

AN
HISTORICAL AND STATISTICAL
ACCOUNT
OF
NEW SOUTH WALES,
BOTH
AS A PENAL SETTLEMENT
AND AS A BRITISH COLONY.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

“ We have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good.”

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been committed against his family by Dr. Smith—was fully substantiated; and I am confident that no intelligent jury of twelve honest men, either in England or in New South Wales, would have suffered the minuter details of that affidavit, though actually proved by unexceptionable evidence to have been inconsistent with the fact, to be made a peg on which to hang an action for wilful and corrupt perjury. In short, I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion, that the verdict in the case in question was not only contrary to the plainest dictates of common sense, but under all the circumstances of the case absolutely monstrous.

CHAPTER II.

JOURNEY OVER-LAND TO HUNTER'S RIVER, WITH
A DESCRIPTION OF AN AUSTRALIAN FARM.

*Sic ego desertis possim bene vivere sylvis,
Quo nulla humano sit via trita pede.*

PROPERTIUS.

Thus could I live in desert wilds,
Where human foot had never trod.

THE principal agricultural and grazing district in the colony of New South Wales is that of Hunter's River, to the northward of Sydney. Hunter's River empties itself into the Pacific Ocean at Newcastle—a small town beautifully situated at the head of a romantic bay, the entrance of which is about seventy miles distant from the heads of Port Jackson. At the entrance of the Bay of Newcastle there is a small but rather lofty island, called Nobby's Island, somewhat resembling the Craig of Ailsa or the Bass Rock on the coasts of Scotland, and consisting apparently of indurated clay supporting a stratum of sand-stone, over which there is a stratum of coal, the clay appearing to rest on a substratum of silicious substance. The indurated clay, of which I have seen various specimens, although I have not myself landed on the island, consists

of thin laminae, into which it may be easily separated with a knife, and which present innumerable impressions of vegetables. I have seen such impressions in specimens of the clay obtained at a height of fifty to a hundred feet above the level of the sea. It appears indeed to consist of nothing else but masses of vegetable matter, which, at some former period in the history of the earth, must have floated in a solution of clay. Nobby's Island has evidently been originally joined to the main-land; the intervening channel to the southward being still narrow, shallow, and rocky, and the successive strata of which it is composed corresponding with those of the main. It is a very remarkable and interesting object on the coast.

A packet for goods and passengers used formerly to ply between Sydney and Newcastle once a week; goods and produce being conveyed to and fro, between Newcastle and the head of the navigation of the river, distant about twenty or thirty miles from the coast, in a barge. Several other small vessels also plied on the main river and the other two navigable streams that fall into it, carrying direct to Sydney the produce of the farms along their banks; but the annual loss of life in these vessels, on the coast between Sydney and Newcastle, was very considerable. My father lost his life in this way, with about sixteen other persons, in the month of April, 1830. He had been residing for some time previous at my brother's farm on Hunter's River; but, requiring to come to Sydney, he had been induced to venture on board one of the small trading-vessels, as the regular packet had been detained a week

longer than her usual time in Sydney by northerly winds. Shortly after the little vessel had got out into the open ocean, it began to blow freshly from the westward. Unable to proceed along the coast to the southward, she was seen returning to the port of Newcastle on the evening of the second day after she left it; but as both wind and tide were strongly against her, she was obliged to put about again and stand out to sea. A strong southerly gale succeeded almost immediately thereafter, in which it was supposed she had gone down with all on board, as she was never afterwards either seen or heard of.*

The arrival of a steam-boat in the colony in the year 1831, to ply between Sydney and Hunter's River, was therefore of incalculable benefit to the latter district, as well as to the colony in general. There are now two on the course, each of which makes a trip to Hunter's River once a week, and there will shortly be a third of much larger size. The steam-boat leaves Sydney at six o'clock in the evening, reaches Newcastle about the same hour next morning—the ocean part of the voyage being thus performed during the night—and arrives at the Green Hills, or the head of the navigation of the Hunter, at the distance of four miles from the town of Maitland, about eleven o'clock; the whole distance being about one hundred and twenty miles. The town of Newcastle, I have already observed, has somewhat the appearance of a deserted village. It is reviving, however, though rather slowly, and is likely eventually

* My grandfather also lost his life in a similar way, about fifty years before, on the coast of Jamaica, in the West Indies.

to become a place of considerable importance, as it is situated in the centre of the great coal-field of the colony, and as the Bay forms a good harbour for small vessels.

Coal abounds along the east coast of New South Wales to a vast and unknown extent. It is frequently discernible from a black streak along the face of the perpendicular cliffs that form the coast-line, a mile or two off at sea; and it is worked at Newcastle with comparative facility. The Australian Agricultural Company enjoy the exclusive privilege of working the coal-mines of the colony for a certain number of years, and they have erected works for the purpose in the immediate vicinity of Newcastle of considerable extent. The main-shaft is on the declivity of a hill or bank running parallel to the course of the river, about a furlong from the water's edge, and the coal is raised to the surface by steam-machinery. It is then placed in large trucks, which are made to descend along an inclined plane by their own weight; the angle of inclination being about thirty degrees, and the weight of each descending truck being employed to raise an empty one, by means of a connecting chain passing around a system of wheels or rollers at the upper extremity of the plane. The truck is then pushed, by one or two men stationed for the purpose, along an elevated horizontal railway, which terminates in a jetty; the moveable extremity of which is so constructed as to place the truck right over the deck or open hold of a vessel loading coals in the river. The slip-bottom of the truck, which is moveable by a spring, is then thrown open, and its whole

contents descend into the vessel's hold without further trouble.

Coals are sold at the jetty on behalf of the Company at eight shillings a ton. The quantity sold last year, I was told by a gentleman residing in the neighbourhood, realized about £2500; but the salaries of persons connected with the works, the price of labour, and the tear and wear of machinery, amounted to about an equal sum. There is reason to believe, however, that the consumption, and of course the sale, of coal will ere long be increased tenfold in the colony; for besides the quantity sold for exportation, and the daily increasing consumption of steam-engines and factories, families in Sydney already begin to find it a less expensive and more convenient sort of fuel than wood.

When Newcastle was a penal settlement, a jetty or breakwater was commenced, to extend from the mainland to Nobby's Island, with a view to improve the navigation at the entrance of the harbour, by shutting up the shallow, rocky channel to the southward of the island, and thereby widening and deepening (which it was expected would be the result of the operation) the channel to the northward. The work, however, was discontinued during the governments of Sir Thomas Brisbane and General Darling; but it has just been resumed under the vigorous administration of the present Governor, and will, in all likelihood, afford suitable employment for two or three hundred convicts under colonial sentences for two or three years. Some colonial Goth, whose antipathy to interesting natural scenery seems to be a sort of inherent or original sin, has even

proposed to level Nobby's Island altogether, on the plea of its having been repeatedly found guilty of taking the wind out of the sails of vessels entering the harbour. I trust, however, the colonial government will adopt the wiser expedient of erecting a light-house on its elevated summit; for the island has surely been long enough at a penal settlement, to entitle it to indulge the reasonable hope of escaping decapitation—the last punishment of the law.

Hunter's River, or the Coquun, as it is called by the Aborigines, runs in an easterly direction for upwards of a hundred miles, from the high ranges of mountains in the interior to the Pacific Ocean. It is formed from the junction of various smaller rivers, that traverse these ranges in various directions to the right and left. It is navigable, however, only for about twenty-five miles in a direct line, or about thirty-five by water, from the coast. At the distance of twenty miles by water from Newcastle, it receives another river of considerable magnitude from the northward, called William's River, or the Doorribang; and at the head of the navigation, or about thirty-five miles from Newcastle by water, it receives a second river, called Patterson's River, or the Yimmang, each of which is navigable for a considerably greater distance than the principal stream or main river.

For the first fifteen or twenty miles by water from the mouth of the river, the land on either side is generally low, swampy, and sterile, though for the most part thickly covered with timber; but higher up and along the banks of the two tributary rivers, the soil for

a considerable distance from the banks is entirely alluvial and of the highest fertility, and the scenery from the water exceedingly beautiful. Let the reader figure to himself a noble river, as wide as the Thames in the lower part of its course, winding slowly towards the ocean, among forests that have never felt the stroke of the axe, or seen any human face till lately but that of the wandering barbarian. On either bank, the lofty gum-tree or eucalyptus shoots up its white naked stem to the height of 150 feet from the rich alluvial soil, while underwood of most luxuriant growth completely covers the ground; and numerous wild vines, as the flowering shrubs and parasitical plants of the alluvial land are indiscriminately called by the settlers, dip their long branches covered with white flowers into the very water. The voice of the lark, or the linnet, or the nightingale, is, doubtless, never heard along the banks of the Hunter; for New South Wales is strangely deficient in the music of the groves. But the eye is gratified instead of the ear; for flocks of white or black cockatoos, with their yellow or red crests, occasionally flit across from bank to bank; and innumerable chirping parrots, of most superb and inconceivably variegated plumage, are ever and anon hopping about from branch to branch. I have been told indeed that there is nothing like interesting natural scenery in New South Wales. My own experience and observation enable me flatly to contradict the assertion. There are doubtless numerous places throughout the territory uninteresting enough, as the reader may conceive must necessarily be the case in situations where the prospect of a settler's

cleared land is bounded on every side by lofty and branchless trees. But in many parts of the territory, both to the northward and the southward of Sydney, both beyond the Blue Mountains to the westward, and for many miles along the Hawkesbury and Nepean rivers that wash their eastern base, I have seen natural scenery combining every variety of the beautiful, the picturesque, the wild, and the sublime, and equalling any thing I had ever seen in Scotland, England, Ireland, or Wales.

The following pastoral by an Australian poet, whose name I am not at liberty to mention, will show that there is something to captivate the admirer of nature in the woods and wilds of Australia, and will also afford the reader some idea of the rural scenery on the banks of Hunter's River and its tributary streams:—

ODE TO YIMMANG WATER.

On Yimmang's banks I love to stray
And charm the vacant hour away,
At early dawn or sultry noon,
Or latest evening when the moon
Looks downward, like a peasant's daughter,
To view her charms in the still water.

There would I walk at early morn
Along the ranks of Indian corn,
Whose dew-bespangled tassels shine
Like diamonds from Golconda's mine,
While numerous cobs outbursting yield
Fair promise of a harvest-field.

There would I muse on Nature's book,
By deep lagoon or shady brook,
When the bright sun ascends on high
Nor sees a cloud in all the sky,
And hot December's sultry breeze
Scarce moves the leaves of yonder trees.

Then from the forest's thickest shade,
Scared at the sound my steps had made,
The ever-graceful kangaroo
Would bound, and often stop to view,
And look as if he meant to scan
The traits of European man.

There would I sit in the cool shade
By some tall cedar's branches made,
Around whose stem full many a vine
And kurryjong* their tendrils twine,
While beauteous birds of every hue—
Parrot, macaw, and cockatoo—
Straining their imitative throats,
And chirping all their tuneless notes,
And fluttering still from tree to tree,
Right gladly hold corrobory.†

Meanwhile, perched on a branch hard by,
With head askance and visage sly,
Some old Blue-Mountain parrot chatters
About his own domestic matters:
As how he built his nest of hay,
And finished it on Christmas-day,
High on a tree in yonder glen,
Far from the haunts of prying men:
Or how madame has been confined
Of twins—the prettiest of their kind—
How one's the picture of himself—
A little green blue-headed elf—

* The kurryjong is a tree or shrub abounding in alluvial land, the inner bark of which is used by the natives for the manufacture of a sort of cord, or twine, of which they make nets, bags, &c.

† *Corrobory* is a native word, and signifies a noisy assemblage of the Aborigines. It is also used occasionally in the colony, to designate a meeting of white people, provided their proceedings are not conducted with the requisite propriety and decorum; as, for instance, the meeting of the Benevolent Society in Sydney, in the month of June last. At the St. Andrew's dinner, also held in Sydney, in the year 1829, an infamous Gaelic toast, of which a false translation was put forth (whether wittingly or unwittingly I know not) by the gallant chairman, was drunk with applause by the gentlemen present; for which reason the meeting has ever since been deservedly designated, "*The Scotch Corrobory.*"

While t'other little chirping fellow
 Is like mamma, bestreaked with yellow :
 Or how poor uncle Poll was killed
 When eating corn in yonder field ;
 Thunder and lightning!—down he fluttered—
 And not a syllable he uttered,
 But flapped his wings, and gasped, and died,
 While the blood flowed from either side !
 As for himself, some tiny thing
 Struck him so hard, it broke his wing,
 So that he scarce had strength to walk off !
 It served him a whole month to talk of !

Thus by thy beauteous banks, pure stream,
 I love to muse alone and dream,
 At early dawn or sultry noon,
 Or underneath the midnight moon,
 Of days when all the land shall be
 All peaceful and all pure like thee !

The country along the course of the Hunter appears to have undergone considerable changes in its physical conformation from the inundations of the river. In some places the river has been entirely diverted from its former channel, leaving a line of long narrow lagoons to designate the place of the ancient rushing of its waters ; in other parts of its course, lakes, whose existence cannot be doubted for a moment, have gradually disappeared, and been succeeded by grassy plains, islands, or peninsulas. This is particularly obvious at Patrick's Plains, a level tract of alluvial land of considerable extent, about thirty miles from the town of Maitland, as well as at the Green Hills at the head of the navigation. At the latter of these localities, the rivers Hunter and Patterson, or, as they are called by the black natives, the Coquun and the Yimmang, approach to within two hundred yards of

each other, and, then diverging, inclose between their deep channels a peninsula of upwards of eleven hundred acres of alluvial land, forming almost a dead level. The peninsula, which the natives call Narragan, but which the late proprietor, Mr. Harris, a native of Dublin, called *the Phoenix Park*, is without exception the finest piece of land, both for quality of soil and for beauty of scenery and situation, I have ever seen,—being entirely of alluvial formation, and bounded on all sides, with the exception of the narrow isthmus that connects it with the main-land, by broad and deep rivers, the banks of which are ornamented with a natural growth of the most beautiful shrubbery ; while over its whole extent patches of rich grassy plain, of thirty or forty acres each, alternate with clumps of trees or narrow beltings of forest, as if the whole had been tastefully laid out for a nobleman's park by a skilful landscape-gardener. Mr. Harris has informed me, however, that in digging a well, somewhere near the centre of the peninsula, he found pieces of charred wood at a depth of nine feet from the surface, or beneath the present level of the river. It cannot be doubted, therefore, that the beautiful peninsula of Narragan was formerly a lake, and that it owes its existence to successive deposits of alluvium from the two rivers.

Previous to the introduction of steam-navigation in the year 1831, the uncertainty and danger of the existing mode of conveyance by water, between Sydney and Hunter's River, induced the majority of those who either resided in, or occasionally visited, the latter

district to travel by land. The distance is about one hundred and thirty miles, and the journey generally occupied three days.

The first time I travelled across the mountains—in the year 1827—I had a young man, who lived as a settler at Hunter's River, for my fellow-traveller and guide. Our horses had each a long tether-rope wound about their necks, to fasten them with at night. We had each a valise or portmanteau affixed to the saddle behind, containing a small supply of provisions for the mountain-part of the road, and a boat-cloak lashed to it before to serve as our covering when bivouacking in the open forest during the night. A tin quart-jug to make tea in on the mountains, and a pistol to strike a light, completed our equipment.

The country from Sydney to Parramatta—the first part of the road to Hunter's River, comprising a distance of fourteen or fifteen miles—is in general of inferior quality as to soil, though in some parts of it there appears to be good land. Its vicinity to Sydney, however, renders it valuable. The greater part of it has therefore been cleared for a considerable distance on either side of the road; and the number of neat cottages and comfortable villas that are seen at moderate intervals to the right and left indicate the neighbourhood of a bustling and thriving capital. Indeed, land of any kind adjoining a public and well-frequented road in the colony is always considered highly valuable; for, though it should produce absolutely nothing to the agriculturist, it will at least serve to build a public-house on—a sort of crop which

is cultivated in all parts of the territory in which it can possibly be grown with the least prospect of success. Indeed, the number of these nuisances, each of which produces £25 annually to the colonial revenue, is the most striking feature in the scenery of the Parramatta road, and speaks volumes for the colony. There are the *Spinning Wheel*, and the *Cheshire Cheese*, and the *Cherry Gardens*, and the *Ship*, and the *Duke of Wellington*, and I do not know how many other *signs of the times* along the highway from Sydney to Parramatta; at each of which the poor emancipated convict-settler, who is just beginning perhaps to do well in the world, may easily get himself dead-drunk on returning home from Sydney market with the price of his load of wheat or maize, or pigs, or poultry. And lest he should have resolution to drive his bullock-cart forward without stopping to bait, there are Jem Tindall and Dennis Flanagan, sitting quite comfortable in the tap with the window wide open, bawling out to him “to stop a bit, and they'll go along with him; for it is getting dark, and the bush-rangers are out.”

I have heard of a poor settler of this class, who left the Hawkesbury with a well-furnished team and a well-filled cart of produce, coming to Sydney and disposing of his goods at a fair price. Unfortunately, however, he happened to meet in the market an old associate, who had arrived in the colony as a seven years' man and had just obtained his ticket of leave, and with whom perhaps he had often stolen in company in merry England. It was impossible to resist the temptation to adjourn with so old and *tried* a friend to

one or other of the public-houses adjoining the market-place, to talk over their eventful histories. *There* the narrative of the ticket-of-leave man became so interesting, and the Bengal rum so enticing, that all thoughts of home and the Hawkesbury were thrown to the winds; and the price of one bushel of wheat was dealt out after another, till the whole proceeds of his load were gone. He had still, however, a good cart and team, and the publican "knew a friend who had just need of such a thing at his farm." A bargain was accordingly struck—"no bad bargain either," the publican assured him—and the two friends continued to drink on. "Have'n't you a bit of land at the Hawkesbury?" said the publican to his oblivious guest, after he had sojourned at his house so long that the price of the team and cart was nearly exhausted. "Have I not?" said the settler—"as good a thirty-acre farm as in the township, every acre of it cleared." "I have a mind to buy a farm thereabouts," said the publican; "what would you say to thirty pounds for it?" "You mean to make a man of me all at once," said the settler sarcastically, recollecting that the price offered was not one-fourth the value of the farm; but he was not in the humour of higgling about the price of his property, and the publican, therefore, soon brought him to his own terms. The deed of sale was accordingly made out in due form; for it is easily done "where no stamps are used." The price was then paid before witnesses, in dollars at five shillings. The settler thought there was some mistake in that mode of reckoning the price, as he had certainly meant *sterling*; but, the publican assuring

him he had meant no such thing, the matter was *amicably* arranged. It was only, however, after the price of his farm had been reduced to ten dollars, that the settler awoke from his dream, and determined to proceed homeward. He left Sydney with a light purse and a heavy heart, imprecating curses upon himself and on all the publicans of the colony, at every public-house he passed on the way to Parramatta. He had resolution enough to pass through the *camp* * without visiting any of its haunts of dissipation; but, on reaching the halfway-house to Windsor, he met the Hawkesbury carts coming to Sydney with produce, and was tempted to "stop a bit" with some of his old neighbours, to learn how matters had been going on in his absence, and to explain the circumstance of his tarrying so long in Sydney. He had still his ten dollars remaining, and he had only to take one glass of the publican's Bengal to have them no longer. In short, he very soon got dead drunk again; and when he awoke from his stupor, he found he had been sleeping in an out-house, and that his good blue-cloth jacket and black beaver hat of colonial manufacture had been exchanged for an old canvass jacket and straw hat not worth a farthing. In this respectable attire he made the best of his way to the Hawkesbury, whose broad and quiet stream he had not gazed on for seven weeks before. His heart throbbed instinctively as he looked in the direction of his log-hut, at the door of which his affectionate Molly

* The *old hands*, as they are called in the colony, who still recollect the time when the towns of Sydney and Parramatta were *encampments* or rows of huts, generally prefer the old appellation.

—I am sorry I cannot call her his wife, although she was the mother of his children—used to watch his return from Sydney. No Molly was there; and when he reached the scene of desolation, he found that there was neither a pig remaining in the sty nor a stool in the cottage! Leaning on the door-post of his deserted cabin, with his head resting disconsolately on his shoulder, he continued for some time utterly lost in the bitterness of self-reflection; till he was roused at length to fury and desperation by the unsolicited information he incidentally received from a neighbour passing his door. “Molly,” said the rustic, observing that he looked rather sorrowfully—“Molly has gone to live with M’Manus t’ other side the river, and has taken the childer with her.”

The reader will not be surprised when I inform him, that some of the largest estates and some of the largest fortunes in New South Wales have been gotten together in some such way as the one I have just exemplified, viz. by *doing business in the public line*. But he will scarcely be prepared for the additional information, that there are gentlemen in the colony—magistrates of the territory, and men of unquestionable honour, forsooth,—who are mean enough to speculate on this lamentable propensity of the lower orders to drunkenness, by building public-houses in the most alluring situations, and getting them licensed by the bench of magistrates in the district, and letting them at exorbitant rents.

The country between the Blue Mountains and the Pacific Ocean generally consists of a thin coating of sandy soil on a substratum of tenacious clay. The

clay retains the moisture which percolates through the soil above it, and thus renders land comparatively productive, which in England would be good for nothing. This is quite the character of the cultivated land near the village or town of Parramatta; the population of which, including that of its immediate neighbourhood, amounted in the year 1828 to four thousand six hundred and eighteen persons. Parramatta has a rural aspect, and there is an appearance of quiet and retirement about it which the town of Sydney certainly does not exhibit; and in George Street, the principal street of the town, which is about a mile in length, the houses are all detached from each other, and have generally small gardens in front as well as in the rear. Government-House, a plain building of two stories, occupies an elevated and commanding situation, within a pretty extensive domain commencing at the upper end of George Street; and the Commissariat Store, a large brick-building on the bank of the river, to the course of which the street runs parallel, forms its termination at the other extremity.

The Hunter’s River road branches off from the road to Windsor and the Hawkesbury, about three miles beyond Parramatta. For several miles onwards, the forest on either side of it consists chiefly of lofty iron-bark trees, the soil being moderately good, and the pasture in moist seasons highly luxuriant. About nine miles from Parramatta the road crosses the settlement of Castle Hill, one of the earliest-formed agricultural settlements in the territory. In this neighbourhood there is a large extent of cleared land of good quality,

and the country has an undulating appearance, which relieves the eye, and is highly pleasing.

It was at this part of our route that my fellow-traveller and myself halted for refreshment at the cottage of the *ci-devant* cobbler, the particulars of whose history I have already related. After a ride of twenty-five miles from the settler's cottage through a very uninteresting and sterile country, in which sand-stone hills and stunted trees were the only objects that the eye could discover, the sun was just beginning to descend beyond the distant Blue Mountains, when we were suddenly delighted with the view of the broad Hawkesbury River, winding along in a deep valley far beneath us. In the upper part of its course the Hawkesbury flows through a champaign country, on which its own successive inundations have gradually deposited many feet of the richest alluvial soil. But, for sixty or seventy miles towards the ocean, the mountain ridges on either side of it approximate so nearly, that the river has scarcely room to flow between them; and it merely leaves a small patch of alluvial land, sometimes on the one side and sometimes on the other, as it sweeps more closely to the opposite bank. At the point, however, at which the road to Hunter's River crosses its channel, the valley of the Hawkesbury is of considerable width: the river, which at this part of its course is at least a quarter of a mile broad, suddenly changes its direction; and, as it sweeps close to the precipices on the one side, it leaves a delta of alluvial land of several hundred acres on the other of the highest fertility. Nearly opposite this point of land it also receives a tributary

stream called *the First Branch*, on either bank of which there are numerous small settlers located for a distance of many miles, as the rich alluvial land which the settlers chiefly cultivate is more frequently met with on the *Branches* than on the main river. The delta I have just mentioned belongs to Mr. Solomon Wiseman, a very prosperous settler, whose large two-story stone-house had been most opportunely transformed, at the time I refer to, into a comfortable inn; the situation of which, overlooking the delta and the river, and facing the mountains on the opposite bank, is interesting and romantic in the very highest degree. Indeed, so much pleased were His Excellency the late Governor and Mrs. Darling with the scenery in this vicinity, that they rented a part of Wiseman's house, and lived in it for some time.

The rays of the setting sun were glowingly reflected from the smooth glassy surface of the broad river, when this beautiful scene suddenly burst upon our view. Patches of wheat nearly ready for harvest, and fields of Indian corn, appeared to the right and left along the main river, and, as far as the eye could trace it among the mountains, on either bank of its tributary stream; while the yellow tints of the one, and the deep healthy green of the other, beautifully contrasted with the sombre shades of the forest, and the grey rocks that were ever and anon peering forth along the sides of the mountain. The road, from the high level from which we had first seen the river to the plain below, was formed by the late colonial government, across deep ravines and along the edge of frightful precipices, with

prodigious labour, and doubtless at very great expense. It is an easy task, however, to descend a mountain by a good road. We were speedily at the foot of the precipices, and safely lodged in the inn. Our evening repast was light and pleasant. Shortly after it was finished, we invited our host and hostess to attend our evening devotions, and we then retired to our separate places of repose to resume our journey at day-break.

The first rays of the rising sun were just beginning to gild the summits of the lofty ridges on either bank of the Hawkesbury, when we led our horses on the following morning towards the river, which we crossed in a punt or ferry-boat constructed for the conveyance of men and cattle. The road on the opposite bank is still more precipitous, and has obviously required greater labour for its construction. Numerous convicts were at work on it as we climbed the mountain. Having slowly gained the summit of the ridge, we again mounted our horses, and trotted at a brisk pace along an excellent road, over a mountainous and sterile country, for about twelve miles. We then dismounted for breakfast, near a small stream of limpid water, in a valley called *the Twelve-Mile Hollow*, unsaddled our horses, and, fixing the ends of their tether-ropes, turned them out to browse for a little on the miserable vegetation which the place afforded. My fellow-traveller then struck a light with his pistol, and immediately kindled a fire, on which he placed the tin-jug or quart-pot, which he had strapped for the purpose to his saddle-bow on our leaving the small settler's, and which he had previously filled with water from the brook. When the water

boiled, he measured the requisite quantity of tea in the palm of his hand, and threw it into the pot; and then, adding a quantity of sugar, he broke off a twig from the dead branch of a tree, which he humorously told me was called *a spoon* in the Australian dialect, and stirred the mixture. When the tea was sufficiently boiled, he carried the jug to a little pool of water, in which he placed it for a few minutes, to cool it,—and we then breakfasted, not less comfortably than romantically.

For a mile or two from the place where we halted for refreshment, the road, which was only a footpath at the time I refer to, though it is now an excellent road throughout, lay along the bottom of the valley; but we were soon obliged to dismount again to climb up the precipitous side of a steep mountain, to gain the summit of what the colonists call “a dividing range.” These ranges, which are flanked on either side by deep and sometimes impassable ravines, traverse the country in many places for a great distance, either in a northerly and southerly or easterly and westerly direction; and the traveller has therefore merely to ascertain the proper range, to ascend to its summit, and to follow it in all its circumvolutions, to reach the proposed termination of his journey; for, if he should attempt to pursue a direct course by descending into the gulleys, he would in all probability lose his way and perhaps perish of hunger. The summits of these ridges are just broad enough for the construction of a carriage-road, and they are often so level that a person on horseback can trot along them for miles together without the slightest interruption.

The stage we had now commenced was eighteen miles in length ; but the frequent mountings and dismountings, to climb or to descend the rocky sides of the mountains, made it appear much longer. In many parts of the route the road was so very bad that I am sure most English horses would have refused to face it. It seemed as precipitous in some places as the stair of a church-steeple ; and how the poor horses could either ascend or descend I was frequently at a loss to conceive. The colonial horses, however, are remarkably adept in such situations. My own was an Australian by birth, and was so trustworthy and so much *au fait* on the mountain-road, that I had only to throw the reins on his neck at the dismounting places, and he would either ascend or descend the steepest and ruggedest precipices, as quickly as I could possibly follow him, without ever leaving the track.

Along the miserable valley of the *Twelve-Mile Hollow*, and up the sides of the rugged and sterile mountain beyond it, to a height, I should suppose, of not less than fifteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, I was exceedingly gratified at observing innumerable specimens of one of the most splendid flowers in the whole botanical kingdom,—I mean the *Doryanthes*, (or spear-flower, as the word signifies,) commonly called by the colonists the *gigantic lily*. This splendid flower shoots up a single upright stem, about an inch and a half in diameter, from a tuft of blady and acuminated leaves, to the height of from six to twelve feet, which all at once expands at its highest point into a bunch of beautiful blood-red flowers considerably larger than a man's head. The

contrast which this splendid flower, which would doubtless constitute one of the most attractive ornaments in the gardens of kings, forms with the stunted trees around it, and the sterile sandy soil from which it springs in the crevices of the rocks is striking in the highest degree ; and it strongly recalled to my recollection the beautiful lines of the poet, which were surely never more appropriate—

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of Ocean bear :
Full many a flower is born to bloom unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

At the termination of our second stage, we arrived at a place of which the mere name is a sufficient description—*The Hungry Flat*. It affords neither bread for man nor grass for horses, and its only recommendation is a stream of delicious water, at which both the horse and his rider gladly and luxuriously quench their thirst. We again unsaddled our horses at this resting-place, and allowed them to roll themselves on the sand, or to pick up any thing in the shape of sustenance they could find among the bushes. My own horse, however, being an old traveller and having more good sense than his four-footed companion, thought it better to await the opening of my little portmanteau than to swallow a few nauseous leaves of the gum-tree, and accordingly received a piece of a *dampier*—the colonial name of an unleavened wheaten cake baked in the ashes—with neighing satisfaction.

In half an hour we were again on horseback, trotting

along towards the valley of the Wollombi, at the head of which we arrived towards sunset, after traversing about eight or ten miles more of sterile mountainous country. The valley of the Wollombi extends in a northerly direction towards Hunter's River for about thirty miles. It is bounded on either side by mountain-ranges covered with timber to their summits, and throws off numerous *arms*, as the settlers call them, to the right and left, some of which extend for a distance of twenty or thirty miles among the mountains. These arms, as well as the principal valley, abound in excellent pasture, and afford sustenance for numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle; and the contrast, on descending the mountain, from a region of absolute sterility into a fertile valley, in which the hungry horses are ever and anon tempted to steal a mouthful of grass as they trot along to the next resting-place—is equally striking and agreeable. The numerous cattle-tracks, however, in this part of the country, and the comparative thinness of the timber, rendered the road particularly intricate to inexperienced persons, about the time I allude to.

About a year after my first journey over-land to Hunter's River, I had occasion to visit that district a second time. I was accompanied by a respectable proprietor of land at Hunter's River, and by a convict-servant of my brother's. I was the only one of the party, however, who had ever travelled the road before; and, as it was winter, and consequently quite dark when we reached the foot of the mountains after a long and fatiguing day's journey, I confessed myself quite un-

able to point out the way along the valley, and proposed to trust ourselves to the guidance of my horse, of whose ability to act creditably in the responsible capacity in which I proposed to employ him, I felt perfectly confident. To this proposal, however, my fellow-traveller was unwilling to consent, and he therefore led on in what appeared to him the broadest track. In the direction of that track we rode along between two ranges of mountains for seven or eight miles. At length, however, we lost the track, and ascertained beyond all possibility of doubt that we had also lost our way. As it would have been absolute madness to have either gone forward or attempted to retrace our steps in such circumstances, we agreed to bivouack for the night on the side of a hill near a pool of water; and accordingly, unsaddling our horses and fastening the ends of their tether-ropes to trees in the neighbourhood, we struck a light and kindled a large fire, each of us collecting for that purpose numerous branches of fallen trees; and our convict-servant speedily made us a very comfortable tankard of tea. As soon as we had finished our repast, I read off a chapter from a small Greek Testament, which I had carried with me as a pocket-companion, by the light of our large fire; and we then knelt down together to offer up our evening devotions to the God of the hills and the valleys, the dry land and the sea. Our convict-servant—a tall brawny Scotchman, who was remarkably attentive to our comfort—then gathered an armful of fern, (*Scoticè braken*,) of which there was abundance in the neighbourhood, for each of us to repose on; and accordingly, wrapping

ourselves in our boat-cloaks, we lay down to sleep as near the fire as possible, for it was excessively cold. For my own part I was unable to sleep, and lay for several hours listening to the horses browsing at hand or the owls whooping in the distance, or gazing at the smoke of our large fire curling upwards and losing itself among the branches of the tall trees around us. About one o'clock in the morning, the moon arose over the tops of the mountains; and as soon as she had attained a sufficient height to illuminate the valley, I arose also, and, leaving my two fellow-travellers sound asleep by the fire, walked first a mile or two in one direction, and then a mile or two in another, to endeavour to find the footpath we had lost trace of the evening before. Bush-roads, as they are called in New South Wales, are formed by the person who first traverses the forest, notching the trees with an axe in the direction of his route; and the way to ascertain which of two doubtful tracks is the public road, or a mere cattle-track, is to examine which of them has the trees notched along its course. I could find, however, neither notched trees, nor the marks of any horses' footsteps but our own, along the various tracks I examined in the clear moonlight; and I was therefore obliged to return to our large fire and await the rising of the sun. At day-break we again mounted our horses, and, retracing the track we had travelled along the preceding night, we were fortunate enough to regain the road, and were enabled to pursue our journey.

On my first journey along with the Hunter's River settler,—who was better acquainted with the route,—we

rode about nine miles down the valley after sunset, and bivouacked on the side of a hill near a pool of water. We happened to be near the sheep-station of a respectable free-emigrant settler; and the convict-shepherd or overseer in charge of it—a very obliging sort of person—brought us a bucket to hold water for our tea, and a piece of salt pork to relish it. He roasted the pork for us by using a branch of a tree sharpened at one extremity as a substitute for a fork, and holding it within a reasonable distance of our bonfire. After breakfasting in the morning we acknowledged his kindness by giving him all that remained of our mountain-store, as we had again got within the limits of civilization.

The valley of the Wollombi consists rather of pasture than of arable land, and during the years of drought it afforded plentiful subsistence to numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. In the upper part of it, a chain of ponds, forming in one place large sheets of water, gives an interesting character to the landscape; in the lower part of it, clumps of trees, alternating with considerable patches of naturally clear land, diversify the scene. The late colonial government established about ten families of the Royal Veteran Corps in the lower part of the valley of the Wollombi, giving each of them about a hundred acres of land, with one or two cows and rations for a certain period, and building each of them a good cottage or log-house. Families of the same Corps were also established, during General Darling's government, at Maitland and Patterson's Plains, in the district of Hunter's River, at Bong Bong

in Argyle, and in the district of Illawarra. Soldiers, it is true, generally make but indifferent farmers. They are neither industrious in their habits nor economical in their domestic arrangements; and they frequently sell their land as soon as their length of possession entitles them to do so. But the attempt on the part of the late colonial government was undoubtedly praiseworthy, and the plan pursued for the comfortable settlement of the veterans highly judicious.

Every habitable district in the colony has its tribe of aborigines or black natives; and many of these tribes are not unfrequently in a state of warfare with each other, though at peace with the Europeans. The Wollombi tribe had a deadly feud a few years ago with the tribe inhabiting the adjoining district of Illalong; and the latter, I was informed by a respectable settler in the valley the last time I travelled over-land to Hunter's River, had a short time before testified their vindictive feelings in a most ferocious manner. Three boys of the Wollombi tribe had been induced by three different settlers in the valley, to reside in their respective families. They were marked out as objects of vengeance by the Illalong natives; and, accordingly, about a hundred of the latter, who were seen at sunset one evening at Illalong, travelled a distance of between twenty and thirty miles during the night—a thing almost unheard of among the aborigines—and arrived in the neighbourhood of the settlers' houses in the Wollombi very early on the following morning. Two or three of their number were detached to each of the houses to entice the boys out. The latter, it appeared,

were apprehensive at first that their neighbours had come to their vicinity with no good intentions; but, being at length prevailed on to join the *corrobory* of Illalong natives, the latter suddenly formed a circle around them, and, attacking them simultaneously, beat them to death with their *waddies*. Immediately after the perpetration of this deed of murder, the Illalong natives returned to their own district. My informant happened to pass the assemblage just as the boys were dying; but, as he was alone and unarmed, his interference with the infuriated natives would have been dangerous to himself, and could have been of no avail to their unfortunate victims.

In the course of our third day's journey, I called, along with my fellow-traveller, at the houses of several respectable settlers on our way, and at sunset I had the pleasure of reaching my destination on the fertile banks of the Hunter.

Hunter's River was named in honour of His Excellency Governor Hunter, during whose government it was discovered. Its two tributary rivers were called William's and Patterson's Rivers, in honour of Colonel William Patterson of the New South Wales Corps. Preposterously enough! for all the three rivers had had native names much more beautiful and highly significant, as all the native names are, from time immemorial. Every remarkable point of land, every hill and valley in the territory, has its native name, given, as far as can be ascertained from particular instances, from some remarkable feature of the particular locality—insomuch that the natives can make

appointments in their forests and valleys, with as much accuracy in regard to place, as an inhabitant of London in the streets of the metropolis. Thus *Jerran* or *Frightful* is the very appropriate name of a frightfully precipitous mountain near Liverpool Plains; *Bardo Narang* or *Little Water* is the name of a small stream or creek that empties itself into the Hawkesbury; and *Cabramatta* or Cabra-pool is the equally appropriate and descriptive name of a chain of ponds abounding with the *cabra*, an insect of the *teredo* family, resembling in appearance the contents of a marrow-bone, which insinuates itself into the hardest timber under water, and of which the aborigines make many a delicious meal. Surely then, when there are such unexceptionable and really interesting names affixed already to every remarkable locality in the country, it is preposterous in the extreme to consign these ancient appellations to oblivion, in order to make way for the name of whatever insignificant appendage to the colonial government a colonial surveyor may think proper to immortalize. Such, however, was the system uniformly pursued in the colony by all the predecessors of Major Mitchell, the present enlightened and talented Surveyor-General of New South Wales; who, I am happy to say, has set his face against this egregious folly, and has thereby in great measure *reformed* the colonial nomenclature, by retaining the native name of any remarkable locality whenever it can be ascertained, and by using English names very sparingly. Indeed, if the native names are to be changed in any instance, let them be displaced only for those of men who deserve to live in the memory of

the colonists, and not for such *nomina obscurorum virorum*,* as are at present stuck in every direction over the whole chart of the territory. For my own part,

I like the native names, as Parramatta,
And Illawarra, and Woolloomooloo;
Nandowra, Woogarora, Bulkomatta,
Tomah, Toongabee, Mittagong, Murroo;
Buckobble, Cumleroy, and Coolingatta,
The Warragumby, Bargo, Monaroo;
Cookbundoon, Carrabaiga, Wingycarribbee,
The Wollondilly, Yurumbon, Bungarribbee.

I had frequently enquired of intelligent settlers residing on one or other of the three rivers in the district of Hunter's River, what the native names of these rivers were; and I confess I was not a little surprised that none of them had ever had the curiosity to ascertain them, or could give me any information on the subject. I happened, however, when riding alone in the district one day, about four or five years ago, to overtake a solitary black native who was travelling in the same direction, and whose name he told me was *Wallaby* † *Joe*—a name which had probably been given him by some of the convict-servants of the neighbouring settlers. I found him rather an intelligent and somewhat communicative personage; for on asking him, among a variety of other questions bearing on the native mythology, the native names of the three rivers, he immediately told me that the main or Hunter's River was called Coquun; the first branch, or William's River, Doorribang; and the second, or Patter-

* Names of obscure persons.

† Wallaby is the native name of a small species of kangaroo.

son's River, Yimmang. These names are now pretty well known in the district. The first of them—Coquun—is not likely to displace the English name, nor is it desirable it should; although the native name is occasionally preferred by the Australian versifier, as the following quotation from another colonial pastoral, by the author of the "Ode to Yimmang Water," will evince. But, with all due respect for the memory of Colonel William Patterson, whose most unclassical name is already immortalized in the township of *Patterson's Plains*, I think it high time, and in every way desirable, that the native names of the rivers Yimmang and Doorribang should forthwith be restored.

Exhausted by the summer sun,
The school-boy fords the broad Coquun;
For then the slow-meandering stream
Sbrinks from the hot sun's fiery beam,
And like a wounded serpent crawls
From Cumleroy to Maitland Falls.
But when th' autumnal deluge swells
Each little brook in yonder dells,
And twice ten thousand torrents pour
From cliff and rock with deaf'ning roar;
O then he rolls with manly pride,
Nor steam nor storm can stem his tide.

Although the reader will be able to form a general idea of rural life and of farming operations in New South Wales, from the desultory remarks scattered over the preceding pages, it may not be improper to give a more particular description of an Australian farm, and especially of one combining in some measure the various characteristics of an agricultural, grazing, sheep, and dairy establishment on a moderate scale. If I had

been equally well acquainted with the present state and progressive improvement of any other farm of a similar kind in the territory, I should certainly not have selected one belonging to a near relative of my own: but as all the information I have acquired of the interior of the colony has been obtained chiefly in the course of rapid visits to its different settlements in the discharge of clerical duty, I cannot be supposed to have had equal opportunities for observation in any other quarter. Besides, as the farm I allude to was not taken possession of till the actual commencement of the long drought,—the most unfavourable period for agricultural operations which the colony has ever experienced; and as the improvements effected upon it have rather been the result of persevering industry, and judicious economy, than of a large outlay of capital; and as the convict-servants employed on it have to my certain knowledge become for the most part, and indeed almost without exception, useful, obedient, and contented servants, under a system of management which any person of a conciliating disposition accompanied with a degree of firmness could put in practice and would find equally successful, I do not know that a fitter instance could have been selected.

My brother, Mr. George Lang, arrived in New South Wales as a free emigrant in the year 1821, and obtained a grant of a thousand acres of land, which he selected on the banks of the Yimmang or Patterson's River, about five miles from the town of Maitland, in the district of Hunter's River. As he held an appointment, however, in the Commissariat Department, he did not immedi-

ately take possession of his land, but retained the appointment till the month of December, 1824, when he resigned it with the intention of proceeding forthwith to his farm; but, being seized in the mean time with an inflammatory fever, he died in Sydney in the month of January following, in the twenty-third year of his age, and during my own absence in England. The land consequently fell to my younger brother, Mr. Andrew Lang, who had arrived in the colony a few months before as an agricultural emigrant, and who afterwards obtained an order for a grant of land on his own account from Earl Bathurst, which he selected in the same district to the extent of twelve hundred and eighty acres, about thirty miles farther up the river. My surviving brother did not take possession of the land on which my late brother had proposed to settle, till January, 1826; and, as he had to reside in Sydney the whole of that year, he entrusted it to the management of an emancipated convict overseer, who proved a very inefficient servant, and did very little in the way of improving it. Nothing in reality could be said to have been effected on the land till the beginning of the year 1827, when my brother settled upon it himself.

My deceased brother's grant—which he had named *Dunmore*, as a mark of filial affection towards a revered relative still alive, to whose Christian principles and uncommon energy of character I shall ever be under the strongest obligations—consisted partly of a belt of heavily timbered alluvial land, extending about a mile and a half in length along the windings of the river, which at that part of its course and for several miles higher up is both deep

and broad—sufficiently so indeed for the largest vessels—although towards the ocean, which is about forty miles distant by water, there are shallows which a large vessel could not get over. Beyond the belt of alluvial land, there are two large lagoons, nearly parallel to the course of the river, the frequent resort of innumerable wild ducks, and occasionally of pelicans and black swans. The beds and banks of the lagoons consist of the richest alluvial soil, the rest of the farm being good forest pasture-land, very lightly timbered.

The settlement of the Scots Church in Sydney having been attended with much greater difficulty and expense than was anticipated, and certain influential Scotsmen in the colony having rather augmented than diminished the burden that was thus entailed on its friends, my relatives had been induced to make common cause with myself, in bringing whatever capital and credit they could command in the colony to bear upon the ultimate accomplishment of that object. My brother was consequently left with comparatively little capital to commence with upon his land; but he was fortunate enough to escape the influence of the *sheep and cattle mania*, which was then just at the highest; for while various other settlers, who had also but recently commenced farming at Hunter's River, mortgaged their land to buy large herds of cattle to stock it, he remained satisfied with the few he already possessed, and determined not to buy more till he could pay for them. With these cattle a dairy establishment on a small scale was formed on the farm, while agricultural operations were commenced on the alluvial land. The dairy was managed

by the Irish Roman Catholic family, of whose colonial history I have already given an outline; the dairy produce, which was then bearing a high price in the colony, being regularly forwarded to Sydney to meet the various items of expenditure incurred in the maintenance of the other convict-servants on the farm.

These servants, whose number was gradually increased from four to upwards of thirty—as additional men could from time to time be obtained from the colonial government, and as maintenance could be raised for them from the land—were variously employed in felling and burning off trees for the clearing of land for cultivation, or in grubbing up the roots of those that had been already felled; in ploughing, sowing, reaping, threshing and grinding wheat; in planting, hoeing, pulling, and threshing Indian corn; and in the numberless other operations that require incessant attention and incessant exertion on a large agricultural establishment in New South Wales, where the soil, the intending emigrant will bear in mind, is not hidden from the view as in the British provinces of North America, for six or seven months together, under an impenetrable covering of frozen snow, but where the plough and the hoe and the sickle are kept in successive and unintermitting motion all the year round.

In this way about one hundred and fifty acres of heavily-timbered land have been successively cleared and cultivated; the stumps of the trees, which are usually left standing in the first instance, being for the most part rooted or burnt out. The extent of land under wheat last year was about eighty acres, an equal

extent being under maize, including a late crop on part of the wheat-land. The wheat is ground into flour and sold in that state in the town of Maitland, in the immediate neighbourhood, the maize being either forwarded for sale to Sydney or used in feeding horses, or in fattening pigs and poultry on the farm. Potatoes and tobacco are also grown for sale, besides supplying the consumption on the farm, which, in the latter article especially, is by no means inconsiderable. The dairy-produce during the four summer months, November, December, January, and February, is cheese, which is sold in Sydney by the hundred weight or ton; during the rest of the year it consists of butter, which is forwarded to Sydney by the steam-boat in a fresh state every week, and sold in the market; the quantity forwarded weekly for some time before I left the colony being I believe from seventy to one hundred pounds. The price of that article of produce varies from one shilling to eighteen-pence a pound.

In the course of last year, (1832,) when the cattle on my brother's farm had increased to a herd of about three or four hundred, he purchased a flock of fine-woolled sheep, which, if I recollect aright, cost fifteen shillings each, with the intention of forming a grazing establishment on his own grant of land, which had previously been lying waste. The dairy-cattle being accordingly separated from the herd, all the rest with the sheep and young horses were sent, under charge of a hired overseer and two convict-servants, to form a grazing station at the distance of thirty miles.

In the mean time, as several hired mechanics with

their families were occasionally employed on the farm, besides free sawyers and other hired labourers, all of whom received rations of flour, &c., as part of their wages, it was found that there was a considerable loss of time and waste of material in grinding wheat for so many people—about fifty in all—with the common steel mills in general use in the interior. A horse-mill was therefore erected, and, in consequence of its being resorted to by the neighbourhood, a windmill was afterwards added; a threshing-mill, and a mill for the manufacture of Scotch barley—the first that had been constructed in the colony—being subsequently appended to the original machinery.

A garden, in which all the sorts of fruit-trees I have enumerated in the preceding chapter were successfully cultivated, had been formed on the farm several years ago by a free emigrant Scotch gardener, hired for the purpose; but being within reach of the inundations of the Hunter, it was completely destroyed by a high flood in the year 1830. A second garden, however, has since been formed beyond reach of the inundations, with a vineyard and orchard, both of which, when I visited the district in the month of June last, (1833,) were in a high state of forwardness. The gardener is one of the machine-breakers, transported from the agricultural counties of England in the year 1831. He had been employed in the same capacity for many years, in the garden of a clergyman in Shropshire, and was assigned to my brother on his arrival in the colony. He is without exception the most industrious man I have ever seen, and one of the commissions I was charged with

on leaving the colony for England, was to endeavour if possible to get out his wife and child, as he told me he had no doubt of being able to do well both for himself and his family in New South Wales.

The first dwelling-house erected on my brother's farm was formed of rough slabs of split timber, the lower ends of which were sunk in the ground, the upper extremities being bound together by a wall-plate. It was thatched with reeds or coarse grass, and contained three apartments—a parlour or sitting-room, a store-room, and a bed-room, each of which, however, was occasionally used for other purposes. The kitchen was detached, and was inhabited by a convict-servant and his wife. The bare ground served as a floor, and the interstices between the slabs were plastered with a composition of mud, the walls being white-washed both within and without. This homely building, which I am sure would not cost £20, was afterwards furnished with glass windows and a floor of rough boards, and served as the farm-cottage for three or four years. By that time considerable improvement had been effected on the land, and a suitable situation had been pitched on for the future and permanent dwelling-house. A range of out-buildings of stone, intended for a kitchen, store-room, &c., was accordingly erected in that situation, and fitted up and occupied as a second temporary residence, the wooden building being then given up to the farm-overseer. At length a permanent dwelling-house was erected adjoining the out-buildings, on an elevated and commanding situation, between the two lagoons, and about half a mile from the river. It is a two-story

house, built of hewn stone, having a verandah or covered portico all round. It was nearly finished when I left the colony.

In short, the maxim of all prudent settlers in the salubrious climate of New South Wales is the one divinely recommended by King Solomon, nearly three thousand years ago, to the Jewish colonists whom he seems to have settled in some of the conquests of his father David; for it can scarcely apply to the case of a country already settled: "Prepare thy work *without*, and make it fit for thyself *in the field*; and AFTERWARDS *build thine house*."—Proverbs, xxiv. 27. A prudent settler, who expends his capital in improving his land, and in securing a profitable and regular return for his labour, in the first instance, will be able, in a very few years after his first settlement, to build a much better house than he is likely to erect on his farm when there is no other improvement effected upon it; and the inconvenience of being but indifferently lodged in the mean time is but a small matter comparatively in a climate like that of New South Wales.

The advantages enjoyed in such cases as the one I have just described, over those likely to be enjoyed by respectable free emigrants arriving in the colony at present, are, 1st, The more eligible tenure of the land; which, in the case of emigrants arriving in the colony a few years ago, was granted in portions of five hundred to two thousand five hundred and sixty acres at a small quit-rent, but which is now uniformly sold by the colonial government at a price of not less than five shillings an acre. 2nd, Superior locality; the farm I have just

described being situated in the centre of a comparatively populous district, and possessing the inestimable advantage of steam-navigation.

At the same time, it must be recollected that in other respects equally important, the circumstances of the colony are incomparably more favourable now than they were seven years ago for the settlement of a respectable family, either in the interior or on the coast. The same amount of capital which it required to stock a large farm moderately with horses, sheep, and cattle, seven years ago, will *do more than purchase a farm of the same extent now, and stock it also*. Besides, the cost of maintaining a family for twelve or eighteen months after their arrival is at present less than one half of what it was at the period I refer to, while the price of wool—the staple article of colonial produce—is as high as ever. To the sheep or cattle-farmer, distance is a matter of very small moment; for cattle travel to the market themselves, and the cost of conveying wool to the shipping-port, from a great distance in the interior, is comparatively trifling. On the other hand, the extension of steam-navigation along the eastern coast of New Holland will, I am confident, very soon render it a matter of no consequence to the agriculturist, whether he is fifty or five hundred miles from the capital, provided he is within reach of a navigable river, or harbour, or good roadstead, on the coast. In all likelihood there will very shortly be a steam-boat plying regularly between Sydney and Hobart Town, the capital of Van Dieman's Land. In that case an agriculturist would just be as favourably situated for the colo-

nial market at Twofold Bay, at the southern extremity of the Australian land, as at Hunter's River.

In short, I see no reason why persevering industry, or rather vigilance and economy, should not lead to equally favourable results in the present circumstances of the colony, with those to which they have evidently led in the instance I have mentioned, as well as in many others, with which I am not so intimately acquainted. Let the reader not imagine, however, that there is any thing to be gained in New South Wales without persevering industry conjoined with prudent management and economy. Wherever our lot is cast in the wide world—whether we are called to earn a mere livelihood by contending with the unpropitiousness of the seasons and the stubbornness of the soil, or to struggle for far higher interests with hostile principalities and powers, this is the uniform condition of mortality,—

Nil sine magno
Vita labore dedit mortalibus;

or, in other words, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.”

CHAPTER III.

NOTICES OF THE SETTLEMENTS OF BATHURST AND ILLAWARRA.

“The man waxed great and went forward, and grew until he became very great. For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants.” Genesis, xxvi. 13.

THE road to Bathurst, or, as it is more frequently called, the *Great Western Road*, branches off from the Parramatta road at the eastern extremity of the town of Parramatta. At the distance of a few miles from Parramatta is the settlement of Prospect, the residence of several small settlers, and of a few families of higher class. In this neighbourhood the country, which is of an undulating character, exhibits that singular feature which I have already mentioned, and which is elsewhere observable in the colony; the ground on the declivities and on the summits of the hills being of inexhaustible fertility, while in the hollows or lower levels it is comparatively unproductive. I have myself frequently observed, when riding in the interior, either before sunrise or after sunset during the winter months, that while the temperature on the high grounds was