden stuff. It was piled up with cabbages and melons as high as a little hut, and these were based upon hampers which he did not doubt contained his choicest fruit. He dismounted

from his horse, tied it to a tree, and, under cover of a dense jungle of wattle-scrub, got near enough to ascertain that the cart belonged to a well-known gardener at Wangaratta.

“Oho!” thought Mr. Curlewis; “now I know the sturdy diggers that rob my garden, and shoot at old Joe! These diggers are garden-diggers, not gold-diggers; and Joe is the principal himself!”

Mr. Curlewis did not let the men with the cart see him, but, making a careful retreat, got back home unperceived. At dinner there were some friends there, — neighboring squatters, — that is, neighbors of fifteen and twenty miles distance. Mr. Curlewis related to them what he had seen, and added, “And here has this arch scoundrel been telling me, a few days ago, that not only are the fruit and vegetables regularly stolen, but that a blight has taken all his garden-seed; — that there are neither onion, carrot, turnip, radish, nor any other seeds. All the heads that should be full of seeds are only full of dust. And he told me that he should want five pounds, at least, to send down to Melbourne, to buy seeds for next spring. I believe it is all false,” said Mr. Curlewis, “after what I have seen.”

“You may be sure of that,” replied Mr. Desauclose, a gentleman who came about twenty miles off; “for it was only this morning, as I rode up past the garden, and got off my horse, to have a look at it, that Joe offered me a pound of the finest onion-seed I ever saw.”

“He did?” said Mr. Curlewis, with an actual start of astonishment. “The hypocritical villain! Now, what, in the name of all roguery, shall I do with that fellow?”

“O! you must get rid of him,” said Mr. Dempsey.

“Will you find me another gardener?” asked Mr. Curlewis. Mr. Dempsey shook his head. “Then,” said Mr. Curlewis, “the chance, I am afraid, lies between our having a few vegetables or none at all. For, if I dismiss Joe, what chance is there of getting any other? and the garden, this hot weather, will soon all be burnt up. But I must look out for somebody; for here that scoundrel Joe shall not stay long.”

And Providence was providing Mr. Curlewis, at the very moment, with a capital substitute for Joe Tooth. William M’Kinnon — familiarly called, by his family and acquaintance, Wullie M’Kinnon — was a young Scotch gardener, who had come out to the colony just before the discovery of the gold. Wullie was married to a nice, active young woman, who had friends out at Melbourne; and from the letters of these relatives they were induced to emigrate thither. Wullie’s father and mother were very much averse to the scheme. Wullie was their only child, and they could not bear the idea of losing him. Wullie said there was no occasion; for that they must go with him and his wife. At first, the old people treated the very idea as ridiculous; but by degrees, when they saw that Wullie was bent on it, they began to entertain the scheme, and eventually went. On their arrival, they purchased twelve acres of land, in the neighborhood of St. Kilda, and began to cultivate and plant it, for the supply of the Melbourne market. Old Hector M’Kinnon, the father, was also an excellent gardener. He was now sixty, but hale and active. He and Wullie built a wooden house on the land, capable of accommodat^g them all, and with a stable and cow-house. They got a cow, — a horse they meant to get

when they had vegetables ready for market, — and the house was speedily surrounded by a good stock of fowls and ducks. They calculated that they could keep this stock, — the cow running out a good deal on the waste, — and yet cultivate sufficient for market.

All at once, before they could get a crop for sale, broke out the news of the gold discovery. Wullie, like many others, was quite agog about it. He thought what a fine thing it would be if he could go and make a fortune at once. Then his father would have no occasion to labor, but might pass the evening of his days in ease and plenty. Besides, everybody told him that there would be no use gardening; that three fourths of the people would be away at the diggings; that land and garden-produce would not be worth an old song. Wullie listened to all this; even his father was infected by it; and the end of it was, that Wullie made up a party with some of his countrymen, and marched away to Ballarat. He had not been there long, when the news of the wonders of Mount Alexander drew away him and his party to that locality. There they continued, with variable luck; but at the end of six months Wullie found himself just as poor as when he came up. He had been laid up with fever, their horses had been stolen, and some of the party had not been very honest. Wullie quitted it, and went on to Bendigo. There, for three months, he was very successful, and was on the point of leaving for home, when there came a rumor of wonderful discoveries at the Ovens. His only partner at that time urged him to go there at once. He pointed out to him the advantage of being amongst the earliest in the field, and it was reported that yet there were not more

than two hundred people at the Ovens. Wullie consented, and set out, with his mate, to that distant field. It was now some three months since that he had been working there. He had accumulated eleven hundred pounds, and was thinking of returning, when a letter from his wife, written at the request of his father, hastened his movements.

It stated that things were taking a wonderful turn at Melbourne; that, instead of things getting cheap, everything was getting dear; that people were pouring in by thousands, and tens of thousands; and that fruit and vegetables were risen to such a price as was astonishing. That the old man, the moment he had perceived this change, had put in a great crop of potatoes, — he had six acres, — and that, to all appearance, they must make a fortune; that, moreover, the price of land had risen so astonishingly that what they had given five pounds an acre for was then worth fifty an acre, and seemed likely to get up much higher. His father and his wife, therefore, urged Wullie to hasten home; for that, after all, gardening was, to all appearance, the finest gold-digging.

It was soon after this that the events occurred at Mr. Curlewis' which we have related. The very next day after his conversation with his neighbors about old Joe, Mr. Curlewis was riding home in the evening from the survey of a distant part of his station, and was just crossing the Sydney road, when he heard some one call to him for help. As it was fast getting dark, and as the road had lately become rather notorious for the visits of bush-rangers, Mr. Curlewis paused a moment before he approached the spot whence the voice came. But being appealed to again to help an unfortunate traveller who

nad been robbed, he drew a pistol from his pocket, and rode rapidly up to the place.

Here he observed a young, good-looking man, in digger costume, tied, with his hands behind him, up to a tree.

"How comes that about, young man?" demanded the squatter.

"The bush-rangers have bailed me up, and robbed me," said the young man, in a tone so frank, and yet so feeling, that all Mr. Curlewis' caution was at once dismissed. He soon learnt that the sufferer was the same Wullie M'Kinnon whom we have mentioned; that he was hastening down to Melbourne alone, when six bush-rangers, all well mounted, had surrounded him, and robbed him. They had robbed him, however, only of some twenty pounds; for the bulk of his cash he had sent down by a substantial merchant, a countryman, whom he knew; for there was, at that time, no escort. Not finding much money, they had, according to a very common practice of theirs in such cases, beaten him severely, and carried away his swag, containing his provisions, and his blanket for the night.

Mr. Curlewis at once jumped from his horse, cut the cords that held him, and bade him mount behind him, and they would soon be at his station. Mr. Curlewis led his horse to a large log, at some distance, to enable Wullie to mount, and as he was about to do that he suddenly caught his foot against something soft and bulky. It was his own swag, which the thieves had not thought worth carrying away, but had thrown where they thought the owner would not happen to find it. Wullie was delighted at recovering it, and told Mr. Cur-

lewis that he was most grateful to him, but that he had now no occasion to trespass on his kindness, as he had everything necessary for his night's lodging and refreshment. But Mr. Curlewis would hear of nothing but Wullie going on with him. He told him that he might again fall into the hands of the bush-rangers, and might not get off so easily a second time; and that the next day he would put him into a track across the bush that would not only curtail considerably his journey, but bring him out on the highway beyond the quarters most frequented by this gang.

So away they cantered on towards the station. On the way Mr. Curlewis learned that Wullie was a gardener, and offered him the most handsome terms if he would only stay with him; but Wullie told him he was sure when he knew how he was situated he would not press him. Whereupon he told the squatter the outline of his own story. Mr. Curlewis then told him what a rogue of a gardener he had got, and how thankful he should be to find another, so that he could get rid of him.

"I can help you," said Wullie, with great alacrity of tone;—for he was delighted to be able to be of use to the squatter who had been so kind to him;—"I can help you, sir," he said, joyfully.

"Can you?" said Mr. Curlewis, in delight.

"Yes," replied Wullie, "I am sure I can; for there is a young man at the Ovens, a countryman of mine,—George M'Hale,—who has been working in the wet diggings at Reedy Creek, and has suffered so much from standing for whole days in the ice-cold water, at the same time that the sun was scorching hot, that he means to return to his own trade, a gardener. In a few days

you might ride up, and bring him down ; and meantime I will take your gardener's place."

"Will you?" exclaimed the delighted squatter. "But suppose your friend does not come?"

"I am so sure of his coming that I will engage to stay till he does come," said Wullie.

"You will?" exclaimed Mr. Curlewis. "Bravo! then all is right." He gave his horse a fresh touch with the spur, and on they cantered, in great satisfaction. Wullie was soon seated at a plentiful tea-table, with Mr. and Mrs. Curlewis, and amid a group of rosy children, who all listened with breathless interest to the story of his being robbed and "stuck up," as the phrase is, by the bush-rangers.

Mr. Curlewis lost no time in proposing to Wullie M'Kinnon to go down to the garden, in the morning, and represent that he was a gardener in want of garden-seeds, and thus see what old Joe would do. Wullie agreed. Accordingly, after breakfast, Mr. Curlewis showed him the way, so far as it was necessary to get a view of the garden and Joe Tooth's cottage. He said he would hasten down, as soon as he saw him go with Joe into the hut, and would watch their transaction through a crevice in the slabs of the wall, so as to come in at the right moment. That would be when Wullie pulled out his purse to pay for the seeds.

It was not long before Mr. Curlewis, from behind the bole of a huge red gum-tree, saw Wullie cross the creek, enter the garden, and approach the gardener, who was digging up potatoes. After some earnest conversation, as it seemed, and old Joe showing Wullie various parts of the garden, and different trees and crops, he saw them

go towards the hut, and disappear on the other side of it; for on that side was the door. On this, the squatter hastened down the hill, and, on reaching the hut, cautiously approached the back of it, and, taking off his hat, placed his head against the wall.

Here he saw old Joe, who, according to his account to him, had not a single seed, deliberately produce, from under his bed, as much seed, of different sorts, as would have sown, not a garden, but a farm. His indignation at the sight was so overpowering that he had great difficulty in restraining himself from running in, and giving the rogue a good sound thrashing. But he did command himself; and having seen Joe weigh out and tie up one packet of seeds after another, and finally Wullie pull out his purse to pay, he ran round the hut as if he were possessed, leaped into it like one beside himself, and, hitting old Joe a terrible blow with a heavy stick that he carried, he cried out, "O, villain! villain! what a *blight* there is in the seeds!" And with that he began belaboring the astonished felon as if he would beat him to powder.

When he had thus somewhat allayed his fury, he cried out, now better able to speak, "Rogue! what do I owe you more? and I will pay that too."

But Joe, who was pretty well paid already, seeing that Mr. Curlewis stood with his stick still upheaved, and a face red with rage, cried out, in his astonishment, "Nothing! nothing at all!"

"I should think not," said Mr. Curlewis, laughing savagely. "I fancy the balance is a good deal on the other side of the ledger. There is that cart-load of vegetables and fruit to the gardener of Wangaratta, that he

had on Sunday. That, I think, will clear all scores between you and me. If not, this will;" and again he hoisted the huge stick in the air. Joe Tooth did not wait for it to descend, but made his exit out of the hut, over the post and rails, and into the forest, with an agility which would have done credit to many a youth of twenty.

When he was gone, Mr. Curlewis, looking half amazed and half amused at Wullie, said, "Is not that a pretty scoundrel?" And Wullie's account of the conversation and bargaining that he had had with the old gardener only made the squatter look all the more astonished. He had told Wullie that if he wanted to supply the market at the diggings he would engage to let him have, weekly, any amount of fruit and vegetables; that he had forty sacks of potatoes already in the inner or sleeping room, laid under bed-clothes and blankets, ready to go off.

On hearing this, Mr. Curlewis rushed into the room, and began tossing blankets and gardening-mats about with great energy, at every fresh heave exclaiming, "O, the villain! I did not thrash him soundly enough, by half!" There, indeed, were the forty sacks of potatoes, besides a heap of melons, and a huge basket of the finest grapes, ready, evidently, for a speedy call.

Nobody, however, did call for them; for no doubt old Joe, in his flight, had seen the party, and given them timely warning. Mr. Curlewis was not long in mounting his horse, and leading another by the rein; in which style he made a rapid journey to the Ovens, and in a few days returned with George M'Hale, a fresh, strong-looking young man, spite of his complaining of rheu-

matic pains, engaged as his gardener. Wullie, meantime, had been industriously at work in the garden. The family had seen him up at the farm daily every morning before breakfast to learn what they would want for the day, and in a couple of hours afterwards they had the things there. How different was that to the practice of Joe Tooth!

George M'Hale now took his friend Wullie's place, and Wullie prepared, with many thanks, to set out homeward.

"Tut! tut, man!" said Mr. Curlewis; "no thanks at all to us; it is we that owe you thanks. You have done two great things for us; rid us of a terrible rogue, and procured, as I hope, a very steady and promising gardener." With that he presented Wullie with a ten-pound note, and as Wullie was attempting to excuse himself from receiving so much, a gig came briskly round the house corner, and Mr. Curlewis cut all ceremony short by saying, "Get in, get in; I must drive you down to the mail, and there is no time to lose."

Wullie M'Kinnon was so taken by surprise that he not only stopped short in what he was saying, but stepped mechanically into the gig, which went off at such a rate that he had only time to take off his hat to Mrs. Curlewis and the children, who, together with his friend George, stood at the door, and shouted "Good-by, good-by!" when he found himself whirled away amongst the forest trees, and out of sight of the house.

Mr. Curlewis drove him down to the mail, a sort of dog-cart that runs along that road to Melbourne; here, as it passed, he bade Wullie mount, shook him heartily by the hand, saying, "I shall come and see you some

day," and away the jolting vehicle drove. Wullie found, when he asked the fare that he had to pay, that it was already paid; and he arrived all well in Melbourne, very little out of pocket by his adventure, but pretty well shaken by his long hurrying drive in that primitive vehicle.

We cannot attempt to describe the joy of Wullie, his wife and his parents, at their once more meeting, much less the amazement of Wullie at what they told him. It was this: that the land in their possession — the twelve acres of garden — was wanted for building, and that they were offered five hundred pounds an acre for it, — six thousand pounds for the whole!

It was some time before Wullie could realize the astounding news to himself. It seemed a dream; but it was perfectly true. They agreed to sell it, and with the proceeds of that land and the eleven hundred pounds which Wullie brought from the diggings, they soon afterwards bought a good farm some twenty miles up the country, in one of the most picturesque and fertile spots in the Plenty district, in full view of the azure and picturesque hills where rise the sources of that river. There they now live, fancying in these lofty ranges they once more behold the mountains of their native land, and with every attribute of abundance around them, — wood, water, fertile fields, cattle, sheep, and poultry. There both Wullie and his father, still stout and active, find constant employment in progressive improvements, while a race of young M'Kinnons is rising around them, that know only Strath-Conan Farm as the pleasant spot of their nativity. Many a digging party, as they pass, attracted by the neat and comforta-

ble aspect of the place, by the bright green foliage of a large garden, and the sight of well-piled corn-stacks, turn aside to get there a quarter of mutton, milk, butter, and the like, and go away saying, "Well, that is a very comfortable, civil, obliging family;" and we may add, may they live long there!

WHITE HILLS, *September.*

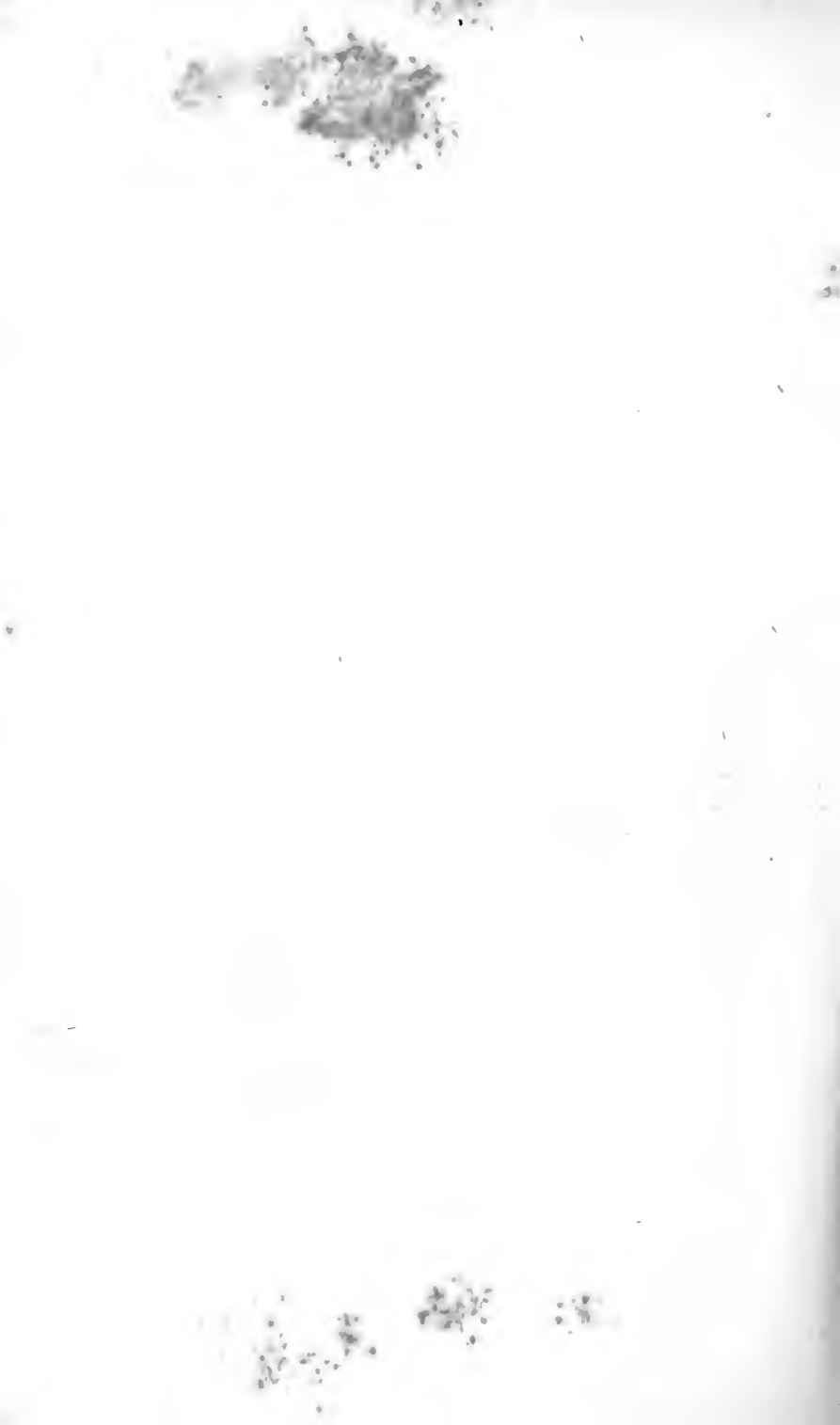
I have already mentioned the Popkinses. We have had a great deal to do with them of late, and I shall now proceed to relate how we became acquainted with them, and who they were.

Soon after we crossed the Goulburn last summer, on our way to the Ovens, we observed a large family camped by a water-hole, or rather a large lake, where there were a great number of the herons called Nankien birds, which I think I have already described to you. They had a cart drawn by two horses abreast, and a bullock before them. There appeared to be eight or nine of them altogether. They had set up two tents, and had put a canvas round the bottom of the cart, so as to form another sleeping place there. As the evening was chill, I was amused to see that they had not only made a large fire by a log, as the general assembling and cooking place, but also had made a tolerable fire just before the door of each tent, so as to throw a light and warmth into each of them.

As my father wished to know if they were acquainted with the road ahead, he went up to their camp to inquire, and he staid a good while talking with them. When he returned, he told us that they were a very curious family. There were father, mother, two daugh-



CAMP OF THE POPKINS PARTY.



ters, girls of seventeen and eighteen, and five sons, as he believed them to be. That, on speaking to the old man, he had answered him with, "Well, lad, I can assure thee that I never was up this road before, and so, lad, thou knowest as much about it as I do."

On hearing this style of address, my father said, "Aha! you must be not only a countryman of mine, but, I fancy, a county man, too."

"How so?" asked the old man, all the family looking at my father curiously.

"Why," continued my father, "are you not from Derbyshire?"

"No, lad," said the old man, "we are not; but thou art not far off the mark, lad, for we are from Staffordshire."

On that my father told them that he knew Staffordshire very well. This created at once a sort of acquaintanceship, and from that time forward we saw a good deal of them. In less than half an hour after my father had been there, a round, rosy-faced, flaxen-haired lad, of about my own age, came to inquire if we had seen their bullock come past our camp, for that it had walked off. We said no, and asked if it were accustomed to walk off.

"O!" said the lad, "he is always walking off. He is a young bullock that we bought when we lost one of our horses in crossing an ugly creek; and he had never been worked, I fancy, before. At all events, he does not like it, and, before we can turn round to get the hobbles off, he is gone as if he had vanished."

"A very sensible bullock," my father remarked; "he must be a stupid bullock that does not try to get away from this dreadful work of getting up these roads."

"You are right there," said the lad, with a merry laugh; "he is too sensible and too nimble for us; but I must after him, or he will be gone miles."

With that he went whistling away into the bush, and before long we saw him coming back with the stray bullock.

"That is a sharp lad," said my father; "I like his looks." And that, in fact, was Jonas Popkins, who has since given us so many a hearty laugh at his oddities.

Jonas' father was a potter, who had always liked a rambling life, and, therefore, had travelled with crockery-ware over a good deal of the midland and northern counties of England. His wife had staid at home with the younger children, and Matthew-Popkins and his eldest son, and sometimes his two eldest, had roamed and camped about in the green lanes of England in the summer months, as much delighted with the life as any gypsies. They had made a good round sum of money, too. Matthew was a tall, swarthy, whalebone sort of man, with very black hair, and strong dark eyebrows and gray eyes. There was a thoughtful expression on his features, with something of a touch of humor. He wore trousers of strong cloth, a double-breasted waistcoat, and a dark blue jacket, that was cut spencer-fashion at the hips, and would button up close like a waistcoat. His wife was a short, fat woman, who appeared very good-humored; and the two daughters, Keziah and Priscilla, were rather good-looking and smartish girls for the bush, who looked as fresh and untouched with care as their brother Jonas. There were three other youths, who all had Scripture names, after the fashion of the Staffordshire potteries. The two eldest, Abner and Abijah, were

tall, strapping young men, strong and active, and having the open, honest cast of the family. All appeared to inherit the light complexion and light brown hair of their mother, except one, who appeared about sixteen, and so near the age of one of the girls that we supposed they must be twins; this youth was thin, slightly made, and had darker hair and skin than any of the rest.

“That youth,” said my father to Matthew Popkins, “most resembles you of the family.”

“That,” said the old man, laughing, “is, I suppose, because he is not my son, — only my grandson; that is my grandson Phinny, or Phineas, if you please. Phinny Dyson, lad, that’s the chap’s name; a nice lad enough is Phinny, only a little too much of the greenhouse plant, a little too much of the girl yet; but we shall harden thee, Phinny, shan’t we, lad, and make a man of thee? Nay, never blush, lad!” for the slim, delicate, shy youth flushed up to the forehead. “Never blush, lad! I mean no harm, — thou knowest thy old grandfather. But we’ll set all that right, lad, in time,” added the old man, as if reflecting.

Matthew Popkins, though he had been a wandering potter, was none of your loose, reprobate vagabonds; he was a serious and a religious man. He was a member of the New Methodist Society, and in the bush held his Sunday meetings and prayer-meetings in his own family. While marching along the wood we often heard him singing, “We are marching through Immanuel’s land,” and he, wherever he was, believed himself there. He was a stanch member of the temperance society, together with his whole family, and often shook his head and spoke in great sadness of the neglect of the Sabbath,

and of the too frequent attendance at the grog-shop, in this country.

This Phineas Dyson was the son of Matthew Popkins' eldest daughter, who had married when she was very young; so that Phineas himself was about the age of Jonas. His father had died soon after his birth, and his mother, who was the tenderest and most indulgent of mothers, had brought him up with every indulgence. She had given him a good education; but old Matthew, according to his account, always disliked the way of his bringing-up, as being that of "a girl." Phineas, up to his twelfth year, lived only with women,—his mother or his godmother,—who were equally fond of him, and equally indulgent. When Phineas had just turned twelve, his mother married again, to a surgeon, or "doctor," as Matthew called him, with whom, according to the same authority, his life became hard enough, only not in the right way; and he then acquired that timid, dreamy, melancholy habit, which was so contrary to all his grandfather's notions. In two years his mother died, and Phineas was left in very hard and pitiless hands. His one pleasure was to visit his godmother, for whom he had the strongest affection; but his visits to her were very rare; for "the doctor" found him full employment in the menial offices of the apothecary's shop,—grinding at the mortar, washing bottles, and carrying out medicines.

Matthew Popkins, who all this time had an eye on his orphan grandson, remonstrated with his step-father, and insisted, as he had benefited by the four hundred pounds possessed by his widowed daughter, that the boy should be treated as an apprentice, and properly in-

structed. But "the doctor" demanded an apprentice-fee, which so exasperated old Matthew that he resolved to remove the boy entirely. This led to a quarrel, and poor Phineas, literally turned out of doors, with a very scanty supply of clothes, fled to his godmother, by whom he was most kindly received, and with whom he remained, "reading and drawing," for some months.

Phineas was happy with this old lady, who, had she but been rich, would joyfully have gratified the boy in his own way, — that was, by sending him to a first-rate school, where he could study to his heart's content. To this Matthew Popkins objected; and poor Phineas, the meekest, the gentlest of human beings, seemed likely to become a bone of contention among them all.

This occurred just at the time when the gold discovery of Australia was creating its earliest excitement in England; and Matthew Popkins, as well as thousands beside, was taken by the marvellous accounts with which the newspapers were filled. He determined to go over, with all his family, including even poor Phineas. How it could have been managed to carry him off, who had no natural love and taste for adventure, there is no saying, had not his godmother herself become a partisan in the same cause. Knowing, as she did, that, with all his roughness, the boy's grandfather had a very kind heart, and would be a faithful guardian of the boy in any case, she resolved that he should go; besides which, she had dreamed that she and the boy were in a field of ripe corn together, and that he had gathered handfuls of golden ears, and so filled her apron; by which she maintained that he would find "lots of gold." Matthew Popkins laughed at that, for he had not much notion of Phineas'

luck; but, as it was an argument on his side, he was glad of it, and laughed many a time at Phineas and his "golden corn."

The intention of the Popkineses, however, was not to dig only; but the women were to keep a store, Matthew or one of the sons staying with them, and the rest going out into the gold-fields to dig.

Such were the Popkineses; and right pleasant folks they were.

They out-travelled us, having more strength of cattle, and only taking just their tents and household concerns; for their stores were coming behind, in bullock-drays. But, then, that unlucky young bullock was always walking off; and sometimes, when we expected that they were whole days' journeys before us, we came up to them camping by the road-side; and the moment we saw them, we always said, "Pompey, the bullock, has walked off."

Sometimes they were several days, or even a week, waiting, before they recovered this rambling animal. It was a young, fresh, and powerful creature, of white, just sprinkled with slight red streaks, as if done by a pencil. He walked at a good rate, and had the cunning not only to go far about, but to take up the most intricate valleys, and amongst the densest scrub. None but the most patient people would have waited for him so often; for he contrived to go off almost as well when close hobbled as when his legs were free.

For ourselves, we had stiff work of it to get over the shocking roads, through the bogs, and across the creeks and gulleys; and at last fairly broke down, half way. But, then, Pompey was always walking off, which

brought us up with them again; till our final breakdown and my father's illness kept us for a month on the road; during which time they completed their journey.

Jonas was the wit, or rather the witty blunderer, of the party, and always was making the oddest mistakes. He had very little education, but had an immense passion for reading, and used to get books from his cousin Phinny; and had, by a sort of hungry, eager, avaricious sort of miscellaneous reading, got the oddest jumble of ideas in his head imaginable.

One day we came up to their cart, where it had been bogged, axle-deep, in a terribly muddy creek. They had been obliged to unload everything as quickly as they could, and pile their effects on the banks of the creek. Meantime, while doing this, their horses and Pompey, which they had taken out of harness to graze, had all walked off together. Everybody, therefore, was gone in pursuit of them, except Jonas, who was left to keep watch. There he was, mounted on a most extraordinary heap of bags, boxes, beds, tools, tins, buckets, and household stores, pulling and dragging and throwing things about, till his face was red as the rising sun, and his light hair streaming out in the utmost wildness in the breeze.

"Here I am," exclaimed Jonas, as he saw us come up, "reducing chaos to disorder!" And it was true enough; for though he meant, I dare say, to produce some order amongst the goods and chattels which had been thrown out of the cart so precipitately, his efforts only appeared to produce a violent perspiration in him, and more confusion in them. "Here I am!" said he;

and his countenance was all laughter and satisfaction, as if one of the happiest things had happened, instead of the most troublesome; continuing to fling down boxes, sacks, blankets, spades, picks, and panikins, from the great confused pile all around him.

We stopped and camped by them that night; and a merry evening we had of it. But the next day they went ahead of us, and we saw no more of them till we reached Spring Creek, six weeks afterwards. There they were keeping a flourishing store; the young men, at the same time, digging successfully. After we went to the Upper Yackandanda, they came there, — that is, old Matthew, his second son Abijah, Jonas, and Phineas. Here the old man thought he could carry on his hardening process with Phinny with less interruption, because the women were not here; for they were as fond of Phineas, and as indulgent to him, as his mother had been. Old Matthew wanted him to have “steel, stamina, and pluck,” as he said; and therefore he took him away with him into the bush.

At the Yackandanda Jonas and I grew great friends. We went together hunting up our horses, and Pompey, the bullock. Jonas was as fond of “possuming” as I was; and we had right pleasant times in the woods, wandering about. Phinny seldom went with us. He liked better to stay about the hut; and so his grandfather set him to cook, — for which he had a genius, — and to keep the tent in order, fetch water, and meat from the butcher, and all that light sort of thing. Phineas was not made, we all thought, for roughing it in the bush. He was gentle and timid as a girl. If any accident happened, as the upsetting of a cart, or anything

that required all hands to be on the alert, he would stand as if he were paralyzed, while Jonas rushed in like a little lion, seized this, lifted that, pulled the other, as by instinct. Jonas was all action; Phineas, all thought. Action had never been called forth in him. When he was doing anything he would stand and think a long time; then go and do a little; then stand and think again. Jonas, on the contrary, rushed into speech and action at a leap, and often made odd work of it, but with a certain kind of cleverness, nevertheless. Phineas had read of all sorts of dangers and diseases, and was in dread of them all. He was afraid of bush-rangers; afraid of firing off a pistol, in order to learn to protect himself; afraid of snakes, of scorpions, of centipedes, and a hundred things. Jonas was afraid of nothing, and liked nothing better than a battle with a snake; and I believe he would have shot a bush-ranger with right good will, as the boy did who was set to watch horses, and shot dead a man that would insist on taking one of them.

You may be sure that Phineas had not a very easy life with such a lad as Jonas. Jonas told him wonderful stories, and made him believe that there were all sorts of dangers in the bush, and asked Phineas to go out with him to face them. I was often very sorry for Phineas, and so were we all.

On the other hand, Jonas not only invented wonderful stories, but believed a whole host of the most thorough cock-and-bull stories imaginable. There was hardly an old superstition that he had not the fullest faith in, merely because it was in a book; and he gave the very oddest twists to the real facts that he read that one

could conceive. He asserted that Mahomet's tomb was suspended between two *comets*! When some one said, magnets he meant, he said, "No, *comets*!" — he knew it was comets, for he had read it in a book.

"Nonsense!" some one said; "they could not be comets. Comets were fiery orbs, which travelled at an amazing speed through the heavens; and they would have dragged Mahomet's tomb away with them, had it been between them."

"No," reiterated Jonas; "I tell you they *are* comets! I've read it."

"It is impossible," replied some one.

"Yes, you may think so," said Jonas; "but it is a miracle."

"I tell you, Jonas," replied one of the company, "the thing cannot be. They are magnets which are said to suspend his tomb; but I don't even believe that."

"Nor I, neither," rejoined Jonas, confidently; "but comets do. You may mean magnets, but I mean comets." And to this day Jonas firmly believes that Mahomet's tomb hangs between two comets.

Jonas is sure that there are witches, because lots of old women have been burnt for them. Burnt, we told him, for being accused of being witches; but not being witches.

"Well, it is all the same," said Jonas; "they were witches, or they would not have burnt them."

He believed, too, that the witches kept a kind of familiar spirits, in the shape of monkeys and toads; — knows they did, and there need be no dispute about it.

Jonas had contrived to confound inextricably in his

mind phœnixes and sphinxes. He talked of a phœnix sitting on a gate-post.

“A sphinx, you mean,” we said.

“No, a phœnix!”

“What sort of a thing is a phœnix, Jonas?”

“Why, a thing like a lion, with a woman’s face, and its hair in paper, and that always lies down, and never gets up either to sit or stand.”

“That is a sphinx,” we said.

“Well,” added Jonas, “*you* may call it a sphinx, but *I* call it a phœnix; and it is so.”

“Well, then,” we asked, “what sort of a thing is a sphinx?”

“A sphinx? why, a bird, to be sure, that makes a nest of fire-sticks, and roasts itself every night for its own supper, and gets up fresh and new again every morning.”

What a laugh we had at Jonas’ definition of a sphinx! But it did not matter to him; he was sure he was right. When told that he had confounded the two things, he said, “Well, it is all the same. There are sphinxes and phœnixes, and you can take which you like.”

One day he was digging in the heat of the sun, and declared that he was “as hot as a Judith in the Holy Furnace.”

“What?” we said; “what?”

“Why, as hot as Judith in the Holy Furnace. Are you deaf?”

Of course we laughed hard, and told him that he had made a very droll mistake. He said, No; it was in the Bible; he had read it, and knew. We told him what

the passage really was, and showed him in the Bible. But Jonas declared that that was not the place he meant. He did not mean Judith and Holofernes, but Judith in the Holy Furnace; and it was so, — he had read it. We asked him to show us the place; but to this day he has not done so, nor, of course, ever will; but he is still as sure as a rock that he is right, and that Judith *was* once in a holy furnace.

Jonas saw one day some pigs near Middlemist's station, on the plains beyond the Goulburn, running at a great rate. "We shall have a storm," said Jonas, gravely.

"Why?"

"Don't you see the pigs running? They see the wind."

"Why, you don't believe such nonsense, Jonas, as that of pigs seeing the wind?" said my father.

"But I do, though," replied Jonas. "It is a well-known fact. Everybody knows that; it has been known these thousand of years."

"How do they know, Jonas? Has anybody been a pig to know? Were you ever a pig yourself?"

"No!" said Jonas; "we can see that without being a pig. We can see them run."

"Ay! for their suppers; but not because they see the wind."

"I tell you they do see the wind," continued Jonas; "it is in a score of books. You must have read precious little not to have read that."

It was just as vain to beat Jonas out of his faith in this point as in any other.

“It is all the same thing. You believe it one way, and I the other, that is all!” says Jonas.

One day, he told me he had read a wonderful story in “Pluto’s Lives.”

“‘Plutarch’s Lives,’ you mean,” I said.

“No! I mean ‘Pluto’s Lives.’ I have read them.”

“Have you?” I said. “Well, I never heard of them.”

“O! that you may not,” interrupted Jonas; “there are such millions of books, nobody can read them all; but I read that, and it is as I tell you.”

“I have read ‘Plutarch’s Lives,’” I said; “a famous book; but Pluto was the god of the infernal regions.”

“Well, that is no reason why he should not write a book, is it? I have read it, — ‘Pluto’s Lives,’ — that is it!”

“No, Plutarch’s!” I persisted. “There is no Pluto’s.”

“Well,” added Jonas, as usual, “it’s all the same. You mean Plutarch, and I mean Pluto; that is all the difference.”

Once, as we were out in the woods, we shot several wood-ducks, — very odd ducks, as many things here are odd, for they sit on trees, and therefore are called wood-ducks. Having told Jonas that they were a species of barnicle, the *Bernicla jubata*, —

“Ha!” exclaimed Jonas; “and they not only sit on trees, but no doubt they grow on them, like the barnicles of the north.”

“Pho!” exclaimed Harry; “you don’t believe that cock-and-bull story, Jonas!”

“Cock-and-bull story! I tell you it is as true as that —”

“The moon is made of green cheese,” interposed Harry, laughing.

“Well, and they say that, too!” added Jonas; “but barnicles do grow on trees, in great pods. I have read it in natural history. Nobody disbelieves natural history.”

“I tell you it is rubbish,” said Harry. “They are hatched from eggs, like other birds.”

“Well, it is all the same,” said Jonas, in the way he finishes all his arguments. “You think so, and I don’t; and that is all the difference.”

Another day, when we had rambled a long way in the woods, and had sat down by a stream, made our quart-pot tea, and cooked a slice of bacon on a pointed stick, Jonas exclaimed, clapping his hand, with an air of great satisfaction, on his stomach, “There! I feel greatly encouraged, as General Washington says in his ‘Knickerbocker.’”

“General Washington!” somebody exclaimed; “General Washington! You mean Washington Irving, Jonas.”

“No, I don’t!” said Jonas. “I mean General Washington. I’ve read his book, and should know—all about those queer Dutchmen, Ten Breeches and Tough Breeches, and Walter the Doughty, and all those odd old chaps. How I did laugh when I read it!”

“And you make me laugh now,” said Alfred. “I tell you the book is Washington Irving’s; and it is Walter the Doubter, and not Doughty, that you mean.”

“Now,” said Jonas, lifting up his head with immense confidence and self-complacence, “now, don’t you think, sir, I ought to know what I mean better than anybody else? I mean General Washington, and I mean Walter the Doughty.”

“General Washington never wrote a book,” persisted Alfred, “that I ever heard of.”

“Well, no! not that *you* ever heard of; but do you suppose that you have heard of everything? Why, no! not by a good many things, I should guess! So I tell you that General Washington *did* write a book, and a plaguy funny book, too.”

“Washington Irving did,” repeated Alfred; “and the very book you are talking of.”

“Pooh, pooh!” said Jonas; “Washington Irving may have written such a book; I don’t dispute it. I don’t pretend, like you, to have heard of everything. But it is all one, you know; Washington Irving wrote the book *you* mean, and General Washington the book I mean,—that’s all!”

We had some leather-jackets to tea one day when Jonas was with us; cakes baked in a frying-pan, and when hot very much like muffins. “Why,” said some one, “I really prefer them to Sally Lunn’s.”

“Ha! Sally Lunn’s are delicious, though,” said Jonas, smacking his lips. “I lived in London, in Kentish Town, with an aunt of mine, three years before I came here; and I remember going one day with a gentleman to see Sally Lunn’s house at Highgate.”

“Sally Lunn’s house at Highgate!” some one exclaimed. “I never heard of Sally Lunn living at Highgate. I always understood she was a confectioner of Bath.”

“O! not a bit of it, I can tell you,” said Jonas; “this gentleman that I went with was intending to take it, for he was half-cracked about queer old houses and places that were ready to tumble down. And this house was just

one of that sort, all built of wood and plaster, and as old as old ! He said it was very pictorish, or pictoraskew, or something of that sort ; and, my word, it was askew enough. It was all askew in heaps of places, and there was an old rubbishy sort of garden behind, with comical old tumble-down summer-houses in it ; and this gentleman, I thought he would have gone off his head about it, he was so pleased. What a very odd man he was ! That was Sally Lunn's house. Ay ! was not it old ! They say she was a famous baker in Queen Elizabeth's time."

It was no use trying to set poor puzzle-headed Jonas right ; he would have his own way ; I suspect, however, that he knew better all the time, only it was his way. But Jonas is certainly the most amusing fellow I ever saw.

Jonas contended that Milton was a Greek philosopher, and that Oliver Goldsmith was a man who wrote something about some people in a garden. We told him that he then meant Milton, and his poem of Paradise Lost. "O, yes !" said Jonas, "I recollect, — and Goldsmith wrote something about a village ; that was it."

And that was the only admission that I ever heard Jonas make. He was in admiration, one day, over some account of sea-tulips that he had read of, and that if you cut them into twenty pieces they all become perfect tulips. We told him that he had mixed up together sea-anemones and polypi. But he said no, nothing of the sort, — he meant sea-tulips !

Jonas was just about as blundering in his writing as in his reading. He hated, above everything, to write ; but, as his father would insist that he should write to his

aunt that he had lived with in London, and from whom he had considerable expectations, with much labor he indited a very elaborate epistle, written after many trials in a great round hand, and running diagonally instead of horizontally across his paper. After many attempts to fold the precious sheet, he carried it to his eldest sister, who did it for him; and Jonas set off to Spring Creek to fetch some household articles and to post his letter. Four months afterwards, however, as Mr. B. was going the same road, he found the identical letter stuck in a hollow tree! There was no doubt felt but that, as Jonas carried the letter in his hand that he might not forget it, some opossum by the way had caught his eye up this very tree, and that he had clean forgotten all about it by the time he had caught the 'possum.

Jonas, however, insisted that he had posted his letter; and when it was shown him, he declared that the mail must have been robbed, and his letter taken out, and that he *never would write another* letter, for it was of no use; and it is very likely that he will keep his word. His father, however, had *this* letter duly posted, or his poor aunt would never have heard from her favorite Jonas. Jonas, indeed, on endeavoring to recollect himself about posting the letter, was only the more confirmed in his belief that the mail was robbed, for he remarked, he said, seeing a very *superstitious*-looking person (meaning suspicious) hovering about the post-office at the time.

But the laughable blunders of Jonas were endless. He declared, one day, that he had traced Spring Creek from its rise to its source! And one evening, as we went into the hut, there sat Jonas with a huge tin tea-pot on his knees ready to pour out into the panikins of

the party! "Here I am!" exclaimed Jonas, on seeing us; "sitting like a muse."

"Why like a muse?" we asked.

"O! like a muse!" said Jonas; "don't you know what a muse is? I am one of the nine muses. I am the muse of the tea-pot."

"That is a new muse, truly," we said; "the Australian muse — making a tenth, Jonas. But why are you like a muse?"

"Have n't you seen muses? I have, plenty of them, cut out of stone, and sitting by wells with jugs or tea-pots on their knees. I have often seen them in pictures."

"Naiads, Jonas, you mean, — goddesses of the fountains."

"No, muses I mean," persisted Jonas; "but it is all one; you mean nay-yads, I mean muses; but come, here is some tea out of my fountain."

But out of these continual trips and entanglements arising from his rabid sort of reading, — for Jonas was a kind of fire-eater in his way, hurrying on, and swallowing down everything, and never stopping to digest it, — he was a bright, active, clear fellow, in real life. He never seemed fatigued, never flagged in his spirits, was always ready for work, and when it was done dropped into his blankets and slept like a top till aroused at sunrise. He was out instantly after his horses, and always brought them up at full canter. Then he came in his red jumper, drab wide-a-wake, and corduroy trousers, a genuine digger in appearance, and bushman in fearless agility and firm seat on horseback.

As for poor Phineas Dyson, he made but slow progress

in the lessons which his sturdy grandfather was teaching. He was so slow in his cooking operations that Abijah Popkins had to help him, or rather to do the main part of the work himself. One day, the whole party were going out prospecting, and told Phineas to have dinner ready at four o'clock, when they would be back. He was to roast a piece of beef in the camp-oven, boil some potatoes, and make a good suet pudding. When the party returned, hungry as hunters, there sat Phineas, the picture of misery ; not a thing had he done. The very dishes and plates stood unwashed from the breakfast. There was no roast beef, no pudding, no anything !

All were, of course, very angry ; but Phineas said that he did not expect them so soon, though they had told him exactly the time. On being further pressed, he confessed that he had been very miserable all day thinking about his godmother !

“ That will never do, Phinny,” said old Matthew Popkins ; “ I must try another plan with thee, lad.”

The next day the whole party went out to prospect again, taking Phineas with them, and leaving Jonas with precisely the same orders as those left with Phineas the day before. When they came back, there was the table set, a nice clean cloth on it. The plates, knives, forks, everything, all set out in order. The roast was done to a turn, the pudding was steaming away in the pot, the potatoes ready, and the whole party sat down to dinner in high spirits.

“ See the difference, Phinny,” said his grandfather, “ between dreaming and doing. You were dreaming all yesterday, and made yourself wretched, and us too, for

want of our dinners. Here Jonas, I'll be bound for it, has been not only as busy but as happy as a bee, — and what a dinner! what a capital, famous dinner!”

Phineas looked very much cast down. “Never fear, Phinny,” continued his grandfather, cheerfully; “we'll make a man of you!”

So from that time Abijah or Jonas helped Phineas to cook and put the tent in order, and then took him with them to the diggings, where his grandfather kept him bailing for him, or doing some light work, till by degrees he could strengthen him, and lead him on to like work and activity. Besides his dislike to physical exertion, Phineas was naturally very timid, and this strange, wild life in the bush did not suit him as it did his bold young uncle Jonas. Phineas was afraid of being stung by tarantulas, scorpions or centipedes. When he went to fetch water from the neighboring creek in a bucket, he feared lest he should tread upon a snake, or some other venomous reptile.

Jonas, who could not sympathize with these fears, for nothing delighted him more than to attack and crush any serpent he could cast eyes on, was continually playing tricks on Phineas. All at once Phineas would spring up out of bed early in a morning, or soon after they had lain down, with dreadful shrieks, declaring that he was stung by a scorpion, or a centipede. There was an instant search, but no such reptile could be found, though there was certainly a red mark where Phineas believed himself stung. On one of these occasions Phineas cried out, for he had read in his step-father's books that the poison of the scorpion was so long in its operation, that he had only a fortnight to live. Jonas, instead of show-

ing any sorrow, only begged that Phineas would make his will, and leave him his books, and he would set up doctor !

At the end of the fortnight, as Phineas was almost well, Jonas told him that it was no scorpion or centipede, nor anything of the kind, but only a prick of a pin which he had given him. Jonas was the torment of Phineas. It made us all excessively angry to see how this young uncle tyrannized over his gentler nephew. He persuaded him at times that he had the eye-blight ; and then, when Phineas was naturally uneasy in the dread of this terrible complaint, Jonas laughed as if it were the best joke in the world.

Phineas was immensely angry on such occasions, as well he might be. But, though this was a very severe discipline, yet we began to surmise, before many weeks were over, that by one means or another his health and state of mind really improved. His head, which used to stoop towards his chest, became more erect ; his chest expanded ; he walked with more firmness and vigor, and the bloom of health gradually tinged his cheek with a more manly glow. But poor Phineas' discipline was not at an end.

“ So far so good,” said Matthew Popkins ; “ now for a stage further.” Jonas hitherto had been the messenger to the diggings, which were a dozen miles off across the bush. He had cantered away to get licenses, to fetch beef, as only mutton was to be got up at the Yackandanda, or to do any other errand. Jonas had a knack of finding his way across the bush, chiefly noticing the position of the sun. He went out to hunt up the bullocks and horses when they strayed, and rarely was lost.

Matthew Popkins now determined that Phineas should accompany Jonas, in order that he might get accustomed to riding and doing errands, and so be able to do that instead of Jonas, when Jonas' services were more required, at the same time that he thought it would give Phineas more manly habits of self-dependence.

My father argued many times with the good-hearted but self-willed old Popkins as to the impossibility of ever making Phineas as bold and hardy as his uncle Jonas. They were totally different natures, my father told him, and, though it was quite right to try to improve his health and make him less nervous, yet that he was not going the right way about it. Phineas would have liked to stop at the store with the women, and his uncle Abner or Abijah, as the case might be, but his grandfather never would consent to that; for he said the women would spoil him; no, he would have the training of him himself; he said he could and would change him, "from a willow wand which had grown in a shady dingle into an oak-tree, a true English oak-tree;" he would "put steel, stamina and pluck, into him;" and old Matthew was so resolute when he took a thing into his head that there was no turning him.

Phineas' education was going on desperately when we met again, after an excursion of six weeks up into the country, and had returned again to the neighborhood of the White Hills.

"Phineas," said his grandfather, one morning, "you must go with Jonas to Spring Creek." Poor Phineas' countenance fell, and he begged piteously to be excused, as he had dreamed of being killed by a horse. But he

might as well have talked to a gum-tree as to his grandfather.

So, after breakfast, Jonas came with the horses to the tent, and called Phineas to mount. Jonas looked as mischievous as a monkey, and whistled, and shouted, and sung, and went on in the wildest way possible. If poor Phineas had only had "steel, stamina and pluck," as his grandfather said, what a jolly setting out they might have had! But that positive old man, and that noisy Jonas, and his bad dream, altogether overcame Phineas, who sat at the far end of the tent, the picture of despair, and begged and prayed to be excused.

No; as I said before, a gum-tree would have been just as pitiless as old Popkins, who, half scolding and half encouraging, dragged out Phineas, and helped him to mount. No sooner was Phineas in his saddle than Jonas, giving his horse the spur, set off at a canter, and Phineas' horse followed. Matthew Popkins stood laughing quietly to himself; while Phineas, really terrified, was heard crying, "Stop, Jonas! Jonas! Do stop!"

This we all saw, and what followed we heard afterwards from both lads themselves; for, after some little time, seeing it was no use to cry after the pitiless Jonas, Phineas, who had had already some practice in riding, finding the horse went steadily, ceased to make his dismal appeals; and before long Jonas stopped of his own accord, and saluted him with, "Well done, Phinny! You ride like a trooper! You fall,—you be killed! — Nonsense!"

"O, Jonas!" said Phineas, whom the encouragement of his uncle had restored to his former terrors, "but

there are logs in the way, and Bob will leap over them. I shall be killed to a certainty !”

But, before he could get the words out, Bob had leaped quietly over one log, over another, over a third, and away they were going, through scrub, up hill, down dale, across creek and gulley, and Phineas still sitting firm, and now far more free and horsemanlike than before. We must not pursue the day's ride. It is enough that, towards three o'clock in the day, Jonas and Phineas came cantering up to the tents, all safe and sound, and Jonas declaring that there was not a better rider than Phineas in the whole colony. “Talk of his falling!—why, Mow-Cop would fall as soon.”

Phineas was a good horseman; and his grandfather, finding his mode of education so successful in this respect, resolved to pursue it in all others. The most hard trial was that he should make a journey alone to the diggings; and this, indeed, was a hardship. He was afraid of being bushed, as it is called, — that is, lost in the bush; but Jonas had so often shown him the way, and told him how he might direct his course by keeping the sun in a certain bearing to his right or left, that the old man thought it well that he should learn a little self-reliance by these trials. And, spite of his fears, Phineas managed to find his way, though sometimes making some extraordinary circumbendibuses. Sometimes, also, he went with Jonas into the woods in pursuit of opossums, flying squirrels, bandicoots, and the like; and this was well on Jonas' account, for he was so fearless that he sometimes got into dangers, while climbing after his game, which were not always easily surmounted by a solitary individual.

One accident, however, which occurred to myself, and which was really frightful, and might have terminated fatally, made old Popkins determine that Phineas should be Jonas' companion on such occasions. And as my adventure is worth telling, here it is: I had ascended a tall gum-tree in quest of an opossum, and had reached a hollow in the trunk at a considerable height; and, having put my hand into the hole to feel for the opossum, my foot slipped from the bough on which I stood, and I was left suspended by the hand which was in the hole. In vain I struggled, and felt with my feet for the bough: I could not regain it! If my arm had been further in the hole, the bone must have been broken by the weight of my body; but the wrist bent, though attended with horrid pain. I knew that if the wrist slipped out I should fall and be killed on the spot; if it did not give way, what would be my fate? I was in the solitary bush, far from any road; and terrible ideas flashed across my mind of hanging and perishing there, and being some day found, a bleached skeleton!

The pain increased, and I grew desperate. What must I do, I asked myself, and really began to think seriously of chopping off my hand at the wrist with the tomahawk which I always take with me to cut out opossums from their holes, and which was at that moment stuck in the bole of the tree, within reach of the other hand. But then the horrid idea struck me that nothing would hinder me from falling down and being dashed to pieces.

What a dreadful time it was! I do not know how long I hung so. I shouted as long as I could, in hopes that somebody might be crossing the bush and would

hear me. But it was in vain; and, at last, in very despair, I made another try to find a support for my feet, and, at last, to my great, unspeakable joy, I did find it, raised myself, and was free.

I never had such a feeling before. I was so overjoyed, and the change seemed so great from danger to safety, that I felt as if I should faint; but I mastered that weakness, and came down the tree, forgetting, however, to bring down the tomahawk. When I was safe on the ground I remembered it, and perhaps should have gone up again for it, only for the pain of my wrist, which I had not noticed till then; the skin was all scraped from the under side, and it was so sprained, and, by this time, so swollen, that I could not move it.

I sat down and really cried, not for the pain, but because I felt so overcome. In a little time I was better, quite well indeed, but for my wrist, which was bad for a whole week, and would have been bad much longer if my cousin Harry with his chemicals, and Phineas with his doctoring knowledge, picked up at his stepfather's, had not taken me in hand.

The reward of Phineas' good offices was that from this time forth he was compelled by his grandfather to be the constant attendant of his fearless uncle Jonas; and many a miserable moment, from the fear of broken bones and broken necks, was that poor lad destined to endure.

THE BUSH-FIRE.

I have not yet seen a bush-fire, but I have had a capital story given me about Allan Macdonald and his family, and the bush-fire which they witnessed. I shall give it a place in my note-book, therefore; and unless I

should be fortunate enough to see a bush-fire with my own eyes, this must serve for that purpose.

A few years ago, Allan Macdonald and his family came to Australia. Allan was a native of the north-western Highlands, and had always been employed as a herdsman, looking after the black cattle of the country, and often driving them down to the Lowlands to market. Allan had a wife and six children, and as his weekly wages grew less and less able to supply all the wants of his family, he began to think of emigrating to America. But the gentleman on whose estate he had lived all his life had connections in Australia, and he strongly recommended him to go thither, where his good character and his great knowledge of everything relating to cattle would insure him good wages, and might, perhaps, lead to his establishing himself as the master of a station. These representations weighed with Allan, and he consented to come hither. The gentleman just mentioned wrote at once to Mr. Cassidy, a wealthy squatter in Victoria, recommending Allan to him in the highest terms, and telling him at what time he calculated that Allan and his family would reach Melbourne, so that some friend of Mr. Cassidy's in that city might meet them on landing.

Allan went out. On arriving in the port of Melbourne, no one appeared to receive them, and they felt very strange and desolate. But they had the address of Mr. Cassidy, and, though his station was two hundred miles up the country, they determined to set out for it. Allan resolved to buy a light cart and one horse, to carry their beds and few effects up, and that his wife and children might be able to ride occasionally. He was

looking at some carts in the street, and the little group of his wife and children standing near him, when a gentleman stopped his horse close to them, and said, aloud, "Yes, Highlanders; and four, five, *six* children, I declare! It must be the same." With that he said, "Pray, my good man, is your name Allan Macdonald?"

"Yes, sir," replied Allan, in a joyful surprise at any one recognizing him. The sound of his own name by a friendly voice, in this strange land, went to his heart like a tone of music. "Yes, sir."

"And my name is Cassidy," said the gentleman.

Allan doffed his bonnet, with equal gladness and respect, and said, "Thank God for it! O, sir, you cannot tell how welcome your name is to us!"

"I can give a pretty shrewd guess," replied the horseman, with a significant smile; "for I assure you that yours is very welcome to me. I have been looking out for you for a whole week; and to-day I was going off back home. But here you are; so come along, and I will take you to the men who are to go up with you."

Allan and his family made no reply, but followed Mr. Cassidy to an inn near, where he ordered them dinner, and brought in two men, his bullock-drivers, and told them that they were to go up the country with them, and to set off next morning. With this, Mr. Cassidy himself was off, that minute; and, saying "Good-by, till you get up to Murragong," he cantered away, and was gone.

Allan and his family found that the two bullock-drivers had each a team of ten bullocks and a dray under his care. They were come down to buy stores, and their drays were loaded with flour, tea, sugar, tobacco, spirits,

and all the things that are wanted in the household of a station, and for the shepherds. There were boxes of shoes, boots, clothes and hats, with a variety of drape-ries for the ladies, and blankets, as well as canvas for packing wool. Part of these were put into the bottom of a three-horse dray, which Allan was to drive, and upon these his family went to sleep and rode in the day-time. This dray had a canvas awning over it, so as to be proof to sun and rain; and the whole Highland family were delighted to have such a domicile on their journey.

By break of day, the next morning, they were on their way. The two bullock-drivers made noise enough with the cracking of their great, heavy whips, which they wielded in both hands, and with their shouting and swearing, to awake the whole city of Melbourne; but of this they took no care. They were two Irishmen, and evidently very rude and noisy fellows, while Allan Macdonald was noticeably still, and was, moreover, of a deeply religious tone of mind. He went on at some little distance behind them, and thought that he would do so the whole day, and so have as little of their society as possible; but towards noon they drew their teams on one side, near a brook, and let out their bullocks to graze. Here they said to Allan, "We are going to dine; so turn out your horses, old man, and get your provender ready;"—only they used a vulgar expression for provender.

Allan took no notice of the coarseness of their language, nor of their calling him old man, though he was a much younger man than either of them; for he had already heard that phrase used as we jocularly use "old fellow."

Here they made a fire, boiled their kettles, set on the frying-pan, with beef-steaks and onions, and sat down on the grass to dine. They asked Allan and his wife all sorts of questions as to where they came from, and what made them come out, and whether he meant to be a jumbuck-man or a bullock-man, and so on. Allan told them all that he thought necessary; but, as he did not know what jumbucks were, he candidly said so.

“Why, sheep, man, sheep! They are jumbucks in this country.”

After dinner, and copious draughts of tea, one of them pulled a brandy-bottle out of the dray, and said that they would give Allan and all his family a “nobbler.”

As none of them knew what a nobbler was, Mrs. Macdonald exclaimed, “O! will they knock us on the head?”

At this the two fellows laughed immensely, and one of them said, “By gar, old woman, but you are greenish! A nobbler, mother, is a glass of grog. Here, drink it off.”

Mrs. Macdonald just sipped of it, and handed it to Allan. Allan would only have that one glass, but the two Irishmen drank out the whole bottle, and then sung, and shouted, and chaffed each other, as they called it, in the most uproarious manner, till they tumbled forward, and fell asleep on the ground.

One of these notable fellows was named Kelly; the other Mahony, or, as Kelly called him, Marny. Kelly was a tall, thin, dark-complexioned fellow, and a dreadfully noisy one. He was continually crying to Mahony, “Ah, Marny! you are a rogue! You are a rogue, Marny! Marny, you are a rogue!” This was his cry

from morning to night. He thought it wit, and had never done with it. They were doomed to hear this absurd cry all the way up the country. If this noisy fellow awoke in the night, he immediately burst out, "Ah, Marny! you are a rogue! You are a rogue, Marny!" to which Mahony, who was a much quieter and more civilized fellow, only answered by a curse, or a "You're a double rogue, Kelly."

Poor Allan Macdonald and his family did not congratulate themselves on their travelling companions, and were thankful that they had a retreat of their own in their own dray, which they always placed, at night, as far from the bullock-drays of these men as they could without decidedly offending them. Thus, for days, they travelled on. It was summer, and the weather was very hot. The further they went, the more barren, burnt up, and miserable, the country became. Beyond the Goulburn river, which they crossed, the whole region was flat and monotonous, and only here and there intersected by deep ravines, which showed that there was water enough there in the winter, and brooks half dried up, which they called creeks.

Allan's family consisted of his wife and six children. There were four girls and two boys. The two eldest girls were fourteen and thirteen years of age. They were called Mary and Martha, after the two sisters of Lazarus. The next was a fine, active lad, called Fergus, between eleven and twelve. Then there came two little girls, Janet and Kate, of eight and nine, and finally a brave little fellow of the name of David, of about seven. Fergus was ambitious to assist his father in driving the horses, and was very useful in this, relieving Allan

occasionally, when the road was good, and also by leading the fore horse over the creeks and gulleys. The two elder girls were very useful to their mother. They gathered dry bark and sticks when they stopped to encamp; boiled the kettle, having first fetched the water to fill it; and combed and washed the three lesser children. When the drays stopped to dine, or encamp for the night, it would have amused a spectator to see Allan take a short ladder to the back of his dray, and, opening the canvas cover which hung down, out would come first a woman, in a sun-bonnet, with its flap falling on her shoulders; and then, after her, a stream of children, like a file of creatures descending from Noah's Ark.

When they were all on the ground, Fergus would set about helping his father to unharness the horses and hobble them out, first taking them to water. The two elder girls would divide their duties: one assisting to make the fire and cook; the other taking Janet, Kate and David, to the creek, and there washing and combing them, each one of them scampering away the moment the operation was completed on its own person. Then Mary or Martha, whichever it was, would proceed to wash her own face, and, producing a little looking-glass, attach it by a hook to the bark of a tree, and by its aid very carefully arrange her luxuriant locks.

The children found, as they went along, continual wonders in the birds, animals and insects, that abounded in the forest. The noise of the frogs, the merriment of the laughing-jackass, the warblings of the singing-crow, and odd nocturnal cry of the morepork, especially amused little David, who had a passion for everything in nature. All went well for about ten days, when Allan's

family began to show symptoms of illness. First, they found the children, one morning, most of them with their eyes swelled up; and then Mrs. Macdonald exclaimed, "Good gracious, children! What! have you been all fighting together?" But they had not been fighting; — it was the blight occasioned by the little tormenting black flies. Before the children were well again, Mrs. Macdonald became seriously ill herself with one of the most fatal diseases of the colony. Allan was much alarmed, and not without cause. But the two Irishmen said, "O! let her drink plenty of grog. That is the only thing for her." Allan, however, asked if there were no doctor near; at which the men laughed, and said, "No; doctors did not grow on gum-trees. They did not believe there was one within a hundred miles." This was dreadful news to Allan. For three weeks his wife lay in a state that any hour might terminate fatally. The Irishmen swore, and wanted to go on; but Allan was afraid that if left behind he might not find the way up that wild country, particularly as he understood that soon they would have to turn off the track they were in into the woods, where there was very little track, through a very hilly and thickly-wooded country.

"That's what comes," said the men, grumbling, "of Cassidy taking men with wives and families. There's nothing so good as single men." They even intimated that it would be a good thing if the old woman — she was little more than thirty — would "kick the bucket," as they could then bury her, and go on.

But at length Alice Macdonald got so well that they could proceed; and the Irishmen recovered their good humor, more than anything from the engaging ways of

little David. He used to go and take hold of the hands of these men, and skip along at their sides, asking all sorts of questions about the birds and other things that they saw, and trying to imitate their sounds. Those two rugged men were delighted with David, and would always have him with them, giving him often their whips to carry, as if he were driving the bullocks, and telling him that he should never be a jumbuck-man, but a bullock-driver, like them and all the first men of the colony. Allan Macdonald, here, would not allow them to have David, only on a solemn promise that they did not give him grog, as they had once done, nor swear in his presence. But as these men devoutly believe that bullocks never draw well, in case of difficulty, without they swear at them, they did not always keep their promise on these occasions; and David, as soon as they began, ran away to his father's dray.

One day Marny caught a young green paroquet, by lashing his whip-thong round it as it sate on a bough near them, and thus gave it, fluttering in the whip-cord, to David. David was delighted with it, and clutched it with such eagerness — though it bit him pretty sharply — that he would soon have killed it, had not the bullock-driver taken it from him, and tied its leg to a string, and the other end of the string to a stick about half a yard long. From morning to night David never had this stick out of his hand. The paroquet, which they called a Leek, from its color, — though, I believe, a much larger green parrot properly claims that name, — soon grew very tame, and only required a little soaked bread for its food. It grew as fond of David as he was of it, and would continually walk up the stick, up his arm,

and sit on his shoulder. All day long might little David be seen travelling with his stick in his hand, and the little leek sitting upon it; and at night the stick was stuck into a hole in one of the boughs of wood that supported the awning of the dray, close to David's bed; and it amused itself and him by continually climbing down the string, and hanging by its heels, head downwards, towards him.

But, alas! it was now David's turn to be ill. He was attacked by a fever, which the men called the bush-fever; and very ill he was. He no longer could walk, but lay in the dray; and all day the paroquet was watching him from its stick, or coming down the string and looking at him, as if to say, "O, poor David! how sorry I am to see you so ill!"

The bullock-drivers were now as anxious to get a doctor as they had been indifferent in the case of Mrs. Macdonald. One of them mounted on one of the dray-horses, and rode away to a distant station, the motive of which was a doctor. Three days he was away, and came back leading his horse, which he had knocked up by his rapid riding. He brought medicine, but it was too late: little David could no longer take anything. He lay in a state of sleep, or rather stupor, and could be roused by nothing. They tried to get a little of the medicine down his throat, but in vain. Disturbed by the attempt, he opened his eyes, saw the little leek hanging at the end of his string just above his head, and looking sorrowfully at him. David articulated, imperfectly, "Leek! leek!" and again closed his eyes. A moment afterwards his mother put her hand to his mouth, and then sunk down on the bed, with a faint

scream. There was no breath. Little David was no more!

This was a stunning blow. The whole family were paralyzed by grief. Allan Macdonald blamed himself for ever quitting his native hills, and their healthy, invigorating breezes. What, he thought, were poverty, in comparison with the loss of his little David? What could this great forest-wilderness give him to replace that loss? The rude, vulgar bullock-drivers were as much cast down as the parents, though they might not be expected to feel so deep and lasting a sorrow. But they were now as still as if they were afraid of waking David out of a refreshing sleep. They no longer wanted to hurry on; no longer grumbled at Cassidy, as they called their master, taking men with encumbrances, as they termed families. The next day the sorrowful family lay sunk in profound grief. The bullock-drivers did not make their appearance, and Mr. and Mrs. Macdonald thought they were lying still under their drays, in order not to disturb them. But these men had been up with the dawn, and had been all the morning busily employed. Away in the wood, on a pleasant rising ground, they had dug a little grave, and had cut down a stringy-bark tree, cut it into lengths with a cross-cut saw, split it into posts and rails, and with those had enclosed the little grave with a square palisado. They had no nails, but they had tied on the pales with soaked bullock-hides, which they frequently carry for such purposes. The thongs of these, drying in the sun, would hold as fast as nails, and endure nearly as long. By this means they had made

no noise of hammering, and thus had been unheard by the mourning family.

Towards evening they presented themselves at the dray, and called out Allan. They told him that it would be necessary to bury the child that night, for in this climate and hot weather the corpse would not keep. Allan felt a deep shock at the news, and endeavored to convince these men that there were yet no symptoms of decay. "Go and look," said they; and Allan went, and soon, to his consternation, saw that the flies had already been at work, blowing living larvæ into the nostrils and the corners of the mouth, and between the fingers of the little body. Allan showed these to his wife, and told her what the men said. After a pause, as if she had been struck speechless by a blow, Mrs. Macdonald said, "God's will be done! But, dearest Allan, where shall we get a coffin?"

The bullock-drivers had already prepared this. They had made a coffin of the bark of the stringy-bark tree; and now they brought it to the end of the dray, and the weeping parents lifted little David out of it, and laid him on a clean, white shawl, in his little bark tenement. Then these bullock-drivers — these rude men — produced a bundle of native wild-flowers. There were the blue campanulas, blue and delicate as the hare-bells of their own hills; there were purple flowers, sweet as heliotrope or honey; there were sweet, purple-fringed flowers, that had no popular name, and small, lily-like ones, that are called orchises, but all unlike those of our woods and fields; there were violets, too, both sweet and scentless, and pale-yellow flowers, smelling like primroses. All these, these uncouth, riotous, and otherwise reckless men

laid on the little coffin, all around the corpse, which seemed to sleep in all its youthful beauty and peace. And as they placed them they sobbed as if their hearts would break, and their tears fell in actual showers.

Soon the little coffin was closed, and, after all had kissed the dear dead child again and again, Mahony closed it up, and he and Kelly carried it away on their shoulders, followed by the weeping family.

As they stood by the little grave, Allan Macdonald said, "That the dear child should thus die in this desert, where there is not even a minister to utter a blessing, as we commit him to the earth!" But he was astonished to hear Mahony say, "It does not need it, mate. Jesus Christ has pronounced that blessing already, and saith 'Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

Allan stood some time in amazement; then, turning to Mahony, he said, "You are right: there needs nothing more. Amen." And with that the whole sorrowing company cast one long look into the little grave, and went away; — all except the two men, who remained to fill up the grave, and to close the palisado.

And there rests little David all alone in the unfenced forest, like many another stranger who has dropped and fallen by the way, and is no longer known by name or tradition. The passing traveller alone sees the little enclosure, and knows that it protects some human being from the claws of the wild dog and the beak of the carion-crow; and, after pausing a moment in thought, passes on, and forgets it.

But little David was not forgotten there, where only he would have desired to be remembered. That sad

family went on their journey in stillness and heaviness of heart. The little green leek sate for days almost motionless on his stick, as if he were quite conscious of his loss, or wondered why David did not awake and carry him onward as before. The other children diligently fed him, and cared for him, because he had been David's leek. They never once assigned that as a reason; for the name of David uttered by any one of them broke up all their outward semblance of quiet, and they gave way to a fresh passion of grief.

Time, however, soothes all wounds, and eventually heals them. Allan Macdonald and his family reached Mr. Cassidy's station in a few days, and were called at once to active duties. Mr. Cassidy appeared to sympathize with their loss, and was very kind to them; but "necessity has no law," says the proverb, or rather has the most despotic of laws. The out-station where Allan was to be located, eight miles off, was already without a stockman. Mr. Cassidy had had to go thither daily for more than a fortnight, and look after the herds of cattle himself. It was not a very encouraging thing for Allan and his family that the last stockman had been killed by the blacks; and Mrs. Macdonald, in great alarm, begged Allan to throw up the post, and not go to it. But Allan said, "God's will be done. I have engaged, and will not run from my word."

Mr. Cassidy said he did not apprehend much danger, for the settlers had assembled and chased the blacks beyond the Murray, and had made such a slaughter of them as he thought would keep them out of that country a very long time.

The next day saw Allan and his family at his hut. It

was a small slab hut, roofed with bark, and with poles tied along the roof to prevent the winds carrying it away. Like a Highland hut, a passage went through the middle, and there was a room on each side. One of these was the dwelling-place, the other the sleeping-place, and behind was a little closet which served as pantry and store-room, and where Fergus could have a bed. Thus Mr. and Mrs. Allan could occupy the dwelling-place as a sleeping apartment, and the daughters the other room. The only bed of the former stockman was a heap of gum-tree leaves in a corner; and the whole place abounded with dust and fleas.

But a single day saw the whole hut cleaned out, and the little furniture arranged. There was nothing Highland-looking about the place but the hut itself, for it stood on a flat plain, all grown over with the Eucalyptus trees, with here and there thick masses of the *Acacia affinis*, or common wattle. But there was an open breadth of land near the creek which ran at some fifty yards from the hut. There was no garden, nor the slightest enclosure for the growth of fruit or vegetables; but Mr. Cassidy told Allan that if he and his family could enclose a piece of land near the hut, at spring he would give him potatoes and seeds to plant, and cuttings of vines, and peach-stems to set; for seedling trees produce splendid peaches here without grafting, so that he would soon have a famous garden. Allan joyfully accepted the proposal. Mr. Cassidy also let them have a milch cow for their use, and said when it was dry he would exchange it for another. Allan had also a horse to ride through the woods to reconnoitre the cattle upon. It was evident that Mr. Cassidy had great expectations

from Allan, from the character he had received from home, and meant to be generous to him; and every day only confirmed Mr. Cassidy's opinion that he had at length got a most trustworthy servant.

The summer sped on warm and dry, and autumn found all the grass and the very trees made almost friable by the long-continued heat. Yet Allan had his herd of cattle, which consisted of five hundred head, all in order, and in good condition. As that number ranged over many miles of ground, and divided into separate mobs, as they are called, it required Allan to ride over a great extent of country daily, to get a sight of them all. But he knew in a little time the favorite resorts, sleeping places, and watering places, of the different mobs, and so the more easily could reconnoitre them.

Things had gone on thus quietly till late in the autumn. There had been no fresh invasion of the natives, and now none was feared. The herds had been for some days gathered from their different beats, for a muster, and to brand the yearling calves. As it is difficult to keep cattle camped in one place, Allan and Fergus lay out in the woods with them every night till the whole business should be finished, only letting those mobs which were done with go off to their old grounds. They lay down near the herd in their plaids, which they had brought with them from their native Highlands, and were ready to start up at the least movement of the cattle.

As they thus lay one fine moonlight night, Fergus awoke his father, and asked him if he did not hear a crackling as of fire, and smell a smell as of wood-smoke. Allan started up, listened, and distinctly perceived the

crackling and rushing sound of fire. "God defend us, Fergus!" he exclaimed; "there is a bush-fire, and in the direction of our hut! Let us fly thither, or your mother and sisters may perish! And what if it should be the natives!"

Away the father and son posted. They had not gone far before they saw the fire driving before the wind, and sending up volumes of thick smoke that totally hid their hut from them. They reached, however, the margin of the creek, and ran at breathless speed. They had the delight soon to see the hut standing yet safe, but the fire making fast advances towards it. As they drew near, all was still; the inmates were evidently asleep, and unconscious of their danger. The father and son rushed in, aroused the sleepers, and both then came out with all speed. In a few seconds might be seen a little troop hurrying out of the hut in their white night-dresses, each carrying their own day-clothes. In great alarm the mother and daughters soon slipped on their dresses, and then joined Allan and Fergus in carrying out everything movable from the hut, and depositing it near the creek. Their property was not great, and half an hour saw all safe lying in a compact heap by the water.

The flames now were drawing near, running along the ground, leaping like fiery tongues from tree to tree, and the roar of the flames in the wind had something awful and terrible in it. The fowls came hurryingly and screaming out of a thick tree at the end of the hut where they roosted, and half flew, half ran, towards the creek.

"Where is the cow?" cried Mrs. Macdonald.

"There, standing in the water," replied Allan, "safe in her instinct. But where is the horse?"

“I see him, father,” replied Fergus; “he is grazing on the other side of the creek, as if the fire did not concern him.”

“All right,” said the father; “and now, Fergus, my boy, we must look after this fire, and see which way it takes. It is going right down the creek at present, but it may turn in a moment, and take some other course, and in some of these changes it may cut off the retreat of some of the cattle. But first we must let Mr. Cassidy know. Yes, Fergus, you must get upon the horse and gallop up to the station.”

“But where then shall I find you, father?”

“That I cannot tell,” replied Allan.

“You shall not go alone after the fire, Allan!” said Mrs. Macdonald. “Fergus shall go with you, or I will.”

“No, Alice! you stay here till daylight by the stuff. Fergus shall go.”

“No, no!” replied Mrs. Macdonald. “I cannot — will not consent to that!”

“I will go to the station,” said Mary, quietly. “I can soon ride there.”

“You!” said the terrified mother.

“You, Mary!” said the father, in astonishment.

“Yes, father,” replied Mary. “I know the way, and have no fear.”

“But suppose the natives are about, — suppose they have done this?”

“O, father!” replied Mary, with a quiet smile, “it is not the natives; or, if it were, they will not be out now, at night. They would be afraid of the ‘Dibble-

dibble,' and would think me a white one if they saw me on horseback flying through the bush."

"That 's true," said Allan. "Mary, if you really are not afraid, I dare let you go."

"To be sure," said Mary; "there 's no danger. Run, Fergus, and fetch the horse!"

In less than ten minutes Mary was cantering away through the forest towards Mr. Cassidy's, and Allan and Fergus were on their way down the creek to watch the course of the fire. Already it was at least a mile ahead of them, and the heat was so great that they were obliged to cross the creek, and keep at some distance on the other side. Suddenly the wind wheeled round, and drove the fire and smoke across the country at a right angle from the creek.

"God grant," said Allan, "that the cattle may have got a good way ahead in that direction before now!"

The father and son then crossed the creek, and endeavored to make their way through the forest where the fire had ceased; but in a moment the wind wheeled round again, and brought the flames back upon them with such rapidity, that they felt the heat like that of a furnace, and Allan cried, "Run, Fergus! run for your life! If in two minutes we do not reach the creek again, we are lost!"

They ran at full speed, and had only time to plunge into the creek and sink all but their mouths under water, before the fire came roaring along to the very edge of the forest, and sending a torrent of stifling and scorching air over their very heads. Here they were obliged to remain till a minute's pause in the wind enabled them to escape and run to a good distance on the other side

of the creek. They now went up the creek, passed their hut, of which only a mere fragment was left, and that burning furiously; saw the mother and three daughters busy making a tent of blankets on the very margin of the creek, and collecting their scattered effects into some order. They then hastened up the creek for nearly a mile, and saw that the fire had consumed their side of the creek all that way. They then began to wonder how Mary had contrived to pursue her way towards Mr. Cassidy's, which it was plain she could not do unless she had crossed the creek somewhere.

Meantime, that courageous young damsel had reached the door of Mr. Cassidy, and amid the clamorous barking of a score of great dogs she was beating lustily on the door with a thick stick, which she had picked up on starting for that purpose.

Mr. Cassidy sprang from his bed, and was astonished to see a slender white figure on horseback, sitting in the moonlight. It was like some apparition, and had it been from the other world could not more have amazed the squatter. After a moment's pause of stupefaction, and the figure still waving its arm, and shouting, followed by a fresh outbreak of barking from the dogs, he threw open the window, and cried,

“In the name of heaven, what is all this?”

“It is me — Mary Macdonald!” replied the figure. “I am come, sir, to tell you that a terrible bush-fire has broken out near the hut. The hut itself was burning when I left. But we hope no harm has come to any of the cattle; and my father and Fergus are out looking after them.”

“Bush-fire! — hut burnt!” exclaimed Mr. Cassidy,

—“your father out after the cattle — you here! Stop! I will be down in a minute.”

In a very short time Mr. Cassidy was down. “You must stop here till morning, Mary. Give me your horse; I will ride down to the hut.”

“No!” said Mary. “Excuse me, sir; but I cannot stay. I must know what happens at home. I must go back.”

“True!” replied the squatter. “You are right. Stop! I will have my horse in a moment, and be with you.”

And in a very short time he and Mary were going at a sharp canter in the direction of the hut.

“We must cross at the bridge here,” said Mary; “for the bush all below nearly is on fire on this side.”

“And yet you made your way hither!” said Mr. Cassidy, in amazement. He spent, however, no further remark on her courage, but asked various particulars as to what had taken place, and so they came to the hut.

It was now just break of day. All around, as far as they could see, was burnt by the fire on that side of the creek. Mrs. Macdonald and the children had made a temporary abode of blankets and boughs, and put their bedding and few movables into some order; but still Allan and Fergus were not come back, and the family were very anxious. Mr. Cassidy asked which way they went last, and rode at a gallop in that direction. It was some hours before Allan and Fergus came home. They were black as sweeps with the smoke and charcoal of the bush-fire; but they had seen nothing of any of the cattle, and therefore felt persuaded that they had gone off before the fire in good time. Mr. Cassidy had said

to Mrs. Macdonald that he did not much fear for the cattle, as many of them had seen plenty of bush-fires.

As they sate at breakfast, Allan said, "Now, dear girls, let us have some dampers and some tea to take with us into the bush, for Fergus and I must away, and try to come across the cattle. We must have provisions for a day or two, as we may be some time in discovering them, and then in counting them up."

Mary and Martha immediately set about to put up the necessary articles, and father and son soon after went off. It was an anxious enterprise, and not destitute of danger, from the sudden shifting of the winds, thus endangering the seekers being surrounded or overtaken by the fires. But all put the two dear ones into God's hand, and so let them go.

After descending the creek some time, Allan stopped, and said he felt a strong persuasion that they must seek upwards towards the ranges. They therefore turned back again, and went for about two miles up the creek. Here, where the fire appeared first to have commenced, they thought the bush had sufficiently cooled to venture across it. As they advanced into it, what a scene presented itself to them! The whole ground was black with the fires. The whole scrub was consumed like chaff. Huge trunks of trees lay on the ground burning with intense heat, and here and there stood up a tree, one glowing column of fire. Frequently where they came the ground was still hot enough to burn through their shoe-soles, and huge blackened boughs of trees on the ground still unconsumed writhed up into the air like monstrous serpents which had perished in torment.

Further and further they advanced into that burnt and

blackened solitude, not a living sound greeting their ears. All that had lived there, quadruped, serpent or insect, must be dead: except legions of running ants, which, retreating deep into the ground, would remain there till the surface was again cool. Ever and anon they perceived the odors of burnt animal matter, where the opossum and wild-cats had been consumed in their hollow trees. Towards afternoon, as the father and son came near a small creek, Allan stopped, and, looking to the left, said, "See! there is the smoke again, driving this way. Don't you hear the roar of it, Fergus? We must keep far enough within the part which is already burnt, or we shall not be safe." As he spoke, flocks of birds came precipitately flying over, uttering the wildest cries. "The forest is burning very near us," said Allan. "It has afresh surprised these birds."

In the next moment a troop of kangaroos came bounding along, and kept on before the wind. A few steps further, and they beheld the whole of a slope before them in a blaze. The fires were rushing along as if alive. Tree after tree kindled and blazed, and roared in the wind awfully. Dead trees stood all in flames, and the bark of others was like coats of fire on the bolls. The roar of the whole expanse of flame when the wind increased was like rushing thunder. At once came a volume of heated atmosphere which seemed to singe the very faces of the two wanderers. They turned and fled at full speed. Again they made a great circuit, but still with an aim to reach the valley which separated these ranges from the higher ones, where they supposed the cattle might have betaken themselves. On and on they advanced through a region of fiery desolation. The

ground was still hot, and thousands of trees, erect or fallen, were burning still furiously. Ever and anon their burning heads and arms fell with a crash, threatening to destroy them. At times their way was completely stopped by the labyrinths of huge trees lying on the ground, and all burning with the intensest heat.

The travellers were almost exhausted by the heat. Their shoes were shrivelled upon their feet, till they were most painful, and burnt through the soles. They became anxious to reach some portion of the forest which had escaped the fire. Evening was coming on, and increased their anxiety, when suddenly it darkened, and they heard the distant growl of thunder.

“There will be a storm,” said Allan; “and that will extinguish the fire. If we could only find a shelter for the night, to-morrow we might come upon the cattle.”

But darker and darker grew the air. The wind roared fiercely, and swept round in a succession of whirlwinds. Soon they could not see their hands before them; but they hastened on, and felt they were descending a steep slope. The thunder burst forth with a tremendous crash, and the rain splashed down in torrents.

“At least,” said Allan, still speeding on, “at least we shall not be burnt.”

A vivid flash of lightning lit up the wood, followed by another awful roar, and another deluge of rain. But in the blaze of the lightning Allan had seen an object that gave him great satisfaction. It was one of those stupendous red gum-trees which grow on the borders of creeks, and almost invariably are hollow at the bottom.

“Here is shelter,” said Allan, advancing in the direc-

tion of the tree, as another flash showed it close before him. "See! there are the fern-trees on the edge of the creek. I know this tree well."

They were now close to the foot of this giant tree, and another flash showed them its stem hollowed out into a cave or den of some yards in width, and of ten or fifteen feet high. They hastened into it.

"Lucky for us it is," said the father, "that the tree turns its back to the storm. We shall be dry till morning." Allan produced his never absent box of lucifers, lit up some dry bark that had drifted into the tree, and by its light cleared the ground of rotten wood. He then produced his damper, and, feeling his way to the border of the creek, returned with his quart panikin of clean fresh water. "There, Fergus, boy, we'll have our suppers, and God be praised for our safety and shelter!"

Having made a hearty meal, amid the growling and foaming of the storm, the two cattle-seekers wrapped themselves in their plaids, and lay down to sleep.

In the night Fergus awoke his father. "Father, I heard the lowing of cattle."

"Where, boy?" said the father, starting up and leaning on his elbow.

"Listen!"

Allan listened, but said, "Nay, Fergus, it is only the moaning of the storm." They lay down again, and Allan slept, for he was very weary.

When he awoke in the morning, the sun was shining bright, but Fergus was not by his side. The anxious father started up, and, going out, saw Fergus busy over a fire, boiling a panikin of tea!

"I did hear them, father; they are all right, over the hill there."

"What! the cattle?"

"Yes, father; I have been and seen them. They are over the Barwidgey creek, grazing quietly. The fire went no further than here."

Allan Macdonald was almost beside himself for joy. "Bravo, Fergus!" he cried; "but this is good news. I must be off and see it with my own eyes."

"But first," said Fergus, "drink this tea, and take some damper in your hand."

Allan drank the tea almost mechanically, took a piece of damper which Fergus gave him, but put it at once into his pocket and sprang across the creek, Fergus following. They were soon over the next range, and saw the Barwidgey speeding along at the bottom of its deep valley, and on the slopes beyond cattle grazing in scores. The delighted stockman hurried forwards down the steep descent, waded through the rapid stream without stopping, and climbed the most steep acclivity with all his energy.

In twenty minutes more he was standing amid scores of his cattle, and was glancing far round to where he could discern numbers of others.

"I verily believe, Fergus, we shall find every hoof of them here. I was persuaded they would endeavor to get across the Barwidgey, where they were pretty certain to be safe from the fire. But we have got a good long job before us to see that all the different sections of the herd are here."

And in truth it took them nearly the whole of that day to ascertain that all the different herds were on that

side of the creek. That once determined, the experienced herdsman felt little anxiety on the score of individual cattle.

"The mob safe, every hoof and horn safe," said Allan, and with that they hastened homewards.

Scarcely had he time, however, to swallow a little supper, when Allan mounted and rode off to announce to Mr. Cassidy the welcome intelligence of the safety of his property. He found Mr. Cassidy just going to bed, but he came down and heard the stockman's good tidings.

"Welcome, Stockman! Stockman no longer!" said Mr. Cassidy. "Allan Macdonald, I dismiss you from your post!"

Allan Macdonald stood thunderstruck. The "welcome" and the dismissal were so incongruous, so incomprehensible! He could not conceive how he could have incurred Mr. Cassidy's displeasure, much less why he should be treated with irony.

"Sir!" said Allan, in wonder and consternation, "in what have I offended you?"

"In nothing, honest Allan," said Mr. Cassidy, advancing, and warmly grasping the stockman's hand. "On the contrary, I rejoice to have the services of such a worthy and zealous man. You are no longer a stockman, but my overseer. I have long looked out for such a man. Sit down and hear what I have to say. I left my native country very young, and very poor. By constant industry, enterprise and perseverance, I have realized a fortune. I would now see again my native land, and my nearest kin, whom I left almost a boy. But till now I could never see how I might leave my property in

safety. I see it now. In your hands, honest Allan, I shall leave everything."

And with this Mr. Cassidy opened up a proposal to Allan Macdonald so advantageous to him, for three years, during which time he himself proposed to be absent, that the overwhelmed herdsman became utterly unable to speak.

At length he arose, took Mr. Cassidy's hand, pressed it, and tears coming to his assistance, he said, "It is too much, Mr. Cassidy, — quite too much!"

"Not a bit of it, Allan, — not a bit. Now get some supper, and then home to your wife, and tell her the news."

But Allan could eat no supper. Once more he pressed the hand of Mr. Cassidy, and hastened away.

Mr. Cassidy never returned from England. He enjoyed too much its social comforts, and the society of friends whom he found there, again to wish to leave them. He wrote to Allan, proposing his purchase of his station, the payment to be made by yearly instalments.

Allan Macdonald is now a wealthy squatter. Fergus is a fine, tall fellow, who rides the best horse, and brings the finest bullocks to market, in all that part of the colony. Mary and Martha are well married to neighboring settlers, and Janet and Kate are now two handsome young women, who take all household cares from their mother. As for Mrs. Macdonald, when the painful circumstances of their first coming up the country are mentioned, she is sure to say, "Well, praised be the Lord, we went through much misery."

"And God helped us through it," adds Allan, who knows what she intends to express.

"That is what I mean," said Alice; "though you never think I say it right."

"Well, not quite right," adds Allan; "but you mean it right."

"Of course," adds Alice, as if all such explanation was unnecessary.

The Macdonalds are prosperous, and they date all their prosperity from the BUSH FIRE.

JONAS POPKINS AND PHINEAS DYSON, AGAIN.

My cousin Harry has met with the Popkinses again. He has written down for me the history of the adventures of these two bush-heroes in search of stray cattle.

I give the adventures in Harry's words, as he tells anything much better than I do.

That bullock, Pompey, was still always walking off. He had now disappeared for a fortnight; and it was resolved that Jonas and Phineas should make a round of several days even, if it was necessary, to prosecute an effectual search; and that, when recovered, he should be sold; for old Popkins' patience with him was now at an end.

So Jonas and Phineas, one fine summer morning, by the very break of day, before the sun had really surmounted the tall white gum-trees of that region, but only cast his ruddy glow upon their topmost branches, were seen riding away into the bush, each with a swag before him, firmly buckled to his saddle, consisting of a warm rug to wrap themselves in at night, and containing a stock of tea, bread, sugar, salt, and a fine piece of bacon, as more portable and easily kept than meat, suf-

ficient for several days' subsistence. Each had a panikin, and Jonas a quart-pot slung in his belt, besides a revolver, and a sharp tomahawk, to enable them to cut down boughs for their defence from wind or rain, if such should be necessary.

The laughing jackass — called the settler's clock, from his exactness in bursting forth with his peal of merriment at the dawning day — raised a loud cachinnation over their heads, as they rode on; a score of warbling crows woke up, and tried again their melodious voices, of which neither themselves nor the hearer is ever tired; a thousand smaller birds took up their incessant chorus, which, though each uttered only some short and ever-repeated note, were so many and so different, from the great number of performers, that they produced a very lively and delightful concert. Some of them, such as the thrush, which chirps, "O teok, teok, O tuee!" sent forth tones so rich that even the nightingale could not rival them in melody, sometimes so varied as to resemble the song of our English thrush; and others, though not so musical, were full of the lustiness and delight of life, and gave a charm to the woods, that grows as it becomes more and more familiar. There were hundreds of small birds along the creek, crying, "Egypt, Egypt!" as if that were their native country; and soon their voices were so mingled with the pipings, tinklings, and whirrings of wood-cricket, grasshoppers, and cicadas, that the whole air was vibrating with this multiplicity of life and song.

Our two youthful wanderers rode on through the tall hop-scrub which reached to their horses' sides, ever and anon starting from the ground, close under their horses'

feet, a quail or a heavy, bronze-winged pigeon, or seeing a fleet kangaroo rat bound from the roots of some huge prostrate tree, and run away at a rate which made their attendant dogs give chase in vain. These dogs, ever present on such expeditions, showed signs of their immense enjoyment of these forest wanderings, and a perfect consciousness that they were bound far away into the bush, amid all the excitement of opossums, wombats, and kangaroos.

To Jonas these rides through the forest were animating and exciting in the highest degree. He had an eye and a heart for nature. He saw with surprising quickness everything around him, animate and inanimate; and in these rapid, lightning-like surveys, he made no mistake, as he did in his readings, at full gallop, through the pages of history and romance. The almost infinite variety of strange birds which inhabit the Australian forests especially charmed and attracted him. The almost infinite variety of strange and curious insects which abound there arrested his delighted attention. The singular animals, which, though less varied, are so widely different from those of any other part of the globe, and the new vegetation which surrounded him, were objects of deep interest and inquiry.

To him the monotony of the forest was lost in the feeling of solitude and boundlessness which pervaded it; and when he came out upon some height, and saw ranges of wooded hills, intersected by deep, far-extending, and utterly solitary valleys, and, still beyond them, the heads and peaks of azure mountains, in the free, blue air, he felt as though he could put spurs to his horse, and gallop on, and on, into the infinite distance. His

young blood bounded in response to the pulse of lonely and great nature, which beat thus solemnly around him, and in the newness of everything added a profound charm to his young life. Jonas felt all this, though he did not attempt to speak of it or describe it. But his open, cheerful, smiling aspect, and his eager advance into the wilderness, peering into every tree, and around every rock, and afar off into the dim horizon, sufficiently told his delight in these things. [N. B. — Jonas Popkins was always a great favorite of cousin Harry's.]

To Phineas there yet remained something fearful, rather than inspiring, in these excursions. He dreaded being lost; he dreaded meeting with bush-rangers; he dreaded the serpents, the scorpions and the centipedes, still. Yet he had by this time acquired a great confidence in Jonas. He trusted to his quick genius and fertility of resources; to his instinct for traversing the bush accurately; and to his courage in any emergency. So on they went, ever and anon saluted with a sudden outburst of doleful cries from the black magpies; of loud and grating dissonance from the flocks of white cockatoos; of quick notes, and glancing of gorgeous plumage, from numbers of parrots; of the bullfrogs in the lagoon, and the shriller tree-frog on the bough; from the ever-varying note, and almost talk, of the amusing leather-heads, and the pheasant-like crowings, and "Yock, yock!" and "Karackaroc!" of the wattle-birds, sucking the honey from the bark or the flowers of the lofty iron-bark. Here they saw a troop of kangaroos bound away before them, and gave chase at the full speed of their horses, their dogs careering impetuously before them; but in vain. Here they saw a troop of wild turkeys

racing rapidly through the scrub, and rising with a thundering whirr. Here the eagle soared aloft in the azure air at an amazing height; and here the carrion-crows, in flocks, deceived them by their mock-pathetic cries. They now traced the windings of streams, hidden deep between the mountains, and often lost in a dense wilderness of the tea-scrub, or showing, by their clear waters, the graceful fern-tree, with its wide crown of leaves, and the beautiful diannella, with its lovely cerulean flowers, and still more lovely cerulean berries, hung, like so many bells, on its tall and gracefully-bending stem. Then, again, they traversed the broad, level tract, barren of grass, but fruitful in a variety of delicate and fragrant flowers, or golden with the masses of everlasting, or white with the tall bushes of the speedwell, fragrant as our meadow-sweet, or studded with shrubs all putting forth flowers, which, though small, would add beauty to the ranks of our conservatories. And at night the lonely voice of the morepork, like a nocturnal cuckoo; the loud, wild shriek of the screech-owl; the wild cries of the curlews; the strange, muttering tones of the wombat on the distant hill; the uncouth, snoring voice of the opossum, and hoarse, ranting cries of tuons and flying squirrels, reminded them that they were in the midst of a nature as far removed in character from that of their native land as it was distant in space.

That day they made a wide range through a tolerably level country, and at noon led out their horses for a graze, and sat down by a small, clear stream, which wound through an open dale, where an expanse of green grass stretched away between the edges of the dense forest. Here was nothing but the forest and its animal

tribes to bear them company. There might not be a man in existence, so far as the desert bore any tokens of his being. They had seen tracks of many cattle in the morning, and here and there came upon a solitary ox or two; but they had seen nothing of Pompey.

After an hour's rest and refreshment, they rode on again. They were soon, now, lost in the thick growth of a dense scrub, and, on emerging from that, found themselves equally lost in the growth of tall grass, which reached to their horses' bellies, and often over their heads, in huge tufts, and with stems almost like corn. Then, again, they had to traverse wide tracts of woodland, where bush-fires had raged furiously at some former time, and where the ground was encumbered with huge trunks, and whole wildernesses of the boughs of fallen trees, which were lying prostrate; and a fresh growth of rank grass and underwood was not to be threaded but with infinite labor and equal care, so as not to plunge into the huge dens of the wombat, which abode there.

Towards evening, they had gained a region of lofty hills, with deep, rocky valleys between them, down which ran rapid, clear streams, over their granite beds. Enormous masses of granite were scattered on their banks, over which giant trees had fallen, and lay in ruin. On either hand the steep eminences were clothed with hushed and solemn woods to their very tops. It seemed a region where neither the white man nor the black had ever come; for, beside the occasional track of the wild herds down from the hills to the waters, there were no marks of man or his creatures.

Here Phineas began to feel awe-struck and terrified,

and entreated Jonas to stop and turn back into a more cheerful region ; but Jonas told him that it was precisely in these valleys, where the wild mobs of cattle retreated, that they might expect to come upon their strayed beast. He asked him what he feared — bush-rangers ? There was no prey for them, and therefore they would not be here. What, then, had they to fear — serpents ? They would retire to their holes with the night. What, then ?

Phineas could only answer that it was so lonely, so wild, so remote, and so awful, that he was afraid. The hills seemed to strike him with terror ; the sound of the waters, seeming to murmur and talk hoarsely on their solitary way, ever louder as the day declined, made his heart quake. There was something so vast, so solemn, so remote from humanity, and so mysterious, in these lofty, bald-summited mountains, and those deep, resounding glens, stretching ever onward and inward, he knew not whither, which appalled him.

Jonas looked at Phineas as he spoke, and saw that his cheek grew ever paler, and that he trembled as he sate on his horse ; but this time he did not jeer or ridicule him, for he himself felt the same awe-inspiring spirit of nature there seated in her lonely greatness, and respected it in his weaker companion.

“Come on, Phin !” he said. “You are a good fellow. I like you, Phin, with all your fears. But come on ! there is nothing to hurt you ; and to-night we will pitch our tent — nay, nature shall pitch it for us — in a more magnificent saloon than kings or emperors can have. See, at the foot of this left-hand steep, what a green opening, like a little emerald meadow, reaching to the creek ; and there, on a gently-swelling mound, almost

close to the margin of the stream, what a splendid old swamp-gum! We will make our fire beneath it, and after our supper we will stretch ourselves in our blankets at its foot, with the fire burning at our feet, and the mountain torrent shall sing us to repose."

Jonas did not dream that he was uttering poetry, but spurred on his horse, and was soon at the foot of that giant tree. Here the two youths speedily unsaddled their horses, put on their hobbles, and left them to shift for themselves. They soon collected fallen wood from beneath the great tree, and made their fire. While Jonas did this, Phineas fetched their quart-pot full of water from the stream, and set it to boil for tea. They then cut slices from their bacon, and broiled them on pointed sticks; which done, they sate down, and drank their tea in huge comfort.

"Ar' n't we jolly here, Phin?" asked Jonas, as he cut a slice from his bacon, as it lay on the bread, which was his plate, "ar' n't we as jolly as Æneas of old, when he suddenly found that he had fulfilled the prophecy of Cassandra, and had reached Latium? Ar' n't we jolly here? Look what a Titan of a tree this old fellow is! I will be bound there are a dozen 'possums, at least, in it. Look at those grand, swelling hills there opposite; and see, the Southern Cross and the Scorpion are coming out in fine style there, near the Milky Way. I wonder what the folks are doing up there in all those worlds. Can you tell me that, with all your physical and mighty-physical books? No, Phin! that is above you and me, I rayther think, a trifle or so. I wonder whether there are any biggish boys up there bullock-hunting. Whether there are any gold-miners, or any bush-rangers."

"Be quiet, Jonas, will you?" exclaimed Phineas.

"Be quiet! Why, what now, Phin? Is there any harm in talking of the stars?"

"No! but you were talking of bush-rangers."

"Why, I only mentioned their name, Phin; only just mentioned their name. Are you frightened at that?" And with this a spice of Jonas' love of mischief came over him, and he could not help saying, "Why, Phinny, do you know, I like to talk of bush-rangers, and to hear stories of them? It stirs my blood, and I feel as if my fingers itched to have a crack at 'em. Did you hear that story of the gang of bush-rangers who went to a settler's —"

"Now, be quiet, Jonas! will you?" again shrieked Phineas. "Or, if you don't, I'll never come out again with you so long as I live."

"Whew!" whistled Jonas, with a droll look. "Well, I can't afford to lose your company, Phinny, so I must drop it. But, really, if we were to fall amongst bush-rangers actually and really, what would you do? You would not be a coward, and run for it, and leave me to fight them myself?"

"Be quiet, I say, Jonas! There you are at it again!"

"But, I say, what *would* you do, Phin? Mind, I don't even mention b——angers now. What *would* you do?"

"Time enough when we meet them!" said Phineas, angrily. "Perhaps you'll think so yourself, if it comes to that."

"Perhaps so," said Jonas. "So now, as it is likely to be a cold night in this valley, let us make a mimi."

On this the two youths jumped up, and speedily had

cut two forked poles, which they struck into the ground behind the spot where they were sitting, threw another pole across them, and against this leaned a mass of boughs, thick with all their leaves, so making a fence from the dew and the wind.

“And now, good-night!” said Jonas, rolling himself up in his blanket, with his saddle for a pillow, and was speedily asleep, luxuriously protected by the mimi over him, and kept warm by the glare of the blazing logs at their feet.

Phineas did not sleep so quietly. Fears of bush-rangers, and of he could scarcely tell what, in this wild, secluded place, kept him anxiously awake. Ever and anon the dogs rose and barked, and walked growling behind the mimi; and every time Phineas started up and shook Jonas, whispering, “There is somebody about — there must be bush-rangers or blacks!”

Jonas would jump up, listen, and then say, “Don’t you know what it is? Don’t you hear the yaffing and howling of the wild dogs in the hills? That is what makes our dogs growl and bark so. Now, don’t wake me again, or I shall be very savage.”

“But the wild dogs — won’t they attack us in our sleep?” asked Phineas.

“Wild dogs be hanged!” said Jonas. “They won’t come near us, you may take my word for it.” And Jonas was speedily snoring enough to frighten any wild dogs or wild creatures far enough away from their mimi.

Jonas slept well. Not so Phineas; he was again disturbed by his imagination, and snakes, and scorpions, and centipedes, haunted his brain. Besides which, the solitude of the bush has a something appalling in it,

amid the dead of night; and Phineas, waking every now and then, heard, if nothing else, the snoring of his uncle Jonas, which, seeming to drive away from him all power of sleep, made him peevish, if not downright angry.

Just before daybreak, therefore, Jonas was again awake by Phineas calling out again, "Jonas! Jonas! I say Jonas!"

Jonas started up, and, rubbing his eyes, said, "Well, Phin, what is the matter now?"

"O, there are snakes, Jonas, huge, monstrous snakes! One has very near bitten me!"

"Eh! what? where are you, Phin?" exclaimed Jonas, feeling in vain for Phineas where he had lain by his side; and hearing his voice come, as it seemed, from somewhere above. "Where in the world have you got to, Phin?"

"Here I am," said Phineas, in a piteous voice; "here, up on the great hanging branch of the big tree. I got up here out of the way of the snake."

Jonas jumped up, looked out, and burst into a fit of excessive laughter, as he could just discern Phineas sitting astride of the great bough above the mimi, wearing a most woe-begone and disconsolate look.

"What do you find to laugh at now?" exclaimed Phineas. "It's no laughing matter, I can tell you; and if that snake had bitten you, you would not be able to laugh now, you may depend upon it — though, I dare say, you would have laughed to see me dying with it."

"But where was the snake, Phin?"

"Where? Why, close to my face, to be sure!"

“Did you see it, then?”

“No! how could I see it in the dark? but I heard it plain enough. There it was, gliding and rustling close to my ear in the leaves.”

“Why, Phin, I’ll bet you any money that there was no snake. It is impossible, man alive! for no snake is or was ever known to be crawling about between sunset and sunrise.”

“How do they get into beds, *then*, eh?”

“How? why, in the day-time, or towards sunset when they are seeking a retreat for the night. Now, Phin, don’t you think you are pretty considerable of a jackass to frighten yourself up into a tree, and rouse me again out of a second dream, by this absurd cry of snakes?”

“Nay, you are the jackass!” said Phineas, angrily. “You are a laughing jackass, and no mistake.”

“What sort of jackasses perch on trees?” asked Jonas, and off he went again into fresh fits of laughter, as he took another look at Phineas’ woful figure. “Come down, Phin! come down! I tell you they were only those little marmot-mice that abound in the grass of these valleys, that you heard gliding and rustling.”

“Nonsense of mice!” said Phineas.

“Nonsense of snakes, I say!” reiterated Jonas. “And snakes, Jonas, huge snakes!” said Jonas, imitating Phineas’ frightened voice, “you have made out of two or three harmless mice. Why, half-a-dozen of them have run over my face during the night, but I did not waken you on account of them. But come down, Phin, for there is the dawn above the mountain-tops. And, hark! there is another of our brethren, the laughing

jackasses, calling up the feathered folk in the neighborhood."

Jonas did not again go to sleep, but, now thoroughly refreshed by his good night's rest, lit up the fire afresh, fetched water for tea, and retired to the creek to wash himself while it boiled. By this time Phineas, too, was up, and was busy frying the bacon as Jonas came back, all the time "humming his surly song," as Jonas called it. For Phineas had a way, whatever he was doing, or whenever he was walking through the bush alone, of humming some monotonous tune, — a self-invented one, which more nearly resembled the moaning of the wind than anything else. Sometimes it rose in strong gales, and then again died away, but never expressed itself in a single word. I do not believe that he had any words. It was a droning hum, and nothing more. Jonas, who had read Ossian, said it was like the choleric Foldath, who, when angry, "varied his form to the wind, and hummed a surly song."

"That's right, Phin," said Jonas, when he heard him crooning. "Then you have got over the snake-panic!" and Jonas went off into hearty laughter as he thought of his nephew's alarm.

"Be quiet, Jonas, I say!" cried Phineas; "you are enough to provoke a stone! If you torment me about snakes, you may hunt your bullock yourself, for me, for I won't come out with you."

"Well Phin, I've done, I've done!" said Jonas; "so let us breakfast and be off."

In half an hour the two lads were on their horses and proceeding up the valley. The glen wound away between steeper and steeper hills, and soon branched out into two

or three other glens, or ravines, down which also ran small tributary streams; but the bottom of the valley became so narrow, and was so obstructed with masses of fallen trees, and deep, dense grass, and brambles, that Jonas saw that no cattle were accustomed to traverse it. He considered that they had now reached the boundary of their search, for no cattle would ascend the precipitous steeps on the other side while they had food and water on this. The youths therefore dismounted, and ascended the near hillside, through the wood, leading their horses. They had an arduous task, for the steep was at least half a mile in ascent, by places quite chaotic with huge masses of granite and piles of granite rocks, by places again swampy, and overgrown with extensive copses of green wattles. At length they emerged to an upper region, giving them a magnificent view of mountains beyond mountains, over which the sun was shining, showing all their white glittering tops, their furrowed sides, and the low ranges all dotted with trees, as in a pen-and-ink sketch. Eagles were hovering in the air high above the valley, and flocks of green paroquets skimming rapidly in lively chirp across from steep to steep.

The scene was so exciting that Phineas, flying, in his volatile spirits, from one extreme to another, as is often the case with people of a very nervous temperament, became quite wild with delight, and offered to ride Jonas a race right down the mountain side.

Jonas was astonished, and treated it as a jest; but Phineas said, "Well, then, I'll do it myself, and here goes!"

With that he gave Bob a dig with his spurs, but Jonas seized the bridle, crying, "Phineas, are you gone

mad? Why, you and the horse would be hurled down headlong and dashed into a thousand pieces! You might just as well attempt to ride down a house-side!"

"I'll do it," said Phineas; "who's afraid?" and again he gave Bob a cut and a spur. But Bob, too sensible to risk his neck, whirled round, and cantered off in the opposite direction, very soon running Phineas slap against the branches of a tree, which swept him clear off to the ground. Jonas hastened up to see if he were hurt, but found Phineas already on his legs, and running to catch Bob, upon whose back he sprang again directly.

"Well, Phin, you are to a certainty gone cracked," said Jonas, seriously. "You may thank Bob for having come off so well; for, if he had been as mad as you, you would not have played Absalom over again, but at this moment have been lying a mangled mass on the steeps below. Good gracious! you make me frightened now, in my turn."

"Pooh!" said Phineas, like one intoxicated. "Come along! you will call me a frightened fellow again, eh? Who's the frightened fellow now?"

Jonas said nothing, but went on, wondering at this sudden and strange ebullition of Phineas. They now kept wheeling more and more to the left to make a circuit round their camp, and soon found themselves in a fine grassy country, bounded by granite ranges, which ever and anon receded into narrow, steep, sequestered glens. In one of these glens they perceived the traces of cattle, and rode up it for a mile or more. Suddenly, at the turn of the valley, they came upon a large herd of wild cattle grazing there, which, the moment they perceived them, began to run fiercely up the glen, dash-





AWAY PHIN FOR YOUR LIFE! AWAY! AWAY! ”

ing, with uplifted tails, through grass and scrub, at a desperate rate. Anon they stopped, with fierce snorting and blowing noises, to look back at them, and then again rushed away. Jonas and Phineas rode after them, to ascertain, if possible, whether Pompey was amongst them; but all at once the flying animals came to a dead stand. They were enclosed by high, rocky precipices; and, not being able to escape that way, they now began to bellow and snort, to lash themselves with their tails, and to face their pursuers.

“Away, Phin, for your life! Away! away! the cattle are for a rush!” and with that Jonas turned his horse, and rode at full gallop up the side of the hill, in a slanting direction, so as to leave the hill free for the bullocks. But, soon turning his head, he saw Phineas sitting as motionless as a statue. His late fit of courage, or rather frenzy, had deserted him, and terror had fixed him to the spot. The bullocks were already in full charge down the valley, when Jonas galloped down, desperately shouting, “Phin! Phin! flee! for your life! for your life!” But, so far as it rested with Phineas, all power of fleeing was gone. Bob, however, had no notion of being knocked down and trampled over by the charging mob of furious animals; but, the moment they began to rush on, he gave two or three extraordinary kicks and grunts, and darted up the hill towards Jonas, with a velocity that no one ever dreamed he had in him. It was but just in time, for the wild herd came thundering on with furious speed, and erect tails, and swept down the valley with a rush and sough that made the very foliage on the trees quiver, and with hoarse bellows swept onward till they were out of sight.

As soon as Jonas could speak, he exclaimed, "God be thanked! — that was a narrow escape, Phin! a narrow, hair-breadth escape! By Jove, it makes me tremble now in every limb!"

Phineas sate and said nothing; he could not speak, but he looked hard at Jonas, as if he would say something, and the next moment burst into a violent fit of weeping. Jonas let him weep it out, and then said, "Well, Phin, I see you are not well to-day; keep yourself quiet, and let us ride slowly on. Whether Pompey be there or not, God knows. I could not think of him at the moment that the creatures passed; but, if he be, he may stay there, for it would be as much as our lives are worth to endeavor to get him out from amongst them."

So they rode on through woods and over bare granite swells, where whole acres of pink geraniums flushed the ground with their bloom, and where the grass-tree luxuriated in the sterile, hot and soilless surface, fixing its roots into the crevices of the stone, spreading out its crown of long grassy leaves on its palm-like stem, and sending up a tall, flowering plume, like a club of four or five feet high. They rode on down a wide valley, where they saw a few scattered cattle, but no Pompey; and about noon saw a fire, towards which they rode, hoping that it might belong to some stockman or prospector, where they could cook and eat their dinner, and perhaps hear news of their missing beast.

As they drew near, however, they perceived that it was a camp of natives. Phineas wanted at once to ride away. He was sure that they were Murray blacks, a tribe noted for their fierceness and depredations up in this part of the country. But Jonas told him that there

was no fear. The blacks here knew now too well the power of the whites. He therefore rode up to the camp and bade the people good-day. There were, however, only women and children there, the men being out fishing and hunting. The camp consisted of some half-dozen mimis of a few boughs only, stuck on end into the ground, near which squatted a number of women and children about the fires. Numbers of dogs ran to and fro barking around, and little, naked, tun-bellied children came running in from the bush in a fright at the white fellows.

The whole scene was a most miserable one. The women were mostly old. The young ones were, no doubt, out gathering gum, and murnong roots, to roast; and these women, with their thin arms and legs, their thick, round heads, covered with raven-black hair, and their broad noses, and huge white teeth, were as hideous specimens of humanity as could be conceived. They had bags of opossums, bandicoots, and the like, hung on the tops of stakes stuck into the ground to keep them out of reach of the dogs; and when Jonas asked leave to boil their tea at this fire, and cook their rasher of bacon, they pulled out a bandicoot, and threw it into the fire whole, and in its skin, piled the ashes upon it, and then drew it out not half roasted, and, tearing off the skin, offered it to them.

Jonas thanked them for their hospitality, which was well meant, and took a leg of the bandicoot, which, however, he roasted further on a stick, and pronounced it very good. Phineas followed his example, more out of fear of offending the blacks than from appetite to such a dish so cooked; and Jonas then gave them

some "white money," which they prefer even to gold, and the youths mounted and rode away.

The two young explorers rode far through wood and valley that afternoon; no cattle, no man — scarcely a living thing was to be seen. It was like traversing a country never visited by man. Towards evening, and when they began to think of encamping for the night, low mutterings of thunder in the west announced an approaching storm.

"Now, Phinny, boy, what shall we do to-night? If the thunder-storm comes, as it will, it will drench ground, wood, grass, leaves, everything. Our only chance is to make a tent of our blankets as speedily as we can, and raise such a fire of logs as the rain cannot drown out, or we shall get no fire, and no dry ground to sleep on; and as to lighting a fire in the morning, that will be out of the question, with everything soaked like a sponge.

They therefore hastily dismounted, and began to cut poles over which to stretch their blankets, and to kindle a fire; but before this could be done a fierce wind came roaring through the forest, as if it would tear everything before it, and on its back came instantaneous deluges of rain, that did not shower down, but even shot down as out of a spout. Flash followed rapidly upon flash of the most vivid lightning, and the whole welkin seemed rent with the almost incessant crashes of tremendous thunder. The two boys had only time to snatch the saddles from the horses and tie the creatures to a tree, while they themselves covered under the blankets from the down-pouring impetuous torrents of rain. Soon the ground was swimming with wet, which came running

under their temporary tent, and through it in all directions. Every little hollow leading to the valley became a stream, and the roar of waters was heard on every side. Darkness had dropped down upon them simultaneously with the tempest, and the prospect for the night was most miserable.

“There will be no sleeping on the ground to-night, Phin,” said Jonas, inclined to joke even in the midst of such cheerless circumstances. “We need not fear any gliding and rustling of snakes at our noses.”

“Well, have done with that, can’t you, Jonas?” said Phineas.

“O, pooh!” said Jonas, “what harm? Why, Phin, you were not quite so distraught as a gentleman at Adelaide, who was camping out in his tent in the bush one night, when he really did feel something gliding cold and clammy under the blankets by his side. He put down his hand and felt a snake! With desperate courage he at once grasped it, and dashed it out upon the ground with such force, that when he got a match lit to look for it, it was dead. But another night he felt something again gliding smooth and cold. Once more he seized the thing, and dashed it out upon the ground with all his might. This time, however, he did not escape so well. He was severely bitten, and he felt an almost instant swelling and mortification in his chest, for when he lit his match, and looked out upon the ground, there he saw — his gold watch! He had put it under his pillow; it had slid down cold and smooth, and in his terror of a snake he had seized and dashed it into a woful mass!”

“That was a shocking mistake,” said Phineas; “but I told you snakes do get into beds and blankets.”

“Ay! in the day-time, as I told you too,” said Jonas; “but, see! the storm has abated; it is quite light again. We had better ride on in quest of some drier place than this.”

Phineas asked where that drier place was. And Jonas said probably in a mile's distance, for the storm might not have extended far. So up they got, and trotted away at a quick rate. They rode on and on, but still all wet, and the day was fast closing. All at once they came across a dray-track.

“This leads to some station,” exclaimed Jonas. “If we could but reach it now! But which way, that is the question! Let me see! The left hand leads towards the diggings; there is no station there; it must be in the other direction. Let us try it.”

With that they put their horses into a canter, and rode smartly for half an hour over hill and dale. By this time it was so dark that no one coming out of a house or a tent could have seen his hand before him. The travellers, however, could see the road, and the sort of country they were in. They were fast hastening into a region of densely-wooded hills, with numbers of valleys branching off right and left, and the track their only clue. Still they rode on and on, crossing creeks, ascending hills, involving themselves deeper and deeper in a wild and intricate country. Hills arose on all sides, and deep glens amid the woods, filled with impenetrable scrub, seemed to promise no country suitable for a station. At length Phineas declared that he could go no further; they had better tie their horses and wait there

till morning. But Jonas cried, "A little further!" and in the next moment shouted, "Hurra, Phin! a light! a light!"

At this inspiring cry, Phineas trotted up, and sure enough there was a light which appeared at some distance above them. They made the best of their way towards it, finding themselves on a sterile granite slope, scattered with huge blocks of that stone, and the ground sounding under their horses' feet as dry and grassless. It was, in fact, bare granite gravel. As they approached the light, they saw that it was really at a station. There were numbers of wooden huts and buildings all about, just discernible through the gloom. Drays and heaps of dead wood for fuel stopped their way; and next they came up to the post and rail-fence of a paddock, on which hung the usual quantity of sheep-skins which adorn the vicinity of a station. The next moment their ears were assailed by the bark of some half-dozen dogs, which were lying out under the broad veranda of the house.

Finding, however, that they could approach no nearer for the fence, for it was too dark to discover a gate, Jonas shouted out, at the top of his voice, "Hillo, there! anybody at home?"

On this, there was a fresh outbreak of the barking, and the next moment the door opened, and a man's voice called out, "Who's there?"

"Two benighted travellers," said Jonas, "who have lost their way."

"Lost your way! Why, the d—! there is no way here, except to this station. What, then, are you doing here?"

“Bullock-hunting!” shouted Jonas.

“Then,” said the man, “go and hunt them, and ——” here he finished with an oath.

“I hope you don’t mean that, sir,” said Jonas, deprecatingly. “We are only two boys, who have lost our way, bullock-hunting. We never were here before in our lives.”

“Let us go! let us go!” said Phineas. “Quick! quick! or we shall be shot.”

“Two boys!” said the man. “Are you sure of that?”

“Quite sure!”

“And nobody behind you?”

“Not a soul but us,” said Jonas.

“It sounds like a boy’s voice,” said a woman’s voice.

“Well, come in here, then,” said the man, “and let me look at you.”

“But how are we to get in?” said Jonas. “I see no gate.”

“Never mind!” said the man. “Get between the rails.”

“But our horses?”

“Horses! Well, tie them there, till I’ve had a peep at you.”

Jonas and Phineas dismounted, flung their bridle-reins over the posts, and advanced towards the house. As they drew near, the woman brought out a light to see them by, and as they came up, “Law, James!” said the woman, “these are no bush-rangers, poor innocents! Poor lads! to be lost, and out all in that thunder and rain!”

“No, they don’t look very dangerous,” said a tall,

stout, family-looking man, laughing. "Come in, my lads, come in!"

"But give us leave to turn our horses out first, sir," said Jonas, "and hang out our wet blankets on the rails."

"Here, mother! Give us the lantern," said the squatter to his wife. "I'll go with you, lads."

And in five minutes the horses were turned into the paddock, and the saddles brought in, the blankets being hung on the rails to dry with the morning sun.

Jonas and Phineas soon found themselves in one of those homely but comfortable slab-huts which are the first residences of the squatters, with its large open fireplace, constructed of wood, and lined with slabs of granite. A good fire was burning on the hearth; a comely, fresh-looking matron was already cutting mutton-chops and arranging them in the frying-pan, for she took it for granted that the boys were hungry. The kettle was put on, and soon the chops began to fizz in the pan, and send forth goodly odors. Besides the settler and his wife, there were three or four chubby children, who stood looking shyly at the strangers.

"Here, James, hold the pan a minute," said the wife. "I must put the bairns to bed." And the little children followed her like a flock of chickens, glad to get to roost, into another room.

"By jingo, lads! but I gave you a rough reception!" said the squatter. "I am glad that I was not rash enough to shoot." Phineas shuddered. "But, do you know, it was only the other day that nine scoundrel bush-rangers beset the house, and two of them, as I went to the door to see what the dogs were barking at, pin-

ioned my arms behind me; another scamp threw a handkerchief over my head and face, and well-nigh smothered me. I was not for giving in in that way, but the villains bade me be silent, or they would blow my brains out. I saw it was of no use contending with them; so I said, 'Well, I give in. What do you want?'

"'Your money!' they said. 'Walk in, and show us where it is.'

"With that they took off my handkerchief, and let me walk in between two great sturdy fellows with masks on. When my wife saw a whole posse of such grim rogues come in, with me in the midst of them, she gave a fearful screech.

"'Don't be afraid, Missis,' they said. 'We won't hurt you or anybody. We only want your money, and a little prog.'

"'Ay! prog, by all means!' said one of them. 'It is dangerous and troublesome going to the diggings for stores.'

"Then they bade me open my desk; and they told me to hand out my money. Luckily, I had very little in the house, — only fifty pounds. I gave them that.

"'That is not all,' they said. 'You sold a flock of sheep to-day to one butcher at the diggings, and seven bullocks to another. They would come to much more than that.'

"'That is a true bill,' I observed; 'but I paid the money into the Gold Office to purchase gold with some day or other.'

"'Then give us an order for it,' said a great, black-bearded fellow, who seemed to be their captain. 'Give us the receipt, too.'

“‘That is more than I can do,’ said I; ‘for I left the receipt with a store-keeper, with whom I have a sort of partnership, and who buys gold for me.’

“‘What’s his name?’ said they.

“I told them.

“‘That will do. Now for the order.’

“‘With all my heart,’ said I; ‘but, as sure as you go there with an order, you will be taken into custody, for I have told him never to pay any order but to one of my family; if anybody brought one, it would be got by foul means.’

“At that they looked at one another, as much as to say, ‘The man has been too cunning for us.’ But at length the captain said:

“‘Come, squatter! mount your horse, and ride with us. We can reach the diggings before morning, and you can get the order for us.’

“‘And of what use would that be to you?’ I asked. ‘For some one would be at the Gold Office as soon as you, and you would be nabbed.’

“With that they saw it was all up in that quarter; so they began to swear and threaten, saying that I must find more money, or they would murder us all, and burn down the house.

“‘God’s will be done!’ I said. ‘I cannot help it.’

“So they then began to search for themselves. They pulled and broke open every part of my desk; pulled out all boxes they could find, and ransacked them; took our best clothes, both mine and my wife’s; and, what angered me more than all, took my old silver watch, which had been my father’s. I offered to give them twenty pounds for it any day, and to take no notice of their robbery;

but they only swore at my twenty pounds, and went on ransacking and breaking everything. Then they took quantities of flour, sugar, tobacco, tea, and such things, out of the store-room, and all the meat they could find, and made off. They had pack-horses with them to carry their plunder; and so they made off, saying, as they went, 'Now, seek to follow us and find us out at your peril; for, if you do, we will come again, and finish you and your place together.' You may judge, after that, I am not very fond of people coming here after dark, and I never mean again to go out without a gun or pistol in my hand. We have put bars and locks on our doors, such things as we never had before since we came into the colony. But, mercy on us! this gold has brought a pretty legion of fiends into this country."

But now the supper was ready, and Jonas and Phineas fell to in good earnest. There were potatoes to their chops, and milk to their tea, luxuries rarely seen at the diggings; and Jonas could not help saying, "Why, settler, this is a lane flowing with milk and honey."

"Not much honey," said the squatter, with a smile.

"Sugar, however," said Jonas; "and that is all the same."

Supper over, they went to a comfortable bed-room adjoining the one where they sate, and only awoke in the morning when the sun was shining bright, and there was a great going to and fro and bustle in the house. It was the bustle for breakfast, the squatter and his men having come in from the bush ravenously hungry. Our young wanderers were welcomed with smiles, and again there was laughter at their having been mistaken for

bush-rangers. The squatter then inquired where they had lost their bullocks.

“Only one bullock,” said Jonas, and described him.

“Why, I have seen that bullock at least twenty times within the last fortnight,” said the squatter. “He is down in a wattle-scrub with three or four more, not a mile from the diggings.” He then described the place, and Jonas saw that it was not above three miles from their own tent.

“Well,” said Jonas, “we are more like Sir Isaac Newton than I ever expected to be.”

“Sir Isaac Newton!” said the squatter. “How so?”

“Why, I’ve heard a story,” said Jonas, “and I believe it to be true, that Sir Isaac and some of his philosophical friends set out on a journey all through England to find the mistletoe growing on an oak, as the old Druids used to do. They went and went from one county to another, looking everywhere and inquiring; but could not find it, so came back, and when Sir Isaac was a few miles from home he stopped to dine at a farmer’s, a tenant of his, and told him, as they sate at dinner, what a long way he had travelled to no purpose.

“‘Bless you, Sir Isaac!’ says the farmer; ‘why, the very thing is growing on your own land.’

“‘Bless my soul!’ says Sir Isaac, and the knife and fork dropped from his hand, and he would not eat another mouthful till the farmer had shown it to him half a mile from his own door.”

The story pleased the squatter, and he said, “I see you are clever chaps. You must come and see me again, when you shall have some more milk and honey.” And

the two youths took their departure, highly pleased with their entertainment.

Scarcely, however, were they on their horses, than Phineas said, "I say, uncle Jonas, you did not tell your story right; it was not Sir Isaac Newton, — it was Sir Joseph Banks."

"How do you know that?" asked Jonas.

"Because I've read it," said Phineas.

"And so have I read it," persisted Jonas, "and I dare say it happened to them both; such things do happen every day. We've been looking for our mistletoe a long way from the mark. You Sir Joseph Banks, and I Sir Isaac Newton, that's all; and our good friend the squatter is the farmer who has sent us to find it on our door-stone. Life is wonderful, Phineas, and one thing typifies another, as I have read in books."

Such was the philosophy of Jonas Popkins.

About noon the two lads were seen coming towards the tent, driving Pompey before them. They had found him exactly where the squatter had said.

OPOSSUM AND WILD-CAT HUNTING, KANGAROOS, WOMBATS, &c.

I have already spoken of the opossum, and of my adventure in the bush when I was out " 'possuming." I must put down a few remarks, therefore, about these animals.

The opossums which abound here, and which constitute so great a part of the food of the natives, are about the size of cats, are covered in Victoria with a fine gray fur, and in Van Diemen's Land with a ruddy brown

fur, as I see by the rugs made of their skins which come from thence. They have a head something like a rabbit, a reddish nose, and dark eyes, that seem to have no pupils, or to be all pupil. They have — the common species — long, bushy tails, the end of which is formed something like the finger, if I may so call it, at the end of the elephant's proboscis, by which they hold on by the branches of the trees as they sit. They have such power in this termination of their tails, that even when shot they will often hang there, and not lose their hold while they have life; and some of them not then, for the muscular contractile power of the tail remains long after death; and they will continue thus, hanging on the very topmost branches, for hours, and in some cases I am told for days.

There is a smaller kind, called the ring-tailed opossum, because the tail curls itself up into the shape of a ring, not upwards, but downwards. These opossums have a shorter fur, their tails are more like the tail of a rat, and are white near the end. There is also a third creature, which we at first called a flying squirrel, but which is called the tuon, or flying opossum. It is as large as a full-sized opossum, but darker, with a smaller head, and a fine, dark, bushy tail. It has a splendid fur. The flying squirrel, which we have since seen and killed repeatedly, is a very different animal, — of the size of a good large English squirrel, with a beautiful delicate fur, like that of the chinchilla.

When we first came up the country, we heard these different creatures making their uncouth noises in the night; for they are all nocturnal animals, like almost every native animal in Australia; and they are too what

is called marsupial, — that is, have a marsupium, or purse, under their stomachs, in which they carry their young till they are able to take care of themselves. The kangaroo will sometimes, when pursued in her flight, and when hard pressed, let the young ones jump or be thrown out of her purse, or pouch, to care for themselves; and they will go off right and left at a great rate.

I believe all the Australian native animals have these singular pouches, except the wild dog; and therefore there are naturalists who contend that the wild dog is not indigenous, but has been left in the country by some of the early navigators; but if that be the case, he has degenerated into a very foxy, wolfy sort of a creature.

But I was going to say that we heard these animals, but did not for some time pursue them. We were anxious to get up the country, and travelled from day-break to sunset, and went to bed early and tired. But when the nights became moonlight we heard people shooting in the woods, and we walked out to see what was their game. They were opossums and tuons. There was a man with a walking-stick gun, made of gun-metal, but exactly like a walking-stick with a plain hook, and the cock and trigger fitting down so nicely at the sides, that they were not seen when the instrument was used as a walking-stick; and this was his regular walking-stick, so painted as to resemble a stick, and nothing else. I believe they may be bought pretty cheap in London.

Well, this man was knocking down these opossums and tuons at a great rate. He said he wanted their fur; and that, besides, they furnished his dogs with meat, of which they were very fond. This was a good idea.

Our dog Prin — the only one that we then had — was sometimes sadly off for meat when we were away in the bush and had to depend on ham, which he would not eat. But, then, these people had dogs bred in this country, which were exceedingly fond of opossum-hunting, and at evening would run out and point you as many opossums as you pleased, chasing them into the trees, so that you had nothing to do but to go and shoot them.

We thought we must get a dog of the country to hunt the opossums for us, for Prin had no more notion of them than of the man in the moon. But, behold! he very soon saw some of them on the ground, and, no doubt taking them for cats, chased them, and saw them run nimbly into the trees; and when we had shot some of them, and he saw them come flop to the ground, and had smelt at and killed them, and tasted of them, a new world seemed opened to him. He found that the trees in this country abounded with cats, and he was always at night looking up for them. From this time he became almost beside himself in the pursuit of them. He hunted them up, and barked at the foot of the tree where they took refuge, as eagerly and perseveringly as any colonial dog of them all. So all now was right, and we used to shoot numbers of these creatures by the light of the moon. In these thinly-foliaged trees you can see them sit, even of a darkish night, like a great lump or knot on a branch. We soon became familiar, too, with their odd, snoring sort of noise. This noise is a sort of “Qua-web-web-web! Qua-web-web-web!” but made in a most singular, hoarse, snoring voice. Prin became as well acquainted with the sounds as ourselves, and the moment he heard it in the night he rushed out furiously, and chased the

animal into a tree, where one of us had generally to go, at whatever hour of the night, to shoot it, before he would come in, or let us sleep for his barking.

After our poor Buff joined us, — who, I am sorry to say, has been stolen, — and our poor Bob, — another dog which came to us in the wood, being lost, and staid with us till he died of influenza, — there were constant opossum-hunts of nights ; for as soon as it was dark away went the dogs, and were soon barking furiously at these creatures in the trees. So we used to go and shoot them sufficient for their next day's food. It is a pity that we did not then know how to cure the skins ; for tanning them with wattle-bark, which had been recommended to us, we found far too troublesome on the road, whereas, as we afterwards found, there required nothing but to tack the skins to a piece of gum-tree bark, the inner side outwards, and dry them in the sun. Had we known this earlier, we might have had skins enough for half-a-dozen rugs. But we are now carefully keeping them.

It was most diverting to see poor Bob's frantic joy when we set out at night to shoot opossums. He used to jump round in a most extraordinary way ; not run round in a circle, but jump round on the spot where he stood ; at one jump turning his head where his tail had been, and so round and round for several times together, with the oddest motions of his head, and barking vociferously. He seemed quite crazy with delight. He very soon taught us to get plenty of opossums in the day-time ; for, as we went along the road, we had only to say, " Go find ! " and away he went barking, and speedily stopped at some hollow tree, where there was sure to be an opossum which we could get at with our axes.

One evening my father went out with us by moonlight, when we shot at an opossum, but it did not fall. As we had forgot our caps, we ran back to fetch them, and also an axe. When we came back and said "Where is it?" my father said, "Why, it has flown away—it is a flying opossum; but there he is in yonder tree." There we went, and there, sure enough, he was; and down we fetched him, a magnificent tuon. Another night, up at the Yackandanda creek, the dogs rushed out at midnight, and were barking furiously near the tent. Alfred went out and saw an opossum in a young tree. He fired, and, to his amazement, instead of one opossum down came two! two of the largest fellows we had ever seen. They were still alive, and the dogs had a stout battle with them, for they bite terribly, and often make the dogs cry out amain, and they seem, like cats, to have nine lives. At times it seems impossible to kill them. I have found, however, since, that, as with rabbits, a good blow at the back of the head dispatches them instantly.

But now we learned another fact, which made a wonderful saving of our ammunition. We found that though Prin and Bob barked incessantly when they saw an opossum in a tree, Buff never barked except it was in a low tree, generally a young one. If it were in a high tree he would sit and gloat at it, as it were, keep close watch upon it all night, if we let him, but never barking. On discovering this, we used always to go, and I climbed the tree and shook the animal down, when the dogs caught him below and killed him at once; Alfred being ready to take the dogs off before they injured the fur. By this means, and by looking out in the day-time for

hollow trees, — and there are plenty everywhere, as if intended for the retreats of these creatures, — we could get as many as we wanted. Where the branches are abruptly broken off the place is almost certain to be hollow, and there it is pretty certain that there is an opossum. Often we can see them in their holes from the ground, and if not we can soon tell by fur sticking about the hole.

So up I go, if the tree be not very easy to climb, by the same means as the natives ascend them for the same purpose; that is, by cutting notches in the bole for the feet and hands with my tomahawk. Once at the hole, I poke a stick down to feel where the creature is, and then cut him out with the tomahawk. This plan I learnt, too, from the natives; for I was often astonished to find long sticks sticking in the hollow trunks and boles, and it occurred to me that they were left there by the natives when they had been getting opossums; and I found that they left the stick in the hole while they cut out the opossum below, to prevent the animal bolting out at the top and away up into the tree, as he soon would do on hearing the blows of the tomahawk. I was going after an opossum in this way, when I had my dreadful adventure.

We soon understood, too, what at first puzzled us, why so many trees had square pieces of their bark cut out, of about a foot and a half long, and a foot wide. It was for the blacks to fasten their opossum-skins upon to dry. Then there were long, oval pieces cut out; these are for their shields; and occasionally by rivers, large oval pieces, five or six feet long, and a yard or more wide. These were for converting into boats, for fishing

in, which they do very simply, by cutting out a piece at each end, and bringing the two sides of the end up together, and daubing the joint with clay.

Well, that is the way we catch 'possums. Sometimes it takes a good shake to shake them down, for they hold so fast by their tails, and fly up to the very topmost twigs of the trees, where we cannot follow them; but for this I found a remedy, which was a noose of string at the end of a long stick, which I put over their heads, and so bring them down.

Sometimes, when I have just been putting the noose over the fellow's head, away he has flown — it was a tuon. At other times I have climbed into the Banksia-trees, or honeysuckles, as they always call them here; a very odd, rough, thick-headed — I don't mean stupid — tree, which has very artificial-looking leaves, something like a coarse fir-tree, only broader, and standing more staringly apart; and it bears yellow flowers, for all the world like the heads of teazles. In these flowers, however, there is honey, and this is eagerly sought after by various birds, but especially the wattle-birds — birds as large as field-fares, and of much the same shape, but of a dark-brown and spotted plumage. They are called wattle-birds, not because they frequent the wattle-tree, but because they have wattles on the sides of their heads, just like young barn-door cocks. *Therefore* Jonas Popkins always would contend that they were a species of *domestic* fowl, because they have wattles, and crow. They cry "Yock! yock!" and crow very much like pheasants, also crying, continually, "Karackarock," so that they ought to have been sacred birds with the natives, that being the name of their goddess, the

daughter of old Pungil, their god. Perhaps they were her birds, and very ancient, for I assure you they are tremendously tough; as we have tried them roasted, stewed and in pies, but still with the same result — lumps of leather, or gutta-percha.

However, like Homer, I dare say I often *nod*, and like Marco Polo, I am sure I *ramble*. I was about to say that often I climbed into these same queer Banksias after what I thought opossums, but I found, to my surprise, that they were always wild-cats. The first of these that I found I was going to lay unceremonious hands upon, as I do on the opossums, when it gave a bounce, a sort of furious snarl, a spitting and a sputtering, and showed such a row of sharp teeth, such claws, and such a fiendish, fiery eye, that I drew back my hand pretty quickly, and was glad I had not touched it. The next moment it sprang from the tree, and there was a furious battle below between it and the dogs. It spitting, snarling, or swearing, as the people call the angry noise of a cat in England, clawing and biting in such style, that Buff yelled out and gave in; but Prin, though bitten severely about the nose, stuck to him manfully, and soon finished him, for he is a plucky little chap.

We had often wondered before that we never met with native cats, but now, we said, we shall find plenty; and that is always the way — when once you see anything, then you see plenty of them. I suppose it is because we are then got into the region for them. Be that as it may, we now find quantities of these fierce creatures. They abound in the fallen logs, as the opossums in the standing trees. They are not at all like English cats, either wild or tame, but are more of the polecat or ferret

kind. They are only half the size of cats, have a ferret head, a red nose, a set of fine-pointed and very sharp teeth, and the most evil, hangman eye that I ever saw. They have a fur of different colors,—sometimes a grayish-brown, sometimes yellow, sometimes black, but always spotted all over with round white spots, the size of a fourpenny piece.

No doubt they get into the Banksias to catch the wattle and other birds at roost. They are most destructive wretches near a farm, killing chickens, fowls, sucking eggs like weasels, and making immense havoc in the night; and yet they have their use too, if the use were not so much outweighed by the abuse; for they kill mice, and a gentleman who industriously destroyed all the wild-cats about his house said that he thought he was then still more devoured by legions of mice.

Scores and scores of these creatures have we killed as we came up the country; for we found that they would sometimes turn out by day as well as by night, when the forest was quite still, and they probably had not fared very well the previous night. We have then seen them, as one of us has sate quite still by the tent, issue from some hollow log near, and come up to the tent, and smell about, probably attracted by the scent of our meat; but on the least motion they would dart off, with their tails roughed up like foxes, at an amazing rate. Prin was ten times more eager after them than any other game, probably from his native instinct that terriers were intended to keep down such vermin, but assuredly because they showed more determined fight. He does not care for things that show no fight, and die tamely.

There is another animal which we for a long time saw

nothing of — the bandicoot. This is a small animal, apparently between a rat and a hedgehog. It is not larger than many rats, and its hair has a thickness in it as of incipient hedgehog-quills. It has a head very like a pig, or hedgehog. It burrows in the ground, most frequently scooping out the light earth where the thick roots of trees have decayed, and thus easily making a run or burrow. Occasionally, however, it is found too in fallen hollow trees. It is reckoned very good eating, and we have frequently cooked them; and when they are cooked as rabbits it would not be easy to distinguish the difference, any more than a young opossum dressed as a hare would not be distinguished from that animal.

We had been so long without seeing a bandicoot, that we offered a native some tea and sugar to bring us one; which, however, he never did; but that very day we killed one ourselves, and after that, as usual, found plenty. The dogs, however, are very indifferent about hunting bandicoots, — I suppose because they show no fight, and are killed without any resistance; neither will they eat them as they will opossum.

Again, there was another animal that we seldom came across, and that was the kangaroo rat, as it is called, but in fact a perfect small kangaroo, about the size of a hare. This, of late, we have seen frequently, but rarely succeed in shooting; for they are so rapid in their motion, that unless they get up just under your feet, they are out of gun-shot in an instant almost, and are too fleet for ordinary dogs. One day we went out into the woods, and put up four or five in a very short time; but they dashed away at such a rate amongst the scrub, that we could hit none of them, and the dogs which we had in

leashes could not overtake them. When we let the dogs at liberty it was worse, because they ran before us, and put up the game almost before we could see it. What we have killed, however, and eaten, are really delicious. They are much more delicate than rabbit, and more resemble rich veal.

These, I think, are all the principal wild animals that we have killed. As we are only travellers in the wood, we have not time enough to hunt the kangaroo. It requires cautious stalking, as for wild deer, going often on your hands and knees to escape their sight, or creeping behind trees and bushes, if you would get within shot of them. And to run them down you must be on horseback, and have kangaroo dogs; that is, dogs of the strong Irish greyhound species, or the stag-hound of Scotland. You see many of these dogs here, and they are said to be much improved by the climate. This Australian breed is highly valued by Highland sportsmen at home. Of kangaroos there are three kinds: small ones, called wallabies, which are of the size of hares, and must be very much like what they call the kangaroo rat; next there is the regular or bush kangaroo, about the size of a sheep; and lastly the great red kangaroo, called a boomah, or old man, which is often six feet high or more. The kangaroos have of late years been destroyed to an immense extent. They are now, in most parts of the frequented country, few, and very shy.

I have said before that we have never had the chance of chasing or attacking the native dog. I may say the same of the wombat and the emu. Often in the lower country we saw the dens of the wombat, and heard its muttering uncouth noise in the night; but the scrub was

so thick and tall all through the woods, that, though we watched for him on moonlight nights, we never could see him, though we sometimes heard something plunging amongst the hop-scrub which we believed to be him.

The emu frequents the open, grassy plains, which we have seen, as yet, little of. It is like a cassowary, and runs as fast as a horse can gallop. In "Leichhardt's Journey from Moreton Bay to Port Essington" may be found accounts of many chases after them, especially by two black fellows that he had with him; but in some of these chases they managed to tumble their horses down, and broke two valuable guns. We have not even got a sight of the wild turkey, or rather bustard, of Australia, yet, though we have passed through districts where it is found; but I suppose it keeps further from the roads than we could go. Some day we still hope to meet with these *Hoch-Wild*, as the Germans call it — these chief game in our wanderings; and then we will give an account of our adventures with them.

Here, however, I must mention, that though Australia is asserted by natural philosophers to be a new region compared with the other continents of the globe, it has yet had its huge mammoth and mastodon tribes, the bones of which have been found both in Sydney, Victoria and Van Diemen's Land, as well as those of a gigantic bird sixteen feet high!

Imagine a bird sixteen feet high, with the face of a man, which the natives of New Zealand said the Moa of those islands had, looking in at one's chamber-window! Jonas Popkins, who thought it was called *More*, said it was absurd to call it so, — they ought to have called it *Most*. Why, the Roc of the Arabian Nights'

Tales was a chicken to it! Yet nothing is more certain than that a bird of this size once existed both in Australia and New Zealand. Such bones have been discovered in Victoria. It is called, by the learned, the *Dinornis*, signifying a terrible bird; and is supposed to resemble the Apteryx, or wingless bird of New Zealand, of which there was a specimen in the Zoological Gardens when I left England. The fossil remains of four species of this kind have been found, one of which is more remarkable than the others for the massiness and strength of its bony structure. Some of the New Zealanders assert that the last of this giant race of birds was killed by their grandfathers; others assert that there are specimens of it still remaining alive.

Quantities of the fossil bones of these birds were found at Turanga, Poverty Bay, in New Zealand. They were of a ferruginous brown, and had lost their oily matter, showing that they had been very long buried. The bones of at least thirty birds were brought by the natives to the Rev. Mr. Williams, and a mechanic asserted that two *Americans* had heard of one on the high hills near Cloudy Bay, on the Middle Island, and went to shoot it. At the request of the natives they hid themselves behind the bushes in the high hills, and soon saw this monstrous bird, from fourteen feet to sixteen feet high, come stalking out to feed. They were, however, so petrified with horror at the sight, that they were utterly incapable of firing. They observed him for near an hour, ere he retired!

This, however, is all a fiction, — no bird of that size could at the present day conceal himself either from natives or Europeans.

Fossil bones, too, have been found in certain caves at

Wellington, in Sydney, and at Mount Macedon, in Victoria, belonging to what learned naturalists call pachydermatous animals, or animals with a thick skin, of the mastodon or elephant family. The *Diprotodon*, or animal with double incisors, is said to have combined the characters of the wombat, the dinotherium, and the kangaroo.

The tooth of a mastodon was brought from the Darling Downs to Count Strzelecki, who sent it to Sir Thomas Mitchell, and he to Professor Owen. Sir Thomas Mitchell also sent to Professor Owen fossil bones of huge Australian animals resembling the *Mastodon angustidens*, and which may be called the *Mastodon Australis*.

The fossil bones found at Mount Macedon appear to belong to the same kind as those found by Sir Thomas Mitchell in the Wellington caves, and were named by Professor Owen *Macropus Titan*, or gigantic kangaroos.

So there once were kangaroos leaping about on the plains of Australia actually thirty feet high! What monsters, and what springs they must have taken! But what is most curious is, that all these huge animals, all these pachyderms, too, whether mastodons or elephants, were marsupial, and had pouches to carry their fine, thumping babies in.

Truly, this has been a queer corner of the world from the beginning; and still it has its alligators—true crocodiles. Leichhardt found them in the Mitchell, the Robinson, and the other rivers of northern Australia, which run into the Gulf of Carpentaria. It must be the crocodile which the natives mean by their Bunyup, or Kianprate, which, they say, lies at the bottom of deep waters,

and pulls people down as they swim. They have a horror of it, and, for myself, I am quite as glad that we have nothing in the rivers here larger than a tortoise or a platypus.

December, 1853.

VISIT TO A SHEEP STATION.

Australia is as famous for its growth of fine wool as it is for its fine gold. There are many millions of sheep in this country; the flocks are immensely large; the space of country over which they feed is quite astounding.

Mr. Westgarth says, that "between the river Glenelg, at the south-western extremity of Australia Felix, and Halifax Bay, to the north of New South Wales, there is a space of eleven hundred miles in a straight line, and over this vast extent are scattered about three thousand pastoral stations, situated at irregular but unusually distant intervals from each other, according to available qualities of the country in the supply of water and pasturage."

There are about one thousand of these stations on the surface of Victoria, each usually including an extent of from twenty to forty square miles, while in the Sydney district they more commonly extend over upwards of a hundred square miles.

These are squatting stations, or *runs*, as they call them, to some purpose. Only think of a squatter living in the midst of these vast solitudes of woods, mountains, and lonely plains, thus thinly scattered over the face of the country! Chiefly, however, these regions consist of immense unbroken forest, not rendered impassable, as in

many parts of the world, by thick underwood, and tangled, interwoven, and thorny shrubs and creepers, but most frequently of thinly-scattered, thinly-foliaged trees, so that the grass grows freely beneath them, and the sunshine as freely plays upon the ground.

For, as Count Strzelecki says, "the aspect of the pastoral portions of Australia is novel and striking, and characteristic of the Australian zone. If mountainous districts present nothing in common with the appearance of the Alps, or the Westmoreland, or Cheviot, or Gramian Hills, its plains are far from recalling the steppes of south-eastern Europe, or the prairies, savannas, llanos, or pampas; and the forest which covers the greater portion of the country has nothing in common with the forests of Europe. A difference of lines, tints and shadows, seems to prevail, and produce original effects in every part of the picture.

"Throughout the whole of it the pastoral ground may be said to present the alternate fall and rise of a smooth, undulating surface; sometimes running into flats, or one broken and riven, terminating in deep gulleys, or steep ridges. The *Eucalyptus*, with its everlasting olive-green foliage, uniformly covers the surface, and, whether totally erect and widely ramified or stunted in growth, rarely yields a shade."

That is a true description of the Australian landscape. It has something uncommonly soft and flowing about it. We look in vain for those rugged and stern scenes which we find abounding in Europe, especially in the north. We look in vain for those abrupt lines, those upsoaring peaks and precipices, those shattered dells and gulfs, with which the mountains of both the continent

and of England are broken. We look in vain for those gray and ancient aspects of mountain and moorland, which so often there arrest our attention, and carry us back to vast antiquity. We look in vain, in general, for those abounding and rapidly-flowing rivers and brooks, for those immense lakes outspread amid the mountains, which give such life to the northern hemisphere; or for those ancient, gnarled, and knotted, and contorted trees, which an old Druidical forest presents to the eye, steeping the imagination in the far-off times and regions of myths and sagas.

No; here, on the contrary, there is generally a soft, a gentle and youthful character, about everything. Nothing speaks to you of long-past ages. The land swells and sweeps in the smoothest style. The hills, when they appear, rise in long, monotonous ridges, clothed, for the most part, with trees to the summit; and the trees themselves have something soft, erect, smooth, and lofty about them, seeming to belong to a youthful family, and having an aversion to old age. They are to a surprising degree hollow, often from saplings; their limbs break off with the winds short as earthenware; and those broken arms are also, for the most part, hollow, affording shelter to millions of opossums, wild-cats, flying squirrels, and the like.

Such is the scenery of Australia, amongst which the squatters have taken up their abode, and where they roam over such vast spaces with their cattle and their flocks. In the earlier days of the colony these squatters wandered and fixed themselves where they listed, or rather where their flocks and herds seemed to like and to flourish on the pasture. There they built them-

selves huts of slabs or bark, and lived in the homeliest manner, while their herds and flocks grew and increased. Others came after this, and often there were disputes between them, as there were between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot in the old squatting times of Padan-Aram and Mesopotamia. Government was obliged to step in and decide these controversies, and by degrees settled that system of squatting which now prevails, the whole country being divided into squatting stations, and every occupier of one of these being obliged to take out a license for his run, and pay so much per head annually on the number of cattle, horses and sheep, kept by him.

So, till the discovery of the gold, and the invasion of the digger race, as the ancient Goths and Vandals came down upon the squatters in the woods of Europe, these patriarchs of the forests were the main population of the colonies, except that which inhabited the very few towns.

Like all other classes of mortals, they have had their bright and dark days. There were days when their flocks and herds outgrew the demand for them,—at least, for their flesh,—and they sunk in value to a mere nominal sum; sheep having been sold for one shilling and sixpence, and even ninepence, apiece; and oxen at one pound and one pound ten shillings. In those earlier times, too, they were exposed to the attacks of the natives; and many a bloody skirmish has the Australian forest witnessed—many a station burned, and its inmates all murdered. Many a scene of fierce retaliation, too, have these wildernesses beheld. The sturdy squatters, part of a determined and dominant race, which

has spread itself over the world from the north to the south, from the east to the west, everywhere subduing the aboriginal tribes to its authority, or driving them before it — these hardy fellows mustered on horseback, and, getting together in a clanship of extermination, have more than paid back the bloody deeds of the natives. The black fellows have thus constantly retreated before the white fellows, till now, as the flocks and herds of the squatters have increased to millions, and tens of millions, they have advanced over the Murray, far northward, over the Yanko, the Billibong, the Edward, and the Darling, and will, assuredly, not stop till they pass over the Burdekin and the Alligator, and reach the utmost north, and gaze from their rivers over the ocean from Cape York and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The blacks have learned the irresistible power of the British race; the wild dogs have died by thousands, from the strychnine to which they have treated them; and the squatters now, for the most part, lead an easy, peaceful life, — growing wealthy by merely allowing their creatures to pasture at their will. You may say of most of them, as the Scripture says of the patriarch Isaac, “The man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great. For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants.” Many of them still live in those homely slab huts, though they have, in numerous instances, introduced books, pianos, and other evidences of civilized and refined life. Many, again, have built themselves stately mansions, and purchased, as the law allows them, more or less of their runs, so that they may never be rooted quite out of them. They can only purchase, at

the least, six hundred and forty acres, or a square mile; but they have the privilege of purchasing more, or all of their run, at the upset price of one pound per acre. Thus they can, for a trifling sum, obtain what in England would be considered a fine estate.

These things have created a great jealousy in the public mind, as population has increased; and there is now a great outcry to break up the squatting system, and sell the lands to the highest bidders. Yet long, very long, must it be before the vast tracts of these forests will cease to be the solitary retreats of the squatters and their ranging herds and flocks, if ever. And even when cultivation advances up from the sea-coasts towards their now obscure haunts, they or their children will still advance northward into new regions equally adapted to their life and purposes, and there will continue the squatter and the present form of bush-life.

Meantime, the squatters — they seem to glory in the name — are become the real aristocracy of the country. They are, most frequently, very wealthy, possessing their twenty thousand and forty thousand sheep, besides cattle and horses. It is to the sheep stations of two of these lords of the wilderness that I mean now to conduct you.

The head station, as it is called, where the family resides, may be one of the primitive huts, or it may be a handsome stone, brick, or timber mansion, with its ample gardens and vineyards; but, be it which it will, there are, besides these, huts, or out-stations, in different parts of the run, where one or more shepherds live, and have a hut-keeper to cook and keep the house in order for them. At the chief station there are, most frequently,

the master and mistress and their family, with a cook, a bullock-driver, and often an overseer. Here, then, there is some little society. But at the out-stations a profounder solitude prevails. There, if there be two or more shepherds, they go out with their flocks at day-break, and remain each of them with his flock, in different parts of the forest, only returning at night, to camp their flocks near the house, and to spend the night in the hut.

Each shepherd generally has charge of a flock of from one thousand to fifteen hundred sheep. In some instances, if the country be pretty open, and free from wild dogs, a shepherd will take care of from two to three thousand. And how lonely and monotonous is the life of these men! From day to day, from year to year, they wander through the same forest with their flocks, with no human creature, for the greater portion of the time, to exchange an idea with. Few of these shepherds are married. They are lonely beings, without connections, without any stirring interests or hopes; and many of them go mad from the effects of this lonely life. In their old age they wander off, possessed by some strange fancy, and perish in the bush. We met a very singular specimen of these shepherds, of whom my father has told you; and we saw and heard of numbers of others who had thus become insane.

But I must not dwell upon this melancholy side of the picture. I must give the more cheerful view of the home station. At one such, on the great Goulburn plains, we spent a month or more. It was at the station of a gentleman that I shall call Mr. Fairleigh. The gentleman had several other stations, both in Victoria

and Sydney, on the Yanko and the Billibong. He had lately built himself a house quite away from the business of the station, and this hut was now the abode of his overseer. Nay, at that time it was the abode of three, two of whom were come from distant stations to assist in the great annual event of sheep washing and shearing, and then conduct the flocks to new grounds. So we heard, in the evening, by the great wood fire, endless talk of the adventures of sheep and cattle hunting in the bush and amongst the mountains, the details of which were to us novel and interesting.

This station stood, as I have said, on a plain of scores of miles in extent every way except one, where we could see the long granite ranges showing themselves over the tops of the forest. In other directions I believe you might go on for fifty, nay, for hundreds on hundreds of miles, and find still the same plain, and all the same evergreen Eucalyptus-trees. It was a country in which you might soon lose yourself, from its sameness; and we were told of shepherds that had wandered with their flocks till they had nearly, and in some cases utterly, perished by hunger. To me there was something fearful in the idea of these vast, monotonous wilds, from which, every now and then, some dreamy shepherd emerged with his flock, which he brought up to be washed and shorn. Where the solitary huts of these men were situated I never knew, for I never visited any of them; and nobody did seem to visit them, except the overseers, who rode away, sometimes to one, and sometimes to another, for a day, and the man who each week took them their rations in a cart.

These rations consist of ten pounds of flour, twelve

pounds of meat, a quarter of a pound of tea, two pounds of sugar, and a certain quantity of tobacco, for the week, each man. It is a diet as monotonous as the life itself. No milk, no vegetables, no butter ; but the eternal mutton, tea, and damper — an unleavened cake which they bake in the ashes.

The station itself, notwithstanding the levelness of the country, was, to my eye, pleasantly situated. It stood about fifty yards from the bank of a considerable stream, which, for a wonder, ran the whole summer through. Near the stream the grass was green, and the trees, more thinly scattered, were of that gigantic species of red gum called swamp-gum, from its love of growing by water. Here and there some gigantic specimen of this tree had fallen across the stream, and made a bridge to the other bank. Fish abounded in this stream, and tortoises, which I used to amuse myself in endeavoring to catch. But the tortoises I pursued in vain. At the first glance of me they sunk, like so many stones, to the bottom of the water, and were seen no more, while any one was in sight. There were, also, quantities of crayfish, blue as steel, and armed with prickles down each side of their tails, but still very good eating. Many a pleasant day have I spent in fishing on the banks of that stream.

There were hundreds of warbling crows and laughing jackasses all about ; and there were two sorts of birds which I always still connect in idea with that place, whenever seen. One was a small bird, which had a simple note, but something so wild, so sweet and musical, in it, that I was never weary of hearing it. And there it was, up in those tall, huge trees, by the stream, from the earliest peep of day till night, singing its

“Away, away we go! away, away we go!” I have heard the same bird in many other places, but it never had the complete song which these birds had.

Then there were numbers of that beautiful bird the magpie-lark, like a soft, gentle, and most delicate black-and-white dove. O! so gentle and lovely it seemed, and so tame, that it would sit upon the low boughs till you were close up to it, and come walking on the banks of the stream, just by you, without any fear, crying, ever and anon, “Chain, chain, chain!” in a ringing, metallic tone, that could be heard very, very far off. I found a nest of these, with fledged young ones; and had I been coming home, I should have liked to try to rear them, and bring them over.

The station consisted of a number of rude slab huts, covered with sheets of the bark of the gum-trees, which were held on by ties of bullock-hide. There was the chief hut, having two rooms in front, each with a huge, wide, open fireplace, made of slabs of wood, lined with slabs of granite up as high as there was any danger of the fire burning the wood. The floors were of mud, and the walls of slab had cracks that you might put your hands through; but still, in that warm summer weather, it was all very home-like and comfortable. The furniture consisted of the most rustic chairs and a table. The knives, forks, spoons, tea-pot, and everything, — and there was no superfluity of utensils, — were just as primitive. Close by was another hut, inhabited by a man who united the trades of carpenter and butcher; and in the yard behind stood the kitchen, stables, and other offices. There were numbers of dogs about the house, which were never permitted to come into it, —

they never are at these stations, — but lay at night under the spacious veranda in front. There were also plenty of cocks and hens, and cats and kittens; so there was a good deal of life of one sort or another.

Just below, too, stood one of the shepherd's huts, and across the stream at some little distance a new township was laid out by government, and there were three or four huts already upon it. On the other bank of the stream, too, lay a large garden, or rather what had been a garden, for Mr. Fairlegh had taken up the vines, and all the young fruit-trees that would bear transplanting, and conveyed them to his garden at his new house, some miles off. Yet there remained here and there a vine-stock, putting out most vigorous shoots amidst the rank weeds which had sprung up, as if determined to flourish and produce grapes in the desolation of the place. There were peach-trees, and quince-trees, all hung with loads of fruit, but still quite green. And what marvellous quinces grow in this country! as large as good-sized decanters, and of the most beautiful yellow; and what marmalade they make! There were roses, too, and larkspurs, and lilies, and scarlet and crimson verbenas, all flourishing amongst the weeds and bushes. How beautiful they looked! I think I never saw garden-flowers flourish so well, nor look so brilliant, as they do here. There were beautiful huge red stocks. They were above a yard high, with sturdy stems, like shrubs, and with wonderful masses of glowing flowers. And there were sweet scabiousses, my father's favorite flowers, large and splendid, and which had scattered their seeds all outside the garden, and seemed as though they would soon become denizens of the forest.

All these lovely flowers were growing there, though nobody seemed to notice them but us; and we used to walk over to the fig-tree, that made the only passage to the garden across the creek, and bring great bouquets of them to regale our senses in the hut. There were such beautiful bird's nests there, too, in the rose-bushes and the wild bushes that were growing up! For, do you know, that although the garden was still fenced in with posts and rails from the forest, the overseers there did not take the trouble to cultivate it! They might have had the most abundant crops of fruit, and vegetables of all kinds, — of pumpkins, melons, water-melons, and all those delicious things which are so charming and refreshing in the hot summer. But these overseers and shepherds seem to lose all care about such things, and they are from one year's end to another eating their tough mutton-chops, and their tough beef-steaks, and damper, and drinking their tea without milk and with the coarsest brown sugar, which they prefer, as if potatoes, cabbages, peas, beans, and all these things, were not worth a thought!

Thus this splendid garden was left a wilderness, and the hens went and laid their eggs in the concealment of the thick bushes and the grass, and came out marching about with such flocks of chickens as you never saw. And there, too, some one had tethered his horse, to eat up the quantities of grass and clover and lucerne which sprung up, just as if they thought the ground ought to be occupied with something, and if potatoes and turnips did not do it, they would.

I used to spend many a pleasant hour in a nook which was all hung over with honeysuckles, — real English

honeysuckles, all in flower, and breathing over me a perfect cloud of honeyed fragrance; but there was one thing that used to disturb me in my garden, as it did Adam and Eve in theirs, and that was — a snake. This nuisance had made his den under a quantity of fallen branches close to the gate, and used to be out basking close to it; and whenever I went up he glided away under the boughs, but so near that Prin could see him, and was sure to begin and bark furiously at him. I did not like the neighborhood of this fellow, for every now and then, like Phinny Dyson, I used to hear “rustlings and glidings” in the thick bushes close to my honeysuckle bower, and expected that it was this lurking villain. But, if it were, I never could get sight of him; and, with all my watchings and endeavors, I never, to the last, could get a blow at the rogue. He still glided away from the bank by the garden-gate at my approach, and to the last moment he was there under the sticks, as if watching to give me a sting.

It was now the busy part of the squatter's year — washing and shearing time. There were some dozens of men now about the place, — some of them sheep washers, some shearers. They all lived in the huts in the yard, and seemed to congregate chiefly in the kitchen, night and morning and noon, when they were there at their meals. There was a continual clamor, din, and laughter. Their jokes and horse-play were of the roughest kind. At night they used to send the rum-bottle briskly round, and then, indeed, there was a bawling, a hooting, a singing, a laughing, a swearing, and a quarrelling! Sometimes it came to downright fighting, when on all such occasions Prin used to think it his

duty to rush out and seize one or other of the combatants by the leg. Ever and anon there was a wild cry; "O! the dog! the dog! take off the dog!" and Prin generally succeeded in putting an end to the fray, taking care to make his retreat again into our hut before any one could strike him with a stick, or with a volley of stones, — which, however, were sure to pursue him.

It was wonderful for what a length of time these fellows — some of whom were old convicts, come over from Sydney, or Van Diemen's Land — could exist on a very flat and stale joke. One such joke, uttered amid uproars of merriment, would be iterated again and again and again, fifty times in the day, for a fortnight, and never in their eyes seem worn out. The cry of "O! the dog! the dog! take off the dog!" was thus set up amid shouts of laughter for weeks after it first occurred.

Ever and anon there came men who were going up or down the country, and took up their quarters for the night there. It is the custom of the bush, where there is no inn, for all travellers to go, without ceremony, to the first station they can find, and expect food and lodging. This has, of late years, been so burdensome to some squatters, that they have had inns licensed near them. But here there was no inn, and it was wonderful what a number of people came to the station and were entertained, and what a strange medley they were.

Some were settlers themselves, or overseers, going after lost cattle, or to town on business; and these came into the chief hut, and were our associates at table. The common class of fellows all instinctively took themselves off to the huts in the yard, and joined the roystering crew already there. They had generally some news;

or, if not, they could invent some, or vamp up old news in a new dress, and this made them welcome to the rest. There were shepherds, drovers, diggers, and, not seldom, well-known bush-rangers, with pistol and knife in belt, and with good steeds, which they, without any asking, turned into the adjoining paddock. These fellows would ask what there was in the pot; and, if it did not suit them, dictate a more savory repast, which was forthwith prepared, if possible. Often these fellows would produce a bottle of first-rate rum, which they dealt freely round to fuddle and set the men talking, by which means they could pump out of them who had money, and where it was; and probably, at daybreak the next morning, the money and the visitors were missing together.

We often asked why they allowed all sorts of people to come there, and make free quarters; but they asked us what they were to do. Where were people to go, who were travelling without drays or tents? If they offended these men, they might visit them in a different fashion, or ride off their horses from the bush.

“But,” we said, “you don’t seem to fear bush-rangers. You sleep every night without a lock or a bolt to any door; any one could walk in and ‘stick you up’ at their pleasure.”

“No, not quite so,” they replied; “nobody could approach the place without a fierce alarm from the dogs, and we always have fire-arms at hand. The bush-rangers here seldom rob the squatters. It is not their interest to rouse them too much; for they know all the nooks and hiding-places of the bush, and, once their blood up, would soon scour the whole country, and burn out these vermin.”

“ But don't the squatters get a marauding visit occasionally ? ”

“ O, yes ; once in a while. There were our neighbors, the Darlots, up amongst the hills yonder, had such a visit last year about this time. Their washing-place and wool-shed are two miles above the house ; and one day, as all the men were up there, about noon, on a splendid summer day, up rode three men, leaped from their horses at the door, and marched in. There were Mrs. Darlot, and her sister, Miss Sinclair, and a maid-servant, in the house. That was all. They were rather alarmed at the sight of these men, for they walked into the room where they were sitting without saying a word. They were dressed much as settlers, — had jack-boots, strong riding-trousers, cabbage-tree hats, bottle-green loose coats with velvet collars, a good deal dashed, as with riding daily through the forest through sun and storm. Spurs and riding-whips they all had, as if they were every day horsemen. One of them was a little, thin man, with gibbous shoulders, almost amounting to a hump-back. He had a pale, thin visage, his cheeks sunken upon the high cheek-bones, and a narrow chest, which seemed to heave as if he were asthmatic, and breathed with difficulty. His hair was thin, and black and oily, and his thin but prominent nose, his pale gray eyes, and his mouth, which had a muscular, and, as it were, acrid expression, all struck the spectator with the feeling of a feeble but determined fellow, one whose pistol supplied the place of physical vigor, and in whom there was the spirit of the tiger — smooth, but not genial, cruel and cold.

“ This man was dressed in top boots and blue coat



MRS. DARLOT'S VISITORS.



with gilt buttons; and he had on his head a cap like that of a military officer.

“Mrs. Darlot, after a minute’s overpowering surprise, said, ‘Gentlemen, do you want Mr. Darlot?’

“‘No, ma’am,’ replied the little, distorted man, with a voice which seemed to require an effort to heave from his asthmatical chest, ‘we don’t want Mr. Darlot at all. It is because we know that he and all his men are at the sheep-wash that I and my friends here have agreed to pay our respects to you ladies.’

“‘Lord have mercy on us!’ exclaimed Mrs. Darlot. ‘What do you mean?’

“‘Pray don’t alarm yourself, madam,’ continued the little man, his two great, strong, hairy companions standing close together between them and the door, and looking on. ‘Pray don’t be alarmed. We mean no harm, madam, whatever; but we have occasion for a little money, and we wish to obtain it in a quiet way. I love quiet, madam. Do you?’

“Mrs. Darlot’s tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, and refused to answer.

“‘I see you do,’ observed the man, with a wintry smile,—one of those smiles that have frost in them, not sunshine. ‘I see you do; so we need not say more on that head, but proceed to business. Be so good, madam, as to open your escrutoire, and hand us the money which Mr. Darlot deposited there on Thursday last, the proceeds of the sale of the Breadalbane sheep-station.’

“‘Lord have mercy!’ said Mrs. Darlot, now recovering her speech in astonishment. ‘But that will be of no use to you. It is all in bills.’

“‘That is unfortunate,’ replied the man; ‘but let me see them. Perhaps we can negotiate them.’

“Mrs. Darlot was compelled to open the desk, and give him the papers. The little man then said, ‘Excuse me, madam, if I take a seat a moment.’ He proceeded to lay down his hat and whip and gloves on the table; then very coolly opened the papers, examined the bills, their dates, time to run, and their indorsements. ‘These are not bad bills, madam. They have already passed through a good many hands. One signature more can create no suspicion. Your husband has accepted them, I see. Yes, that is his hand; very good — I am glad to have his autograph. I think all is easy,’ said he, turning to his two burly companions, who only muttered, ‘Very good.’ And then saying to Mrs. Darlot, ‘They are all here; seven thousand pounds in amount, I see. So far, well; but there is, no doubt, a little ready cash in the desk. — O! pardon me, madam; do not trouble yourself to look. I will take that trouble off your hands. Pray be seated, madam. Yes,’ seeing Mrs. Darlot hesitate, as unwilling to allow him to examine the desk. ‘I beg, — I *insist*,’ added he, in a tone and with a manner meant to be polite, but which gave her the horror that the hissing of a serpent would. Mrs. Darlot sunk upon a chair, and the little, shrivelled man systematically opened every drawer in succession, — here taking out a quantity of sovereigns, there turning over a mass of papers, and closing the drawer again. At length he took out a gold watch and chain, and eyed it with a most satisfied smile. Mrs. Darlot groaned at the sight of the wretch dropping it into his waistcoat-pocket; on which the man said, with a bow, ‘I am quite distressed,

madam, at the pain you evince ; but what are such baubles to you, in the bush ? If you know the time, that is enough ; and here is an old hunting-watch ; it has seen a good deal of wear. I had it from an honest settler, the other day, in — but no matter where. It seems admirable in its keeping of time. There, I put it in the place of this. Mr. Darlot will find it just as useful to him ; and this will be infinitely more useful to me. A mutual advantage — eh, madam ?' And with this he smiled again a pallid, wintry smile.

“‘It grieves me,’ then added he, ‘but I must trouble you, madam, to accompany me to the next room. You have some very nice jewels there, — very nice, that is, for the bush. Not such as I have seen and handled in L—— ; but no matter ; not such as those of great people, in great, wealthy capitals, but very nice nevertheless. Let us go.’

“Mrs. Darlot rose up mechanically, — she dared do no other, — and Miss Sinclair rose too. ‘O, pray, madam, be seated,’ said he to Miss Sinclair. ‘We need not disturb you. Pray remain here.’

“But Miss Sinclair cast a hurried look at Mrs. Darlot, and then at the two grim mutes by the door, and said, ‘O ! do, pray, sir, let me go too.’

“‘O ! if you wish it, certainly. I am only too much honored by your company ;’ and he bowed a very low bow, accompanied by another icy smile. The three proceeded to the next room, where the man walked up to Mrs. Darlot’s drawers, asked for her keys, unlocked the very one where her jewel-case was, took it out, opened it to see that all was right, dropped it coolly into the open outer pocket of his coat, and said, ‘Now, madam,

I have done. Excuse me, but necessity has no law. But, ah! you have a piano here. How delightful! O! my soul perfectly thirsts for music. You play, of course!’

“‘No, sir,’ replied Mrs. Darlot, ‘I do not.’

“‘Your sister, then. Miss Sinclair, be so good as to take your seat at the piano. You will extremely oblige me.* Nay, do not blush;’ for Miss Sinclair’s heart swelled with indignation at the idea of being compelled to play to a thief, and, as she believed, a murderer. But there was no alternative. Her indignation had flushed, suddenly, her brow; she now again grew as pale, and placed herself at the instrument. ‘Would you oblige me,’ said the robber, ‘by playing that fine overture of Meyerbeer to *Il Roberto Diavolo*?’ Miss Sinclair played a portion of it with great spirit; her still inwardly-boiling blood gave spirit and fire to her fingers. ‘Bravo! bravo!’ cried the enraptured man. ‘Miss Singleton, — Sinclair, I mean, — you play divinely. Ah! what a luxury! what an enjoyment! That was a delight I once revelled in; but an exile, — a pursued and persecuted wretch like me, — what enormous, inexpressible sacrifices he must make!’ The man of ice and asthma sighed, and sighed deeply. ‘But you sing too, Miss Sinclair — you sing. Nay, I know you do. I recollect, now, that I have heard so. Well, but time flies — we must go; but ere we part just sing us that simple, wild, fine, but now somewhat hackneyed song of Miss Eliza Cook’s, — “I’m afloat! I’m afloat!”’

“Miss Sinclair again obeyed, her heart swelling with

* A fact.

even stronger indignation at thus being compelled to sing under terror, and to a base bush-ranger.

“‘Gad! but that is fine, too, Miss Sinclair — gloriously, divinely sung! Alas! that it must be heard no more!’ And again the frosty-looking manikin heaved a deep and sentimental sigh, casting, at the same time, his eye on a handsome gold watch which the young lady wore at her side, suspended by a valuable chain. ‘I did intend, Miss Sinclair, to have entreated the loan of that handsome watch and chain, but I will *give* it to you in recompense for the delight you have afforded me. Your voice, madam, will often ring in my ears, and in my heart,’ — laying his hand pathetically on his narrow, heaving chest, — ‘often, often, when I am in the wilderness; and perhaps when — but no matter. Mrs. Darlot, would you be good enough to order up dinner? I saw that it was nearly ready as I passed by the kitchen;’ and, pulling out her husband’s gold watch, he added, ‘we have got a ten minutes or so to dispatch it.’

“The lady hastened to the kitchen, and ordered up the dinner, busying herself to expedite the arrangement, in the hope of being the sooner quit of the formidable guests. She longed and yet feared lest Mr. Darlot might come home to dinner; though he said that he should not, as he was overlooking the clipping and pressing of the wool. But, as she looked into the pot on the fire, the servant-girl came down to her, and said, ‘O, ma’am! the house is surrounded by robbers. I hastened out, in the hopes of getting away to alarm master and the shearers; but a man stepped from behind a tree, and bade me go back again. I went in another direc-

tion, and out came another horrid fellow from behind another tree, and bade me try that game no more.'

"At this an idea struck Mrs. Darlot. She cried out, 'Jane! Jane! run, fetch a fresh table-cloth and napkins; here, I will give them you.' With that she hastened into her bed-room, wrote on a slip of paper 'Robbers in the house!' gave the linen to Jane, and at the same time accompanied her to the kitchen, where, tying the paper under the throat of a large shepherd dog, where it was buried in his hair, she said, in a low but solemn tone, 'Fleetfoot! where's your master?' At this question the dog hurried out of the house, ran barking up the hill towards where some bullocks were grazing, and was permitted by the robber-sentinels to pass, they supposing that he was running to drive off the bullocks.

"Mrs. Darlot watched the dog's progress, — it required only a minute or two, — from her room window, and then feeling that all would be right, exerted herself more assiduously to prepare dinner. She condescended now to talk to the little, shrivelled leader; thanked him for not offering any violence, or using rude, surly language to them, complimented him on his taste in music, and said she supposed he had formed his taste in London.

"'I have been there, ma'am, it is true,' said the man, 'but some time ago. My taste has been formed in most of the capitals of Europe, and, had I been at liberty to consult it, it certainly would not have led me hither. But here I am, and — now the dinner!' said he, starting up as he saw the girl bring in a large covered dish. 'Here, mates,' he added, 'be seated.' The two rough fellows seated themselves mechanically at the lower end of the table. During dinner the little fellow became

very lively, and talked a great deal, continually, however, checking himself when about to utter, from his past recollections, news of different people or places. Then turning to Miss Sinclair, 'Well, Miss Sinclair, music has charms the savage breast to soothe, you see — and so has wine, too; this port is superb — for the bush,' he added as in a parenthesis; 'will you do me the honor to take wine with me?' Miss Sinclair did so, charitably hoping that his port might poison him; for she was naturally of a somewhat excitable temperament, and the more she thought of having been compelled to sing, the more she inwardly rebelled and swelled with indignation.

"Mrs. Darlot then ordered up more port, and set a bottle before each of the huge fellows at the bottom of the table, at the same time heaping their plates plentifully with roast beef and potatoes, and then with roast wood-duck and other delicacies. She most willingly took wine with the little manikin chief, and endeavored to keep him in conversation on his travels in various quarters of the world. All at once there was a noise outside. The next moment a huge head of black, shaggy hair, and a huge bearded and blackened face, appeared at the window, crying 'Treason! treason! here they are!'

"All started up in a moment. The ladies gave a shriek as of alarm; and it was no doubt alarm, mingled with strong hope of rescue. The fellows snatched their pistols from their belts and darted from the room, one of the huge, swarthy fellows dashing the half-emptied bottles of port on the table in mental rage as he went, making wild havoc amongst plates, dishes and glasses, and the manikin leader giving the ladies a look, as he

turned his back, which had in it the black and murderous fire of a fiend. Such a look it was as once seen is never forgotten. It comes back in dreams, in solitary places, in moments of doubt and danger, and makes the heart seem to shrink and stop. It is like that scowl upon the ocean ere a breath of air is felt, but which makes the captain shout, and men run and climb, and haul down canvas for their lives; for there is death and wreck hastening towards them as on lightning wing, and which can only be escaped by agility and quick presence of mind. The ladies hurried out to the door after the robbers, and saw them already mounted, and another batch of horsemen coming down the hill, and now close upon the house. Another glance showed them that it was the shearers, with Mr. Darlot at their head. 'Quick! quick!' he cried as he dashed up; 'my pistols! all arms! all arms that you can lay your hands on!' Away darted the ladies, the next moment appearing with pistols, guns, blunderbusses, and a great, old sword; these were snatched by the men in haste, and away they galloped after the robbers.

"Charles! Charles!" shouted Mrs. Darlot, in terror. She would have bade him be careful, but he and his attendants were gone, and were now galloping at fearless and headlong speed down the valley; the three women ran and climbed upon a huge mass of rock which stood just above the house, and gave a full view of the valley to where the hills met a quarter of a mile below, and left between them only a passage for the road and creek. As the robbers reached this pass, there was a sudden volley of fire-arms, which seemed to come out of the hill-sides on each hand. The robbers recoiled, and

would have turned to flee, but the pursuing troop were now just behind them, hurrying on with renewed cries and hurras. The next instant the women could see the robber-troop, some half-dozen in number, make a furious charge at the pass, firing right and left as they galloped into it. There was a second and hotter reply to them from the steeps of the defile, and the pursuers next dashed into it after them, and were lost to view. But still there came thence the sound of hurried shouting, the discharge of arms, the din of horses' hoofs on the hard, granite road. It was clear that a warm contest was going on.

“The three trembling women stood uttering ejaculations to Heaven for the safety of the pursuers, and at length saw a horseman issue from the pass, and make thitherward at full speed. It was Mr. Darlot, who came dashing up, crying, ‘Linen! linen for bandages! Quick! quick!’

“‘Gracious Heaven!’ exclaimed Mrs. Darlot, ‘what has happened? — are any of our people killed?’

“‘No! hope not,’ said Mr. Darlot, almost breathless with haste, ‘but one or two are severely wounded, and several of the villains are dead or dying. Two of them have escaped. But quick! quick! friend or foe, we must do what we can!’

“The next instant a heap of linen was brought out; he snatched it up, and away he galloped again. Soon after there were seen a group of people coming out of the pass, who seemed to be carrying some heavy weight, and as they came nearer it was perceived to be the bodies of wounded men, borne on litters formed of boughs and leaves. There were five of them. Two of

them proved to be shearers, and three bush-rangers. They were borne to a hut near, and there awaited the doctor, for whom two men had already ridden off.

“The ladies now learned from Mr. Darlot that when the dog arrived, and they discovered his message, fortunately a number of horses were not far off in the bush. These were instantly mounted, though there was only some rope to make halters for them, and no saddles except on the horses of Mr. Darlot and his overseers. Part of the shearers, under guidance of the two overseers, made all speed to secure the pass, and Mr. Darlot and his company hastened on to rouse the bush-rangers from the station; and the stratagem had succeeded as we have seen. Two bush-rangers were shot dead, and it was expected that one or two of the others were mortally wounded.

“‘But where is the captain?’

“‘What, that will-o'-the-wisp scoundrel?’ said Mr. Darlot. ‘Dead! dead as the fire-blasted gum-tree by which he lies. But what a demon was in him! How he dashed on his fiery horse! How he scowled and grinned as he discharged his pistols right and left, as he passed, at our men! How he seemed to fly rather than sit on his powerful horse, and spring over log and creek, and made his horse crash through the wattle scrub, as if neither trees, water nor fire, could stop him! But he was not destined to escape this time. A sure shot felled him to the earth; and how the writhing thief scowled and ground his teeth as we came up to him, as he lay twisting like a scotched snake! At the last moment he snapped his last barrel at me, but in the very instant his

head fell back, his arm quivered and fell, and the bullet struck fragments from the rock just by us.'

"' You say, this time he has not escaped. Has he ever done so before?' asked Mrs. Darlot.

"' Has he? A score of times, at least. What prison-walls have been able to hold him? The tree never grew which was to form his gallows. He has eluded bullet, rope and knife, time after time. That little crumpled carcass of his seemed as if it could pass through key-holes, clamber over the steepest and most dizzy roofs, and drop from any height unscathed. It was but a twelve-month ago that he escaped out of Liverpool prison; and there is five hundred pounds on his head, — a good booty for these trusty fellows here. People said he had made a bargain with the evil one. I am sure he was an evil one himself.'

"And with that Mr. Darlot named a name that made the two ladies shriek with horror, — horror at the recollection that they had been in the company and the power of a monster dyed in the blood of so many atrocious murders — of such diabolical deeds of cruelty. It was a name which had filled Europe with horror, and the abhorred bearer of which had been dogged through the continent, and over the vast regions of America, to this extremity of the globe, by the emissaries of retributive justice, — here to secure him, but not personally.

"The man was buried not far from where he fell, and there are few inhabitants of that neighborhood who care to pass that gloomy defile by night. There is a superstitious terror cast around the fearful bush-ranger's grave. It is said, however, that a gentleman of noble style and bearing, some few months after, inquired out the resting-

place of this abhorred mortal. He dropped words to some of the squatters, that the dead robber had once been an honest and a titled man, and possessed habits and tastes of the highest order ; but that a scorned and rejected love-suit had changed his very blood into gall and wormwood. The stranger raised a stone at the head of the grave inscribed with this sentence : ‘ Had Nature given him a comely, healthful body, would he have acquired so diseased and distorted a mind ? ’ ”

The wounded men all ultimately recovered.

Such were the stories which were told around the fire-side of the sheep-station of an evening. There were also tales of the skirmishes with the blacks in this neighborhood but a few years ago. They used to shoot down the shepherds in the bush, and make havoc amongst their flocks. On Dr. Mackie’s station we were told that they had killed several shepherds, and that one shepherd had run for his life all the way from Faithful Creek to the Goulborn, a distance of forty miles, and became blind and deaf for life in consequence. But the squatter Mackie galloped down from his station to Melbourne for a number of troopers, with whom, and the neighboring settlers, they scoured the bush, and effectually cleared the country of them. I have myself seen a gentleman, and a young one too, who was engaged in one of these last deadly encounters with the natives in these parts, and who shot several of them. You will find the account of the affray in the chapter on the Blacks.

But now all these things are over. The few remaining blacks are tame as the ’possums in the trees. The dingos, or wild dogs, too, are becoming few and far be-

tween. I have occasionally seen the carcasses of three or four sheep freshly killed by them lying in the bush; but these cases are rare. I have heard these animals on the hunt in the night, making a short, monotonous bark. "Wiff, wiff! Wuff, wuff! Wiff, wiff! Wuff, wuff!" the shriller "wiff, wiff," of the female being regularly answered by the deep bass voice of the male dog. I have heard them also making their wild howl in the bush near our tent, at which our dogs would bristle up, and rush out frantically; but they are so shy that we never see them.

One of the overseers at this station told us that one day, as he was riding in the ranges, he suddenly started a dingo in the scrub, and, being on horseback, and armed with a stock-whip, he gave chase to it. Ha! you should see a regular good stock-whip, which they use to collect and drive the cattle with. It has a very short handle, — not more, I suppose, than two feet, — and a heavy lash, tapering away to the finest point, of as many as six yards long. With this a stockman who has acquired the power of using it makes reports louder than the report of a pistol, and takes aim to such a nicety that he would cut you a piece out of a bullock at full gallop, both horse and bullock galloping, to an inch, at any spot you would name. A terrible instrument is the stock-whip, cutting where it falls like a knife, and making the blood follow like a bullet. Well, the overseer dashed after the wild dog, and in a furious chase over stock and stone, up hill and down, through creek and gully, at length literally cut the creature to pieces.

This is very cruel. But the dingo is cruel when he comes stealing upon the midnight flock in true wolfish

ferocity, killing and wounding all before him — not content to make a single prey, and therewith appease his hunger. Therefore the squatter wages deadly war against the wild dog.

But now a truce to adventures: “*revenons à nos moutons*” literally. This was, as I said, the lively time of the year. Day after day there came vast flocks of sheep rolling like a fleecy cloud over the ground, and sending before them the most plaintive cries, their shepherds following in silence with their dogs, and looking strange and dreamy, as if dazed by the everlasting silence of the woods. These flocks were conducted some distance up the creek above the station to the washing-place. This was a part of the creek of considerable depth and swiftness. At one side of it a large portion of the flock was driven into an enclosure of hurdles; a smaller portion then was driven, with much shouting and barking of dogs, into a smaller enclosure on the bank of the creek. The sheep seemed to be well aware of what awaited them, and hung back with all their power; but they were ever and anon forced off by a dozen or so at a time into the water, where a number of men, either from the banks, or from trees laid across the stream, or in the water, pushed them about, and repeatedly submerged them with forked poles, so that they were obliged to swim, and thus wash their fleeces.

In England each individual sheep is caught by a man on its being plunged into the water, and its fleece then squeezed, portion by portion, through his hands, so as to cleanse it. But here this would be an almost endless process, with such vast flocks. So they are thus pushed about, and when sufficiently washed are directed tow-

ards a man in the water, who seizes them successively, and pushes them under a beam that is only level with the surface of the water, so that they get a good final ducking, and then are allowed to swim out, a landing-place being made for them. Some of the sheep are so weak that if they are not well looked to they get drowned; and, indeed, I saw several drowned while I was looking on. The lambs meantime are allowed, on jumping in, to swim out without molestation. And the poor, devoted creatures, heavy with the water in their fleeces, struggle and flounder up the banks, and are generally so exhausted, that, on reaching the firm ground, they stand some time to recover themselves; then, giving themselves a good shake, sending the water on all sides, as a housemaid sends it out of her mop when she twirls it, they set off with lamentable bleatings, lambs in search of their dams, and ewes in search of their lambs. So it goes on from day to day; as one flock is driven off another comes up bleating from the woods. As soon as their fleeces are dry they are conducted to the shearing-shed. Here a number of men seize them one by one, turn them up on their sterns, and shear away at an amazing rate, being paid by number. As fast as the fleeces are separated they are rolled up and carried to a powerful press which stands near, and are there pressed down into strong canvas bags and stitched up, forming those large square bales that you see arrive from abroad at the docks in London.

The fleeces of this fine wool only weigh from about two and a half to three pounds each, and one of these bales is calculated to hold from two hundred and eighty to three hundred pounds; so that you see every

bale swallows up upwards of one hundred fleeces. These in a while are packed on stout drays and sent down by powerful teams of bullocks to Melbourne.

Such is the routine of shearing-time at a squatting station. All hands, master, overseers, men, are then on the alert. It is a great thing to get their shearing done before certain grasses ripen their seeds, which are like so many needles, and greatly injure the wool. For how is it to be sorted and manufactured full of these vegetable needles, which are so sharp that they not only enter the fleece but the flesh of the sheep, and pass often into their very lungs? It is equally desirable to anticipate the ripening of a certain small burr which gets into the fleeces, knots them, as it were, together, and thus spoils them for the cloth manufacturers.'

The people, therefore, are all up at peep of day, and, with the exception of breakfast and dinner time, work till the sun goes down. How well I seem to see overseers coming hurrying in to their breakfast, saying to one another, "Well, we put so many score through this morning," and "*we* have got so many score shorn;" while the cook, an odd, convict-looking fellow, — and he was from Sydney, too, — with his cat-like pace, and his low forehead and felon look, brought in his eternal dish of chops or steaks, and his huge tin tea-pot of tea; if he gave us a variety, it was a piece of roast or boiled beef, or a heavy, hard-boiled roll, called a dough-boy. That was his only grand deviation; and one day the hungry overseers were struck with consternation at his setting on the table a piece of old, cold, half-mouldy meat, saying, "While I turned my back somebody went into the kitchen and carried off the roast, — a piece of beef, —

dish and all!" It came out, afterwards, that he had himself sold it; and so he was sent to the right-about, but not before he had carried off one or two of our spoons and an umbrella. The overseers, in fact, always warned us not to let any of our knives, spoons, or such articles, get into the kitchen, for they would never reappear; and for that reason they only used such as were not very valuable.

Well, I remember the time spent at that station, our rambles in the woods, our fishing in the stream, our evening talks of all the wild life of cattle-hunting, and home gathering in the mountains, and our watching the busy coming and going, washing and shearing, of the thousands on thousands of sheep. At any other season there must be a great stillness, however, about a sheep-station; and yet the squatters get very much to like the bush life. They enjoy the bondlessness—the uncramped, unfenced bondlessness. Their rapid rides, and freedom from all the conventionalities of society, have charms which soon rivet their attachment to this solitary existence; and when, having grown rich, they sometimes "go home," as they call it,—that is, to England,—it is asserted that in most instances they soon sicken of Europe's crowded scenes, and return with joy to their old woods and wilds. "Isolated," says an Australian writer, "on some expanded plain, sequestered in the mountain glens, or buried in the depths of the forest, the small community which is grouped together at the homestead passes weeks, and even months, without communication or intelligence with the rest of the world. The respective squatting establishments, dotted over the

country at intervals of five or ten miles apart, are generally hid by some intervening obstacle from one another."

Yet this, perhaps, only renders the intercourse of these ten-mile neighbors the more lively when they do meet; and we know that there are neighborhoods where a number of intelligent families make up a delightful circle, enjoying at each other's houses books, music, and other refined pleasures of social existence.

We visited another sheep-station for a short time up amongst the mountains. The picturesque stock-hut of the settler stood on a fine elevation, with sloping grassy expanses around, descending to a considerable creek, and beyond that again the forest, and a wide and circling range of mountains. You will see this hut sketched by our friend the painter. It was now the end of summer, and the garden, which in spring is said to be gorgeous with its flowers, of which its mistress is extremely fond, was now burnt up by the long drought. The very shrubs in it stood so withered that you would believe that they never could recover. Lower on the slope, however, and adjoining the creek, was a garden abounding with the most delicious fruits, — peaches, nectarines, apricots, grapes, and whole roods of ground were covered with melons of various descriptions, and especially the fine, refreshing water-melon. The tuons (the great flying opossums) and the climbing opossums had anticipated us a good deal in the destruction of the peaches. But the grapes were in wonderful profusion. There was one tree which from the frame to which it was tied had sent out its shoots for many yards round, covering a large expanse of ground; and yet, though thus neglected, it hung with some hundred-weights of the most magnifi-

cent bunches of sweet-water grapes imaginable. You may be sure I paid diligent visits to that tree. Jonas Popkins, whom we met on the way, coming from Melbourne also, came and spent a day there. Meeting him in the afternoon, at some distance in the wood, I said, "Jonas, don't you get some of those fine grapes? Mr. — bids us not to spare them."

"Why, the truth is," said Jonas, "I have made three attacks on that tree, and to such effect that I believe I have eaten a bucket-full; and I am now taking a little rest to recover myself, preparatory to another and final attack."

Jonas had been laboring at the splendid old vine in a very quiet and unostentatious manner. By the by, he added, too, "I ate so many peaches, that, looking down, I saw at my feet quite a little mountain of stones; and I was so frightened that I threw them all into the creek, and hurried out of the garden, half afraid somebody might have seen my veracity."

"Voracity, Jonas!"

"Well, it is all one. But I must really have a good walk."

"Come along, then," I said, "for I hear wood-ducks up the creek here." And we had such a chase after them, that Jonas could not only make another vigorous visit to the vine, but dispatched a quarter of a roast wood-duck to his supper. "That wood-duck, Jonas," said I, "has no empty-rheumatic taste, I think."

"None," said Jonas; "none, not in the least."

This I said in a joke, in consequence of Phinny Dyson once having said that the roast had got an empyreumatic taste in the camp-oven. And this fine word Jonas had

immediately seized on, and changed in his usual way to empty-rheumatic, which became a phrase amongst us when the meat was burnt.

“Good-by,” said Jonas, the next morning. “And I wish,” he added, going off, “we may meet again at no worse place than a sheep-station, especially if there be plenty of melons and grapes.”

To which I said, “Amen.”

WHITE HILLS, *near Bendigo.*

THE DIGGINGS.

If I were to say nothing about the Diggings in this country, it would be like players acting the play of Hamlet, — or *Hamilton*, as that crazy old shepherd whom we saw the other day called it, — and leaving out the part of Hamlet. Yes, that poor old shepherd said that besides Burns' poems he had read *Hamilton* and *Macbeth*.

Everybody knows that the gold was discovered in Sydney in May, 1851, and soon after a nugget, then sticking out of the ground on the top of a quartz rock, of one hundred and six pounds' weight. What a stir this news made all over the world! In August of the same year gold was also found in Victoria, in great quantities, and the stir all over the world grew greater and greater. Before long the stir was so great, that if anybody could have raised themselves above the surface of the globe, they might have seen what one often sees in a wood, only on a larger scale, — long, black, and never-ending files of ants moving from all quarters towards their great nest; do what you would to these, — sweep them away, pour water on them, or put some barrier in their way, — it

was all to no purpose ; on they or others would go, just in the same swarms, on, and on, and on, to the great centre of attraction.

Well, I say, if one could have stood up aloft above the globe, as I heard a gentleman say one day, we should see the same kind of thing ; all the nations of the world going, going, going towards this land of gold, and we who are in it see them coming, coming, coming, as if they never would stay. From all nations of Europe, Englishmen, Scotchmen, Welshmen, Irishmen, Dutchmen, Swedes, Danes, Poles, Hungarians, but chiefly French and Germans, mingled with Italians and Swiss, have been changed by the magic wand of expectation into these gold-ants, which ceaselessly traverse the globe to this southern Eldorado. Californians leave their land of gold, Americans from every state of the Union, colonists from Canada, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, march off, and fall into these eager lines of life which extend over the convexity of our planet. Natives of New Zealand, boors and citizens from the Cape of *Good Hope*, negroes from America and the West Indies, fall into them, inspired with what seems to me a *Better* hope. Coolies from India, Lascars, Malays, and swarms of Chinese, those men who have been unchanged for ages, are changed just as rapidly into *gold* ants as any of the sons of Europe. All these human ants are seen streaming up the country through the Eucalyptus forest to the various fields of gold,—Balaarat, Mount Alexander, Bendigo, Mount Korong, Jones' Creek, the Goulborn, and the Ovens.

We have been to many of these gold-fields ourselves, and what I have written above is perfectly true. There

is a regular Babel of tongues there. Jonas Popkins said with justice that a new language would some day be discovered in Australia,—a universal tongue, called the *Polyglot*. And all people are equal at the gold-fields: the Chinese fears here no cruel mandarin, watching to squeeze him for his gold; the negro grins merrily, and laughs and sings his chirpy, jolly song, freer even than if he were in Africa.

Now, as to the sort of country in which the gold lies, I will copy something which my father has written down for me, as he can do it better than I could.

When you have made your way some eighty, or a hundred, or, it may be, two hundred miles, through the great Eucalyptus forest, through a country yet without roads or bridges, but plentifully supplied with morasses, quagmires, rough regions strewn with rocks, and deep, precipitous gulleys and streams, you come to some barren region, where the ground generally seems burnt by past fires, and where the low, swelling elevations of the landscape are thinly scattered with white quartz, as with a sprinkling of snow, with huge granite masses protruding on a ferruginous sandstone, running edgewise in direct lines from north to south; where the gum-trees on the swells give way to the stringy-bark and the black and deeply-ploughed iron-bark trees, and where the ground, ceasing to yield grass, but only everlastings and prickly shrubs, yet is in spring adorned with frequent flowers; there you suddenly find a space cleared of its trees, and for miles the earth turned up in chaotic heaps, while white tents stand in scattered array on each side of this bald opening in the bush. There the gold-ants have been at work. It is precisely, indeed, as if enor-

mous ants had there made a vast city of their hillocks. All over this bared space, but generally running more in lines along the valleys, and the lesser hollows which go off right and left, huge heaps of yellow clay, yellow gravel, intermingled with still greater heaps of a white sandy clay, and white pure pipe-clay, meet the eye. When you arrive amongst these, you find all between the heaps the earth is bored more or less deep with holes like wells, and pits, and graves; some round, some square, some oblong; some five, some ten, some fifty, some a hundred feet deep. Miles of these confused heaps and hollows present themselves, which have been rifled of their contents, and are again abandoned. Others that have been worked out, but where diggers are again shovelling up the earth that has been thrown out in times of eager and headlong pursuit of nuggets, and what are called "great hauls" of gold. This earth they are putting through the cradle, or the long-Tom, at the next creek, and getting more or less gold. Others are seeking out between these heaps, in places which made a good yield, spaces that have not yet been dug up, — spaces which were buried under the earth thrown out, — and sometimes they come upon good bottoms. Thousands on thousands of these holes you see filled with water, or huge masses of their sides tumbling in, till the whole expanse is a scene of indescribable chaos; nature being already at work endeavoring to restore the earth to that ancient level which the gold-ants have destroyed.

All the ground where the diggers are still working is scattered with huge trunks of trees, which the diggers invariably fell, either to prevent their falling on them when they are undermined, or to supply them with fuel.

All around stand the stumps, yard-high, from which these huge trunks have been sawn. Where unbroken ground remains, from nothing having been found on it, you see numbers of dried bullocks' heads and feet, sheep's heads and feet, sheep-skins, and pieces of bullock-hides, all decaying, and half trodden into the ground; besides these there are rough stones of quartz, white as snow, or burnt quartz and iron-stone of a dusky red, with withered leaves, prostrate trees, and the foundations of tents now taken away, generally defined by a square of tree-trunks, to which the bottom of the tent has been tacked, or by a square marked out with a trench, and the area and neighborhood plentifully scattered with the remnants of worn-out clothes and hats.

When you ascend the hills you again find diggers at work. Here their holes generally amount to real mines. They are from fifty to a hundred feet deep. Here they have windlasses to ascend and descend by, as well as to draw up their stuff. Here they excavate the hills at that depth, driving tunnels as far as their neighbors will let them, and clearing out all the space that they can obtain of the gold-impregnated stratum. Some of these hills here are thus excavated for miles, and one so completely so, that the other day the whole hill cracked right across, from one end to the other, with an explosion like thunder, the fissure descending from top to bottom; when all the miners emerged from their pits, like rabbits from their burrows when they are invaded by the ferret. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

The hills here are called the White Hills, from the mass of white sandy stuff which is now thrown out upon them; and they are seven in number, forming a

continuous chain. Their appearance is strange. Their sides, all bare of trees, have been industriously bored by the miners, exhibiting heaps of yellow clay and gravel thrown out, while along the summits rise continuous heaps — immense heaps, ten or twelve feet high — of the white clayey sand which lies contiguous to the gold stratum, and of pipe-clay, which lies under it. Here and there amongst them rises an abode, half tent, half hut, with a wooden or bullock-hide chimney; while projecting windlasses, and here and there a blasted, leafless tree, or bole deprived of its head, and a road winding up the ascent, complete the scene.

If you descend from the hills to the creek, there you find a busy scene. There the diggers are washing the stuff containing the gold in cradles, or long-Toms. There are scores of them, often hundreds, at work, occupying the whole banks of the stream. You have seen lithographs of the diggings, and know the aspect of this scene, the costume of the diggers, and the form of their cradles. The costume of the digger is generally a blue or scarlet woollen jumper, mostly worn as a shirt; a pair of moleskin or corduroy trousers, well stained with the yellow clay; hats, often huge waterproof ones, and broad-brimmed, cabbage-tree hats, or drab or green wide-awakes. Exactly behind their backs they have a butcher's knife at their waist, in a leathern case, called a fossicking-knife, to pick out nuggets, and scrape the bottom of their holes.

The mode in which they wash their gold in the cradles is this: One man generally fills the hopper, or square box at top, which is usually about four inches deep, and has a bottom of sheet iron, punched full of

holes, or is made of hooping iron laid crosswise, with washing-stuff. If it be dry stuff, it has previously been well worked in a tub of water, called a puddling-tub, so as to dissolve the earth from the gold, and enable the stuff to pass easily through the cradle. The hopper filled, the man at the cradle rocks it gently, at the same time stirring the earth about in the hopper with a stick, while the other man pours water upon it with a tin at the end of a stick, called a bailer. When all the earth is washed from the stones, these are thrown out, and the process is repeated till a certain quantity has been passed through, when the cradler stops, takes out the hopper, and draws out the slanting slide beneath it. This slide slants backwards, to carry all that passes through the hopper down in that direction; but at the bottom of the slide there stands a ledge, an inch or so high, against which the gold lodges, while the mud and water pass out into the bottom of the cradle, and are, for the most part, washed away. There are, however, in the bottom of the cradle two or three other ledges, so as to detain any particles of gold that may chance to pass the ledge of the slide.

The gold and the small quantity of gravel which lie against the ledge of the slide are now scraped away into what is called a riddle,—a tin dish, with the bottom full of holes, like a cullender,—when the gold is again washed through, and separated from the gravel which has gone through the hopper. This gold in the dish remains there till a considerable number of these deposits is added, when they are washed by a peculiar circular motion, and the mud and gravel gradually separated from the gold, which remains clean and bright in the dish;

and happy is the digger to see a good deal there! The gold now only wants drying over a gentle heat, and is then put into wash-leather bags or purses, ready for market.

That is the process with the cradle. A long-Tom is an open trough, of perhaps twelve feet long, and eighteen inches wide, and six or eight inches deep. At the lower end it is terminated by a kind of iron grate, which acts like the hopper of the cradle, letting the smaller gravel and gold go through. There is a shallow box placed under this end of the Tom to catch these, and then a stream of water is allowed to pass through the Tom. The men then keep throwing into Tom a bucket-full or two of the washing-stuff, and shovel it about in the running water, till all the earth has passed from the stones. When a certain number of buckets-full have passed through, they take up the shallow box from under the end of the long-Tom, and wash away the small gravel from the gold in the tin dish, as described before. These long-Toms, of course, from the stream of water constantly flowing through them, wash at a much greater rate than cradles. But then they *require* a stream of water, which is not always to be had. To supply these long-Toms, you must bring a small race of water, as it is brought to the wheels of water-mills. These have often to be cut a considerable distance from the streams above, and even when that can be done they are always liable to be laid dry by diggers washing above. Along the banks of the creeks where washing is going on you see dykes and water-races cut in almost numberless places, and other schemes to get a stream of water for your long-Tom. Here men are working a Californian

bell-pump to raise water out of the creek into the race, and there they are pumping up the water by a water-wheel turned by a horse. There is also what is called sluice-washing; that is, conducting a race of water to a certain point of the creek, and then allowing it to fall from a certain height upon the washing-stuff, so as to wash away the earth from the gold; and again, there are large puddling-troughs fixed to the upper end of a long-Tom, in which they can agitate the stuff in water with rakes before putting it through the Tom.

Thus you would, as I have observed, find the side of a washing-creek a busy place, — carts coming continually loaded with the washing-stuff from the mines, and the creek itself running a yellow puddle thick as batter.

But now let us take a peep at the diggers' huts. These are scattered about in a very miscellaneous manner, for the most part on the bald bare places where they have felled the trees. Many of them are half hut, half tent, put together of wood and canvas, often of blankets and quilts, just as they can get them. In the winter they build each a chimney to their tent; and these are many of them funny constructions, — some of wood, some of brick, some of tin, some of sheep-skins or bullock-hides, and some of several of these materials, in a most mosaic style. Some surmount these structures by a tub instead of a chimney-pot, and others hoist up old bags on the side the wind comes, and shift these as it changes by means of a pole.

Many of the diggers, however, pitch their tents out in the borders of the woodlands, which look very pleasant, and if there be grass they can graze their horses under their eye. Numbers of them have their families with

them, and there are heaps of children playing about, as well as goats and cocks and hens.

Along the main road are miles of shops, or stores, as they are called, — most of them huge tents, but some of them of wood. These hoist their signs in the shape of flags with various designs, besides having their names and the names of their stores over the doors; as, “California Store,” “American Store,” “Adelaide Store,” “Tasmanian Store,” “Port Fairy Store,” “Hamburg Store,” “London Store.” There are doctors’ shops, druggists’ shops, general stores, blacksmiths, butchers, bakers, eating-houses, sellers of new tools and hardware, sellers of old tools, carriers’ warehouses, Pickfords, of course. There are German, French and Dutch shopkeepers. Germans with very odd-looking clocks, French with all sorts of light things and knick-knackery, pipes, and the like. Italians with looking-glasses, boxes of scales and weights, pocket-books, and a world of trumpery, that we wonder who buys, but which, I suppose, is suited to somebody’s taste. There is an old book-shop, which has over a stall in front two large drawings, one of a kangaroo, and the other is named GRIZZLY. I supposed at first it was some Australian animal, but found that it meant a grizzly bear, the picture being as much like as the name. There are lots of auctioneers’ places, and I see a Dutch store bearing the name and designation of “Anketell and Van Der Poel, Handelaer nit de Kaape de Goede Hoep.” Then there is a small barber’s tent with the grand emblazonment of “Lester’s Shampooing Saloon.”

Besides these, there are various places of amusement. There are coffee and eating houses where you may see

the newspapers or hear music. There is a place calling itself the Crystal Palace, — it is not built of glass, but of canvas, — where they have a piano and concerts, as well as good suppers. But I hear that it is a most notorious resort of thieves and the worst of characters. There is also Benton's Crescent, as Jonas Popkins called it when it was at the Ovens last summer; that is, Benton's Circus, near which they had the other day the startling announcement that Mr. ——— will sell by auction "horses, drays, diggers' tools, and twenty men"! On going close up, however, we found the important words "enough for" in very small letters preceding the men.

But the worst places at the diggings are the sly grog-shops. The sale of spirits is prohibited at the diggings, owing to the number of murders and other crimes which have originated in intoxication. There are very severe penalties for offences against this law, — fifty pounds, and the confiscation of the tent and all effects, — but still these places abound, and seem known to everybody except the police, who, no doubt, are wilfully ignorant of them. At these places you hear, all night long, singing, quarrelling and most horrid cries of murder. From them, at all hours, come reeling drunken men, often in parties, singing, shouting, and making the most terrible uproars, totally regardless of disturbing quiet people in their sleep. In fact, the diggers seem altogether utterly regardless in this respect. They not only fire off their guns every night and morning, so that you would think a battle was going on; but they continually fire them off at all hours of the night, while the legions of diggers' dogs keep up an incessant barking all night long. On moonlight nights the majority of the people seem to be

up and about the whole night till near daybreak. But by far the worst of the diggings is, that they have drawn together such multitudes of the most wicked and debased characters in existence. Here have flocked the hardened transported convicts from Sydney and Van Diemen's Land. Here have hastened thousands of the lowest populations from the lowest purlieus of London and our other large towns. Here, loose from the restraints of the law, as in a densely-peopled and civilized country, they can range to and fro, and escape the few police and other authorities, committing dreadful crimes and continual thefts, and contaminating by their conversation and example the large mass of rude, uncultivated men who make the majority of the diggers. Gentlemen are still sprinkled amongst them. The other day we were told of a banker, a doctor and a captain, all working together near here as a party. But these instances are becoming rare. Well is it that there are schools and churches and chapels rising, and the land about to be thrown open to purchase, so that numbers may make themselves masters of small farms, and in the pure, fresh air and quiet of the country may air their souls, and gradually cleanse them from the fust and the mildew of vice in which they have been steeped.

But the diggers are an ever-moving, never-settled race. They are always in quest of the marvellous gold-fields which lured them hither, and which they never find. Scarcely a week passes but there comes a rumor of some wonderful discovery. Nuggets of several pounds' weight are said to be dug up at only a foot deep. All the old fabulous times of Balaarat and Mount Alexander are said to be come again. Away rush the dig-

gers, regardless of the distance. They go off loaded with their swags like bees. Carts and bullock-drays are in urgent request to carry the tents and effects of others. Day after day you see them going and going, till all around you is deserted. You hear of tens of thousands flocking to the same quarter from other diggings, — and then comes the eternal counter-tale, that it is a hoax and a failure. The diggers come pouring back again, or are lured away to some fresh spot, the victims of some new rumor, as brilliant and as false as the former. Store-keepers, in fact, are known to have bought up large quantities of gold at the old diggings to send down by the escort from a new one, in order to give it a spurious fame. The diggers are the perpetual victims of these schemes; and such is the origin of three fourths of these rushes, as they are styled.

Such is a brief outline of the diggings and of digger-life. You will agree with me that it is not a very attractive one. Still diggers are not cannibals, as a person the other day jocosely asserted. "There is a cannibal," he said, gravely, "living in yonder tent."

"A cannibal? How do you know?"

"O! I heard him answer some fellows who were calling him to come to work, 'Arra, thin, and how can I come till I have aten my *mate*?'"

PHINEAS DYSON'S LUCK.

While we were camping one day on our road to the diggings, and our party had gone up the country and left me and the dogs in charge of the tent, I was agreeably surprised by a visit from Jonas Popkins, who was, as

usual, out in search of stray cattle, though Pompey this time was not one of the culprits, for he was now really sold. It was towards the end of summer; the roads were dry and excellent, and they had taken the opportunity of laying in goods for the next winter, and were now on their way to their store at Spring Creek, where were Mrs. Popkins and one of her daughters, the other being now married. Old Matthew and Abijah were now at a very good claim, and could not leave it, or somebody would go into it and work it. So Abner, and Jonas, and Phineas, as I said, had been down to Melbourne with the two horses, and were to buy a third, instead of the one they lost when they bought Pompey. They were also accompanied by two bullock-drays, though these bullock-drays were only hired for the journey. But now a great misfortune had happened to them; the axle of one of the bullock-drays had broken, and while they waited for it to be mended their horses were gone astray. Jonas was now on the search for them.

I was very glad to see Jonas once more; and he was just like himself. I wish I could give an idea of Jonas! He always is in a hurry — at least, he says he is; and after he has done his business, whatever it may be, he begins in his hurried way to tell one something, which, however, he often never does tell. And all the time his face is crimson with eagerness, all flushed up to the very roots of his light-colored hair, and his eyes sparkle, and he chuckles and rubs his hands together as if he had such a huge joy within himself he did not know how to contain.

I laughed at Jonas as he stood there at the opening of the tent, and set down his panikin of tea on purpose

to chuckle and rub his hands; I could not help it. When he saw me laugh, he exclaimed, "O, there was the funniest thing!—the funniest thing in this world! O, it was so funny! You would have laughed if you had seen it, and such a lot of people looking on and laughing!"

"What was it?" asked all our folks — for everybody listens to Jonas.

"Well, I can't describe it to you; but really it was one of the funniest things I ever saw!"

"But, if you saw it, Jonas, you surely can tell us what it was about," said my father.

"No, really I cannot! You should have seen it yourselves! O, it is a pity you didn't. People said there never was anything so entertaining."

"What people?"

"The people there, I tell you."

"Where?"

"Why, down yonder, there; a good way off, — not near here at all. I only happened to be passing."

It was no use questioning and cross-questioning Jonas; we could get nothing out of him, only that it was the most diverting thing that ever was heard of.

Jonas has the quickest perception of anything, but he seems to have no power of description, or else he has a lazy way of taking it for granted that you *must* know because he does. He will stand and talk to us for half an hour about some of the "very droll and extraordinary" books that he has read: but one can never get an idea of what kind of books they were; he really cannot tell; he only wishes we had read them; they were really so very droll!

One day, when our party was out, and I was left to take care of the tent, Jonas, happening to come by, stopped to talk, as he always does.

“O, you should have been at our tent last night!” he began. “There was *such* a witty fellow there! He kept us laughing till our sides were sore.”

“What did he say?” I asked.

“O, it is impossible for *me* to tell you; only such a clever fellow as that could! But he did say such clever things!”

“Tell me one,” I said.

“Well, there was one about a man that had a monkey, and the monkey had a chain that was fastened to a stump. And this man, you know, used to take long rides. He went all around the country, all up and down; he had business of some kind, and he had friends, and staid out for days sometimes; and all about that, you know; and the man’s wife and daughters, and a dog that was named Crib, or Belcher, or something of that sort. And they had a pig-sty behind the house, and lots of hens, and a great goat. And this man used to go a-fishing; he was a famous angler, a fly-fisher, and he scorned anything but fly-fishing. And one day he lost himself in a wood, and came to a house where there lived a very surly sort of fellow, and this fellow would not give him anything to eat, nor sell him anything, — and so —”

“Well, what?” said I, seeing Jonas come to a pause.

“And so,” continued he, “he had to go without, I suppose.”

“Now, Jonas, you are making a fool of me!” I exclaimed, quite vexed.

"No, I am not," returned he, looking very grave, and yet with a merry twinkle in his eye; "no, I am not, — I am telling you as fast as I can."

"But what about the monkey? And what did the man say so clever?"

"That was the thing! To be sure it was! That was the very cream of the joke!" exclaimed he, rubbing his hands together.

"Then tell it me at once!" I said.

"La! *me* tell you! I could n't for the world! You should have heard the man himself. You would then nearly have killed yourself with laughing, as we did!"

And that was all I could get out of Jonas.

It was a bad break-down, that of the Popkinses, and something happened, I don't know what, that seemed to put them all out of sorts. The next day Phineas Dyson came to our tent. He was now a great deal better in health, though he really had had a bad attack of fly-blight; and he was not half as nervous and frightened as he used to be, — but it was plain that something was wrong with him; we could see it in a moment. He was very silent; his head drooped on his chest, and he sate "samming," as his old grandfather would have said.

Phineas was on his way to the diggings to carry the news of their delay to his grandmother, and with her he was to remain. He had his swag with him, and was to walk by himself; but, as Alfred was going a few miles on the road with our horses, Phineas got a ride so far, and they set off after breakfast.

Poor Phineas was very low, and told Alfred that he could not bear this life in Australia, and that he longed

to get back to England. He said his uncle Abner was angry with him because he would not go with Jonas to hunt up the horses ; and that he had not had a wink of sleep all night. He said that some day he should run away, and get back to England ; he would go as a common sailor rather than stop. Alfred told him what a beautiful country this was, and what a jolly life it was travelling up and down and seeing such a many things. But Phineas neither thought the country beautiful nor the life jolly, and instead told him how much more beautiful would his life be in England, if he could only get back to his godmother, who was the widow of a curate, and had a great many books, and lived with many other clergymen's widows somewhere in Kent, at a place which he described as the most beautiful in the world, all amongst trees and gardens and gentlemen's seats, just like some old college.

Alfred was sorry for poor Phineas, and told us so when he came back. We were five miles from where the bullock-dray had broken down, and were very busy ourselves, so we did not see anything of them either that day or the next. And the next day how surprised we were to have a note delivered at our tent by the escort that was passing, from Phineas, addressed to Alfred, in these words :

“Something has happened. Inquire for me at the commissioner's tent, and don't tell our people, but come to me immediately. PHIN. DYSON.”

We thought he had fallen sick, and Alfred, taking our little medicine-chest with him, and directions from Harry, who is our doctor, what he must give him in case

it was this or that disease, set off at once, but, unfortunately, had to walk till he could get to Mr. B——'s, in whose paddock our horses were turned.

He soon reached the diggings, and inquiring, as he was desired, at the commissioner's tent, learned, to his great relief, and no less surprise, that Phineas coming up at the moment when a piece of old road was being disposed of in lots for digging, he had, by some means, obtained number fifteen, and left his watch as pledge for the amount of the license-fee. One should never have expected Phineas to do such a thing. Jonas might; but Phineas, never! — at least, so we should have said.

Alfred had no difficulty in finding the piece of land, which was now being torn up as if by the roots. Above a hundred people were at work on it; every lot, except number fifteen, seemed swarming with gold-ants. In number fifteen, however, sate a doleful-looking object; — it was Phineas. By help of a good-natured neighbor digger, he had succeeded in making an opening big enough to get into; and there he sate, looking the picture of despair. At sight of Alfred, however, he made mysterious gestures, beckoning him down into his hole, — twisting his fingers about with rapid but speechless signs, as if he were either dumb or insane.

The truth, however, was, that he had dug and scraped and scratched in his hole, till he had got sight of a golden treasure which almost made him beside himself. He dared not tell his neighbors, not even the good-natured one, lest he should have his gold stolen, be murdered, or he knew not what horrible thing should happen. Fortunately, the setting out of the escort enabled him to send the note to us; but from that time, all the rest of that

day, and through the night, there he had sate, in his hole, upon his gold, like a hen on her eggs, wrapped in his blanket; but never, as he declared, sleeping one wink. Nor had he been up to the diggings with his grandfather's message.

A sudden idea, he could not tell why, had seized him to try his luck at digging; — he, who had no skill or power for such hard labor, and not a farthing of money in his pocket. But he never thought of these things, he said, till he had got his claim; and then he was forced to give his watch — his godmother's present to him, at parting — in pledge for the money. However, his claim had turned out a lucky one: anybody might see the gold. He should not wonder if there were a thousand pounds' worth in it!

Alfred liked the look of it as well as Phineas did. It promised to be one of the richest claims he had ever seen. What a bit of good luck it was! Phineas soon worked till his hands were all one blister; for there was now life and spirit enough in him for anything, — plenty of "steel, stamina, and pluck." As they were not able to work this claim themselves, and Alfred could not stay much longer, he sent down to old Popkins and Abijah, and told them to lose no time in coming up, promising, at all events, to stop with Phineas till one of his uncles and his grandfather came; and, indeed, Abner and Jonas, with their load, and the two bullock-drays, might now be expected up almost hourly. But none of them made their appearance, nor did any message come from them; which seemed very strange.

Alfred and Phineas remained alone, in hourly expectation of the arrival of the Popkinses, and doing very

little in the hole, but having uncomfortable fears, all the time, that the diggers on either side, who were now pretty low in theirs, were burrowing below into Phineas'; as, in fact, it soon turned out they had done.

The reason why none of the Popkineses made their appearance was a very extraordinary one. The truth was, that our hero Jonas was having some remarkable adventures of his own, which I will relate at large, as they were written down at the time, having somewhat of a public interest in them.

JONAS POPKINS AND THE BUSH-RANGERS.

Jonas' business, as I have said, was to hobble both the horses night and morning. One night he omitted doing so, and the next morning they were, as Captain Nolos Bolus would say, "gone alibi deficit." Jonas had been out and out again for a whole week, but they were nowhere to be found.

It is a serious thing for a lad — even a sharp, clever lad, like Jonas — to set off alone through the vast, pathless woods, on such a search. It is most difficult to prevent one's self from being lost in these woods. I know it by my own experience, for I have had many such excursions as Jonas'. You soon lose all idea of the four quarters of the heavens, unless you are very careful to observe all the bearings of the sun, or have a compass with you. But even men, and very clever men too, have become so confused and bewildered that they have soon got bushed, as the phrase is, — that is, completely lost; and many people have lost their lives in this manner; for in the unsettled country you may go scores and

scores of miles without seeing a habitation or a human being, and the woods and hills looking, all the time, one very like another.

Yet nothing is more frequent than for boys to go out, as Jonas now did, to wander for days in quest of stray cattle. Imagine Jonas going out thus by himself, — for Phineas, as I said, from some cause or other, was not with him, — carrying on his back his blankets, with provisions for a day or two, and having, unless he soon found the horses, to sleep out in the vast, solitary woods, at night. But it was nothing to Jonas: he was used to traversing the woods, and felt no fear. He was sure to turn up somewhere. He wanted Phineas to go with him, but, as Phineas objected, did not care about it, but contented himself with his large, strong dog, Nugget, — a large, strong shepherd dog, black, with tan legs and throat. Nugget was as passionately fond of this rambling and of 'possum-catching as Jonas; and so they went away together, Jonas taking a stout stick in his hand, to kill any snakes that lay in his way, or to thrust into the hollows of trees, to feel if any 'possums were there. He had also his sharp tomahawk in his belt, to cut out these animals from the trees.

A man had come, that morning, up to their tent, and told them that he had seen their horses up a gully in the hills, ten miles off, in a south-west direction. He described them exactly; there could be no mistake. He pointed to Jonas away in the direction where he said he had seen them, and told him to go on in a straight line. Besides this, he described certain rocks and overthrown trees, which he thought sufficiently

marked the valley. With this information, Jonas trudged away, whistling as he went, and disappeared in the woods. Before noon he had reached the foot of the hills, though he had to work through a most rugged and tangled scrub, and to clamber over whole miles of huge fallen trees. But here, to his consternation, several valleys branched off into the hills, one appearing as like another as possible. In which of these the stray horses might be it was impossible for him to say. Having sate down by a rapid stream that rushed from the mountains, eaten his dinner of a cold chop and damper, and drank a panikin of the clear, cool mountain water, he determined to take up that gulley which appeared most in a straight line from his present position. He crossed the stream, therefore, by a gigantic tree fallen across it, — nature's bridge, in a wild country, — and advanced up this glen. It was one that lay deep between the mountains, and went on and on, as if it would extend to the end of the world. Jonas saw with concern the sun disappearing behind the mountains before he discovered anything of his horses; yet he plainly saw the tracks of horses, and he therefore went on. There were pits dug here and there, too, by the margin of the stream, which showed that prospecters had already penetrated into these secluded glens. Still, he had to go on a weary way, and was beginning to think it high time to camp, when, hearing something, as he thought, down the glen behind him, he turned, and saw a man on horseback coming slowly up. The man was evidently a digger. He was old; the horse was white, and old-looking. Could it be? — yes, it actually was — old Paddy, the Prospector!

In case anybody does not know what a prospector is, I may as well explain it. He is a digger who goes out seeking fresh gold-fields. He takes his pick, shovel and tin dish, with him, and digs where there appears a likely place ; tries a few dishes of the stuff, by washing it at the stream ; and if there be gold, sets to work, and works as long and as hard as he can, before any other prospector finds him ; for there is pretty sure to be a rumor of the new digging, and a crowd of people swarm after him to it.

There are hundreds of these prospecters out, traversing the country far and near. They go ahead of the rest, and penetrate into every nook and corner of the immense trackless forests and hills. Paddy was one of the most noted of these. He was a quiet man, stealing away as unobservedly as possible ; and in the diggings had little to say, except you could get fully familiar with him, and that was no easy matter. He was supposed to have made a great deal of money, but nobody could tell where it was deposited. But the old man, with his great grizzled beard, and his old white horse, Job, was ever and anon met in the most distant and unfrequented places.

I have heard that this man was once lost for nine days, and lived on lizards for a great part of the time, which he boiled in his quart-pot ; and of the singular fact that his kangaroo dogs refused to hunt any more kangaroos after his regular provisions were spent. How this was Paddy could not tell, but thought that they required a share of his meat to encourage them, and seeing him dispirited, that they had become so too.

Jonas was right glad to see old Paddy, for he had

taken a fancy to the Popkins family, because they were religious, and especially to Jonas, because he was so fond of rambling in the woods. Paddy was much astonished to see Jonas there alone, and when he told him of his horses the old man shook his head, and said it was like hunting a needle in a bottle of hay to hunt them there, for the gulleys, as he called them, branched off into the mountains like the fingers on his hand. He confessed that he himself had come up a gulley that he did not mean to, and, in his peculiar way, said, "We have no business here, Jonas; these rocks have no business here; these trees have no business here; we have none of us any business here. But here we must stay, at least for the night."

They therefore looked out for a camping-place, and soon found one. There were a number of square masses of granite projecting from the foot of the mountain on this side, as if made for seats, and close by the stupendous trunk of a tree which reached almost to the stream as it lay in the green bottom of the valley. Here old Paddy dismounted, took his swag from Job's back, and let the old stiff horse loose. There was no need to hobble him. Paddy then, with Jonas' help, dug a hole and fixed a forked pole into the ground, throwing another pole over the fork, the other end leaning on the huge tree. Over this he stretched his canvas, and pegged it on each side to the ground. There was at once a tent. They then cut down a quantity of gum-tree leaves for a bed, and threw their rugs upon them ready for bed-time. Then they quickly had a blazing fire before the open end of the tent and the stone seats, and cooked their

suppers, and sate in great satisfaction over the fire, as it grew darker and darker.

By degrees Paddy began to talk of his many wanderings in this country, and his travels in others. He could not have a more delighted listener than Jonas, who sate and devoured his words, and continually asked him to go on and tell him more. The scene, the place, the dark magnificence of the night, the stars coming out in all their splendor in the clear blue sky above their heads, and something in the spirit and sympathy of his companion, seemed to open up the heart and feelings of the old man, and he went on from one story to another, till he was relating to Jonas the story of his own life.

He related his early, happy life, in the land which, he said, he had been obliged to leave at eighteen. He told the story of his enlisting, of his serving in India, in Canada, the West Indies, at Gibraltar, Malta, Teneriffe, and the Isle of France.

“ Ah! Jonas, my boy, you would not think it, but when I left Ireland I was much such a looking lad as you. Old Paddy is different now. Above forty years have I been wandering over different countries, and I must wander yet. I have been so long away from my country that I have lost the very least trace of my native brogue. Nobody would know me for an Irishman except by my name.”

“ But have you relations, Paddy,” asked Jonas, “ in Ireland ? ”

“ None, boy, none. I was forced to fly because I fought with the soldiers when they came to help the parson to take the tithes from a poor widow; and I listed at Fermoy. I was not eighteen, I tell you, Jonas,

and I was sent right away to India, and then to the Isle of France; and when my seven years were up I went home to see my old father and mother, and they were dead — dead and gone, Jonas! I had no other relations living there; they had emigrated years before to America, and God knows where they are.

“But there were two other people who were dear to me as my life, and they told me they were dead too! Dead! Yes, and they were as young as myself, Jonas. I believe I was bewildered with the news, and I went away as fast as I could to enlist again.”

“And who were they, Paddy, who died so young?” asked Jonas, in a very feeling voice.

Paddy was silent. At length he said, “I will tell you, Jonas, though I never told any one before. That is the secret of my soul, boy; but I will tell you. They were Nora and Cathleen M’Cartney, two of the most lovely girls that ever grew in Ireland. Ah, Jonas! those were blessed times, when Nora, Cathleen and I, used to ramble out on Sundays on the wild blossoming moors, and sit by the clear margin of the loch, and talk of — ah! what did not we talk of that was to be bright and beautiful? You should have seen Nora, Jonas. That angelic creature, with those blue tender eyes, that cloud of raven hair swelling above her delicate temples, and over her soft, rounded neck! Ah! what a smile she had! none but the angels have such: and her voice! You have heard music, Jonas, when it talked unutterable things to you, and you made language to your feelings, and saw such sights and had such feelings! The tone of her voice was like that. It used to go through my heart like something divine. My

heart used to leap, and seemed to open and close with a delicious pang, and my young blood used to course in my veins like sunshine. Cathleen had a sweet smile, a kind smile, and a tender voice; she was a loving soul, but only Nora had a smile like the angels. Only she had a voice like melting music.

“Ah, Jonas! if ever you should know a parting like ours, then you will know what misery is; but you cannot understand this yet. Nora, Cathleen, all three of us, were desperate, and prayed to die there and then; but we *must* part—and we did—never as yet to meet again.”

Here Paddy was silent again, gazing into the heavens over the tops of the mountains.

“But you will meet, Paddy,” said Jonas, “one day, in heaven.”

“Who said that?” asked Paddy, starting from his reverie. “In heaven! yes—but Nora is not dead!”

“Is she not dead?” said Jonas, in astonishment. “I thought you said she was.”

“They told me so,” continued Paddy; “they showed me the graves of Nora and Cathleen. But it was false! Cathleen came to me as I lay tired and in despair by the moorland track on my way to Dublin.”

“She did?” said Jonas, now starting in turn.

“She did,” said Paddy. “She came young, fair, loving as ever, and she said, ‘Paddy, don’t despair; Nora is alive; she is gone to seek you. She said she would go to the world’s end to find you; that she would wait for you, and never for any one else, till you met. Cheer up, for you will meet. Cathleen, her sister, tells you so.’”

“Blessings on Cathleen, there never was such a sis-

ter! I knew," said Paddy, "when I saw her, that *she* was dead, and gone to live in heaven. There was a breath of heaven all about her. There was the love of heaven in her eye and on her lips as she spoke. I was not afraid of her, and she has ever since often come to me, and cheered me up, and bade me go on.

"Since that first time I have served in many countries, and everywhere I have looked for Nora; but I have not found her yet — but I shall, that is certain — for Cathleen still says so."

"Yes, you will meet in heaven," again said Jonas.

"Ay, and on earth, too," added Paddy, positively. "I have been long seeking her, and she seeking me; and we are now both old, and she must be as much changed as I am; and when you look at yourself and then at me, and think that I *was* like you, Jonas, and *am* now like what I am, you may think that Nora would not know me, nor I know her; but, O, there could be no mistake! Nobody has angels' eyes, and a voice with heaven's music in it, but Nora. I could pick her out of the innumerable hosts before the throne of God and of the Lamb, all clothed in white raiment.

"And now for these five years I have been gathering gold while I have sought after Nora. I have traversed the banks of the Sacramento, as I have traversed these streams, and have climbed the Sierra Nevada, as I have climbed the Snowy Mountains; and," here he stooped, and whispered to Jonas, "I have found a heap of gold, but where it is I have told nobody. Nobody will ever find it till I find Nora! Tell nobody that, Jonas — that is my great secret. They think me a rough, crazed old digger, boy; but when I am out in the woods and the

wilds I only hold converse with spirits, and I watch for the coming of Cathleen. And she is very good; she comes often, and says, 'Courage, Paddy,— you will still meet.'

"But one day I asked her where, and she appeared alarmed, and said, 'You must not ask me any questions, or I cannot come to you. What I am allowed to say I always say, but if you ask these questions I cannot come and comfort you.'

"'But I must know where Nora is,' I said, 'or how can I find her? Is she in a far land?'

"'She is,' answered Cathleen.

"'Are the palm and the banana there?'

"'All that, and more.'

"'Are there the orange, the lemon, and the lime?'

"'All that, and more.'

"'Is there gold there, and the vine, and the fig?'

"'All that, and more. But now I cannot answer further. Be satisfied that you are certain to meet.'

"And, with a heavenly smile, Cathleen was gone."

"Yes," said Jonas, strangely excited, "it is then in heaven that you will meet, Paddy. It is there, and not on earth."

Paddy seemed again sunk in a revery. His gaze was fixed on the brilliant stars that glittered on the crest of the opposite mountain, and he said, as involuntarily echoing Jonas, "In heaven, and not on earth! Can it be? But,"—with increasing ardor,— "I must know. I will ask Cathleen. She *must* tell me. I will say next when she comes, Is it on earth or in heaven that Nora is? But no, it must be on earth; for she is seeking and waiting for me; and it is where the palm and the

banana are, where the vine and the fig, where there is gold, the orange, the lemon, and the lime.

“Jonas, there are delicious scenes and fruits in the Isle of France, but I could not find Nora there. I have cut palms in Africa, but Nora was not there; I have eaten yams and bananas in the South Sea Islands, but Nora was not there. Ah! pleasant are the orange-groves and vineyards of Parramatta, — the orchards and pastoral valleys of Illawara, — pleasant are the farms on the banks of the Hunter and the Hawkesbury, — I have been all there, and there was no Nora. I have gone to the lofty plains of the Bathurst, and dug at the Turon, — I have wandered through the lovely valleys of Argyll, — I have crossed the Snowy Mountains, and prospected Lake Omeo, the Tumut, and along the Mitta-Mitta, and I am here without finding Nora. Yet Cathleen says always the same. But I *will* know, — I *must* know, — I will ask her direct, — Is it on earth or is it in heaven?”

Here the old man sunk again into his revery; Jonas, too, was silent; old Paddy had astonished him. Till then he had regarded him as a deep, still man, of great worldly sagacity, and, though evidently religious, caring for the things of this world. But now a new revelation had burst upon him, and he saw the old man wandering over the earth, the martyr of bruised affection, and his whole mind worked up to a silent, inwardly retreating madness, by excess of feeling. Meanwhile the old man said, “Let us to our blankets, my boy,” and they turned into their tent.

When Jonas awoke in the morning Paddy was up and busy digging on the banks of the creek. When

Jonas went to him he shook him warmly by the hand, and said,

“Bury our last night’s talk in your bosom, Jonas, — let it be sacred, — to none else have I shown what old Paddy really is. But you must be off; I shall stay here a day or two to prospect. Job will find good feed here; and the creatures of the wild all know him. The eagle knows him as it soars amid the clouds; the kangaroo knows him, and does not fly as he passes; the stately emu knows him, and stands and looks at him with his large dark eyes; — all the creatures know him and like him, the faithful old veteran!”

Jonas felt that the last night’s conversation was still vibrating in the old man’s brain and heart; but he made no remark; they went back to breakfast, and then Jonas said,

“Good-by, Paddy; I am going to Melbourne. Can I do anything for you?”

“No,” said Paddy; “no, thank you kindly, Jonas; a little serves me on my journeys. Good-by; God bless you!”

And Jonas clomb slowly up the steep to pass on into the next valley. When he reached the summit, he turned for another look at Paddy, and saw the old man again digging by the solitary stream.

That day Jonas traversed the next valley up and down, but in vain. He was thinking continually of old Paddy, but he did not forget his horses. He resolved to go down to the mouth of this second valley, and ascend it thence. This was a work of time, and once more the sun dipping behind the hills reminded him that he would have again to camp out. How ardently did he

wish that he could camp this night, too, with old Paddy, and listen once more to the story of his love and of his wanderings! But that was out of the question. He now perceived numerous traces of horses on this glen, and moved on with renewed vigor. But the night travelled faster than he did, and, looking about for a snug encamping place, he saw a side gully, up which, at some distance, he fancied that he saw a dull red light, as of a fire burnt down to its embers. The mouth of the glen was densely grown with trees, the sides were steep and lofty, and, to any one unaccustomed to track these wilds alone, like Jonas, there would have been something awful and repellent in the gloom of the place. But a few steps onward assured him that it was a light that he saw, and he felt persuaded that here again were some prospecters desirous of hiding their retreat as much as possible from casual passers of the same class. Jonas strode onward and upward boldly, seeing as he advanced the red light burn more distinctly, and coming anon to a group of six or seven horses, of a superior kind to what diggers generally possess. This the more convinced him that they were prospecters, who rode good cattle in order to make rapid transits from one part of the country to another. The next moment a deep, gruff voice said, "Who goes there?" a greeting which was followed by a loud and clamorous barking of dogs, which now rushed forward from the vicinity of the fire.

Jonas stood still, and cried out, "A boy who has lost his way."

"Come here!" said the same voice, at the same time that the speaker turned and drove back the dogs with blows and menaces. Jonas strode on, and now



JONAS STOOD STILL AND CRIED OUT; "A BOY WHO HAS
LOST HIS WAY."



stood in the light of what was plainly a charcoal fire. Six or seven rough, digger-looking fellows sat round it on logs, and all silently waited to hear what account Jonas gave of his advent there to the man who first interrogated him.

“What brought you here, my boy?” said this man.

“I am looking out for stray horses,” — a fact which Jonas' having a bridle and a halter slung round his neck confirmed.

“What sort of horses?” asked the man.

Here, Jonas described their points, their colors, and their hands. As he did this the man turned and nodded to the others. “All right,” said he; “the young 'un speaks the truth. But,” turning to Jonas, “how came you to seek them here?”

“A prospector told us he had seen them somewhere here?”

“What sort of a man was he? Had he a white horse? Was he an old man?”

Jonas here knew that they meant old Paddy, but something told him not to say anything of the old man there. He said no, and described the man and his horse. At this there was a significant look passed from one to another; but the burly, black-whiskered man, who was questioning him, said, “There is a log, young one; sit down and have some tea.” Upon this one of the other men at once handed him tea, with some bread and a chop from the pan lying by the fire. Jonas ate and was silent. There was a strange feeling come over him. He thought the men the most ill-looking fellows that he had ever seen. He could not divest himself of

the belief that they were bush-rangers, and he fancied the same gang who had so lately robbed the squatter.

“There, young 'un,” soon added the same man. “You are tired, no doubt. Roll yourself up under yonder tree; and so, a good-night to you.”

Jonas did as he was ordered. He wrapped himself in his blanket, and lay down where he could see the group round the fire; his trusty dog Nugget, who had been returning snarl for snarl with the dogs of the men, all the time crouching down at his back. As he lay, he took a rapid view of the scene. The group had made their camp, consisting of several mimis, at the foot of a huge perpendicular rock. The fire of charcoal he was sure was used to prevent flame and smoke discovering their retreat. It burnt red and low, and left the faces and figures of the men but dimly visible. All around were strewn rocks, as if they had been hurled from a height above, — huge, square masses, some of them of many tons each; and around them grew the densely ranged and swarthy bolls of the stringy-bark trees.

As he lay, he could hear them talking in a low tone, and had a feeling that they were talking of him, but could not distinguish their words. For a while the fellows threw themselves down in their mimis, having first heaped on more charcoal, and soon the camp was as still as the empty forest itself.

But Jonas could not sleep. He would, if he could, have quickly stolen away; but he knew that the least motion on his part would put all the dogs into a vociferous barking. He therefore lay anxious and foreboding, and about midnight he heard the arrival of fresh horsemen. Anon he saw two tall fellows with blackened

faces emerge from the shade of the trees, and call out,

“All asleep there?”

“Is that you, Blunt — you, Bloxham?”

“Ay! and pretty watch you keep here.”

“All right?”

“No! all wrong!”

“How so?”

“How so? Why, the old villain, after all, had only five ounces with him, and he would confess to no more, and give no order.”

“Well, then? — but what’s that? Claret on your jumper?”

“Ay! claret is it, and a curse to the old hunks!”

“Nay! that’s bad! Now we shall have the whole country up. We must march.”

“Well, there was nothing else for it; the old scamp was as dogged as a granite block; so we spilt his claret, and left him. They’ll not find him, if any one seeks him, this many a day.”

Jonas listened to all this with intensest attention. He fancied that there was something horrible in it, though he did not understand the slang in which it was delivered, garnished by a profusion of the most direful oaths. They had robbed some one — perhaps murdered him! He trembled in every limb. At one time he was dreadfully afraid that it might be old Paddy, and he listened to catch his name, or the mention of his old white horse. But there was no mention of either. Could it be the settler again? He was lost in a confusion of horror and apprehension.

“But we must turn out our horses,” said one of them, and hastened near where Jonas lay. Nugget raised his

head, and gave a surly growl. "Eh!— what the deuce have we here?" said the fellow, in great surprise. "A man — a stranger! How is this?"

"O, it is only a boy who is seeking those two horses in the next gulley."

Here Jonas learned a piece of news—his horses were in the next gulley; but while this passed through his mind the man ran back to the camp-fire, where the whole party were now up and assembled again, and he could hear him say,

"And you knew this, and you could let me talk, and give no warning!"

"Pshaw!" said one of the men. "The young cub is fast enough asleep."

"I don't know that. The shortest way is to put a bullet through his heart."

"No more of that, Blunt! We won't have an innocent child's blood on our heads."

The fellow called Blunt, however, thrust a branch into the fire, and as it flamed came and waved it over Jonas' eyes. Jonas, who the moment before trembled like an aspen-leaf, now commanded himself, and feigned sleep to the best of his power.

The man withdrew with a growl, answered by that of Nugget, and said to his comrades, "I am not so sure of that young snip, and that brute of a dog of his. I should like to shoot him too."

More words passed, that Jonas could not hear, for soon they drew out their brandy-keg, and began to drink and smoke, the two fresh arrivers during part of the time eating their supper. The whole crew were soon loud in talk, and proceeded to altercation. There was a violent scene

of scuffling, fighting, and swearing, of the most dreadful kind. Jonas could understand that they were quarrelling about the division of the booty, and about something that these two men had done that did not please the rest. It was near morning before they retired to sleep, and Jonas, who lay awake the whole night, was in hopes that he might steal off unobserved. But the moment he arose a huge bull-dog which was chained near the sleeping-place of the men gave warning by a fierce growl. A rough head was instantly thrust out of the mimi, and Jonas, who was already up and ready for a start, said, "Good-morning, sir, and many thanks for your entertainment. I must go."

"Hold a bit there," said the man, jumping up; "not so fast, my young fellow!" Jonas shrunk with terror, as if something horrible was coming. The man came up to him, and said:

"Look here, young 'un, you've come to our camp without being sent for, and as we are prospecters who don't want any one to track us, we must take care that you don't blab." With that, he drew a revolver from his belt, and, holding it towards Jonas, went on, "Kneel down, my man!" Jonas kneeled, believing that he was going to be shot, and had only a minute to live. He sent up an ejaculation to God, and awaited his fate.

"Now," said the man, with a ferocious look, "swear by God and all that is sacred that you will neither say what you have seen here nor bring any one here to detect us,—that you will do nothing to betray us, no more than if you had never seen us. Swear!"

Jonas swore in the words that the man dictated, on which the man said, "Now, then, you can go; but remem-

ber your oath, or, by the powers you have sworn by, it shall cost you your life, and that without remorse! So now off with you!"

Jonas did not need twice bidding to go. He hastened away as rapidly as he could, never once pausing to look behind him till he was at a good distance in the wood. Seeing that no one was watching him, he ran down the next hill till he was out of breath. Again he looked behind him; seeing only the wild open wood and his faithful Nugget, he once more dropped on his knees and thanked God for his wonderful escape from this den of murderers. He was not long in finding his horses and cantering towards home; but the men he had witnessed, and the oath he had been compelled to swear, lay with a heavy weight on his heart. He had never taken an oath in his life, and to have taken one to keep the counsels of thieves and murderers appeared to him as a heinous sin. Yet how was he to act? He dared not break his oath, wicked as it seemed; he must, he thought, keep silence. All that night again he lay trembling, and could not sleep. Never had he felt such an anguish of spirit.

In the morning his father noticed his pale and anxious countenance, and asked him what was amiss; whether he was ill. Jonas said he was not very well, but it might be being out in the bush two nights, and being tired.

"Perhaps so," said his father, and was about to say something more, when the squatter whom Jonas and Phineas had visited, and whom we shall call Mr. James Kensal, rode hastily up to the door.

“Is your son Jonas at home, Mr. Popkins?” asked the squatter.

“Yes,” answered old Matthew.

“All well and right?”

“Well, I don’t think he is very well,” answered Matthew, “but here he is.”

“That’s right,” said the squatter; “I am heartily glad of it, for I saw him the other morning in the bush as if he were horse-hunting up our way, though he did not see me, and I was in too much haste about some anxious business to stay and call him; but do you know there has been an ugly murder, a very ugly murder, committed up in a gulley that way?”

“A murder!” ejaculated Matthew Popkins. “Lord have mercy upon us! What is it? Who have they murdered?”

“Why,” said Mr. Kensal, “that poor old man who was always riding about the bush on an old white horse.”

“What, poor old Paddy!” exclaimed Matthew.

“The same,” said the squatter. “Old Paddy, that is the man. A stockman of mine found him lying dead last night, close to his tent; and at first he thought that he had died naturally, but when he came to look closer he saw a pool of clotted blood under him, and he thinks he has been shot through the heart. All his things, too, in his little tent, had been turned topsy-turvy, as if the rogues had been looking for treasure.”

At this moment Jonas darted out of the tent, looking like a ghost, and crying out, frantically, “O! they have murdered old Paddy! What shall I do? What will become of me?”

“What ails thee, lad?” said his father, in astonishment. “What will become of thee? Why, what hast thou to do with it, more than anybody else?”

“O! I have! I have! What shall I do? What shall I do?” Jonas continued to cry out, wringing his hands and writhing as in agony.

Both the men were struck with astonishment, and old Matthew trembling said, “Speak, Jonas! speak out, lad! — what ails thee? Canst *thou* possibly know of this murder?”

“O! come in, a moment, father! — come in!” cried Jonas. “I want to speak to you.”

The old man followed Jonas into the hut, and Mr. Kensal continued to sit at the door in wonder what was to come of this. As soon as they went into the tent, Jonas threw himself upon his knees before his father, and, clasping his knees, cried out again, in agony, “O! what shall I do, father? — what can I do? They have murdered old Paddy, and I know it is they, and I dare not speak! I must not speak!”

“Who have murdered old Paddy?” asked old Matthew, sternly; “dost thou know, Jonas?”

“I think I do, — I feel sure I do!” said Jonas, passionately; “but they bound me by an oath, — O! I have made a dreadful, dreadful oath never to tell!”

Old Matthew recoiled in horror and astonishment from his son. Loosing himself from Jonas' agonized grasp, he called out to the squatter, “Come here, Mr. Kensal; come here, instantly.”

The squatter, who had heard in increasing amazement what Jonas had said, came hastily in. Old Matthew, pale and trembling, said, “The lad says he knows who

have done this bloody deed, but that they have bound him by a dreadful oath not to tell."

"No, no! not to tell of the murder!" cried Jonas. "There was no murder then; I saw old Paddy; I spent the night with him; he was alive and well when I left him; but it is they! it is they! I know it! They have done it, and I cannot speak!"

"But thou must speak, lad," said old Matthew, Abijah and others also standing by in blank fear and amazement; "thou must speak! What hast thou to do with thieves and murderers?"

"Stop!" said the squatter; "give me leave. Be quieter with the poor lad. I think I see where the shoe pinches. Jonas, my boy, you fell among these robbers on your hunt after the horses. I know they haunt somewhere up there."

"O, what shall I do? — what shall I do?" again cried Jonas. "I cannot, dare not tell!" and at that he groaned again.

Jonas was now in a very unusual case. He would have given anything in the world to have told his whole story from beginning to end, but he dared not.

"Well, well," said the squatter, "take time and listen to me. I see how it was, — you fell amongst them, and they made you swear an oath — they often do that — that you would not tell where they were, nor anything about them."

Here Jonas could not help nodding. "I thought so," said the squatter; "calm yourself, Jonas, and you too, sir. Well, now, my boy, let me tell you that such an oath is not binding. In all ages and nations, and by all the wisest and best of men, an oath imposed under com-

pulsion, and for base purposes, is held to be totally void; and I believe God holds it so too. He must, indeed, as a righteous God, who hates iniquity, and all the plots and leagues of the wicked."

"Amen! amen!" said old Matthew, solemnly.

"Now, my dear boy," continued the squatter, "if you have been compelled to take an oath not to betray these bloody men, the oath is a wicked, sinful oath, which the sooner it is broken the better. If you keep it, consider you make yourself art and part with these incarnate fiends, and on your head will partly lie any further blood that they may shed. Will you break a wicked oath, or keep it, and allow the men, as far as in you lies, to go on doing further mischief?"

"That is God's Gospel, my dear boy," said old Matthew; "speak, my lad, speak, and relieve thy old father's heart, which yet quakes at this strange news. Thou, who never swore an oath in thy life! O, how was it, Jonas, how was it?"

"They made me, father! — they swore they would shoot me dead on the spot if I did not. They held a pistol to my head all the time."

Old Matthew groaned with terror and indignation.

"That is precisely what I expected," said the squatter, "and what else could the poor boy do? But now, my dear fellow, tell us all about it. Not only we, but God and your country, the blood of this poor old man, and outraged humanity, demand it of you."

Jonas listened eagerly to every word the squatter said, following his lips with his eyes, as if seeking further assurance from them.

“Speak! speak, my good Jonas!” again cried old Matthew. “I command thee to speak!”

“Then I will!” said Jonas, rising to his feet, as if relieved from a heavy load. “I will speak. My heart tells me, Mr. Kensal, that you are right, and if I am wrong may God forgive me!”

Jonas then related, in a very clear and circumstantial manner,— a thing that he had never been known to do before, — all that had passed from his setting out; his meeting with old Paddy and their long conversation; his stumbling on the robbers’ camp, and the arrival of the two men in the night, whom he believed at the time had been committing murder. Its flashing across him that it might be old Paddy, only that they never named him or mentioned his white horse, and of the manner in which the men had compelled him to swear in the morning. When he had done, old Matthew, who was a truly God-fearing man, and had brought up his family in a solemn regard to the duties of religion and to points of conscience, suddenly clasped Jonas to his heart and said, “Almighty God be praised, my child, that he has brought thee safe out of that den of murder! O, what a narrow escape thou hast had! It was wrong to let thee go in that way alone. It shall never be done again. Better every horse be lost than any child of mine should run into such peril!”

“But now,” said the squatter, “there is not a moment to lose. We must have these fellows, if possible. Be ready with your horses, while I gallop down to the diggings and bring up a number of troopers. We must scour the gulleys for them at once; and, Jonas, you won’t now refuse to show us the way.”

“I will do it, with all my heart!” said Jonas, now appearing much more at ease. “I feel I ought to do it. O, poor Paddy! But we will hunt them out, poor old man! He shall not be murdered unavenged!”

The squatter galloped off, and in less than three hours came cantering back at the head of a dozen troopers, and a score or more of diggers, who, on hearing of the murder of old Paddy, had hurried off for their horses and arms, and come along with them. Old Matthew would go with them, and he and Jonas were waiting, already mounted, near their tent, and the whole company went off at a quick rate together. Jonas and the squatter led the way. Jonas could tell exactly the direction of the glen where the murderers had camped, and the squatter knew the best and most open tracks by which to reach it. In little more than an hour they were on the spot, and rushed down upon the camping-place in full charge, hoping to take the villains by surprise. But the birds were flown! They were too knowing to remain long near the place of their last horrible crime. But it was evident, from the charcoal fire still burning in its ashes, that they had only gone off that morning. All eyes were, therefore, eagerly employed in discovering the way which they had gone.

This was soon discovered, both by marks of horses' feet in the dry, gravelly soil, and by the stems of the long, dry grass which were beaten down in their passing. The party followed the trail as rapidly as they could, first over one hill and then over another, till they came upon a tolerably beaten road.

“Here we are!” then exclaimed the squatter. “This

is the track from Ellis' Station to the Nine-Mile Creek. Depend upon it they are gone that way."

All again put their horses into a brisk canter, and were not long in reaching the Nine-Mile Creek Diggings. These diggings lay up high amongst hills timbered with iron-bark trees, and rough with scrub and masses of quartz and yellow sandstone. The diggers were busy at work in their picturesque glen, with their tents scattered here and there on the sides of the glen in very striking and pictorial situations, many of them at the foot of some huge tree which had defied their efforts to fell it. As they saw so large a party of horsemen, diggers and police, come galloping up, cradles stopped rocking, picks and shovels suspended their operations. All stood gazing in wonder and expectation. Numbers of men emerged from their holes; women issued from their tents, and children stood in silent groups, having been stopped in their play by the sudden galloping up of so many men. Dogs barked furiously on all sides, and not a few men might be seen cautiously stealing away into the scrub to hide, lest there might be some inquiry after licenses.

But when the police called out to know if any horsemen had come that way in the morning, and added that they were in pursuit of bush-rangers who had murdered a digger, there was a simultaneous gathering of the people from all quarters. You might hear the women crying out, "Good Lord ha' mercy! There's been a murder!" All turned towards the horsemen. The men came back again from the bush, every one being intensely interested in the tidings which the police gave them. Then came oaths and curses sternly from many

mouths, with vows of vengeance. And a number of these stout fellows also hastened away for their horses to join in the pursuit.

No horsemen, they said, had passed that way, but some fellows who had camped higher up, and who were always coming and going, and were supposed to be prospectors, had that morning gone away before daybreak, with their carts. There were six or seven of them.

"Then the horsemen have cut across the bush to join these fellows, who will travel down the country as innocent diggers. We must be before them," said the squatter.

Meantime, the police found that they were very hungry, and the diggers then found that they were so, too. Frying-pans were quickly taken in hand by the women; chops and steaks were speedily fizzing and crackling over half-a-dozen fires; bread, dampers, tea, grog, were produced from a number of tents, whose inhabitants were eager to assist the pursuit and capture of the villains, while the men were consigning them with rude oaths to the nethermost regions, and the women were lamenting the horrible fate of poor old Paddy, who, the pursuers told them, was still lying in his blood in the solitary glen, till their return, when they should go thither with the coroner and bury him.

The meal was quickly dispatched, and quickly the eager pursuers sprung to horse again, and away towards Spring Creek. Through Six-Mile Creek, and Three-Mile Creek, and One-Mile Creek, they found the three carts and their attendants had passed. As the troop approached Pennyweight Flat, they found that the carts had taken a left-hand course through the bush, to avoid

Spring Creek. This was a fortunate circumstance for the pursuers ; for, had the murderers turned up into Spring Creek, entering with one cart at a time, or had they taken the way to Reid's Creek, it might have embarrassed them. But here they had them clearly before them, and it was evident that they were taking the highway to the Goulburn.

The troop rode rapidly forward, and, on cutting into the highway again at some distance, they could hear, from draymen and diggers that they met, that the three carts were still on the road before them. On they galloped, that they might overtake the villains before evening, when many of them might escape. They felt sure that they should find them, now, at the Shepherd's Hut Creek, a noted place for halting, because beyond there was little water till you reached the Oven's river. The sun was descending the evening sky rapidly as they drew near the place. The creek was a small, clear stream, running over a granite bed, in winter and spring, with a murmur and a noise which reminded you of many a scene in England. The hills around were thinly wooded, and some of them bare, like the moorland hills of Derbyshire, Cumberland, or Scotland ; but they were not high. There was a spot not far below the road where the creek gave a sudden turn, and left a space of sheltered meadow, screened from the higher part of the valley by a thick copse of wattles. This was the favorite camping-place of those who travelled up and down this road.

To avoid giving the thieves notice of their approach, the pursuers cut across the glen to the left at some distance above, and followed the stream down on its left bank till they came to where the road crossed ; over this

they gently walked their horses, to avoid the loud clatter of their hoofs. There now remained only a single piece of ground between them and the usual camping-place, and over this they pushed at full gallop. The first that reached the shoulder of the hill immediately gave a shout and a hurra, — the signal that the expected party was there, — and the whole troop of pursuers dashed forward to the brow of the descent.

There sure enough were the guilty ones! There were three carts, around which stood a number of men, apparently amounting to ten or a dozen, who were in the act of setting up their tents for the night; the robbers now stood arrested in their employment, gazing at the numerous troop of horsemen who were furiously riding down the descent towards them. But their inaction was only for a moment; the next instant the whole of the fellows were in rapid flight, evidently endeavoring to gain the opposite side of the creek, where there were six or seven saddle-horses feeding.

But the pursuers gave them no time to effect that. The troop, dividing right and left, galloped, with stunning outcries, so as to enclose them; a small number only remaining posted by the carts, to prevent any escape by a retrograde movement. The fellows dashed through the creek as though it had been dry land, making the water fly around them like glittering silver. The main body of them sped headlong towards the horses in the bush, while others squandered in different directions, each hoping to escape by being overlooked in the eager chase after the main mass.

But the pursuers were too many and too determined to give them much chance. The squatter, at whose

side Jonas rode like a young huntsman, was ahead of the right division of the pursuers, and came in at once between the saddle-horses and some of the murderers. A posse of troopers were close upon them behind, crying, "Yield! yield yourselves! or you are dead men!" As they were thus encompassing them, a huge, stalwart fellow, with a prodigious growth of black beard and hair, suddenly confronted the squatter and Jonas, and, with the look of an infernal fiend, his eyes flashing fire, his white teeth showing themselves as he ground them in his rage, cried, "So, you're there, young Perjury!" and in the same instant discharged his revolver three times in rapid succession at Jonas.

Crack! crack! crack! went the reports, and Jonas heard the balls whistle close past his head each time, but not one touched him; and before the fellow could draw the trigger a fourth time, he fell, shot through and through by the troopers close upon him.

For a moment the knot of men who accompanied the fallen bush-ranger showed fight; but it was only for a moment, for they were completely covered by the fire-arms of their mounted antagonists, and threw down their own with a dogged, surly air, in token of yielding. They were speedily bound, and guarded back to the cart.

Meantime there had been a hot chase after the rest of the scattered gang, some of whom, by dodging behind trees, and diving into thick scrub, made a determined attempt at escape, and gained a considerable distance up the hills. But all were eventually captured. Not one escaped, for luckily there was yet good daylight, and the bush was more than usually open.

On mustering the gang by the camp-fire, there were

found to be nine of them, besides the one killed. This fellow it was who had administered the oath to Jonas, and who was evidently a leader amongst them. The whole of them were clad in ordinary digger costume, and were palpably a very low and brutish crew, — most likely escaped felons.

They were all now most securely bound, and a guard set over them, near the fire, for the night, to be relieved in due course. The dead man was left where he fell till morning. The successful pursuers now made free examination of the contents of the carts, and found ample stores for a long journey: — sugar, tea, good bread, butter, cheese, a fine piece of beef, and a six-gallon keg of rum. They lost no time in cooking steaks and preparing a hearty supper out of the enemies' larder. They found, too, that they had loved good living, and had a fine assortment of preserved salmon in tins, sardines, and other luxuries, besides potatoes, cabbages, and water-melons. On all these the pursuers laid free hands, and repaid themselves for the day's exertions by a jovial supper. As to the thieves, they gave them but a moderate supply, thinking that short commons were a fitting commencement of the work of retribution.

Supper over, they reconnoitred the prisoners, and Jonas pointed out the two men who had come into the robbers' camp at midnight, and who there was every reason to believe were the murderers of old Paddy. Mr. Kensal also recognized the men who had robbed his house. Amongst the baggage of the gang they also found a heavy weight of gold, upwards of a hundred and fifty ounces; and, most singular, the squatter found the fifty pounds in bank-notes, rolled up just as he gave

them to the thieves, which he knew accurately by their numbers. There were, also, no less than a dozen gold and silver watches, all, no doubt, the produce of robbery. It was obvious that the fellows were making off down to Melbourne, where they hoped more securely to dispose of their plunder.

The next morning the troop were up early, breakfasted, gave the prisoners breakfast, and packed up the luggage, disposing as much of it as they could on some of the saddle-horses, so as to give room for the felons in one of the carts, and the body of the dead man in another; and thus they set out toward Spring Creek, leading all the horses along with them. They reached the diggings, which were eight miles off, before noon, and went up through them, amidst a gathering crowd of thousands of diggers, who came running from all parts, springing out of their holes like so many trolls and dwarfs of the northern sagas, and following the procession, with threats and indignant language, calling to one another to drag out the murderers, and tear them limb from limb.

But the firm and temperate conduct of the captors enabled them to prevent any such catastrophe, and to reach the Government Camp with their prisoners in safety. Here the throngs that came together were thousands upon thousands, all pressing, crushing, elbowing their way onwards, to get a glimpse of the detested culprits; so that the scene and the deafening din around were like that of an agitated sea.

That very afternoon, a party of troopers, with whom went the squatter and Jonas, as well as old Matthew Popkins, set out to the glen where poor old Paddy lay in

his blood. They reached the spot before sunset, and found the old man, as the shepherd had described, lying on his face near his tent, the flies having already made fearful devastation on the cheeks of the dead, which were accessible to their onslaught, and rioting in his clotted gore. They threw a cloth over him for the night, and pitched their camp at some little distance from his rifled tent.

Here they passed the night, Jonas gazing with strange feelings on the stones where they had sate the evening of the first night, pondering on the strange story and imaginations of the old man, whom he little expected so soon to find a mangled corpse. He wondered whether Cathleen had again appeared to the old man, and whether he had put to her the question, "Is it on earth or in heaven?" He wondered, again, whether he had now found Nora. He believed that he had; and he fancied that he could see him wandering on the banks of a beautiful stream, with the two beautiful and loving sisters, where the palm lifted its lofty head; where the sands of the streams were of gold; where grew, in the green and flowery meadows, the orange, the fig, and the banana; where there were all these, and more. As he sate, sunk in these thoughts, at some little distance from the rest, he heard a low neigh, and, looking round, saw the white form of poor old Job, who seemed to be also wondering where his master was. Jonas arose, and patted his thin sides, and fetched him a piece of bread from the camp; on which the old horse once more resumed his grazing in the neighboring thicket, and Jonas stole off to bed, to dream of Paddy, of Nora, and Cath-

leen, and of those beautiful streams and hills where he had seen them, in imagination, wandering.

The next morning the coroner arrived; inquest was held on the body of the old man, a verdict of wilful murder given against some person or persons unknown, and the body of the old wanderer was committed to the earth. They dug the grave as near the place where he and Jonas sate on that late memorable evening, at Jonas' request, as the granite would allow. Here they laid him, wrapped in the rug which had folded him on so many nights of his solitary peregrinations; and with him they buried his pick, his shovel, and his tin prospecting-dish. They were old and worn, and of little use to any one living; they seemed as though they ought still to accompany the dust.

Jonas wanted to know what was to become of old Job, and some of the party declared that the best thing was to shoot him; but this Jonas opposed with vehemence and tears; and the squatter agreed that for the tent, blankets, saddle and bridle, of the old man, which would be useful for a shepherd, he would see a palisade put round the grave, and give old Job the run of the tract near him for his life.

So they left the pilgrim to his repose by the mountain stream. His end was sorrowful, but the place seemed just such an one as the old man would have chosen to sleep his last sleep in; and the party rode away, leaving him to silence and to nature.

Many were the speculations as to where Paddy had concealed his gold. It was universally believed to be very considerable in amount, and that it was buried somewhere not far off in the bush. Some hit on the

idea that if they mounted old Job, and let him take his own course, he would go of himself, from old habit, to the spot, especially if they exhibited a gold-bag well filled before mounting; and Mr. Kensal believes that the poor old horse was thus mounted at least a dozen times during the moonlight nights; but in vain. From one such experiment that he saw tried, he felt sure that Job would never lead any one to that spot but his master; for, when urged on, he went steadily forward in the very direction in which he happened to stand, and at that slow pace which he had used when backed by Paddy. He would have gone on thus to any distance, and when turned in another direction he would go as patiently and perseveringly in that. No one, as yet, has got a clue to the hidden treasure, nor has Paddy's spirit shown any uneasy desire to return and visit it himself. He has met Nora and Cathleen in the land of gold, of the vine, the fig, and the banana, and he assuredly cares not to wander or prospect any more.

Some time after this, the squatter, Jonas and his father, were summoned to Melbourne, to attend the trials of the bush-rangers. All were found guilty of various robberies, but there was no evidence to bring home to them the murder of the old man; there was the utmost moral certainty of the fact, but no legal certainty; and they were therefore condemned to hard labor for greater or less number of years, according to crimes proved against them.

The wonderful adventures of Jonas of course prevented any of them from coming up to Phineas for several days. At length Abner and some bullock-drays made their appearance, and in less time than might have been

expected Abner was back again, with two or three trusty fellows, and the claim was regularly and thoroughly worked, Phineas working as hard as anybody.

It turned out as Phineas had said: there was a thousand pounds' worth of gold in the hole, and might have been as much more, if it had not been completely undermined from both sides, so that when they got a good way down into it it was dangerous working, and did fall in with them, though fortunately nobody was hurt.

We all thought that this gold ought to be Phineas', and were making ourselves quite uncomfortable about it, when my father met old Matthew Popkins, and learned from him that he meant it to be so, every penny of it, and he would himself give Phineas the cost of getting it. And, more than this, he had determined to let the poor youth go back to England; and this consent, and his good luck, together with the hardy life which he had led since he had been in this "horrid Australia," as he used to call it, had quite completed the education which his grandfather proposed for him. So he was to sail, now, in about a month, his godmother having already been written to by the overland mail, and his gold turned into money, the first bills of which his grandfather had also already remitted to a trusty friend in London, on Phineas' account; so that truly the old godmother's dream had already been, as it were, realized, — Phineas had gathered a lap full of golden ears.

We were all very glad of this news; and Phineas will take this, my note-book, to the dear folks in the old home. I wish it were real gold, like Phineas', but I have not had his luck in that way; but I may have, for all that.

“ Phinny must have a trouble of one sort or another, poor lad ! ” said his grandfather ; “ so his trouble now is about leaving us all. He is beginning even to like Australia now ; and when the poor chap has left us I expect he ’ll be setting us up above his godmother ! Well, Phinny ’s a good lad, for all that, and I ’m glad I made him come out with us ; for I rayther think he might have dug a good while in England before he had taken a thousand pounds out of a hole ! ”

That is the last we have seen of the Popkinses.

Phineas will sail from Melbourne about Christmas, when as many of them as can be spared will go to see him off.

I am working hard to get my notes in order. I must now say something

ABOUT THE NATIVES.

We are living here in a land of savages ; a few years ago, comparatively speaking, it was inhabited only by savages, and yet the English are now so completely at home in it that they do not seem to think any more of the native blacks than we used to do in England when we saw a wandering party of gypsies.

Travellers and writers agree in considering the Australian blacks as very low in the scale of humanity. They are a slight-built race, and have but very little of that bold fierceness which we consider a part of the character of the savage, and which often inspires something like respect. Perhaps the reason of this may be because they have had to contend with no terrible beasts

of the forest, like the African and the Indians of North America. There are neither bears, lions, elephants nor tigers here, and perhaps that may be the cause of their being so unheroic. And yet in New Zealand, where there are none of those strong and ferocious beasts, the natives are a much bolder and more resolute set of men.

The Australian natives have wandered for ages over these vast regions, and have left no monuments or lasting traces of their abode amid them. They have been always wandering, but never seem to have advanced; and when they are all gone they will leave no memory behind them; they might never have been. They have built no houses, except in some very few cases, of which I shall speak presently, and those not of a durable kind. They have never cultivated the ground, nor do they yet do it, though they see what luxuries and comfort the European obtains from it, and which they like to enjoy. They have neither flocks nor herds, nor do they manufacture anything except their rude weapons and a few baskets. They buy from the Europeans the very tomahawks with which they cut the opossum out from the trees; they would never think of making them for themselves; and though they have wandered over their country for ages, where the gold has been glittering in grains and nuggets, they have never discovered its value; and even now, when the white men are gathering it up with such eagerness, they wander among the diggings with their arms folded in their blankets, as beggars. Poor black fellows! *They* want "steel, stamina and pluck," more than ever Phineas Dyson did, and one may be sure what their fate will be. They know it themselves. They say, "White fellow is come; kangaroos

gone. We have no longer country; it is the white fellows'!" And they believe that Pungil, their god, is cast down, by the god of the whites, into the bowels of the earth, and there lies bound. They must indeed believe that their deity is in bonds, and cannot help them, when they tamely see themselves despoiled of their country, and never lift a hand to help themselves.

They are, as I have said, a slight-built race; the men are as slender as women. They have jet-black and smooth hair, and yet the long heel like the negro. Their color is, as it were, of a reddish-copper hue, overlaid with a sooty swarthiness. Their faces are darker than their bodies. They have intelligent and often handsome countenances, though their noses are broad, their teeth large and strong, but white, and their lips generally thicker than those of Europeans. The men seem to have a quiet, aristocratic manner about them, and rarely express any great surprise at anything being novel and wonderful to them. There is nothing of the wide-eyed, gaping wonder observed in them on such occasions, as there is in a clown and ordinary people. They talk in a quiet, self-possessed manner, very much like educated men. There are occasions when they show themselves much amused, and laugh heartily, but not loudly, and express their admiration by clucking with their tongues. These are the men. They now, in the parts where the colonists reside, generally appear in a woollen jumper or a blanket thrown round them with a native grace. That is all their dress, except that at times you will see them with a red cloth folded round their heads. They frequently carry their weapons — a tomahawk, a light spear formed of the shoot

of some tough young tree, and pointed and barbed with pieces of broken bottles, a wommera, or throwing stick, with which they throw the spear, a waddie, or short club, and sometimes a boomerang. It is equally wonderful that the natives of this country have never invented nor used bows and arrows, and that they have invented that most singular instrument, the boomerang.

The women are, as already described, much inferior in their appearance to the men. This may be accounted for from their being the slaves and beasts of burden of the men. They are compelled to carry not only the infant children hung in a fold of their blanket on their backs, but they must also carry, in moving from place to place, any household gear that they may have, any blankets, opossum-rugs, any pot or kettle, or any store of meat, while the men stalk on in lordly ease. The women have to go out and collect the minor kinds of food. The men kill kangaroos, opossums, and the like; the women catch bandicoots, hunt for the wattle-grub, — a great luxury of these people, — and collect gum for roasting, and the root of a sort of hawk-weed, called the murnong, or, as Leichhardt found in the north of the continent, the murnatt.

When they have done all this, the husbands take the best part of the flesh of the animals, and give to the lubras, or women, the remains and the entrails. The roasted grubs, which they themselves have collected, are too good for them. Then their treatment is often savage and brutal in the extreme.

The natives are well treated by the present government, and if they would condescend to adopt the pursuits of civilized life, as bullock-drivers, shepherds,

diggers, or police, they might be very comfortable. There are some few on the diggings who work steadily, and now and then we meet a native accompanying the bullock-drays. But the mounted native police was obliged to be given up. They were splendid horsemen, and would have made excellent police, but they were only too glad of the opportunity thus afforded them of horses and fire-arms, to attack the hostile tribes of natives. To a black the native of every other tribe is a "Wild black fellow," and when two different tribes meet they try to exterminate each other.

This circumstance, combined with all their cannibalism, their practice of infanticide, and their strange superstition that every one who dies a natural death has died from the evil acts of an enemy who has eaten his kidney-fat, and therefore must be avenged, would, had not the white man come in time, have exterminated the race.

In battle, they tear out and devour the kidney-fat of their enemies, often doing it while the prisoners are alive; and, seeing that it causes death, of course they attribute all deaths to this cause; and when any one dies his next relative sets out, and does not rest till he has killed a man of a hostile tribe in avengement. He believes this to be the very man who caused the death of his relative, and that by a mode of reasoning as absurd as that which led him to believe in the natural death being the work of an enemy. He watches an insect — I believe a particular species of beetle — which is laid down by the corpse, and whichever way it travels that is the direction, he is quite convinced, in which lies the unknown murderer. He therefore goes off in that direc-

tion in a straight line till he meets a native, whom he kills as the very man he is in search of.

A native of Victoria, called Captain Murray, — for they always assume the names of white men of note, — lay in a bed of bamboos in the garden of Mr. Barlow, on the banks of the river Plenty, for a good part of a day, selecting the very finest bamboo that it contained. Having done this, he disappeared, and, on returning, some time after, he approached shaking his spear, and, laughing, said, “Merry jig this — killed four black fellows!” He said he had been all the way to Gippsland to avenge the death of a relative, and had killed four of them.

The Australian blacks, like savages of all countries, have a number of peculiar customs: we may mention the following: First and foremost stands their practice of cannibalism, of which the evidences have been so numerous, and furnished by parties of such undoubted truth, that there can be no question about it. They not only eat the flesh of their enemies who are killed in battle, but of their own friends and relatives who have died a natural death; and they do this with much jollity and festivity. Mr. Sievright, who was one of the assistant protectors of the blacks in Victoria, states a case which came under his own eye. It was that of a young woman who had been killed by a hostile tribe, and her own friends devoured the body with peculiar voracity, — literally tearing the flesh off the bones.

On one occasion a child had burnt its arm, which mortified, and the hand fell off at the wrist, when it was immediately snatched up by a black and devoured! In many parts of the country they bake or roast the bodies of their deceased wives, and feast on them.

Infanticide is extremely prevalent, especially of the female children, and these young victims are considered most delicate morsels. This used to be the prevailing custom in the Colac district. The Rev. J. Y. Wilson, of the English church of Belfast, Port Fairy, gives a shocking instance of this, and states the practice to be very common in that district. Of course, these horrible practices have been most determinedly discouraged by the missionaries and magistrates, and are now done with more secrecy.

A much more innocent but still absurd custom is that of knocking out two of the front teeth of every boy who reaches the age of fourteen. You see this mark of manhood in every male mouth. Another practice is that of selling or bartering the young women as wives. Each man has several, which he has purchased of their parents, or of their husbands; for the husband very unceremoniously sells or exchanges whatever he has knocked down with his waddie and carried off from some other tribe. In no case is the inclination of the women, either as it regards marriage or anything else, consulted. They are property and slaves, not companions, and the sentiment of love is unknown. It is said that they have songs, but they certainly cannot be love-songs; probably they are those of war, but I have had no opportunity of hearing any of them. Mr. Westgarth gives a specimen of a song sung by the natives in the Murray district, when any of their tribe are setting out on an expedition, which they say over and over for an hour together, but it appears only to consist of these words :

Return hither, hither ho,
Return hither, etc. etc.

They tattoo, as we have said, and the natives of Gippsland, the Worrigals, wear the hands of their deceased friends slung round their necks in a state of fine preservation. A much more common ornament is a necklace of cane beads, which you see the men, particularly, adorned with. They have some very odd customs connected with the burial of their dead. People here thought they had discovered large numbers of the graves of the blacks, lying lengthways, as amongst the whites, but these have turned out to be a natural phenomenon, and called Dead Men's Graves. The natives generally bury their dead in a sitting posture, with the face to the east, or they place the body in a hollow tree in that position; or they burn it, and place the bones there. But, as we have said, they more frequently roast and eat the young and tender; and where that is not the case, they cut off the head, and make a drinking-cup of the skull, and the gins or women in particular possess these cups manufactured from the skulls of their nearest relatives. Some have an odd custom, after the head is cut off, of doubling up the body and legs into a square package, wrapping it in an opossum-rug, and carrying it with them and using it as a pillow. They have a horror of the spot where one of their friends has died, and immediately abandon the place, never more mentioning the name of the deceased, so that one tribe had to give a new name to fire, a black fellow of that name having died.

They are very superstitious, and dare not go out at night for fear of the "devil-devil," or some bad spirit to whom, in speaking to the whites, they give that name. They believe, too, in a Deity, and a future state.

I will give an account of their faith and traditions which my uncle Richard obtained from Mr. Thomas, one of the protectors of the aborigines ; it is as follows :

“ Of their traditions the most novel is that of the creation. First, say they, a young man, along with others, ‘quamby along a beck,’ sat down in the earth where it was ‘plenty dark.’ There they were, not merely two, but many people, lying, or sitting, unfinished and half torpid in the ground — this reminds us of Milton’s Limbo ; but Karackarack, daughter of the god Pungil, a kindly divinity, had condescended to ‘yaninna warrect,’ walk a long way to look out for them, to clothe them completely with good opossum-rugs, of which, no doubt, she had great store. The Old Man, as they call Pungil, their god, not unlike the Hebrew term Ancient of Days, now held out his hand to ‘Gerer,’ the sun, and made him warm.

“ When the sun warmed the earth it opened like a door, and then plenty of black fellows came up out of the earth. Then the black fellows plenty sing, like it white fellows, ‘big one Sunday,’ which means that a day is kept sacred like our Sabbath, in commemoration of the creation ; the dance on that day being of a peculiar kind, called gaygip, at which time they corrobory before images carved curiously in bark.

“ For a long time after creation, in the winter, they were very cold, for they had no fire. Their condition, as it regarded food, was no better than that of their dogs, for they were compelled to eat the kangaroo raw ; and, to add to all this misery, the whole land was full of deadly snakes and guanoses. But good Karackarack, their truly womanly divinity, did not forget or forsake

them. Pungil, her father, like a true native's god, was too much of a 'big one gentleman' to do anything but carry his war-weapons; while Karackarack, a native divinity of the true feminine sort, — a worker, — came a long way, armed with a long staff, — native women carry such, — and with this she went over the whole land, killing the reptiles; but just before she had killed them all, the staff broke, and the kind did not all perish. Misery there was in the breaking of that weapon, but there was also mercy; for Karackarack had so warmed it, as well as herself, with such a great slaughter, that when the staff broke there came fire out of it. Fire they had now to warm themselves and to cook with. Their condition was much improved, but did not long continue so, for Wang, the Crow, a mysterious bird, regarded as superstitiously by them as the raven amongst Thor and Odin's worshippers, watched his opportunity, and flew away with it. For a long time again they were in a most sad and fireless condition, until ever-kind Karackarack learned their state, supplied their wants, and they have never since lost it."

But they take care on this head, for it is the business of the women to see that the fire never goes out; and wherever they move, one of the women carries a couple of firebrands, holding them together at the part in combustion, so that they may not chance to go out. I have seen them thus on the march. But I will give you a little more of my uncle's account of old Pungil:

"Of a great flood they speak that rose above the highest trees and hills, and how some of the natives were drowned, and the rest were caught up by a whirlwind to another similar country above them. When the

flood subsided there jumped up out of the earth two kangaroos and opossums — everything. The old race rose, the antediluvians became stars. Amongst them was Pungil, their principal deity; Karackarack, their female Prometheus; Teer and Teerer, sons of Pungil; Berwool and Bobinger, son and daughter of Pungil, the first pair who dwelt on the earth after the flood, and from whom the present race of mortals are sprung. Wang, the Crow, also became a star.

“Pungil was still, notwithstanding his deification and stellification, bodily often on the earth; but the coming of the white people was fraught with ruin for him as well as for his black children; for the god of the white people was in like measure with his white children more powerful than Pungil, and strictly ordered the old man no more to wander about the earth, which was no longer his, but to get himself into the ground. There he now is, and the white man's God does not permit him to eat or drink — not even to smoke; neither is he allowed to sit or stand, but must evermore lie down. Still, in his abject condition, if he has any spirits for it, to solace himself in his darkness and his many griefs, he is at liberty to sing a little.”

The idea of a future state consists amongst these natives in the belief that after death they shall go to Van Diemen's Land, and come back white fellows. It was from Van Diemen's Land that the white settlers of Victoria first came, and thence the belief. The simple natives believed that they were their ancestors who had come back. They still often believe that they recognize their relations amongst the colonists. One native was sure that he had known our uncle the doctor as a black fellow,

and an old woman was much distressed because firmly persuaded that she had recognized a dearest son in a colonist: he would not own the relationship. A black man, who was hanged some years ago at Melbourne, rather enjoyed the idea of it, saying he should "jump up white fellow, and have plenty of sixpences."

I have seen a gentleman — Mr. Byerly — who was engaged in one of the latest contests with the blacks, and who, I believe, shot several of them. Here is the account drawn from the *Melbourne Patriot* of that period:

"November 23rd, 1846. — The natives still continue to inhabit, in considerable bodies, the banks of the Murray, where they are plentifully supplied with fish; but the encroachments of the colonists; who are gradually occupying the whole extent of that noble stream, will soon occasion their disappearance. In the mean time, the outer settlements for the time being are scenes of occasional conflict; and it is sometimes necessary to supply the shepherds with fire-arms, and give them the use of a horse.

"A melancholy accident occurred, at the close of the preceding year, in the neighborhood of Captain Coghill's station, on the Murray, where the natives murdered a colonist of the name of Beveridge, a youth of excellent character, but probably the innocent object of revenge for some previous damage sustained by the assailants at the hands of his countrymen. The murderers were captured, a few weeks afterwards, in the following manner, which, however, I think was rather treacherous:

"Three natives had been concerned in this murder,

and the deceased, who had survived for a short period after their retreat, was enabled before his death to describe to his friend and neighbor, Mr. Byerly, the persons of his murderers. In the beginning of November, a month or six weeks after the occurrence, a sergeant of police, with two of his men, happened to arrive in the neighborhood; and the opportunity was taken of endeavoring to secure the criminals. A body of blacks was at that time encamped on the opposite bank of the Murray, and the objects of their search, whom Mr. Byerly was prepared to identify, were not unlikely to be found amongst them. The police having arrived, the party began with due caution the difficult preliminary of inducing the blacks to venture across the river. This was at length accomplished by holding out the temptation of a gift of food and tomahawks; and, according to expectation, the three criminal parties proved to be of the number.

“About twenty-five natives had thus been induced to cross over, and they were all eventually lodged in a hut upon the station, and seated around a fire, where a huge pot of boiling wheat had been designedly placed to monopolize their attention. The blacks were by no means unsuspecting, and had thrown out sundry cautionary inquiries relative to the late appearance of the police in their vicinity. The police were of course kept in concealment; but the wary natives were still troubled by the presence of several assisting settlers, and demanded what the stranger white fellows, with their horses, were doing amongst them. To these and similar queries it was replied that the police were ‘plenty far away;’ and that the white fellows were in quest of a

new station, and would give unmeasured quantities of beef, damper and tomahawks, to every black who would assist in finding a suitable tract of country. Their suspicions were thus allayed, and Byerly indicated the persons of the culprits by the concealed signal of his dropping a piece of bark behind each of them.

“Cords with running nooses were then prepared, and on a favorable opportunity were simultaneously thrown around the necks of the blacks. After a hard but momentary struggle, they were safely secured, their comrades rushing from the hut with the greatest terror and precipitation.

“This was the first stage of the proceedings. But the natives, who happened at that time to be very numerous in that particular place, determined on a rescue. This circumstance was fortunately communicated, in the course of the day, by one of the blacks who had been acquainted with the occupants of the station, and who now came to inform them that great numbers were mustering from the surrounding country, and that the hut would be attacked before ‘piccanini sun,’ — that is, about daybreak. The police therefore remained on the spot, and the culprits were properly secured. Every possible preparation was made, by strengthening the doors and windows, and getting in readiness a number of ball-cartridges; and one from their scanty numbers was forthwith dispatched to the nearest station where assistance could be had, — a distance of no less than seventy-five miles.

“By rare good fortune in so remote a location, several settlers arrived at the hut during the day, and were promptly enlisted in the cause. All was quiet during

the night, but as the gray dawn of morning overtook the watchful inmates of the hut, they soon learned the correctness of the information so timely afforded them by the friendly black. A party of natives was perceived approaching with a noiseless but firm step, all arrayed for battle, with their bodies painted red, and their heads surmounted with some feathers.

“The death-like stillness, and the singular appearance of the advancing foe, dimly shadowed forth in the glimmering twilight, may be conjectured to have formed a scene capable of inspiring terror. Vexation and disappointment were evidently expressed in the countenance of the assailants when they perceived that the enemy was prepared for them. The attack, however, was commenced. The vanguard, consisting of about fifty, was soon followed by the main army, which advanced to close quarters, and the battle became mutual. But the shower of spears, though launched against the hut with wonderful force, did no damage to its inmates, who, on their part, responded with better effect from their fire-arms, shooting, as opportunities permitted, through loopholes and crevices of the building.

“Great excitement prevailed at one period, on the occasion of one of the leaders being shot; the natives rushing with savage yells upon the roof, and attempting to tear off the bark and rafters, and even to descend the chimney. As the morning advanced, they retired from the hut, encamping about a hundred and fifty yards in front, and making no further attempts that day, nor yet the succeeding night. Towards daybreak of the following morning they were again preparing for war; but at this crisis the opportune appearance of nine horse-

men, who had been collected by the industrious emissary of the previous day, induced the natives to abandon their designs and effect a speedy retreat, leaving their three companions in the hands of their captors."

When these people go wandering along from one locality to another, they are always attended by a number of strange, inkerly-looking dogs, of every mongrel breed, and all seeming as if they were used to lie in the ashes of the camp-fires, and were dirty and singed, and having a shy, ugly look. These dogs may be seen especially attending the women, seven or eight of them with one lubra; these lubras, or women, are said to be often fonder of them than of their own children, and that they will often, when food is scarce, give it to their dogs in preference to their children. Perhaps this is not true as a general rule, for the women show no want of natural affection for their children in general, though they do kill and eat them occasionally; but that shows that they are fond of them, as Jonas Popkins said one day; — and, without a joke, their killing their children is attributed in a great degree to the impossibility almost of the women dragging them and all their household stuff about the country on their continual wanderings.

There they go moving on through the great forests, the men lazily stalking forward, carrying nothing but their arms, now often nothing but their tomahawks; one woman carrying two fire-brands crossed over the points, and all the rest of the women loaded with children, opossum-rugs, a kettle, and such game as the men kill on the way. They look like beasts of burden. And, by the way, the natives of northern Australia, who had

never seen white men before, asked Leichhardt if the bullocks were not their gins, that is, their wives, because they were carrying their baggage, showing precisely that the idea of a woman in the minds of Australian natives is that of a beast of burden.

Now they may be seen halting by some stream or water-hole, where the forest provides a good supply of kangaroo or opossum. Here they have no tents to erect, and they erect no huts; they stick down for each family, in a slanting direction, a few boughs, which the men cut from the gum or wattle trees, and in front of these make a fire. That is their abode. In winter sometimes they will rear up a few pieces of bark instead of boughs, but even this is very rare. In the north, however, Leichhardt found something approaching to huts, and even two-storied ones :

“On the banks of the river Lynd,” he says, “we saw a very interesting camping-place of the natives, containing several two-storied gunyas. Four large sticks rammed into the ground, supporting cross-poles placed in their forks, over which bark was spread sufficiently strong and spacious for a man to lie upon. Other sheets of stringy bark were bent over the platform, and formed an arched roof, which would keep out any wet. At one side of these constructions the remains of a large fire were observed, with many mussel-shells scattered about. All along the Lynd we had found the gunyas (mimis) of the natives made of large sheets of stringy bark, not, however, supported by forked poles, but bent, and both ends of the sheet stuck into the ground. We met with the two-storied gunyas very frequently afterwards during our journey round the Gulf of Carpentaria.”

Again, he mentions finding in the dry bed of the Van Diemen some well-constructed huts of the natives. They were made of branches arched over in the form of a bird-cage, and thatched with grass, and the bark of the drooping tea-tree. In another part they found an old camping-place, where there was a hedge or long mimi of dry timber, and opposite to it a row of places constructed of stones where the fires had been. Besides these, there were three huts of the form of a bee-hive, closely thatched, like the former, with straw and tea-tree bark. Their only opening was so small that a man could scarcely creep through it. They were four or five feet high, and from eight to ten feet in diameter. One of the huts was two-storied, like those on the banks of the Lynd. They afterwards saw others of these rounded huts, looking just like huge nests of the white ant.

These natives were evidently of a more advanced class, and probably came from New Guinea, or the island on that side the Torres Straits, where the natives are of a much superior race, and have canoes fifty feet in length, which they manage admirably, and trade from island to island. Flinders describes in favorable terms the aspect of some of these coasts. Darnley's Island, in particular, had a fine appearance, and a dense population. Huts constructed of bamboo were seen surrounded by neat fences, enclosing small plantations of yams, cocoa-nuts and other vegetables.

Leichhardt also found the natives of this western portion of Australia constructing excellent fish-nets, and making weirs across the creeks of dry sticks, to impede the escape of the fish. They were also not only blessed with a more liberal wild produce, as figs, oranges,

lemons, and a variety of smaller fruits, but also collected and roasted the roots of the large *Nymphæa*, or water-lily, and prepared the seeds of the *Pandanus*, and the seeds of the *Cycas*, by pounding, soaking, and roasting the *Pandanus*-seeds, and slicing, drying, and soaking the *Cycas*-seeds, so as to produce not only an agreeable food, but a pleasant beverage too. All these things mark a people far ahead of the wildest natives of the south.

But now let us imagine ourselves coming upon an encampment of these natives of Victoria. If it be in the morning or evening, while the men are there, you see these lords of creation sitting or lying round the fires, and about them a number of lubras and naked children; and around and amongst them a crowd of dirty, mongrel, mangy dogs, which set up an obstreperous barking at you. The dogs seem to have an instinctive feeling that the blacks and the whites are two different people, and it is said that those which have been accustomed to the blacks will never follow white men, let them be as kind to them as they will.

You will see the pot boiling, for they have obtained pots from the whites; or the opossum roasting, or half-roasting, for they eat all their meat half raw. The lubras must cook it, and the coolies, or men, enjoy it first; after which come in the women and children.

You see an old sack, their larder, hung here and there, out of the way of the dogs. These few boughs, their houses, their arms, their tomahawks, and their fishing-spears, are all their wealth. Many of them have blankets, and always of that dingy hue which those of gypsies have; others only shirts or jumpers, black as

months or years of unwashed wear can make them. Old hag-like women are crawling about, supporting themselves on tall sticks, like so many old fortune-tellers, or black Meg Merrilies. All this is a picture of savage life which would not, I think, enchant even a Rousseau! As you move along the river sides, if it be near a river, there you see them intently watching to spear fish; and if you go near a public house, there you see them, men and women too, as intently watching to get treated to that fire-water, which is destroying them, as it destroyed the North American Indians.

The natives do not like that any of their race should be civilized. I have read in Dr. Lang's history of three boys of the Wollombi tribe that had been induced to reside in three different families of settlers. The Illa-gong tribe marked them out as objects of vengeance, treacherously invited them to a corrobory, and then beat them to death with their waddies. He mentions, also, Bennelong, an intelligent native of some consequence in his tribe, whom Governor Phillip domesticated in his family and brought to England with him, introducing him to many persons in the highest circles, but who, on returning to his native land, speedily divested himself of his European attire, and returned a naked savage to the woods. Such cases are endless. One of the most striking is that of Jack and Bob, two natives whom Mr. Robinson had in his service thirteen years, and who appeared thoroughly civilized. Yet, on quitting Mr. Robinson's service, they went off with one Truganini, a black female, wife of another of Mr. Robinson's black servants. They became regular wanderers, and at length robbed a station near Western Port, and com-

mitted an outrageous murder, for which they were hanged at Melbourne in December, 1841.

These savages do not like that their children should be different to themselves. One man, whose children the missionaries had induced to go to school, was so angry, that he declared that if they took them to school again he would take some of the white children and teach them in his turn. He would give them "useful instruction," he said, "in hunting, fishing, and making nets; but the white men did no good to his children."

At M'Ivor there were some blacks employed in cutting wood for the government and the store-keepers, but these same blacks are now here, wandering over the gold-fields, too proud to dig, but not too proud to beg. One of them, Lankey, the other day, came and sat down on the ground by our tent, and said, "Bit of bread." I gave him some bread and some tea, but I added, "Why don't you black fellows dig gold like the white men, and then you get plenty white money, plenty tea, plenty sugar, plenty mutton?" He replied, with a slight shake of the head, "No, no." Yet the lubras, either by their commands, or their own more workable natures, the other day were hunting gold among the old stuff, and found some, and sold it to a store near. At this very moment, two lubras are passing the tent in their dingy blankets, fitted like close cloaks to their bodies, with a narrow band of red cloth round their heads, and their reticule-like baskets of dusky-red plat hanging, as is their fashion, in the middle of their backs. They look in at the next tent and say, "Bit of bread."

Having finished with the natives, I must now give you some account of the

AUSTRALIAN DISCOVERERS,

which I will take from my notes about the discovery of this strange and wonderful country, having of late been reading on that subject.

The French, the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch, all lay claim to the honor of discovering it. Don Pedro Fernando de Queros, a Spaniard of noble birth, discovered, in 1609, land which he called Australia del Espiritu Santo, somewhere in the neighborhood of Torres Straits. It is not certain whether the land which he discovered was really the continent of Australia, but that name has been given to it instead of Nieuw Hollandt, as the Dutch called it, who claimed to have been the still earlier discoverers.

The French say that they were before the Dutch, and that Captain Paulmier de Gonneville was driven on the coast of Australia in 1504. A great country is laid down south of the Moluccas in very ancient charts, both English and French. The country is styled New Java in these maps, and the land in its extent, and also in its position, bears some resemblance to Australia. But, unfortunately, it is represented not only as immensely larger than it is, but is adorned with animals, and houses, which make it look like a fiction concocted out of the vague descriptions collected from the voyages of the Portuguese in the eastern seas. The land that the *French* saw is now believed to have been *Madagascar*; and though it is probable that the *Portuguese* may have

had a glimpse of these shores so early as 1540, still there is no way of proving it.

Yet a strong persuasion of a great southern land had taken firm hold of the public mind, and it was reserved for the Dutch, in 1606, to give the first authentic account of it. A Dutch yacht, called the *Duyfhen*, leaving the port of Bantam towards the end of the previous year, coasted along the eastern shore of the Gulf of Carpentaria, as far as Cape Keer-weer, or Turnagain, supposing it to be the coast of New Guinea. The explorers were induced to turn again in consequence of a lack of provisions, and their terror of the "wild, cruel, black savages, by whom some of their crew were murdered." Quick in their track, however, appeared the Spaniards, under Louis Vaez de Torres, who, later in the same year, sailing from Callao in Peru, coasted along the Louisade Islands, and passed through the dangerous straits which now bear his name. Such, however, was the secret policy of the Spanish government, that nothing of this was known until Mr. Dalrymple, when the British forces were in possession of Madrid in 1762, found in the archives there the copy of Torres' letter, dated Manilla, 7th of July, 1607, giving an account of the discovery, including the hills of Cape York, which he describes as very high islands. Then it was and thus, owing to the liberality and justice of an Englishman, that the name of Torres received its due honor.

The Dutch, by their eastern possessions, were very conveniently situated for prosecuting discoveries in this quarter, and accordingly a succession of Dutch navigators laid open to the knowledge of the world the great western coast of Australia, from the Gulf of Carpentaria,

to Cape Leeuwin, and on thence to the southern portions of Van Diemen's Land, which they believed to be a part of what they called New Holland, including a great portion of the southern coast of the vast continent. Nor did they stop there, but, as we shall see, went on and discovered New Zealand, which they likewise thought a portion of this immense southern land, as it must have seemed to them.

Of this extent of country, the coast stretching from the tropic of Capricorn to the 28° south latitude was discovered by Captain Dirk Hartog, in the Dutch ship *Endraght*, or Harmony, and was thence denominated *Endraght's Land*. Two years afterwards, another Dutch captain, of the name of Zeachen, discovered a considerable portion of the northern coast, which he named the *Land of Arnhem*, which it still bears. The next year, Captain John Van Edels visited the western coast to the south of *Endraght's Land*, and gave his name to a part of it. In 1622, the south-west cape was discovered, with the land extending northwards to Van Edel's Land, and was named, oddly enough, *Landt van de Leeuwin*, or the Land of Lions. Could the worthy Dutchman have mistaken kangaroos for lions? or was it named after the vessel in which they sailed, or from the Dutch heraldic lion?

Five years afterwards, a considerable portion of the southern coast was discovered by Captain Peter Van Nuytes, who gave it his own beautiful name, which it still bears. In 1628, the line of coast intervening between *Endraght's Land* and the Land of Arnhem was discovered and surveyed by a captain of the Dutch East India Company, and named *De Witt's Land*, in honor

of De Witt, who then commanded the Dutch East India fleet. In the same year, Captain Peter Carpenter, an officer of the same honorable company, entered and explored the Gulf of Carpentaria, so named after him.

These were great and important discoveries, and they were yet to be greatly added to by one of the most interesting navigators and discoverers of any age.

ABEL JANSEN TASMAN.

This distinguished navigator was one of the earliest explorers of the ocean of the southern hemisphere. His fame, had he been an Englishman, would have been far greater than it is, for the Dutch have always been averse to the publication of their discoveries. As they destroyed the nutmeg-trees in the Banda Isles in order to keep up the price, and are said to subject the nutmegs themselves to some process, before sending them abroad, to prevent their growing, so, when they were a great maritime power, they were equally selfish with regard to their discoveries. These were kept profoundly secret as long as possible, and thus the just fame of those of their nation who made the first inroad into the darkness which hung over the southern regions of the globe suffered in consequence; and that of Abel Tasman among the rest. Of his last voyage nothing, in fact, is absolutely known — nothing was ever published. Nothing is known of the private life of Tasman; not even the names of the places where he was born and where he died! Yet he opened up regions of such importance to Holland, as must have made it one of the greatest

nations in Europe, if it only had had the sense to make proper use of its good fortune.

But neither Holland, Spain nor Portugal, ever had the good sense to do so; they were too selfish and too narrow to plant themselves worthily in the vast lands which opened upon them. England was always wise in this respect, and therefore has such fine colonies.

Tasman was in the service of the Dutch East India Company at the time that Anthony Van Diemen was its governor-general, about the middle of the seventeenth century. He showed so much maritime ability and enterprise, that Van Diemen, the greatest governor that the company ever possessed, sent him out on a voyage of discovery in 1642. The great object was to obtain further knowledge of the Australian continent which had been made known by previous Dutch navigators.

Tasman sailed from Batavia on the 14th of August, 1642, having two vessels under his command, the *Heemskirk* and the *Zeehaan*. He was a sort of ocean knight-errant. Love of glory and of the beautiful Maria Van Diemen, the daughter of Governor Van Diemen, were his guiding stars. Wherever he went, he marked his devotion to his friend and to his beloved by conferring their names on the lands which he discovered. Having touched at the Isle of France, he sailed to the 50° of south latitude, and then went eastward till having passed 127° east longitude, he then directed his course north and east, and on the 24th of November descried land, which he named Van Diemen's Land. He imagined this to be the southern extremity of Australia, and had no idea that it was, in fact, the southern part of an island.

Tasman did not remain to make much acquaintance with this country. He was defeated in his attempt to enter a bay, which he therefore named the Bay of Tempests, — Storm Bay. He then proceeded northwards to another bay, where he landed, and planted the standard of the Dutch East India Company, naming it Frederick Hendric Bay. Still pursued by unfavorable winds, he bore away to the Solomon Islands, which had been visited by other navigators. On the 13th of December he discovered land, to which he gave the name of Staatern Land, the land of the states, now known as New Zealand.

Tasman supposed this second great discovery to be still part of Australia. He sailed along the coast to the north-east, and entered Murderers' Bay, which he thus named from one of his sailors' being there killed by the natives. He next anchored in a bay to the east of Murderers' Bay, still called Tasman's Bay. He then continued his course northward till he visited the extreme northern point of New Zealand, which he named, after the object of his affections, Cape Maria Van Diemen, which name it has always retained.

He advanced still further, and discovered a small group of islands, which he named the Three Kings. The violence of the waves, however, prevented his landing, and he sailed away eastward, and afterwards northward as far as one hundred and seventy degrees south latitude, and then westward towards the Isles of Cocos and of Hoorn.

In the course of this voyage he reached Tongataboo, which he named Amsterdam, and Owhyhee, which he called Middleburg. He discovered several other islands,

amongst them, Annamooka. Thus was Tasman sailing about amongst the South Sea Islands one hundred and fifty years before they were visited by Captain Cook, who found the tradition of Tasman's sojourn there still fresh in the memory of the inhabitants.

On the first of February he discovered the island of Prince William. Running short of provisions, and fearing bad weather, he bore away for New Guinea, and some islands discovered by Schouten and Le Maire. He passed the Green Islands on the 19th of March, and on the 26th the Isle of St. John. On the 1st of April he was in sight of New Britain, which he supposed to be New Guinea, and soon after doubled the Cape of St. George of Dampier, and of Santa Maria of the Spaniards. On the 20th he was near Brandande Yland, or Burning Island, which had been mentioned by Schouten; and, after visiting various other islands, he reached Batavia on the 15th of June. Thus in the course of ten months Tasman had made far more discoveries than he ever dreamt of, or rather the beginning of discoveries of vast and most important lands.

The splendid result of this voyage induced Van Diemen to send out Abel Tasman on a second; the great object of which was to ascertain whether New Guinea belonged to the great Australian land, or whether there were a passage where Torres' Straits are now known to be. Of this voyage nothing certain is known. He had two vessels, the *Zeehaan* and the *Braak*, and "it seems to be the general opinion," says Flinders, "that Tasman sailed round the Gulf of Carpentaria, and then westward along Arnhem, and the northern coast of the northern Van Diemen's Land; and the form of these coasts in

Thevenot's charts of 1663, and in those of most succeeding geographies even up to the end of the eighteenth century, is supposed to have resulted from this voyage." This opinion is strengthened by finding the names of Tasman, the governor-general, and of two or three of the council who signed his instructions, given to places at the head of this gulf; as is also that of Maria, the daughter of the governor. In the notes also of Burgo-master Witsen, concerning the inhabitants of New Guinea and Hollandia Nova, as extracted by Mr. Dalrymple, Tasman is mentioned as amongst those from whom his information was drawn.

So little justice has been done to Tasman by his countrymen, that his name does not even occur in Chalmers, nor in many other universal biographies in the English language. But, notwithstanding this, his name and fame are stamped on the countries which he first made known. The island which he styled Van Diemen's Land, in honor of his friend and patron, is now every day more and more acquiring his own name. Tasmania is in general use, though the name of Van Diemen still clings to it also, as if, in the spirit of the ancient friendship, the enterprising governor and the bold and chivalrous navigator must be immortalized together.

Along the whole course of Tasman's Australian discoveries stand, as eternal monuments of his enterprise and his affections, names connected with his country, his friends, or his beloved and future wife. Near Tasman's peninsula, on the south-eastern coast of Van Diemen's Land, lies the island of Maria; the northernmost part of New Zealand bears the name of Cape Maria Van Die-

men ; and again, in the north-west of Australia, we find a Cape Van Diemen, and Van Diemen Gulf, named after the governor and Maria. Not satisfied with that, he named a great tract of country facing the Arafura Sea, and stretching from fifteen to twenty degrees south latitude, Van Diemen's Land. In some late maps Van Diemen's Land, in the north-west of Australia, is very properly called Tasman's Land.

DAMPIER, FURNEAUX, AND COOK.

The first Englishman who reached these coasts was the celebrated Dampier. This bold and skilful navigator was, as everybody knows, originally a buccaneer, and received his education amongst these lawless but dauntless men on the coast of South America. He was on a cruise against the Spaniards in the great South Sea towards the close of the seventeenth century, and, after doubling Cape Horn from the eastward, and stretching across the Pacific Ocean towards the equator, he spent some time on the coast of New Holland, and the accounts which he published on his return to England induced the government to send him out on a voyage of discovery in that quarter, in 1699. Dampier turned his attention chiefly to that line of coast which the Dutch had before discovered, and made accurate surveys of it, and close observations of the country and the people.

The next Englishman who reached these shores and made important discoveries, was no other man than the celebrated Captain Cook. It is interesting to me to remember the little village of Marton, near Flamborough

Head, which we saw during that pleasant visit of ours to Scarborough ; for from that little spot issued the great discoverer of so many islands of the Pacific, and of the eastern coast of Australia. It is curious to think of the little peasant-boy who used to run about on that coast, and afterwards was apprenticed at Whitby, and was an humble sailor on board a collier bringing coals to London, becoming, by his spirit and genius, a great naval commander, and one of the greatest discoverers of modern times. To him we owe the discovery of a thousand miles of Australian coast, — of that part, in fact, which is now called New South Wales.

He made two voyages to this eastern coast ; one in 1770, when, being sent out to Tahiti by the British government to make observation of the transit of Venus, he sailed westward of that island, and fell in with the Australian coast somewhere near Cape Howe. He then pursued the coast up northward, and surveyed the outline of this magnificent stretch of coast as far as Cape York, the northernmost point, an extent of one thousand miles. In this survey he anchored for a time at Botany Bay, to give to Sir Joseph Banks, and his other scientific associates, an opportunity of investigating the singular, and till then unknown plants, trees and animals, which were found there. Botany Bay, notwithstanding its name, is an especially sandy, barren place, and is only remarkable for its flowers in early spring. The place commonly miscalled Botany Bay in England, till of late years, was Sydney Cove and Port Jackson, the future penal settlement, and now become the great and populous capital of New South Wales. This magnificent port was so called by Cook, after a common sailor

who descried it from the mast-head ; but as Cook believed it nothing more important than a small haven fit for boats, he gave it no attention, and the name of the sailor Jackson was thus destined to be immortalized, affixed there forever as in letters of iron and of lead on the face of a rock.

It is singular that such a man as Cook should have lain eight days in the open and immense harbor of Botany Bay, the scientific men making excursions every day into the country, and yet that the whole party should have sailed away perfectly unaware that all the time they had been located within eight miles of one of the most magnificent harbors in the world. It was not till 1787, that is, fourteen years after Cook's last visit to this coast, in 1773, that Captain Arthur Philip, the first governor of Sydney, on being sent out with a number of convicts to found a penal colony there, being soon convinced that Botany Bay was by no means a suitable spot for the settlement, proceeded to examine the inlets laid down more northward on Cook's chart, and to his astonishment discovered that which Cook had named Port Jackson, and deemed unworthy of further examination, was a most splendid harbor, and presented a most beautiful situation for a settlement. He therefore removed his people to Sydney Cove, one of the numerous and romantic inlets of that superb port, and there founded the now flourishing city of Sydney.

Cook had seen the land on the southern coast extending away far westward, but did not explore it in this direction ; and on his second voyage, in 1773, Captain Furneaux, who separated from Cook on the voyage, sailed across the eastern entrance to what are now

known as Bass's Straits, between Australia and Van Diemen's Land. Captain Furneaux there made a wonderful discovery, that is, that there was no strait between New Holland and Van Diemen's Land, but only a deep bay! A very deep bay indeed, having no bottom, or rather end, for it is open at both ends. Accordingly, for a long time it was settled by geographers that Van Diemen's Land was only the southern extremity of Australia; and you may see, in all the maps of that time, the land represented as running down from Cape Howe to Launceston; and I suppose it was on the faith of one of those maps that a colonial minister, a few years ago, in Parliament, speaking of the progress of these colonies, stated that there was a mail-coach running regularly from Melbourne to Launceston, Van Diemen's Land!

But now came

CAPTAIN MATTHEW FLINDERS AND GEORGE BASS,
SURGEON,

who went to divide the Australian continent and Tasmania, and open up such an ocean between them as would require a very lofty mail-coach to travel, and keep its head above water.

Matthew Flinders was a native of Donington, in Lincolnshire. He went early to sea in the merchant service; then he entered the royal service, and in 1795 he was a midshipman in the royal navy, and went to New Holland in the vessel which conveyed thither the second governor, Captain Hunter. On board this ship he found a congenial associate in the person of George Bass, the

surgeon, who, like himself, was of a bold and adventurous disposition, and was filled with a passionate desire of exploring new countries.

Soon after their arrival at Port Jackson, these enterprising young men launched a little boat, most appropriately named Tom Thumb, being only eight feet long. In this Flinders and Bass, with no other companion than a boy, ran across Botany Bay, and explored George's River, twenty miles beyond the point where Governor Hunter had had it surveyed. They made several discoveries, and encountered many dangers. Their enthusiasm was appreciated, however, by few persons in the colony, who were people chiefly intent on pushing their fortunes by land speculations and the sale of rum.

The English had been ten years in possession, and there was an imaginary line of more than two hundred and fifty leagues, beginning in the vicinity of the colony, set down on the charts as unknown coast. Flinders was anxious to explore that coast, and remove the disgrace of such apathy and negligence from his country. The complete examination of Australia became what he called his "darling object."

It was not yet known, as we have said, that Van Diemen's Land was an island. Captain Hunter, afterwards governor, had, indeed, in running along the coast of Van Diemen's Land towards Port Jackson, in the *Sirius*, in 1788 and 1790, expressed a strong opinion that a strait or deep gulf would be found between Maria's Island and Cape Howe, from the heavy current running there : and now Bass, in sailing down the same coast in a whale-boat, was struck with the same conviction from the vast swell which came from the west-

ward, and suggested that it could only be produced by the great southern ocean.

Flinders was therefore sent, with his old companion Bass, to ascertain this fact. They embarked in the *Norfolk*, a large decked boat, so called from being built of Norfolk Island pine. They had only a crew of six men. With this small vessel, thus magnificently manned, they ran through the straits, made a rapid survey, and returned to Port Jackson in a little more than three months. Thus was the land discovered by Tasman proved to be an island, and the fiction of the old maps forever destroyed. The name of Bass was very properly given to the straits; but this, however, was the only reward of this meritorious man.

Lieutenant Flinders, after being sent out again to explore the coast north of Port Jackson, in the following year, 1799, fulfilled his task by visiting and examining all the creeks and bays as far as Harvey's Bay. He then went to England and was promoted. From England, in 1801, Captain Flinders again set sail in the *Investigator*, a bark of three hundred and thirty-four tons, carrying eighty-eight men, with two artists, an astronomer, a naturalist, a botanic gardener, and a miner, on a voyage of fresh Australian discoveries. Meantime, poor Bass set sail from Sydney as mate or master of a trading vessel, and was never heard of more. In 1820 there was a vague report that he was still alive, and settled somewhere in Peru, but the most probable story is that he was lost at sea.

Captain Flinders, furnished with a French passport, — for it was in the very heat of the war between England and France, — ordering all French authorities in

all places, whether at sea or on land, to receive and entertain him as a friend, hastened once more to Australia, where he met in Encounter Bay with Captain Baudin, a French commander, who had received a similar passport from the English government, on the plea of going on a voyage of discovery round the world. Baudin had the start of Flinders nine months, and had gone straight to Australia, and there had occupied himself diligently in examining Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales, evidently with a view of forming a French colony.

Captain Flinders then proceeded to Port Jackson, and, after refitting, sailed again along the north-east coast, explored Northumberland and Cumberland Islands, and surveyed the great Barrier Reef of rocks. Passing through these peculiar mazes in fourteen days, he bore northward, made Torres Straits, surveyed the vast Gulf of Carpentaria, when his vessel proving unseaworthy, he bore away to the Island of Timor to refresh his men, and then made for Port Jackson by way of Cape Leeuwin and Bass's Straits.

Thus was the whole of Australia circumnavigated by one man and in one voyage. But Captain Flinders having been obliged to hasten his voyage on account of the state of his vessel, again set out to make the same round with three vessels. In Torres Straits his ship, the *Porcupine*, and one of the others, struck on the rocks. The *Bridgewater*, which was safe, commanded by Captain Palmer, instead of assisting them, made off and left them; but this base captain and all his crew met with a deserved fate, being all lost at sea.

Meantime Captain Flinders, with dauntless resolu-

tion and humanity, in admirable contrast to the conduct of Captain Palmer, landing his men on a sand-bank, furnished them with all the stores, except just sufficient to enable himself to reach Sydney, and then set off on that formidable voyage of seven hundred and fifty miles in an open boat, to procure a fresh vessel. He accomplished his daring enterprise, and in less than seven weeks was back again to the aid of his people.

He then attempted to reach England in the small vessel which he had brought to the reef, but putting into the Isle of France, on the faith of his French passport, he was seized and detained by the governor, De Caen, as a prisoner of war.

It was soon evident what was the real object of his detention. The French were bent on securing a position in Australia, and, as a claim to such footing, were desirous, at any cost, especially any cost of faith and honor, of appearing the *discoverers* there. All the charts and papers of Captain Flinders, containing the most accurate surveys of the coast of Terra Australis, were seized and taken away, and were sent to France without delay, so that they might make the whole of the discoveries of Flinders appear as those of Baudin.

Captain Flinders was detained a prisoner at the Isle of France for six years, and meantime a volume of Baudin's voyages, accompanied by an atlas, was published, in which all the discoveries of Nuyts, Vancouver, Grant (the first to pass through Bass's Straits after Bass himself), and D'Entrecasteaux, as well as those of Flinders and Bass, were carried to Baudin's account, and the whole southern coast significantly denominated — TERRE NAPOLEON!

Every point named by Flinders had been rechristened, and there was a display of all sorts of Gallic names along that stretch of territory, from Cape Marengo and Cape Rivoli to Talleyrand Bay. Baudin had made about fifty leagues of real discoveries, and he had modestly claimed, or there had been claimed for him, nearly nine hundred leagues.

But all these imaginary conquests were destined to fade away before the light of truth, and the power and energies of the British people, as rapidly as did the European empire which the great conqueror Napoleon had built up to gratify his ambition.

INLAND DISCOVERERS.

WENTWORTH, LAWSON, BLANLAND, OXLEY, STURT, HOVELL AND
HUME, CUNNINGHAM, MITCHELL, STRZELECKI, GELLIBRAND, AND
HESSE.

The first colony established in Australia was that of Sydney, now called New South Wales. The object of its establishment was to substitute these lands as penal colonies in place of the colonies of North America, then lost to the mother country by the revolution. Accordingly, in May, 1787, a fleet of eleven sail left Portsmouth, carrying out Captain Philip as the governor of the proposed colony, and eight hundred and fifty convicts, six hundred of them men, two hundred and fifty women, besides a number of marines with their officers. The difficulties and hardships which these harbingers of a great nation had to endure for some time after their arrival, as well as on their voyage, which occupied no less than eight months, are extremely interesting, but do

not come within the scope of my present purpose. Under a succession of governors, interior discovery has been continually advancing.

In 1813, the pressure of the rapidly increasing cattle and flocks of the colonists demanded a more extended pasturage. The rich banks of the Hawksbury were highly productive, under the operations of the agriculturists, but the tracts occupied by the sheep and cattle were excessively barren. A lofty and rugged range of mountains, called the Blue Mountains, about forty miles to the westward of Sydney, and running parallel with the coast, cooped up the growing flocks and herds within narrow limits. Many were the attempts to scale or find a way through these mountains, but in vain. They abound with frightful chasms and precipitous ranges, seeming to bid defiance to the efforts of man. But, at length, Messrs. Wentworth, Blaxland and Lawson, urged on by a long drought and the consequent suffering of their flocks, made a resolute attempt to pass this gigantic barrier, and succeeded. A road was constructed by Governor Macquarrie through these mountains. Thus an almost boundless country was opened up to the annual spread of the squatter, especially the rich plains of Bathurst and the valleys of Argyll, since when, river after river, and tract after tract, have been discovered. Mr. Oxley, the surveyor-general under Governor Macquarrie, traced the Lachlan and Macquarrie rivers till they lost themselves in the vast swamps of the interior. Under Sir Thomas Brisbane, the successor of Macquarrie, Mr. Oxley also discovered the river Brisbane in 1823, and traced it up for nearly one hundred miles.

In 1827, Captain Sturt prosecuted, during a season

of severe drought, the discoveries of the Lachlan and the Macquarrie, and found the track of the Macquarrie continued through the great swamp until it united with the larger bed of a new river, called the Darling, whose waters are seen to take a south-western direction, in common with all the rivers of that locality, and to fall into the noble stream of the Murray. The Lachlan was also traced through the swamp, where in a wetter season it appeared lost, and fell into the Murrumbidgee, a tributary of the Murray.

Captain Sturt, with indefatigable zeal, prosecuted his inquiries so as to dissipate the dreams of an inland sea, and exhibit, instead, a vast desert of stony plains and hills of sand, extending in a northerly direction from the town of Adelaide to twenty-four and a half degrees of south latitude.

But still earlier than this, in 1824, a most important discovery was made by Messrs. Hume and Hovell. These gentlemen, residents in New South Wales, resolved on the formidable enterprise of exploring the country which lay between that colony and Bass's Straits. They set out from Lake George, in the county of Argyll. They skirted the ranges of the Australian Alps, then called the Warragong Chain, the native appellation, and successively crossed three considerable rivers, the Hume, the Ovens, and the Goulburn, all falling into one great stream, since named the Murray by Captain Sturt, who succeeded in tracing its progress to the sea, or rather into the Lake Alexandria, near Adelaide. The Murray is the largest known river of Australia.

These adventurers had proceeded four hundred miles

beyond the remotest settlement, when they emerged on a sandy sea-beach, supposed to be somewhere near Geelong. In retracing their steps, they climbed a lofty hill, thirty-five miles north of where Melbourne now stands, hoping to get thence a wide view of the ocean on one hand, and of the interior on the other; but the density of the trees, and their enormous height, even on the summit, prevented their view. The hill is still called Disappointment, in memory of their feelings, and is a well-known elevation of the Plenty ranges.

Thus was the present colony of Victoria first made known. But though occasional squatters had found their way to the rich pastures of Victoria, as the Messrs. Imlay at Twofold Bay, the Messrs. Henty at Portland Bay, and Batman Fawkner, and the first founders of Melbourne in 1835, little attention was paid to this region till after Major Mitchell had crossed it in 1836, and published a most glowing account of it under the name of Australia Felix. Since then Gippsland has been opened up by a Mr. M'Millan, an overseer of the Messrs. M'Allister of New South Wales, and subsequently explored by Count Strzelecki.

I may also mention here two more victims to the thirst of discovery, Messrs. Gellibrand and Hesse. These were two of the earliest settlers in Port Philip. They were young and ardent men. Mr. Gellibrand was a successful lawyer in Hobart Town, but hearing of the discovery of the new region across the water, he hastened over, and ranged far and wide through the yet solitary country. Afterwards, accompanied by his friend Hesse, he started on an excursion westward of Port Philip, from which they never returned. All inquiries

after them proved fruitless, and it is only of late years that it has come to light that their fate was known to the natives in the rugged country near Cape Otway. From them it has been learned that Mr. Hesse fell exhausted by the way, the travellers having entangled themselves in the labyrinths of the rugged mountains and matted woods of the Cape Otway forests.

It appears that Mr. Gellibrand pushed on to a camp of natives to obtain food for his dying friend, where the savages murdered him, as is supposed, to obtain his dress. These barbarous natives had previously murdered four colonists who were the first to appear amongst them. The names of Hesse and Gellibrand are commemorated by two hills about thirty miles westward of Geelong, and there is also a Mount Gellibrand about twelve miles from Melbourne. The skull which there is reason to believe is that of Gellibrand has been recovered, being pointed out by a native. It was stated by the native that it was on that spot that he was murdered. The skull was clearly that of a white man, and exhibited a fracture as from the blow of a tomahawk.

Meantime, the country northward of Sydney had, so early as 1825, been opened up to the settlers by the discovery of a pass in the mountains by Mr. Allan Cunningham, a celebrated naturalist, and which he called Pandora's Pass. This led from the district of the upper part of Hunter's river to the Great Liverpool Plains, an immense pastoral country, northward and westward. In a recent expedition in the same direction, and extending to Moreton Bay, he crossed two considerable streams, the Guydir and the Dumaresq. Mr. Cunningham, from his experience of the refreshment of fruit in his solitary

travels in the bush, always afterwards made a practice of carrying a bag of peach-stones with him on any expedition, and planted them in the forest as he proceeded.

Discovery was also making rapid strides in other portions of this great continent. In 1829, as we have seen, Captain Sturt undertook his expeditions down the Murrumbidgee, and had made known the course of the Murray, and splendid tracts of pastoral country on that side of the continent, extending towards the Gulf of St. Vincent.

In 1840-1, Mr. Eyre made a most important journey, overland, from Adelaide to King George's Sound, throwing much light on the country, its inhabitants, and productions; while in north-eastern Australia Sir Thomas Mitchell cleared up much mystery hanging over the vast regions between the Darling and the river Victoria, which stretches its wide and noble stream northward, apparently towards the Gulf of Carpentaria.

I have seen, too, somewhere, a most interesting narrative of the death of a traveller in the north-east of Australia, Mr. Kennedy, I believe, who was speared by the natives, and whose native attendant, Jockey-Jockey, at his dying request carried his papers away, and managed to reach Albany with them in safety. I could not, however, find any account of him at Melbourne, and here in the bush I have no means, of course, of doing so.

The last traveller, therefore, which I shall introduce, is

LEICHHARDT.

Dr. Ludwig Leichhardt, but recently returned from an exploratory journey to the northward of Moreton Bay,

learned that a strong desire existed that an overland journey should be undertaken from Moreton Bay to Port Essington, on the north coast of Australia. It had been proposed that this expedition should be undertaken by Sir Thomas Mitchell, and that the colonial government should appropriate one thousand pounds to this object. There being, however, difficulties and delays in the carrying out of this scheme, Dr. Leichhardt at once offered to undertake this journey, provided he could be assisted in the expense. This was done by a number of individuals; and, on the 14th of August, 1844, he left Sydney, accompanied by five persons, who, on reaching Moreton Bay, were increased to nine, — with himself, ten persons. Of these, four were gentlemen, one was a boy of sixteen, two were natives, and one an American negro. Of these, Mr. Hodgson was a colonist, and Mr. Gilbert had been an assistant to Mr. Gould, the eminent zoologist.

They had sixteen bullocks and seventeen horses, for riding upon and carrying their stores of provisions. This journey was completed in about seventeen months. They encountered no wonderful adventures, but plenty of hardships. For a long time after their provisions were exhausted they subsisted on fruits and what they killed, — kangaroos, emus, opossums, iguanos, and fish. They had no flour, no tea, no sugar, no salt, left. Yet, with the exception of one of their party, Mr. Gilbert, who was killed by the natives in a treacherous night attack, the whole party reached the place of their destination alive and well.

I shall now give a few facts from this journey regarding the natives, and the native objects, which differed in

a great degree from those of this colony. I have already said that though they found no very powerful tribes of natives, yet, as they proceeded northwards, the race had decidedly a more advanced character. It was a very unusual thing, indeed, for Australian natives to make an attack in the dark, but this they did just after the weary travellers had laid down to rest, about seven o'clock in the evening; and Mr. Gilbert, looking out of his tent, was struck with a spear, and fell dead. At the first discharge of guns, the natives took to their heels.

It was clear that these natives, who had not before seen white people, took them for spirits, and would not look them in the face, lest the whites should thus obtain a power over them. A native and his gin, seeing the travellers advance, ran up into a tree, and when they were asked by them where they could find water, kept their backs towards them. As they went round the tree to come in front of them, they as carefully turned round too. Another fellow ran up into a tree, where he stood between some dry branches, like a strange phantom or a statue. Though they called to him, and made signs to him, he remained motionless and mute, as though he himself were but a black, dead branch. At last Charley, one of the natives accompanying Leichhardt, began to climb the next tree; and on this the other began to bawl out lustily. He *pooed*, he *birred*, he spat and *cooed*, and made such a noise that the horses took fright, and those which were loose ran away. Lest his cries should bring a whole tribe upon them, they went to some distance, when he was quieter for a time, but began again to halloo, and throw sticks at the travellers and their horses. They removed still further off, when





SEIZING THE CHILD, AND SHRIEKING PITEOUSLY, SHE
RAPIDLY CROSSED THE CREEK.

he cautiously slid down, dropped, and made off into the woods.

On another occasion, while riding along the banks of a river, they saw an old woman before them, walking slowly and thoughtfully through the forest, supporting her slender and apparently exhausted frame on one of those long sticks which the women use for digging roots. A child was running before her. Fearing that she would be much alarmed if they came too suddenly upon her, as neither their voices in conversation nor the foot-fall of their horses attracted her attention, they *cooeed* gently. After repeating the call two or three times, she turned her head. In sudden fright she lifted her arms, and began beating the air, as if to take wing. Then, seizing the child and shrieking piteously, she rapidly crossed the creek, and escaped to the opposite ridges.

No doubt they were the first white people and the first horses that she had ever seen. "And what," says Leichhardt, "could she think, but that we were some of those imaginary beings in the legends by which the wise men of her people frighten the children into obedience, and whose strange forms and stranger doings are the favorite topics of conversation amongst the natives at night, when seated around their fires?"

Besides those two-storied huts, and their fish-weirs, which I have mentioned to you in the chapter on natives, they observed that these people had also a kind of trap, or decoy, for emus, constructed of dry sticks, with which they fence in the watering-places of these birds, leaving entrances for them, and then surprising them when entered. Besides, too, their superior preparation of a variety of food, and even of a drink from the

fruit of a tree, they observed that one of them had advanced so far in the arts that he had carved a representation of the foot of an emu in the bark of a gum-tree. He had performed it with all the exactness of a good observer. "It was," says the traveller, "the first specimen of the fine arts that we had witnessed in our journey."

Of animals, they saw, as I have stated, crocodiles in the rivers, and black kangaroos, as well as buffaloes, in the neighborhood of Port Essington, as Leichhardt calls them, but which, he says, are the offspring of the cattle which have escaped into the forest, and are, therefore, only wild cattle.

Amongst the birds which he saw, perhaps the most remarkable was a species of kite (*Milvus isiurus*), which was so bold that it used to dart down, while they were at their meals, and snatch the meat from the plate in their hands. Swarms of them would come, like the harpies in the *Æneid*, and they had a regular fight with them. "If the natives," Leichhardt observed, "had had as much boldness, we must speedily have decamped." One of them, on one occasion, snatched a skinned specimen of a new species of honey-sucker out of Mr. Gilbert's tin case; and when they were busy drying meat, to carry with them, they were obliged to have a stick in one hand, as they laid out the meat with the other, to beat them off.

They saw a different species of laughing jackass to that which we have here; not the *Dacelo gigantea* of Gould, but the *Dacelo cervina*, a smaller bird, with a different and not so ludicrous a noise, but, like the *gigantea*, always heard before sunrise, and immediately after sun-

set. Of wild ducks, geese, pelicans, honey-birds, and bower-birds, plenty; but I do not recollect that he mentions any black swans there.

Amongst the insects was one that I have not seen here, — the gum-tree ant. They were near the river Lynd. They seemed to live in small parties, in rude nests, between the green leaves of shady trees. The passers-by, when touching one of their nests, would be instantly covered with these ants, and would soon be aware of their presence by their keen and pungent bites. They had, too, plenty of bright-yellow hornets, with black marks, which made their paper nests on the stems of trees, or suspended them from the dry branches. They were so fierce, and stung so severely, that when they found them near their camp they made fires of the dry grass to drive them away. By the by, too, plenty of native bees, and lots of delicious honey, in the hollow trees, which you don't find here.

Amongst the flowers seem to have been many beautiful ones, but none more so than one mentioned by Dr. Lang as growing in Sydney, which, though not exactly in place, I shall mention here. It is the *Doryanthes*, or spear-flower, as the word means, called by the colonists the *gigantic lily*. This splendid flower shoots up a single upright stem, about an inch and a half in diameter, from a tuft of blady and acuminate leaves, to the height of from six to twelve feet, which all at once expands at its highest point into a bunch of beautiful blood-red flowers, considerably larger than a man's head. This splendid flower, which would make a very fine show in a king's garden, forms a great contrast with the stunted

trees around it, and the sterile, scanty soil from which it always springs.

Leichhardt found nothing like that northward, but he saw beautiful red passion-flowers; Bauhinias, with large white blossoms, fragrant climbing Capparis, also, with large, white, showy blossoms; a species of *Amaryllis*, with large clusters of fine yellow flowers. There grew the real sensitive plant, and the Gardenia, with flowers of the shape and fragrance of the jasmine; the white cedar; the native cotton-tree, with bright, showy yellow blossoms, and large capsules, full of silky cotton; cabbage-palms, and numbers of flowers and trees, which, having only botanical names, will give as little real idea of them to others as they do to me. Then, as to fruits, they found oranges, lemons and figs, in abundance; but whether they were very good I do not know, not being there to taste them. But there were fig-trees, he says, in the bush, of fifty and sixty feet high, with a rich shady foliage, and covered with bunches of fruit, which were of the size of a small apple, and of an agreeable flavor, *only* they were full of small ants and flies. There were native raspberries, and fruit like strawberries, and mulberries, and raspberry-jam trees, which, I suppose, only smelt like raspberry-jam, or they would be very convenient trees, and save the trouble of preserving.

Then there were those Capparis-trees. I have no idea what they are, but they had not only flowers in full bloom, but eatable fruit. There were *Roorajongs* and *Santalums*, with fruit, I am afraid, nothing to boast of, for the lemons were only *half an inch* in diameter. There were *Pandanus*-trees, with fruit which required a little cooking, or it took the skin off your mouth; and

fruit of the *Eugenia*, a tree forty feet high, which was two inches in diameter, scarlet-red, and very eatable, — which means, I expect, just so-so, — and another *Eugenia*, the fruit of which was quite delicious, some of the fruit scarlet, and some rose-color. So that altogether the natives of the northern parts have much more bountiful woods than these poor wretches here, who have hardly a berry that a bird would eat, much more a man.

I must quote you a passage in Leichhardt with which we know how to sympathize, and which is very descriptive of the experience of bush-travellers in this often barren and thirsty land :

“ He who travels the untracked forest is in a continual state of excitement ; now buoyed with hope as he urges on his horse towards some distant range or blue mountain, or, as he follows the favorable bend of a river, now all despairing and miserable, as he approaches the foot of the range without finding water, from which he could start again with renewed strength, or as the river turns in an unfavorable direction, and slips out of his course. Evening approaches ; the sun has sunk below the horizon for some time, but still he strains his eye through the gloom for the dark verdure of a creek, or strives to follow the arrow-like flight of a pigeon, the flapping of whose wings had filled him with a sudden hope, from which he relapses again into a still greater sadness. With a sickened heart he drops his head to a broken and interrupted rest, while his horse is standing hobbled by his side, unwilling, from excess of thirst, to feed on the dry grass.

“ How often have I found myself in these different states of the brightest hope and the deepest misery, rid-

ing along, thirsty, almost lifeless, and ready to drop from my saddle with fatigue, — the poor horse, tired like his rider, stumbling over every stone, running heedlessly against the trees, and wounding my knees! But suddenly the note of *Grallina Australis*, the call of cockatoos, or the croaking of the frogs, is heard, and hopes are bright again. Water is certainly at hand; the spur is applied to the flank of the tired beast, which already partakes in his rider's anticipations, and, quickening his pace, a lagoon, a river, or a creek, is before him!

“The horse is soon unsaddled, hobbled, and well washed; a fire is made, the teapot is put to the fire, the meat is dressed, the enjoyment of the poor reconnoiterer is perfect, and a prayer of thankfulness to the Almighty God who protects the wanderer on his journey bursts from his grateful lips.”

There is another passage in Leichhardt describing the routine of their day, which reminds me so strongly of our travelling in the bush, that I shall conclude this paper with a portion of it.

“As soon as the camp is pitched, and the horses and bullocks unloaded, we have all our allotted duties. To make the fire falls to my share; Brown fetches water for tea; Mr. Calvert weighs out the flour for the fat cake; the large teapot being empty, Mr. Gilbert weighs out the dried meat to stew for our late dinner; and during the afternoon every one follows his own pursuits,—washing, mending clothes, repairing saddles, pack-saddles, and packs. I write my log, lay down my route, or walk out to botanize, or ride out reconnoitering. Mr. Gilbert takes his gun to shoot birds. A loud cooee unites us at evening round our table-cloth, and whilst enjoying

our meal the subject of the day's journey, the past, the present, and the future, furnish conversation.

“ Mr. Roper is taciturn; Mr. Calvert likes to speak, and is an excellent companion, with jokes and amusing stories; Mr. Gilbert has travelled much, and consequently has a rich store of *impressions du voyage*. His conversation is pleasing and instructive, describing the countries and the customs of the people he has known. He is well informed on Australian ornithology.

“ As night approaches, we retire to our beds. The two black fellows and myself spread out each our own under the canopy of heaven; most of the rest have their tents. Mr. Calvert entertains Roper with his conversation; John amuses Gilbert; Brown — one of the natives — tunes up his corroboree songs, in which Charley joins. Brown sings well, and his melodious, plaintive voice lulls me to sleep when otherwise I am not disposed. Mr. Phillips is somewhat singular in his habits. He erects his tent generally at a distance from the rest, under a shady tree, or a green bower of shrubs, where he makes himself as comfortable as the place will allow, by spreading branches and grass under his couch, and covering his tent with them, to keep it shady and cool, and even planting lilies in blossom (*Crinum*) before his tent, to enjoy their sight during the short time of our stay. As the night advances, the black fellow's songs die away; the chatting voices cease, or become few and far between.

“ The neighing of the tethered horse, the distant tinkling of the bell, or the occasional cry of night-birds, alone interrupt the silence of our camp. The fire grows dull and smouldering under our pot, where simmers the meat

for the morrow; the bright constellations pass unheeded over the heads of the dreaming wanderers of the wilderness, until the summons of the laughing jackass recalls them to the business of the coming day."

That is a pleasant picture, but it is but the picture of a scene that is past and gone. Soon after, Mr. Gilbert was killed. The party reached their bourn, returned, and were dispersed. Dr. Leichhardt scarcely had reached Sydney, where he was received with the highest enthusiasm and public honors, when he planned a far more formidable journey, from the eastern to the western side of the continent, from Moreton Bay to Swan river! He departed on this stupendous undertaking December 6th, 1846. His party consisted of six whites and two blacks. He had purchased thirteen mules, twelve horses and two hundred and seventy goats, which, as they browse on shrub, can exist in the most sterile deserts, and might thus afford milk or flesh where all other sustenance failed. Besides this, he had been presented with forty oxen, three mules, and two horses. He calculated that he could not accomplish the journey under two years and a half, but he has now been absent nearly *seven* years, and, like Sir John Franklin, nothing has been heard of him. No doubt, he and all his party have perished, adding one more grand sacrifice to the spirit of discovery.

And so ends my chapter of discoverers, so many of whom "depart, like Ajut, never to return."

And now, I think, I have put down most of what I have seen, and a good deal of what I have heard, in the wilds of Australia. Anon, and I hope to be once more with you in merry England; and the fact that I am sit-

ting here surrounded by the golden splendor of a variety of acacias in flower, with my paper on my knee, writing to you at the foot of a huge gum-tree, and seated on the huge prostrate trunk of another, while the parrots and paroquets glance past me, in their brilliant green and scarlet and purple, with their sharp, wiry voices, while the cicada whirrs, and the wood-cricket sings, and a little taunting bird keeps crying near me, "Give it up! give it up!" and whole choruses of others are chirping exactly like a flock of chickens; and the leatherhead, in his queer voice, asks whether I am "quite well," and the laughing jackass seems as if he would laugh me out of my gravity, and the warbling crow pipes on in a charmingly grotesque kind of music — all this, I say, will appear then but as a pleasant dream.

Bush, near Nine-Mile Creek, December, 1853.

What a glorious time we have had travelling along for weeks through a beautiful country! On the Campaspe we saw natives fishing for what they call cod, but which is a sort of bream. I myself fish whenever I can, but, as my hooks are home-made, I have not always good success, though the fish is very good, and a great relish to us.

Our party now consists of my father, Alfred, and an American, Mr. Beams, together with lots of dogs. Of dogs we have now old Prinny, the privileged dog of the family, because, having come with us from England, he is allowed to live in the tent. We reckon him one of us. Prin passes his time in barking, watching everything we do, — I am sure he reasons about it too, — and

in killing all rats, mice, 'possums, wild-cats, tiger-cats, kangaroo-rats, rabbit-rats, and lizards, that he can lay hold of. Next comes Pincher, a big brindled bull-dog. He has a very terrible countenance, which makes people think he is not to be trifled with; nor indeed is he, for he hates all strangers. Pincher and Prin are not good friends, and every now and then have terrible pitched battles. Pincher has a great taste for hunting, which we do not approve of, and therefore every now and then he sets off on secret expeditions against all kind of creatures. Next comes my favorite Susan, or Mrs. Whitehead (which you please), a handsome Scotch colly, much given to barking, and leading away Pincher to hunt in the bush; and last of all five fat roundabouts of pups, black-and-white, and all exactly alike, belonging to Mrs. Whitehead, which, having found out that they also are watch-dogs, make a terrible yaffing and noise when anybody comes near the tent, so that there is no quiet for them. As we travelled along in the day we made a little cave for them in the loading of the cart, and there they lay very snugly, and I looked at them now and then, and when we stopped took them out; and their mother was quite satisfied, knowing that we meant well by them, and trotted on and hunted 'possums, or whatever else took her fancy.

The weather was very hot, and we had a dreadful tornado and thunder-storm. We had just pitched our tent in the bush when the storm came on roaring and rushing dreadfully; the trees bent like reeds, and our tent would have gone over like nothing, if we had not held fast by the poles; we had a regular battle with it for nearly half an hour. That was something of a

storm! And such rain, and such thunder! But what I was going to say was, that all the day before the storm came on the dogs were so affected that they were constantly sick. Such coming storms affect dogs in this way, for I remember Jonas Popkins telling us the same thing; only he said that the dogs were so sick with the heat that they could take no food, and threw up everything they ate! As to the little pups, they did nothing but yelp all the morning, and seemed miserable. At last it occurred to me to dip them in water, and when I had done so they were quiet at once, and then slept for hours.

On our journey we came to a beautiful station where we spent two days rambling about the country and enjoying capital good living. There were some fine lakes here among the hills, in which, however, was no fish but a sort of crawfish-lobster; but there were plenty, thousands and thousands, of water-fowl, black swans, ducks, pelicans, ibises, teals, divers, and all other kinds. The waters of the first lake we came to were as white as milk, which looked very odd. The plains round the lakes are full of wild-turkeys. We went out for a day's shooting, but, though Alfred and Mr. Beams are capital shots, we had not much luck either with the water-fowl or the wild-turkeys, which mostly managed to keep out of shot. They had just lately been hunted by a great gathering of the blacks, and were therefore very wild.

After we left the hills we came down into the vast swampy plains which border the Goulbourn river,—and here too was something to see! Mr. Beams said it was like the swamps of Demarara. For miles and miles you could see the water glittering among the rank

green water-plants, and there was such a croaking of frogs, and tall swamp-gum trees rising up like lofty columns out of the water; and when you came to the river, there it was running dark and gloomy in its deep bed with dense wattle-scrub on its banks.

This part of the country is infested with horse-stealers. We encamped about a mile from the bush. There was an old stock-yard near, where a number of very bad-looking fellows had taken up their quarters in a wilderness of trees. But we tethered our horses in a bend of the river behind our tent, and did not trouble ourselves about them, though we have three capital horses in excellent condition, worth about a hundred pounds each. Well, towards dark, a young man rode up on a good horse and said he was glad to see us camped there, for there was a gang of notorious horse-stealers down in the bush, who said they should camp up here that night, and so he was riding away, but, seeing our party camped so near the stock-yard, he would venture to stop. He said that the leaders of this gang were Joe the Sexton and another notorious fellow, who were always inquiring after lost horses, just on purpose to reconnoitre yours. Scarcely had we heard this than up rode this very Joe the Sexton, on a gray mare, with a foal following it; and at once we knew the man, for he and another had passed us, inquiring for lost horses, that very day, as we were sitting at dinner in the bush. Joe was a very ill-looking fellow, with a rough black beard and rusty black clothes, whence his name of the Sexton. As we did not want his company, no sooner did we see him coming than we quietly let loose our dogs, and they rushed out furiously towards him; Pincher making for

the foal, "Take care of the bull-dog!" shouted Alfred; "if he pins the foal you'll have to cut the foal's throat before you get him off!" and Mr. Beams said, speaking to my father, "That dog will eat somebody up before he has done!"

This was quite enough; Joe the Sexton, without stopping to inquire after "lost horses," turned his mare round and trotted off again, and we saw nothing more of him.

On we went over grassy plains which were sometimes wooded and sometimes not, but where there was always abundance of grass, so that the horses had plenty to eat, and became very fat. Now we were on the banks of the Broken river, and now we were half lost in the bush among the golden wattle in full flower. I never knew anything so pleasant! I have said before now how we all appear on our journey, but I have not said anything about the appearance of Beams. He is above six feet high, and very strong built; he rides a white horse, and wears a scarlet jumper, jack-boots, broad straw hat and blue veil. He looks a very formidable fellow, and rather bush-rangerish, with his rifle slung at his back. He is very amusing, and, as he has been all over the world, has plenty of adventures and wild stories to tell.

For instance, he has just been describing to us the house of a rich gentleman in Shoreditch, shut in amidst that great crowd of houses, and filled with the heavy, close air of that part of London. This gentleman, who had lived there all his life, and maintained that it was a very healthy situation, had surrounded himself with all the green and pleasant things of the country which he could collect. He was a very scientific man, a bota-

nist and a naturalist, and collected specimens of plants and animals from all parts of the world. There were in one room cases of ferns and of insects, whilst in another birds were seen building in old hats hung up against the wall: there were tortoises in the kitchen, and chameleons in the drawing-room; and, above all, there was in the engine-room of his works, basking in the warmth of the ever-burning fire, curled up in his immense folds, a terrible creature — a real living boa-constrictor. This large old boa used to be a great amusement to the workmen, and one in particular permitted the boa to become very familiar with him, allowing the creature after its bath to amuse itself by coiling itself round his body and outstretched arm. One day, however, the man got a terrible squeeze, and gave up this dangerous familiarity ever after. He had been brought to this gentleman by the captain of an East-Indiaman. Unprotected, except by his blanket, the fearful monster slept within a huge basket, at certain times coming forth to gorge himself upon rabbits, chickens, and “such small deer,” or to bathe in a brewery vat. At length, however, a horrible cry went through the house and warehouses that the old boa was missing — the blanket was empty. Snaky coils were suspected beneath beds and in cupboards, behind stores of merchandise, behind lumber in dark corners, or secreted within the nooks of the fireside; sofas, chairs, — all were distrusted.

There was a terrible hue and cry, but no boa was discovered; and week after week went on, and people began to forget that such a monster lurked in the house.

But one night the gentleman gave a dinner to some

friends in a small dining-room at the back of his warehouses. The whole place was filled with the savory odor of dinner, especially this dining-room. The guests had assembled, when, behold! there heaved itself up from behind the sideboard a terrible scaly head — terrible coils rustled — horrid eyes sparkled and gleamed across the table! The boa was aroused. Away fled the guests, in a terror which was more than even hungry men could master. After much trouble he was captured, well fed, and laid to rest in his basket.

But again the basket was empty. A cry and turmoil were heard in the street behind the warehouses! — children shouted and screamed like mad! The huge boa was seen curled round the crane, and gazing with horrid eyes and threatening head upon the astounded crowd below. After this second and terrible fright, the gentleman determined to send him to the Zoological Gardens; but he never did this, because the snake suddenly died.

The end of the poor fellow was rather pathetic — he was frozen to death one night, when, owing to a holiday, the engine-fire had gone low.

On this part of our journey we saw the grass-trees splendidly in flower, and quantities of beautiful flowers such as we never saw before, and one or two new trees; and as to animals and birds, they were endless. We mean to get a blue mountain parrot to take home with us; it is of deep-red and brilliant blue, and has many musical notes. Speaking of the creatures in this part of the country, I must mention that to-day Mr. Beams cut a bulldog-ant in two to kill it, as it was coming into the tent, and immediately the head turned and attacked

the body, and the body the head. The head seized the body with its mandibles, and the body kept stinging away at the head. The fight went on for half an hour without any appearance of weariness. I had often seen the same thing before, and when I told them they thought I exaggerated; but now they saw it for themselves. Instead of dying, as it ought to do in such circumstances, this strange creature sets to and fights with itself for hours, if some of the other ants do not come and carry it away, whether to eat or bury I cannot tell. The flies, however, ate this when we crushed it to put an end to its self-combat.

Speaking of these ants reminds me of a few notes on the insects which I made some time ago; and as I may not have a better opportunity of giving them, I will do it here.

In the fine weather there are thousands of dragonflies, very much like the English ones, soaring over your heads in the air, often as high as the trees, as gnats are seen soaring in England. The butterflies very much resemble the English ones, and I have been surprised not to meet with much larger ones, nor much larger moths, considering the enormous grubs which are found here, especially the wattle-grubs, which the natives eat, and which are as large as one's finger. The beetles are without end, and some of them very extraordinary things. There is one orange-yellow fellow, which we first took for a species of hornet, for he comes buzzing very briskly about you, and is the nimblest beetle I ever saw, for it is almost impossible to knock him down; when we did knock him down we found him a harmless, plump, orange-colored beetle. I fancy that he is some-

thing like the ass in the lion's skin, and makes a great pretence of being very formidable. There is a green creature, a kind of grub, which, like the larva of our May-fly in England, clothes himself with a jacket of bits of wood and sticks, and crawls up the sunny side of a tree, where he hangs till the sun brings him out into his fly state, and he leaves his rugged jacket behind him hanging on the tree. These jackets are nearly as long as your finger. I have been told that these are the jackets of the cicadas, but, as I never saw the creature creep out, I cannot say whether that be so.

The noise of these cicadas I have described to you as the incessant whirring of little wheels. Our uncle Richard compares their noise to that of spinning-jennies, and in truth it is very like it. The mole-crickets, which abound in the warm ground, make just such a whirring noise, but most loud and surprising. At first we thought they were the cicadas, but soon perceived that they were in the earth; and we then also perceived that the cicadas had at intervals an undulating sound in their whirr, as though they were boring into the tree, which they frequently do; and it is from their punctures that the manna distils,—most beautifully white and sweet manna, which falls on the ground like snow.

Then there is the peculiar cicada which resembles a hornet in some degree, and settles on the boughs of trees not very high, and makes a most ludicrous “Thuck, thuck, tweedle-de-dee.” Grasshoppers here are in myriads; some very large, and of a golden color. Wasps and wasp-looking flies are legion. There are insects called mantises, strange, skeleton-looking things, like the ghosts of grasshoppers, with long bodies, long

as your finger, of a pale-yellow, about as thick as a straw, with long, scraggy legs, and necks like giraffes, with a spectre-like head at the end. I never saw such odd creatures.

I have told you of the universal swarm of ants of all sizes, and of the large inch-long ones, called bulldogs, which bite and sting at the same time terrifically; but I do not know that I told you that we had seen some of a dark-red, and others as blue as steel, of more than an inch long, — I think an inch and a half, — especially fierce. The white ants make pyramidal nests of clay, often a yard and more high; and it is difficult to see where they get in, for the clay is baked by the sun hard as brick. Ants fill the hollows of trees with their clay nests, and will case stumps of a yard high over with them. We have found, too, nests of others in the hollows of trees which have been blown down, as large as bee-hives, all made of the gummy kind of earth, exactly like the Japan earth of the shops, into which the interior of these trees often resolves itself. This earth has been moulded by the little creatures into thin scales like leaves, and one laid over another till there has been a huge ball of more than a foot through composed of these layers, one over another, like shingles.

I think I have told you that the ants bore into the very youngest trees, and make them hollow, and they do the same by the branches at the top of trees more than two hundred feet high. We have split some of these, and there, in the very heart of them, are the runs and channels of the ants, and the ants busy in them.

Amongst the spiders there is a very large one, which makes a cocoon of real yellow silk, so strong that you

can with great difficulty break it. There is also a native silk-worm, and we had a nest, as large as my hand, given to us, but forgot to bring it away. It was composed of yellow silk, and should be properly called a cocoon, and not a nest. There are also scarlet spiders, the bite of which they say is deadly; and there is a very odd spider, which makes holes in the ground, and puts lids over them like tankard-lids, with hinges made of a bit of grass, so that the spider can shut himself in.

Many of the wood-cricketts make noises like birds chirping, and some are quite musical. The centipedes are larger than the hundred-legs, as we call them in England, and which one sees sometimes turned up in the garden soil. Here they lie under the dead wood, and often under the bark; and therefore we are pretty cautious in handling them, for they are very venomous, and one of the young men who came out in our vessel died of a bite from one. They are from two to three inches long. The scorpions, too, lie under the wood; they have heads and claws something like lobsters, a long tail, which curves just as you see them drawn, and at the end a loose joint like a barley-corn, which is the sting. It is curious to see how exactly the constellation of the scorpion is like the real scorpion,—its head, the sweeping curve of the tail, and the sting-joint at the end composed of two stars in a precisely similar position.

But one of the oddest things I have heard of is the knobble-tailed lizard, which has a head at one end, and a knob at the other for a tail, so that it seems to have two heads. A gentleman who saw one insists that it has two heads, for he said one exactly resembled the other,

and at whichever end he touched it with his stick it ran the other way.

Among the birds in the bush, I must not forget to mention the Native Companion. It is a sort of stork, I suppose, three feet high ; some, I believe, are more. It something resembles the adjutant. It is very sociable, and takes strong attachments to people, and thence its name. There is one running about a store at Bendigo, and another, a very large one, at a station in this neighborhood, which is very much attached to the stockman. It follows him all about in his rounds through the woods. When he comes out in the morning, it begins to leap and flap its wings, runs round him, and makes the most extraordinary cries ; it then takes great lofty leaps as high as the man's head, cutting the oddest figure with its long legs, its flapping wings, and its gaping beak. The stockman says, "Come along, mate ; let us go to the horses." On which he leaves off capering and making his noises, and walks soberly along by his side. When the man goes up to the horse on one side, the bird goes up to him on the other to stop him ; but if the horse offers to come towards him, he leaps off very nimbly, and seeks protection by the man. Wherever the man goes, the bird stalks at his side like his shadow.

The curlews here are almost as curious. You hear them making their wild cries at night all around you in the midst of the diggings, where there is neither bush nor tree to shelter them, and where they cannot possibly remain all day. They must come by night out of the woods, and return thither before daylight, for you never see them, though I have constantly heard them, and often close at hand ; nor have any of us ever caught a single

glimpse of them. They hide themselves as completely as the flies in winter. And, in fact, where do flies go to? One finds all other sorts of insects in hollow trees, and under the bark of trees, in winter, — spiders, centipedes, beetles, all sorts of things; but one never finds a single fly, though there are such myriads in summer. Entomologists say that they all die, and that those which appear next spring are hatched from the eggs they leave. But I can hardly imagine that those great fat blue-bottles which appear on the very first warm day are only just hatched. It is quite a mystery!

To-day we killed a porcupine, the first that we have caught. It is between an English hedgehog and regular porcupine. The quills are only about an inch long; it is a queer, compound sort of creature, with a horned snout like a platipus, a long tongue like an ant-bear, and the beginning of a pouch which seems never to have been finished. It has a thick skin, quite as heavy as the body. We try all sorts of experiments in the eating line; so, as we had heard it was excellent, we roasted it, and found it as good as pork.

December 28th.

We have had a determined attempt to secure a wombat. There are numbers of wombats all about here, but neither this summer nor last have we been able to get sight of them. They are amazingly cunning animals. They make their holes where the scrub is so high and thick that you cannot possibly get a glimpse of them during moonlight nights, for night is the only time they venture out. They dig their holes so deep, and to such a length, that it is next to impossible to get at them.

Besides this, they make their dens near each other, so that there are whole underground villages of them; and most of them have two entrances, if not three, and no doubt they have holes through into their neighbors' dens. Anybody can understand, therefore, what a difficulty it must be to catch them. I think I have already mentioned the perpendicular circular holes that go down into these dens, and are commonly from eight to ten feet deep. These are said to be dug by the natives to get at them; but how they can manage to dig I cannot think. They are so narrow that no white man can stoop in them; and how they are dug and the earth thrown out of them seems quite a mystery; perhaps they crouch down and dig between their legs, for they can crouch into much less compass than any white man could. But then there is another difficulty: how can they contrive to keep the creature right under the hole while they are digging it? I have heard that they set a child with a stick to hem him in; but then he has two or three holes, so that they must have two or three children. But let that be as it may, we were determined to have a wombat, and, as we had neither black nor white children to help us, we made use of our dogs, and very good substitutes they are, too. We sent them down one at each end, and soon had them furiously barking at the creature a long way under ground, whilst it kept up a constant low, deep growl. As we wanted to know exactly where he lay, I went down myself twelve feet into the den with a strap fastened to my leg, to pull me back in case I should stick fast; and this will show what a large beast it must be, when I could crawl in for twelve feet. I could not, however, go further, because here the

burrow suddenly divided and contracted just sufficient to prevent my going on ; so I shoved myself out, and we sent Prin in again with a string tied to him, by which means we found out how far he was from one end, and the other end we stopped up with stakes. We then set to and dug a hole down to where we supposed him to lie. We sank two feet, and then we found that he had moved considerably towards the open end, spite of the dogs, one of which we had sent in each way. Well, we sank another hole right over where he then was, but on coming down he was not there ; he was now about half way between our two holes. The dogs were furious. Pincher had a regular fight with him in his den, and Prinny came up with his mouth full of wombat-hair. Before we could finish our third hole night came on ; so we safely barricaded him in, and left him till next morning. Next morning the dogs had him again at bay on the same spot, and we made ourselves sure of him ; but before we could get down the dogs lost all their ardor, and we suspected that by some mysterious means or other he had got away. We could not conceive how this could be, for all the entrances or holes that we knew of were carefully stopped, except the one by which the dogs went in, and that was full in sight. However, so it was, when we cut through into his run we found that the poor old fellow had employed himself in digging as fast as we had dug, and had formed a run at right angles of several yards, and made his escape into a neighboring run, and stopped the earth after him, so that the dogs could not follow ! I could not help saying, " Hurra, plucky old Wombat ! "

This last run was so full of foul air, or choke-damp,

that the dogs could not breathe in it, and the candles would not burn. So ended our wombat-hunting that time, but we mean to have another try before long. We dug on this occasion altogether thirty feet in depth, by six feet long, and two wide. But wombat-catching must always be difficult; for what can you do with a creature that burrows ten or twelve feet under ground, and makes runs of from twenty to thirty yards, and all the time can dig away as fast as you can? My scheme, however, is to make a box-trap, such as they catch cats in in a rabbit-warren, with two trap-doors, and fix it on one mouth of his hole, stopping well up the other. Alfred and I mean to make one as soon as we can get the time, and while we are among the wombats.

I forgot to say that we had plum-pudding on Christmas Day, and that reminded us of Jonas Popkins, who said, speaking of Christmas dinner, that the best sort of pudding was apple and gooseberry pie.

FOOT OF THE BUFFALO MOUNTAINS, *January 1st, 1854.*

A Happy New Year to everybody!

Here we are on our rambles up in the country where white men are yet strangers. We have got as far as the Buckland river, and a very pleasant journey we have had. Mr. B., our artist friend, joined us just before setting out from Nine-Mile Creek, because the scenery and flowers of the country where we are going are very beautiful.

On the second morning of our journey we came to a dreadful gap in the hills, through which we had to descend into the deep valley which runs up all the way

hither, sixty miles. What a dreadful place it was! A sudden dip from the hills down into the valley, the only possible descent being by coming round a slope as steep as the roof of a house, with the cart hanging all on one side, and then shooting down a still steeper hollow, with a pole put through both wheels to lock them fast. We half unloaded the cart, and took off the other horses, leaving Ben only in the shafts. Our business was to hang on the upper side as we rounded the hill, to keep the cart from going over, and then to hang behind to keep it from hurling down poor old Ben and everything before it.

At the first view of the descent, Ben ran back, and, spite of all our flogging and encouragement, jibbed most determinedly towards a frightful ravine, where both he and the cart would have been dashed to pieces. It was all we could do to scotch the wheels with huge stones, and then get Ben out. This done, there was nothing for it but to unload the cart and carry everything down the hill, — a bag of flour, all our provisions, clothes, bedding, tent, etc.; and this we did partly as packs on the horses, and partly ourselves. When we had done all this it was night, and time to camp; which we did at the foot of the hill, very tired, for the day was hot, the thermometer one hundred and two degrees, and the flies very troublesome.

After leaving the gap, we had a delightful journey, crossing creeks and gulleys, and finding plenty of feed for our horses; and the further we went the more picturesque grew the country; the only drawback being that the banks of the Owens river are burnt up for thirty

miles by the diggers, who wherever they go burn up the grass and scrub to get rid of the snakes, they say.

Of course there were numbers of people on the road, and plenty of break-downs. One day, as we were traveling very comfortably along, what should we see trudging before us but a great big hen, with a string tied to her leg! We picked her up, of course, and presently saw a dray on the road, which before long we overtook. "Have you lost anything?" we said to the people who were with it. "No, they did not think they had;" the woman, however, going behind the dray, looked into a bucket which hung there, and then exclaimed, "O, my hen! my hen! I've lost my hen!" On this we brought out the hen tied up in a handkerchief, and a wonderful rejoicing there was.

Well, we went on and on, and ranges after ranges of steep granite hills rose before us, running in long stretches, sharp-edged at the top, and broken into occasional peaks and hollows, but all covered from head to foot with woods; and above all rose the huge bulk of the Buffalo Mountain, the only one which looked bare and desolate. The nearer we came to this mountainous region the worse grew the roads, running up and down, and being all on one side. The most dreadful roads to travel on possible; but still it was very delightful.

January 14th.

And now here we are camped for a few days on this beautiful Buckland river, a tributary of the Ovens, and here I mean to finish my notes. Everybody is writing to-day, as a great packet of letters is going to England.

I wish our English friends could seat themselves on the magic carpet of the Arabian tales, and just be set down on the green terrace by the Buckland river, where our tent stands; then they would see something very pleasant. They would see a broad river rushing along between steep rocky banks, and overgrown with tall shrubs and young trees, very beautiful all of them, and many in flower. They would see tall trees shooting up from this scrub like slender masts, with green drooping heads, and the river banks in many places covered with ferns, fern-trees, and all kinds of plants, wild mint, clematis, and lovely flowers. They would see the terraces which lie along the river banks, and run up towards the mountains, covered with grass to the very tops of the hills. On the left hand the barren summits of the great Buffalo Mountain, and beyond that an almost unknown country, which I hope we shall visit, stretching to the head waters of the Goulbourn and the Devil's river. We are here indeed on the confines of the settled country, and the very animals and birds show by their familiarity that they are not accustomed to man, and not therefore afraid of him. Our friends on the carpet would see, as I do at this moment, platipuses, or platipi, if they will, swimming about in the deep holes of the river, and basking in the sun as comfortably as can be; they would see flocks of wild ducks as tame as those in their barnyard, and the most brilliant parrots sitting quietly in the branches, and pluming themselves as if to be admired. Here too they would hear the wild dogs at night come down from the ranges, and howling dismally round the tent; and they might even see them in the day-light; but all that only adds a sort of charm to the life here. The

nights, it is true, are noisy enough, for the wild dogs set our tame dogs to barking like mad ; they will bark for hours without stopping, and not only the wild dogs set them on, but the 'possums too, for they sit on the boughs just out of reach, grunting and snoring at them, and drive them almost frantic ; stray bullocks often take an extraordinary fancy also for wandering round our tent at night, and when the dogs can find nothing else to bark at, they excite themselves by the cries of the "morepork," which we look upon as a very happy bird, for he must get "pork," as Jonas Popkins said, by crying out for "more!" while we cannot get any at all, — nothing but mutton, mutton, mutton! But I rather think I have said this before.

I have been fishing a good deal of late, and we have killed a platipus ; we shot it in the river. There are lots of them, and we hope to be able to cure some of their skins. They certainly are very queer animals. They are a foot long ; the body is covered with fur like an otter, and they have a beaver's tail, feet half like a water-fowl's, and half like a porcupine's for digging ; the head and beak are like a duck's, only the beak is much broader. There is a membrane, as if of leather, cut out, as it were, in a very shapely manner, stretching from the beak half over the face ; and on the tongue, at the root, they have a couple of teeth, or something like teeth. They have warm blood, and lay eggs like a duck, and are sometimes in the water and sometimes out, but mostly in it ; they are very active, and disappear in a moment. We could only find something like mud in the stomach of the one we shot, and therefore suppose

that it does not eat fish, like the otter, but weeds and animalculæ, like the duck.

I wonder whether, after all, I shall see a bush-fire. During the last week we have seen lurid smoke by day, and a deep-red cloud by night hanging over the Buffalo, showing that immense fires are raging in the jungle of its ravines, and the forests that extend in dark masses up its sides. My father and Mr. Beams have been out for many miles up the country, and they say that it has all been burned up to the hill-tops, excepting close by the banks of the river, or where the vegetation is too rank and juicy for the flames to spread ; but even among the reed-beds and dense jungles of the flat and swampy parts of the river fires roar and crackle, and run up tall bushes like flaming creepers, in such a manner that you would fancy at a distance that the flames had got among a mass of dead and sun-dried bushes, instead of the rank grasses and reeds of the river banks.

Well, we shall see what this will turn out to be, only I shall not be able to give an account of it this time.

THE END.











