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# Ten Years in Australia Being the Results of his Experience as a Settler During that Period

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TEN YEARS IN AUSTRALIA:

BEING

THE RESULTS OF HIS EXPERIENCE AS A SETTLER  
DURING THAT PERIOD,

BY

THE REV. DAVID MACKENZIE, M.A.

THIRD EDITION.

WITH

*An Anniversary Chapter*

CONTAINING THE LATEST INFORMATION REGARDING  
THE COLONY.

LONDON:

WILLIAM S. ORR AND CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCLXIII.

Campbell Town, Goulburn, Braintree, Wollongong, and Melbourne.

Several clergymen of the three leading denominations, Episcopians, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics, have each of them two or three different preaching stations, widely apart from one another, which they visit at stated periods. This is going to work the right way: it is removing the general excuse of distance, and forcing the great truths of the Gospel upon the notice of the people. This is, doubtless, a toilsome undertaking for the clergyman; but there is no other way of reaching many of the settlers throughout this colony.

If I had any selfish interest in advising you to emigrate to Australia, I would not say a single syllable about the morals or society of Botany Bay. But I have no wish that any of you should come here, neither have I the least inducement to conceal from you any of our moral deformities; and I must then candidly tell you that our calendar of crime is truly frightful, embracing murder, highway robbery, stabbing, arson, cutting and maiming, burglary, shooting and wounding, rape, piracy, perjury, cattle-stealing, &c. In one year no fewer than 116 sentences of capital convictions had been passed for crimes of violence alone; for you are no doubt aware that, since 1833, capital punishment for what were considered minor offences, such as forgery, theft, &c., ceased to be awarded.

If you were only to peep into the Sydney police office on a Monday forenoon, you would there see a lovely specimen of our morality. Scores of men, women, boys, and girls, who had been dragged off the streets on the preceding evening for drunkenness, fighting, and other similar offences, standing with brazen faces to hear their respective sentences. You may then, every two or three minutes, hear thundered forth with the voice of authority from the magistrates' bench, "Six hours to the stocks—ten days to the cells—twenty days to the treadmill—fifty lashes (on his bare back)!"

Among the motley group of culprits thus convicted of drunkenness, riot, theft, &c., you see smart-looking girls of fourteen or fifteen years of age; elderly and young women, dressed in silk gowns and Leghorn bonnets, broken noses, or no noses at all, and black eyes. I do not mean eyes naturally black, but only artificially blackened by the kind husband through sheer affection—a pair of artificially black eyes being the Botany Bay coat of arms. I need not tell you that the great domestic amusement here is that famous game called "*playing at cross purposes*," a spirited sort of bodily exercise, which I believe is not altogether unknown in some families in England.

In the vicinity of Sydney, and on all the principal roads in the interior of the colony, bushrangers are frequently committing depredations. They are generally well armed and mounted, and go in bodies of from two or three to half-a-dozen. Their main object being plunder, they seldom commit murder unless they are resisted in their attempts at the commission of robbery. Within the last few weeks they have two or three times stopped and robbed our mail-coaches loaded with passengers. I almost forgot to tell you, that with very few exceptions, these bushrangers are convicts who have run away from their masters, or broken away from government iron-gangs, and taken themselves to the bush (the woods) to procure a livelihood by robbery. A large majority of them are Irish Roman Catholics. Throughout the interior, and even in Sydney, they find numerous receivers for their stolen and robbed property. These receivers not only harbour them, but provide them from time to time with supplies of ammunition, food, and clothing, and inform them when valuable stores are about leaving Sydney, and by what roads; also, what gentlemen are supposed to keep money in their houses, and how such gentlemen could be most easily robbed.

The two prevailing vices here are drunkenness and avarice. These are our besetting sins. From these two sources proceed almost all the crimes which stain the annals of the colony. That drunkenness is common, you may reasonably infer from the enormous sum of money paid as duty here on imported and colonially-distilled spirits. In the year 1836, the consumers were 62,926 in number, and yet the direct revenue from ardent spirits amounted in that year to £127,000, showing that every male and female throughout the colony, above twelve years of age, paid in direct taxation, for ardent spirits alone, more than £2. Any man who is addicted to the free use of intoxicating liquors, has overstepped the barrier which the dictates of reason and the obligations of religion have interposed between him and the commission of crime; drunkenness obliterates the line of demarcation between good and evil; and the drunkard, having thus willfully resigned the guidance of his reason, is ready, when temptation offers, to purchase the indulgence of his passions at whatever hazard, either to his body or soul. As some of the offsprings and concomitants of drunkenness, cursing and swearing, ribaldry and blasphemous, annoy the ear wherever you go. Temperance societies and total abstinence societies are here supported by large numbers of consistent members; but the great majority of these members have never been drunkards, and they joined these societies for no other purpose than to set a good

example. The great body of drunkards, young and old, still cling to their vicious habits; the moral leprosy is perpetuated, filling our country with crime, our goals with inmates, and our grave-yards with food for the worm.

But avarice, that "*auri sacra fames*," is neither less common, nor in its results less detrimental to the interests of morality and religion, than is drunkenness. Money, money, money. Nothing is considered disgraceful here but the want of money. It covers an immense multitude of sins. Acts of swindling, if cleverly done, do not here, as in England, exclude a man from society, and brand him with infamy; it is only poverty that excludes even one brother from the house of a richer brother in Botany Bay. In this colony it is

"Cash makes the man, and want of it the fellow,  
The rest is all but leather and brimstone."

In order to convince you that I am not dealing in general assertions unsupported by facts, in stating that swindling, cleverly committed, does not here exclude a rich man from what is called high life, I will copy at random two or three authentic anecdotes, from a collection of some scores which I some time ago gathered, as illustrative of Botany Bay morals. About six years ago, Mr. —, who is a Sydney merchant and bank director, attended a land sale of town allotments, on the Parramatta road, at a place called Burwood, within six or seven miles of Sydney, when he entered an adjoining public-house, kept by a man named C—, to whom Mr. — stated that he came up for the purpose of buying some allotments, which were situated contiguous to C—'s property, on which C— requested him, as a particular favour, not to do so, as he himself intended to buy them, and that he could hardly do without them. It was ultimately agreed that the bank director should receive £50 for not opposing C— at the sale. A cheque for this sum was drawn out and given to the director. The sale proceeded. The allotments in question were bought, not by the director, who stood looking on, but by a person in his employment, for they were marked down in the auctioneer's book in Mr. —'s name. The publican was furious, took his horse and galloped to Sydney to stop the payment of the cheque at the bank: but Mr. —'s horse was the better goer of the two. It was after bank hours before either of them arrived; yet Mr. —'s influence as a bank director having readily secured him a hearing, he received, and pocketed the £50 before the thick-winded publican could obtain an audience.

A few years ago, a respectable settler, living with his family on

his own purchased farm of upwards of two thousand acres, on the Hunter's River, mortgaged his land to Mr. B—, of Sydney, for about £800, to enable him to purchase live stock, which was then selling at a very high price. In consequence of the price of live stock falling soon afterwards, and his land yielding him nothing, he was unable, not only to pay off the mortgage, but even the interest. Mr. B—, the mortgagee, advertised the estate for sale. The settler had been ill and confined to his house; yet, on seeing his house and lands advertised for sale, he contrived to come to Sydney. He was too late. The sale was over. A Mr. —, a Sydney merchant and bank director (not the Burwood-town-allotment gentleman above referred to), attended the sale in the settler's name, and addressed the people assembled in the auctioneer's room in nearly the following terms:—"You are perhaps aware that the property which is now about to be here offered for sale belongs to a most worthy and industrious settler, an old acquaintance and friend of my own, who has a numerous small family depending upon him for their support. This is his only property,—his house and home. If he loses it he is thrown destitute on the world. My object in attending here this day is, if possible, to buy in the estate for this worthy family."

This short speech was effectual. It appealed to the best feelings of our nature; and I am certain, that if you had only seen the long-faced solemn-looking director, you would not for a moment have doubted his sincerity. The estate was put up for sale at only the amount of burdens, about £1000, upon it. There was no bidder. The bank director offered the up-set price. The estate was knocked down to him. The deeds were made over to him, and immediately afterwards he sold the same estate for about £2500, pocketed the money, and laughed both at the settler and at the people whom he had so cleverly duped in the auctioneer's room. The settler, whom I knew intimately, called on me a few days after the sale, when he told me the above particulars. This affair seemed to have broken his heart. As he had no money, the lawyers would do nothing for him. Were the law of libel what it ought to be, I would here give in full the names of the two bank directors who figure in the foregoing anecdotes; but Lord Teniersden has long ago decided, that the more true the statements are which affect private individuals, the greater is the libel.

Within the last few months, a large stockholder in the Murrumbidgee district having visited his station there, found, apparently in a dying state, one of his servants, who had been at one time a convict,

but who had by industry and economy become possessed of a little property, partly in money and partly in horses. He requested his master to write a will for him, conveying his property to his only surviving brother in Ireland. On the following day, the master accompanied by two men who were to act as witnesses, came with the will into the sick man's bedroom, to procure his signature, which he was earnestly pressed to put to it immediately. But the sick man suspecting that there was something wrong, alleged that he was then too much indisposed to sit up to sign his name, but that if the paper was left with him, he would sign it next morning. After some hesitation, the master left it. The man got it read to him. It was a regularly drawn-up will, making over all his property to the master himself! The invalid, who was then hardly able to crawl, immediately left the place. I have known him for years and always considered him a steady hard-working man. It was in February last, a few months after leaving his old master, that the above particulars were given to me by the man himself, when he showed me the will written in his master's own hand. Yes, written in the hand of that villain who has cattle upon a thousand hills, and who derives a princely income from his land and houses, flocks and herds. The curse of Heaven must sooner or later alight upon such ill-gotten pelf. Nathan's parable to David is here more than realized.

I have reason to believe that in some cases immoral acts in the colony proceed more from ignorance than from any preconceived design. A remarkable instance of this kind was related to me by the Rev. Mr. E——. In 1840, a decent-looking couple, after the usual proclamation in his church, came to him to be married. It was afterwards, however, discovered that the bridegroom had been, through some accident, detained at home, and that it was his *brother* who arrived, accompanied by the bride and two or three of her friends. They waited a whole hour for the bridegroom, but never told the clergyman the real cause of their waiting. At last they stated that they would wait no longer. My friend accordingly married them, and they returned home. When this irreparable blunder was afterwards discovered, the married brother, in the simplicity of his heart, stated that he thought he could transfer the young wife in the evening to his brother, the real bridegroom, for whom he waited a whole hour, and that he "was unwilling to return home from the parson, after having come so far, without doing some business by way of securing the woman." I forgot to inquire of my friend, the Rev. Mr. E——, with which of the two brothers the blooming bride had

since lived—whether it was with her *real* or with her *intended* husband.

This is, I think, the greatest extension of "a power of attorney" that I have ever known given in this colony.

It would not be fair to conclude these remarks without mentioning the fact, that the state of morals in New South Wales has been greatly improved within the last few years. This salutary change has been produced by a variety of causes, such as the large numbers of reputable emigrants that have arrived here within these few years. The combined efforts of an increased number of clergymen and school-masters have greatly tended to neutralize convict influence, and reduce these black sheep to their degraded level.

Another great cause of the improved morals here is to be found in the altered character of the colonial press. Convict editors, as formerly, are now nowhere employed to preach to her Majesty's lieges their moral and religious duties. And the press has a very great influence on the colonial public: everybody here is able to pay for a newspaper, and is moreover anxious to hear the news of the times.

The convicts—that curse of this fair colony—are now rapidly diminishing in number and influence. Their day is gone; and an act of the British Parliament has been passed to prevent any more of the sweepings of English, Irish, and Scotch jails being sent to New South Wales to pollute our moral atmosphere, and render the finest country in the world a perfect Pandemonium.

The different benches of magistrates are now much more chary than they used to be in granting licenses for public-houses. Many improper persons, who once kept public-houses, have been latterly refused the renewal of their licenses; and every publican whose house is improperly conducted, is liable to have his license cancelled. This regulation has been productive of happy effects to the colony. At one time, the most direct road to fortune was by selling ardent spirits. Immense fortunes were thus realised by very questionable characters in a few years; but then a public-house was nothing better than a den of thieves. Houses and land, and herds of cattle, were made over to the publican for rum by the besotted settler.

Those gentlemen in England who feel any interest in the prosperity of the Australian colonies, ought to exert themselves in endeavouring to stop the usual allowance of ardent spirits to those emigrants whose passage is paid by the government. The issuing of spirits as part of their rations on ship-board during so long a voyage, has, in many instances, been the means of first creating a desire, and then of

gradually establishing a habit, which rendered the emigrants a disgrace and a nuisance to the colony. It is painful to witness groups of emigrants, soon after their arrival, staggering along the streets of Sydney in a state of intoxication.

The great disproportion of the sexes is another obstacle to the moral improvement of this colony. This is a serious evil in the eye of the philosopher and the philanthropist, and is such as requires for its removal the interposition of the British government. It is to be hoped, that in the selection of emigrants who shall receive a free passage to Australia, no unmarried man above the age of eighteen shall be deemed eligible.\*

## CHAPTER VI.

### LAND AND SQUATTING REGULATIONS.

The total quantity of lands alienated up to last year, within the nineteen counties into which New South Wales is divided, is nearly six millions of acres. The greater part of this land was given as grants; the remainder was bought. The system of free grants was abolished fourteen years ago. Since that time the government sold, by public auction, whatever land was applied for, provided the application met with the approval of the Governor and the Surveyor-General. For the first seven years after the abolition of grants, the Crown lands were offered for sale by public auction at a minimum price of 5s. per acre. The minimum price was afterwards, that is, about seven years ago, raised by the Home Government to 12s. per acre, and three years ago to 20s. per acre; for, in the year 1842, an Act of the British Parliament passed for the purpose of establishing a fixed minimum price of land in the Australian colonies of 20s. per acre. Very little land has been bought here from the government since the promulgation of this Act of 1842.

\* The reader will bear in mind that the author here pictures a state of society that happily no longer exists in the colony. Since the period at which he writes many improving influences have been at work. Among others may be mentioned, the great influx of a respectable class of emigrants—both a consequence, and partly a cause, of the diminished importation of convicts—and an increased attention on the part of the Colonial Government to an improved and extensive system of education.—*Editor.*

The emigrant who intends to purchase land here, applies at the Surveyor-General's office, where he inspects the maps of the colony, and sees what lands are unappropriated. He then visits and personally examines various localities which he thinks would suit him. Having made his selection, he applies for it to the government, which, after one month's notice in the case of emigrants newly arrived, and after three months' notice in all other cases, will put up to sale, by public auction, at a minimum price of 20s. per acre, the lands so applied for, if approved of by the Governor, whose approval, however, is always given as a matter of course.

If the selection is made so as to encroach on a rich neighbour, the emigrant may be opposed at the sale, and obliged either to pay too much for his land, or witness an unexpected rival become the purchaser of it. It may also happen that through some unforeseen circumstance the measurement of the land applied for is either not completed, or not reported previous to the day of sale, in which case the sale is delayed.

"With the exception of special cases, the reasons of which must be assigned, each lot so put up for sale will consist of not less than one square mile, or 640 acres. If a section with water frontage does not contain this full quantity, the section behind it will be added to the lot. The highest bidder must pay down a deposit of ten per cent. at the time of sale, and the remainder of the purchase-money within one month, under penalty of forfeiting both the land and deposit."

Instead of buying land from the government, the emigrant might save himself much time and trouble, by buying from private individuals a small farm, partially cleared, with house and other improvements on it, at a less sum than the government minimum price. I have known several small farms of this description, which have been sold within the last few months at less than 10s. an acre.

A few days ago a farm of 2000 (two thousand) acres of excellent land, well watered, all fenced in, a great part of it under cultivation, with a large and substantial dwelling-house, an orchard, garden, stables, meat's huts, and barn, which cost £200, were all offered for £800 (eight hundred). It is situated in a beautiful valley, near the town of Berrima, eighty-five miles from Sydney, on the mail road to Port Phillip. In May, 1843, a farm belonging to Mr. Ward Stephens, on the River Hunter, measuring 1300 acres, and partially improved, was sold at 1s. 3d. per acre, or £75 for the whole of this farm of twelve hundred acres! There are many such opportunities which the emigrant, with a small capital, may have of sitting himself with-



out either losing time and money by the delay, or running the risk of competition arising from his attempting to buy land from government.

Some emigrants prefer leasing for a certain number of years farms already cleared. This has frequently been done by families who wished to gain colonial experience before making any purchase of land, or who preferred to lay out the greater part of their capital in live stock or some other investment. Farms of all descriptions, and of any extent, may be obtained on lease of from two or three to ten or twelve years. Yet the preferable way is to buy the farm, how small soever it may be in extent. A man has never the same inducement to exert himself when he knows that all his improvements will, after the lapse of a few years, pass into the hands of his landlord, who will turn him and his family adrift to begin the world anew.

Whatever quantity of land a man cultivates, let it be absolutely his own, and then he will in good spirits and in right earnest begin to improve what he knows is to descend to his children's children.

To induce any newly-arrived emigrant to take a farm on a *clearing lease* here is downright cruelty. Many a poor fellow has thus been robbed of his little capital, his time, and his labour, in clearing the heavily-timbered estates of our rich landed proprietors. Whatever, therefore, you do after landing in Australia, avoid taking a farm on a clearing lease, no matter what may be the soil, the situation, the duration of the lease, or other plausible inducements held out to you by the man of acres.

Now, supposing that either you have no money or no inclination to buy land, whether cleared or uncleared, and that you are equally disinclined to lease a farm, or, in short, to have anything at all to do with farming; and yet that you are desirous to become the owner of sheep and cattle, how are you to obtain pasture for them, and a home for yourself? The answer to your question is,—become a squatter, like more than one-half of all the rich and respectable stockholders in the colony. More than one half of all the present members of the Legislative Council are squatters, and, agreeably to the confession of the Lord Chancellor, Her Majesty Queen Victoria herself is but a squatter in Australia; and surely it cannot be wrong to follow the example of such an amiable lady.

Therefore, without adducing any further arguments, I shall now take it for granted, as a thing admitted, if not fully proved, that to squat is common, is right, is fashionable. Then comes the other question—What is it to squat? and what you may, or can, or might,

could, would, or should do, in order that you may or can squat. All that you have to do is, first, to accompany beyond the limits of location some friend or acquaintance who knows the district where you wish to have your station. Push beyond the farthest out-stations, making all possible search and inquiry as you proceed, and, as a means of further securing the object of your excursion, stipulate to give a title to some stockman connected with one of the farthest out-stations, on condition that he shall accompany you and endeavour to find for you a suitable place for your flocks and herds. The requisites are the following:—A reasonable distance, say seven or eight miles, from your nearest neighbour, either plains or open forest land, plenty of good grass, and, above all, plenty of water in the driest season. Timber for building and fencing can be got conveniently anywhere, except at Maneroo, and one or two other places.

Immediately after you have selected your run, write to the Commissioners of Crown Lands for the district, applying for what is called a depasturing license. In your application to the Commissioners you describe as nearly as you can the boundaries of your run, and the extent or number of square miles you claim. If the Commissioner has reason to believe that you are a reputable person, and worthy of holding a squatting license, this application will secure your run against any other squatter for six months, so as to allow you time to build your hut and bring your live stock on the ground. Your application is forwarded by the Commissioner, with his approval, to the Colonial Treasurer, Sydney, or Sub-Colonial Treasurer, Melbourne, according to the district in which your selection is made, and you will be required to pay at the Treasury the sum of £10 sterling, for a squatting license, which entitles you to occupy your station and run for one year, providing your license is taken out in July, for all squatting licenses expire on the 30th of June yearly, and must be renewed thereafter by the payment of £10.

Besides the £10 for a depasturing license, the squatter must also pay to the government the following half-yearly assessment on all the sheep, cattle, and horses which he may have on his station:—For every sheep, one halfpenny; for cattle, three halfpence each; and for horses, three pence each.

Hitherto one license has been held sufficient to entitle the squatter to occupy any reasonable number of stations of any extent in the same district, but the Governor has last year proposed to make every station pay a separate license, and to allow no station to include more than 30 (twenty) square miles, unless a double license, or £20, be paid

yearly for it. The colonists have furiously opposed this proposed law, which, therefore, has not yet been enforced.

There is no doubt, however, that the present squatting regulations require to be revised and modified. Many abuses which I could specify have been gradually introduced. I know of a whole family, who occupy some hundreds of square miles, for which they pay only one license, or £10, besides the usual assessment.

## CHAPTER VII.

### LIVE STOCK—HORSES.

At the formation of the colony in the year 1788, fifty-seven years ago, the live stock consisted of 4 cows, 1 bull, 1 bull-calf, 3 mares, 3 colts, and 1 stallion. No sheep. Twenty-two years afterwards, or in the year 1810, on the arrival of Governor Macquarie, the live stock of the colony was found to be—of cattle, 12,442; sheep, 23,888; hogs, 9544; horses, 1134; and in the month of October, in the year 1821, immediately before Governor Macquarie's departure from the colony, the live stock was—of cattle, 102,939; sheep, 290,158; hogs, 33,906; horses, 4564.

For the introduction of fine-woolled sheep, the colony has been indebted to the late John Macarthur, Esq., whose flocks, in the year 1803, amounted to nearly 4000, derived chiefly from thirty Indian sheep purchased in the year 1783, from a ship which arrived in Sydney from Calcutta. To these thirty sheep Mr. Macarthur had added ten of the pure Spanish merino breed. This is the origin of our grand staple commodity, which required last year from Sydney alone forty ships for its transport to London, amounting in weight to 10,000,000 lbs., and realising in *Sydney* the large sum of £625,000—a pretty income from one article alone from so young a colony.

Pigs are easily fed here where milk, peaches, maize, &c., are so plentiful. You scarcely pass a station or hut without seeing a lot of pigs, either running about or in a sty at a short distance. I have seen herds of two hundred of them together feeding out in the woods and followed by the swineherd. They were of all sizes, of all ages, and of all sorts of breed. They got very little to eat, except what they picked up in the bush.

Many parts of this country are extremely well adapted for the rearing and maintenance of goats, and for no other purpose. In the year 1832, a Mr. Riley imported to this colony a few Cashmere goats from France. In three years the number increased to three hundred. About that time Mr. Riley exported three of them to the Cape of Good Hope—one pure male, and one female, and one cross-bred female, produced from our common goat and the Cashmere. These three sold at the Cape for £150. Last year I saw a fine flock of these goats near Sydney, at a farm called Canterbury, belonging to a Mr. Campbell, a Sydney merchant, and lately a member of the Legislative Council.

There is one great advantage attending goats, viz., they are liable to no disease of any consequence. They are also more hardy and more easily fed than sheep. Several of our great colonial stockholders occupy runs including many thousands of acres, which are useless for either sheep, cattle, or horses, but which would well answer for feeding numerous herds of the common goats; and I have not the slightest doubt that these would yield a liberal profit to the grazier. They require but little care. They would travel to market with greater ease and expedition than any sheep. They increase very rapidly, in most cases producing twins; and now that boiling-down establishments are formed extensively throughout the colony, the male increases, when full grown, might be yearly boiled down for their tallow. The skin is thrice as valuable as that of a sheep, and it is a well-known fact that goats' tallow always commands a higher price than either sheep's or bullocks' tallow. In hardness and purity candles made from goats' tallow differ but little from those of sperm or wax.

The enormous number of horses, now upwards of 70,000, we have here for so small a population, will, no doubt, surprise you; and you will naturally ask—for what purpose do you rear such an immense number of animals, which neither carry fleeces for the woollen manufacturer, nor flesh for the butcher? In reply I must inform you, that a very large number of horses is required and annually ruined in performing our ordinary work in this colony.

Everything here is done on horseback—every man you meet is on horseback. In the interior a boy will not travel from the hut to the stockyard except on horseback. A man will walk two miles to catch a horse to carry him one mile. A hack fellow will not proceed fifty paces for you unless you lend him a horse to ride. So well known and established is this rule, that at some stations a dozen saddle-horses are always kept for the work of the place. Every stockman



Scotland. The bullocks' horns are always thrown away. A Scottish tinker who could work these horns into spoons, drinking cups, &c., would make his fortune here, and benefit the colony. The hide is kept to be cut up for ropes. In this colony everything is held, tied, or mended with green hide. Our loads of wool and hurdles are tied by green hide; our bullocks and horses are roped with green hide; our horses are tethered, and our bullocks hobbled with green hide; our saddles and bridles are mended with green hide; our milch cows are leg-roped with green hide; our calves are tied up with green hide; our broken fences are mended with green hide; our bucket and pot-handles are made of green hide; our spurs are tied on with green hide; our stook and bullock whips are made of green hide; our door-hinges and hasps are made of green hide; our house-frames and roofs are secured with green hide; our harness and bullock-chains are mended with green hide; our wheat is led home tied with green hide; our wheel-washers are made of green hide; green hide, instead of canvas, covers the stretchers on which we sleep. Of green hide we make sieves; of green hide we make leading-halvers and lunging ropes. With green hide many a convict has been taught obedience. But time would fail me to enumerate half the virtues and uses of green hide. Suffice it to say, that green hide, horses, and string-bark, are the grand support and stay of Australia; without them the whole fabric would totter and fall.

Nothing will more surprise you here than the quantity and quality of eatables on the table of some of the old settlers at a cattle-station. In the course of one day I have seen the following on a table which consisted of a sheet of bark, nailed on four posts driven into the floor—beef, pork, ham, vegetables, eggs, fitters, butter, cheese, tea, sugar, cream, damper, poultry, wild ducks, and fish fresh out of the river.

No wonder, then, that some people here should occasionally complain of indigestion. The only article in the above list which you may not probably understand is *damper*. This is our bread baked under the ashes. Men who have been long in the bush can, in a very short time, convert wheat into bread for you. During a short visit I made to my cattle-station about five years ago, my but-keeper came in at breakfast time to inform me that there was no bread for dinner and, what was worse, the wheat was done. I was about ordering a horse to be saddled, on which I was to send the stockman to my neighbour to borrow a bushel of wheat, when the but-keeper informed me that a corner of my own wheat was ripe enough. He accordingly started with a sickle, reaped a sheaf, carried it home

thrashed it out with a sickle, winnowed the wheat, dried it for an hour by exposing it to a hot sun, ground it by the steel mill, put the flour through the sieve, made a damper, baked it, and it was cool before evening on my riding home to dinner!

## CHAPTER X.

### BUSH AMUSEMENTS.

The chief sources of amusement you may freely enjoy in the bush are the following:—Fishing, hunting, shooting, riding, and reading. Our rivers abound with fish of all sizes. We generally catch them with a line and baited hook. If you are a true disciple of Izaak Walton you may catch as many in a couple of hours—as weighing from half-a-pound to twenty pounds—as will supply your table for a week. The most common sort are perch, bream, roach, carp, cod-fish, and mullet. This last-named, as you know, is a fish which thrives equally in salt and fresh water. I have seen cod-fish caught which weighed from sixty to eighty pounds. But these very large ones are inferior in taste and flavour to those of a smaller size. The blacks generally catch their fish by spearing. At a single glance they aim at the fish, and drive their spear through him with unerring precision, as he swims at a considerable depth under the water's surface. You would suppose, from witnessing their skill and practice, that they studied, in Newton's *Principia*, all that is there stated on the angles of incidence and reflection. They capture wild ducks in the same way as fish—by spearing. The black fellow either crawls quietly on all fours through the long grass, or keeping a tree in a line between him and the ducks, he softly creeps until he reaches the edge of the lagoon or river, when he suddenly darts his spear, and generally secures one, if not two of them.

Hunting is a favourite amusement here. The animals hunted are, generally, the native dog, kangaroo, and emu. The native dog closely resembles the English fox in size, shape, and cunning. The English fox, however, is generally of one colour, viz., red; whereas, among the Australian native dogs are some red, some brown, and some black. They are very numerous, and extremely troublesome. They come almost to the very door of the huts, and leap over the hurdles among

a flock of sheep on one side of the fold, while the watchman is in his box on the other. A great number of calves—perhaps ten per cent. at some out-stations—are yearly destroyed by them; and, when pressed by hunger they will attack foals. I have seen several of my calves which had their ears and tails bit off by these carnivorous animals. To destroy them is, therefore, the great object of every stock-holder, in keeping a few kangaroo dogs, which are a breed between a pure greyhound and a mastiff. At every station you find some of these dogs, and, accompanied by them, some settlers spend a great part of their time in riding over their runs in search of the native dog. He smells as strong as the English fox, and the dogs no sooner come on his scent, than they start at full speed, their noses to the ground. When they get sight of him, you must let your horse out and follow them. He will make hard either for the mountains or the river. They soon catch him, and tear him to pieces. I lately came on four of them together, tearing away at the carcass of a calf. They cunningly fled in four different directions. I had only three dogs with me, all of which followed one; after a smart chase they caught him, and fairly cut his throat. Some years ago, several stock-holders in this colony used to give two shillings and sixpence for every native dog's brush or tail produced; and then every man who wanted half-a-crown tried to *own-tail* them. Their barking is quite different from that of a domesticated dog. It has been erroneously stated that they, being in a state of nature, never bark; and some writers have obstinately maintained that barking is entirely the result of civilization. I am aware that the dogs carried by Columbus to America were afterwards found by him to have lost their propensity to barking. They could merely whine, howl, and growl. And the traveller Sonnini also states, that the shepherds' dogs in the wilds of Egypt possessed not the faculty of barking.

The kangaroo is an extraordinary animal. There are several kinds of them, and they are of various sizes. The kangaroo forester is about five feet high, and, when pursued by dogs, it leaps or bounds from fifteen to twenty paces. The animal goes on his hind legs, steering his body with his tail. His fore legs are only about half the length of his hind legs. He is generally of the same colour as the English hare, and his flesh greatly resembles in taste and appearance that of the hare. The tail, which sometimes weighs twenty pounds, is considered the best part of him. It makes excellent soup—indeed, equal to any ox-tail soup I ever tasted. His movements in his native wilds are extremely graceful. Seldom rapid, until he sees you and

your dogs in full chase after him, then he hits out in right earnest, hops, skips, bounds, and if you have not fleet dogs before you, and a fleet horse under you, he is soon out of sight. In some parts of the colony they are seen in droves, but I never saw more than five or six of them together. I have often seen them quietly feeding among my cattle, with which they seemed to live on peaceable terms.

When hard pressed, they turn about, put their backs to a tree, and for a time successfully fight the dogs, which they often rip up and disable for life. They have been known not only to drown dogs, but also to take a man in their arms, carry him towards a lagoon or deep pond, and there attempt to drown him, as they commonly drown a dog, by pressing his head under water. A friend of mine, a Mr. James Aitken, settler on the Clarence River, has lately received in a battle with a kangaroo a mark which he will necessarily carry with him to the grave. He was in chase after a kangaroo, which at last his dogs caught, when my friend inconsiderately dismounted from his horse for the purpose of assisting his dogs. The kangaroo now left them and attacked Mr. Aitken, whose hip he completely tore. The kangaroo is naturally timid, and is easily tamed. He lives entirely on grass; and the female has only two young ones at a time, which she carries in a pouch or bag under her belly. When hard pressed in the chase, she drops them one by one; you can then be certain that she is nearly beat—all that a kangaroo has will she give for her life. The skin is remarkably tough, and is converted into stock-whips, and sometimes used as a substitute for a blanket in travelling through the bush. With half-a-dozen of these skins sewed together a man could comfortably sleep out all night on a bleak snowy mountain.

The emu is covered with hair rather than feathers, and accordingly he never flies. He stands from five to seven feet high, and is of a ragged grey colour. I have seen nine or ten of them together. They can run as fast as a racer, and it is very seldom they can be run down by a man on horseback. I once had an old stock-horse, on which my stockman, who was rather too fond of field-sports, used to run down emus—a feat which was here considered extraordinary. The emu lays ten or twelve eggs. I have one of them now in my possession; it measures thirteen inches in circumference one way, and eleven the other way, and is of a dark-blue colour. The emu has an oily, disagreeable taste, and is seldom or never eaten by white men here; the blacks, however, are fond of it. A valuable oil is procured from these birds, and this is the chief, indeed the only, satisfactory reason assigned by white men for hunting them. When half-a-dozen

emus are viewed from a distance, majestically striding across the plain, they look like a party of savages.

Shooting is here a common amusement. You are aware that in this colony we have no game-laws, and therefore wild animals are considered common property, to which all men have an equal right; and, accordingly, every settler has his double-barrelled gun. I know several boys, of ten or twelve years of age, who are first-rate shots, the result of constant practice.

Among the animals which we have here to be shot, are the following:—Native turkeys, which are very good eating; wild ducks, with which some of our lagoons are covered, and are superior in flavour and taste to our tame ducks; bronze-winged pigeons, which are very numerous, and will allow you to get quite close to them; wild Geese, teal, and parrots, all of which are very good eating. The musk-duck, native companion, and cockatoo, are common, but eaten only by the blacks. The only quadrupeds usually shot are, the opossum, an animal resembling a rabbit,—feeds on grass and leaves, carries its young ones in the same way as the kangaroo, in a pouch or bag under the belly, and lives in the hollows of decayed gum, box, or string-bark trees. Opossums are very abundant, and it is a common amusement, especially among boys, to form parties to go out with guns by moon-light, to shoot these opossums as they jump from branch to branch among the trees. Of their skins, beautiful cloaks are made, one of which would be sufficient to keep you warm in the open air during our coldest winter-night. Many a night have I slept under a tree with no other covering than one of them. Bandicoots and kangaroo-rats are also very numerous, and are excellent eating. Both white and black men are fond of them. The flying-squirrel is eaten only by the blacks. The wombat, an animal resembling a bear, is considered equal to pork. He burrows like a rabbit. One of them was lately brought to me as a present by a tribe of blacks, who killed in one day, on a mountain behind my hut, as many as the tribe could eat during several days.

You will require all kinds of shot. Hall's gunpowder is much used here. Get a real *Joe Manton*, if you can; at all events, get a genuine *kurist* barrel and a *perrossion* lock. With a good rifle you might occasionally bring down a kangaroo, emu, or native dog.

It is unnecessary for me to state, that riding is one of our common recreations in the bush. If you are tired of either fishing or shooting, you order your servant to saddle your horse for you. Some of your time will also be spent in attending the cattle musters of those

neighbours who assisted you on a similar occasion. Your nearest neighbour is, perhaps, from eight to ten miles from you. But that is only a short distance, and your horse will probably carry you thither within one hour. You will, perhaps, have occasion often to visit one or other of your neighbours for the purpose of borrowing or returning a book or newspaper, or of spending the evening or dining with him, &c. Strange to say, they have even their balls and dancing-parties here, and you will see some very pretty currency lasses gracefully moving through a quadrille, or playing on the pianoforte, four hundred miles from Sydney, on the banks of the Hunter!

I have already stated, that the people of this colony are fond of reading. In the bush this is a favourite amusement. In several huts you enter, you see the proprietor of the station wearing his regatta shirt and fustian dress, and inhaling the fumes of tobacco through a short black pipe, which he occasionally draws from his mouth, in order to wipe away from his eye the tear of joy or of sorrow, as he reads one or other of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, or of Fenimore Cooper, or of Dr. Bird, or of Bulwer, or of Smollett, or Tom Cingle's *Log Book*, or Sam Slick, or Dickens's *Works*, or Chambers's *Journal*. You will also see, resting on roughly-constructed shelves behind him, a few volumes on history, chemistry, philosophy, and travels by sea and land. You will be as agreeably surprised as I have been on finding so large an amount of intelligence among long-bearded bushmen wearing nothing but fustian.

It is in the bush you really enjoy, after a day's ride, some interesting volume,—and much tallow is thus consumed by the intelligent settlers fond of reading. But tallow costs them nothing; they make their own candles and either the mould in which they are made, or the neck of a bottle, or a lump of wood with an inch auger hole in it, serves for a candlestick. A foot-long piece of iron hoop bent double, and retaining some of its elasticity or spring, serves for snuffers. The floor or fire-place is the tray. Truly, "man wants but little here below."

I think I have now said enough to show you that in the bush we spend an active life, and enjoy the opportunity of blending the agreeable with the useful.

Clerks who have rambled into the bush on a leave of absence from public offices—youngsters from school, who, during the holidays, have visited their fathers' stations—shopkeepers, lawyers, soldiers, and sailors, who have made an excursion into the bush to gratify a feeling of curiosity—have found our field-sports too strong an allurement to

be resisted, and, accordingly, either remained in the bush, or soon afterwards returned to its healthy exercises and enjoyments.

Here you experience a buoyancy of spirits and a freedom from care unknown among the busy haunts of a crowded population. Here you have to contend with no farming interests—no under-handed rivalry. You may live as you choose. You are "monarch of all you survey." Here the freedom of the savage and the comforts of civilization are conjoined. The patriarchal simplicity of life is restored. Here solitude invites to meditation, and rural exercise sweetens enjoyment. Here may be found that lodge in a vast wilderness, after which prophets, and poets, and lovers have sighed. "*Barkes file, give proof negative,*" exclaims every settler who is capable of appreciating the beauties of nature,—and especially that greatest of all beauties—his cattle, sheep, and horses, increasing around him, and holding out to him the reasonable prospect of leaving his children, if not in affluence, at least beyond the fear of want. Here you may live in peace with all men; for if perchance any dispute about the boundaries of a run should arise between you and any of your neighbours, you may well address him as Abram addressed Lot, "Let there be no strife between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are neighbours. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." And let me assure you that such an honest attempt at peace-making as this seldom fails of producing its intended effect.

## CHAPTER XI.

### SYDNEY.

OBSEERVE now, as we ride along our Macadamized streets, how nearly all of them, at equal intervals, cut each other at right angles. A large portion of the ground along one side of that main street belonged to a tailor who came out with the 102nd regiment. About ten years ago he sold a great part of it for £40 a foot frontage. The land on your left was sold at £57 a foot, in the Year 1834. There were then no buildings on either of these lands. Notice the great number of Jewish names on the shop signs—there are "Abraham

Isaac and Jacob, Joseph and Benjamin, Moses and Aaron, Samuel and Solomon, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Judas and Bealzebub," &c., in partnership. The ten lost tribes found their way to Sydney; that accounts for it. Look at our splendid shops, some of them fully equal to those of second-rate in London. Behold what fine buildings are these!—all of freestone, and built chiefly by Scotch masons. See what magnificent quarries, and of freestone, and in blocks of enormous dimensions, we have here in the very heart of Sydney. The whole city is built upon one immense rock, of various elevations and depressions, but all composed of this valuable solid material; and it was not without reason that the honest Scotch mason, when, a few days after his arrival here, he was asked by a friend of mine what he thought of the colony, replied, "Heeh, man, it is an unco braw hintra for stanes." See what a magnificent harbour is ours! The whole British navy might ride here in safety. It is completely land-locked. The entrance is, no doubt, narrow—only about a mile—and there is, inside the entrance, a bar; but there is a fine light-house on the south-hand, close to the entrance, for the guidance of ships; and many a large vessel has sailed over the bar, close to a part of which, called the "Sow and Pigs," there is always stationed a tub of a vessel serving for a light-house, with a family living on board. A seventy-six gun ship (Her Majesty's *Warrigole*), 1660 tons, and drawing 24 feet water, has entered Port Jackson. I think, therefore, that few merchant-vessels have anything to fear. A few of our buildings, you see, are slated, though the great majority of them are shingled, or covered with pieces of split wood, of the size, shape, and appearance of shingles. In some of the houses coals are burnt; in others wood is used as fuel. Here we come to the house where, in November last, poor Mr. Warr, whom I knew, was murdered by his servant, James Bidal; who, after completely fracturing his skull with a large axe, attempted to burn the body on his own fire, but failing in this, he cut the half-burnt carcase up into pieces, and packed them in a box, which he was carrying away when he was detected. He was tried, convicted, and hanged. There is the house in which Mrs. Jamison, a poor widow, who kept a small shop, was last Year murdered by Sir Edward Knatchbull's brother, who expected to find some money in her till. Since his arrival in this colony, under sentence of transportation, he committed various crimes. While he lived he was a curse to society, and a disgrace to his family and high connections—and at last he died on the scaffold the death of a dog.



the surrounding elevations. Follow *down* this creek; for in all likelihood there are stations on it, or it will lead you to some river or larger reservoir of water, near which you will certainly meet either white or black inhabitants. Some new chums, to whom I once gave this direction, told me afterwards that they found the creek by following my advice, but that after finding it, they could not ascertain which was up or down, or towards what point of the compass the creek when running, would flow, so level was the valley through which it passed. To determine this point is very easy. Almost all our creeks run at one time or other of the year, and, while thus running, they wash down a mass of rubbish, part of which is caught and held by trees and logs in the channel of the creek. It is therefore evident that the current, which had so far carried this rubbish, must have come from that side of the tree or log against which the rubbish was left.

If neither of the plans which I have here suggested should get you out of your difficulty, you must just hobble your horse, light a fire, and *back* it for the night. If you have no food, you must try to imitate the blacks, who have to catch or gather all their food. How *they* manage to live you will see, if you take the trouble of reading the following chapter.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### NATIVE POPULATION.

Of the black natives of Australia there are several varieties, differing in language, customs, and general appearance. The following remarks apply chiefly to those aborigines residing in the Murrumbidgee and Murray districts. In both height and weight these blacks differ very little from the English; and in these two respects also the males and females among the blacks bear the same proportion to each other, that the two sexes in England do to one another. But in many other points the difference is very remarkable. The legs of the blacks especially of the females, are extremely thin and slender—they are perfect spindle-shanks; the arms also of the females, which are long, appear to be nothing but skin and bone. The hands are small. Among both sexes, the foot approaches to club-shape, and the toes are wide and turning inwards. From these two peculiarities, I can at once tell whether the impression of a human foot in the sand or mud

before me be that of a white or a native. The head is generally large, with a greater proportion behind than before the ears. The forehead is long, narrow, and sloping backward. The skin is dark; the hair is jet black, straight, long, and coarse, but neither curly nor woolly; the eyes are black and lively; the face is broad, the mouth large, the lips thick and prominent; the nose short, with its point slightly turning upwards; the cheek-bones are high; the skull is so thick that a blow from their waddy seldom produces any impression on it; their teeth are invariably white and regular. In all parts of this country where I have met the blacks, I observed that they emitted a peculiarly strong and disagreeable odour, which is not at all owing to want of cleanliness. So strong indeed is this odour, that cattle smell it at a considerable distance; and thus warned of the approach of the blacks, whose spears they have been taught by experience to dread, gallop away to some place of safety.

The language of the blacks sounds very guttural to a European ear, until accustomed to it. Many of the words, however, especially their names of places, are not only harmonious, but very expressive, and denote some peculiarity or characteristic of these places. It is therefore much to be regretted that the whites, influenced chiefly by vanity, should discontinue these native names, in order to "call their lands by their own names."

The blacks have no writings, no hieroglyphics, no signs, to record past events, no works of art, no monument of any description. The following is a specimen of the most common words in their language:—  
 Galleen, water; patten, food; bulga, hill; birnble, ground; morn, road or path; gurrya, hut; pelagevee, wife; murrumbidgee, river; cumma, snow; toggra, cold; mandarra, thunder; nurumo or waller, rain; nangee, night or sleep; waddy, tree or stick; mungee, fish; cobbra, head; mandoi, foot; nange, small; caboon, large or much; budgere, good; corodgee, doctor; troka, sun; crammer, to steal; yeen, to go; bundygerry, to understand; yabber, to speak; burra-burra, to make haste. They count by moons. Their mode of counting, except when they do it by signs, by holding up their fingers, is extremely clumsy and imperfect. Ooddy, one; bythum, two; cooddy bythum, three; bulla bulla, four; bulla bulla cooddy, five; &c. Among them infanticide is and has been frequent. It is sometimes difficult to point out the motives which lead to the commission of this crime. It is not always to be ascribed to the want of affection on the part of the mother, except, perhaps, in the case of half-caste male children. Captain Sturt, while on the journey down the Murray in



1830, witnessed a black fellow kill his infant child by knocking its head against a stone, after which he threw it on the fire, and then devoured it. Here was an instance of infanticide, committed apparently from the want of food, as well as from the want of affection.

The want of affection is beyond all doubt a frequent cause. A black woman, who was seen committing this act by knocking her child's brains out against a tree, was once pointed out to me; and on my asking her why she had committed such a crime, she quickly and coolly replied, "Pickaniny too much cry."

The famous Benniongs, whose society was so much courted in England, assigned a totally different reason for murdering his infant child. Having followed his wife's body to the grave, he astonished the bystanders by placing the living child along with the dead mother in the same grave, which was instantly filled up by the other native blacks in attendance. The defence which the father (Benniongs) made for this unnatural act was, that the mother being dead, no woman could be found willing to nurse the child, and that therefore it would soon die a worse death.

There is apparently very little trouble in rearing black children. The child is generally carried by the mother on her shoulder, sometimes in a bag of net-work made of bark filaments; and sometimes the child is seen slung over her shoulder, and held by one leg; the little black head swinging like a pendulum athwart the mother's back as she walks. I have been assured by an eminent medical practitioner, who had various opportunities of observing the fact, that there is one part of the original curse which the black mothers are not doomed to experience to the same extent as European mothers.

At a very early age, the male children learn a variety of gymnastic exercises. I have seen a boy, whose age, I was told by the mother, was just four times as many moons as she had fingers on her hands, or about three years and a-quarter, dance, wrestle, swim, throw the spear and boomerang, and sing their famous national tunes. The happy little fellow had never in his life been subjected to the bondage of wearing any clothing. It is an amusing spectacle to witness half-a-dozen little boys and girls, stark naked, engaged in a sham fight with their yam sticks. They display an amazing degree of presence of mind, agility, and good-humour, while they thrust, parry, and ward.

The age of puberty among the blacks is from thirteen to fourteen. The families are small. I have heard of twins, but have never seen them among the aborigines.

There is one respect in which the blacks far excel Europeans, namely, in the perfection in which they (the blacks) possess the five senses, especially sight, hearing, and smelling. A European would be quite astonished at their sharpness of sight, quickness of hearing, and keenness of smell. They can trace a man or beast over rocks or hard ground, where a white man could see no mark whatever. Among thousands of objects of every shape, size, and hue, the black fellow's quick eye can detect, some hundreds of yards off, an opossum sitting on a limb of a tree. And they put their ears to the ground, and can tell you if there is anything moving within an immense distance of the spot. This quickness of hearing has enabled many of them living among us to pick up many words and phrases in the English language, in an incredibly short time.

Their smell is nearly as keen as that of a Scotch terrier, and they turn this natural qualification to good account, in smelling at the carcases of stringy trees, when hunting opossums, their favourite food. I have not had equal opportunities of proving whether these people possess the two remaining senses, those of touch and taste, in equal perfection. The necessity which they are under of constantly exercising, at least three of their senses, both in providing their daily food, and in guarding against sudden attacks from their enemies, may have contributed to improve these senses; but these causes are insufficient to account for the very great superiority, in this respect, of the black man over the white. I fully believe that this superiority is partly inherent or natural, not acquired.

At the age of puberty, the young man has two of his front teeth knocked out. The two fore teeth of the upper jaw are accordingly found wanting in all adult males. It was in order to make a man of him that his friends had inflicted this cruel punishment; which is, however, immediately followed by one of great consolation, namely, that he is thenceforward at liberty to *take a wife* whenever he can find one to his taste; whether he is to her taste or not, is a matter of very little consequence.

The chastity of both sexes among the blacks is very defective indeed, as may be satisfactorily proved by the number of black women subsisting, with the knowledge and consent of their sable husbands, in all parts of the interior, with white hut-keepers—the number of half-caste children seen at every black fellow's camp—and, above all, by the number of white men daily under the medical care of practitioners throughout the colony.

Polygamy, which Moses never approved of, but merely connived

at, and that only for the hardness of the people's hearts, is not only permitted, but practised to a very great extent among the Australian blacks. I know several black fellows who have each of them a number of wives. A strong, and rather handsome fellow, named Yarry, who frequently assisted me at sheep-washing, has generally half-a-dozen wives; and he is also continually changing them. Within my own recollection he has divorced four or five of them, in order to make room for an equal number of younger and prettier girls; for he displays no small degree of taste in his selections. Several young men, however, who found it difficult, in the present scarcity of women, to get wives of any sort, have often complained to me, that "Yarry was caboun greedy;" a remark, the justice of which my conscience constrained me to admit, though I had no wish to be the means of sowing sedition, not knowing where it might end, among the black population. There was one political benefit: Yarry's castaway wives, if not too old, were readily picked up by young men who had no wives at all.

The blacks use both animal and vegetable food, but they neither cultivate vegetables nor rear animals. A short description of their food, and their mode of procuring it, may not be uninteresting. Opossums, which are very abundant in all thinly-inhabited parts of the colony, constitute the principal article of food among the blacks. These opossums are generally caught, as they lodge in the hollow trunk of a tree, at some elevation from the ground. The black feller can, in most cases, know, before taking the trouble of ascending the tree, whether an opossum is there. The hollow limb, or tree, in which the animal rests, is open at the top, and if the aperture is deep, it is sometimes necessary to smoke it out, which is done by setting fire to the tree, when the opossum, to avoid being suffocated, rushes out, and leaps on the ground, where the black feller's dog immediately catches it. Bandicoots, kangaroo-rats, and squirrels, which are also very plentiful in the bush, and considered very good eating by the blacks, are caught in nearly the same way as the opossum. Wombats are differently caught. The flesh of these animals, which commonly weigh from 20 lbs. to 60 lbs., is considered very delicious. I have never seen the blacks catch either fish or wild ducks otherwise than by spearing, in which long practice has rendered them perfect adepts. They do, however, catch fish with nets, made by the black women, either from tough bark or a species of grass.

A never-failing, and it is said, a most delicious article of food among the blacks, is a white worm, about the length and thickness

your little finger. This worm, which is very abundant in all parts of the colony, is cut out of the cavities, or from under the bark of trees, and may easily be procured by a man who can catch neither fish, fowl, nor flesh in the Australian wilds. I have cut it out of the tree, and have seen it eaten by white as well as black men. In the heart of the main root of a small sapling, called the *Myal* or *Zoree*, and within a foot or two of the trunk, this worm is certain to be found. The knowledge of this fact might be useful to those people classically called "new chums," or, indeed, to any man who may chance to lose his way in the bush. The situation of this worm is frequently indicated by a small aperture, nearly adjacent. The only tool required is a tomahawk, with which the traveller can cut out food to satisfy his appetite, and bark to cover him at night. The roots of a shrub, called by the natives, "Quondong," are good food, after having been roasted for some time under the ashes. The fruit of the same tree or shrub is also in great repute among the blacks. The native yam, dug up here in great abundance, is considered not only nutritious, but very palatable when roasted. Like the quondong root, under the ashes. Native currents, native raspberries, and wild cherries, are eaten by blacks and whites. The blacks are very expert at discovering bees' nests. I have seen them watch, and then follow a bee in his flight until they discovered his abode. I myself have often eaten honey caught here, and given to me by the blacks. Guanas and snakes are excellent food. The black snake I have not only seen eaten, but have dined on it myself. The blacks cook it by half broiling it on the fire. When thus prepared it is as white as an eel, and as tender as a chicken. The blacks, however, will not eat of it unless it is killed by themselves; the reason is obvious; a white man seldom succeeds in killing a snake with the first blow; the consequence is, that the animal being only wounded, becomes desperate, and often, in the agony of torture, inserts its fangs into its own body, and thus diffuses the poison through every part of it. Black and brown snakes are abundant in most parts of the colony. I have killed several scores of them. They vary in length from three to fourteen feet. The most common length is about five feet. They generally try to get out of your way; but after you have struck them the first blow, they show fight and face you furiously. The danger is when you accidentally tread on them as you walk through the long grass; their bite being almost certain death.

In the cooking of their food the blacks are by no means delicate. After having skinned the animal they have caught, they throw it on the fire, and when it is well heated, but not half roasted, they pull it

off, tear it with their teeth and fingers, and voraciously devour entrails and everything. Sometimes they do not even wait to skin. They merely pull off the hair; after which they half-roast the carcass with the skin, both of which they will then eat.

They have no scruples as to eating anything they deem either nutritious or palatable, and they are enormous eaters. About six years ago, as I happened to be drafting sheep, with two black fellows assisting me, on the Hume River, we smothered a yearling wether, which would have weighed nearly forty pounds. At their own request I ordered the carcass to be given to those two black men, who, after having skinned it, threw it on a large fire, where it was left till half-roasted, when they sat down and continued eating until a late hour of the night. They slept by the fireside, got up, according to their usual habit when they have plenty of food, two or three times during the night, to resume the business of eating; by noon next day, or within twenty-four hours, those two men had ate the whole of the five pounds of mutton. The result was, that for the ensuing twenty-four hours they would do nothing for me; they lay rolling themselves on the ground, heavily groaning in pain, and with their hands rubbing their bellies, exclaiming, "Caboona buggel along bingee" (that is, am very sick in the stomach).

The blacks have no fixed time for eating. Hunger alone regulates their diets.

They have no fermented liquor among them; but, by steeping an empty sugar-bag in water, they obtain what they call "*mul*," which makes them drunk and play a variety of capers. Indeed, very often intoxicates them. A pipeful of tobacco has been known to produce this effect.

The capacity of the Australian black for sustained exertions is very nearly equal to that of Europeans.

Among both sexes the practice of piercing or scarifying the arms, back, and breast, in every fantastic form, is prevalent. The only reason which I have ever heard them assign for this practice is, that it makes them *wetong* (strong) for fighting; and there is no doubt that scarification of the skin renders it less liable to injury from blows.

These people are beautiful dancers. It would perfectly astonish you to witness their corrobories or grand balls. These nightly movements are held at the time of the full moon; such variety and agility of movement, such fantastic capers and ludicrous positions, the dancers all the while mimicking the motion of kangaroos, emus, frogs, and other animals, and yet keeping exact time to music, for which they

have excellent ears. In April last year a tribe of a hundred adult blacks, besides children, arrived at my hut on the morning of Friday, and began to prepare for the grand corrobory. For appearing at the grand corrobories in England, the ladies and gentlemen prepare by putting on their bodies some things considered valuable, such as fine clothes, and a variety of brilliant toys, including a specimen of everything that can be found in a jeweller's shop. Here the fashion is very different; for, instead of putting on ornaments, the dancers put off whatever they previously wore, and enter the hall naked as they were born. And yet no lady or young dandy in England ever spent more time in preparing and decorating the body for attending a public ball. Every inch of the black naked skin was on this occasion ornamented with either chalk or red and yellow ochre. By means of those cheap materials, which showed well on a dark skin, the black fellow made his whole body appear as if covered with *tartan*. Lines horizontal, vertical, and oblique, forming squares, parallelograms, rhombs, rhomboids, and trapeziums, each measuring about an inch in diagonal, constituted a perfectly dazzling scene, through which, I have no doubt, many a nice young lady had on that evening lost her heart. Like most English corrobories, dancing commenced about nine o'clock p.m., and generally continued till two o'clock next morning. This went on for five successive nights, that is, from Friday to Tuesday inclusive. I attended the ball every evening except Sunday. They had good and instrumental music; the musicians were about twenty in number, and consisted of both males and females. I counted fourteen females (musicians); all these sat on a log, with their opossum-skins folded up into bags, which as on so many drums, they beat with their open hands, and at the same time sang together, in perfect harmony, their famous national tune of "Mayley, Mayley, ma-a-me." The gentlemen musicians (six, I think, in number), were all standing in a line in front of the dancing circle, each of them holding two short, dry sticks, which were struck against one another in unison and accompanied, like the drumming among the ladies with vocal music.

The grotesque appearance of so many dancers, the combination of so many well-tuned voices, added to such instrumental music, the shouts of movement, and "the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind," the fine moonlight night, the clear sky, the soft bracing air, impressing "the balmy gales of Araby the blest," and the beauty of the valley, intersected by the limpid river, constituted, as the French would call it, a "tout ensemble," which to an artist would have been an interesting picture.

When a lady wanted refreshment at this ball, instead of stepping leaning on the arm of some tight-laced dandy, as on corresponding occasions in England, into an adjoining apartment, she merely walked *into* the river at my door, put her mouth to the current, and thus cooled herself both inside and outside: or if she felt disposed to taste anything more substantial than pure water, she went to the camp and took out from a greasy net-bag a piece of half-roasted kangaroo-rat, which she tore with her teeth and fingers, ate, and then returned to the ball.

I noticed that in one particular, the ladies at this grand ball closely resembled some of their frail sisters at English corroborees by displaying nearly as much skill, taste, and fine feeling, in their envious and biting criticism and uncharitable remarks on one another. But no sensible man will ever blame the black ladies for this habit. That among the English ladies such a common habit as this is either unchristian or improper, no writer has ever had, or ever will have the temerity to assert; and surely, if an additional diamond, jewel, gold chain, or any other such childish toy, is sufficient to justify envious remarks at an English corroboree, an additional line of child or red ochre ought to justify similar criticism at a black corroboree—and assuredly the liberty of the tongue is not less valuable than the liberty of the press. It must be admitted that in one respect—the black ladies, when they do wear clothes, are centuries before the white sisters in England. That abominable practice of compressing the waist, so as to reduce it to one-half its natural circumference, is here unknown. Scaring the body, and knocking out the two front teeth, are nothing in point of cruelty to this monstrous tight lacing which has sent many an interesting English lady to an early tomb. Such a species of suicide, often encouraged by the vanity of the mother, ought to deprive the victim of all benefit of clergy.

The only dress worn by the blacks, who do not choose always to go naked, consists of opossum or kangaroo skins, sewed together into the form of a blanket, by means of the sinews of some animal, used as thread, and a pointed bone for a needle. A covering thus made is very warm, as I can testify from many years' experience. The same dress is worn by both sexes. English blankets are now fast superseding the opossum cloaks among the blacks.

The blacks are short-lived. At the age of forty they appear old men and women. This statement is supported by the invariable testimony of every experienced colonist with whom I have conversed on the subject. This premature decay is no doubt partly owing to their

constant exposure to alternations of heat and cold, and to their premature mode of procuring subsistence: this week they cram themselves to surfeit, and the next week they may go for days with an empty stomach, suffering the pains and penalties of that *vacuum* which nature abhors.

Their sick are badly treated. In the absence of medical skill, of clothing, of house shelter, and of stored provision, the case of the sick man or woman among the blacks, especially in the winter season, is truly to be deplored. Their quack doctors and quack medicines, as among civilized communities, do more mischief than good. In some cases it is possible that nature *might* have effected a cure, had not the simple with his nostrum interfered.

When a man dies—especially if young, and has gradually pined away—a neighbouring tribe is blamed for it, as having "*crimmed* *gewags*?" (stolen the fat), by some invisible agency, and thus caused his death. In this case nothing but life for life will satisfy the ravaged relations. I tried by reason and ridicule to convince the blacks that such an effect could never have been produced by the same which they assigned; that as the two tribes were living widely apart, with many intervening mountains between them, and without any communication, and especially as there was no visible cut in the body of the deceased, whence the *gewags*, or fat, could be taken out, it was quite unreasonable to blame their neighbours for it. But the old black fellows only shook their heads, laughed at my ignorance, and hinted that that was all we white fellows knew about the matter.

This is one of the thousand fearful effects of ignorance and superstition—a curse from which England owes her emancipation to Christianity alone—for this very superstition was once prevalent in our native land, in Italy, and some other parts of Europe, as it is still prevalent among some tribes both in India and America.

A black fellow's burial is conducted in the following manner:—After having dug a round hole about five feet deep, they cut at the bottom another hole horizontally. Into this latter they thrust the dead body doubled, the head up, the knees to his mouth, his opossum skin wrapped about him; and then all the openings which remain are filled up with long dry grass. The grave, or first hole, is now filled up with sticks, covered over with bark, and finished with earth. Having put a rough paling round it to prevent the intrusion of cattle, they go away, and never again mention the name of the deceased.

The nearest relatives, when mourning for the dead, cover their heads all over with white clay; and at certain intervals, generally



after dusk, they set up piteous howlings. I have often been thus disturbed at night by the loud lamentations of some helpless mother who had buried probably her only child.

Their ideas of a future state are extremely vague and indefinite. Many of them believe that after death they will "jump up white fellows;" and they confidently assert that, among the white Europeans here, they recognize several of their own deceased friends and relations.

They have no fixed abodes, and no houses of any description. Their only shelter at night from cold, wind, or rain, consists of one or two sheets of bark placed obliquely on end, having the upper end resting on a horizontal stick or ridge pole, supported by two wooden forks stuck in the ground about six feet apart, and five or six feet high. Their fire is always outside and in front of this hut. If the wind shifts, the position of the hut is changed in less than five minutes; the front of it, and of course the fire, being placed to leeward. Each family occupies a separate hut. They can strike fire by quickly rubbing against one another two dry sticks of the grass tree. They have no domestic animal except the dog, which is useful to them in catching opossums, &c.

They have no property, except their wives, children, dogs, weapons of war, nets, opossum cloaks, hunting and fishing grounds; to preserve and regulate all which very few laws are required. Their weapons are the following:—Spears, boomerang, nulla-nullah, bat shield, marga, tomahawk, and a woomera, which is a stick with a notch in it, and is used for throwing the spear, which, with the aid of the woomera, they can throw and kill at one hundred yards. Their tomahawks used to be of stone—one of which is now in my possession. They seemed to answer their purpose—that of cutting hair, and nothing trees to climb, tolerably well: but since the arrival of Europeans here, stone tomahawks have been superseded by iron ones. With a tomahawk the black fellow can accomplish wonders; with it he can dig to any depth required, cut bark, build his hut, climb trees, and cut out opossums. In climbing a straight smooth tree without a branch or limb, he begins by making a couple of notches, into which he puts his big toes, after having struck the tomahawk between his teeth, and grasped the tree with both hands. Having got his feet firmly fixed into these notches, which are the two first steps in the ascent, holding on by the left, he now disengages his right arm, takes the tomahawk, and cuts two more notches as higher steps: and thus he continues ascending, step by step, carrying his tomahawk in his

hand, until he reaches the desired altitude. I have seen him in this manner ascend a tree a hundred feet without a branch, as quickly as an old sailor could climb from the deck of a ship to her rigging.

Through famine and war, vice and disease, the blacks are rapidly diminishing in numbers. It is lamentable to think that this should almost invariably be the doom of all savages similarly circumstanced. It is a humiliating fact that Great Britain—the most civilized, the most enlightened, the most evangelical nation in the world, a nation whose proud boast is, that the sun never sets on her dominions—should, notwithstanding this pre-eminence, establish her colonies in the destruction of the native inhabitants, who are swept away before the march of civilization. While England's sons, in obedience to the Divine command, go forth to multiply, replenish, and subdue the earth, the original inhabitants rapidly disappear as snow before the melting sun: the arrival of the white man has sealed their doom, and no power short of Omnipotence seems now competent to arrest the progress of extermination.

The three great causes of war among the blacks are territorial aggression, murdering one of the neighbouring tribes, and the abduction of wives, whether by stealth or violence.

It is a well-ascertained fact, not only that they are cannibals, but that they very frequently eat the bodies of those taken in war. A respectable gentleman, named Morrice, residing on the Hume River, came lately on a party of fifty or sixty blacks, while in the very act of roasting pieces of human flesh. He saw some parts of the same carcass in the camp, which were no doubt reserved for a future repast, and he was given to understand that it was the body of a female from a neighbouring tribe, whom they had just killed.

A stout black fellow, named Paddy, who frequently lives with me, has been a great warrior in his time, and committed several murders. When lately describing to me one of the last murders (that of a black boy, about twelve years of age) in which he was concerned, he stated that this boy, who belonged to a neighbouring tribe that had caused the death of some one in Paddy's tribe, was employed by a squatter on the Hume River, where he (Paddy) and three more watched him for some days, until at last they found him on horseback looking after cattle, when all four rushed on him, pulled him off the horse, cut him up with their tomahawks, roasted and ate him. Old Paddy, hoking his lips, added that it was "*Caron badgeroy gatter take si Emu,*" and that if I wished it, he would bring me a piece of the next he killed. For more reasons than one I declined, however, this generous offer.



There are some very bad points in the character of the Australian blacks. Like most savages, they are both treacherous and avaricious. Neither time nor space will permit me here to multiply proofs for the purpose of substantiating this charge. In Major (now Sir Thomas) Mitchell's expedition, in the year 1835, down the Lachlan River, it says, "A chief, to whom I had given presents and shown particular attention, had been the first to attack us. To conciliate them (the blacks) was quite hopeless, for the more we endeavoured to supply their wants and show good-will towards them, the more they seemed to covet what was utterly useless to them, and the more they plotted our destruction. The very knives we gave them as presents, they immediately used in cutting the cording of our tents."

It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to state the probable number of aborigines now in Australia. That they are few, compared to the immense extent of territory over which they spread, admits of a doubt; and it is equally certain that they are rapidly diminishing especially within the limits of all the Australian colonies.

One cause of the diminution of the blacks is, beyond all doubt, to be found in the disproportion between the sexes in several districts of the colony. The official return from one district gives only two women to twenty-eight men; two boys, but no girls!

The blacks seldom make any provision for the future, but literally act on the principle that "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." A friend of mine gave some cuts of potatoes for seed to a black fellow, which he was induced to plant, on his being assured that after a short time these few cuttings would produce a large quantity of potatoes. Two days afterwards, the black fellow returned to my friend, to complain that the young potatoes did "not yet jump up." He then holding up two fingers, asked if it would yet be so many days before the young potatoes should "jump up;" and on my friend admitting that it might be as many days as there were fingers to both his hands, he immediately went away, dug up all the cuttings of the potatoes and ate them, saying that "white fellow is all gammon."

They make their wives carry everything belonging to them, while they themselves proudly strut in front, shouldering their weapons of war, and thus proving, if any proof of such a palpable fact were required, that they are the lords of the creation.

It may be interesting to the philosopher to be informed, that by intermixture with Europeans, some of the phrenologically bad points disappear in the Australian blacks. Every one of the few half-castes that I know affords a favourable specimen. In her evidence, given

before a Committee of the Legislative Council, appointed in 1838, Mrs. Shelley, who kept for upwards of eight years, the Asylum for Aboriginal Children (established at Parramatta, by Governor Macquarie, in 1814), states that "some of the (black) children under her tuition read and wrote well, and understood arithmetic; that *she always found the half-caste children quicker and more tractable than the blacks*; that several of the girls had married black men, but instead of having the effect intended, of reclaiming them, they eventually followed their husbands into the bush, after having given away or destroyed all the clothes with which they had been furnished by government. Some of the boys went to sea. Most of the girls turned out very bad; *but there is one exception*, in a half-caste girl, who was married to a white man, and was very industrious, taking in needle-work," &c.

The blacks have no religion, no idols, neither sacrifices nor gifts, no sacred days or religious ceremonies. Some of them are afraid of "wadjigang" (ghosts); and in order to keep away the *deh-le-deh-le*, a few of them thrust a bone through their noses. The comet which appeared two years ago greatly alarmed them, and some of them applied to me for an explanation of this phenomenon, as some rascally white man told them that its design in paying us a visit was to complete the destruction of the blacks.

They are excellent mimics, and have a keen relish for the Indian-comic. They enjoy a joke even at their own expense. They are first-rate shots. It is seldom they miss their aim; as sure as you hear the report, the animal aimed at is either killed or wounded, unless there is some other in the piece.

They are fearless riders, and never feel themselves so happy as when at full gallop. An orphan boy, about ten years of age, rode about with me for nearly six months of last year. I found him useful in tending the horses in the morning, &c. At the same time I had two big black fellows driving bullock-teams for me. They did well while they continued; but there is no dependence on them for any length of time, and the laws of their tribe required their attendance at meetings which deprived me of their services. I have my doubts whether, without a thorough change in their views and whole character, they can ever be induced to exchange their roaming habits for all the comforts of civilization.

There is evidently a charm in savage life, which it is difficult, perhaps impossible, for a European to appreciate. Benthong, who was brought to England, after two years' enjoyment of European comforts

and refinements, cast away his fine clothes, and then, naked, joined his old companions in the wilds of Australia. I have repeatedly given clothes and abundance of food to black fellows; but they soon got tired of our tame sort of living, threw away their clothes as useless lumber, fit only for bondsmen, and then joined their tribe in the forest, to live on grubs, and sleep naked under a sheet of bark. This spectacle would certainly have cheered the heart of Rousseau and other great admirers of savage life. I know some sensible white men here who believe that the privations occasionally experienced by the blacks are more than counterbalanced by the perfect freedom and independence they enjoy. Without professing to entertain myself any predilection for such a life, I will add, that great would be the surprise of any Englishman who would contrast the servile, crouching, cowering, drunken blacks lounging about the streets of Sydney,—after having sold their birthright, their independence, for a morsel of bread,—with the wild inhabitant of the forest in a state of perfect nudity, as he roams at freedom over immeasurable plains, hills, and valleys, bearing on his shoulders his weapons of war and implements of chase, yielding submission to no human power, and with a characteristic elasticity of movement, firmness of step, and dignity of gait, proclaiming, not in words, but in every gesture, his hereditary rights and independence.

When viewing, not one man only, but scores of men of this bold stamp, I could not help cherishing an anxious wish that some farther efforts should be made to save at least a remnant of this interesting race from annihilation. Their present condition is a reproach both to British legislature and to the colonial public. We cannot yet conscientiously say, in reference to the Australian blacks, what more could we have done to this vineyard that we have not done?

I am clearly of opinion, that if the heralds of the gospel are ever to make any impression on the aborigines, it must be by joining their camps, following them in their native wilds, and living on roots, grubs, and opossums, like themselves. It was precisely in this way that Mr. Elliot, the famous missionary, acquired the language, gained the confidence, and, by the aid of the Divine Spirit, changed the hearts of many of the Red Indians in North America; and precisely similar was the plan successfully adopted by Mr. Anderson, the missionary at the Cape of Good Hope. Let the Church, at home, therefore, appoint some missionary of apostolic zeal, self-denial, robust constitution, and unconquerable enterprise, to accompany the blacks in their wanderings, and accommodate himself to their savage mode of life.

## CHAPTER XV.

## HINTS TO EMIGRANTS.

There are only two classes of men, physicians and lawyers, to whose advice any high value is attached; and their advice is highly valued for no other reason that I can tell, than that neither of them has ever been known to open his lips, by way of giving advice, without having previously "received in hand" as payment, the sum of at least twenty-one shillings of the current coin of the realm. As it happens, very unfortunately for me, that I am neither a lawyer nor a "doctor," I scarcely expect that intending emigrants will attach much importance to the advice which I am now about to offer to them. It shall, however, be freely and honestly tendered.

This subject divides itself into three parts: *first*, what you ought to do before sailing; *secondly*, what you ought to do on the voyage; and, *thirdly*, what you ought to do after landing in Australia.

Having made up your mind to emigrate to Australia, apply, if you wish a free passage, to one or other of the emigration agents. They will give you all the necessary information required, and the government takes care that none but sound and sea-worthy ships are chartered for the conveyance of passengers to the colonies. The attention of the British Parliament has been long and successfully occupied in devising the best means for securing the comforts of emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland to all parts of the world; and accordingly, in August, 1842, an Act, intitled the "Passengers' Act," was passed, regulating the carrying of passengers in merchant vessels. Every captain carrying above thirty passengers is bound to have on board two copies of this act; and he is also bound to give a perusal of one of these copies to any of his passengers who may ask for it. Every passenger ought to acquaint himself with its contents. He will there see how much space in the ship he can lawfully claim; also the quantity of water, the quantity and quality of the food, &c., &c., to which he is entitled. Many skippers, who take it for granted that their passengers are not aware of the existence of such a parliamentary act, omit their just allowance of space, water, and provisions. For any and every violation of this law, the emigrant, on arrival at his destination, can pull up the skipper, and in a most summary way obtain damages for all injuries thus sustained during the voyage. This Act, of August, 1842, also provides that no skipper shall carry more than in the proportion of three persons for every five tons of the registered