

# A VOYAGE

TO

## AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

INCLUDING A

VISIT TO ADELAIDE, MELBOURNE, SYDNEY, HUNTER'S  
RIVER, NEWCASTLE, MAITLAND, AND AUCKLAND;

WITH

### A SUMMARY

OF THE

PROGRESS AND DISCOVERIES MADE IN EACH COLONY  
FROM ITS FOUNDING TO THE PRESENT TIME.

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BY A STEERAGE PASSENGER,  
JOHN ASKEW.

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convicts and the free people is now almost extinct, and there are no gangs of prisoners employed on the streets as was formerly the case. Several of the principal merchants and ship-brokers belong to the former class, and some of them are good citizens and good masters.

I have occasionally seen seven or eight prisoners heavily ironed, marched through the city, guarded by policemen armed with pistols, to prevent any resistance or attempts to escape. Scenes such as these gave one a faint idea of what the condition of Sydney must have been before the abolition of transportation.

A railway was fast progressing towards completion (and is now I believe finished), between Sydney and Paramatta, so that this queen of cities is now met with all the appliances of the advanced civilization of Europe and the West.

My next fishing excursion was in Rushcutter Bay, and a rare day's sport we had. We visited Double Bay and many other interesting parts of the harbour. On that occasion we patronised Mr. Vincent of Darlinghurst. We caught bream and yellow-tail, and several beautiful rock cod and parrotfish. My companions directed my attention to many beautiful places along the shores of these bays. A place in Rushcutter Bay was pointed out where a son of Sir Thomas Mitchell perished from the bite of a snake, some years ago.

At the time of this excursion I had been two months in Sydney, and there was scarcely a day during which I had not some short pleasure-trip in the harbour or into the country. The weather was fine and dry all that time, except during two thunderstorms, and these were harmless and of brief duration. The only time that I can remember weather equally fine at home, was during the summer of 1826. Anyone whose recollection can carry him back to that period will be able to form some idea of the fineness of the climate, I well remember the bright sunsets and short twilights of that exceedingly dry summer. Darkness set in almost as suddenly after sunset as it does in Australia. The peculiar dryness of the atmosphere was doubtless the cause of that phenomenon in both places.

One Saturday afternoon, I looked into a bookseller's window in George-street, and my attention was attracted by a pamphlet, which contained an account of the Hunter River, and the country round Maitland, by a clergyman then residing in the latter locality. On the back of the book there was a quotation from Scripture:—Deuteronomy Chap. 8th, and part of the 7th, and the whole of the 8th verse. This passage was applied to describe the fertility of that part of the country. It reads thus:—"A land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills. A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and

figtrees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey." I thought that a place answering this delightful description would amply repay a visit, and I determined to go there as soon as possible.

Two days later I went to the Steamers' wharf, and took a berth in one of the Hunter River steamers. I got a return ticket in the second cabin for 24s. The distance I had to go was 100 miles. The *Tamar* steamer by which I was to travel, was an old vessel, but she had just undergone a thorough repair, and was said to be in excellent condition. She was a wood boat of narrow build, and not well calculated to stand the buffetings of a heavy sea. It was nearly eleven at night before we started. I had with me a young sailor for a companion, called James Worth, a native of Newcastle-on-Tyne. And his name was no misnomer, for he was a most worthy character. We steamed down the harbour at half speed, and kept a bell ringing till after passing the light ship. The aspect of the city as we went slowly along by it was surpassingly grand. All the steamers that pass down the harbour at night are compelled to ring a bell, to warn any boats that may be near of their approach. Accidents frequently occurred before this regulation came into force, some of which were attended with loss of life, through boats being run down by the steamers.

When we reached the Heads, we found a heavy sea running from *the* south, and the *Tamar* soon rolled the greater part of the passengers into a state of sea-sickness. I and my friend, after midnight, went down into the second cabin, where we got into a berth head to feet, and remained there several hours, watching the doings of the sailors and passengers, as it was impossible to sleep, such was the uproar and disturbance. The majority of the passengers were gold diggers, returning home from Melbourne, and those who were not sick were almost delirious with drinking. There was a place in both cabins for the sale of liquor, The firemen drank, the sailors drank, and most of the passengers drank, till their language became disgusting and blasphemous in the extreme. The uproar from the effects of drink made the ship a complete floating Bedlam.

About three o'clock a.m., the steward of the second-cabin, who was a young Frenchman, had occasion to go upon deck. During his absence, some half-dozen of the sailors and firemen got into his pantry, and made free with his liquors. When he returned they pulled the door to, and fastened him in, and amused themselves by listening to him thundering at the door and swearing in broken English for more than an hour before they would release him.

About half-past four we sighted the Nobbies, two small hills at the entrance of Newcastle

Harbour and Hunter River. Far in the distance we could see a long stretch of high land tending towards the east, and terminating in the bold heads of Port Stephens. At six o'clock we passed the Nobbies, and the city of Newcastle burst upon our view. We steamed slowly alongside one of the wharfs, which was at that early hour crowded with people, amongst whom were many hideous-looking male and female natives.

Newcastle, which in *size* is a mere village, had a comfortable appearance when seen from the harbour; and I was impressed with its general air, that I determined to pay it a more lengthened visit after I had returned to Sydney.

After half-an-hour's detention in landing passengers, mail-bags, and other cargo, we resumed our course up the harbour, in the direction of a dense looking forest. In a few minutes we gazed on the beauties of the peaceful Hunter, winding its way through "a land flowing with milk and honey."

On looking down into the cabin I saw an ample breakfast provided, for the moderate charge of two shillings. This was double the price of the morning meal in one of these boats before the gold discoveries. - I was in no humour to quarrel with the new regulation, so I went below with Worth and made a hearty breakfast, after which we resumed our places on deck in good humour with ourselves, and everybody, and everything around us.

## CHAPTER V.

Hunter's River..Crayfish .. Lobsters .. Huts .. Farms .. English Emigrants.. Irish Emigrants.. Clearings .. Mosquito Island.. Count Hickie's Residence.. Gardens.. Fruit.. Corn.. Raymond Terrace.. Hinton.. Morpeth.. Size of the River.. Resembles the River Coine, near Urbridge.. Natives, Scene with.. East Maitland Harvest.. Reaping.. Aspect of the Country.. The Schoolmaster, Breeds of Cattle.. Leaving Morpeth.. Sailing down the River.. At Newcastle.. Rough Sea.. Put back to Newcastle.. Landing there.. Voyage to Sydney.. Young Sailor.. Leonard Elvy.. His Family.. Great Britain Steamer.. Frightful Murder of an Old Man.. Boating Excursion.. Little Inn.. Chaffing the Currency Lassess.. Leaving Sydney.. Arrival at Newcastle.. Rogers.. Bathing House.. Mistake.. Alarming some Ladies.. Accommodance Hole.. Ureary Aspect of the Sea and Land.. Description of Newcastle.. Fitz Roy Pillar.. Nobbies.. Reef.. Pitts.. Coal.. Trade.. Preserved Meat.. Wages.. Cruelties to Convicts.. Bushranger's Revenge.. James Backhouse.. Dr. Bowker .. Scenes in Convict Life.. Reuben Page.. Polly Hyde.. Yankee Jack.. Natives.. Hannels.. Innkeepers.. Remarks about Public Houses.. Christmas Day.. Hot Wind.. Ball.. Bush on Fire.. Mosquitoes.. Chinese Coolies.. Funerals.. Joseph Spragg, his Doings.. Price of Land.. Mr. Chester's Concert.. Mounts-banks.. William Hyde.. Ship.. New Zealanders.. Trip to Maitland.. Scenes on the Road.. Halfway House.. Pleased Irishman .. The Last Native.. Arrival at Maitland.

THE Hunter is a quarter of a mile in breadth a short distance from Newcastle. Some miles above is the little island of Mosquito, famed for its fine fruit. There are several flats or shallow places in the river, which steamers have great difficulty in passing when the river is low. These flats abound with mud oysters; and prawns, crabs, crayfish, and

lobsters are caught in great numbers. Tho Sydney market to a great extent is supplied from this source.

The sun was far up in the heavens, and a long stretch of the stream lay before us, with a surface as smooth as a polished mirror. Along its banks a low bright green scrub drooped over into the water. And far in the distance on each side of us, nothing could be seen but sky and forest. As we glided along, picturesque looking iron-bark huts presented themselves to our view, surrounded by cleared plots of land devoted to agriculture. Some of these stand nearly on the river's brink, and are the outposts of extensive farms, where the labourers live during the seasons of sheep-washing and harvesting, and others are the permanent residences of families.

The contrast between the English and Irish emigrants who dwelt in these cottages was painful. The dwellings of the former were invariably clean, fitted up with glass windows, and had that peculiar air of comfort which is so prominent a feature in every English cottage, whether on the banks of the Thames or those of the Hunter. The dwellings of the latter were filthy in the extreme, with groups of unwashed children straggling about them. The windows were commonly stuffed with rags, or had a dirty piece of scarcely transparent cloth hung before them; and all around plainly told, as only

rags and wretchedness could tell, that a bit of "ould Ireland" was cultivated within the walls of the murky-looking tenements.

More extensive clearings, waving with yellow grain ready for the sickle, now came in sight, and some large fields were already cut. Now and then we passed some swarthy reapers, chiefly men, with large cabbage-tree hats to shield them from the heat of the sun. They seemed to be taking it easy so far as their work was concerned; and as we passed they dropped their sickles and stared at us. Some of the clearings had tall trees still standing upon them leafless and bare as they had been left by the clearing fires. Their gaunt bolls, scorched and riven, presented a strange contrast to the giant forms of the white gum-tree and the graceful wattles near them, unscathed by the life-destroying blaze, though doomed to perish by that terrible enemy so often the auxiliary of man in the work of destruction amid the mighty forest; and not always for useful purposes, but too often in a reckless manner, destroying and defacing God's beautiful work.

A few more turns of the river brought us opposite the beautiful residence of Count Hickey. The house was surrounded by fine gardens, the trees were laden with fruit, and the adjoining land was in the highest state of cultivation. The land near the river was planted with Indian corn, and several

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men were weeding and fastening it up in bunches. The green tops of the corn, and the gorgeous flowers blooming in the garden, and along the banks of the river, combined to add fresh beauty to the scenery around.

Raymond Terrace, the first calling-place for the steamer after Newcastle, is a small place with a good inn and a few private dwellings. There was no bustle when the steamer arrived at the wharf; the landlord of the inn, and two or three of the other inhabitants came leisurely down, and one solitary native looked listlessly on. Three or four casks of spirits and a few boxes of merchandise were placed upon the wharf, and they moved them away. The place had a quiet rural air, and the inhabitants seemed to have acquired that contented appearance expressive of affluence and ease.

We next passed the pretty village of Hinton, which snugly lies nestled in a grove of sweets. Through the openings in the trees we caught occasional glimpses of the houses. A mile or two onward, we came to the mouths of the William and Patterson rivers, which empty themselves into the Hunter, a short distance from each other. The scenery around was exceeding lovely, and the land was highly cultivated.

The Hunter river scenery became still more fascinating as we neared Morpeth. In some places luxuriant crops of yellow grain were growing down

to the water's edge. In others were rich orchards and vineyards, noble mansions and picturesque villas with broad walks leading to the river, and pleasure-boats painted in gay colours, resting near the water-gates, for the denizens of these delightful abodes to disport themselves upon their lovely stream.

The Hunter at Morpeth is the width of the river Colne at Uxbridge, and some parts of the scenery resembles that near that pretty meandering stream so rich in historical associations. We now arrived at Morpeth, where two omnibuses and several light carts were in waiting to convey passengers to Maitland.

In the midst of the bustle incidental to landing, two natives came on board to help in removing their luggage ashore. One of the firemen, the most brutal of the lot, who annoyed us so much on the previous night, had a great antipathy to the natives, by whom he said he was once nearly murdered. When this man saw these poor harmless creatures come on board, he struck the foremost down with his fist, and with as little compunction

if he had been felling a bullock. The other native jumped upon the wharf to avoid similar treatment. The more compassionate of the crew lifted up the poor bleeding native, who was severely cut above the left eye, and carried him ashore. Several passengers remonstrated with the brute for

his cruelty, but he seemed so exasperated at the *sight* of the natives, that they were obliged to be got out of his way, for fear of further mischief.

Morpeth is a well-built village, with an excellent inn, and many dwellings of retired sheep-farmers and other gentry. The principal residence of the Bishop of Newcastle is there. Considerable quantities of coal are raised from pits in the neighbourhood, which is shipped in schooners for Sydney. This coal, though useful for some purposes, is vastly inferior to that obtained at Newcastle.

The distance between Morpeth and Maitland is eight miles, and the fare by omnibus was 2s. We took our seats. The road was in excellent order. We passed many farms and cattle-stations. The farmers were all busy reaping their crops and securing their corn. Half-an-hour's drive brought us within sight of East Maitland, a very pretty place, especially when viewed from the direction in which we approached it. The general appearance of the country and the village resembles some of the sweet little roadside hamlets to be met with in Herts, near the vicinity of Hampstead and Berkhamstead.

Maitland gaol stands upon a hill, to the left of this place. Towards the west end of the village are the court-houses, and several small manufactories of tobacco, soap, and candles.

West Maitland, a very considerable town, is more

than a mile from East Maitland, on the opposite side of the Hunter, which is crossed by one of the finest wooden bridges in the colony,

We arrived at West Maitland about noon. The weather was very hot, and we saw little of the town, a description of which will be given, as I saw it on a second visit, shortly before I left the colony.

After partaking of some refreshments, and resting a few hours, till the heat of the day was passed, we set out on our journey back to Morpeth. The steamer was to sail early next morning, and we had made arrangements to stay on board for the night.

We walked leisurely along the road, and made several enquiries respecting the wages of reapers, and other interesting matters relating to labour and farming. The reapers had from 25s. to 30s. per acre, for cutting the corn—binding and stooking included; neither scythes or any other kind of reaping machines were in operation. The reaping hook, (Sheffield made) was in general use. The reaping was conducted in a very slovenly manner; from my own experience in that line, I am certain I could have cut an acre a day, with the greatest ease, in the way they were doing it. The yield, per acre, was from 20 to 30 Carlisle bushels.

By the time we had reached Morpeth, and what I saw of the country in coming up the river; I was prepared to agree with the Rev. author, that the



passage of scripture which he had taken to describe the region round Maitland had been beautifully exemplified.

The approach of a thunder-storm made us hasten our steps towards Morpeth ; we had only been a few minutes on board the steamer till it burst over us, and was awfully grand, during the short time it lasted. When it was over I went into Morpeth to procure some milk for our evening meal.

The two natives we saw in the morning were dancing a corobory before the open door of a neat cottage, where I enquired for the nearest dairy-farm, and was directed to a school close by, the master of which kept six cows, and sold milk to the steamers and other vessels upon the river.

I found my way through a small inclosure into the school-room, and thence into the dwelling-house. The master and His family had done milking, and I bought two quarts of new-milk for 2d. ; I had a long conversation with him and his wife respecting Melbourne. He and his wife were natives of Ireland ; they were both intelligent, and very clean.

They had not been long in the colony, and they were in a great way about going to Melbourne. The necessaries of life they had in abundance ; and I advised them to be satisfied with their situation. Before we parted, my accounts of a digger's life in Melbourne had made such an impression, that they at once relinquished the idea of moving from

their quiet home, to mix in the scenes I gave a description of in a life on the gold fields.

I paid another visit to the school-farm in the morning, and procured a supply of milk for our breakfast. This milk was of the very richest description, and the cows were the best I saw in the colony. They were of the same mixed breed found in all the colonies ; and much like the best of those brought from the South of Ireland to Liverpool and the cattle-fairs in the North of England at the present time.

About six o'clock we moved from the wharf, and passed slowly down the river. The passengers in our departments gave most undoubted signs of as much disorderly conduct, as those who had accompanied us in the upward voyage. The most noisy of them was Mrs. Smith, a very stout lady, the wife of a publican, from West Maitland. She had run away from her husband, and had been graduating at the Victoria Gold Fields for several months ; according to her own account she had made a great deal of money, by various ways and means ; with this money she had furnished a house in Sydney in the most splendid manner, for first-class lodgers, and she had been at Maitland to make it all right again with Mr. Smith, whom she had persuaded to go and inspect her establishment. He was very quiet and reserved, and seemed not to have a very high opinion of his wife, or any part of her conduct.

A loquacious old lady fraternized with her from some part of the country near Singleton, who was bound to Sydney for medical advice; and she pretended to be very pious, but at the same time she was not strictly temperate, and there were many other disorderlies, whose conduct was anything but agreeable.

We sailed down the river at a rapid pace, making no calls at the stations. Several boats were waiting below Raymond Terrace for letters, which were tied to a piece of wood and thrown into the river for the boatman to pick up.

On passing the flats, the bottom of the steamer touched several times; but she was going at such a rapid rate that the obstruction was only momentary. At the turnings of the river the water was cut up into complete ridges of foam, by the rapid progress of the vessel. We passed several small schooners, deeply laden with cargo, beating their way down. Some of them were close to the edge of the water, their jibbooms every now and then running into the rushes that grow by the sides of the river. Several men belonging to their crews were walking leisurely along on the banks.

We arrived at Newcastle soon after eight o'clock, where we remained a few minutes to land and take in passengers, after which we started for Sydney. After rounding the Nobbies a strong southerly breeze rose, and in about half-an-hour a heaving

sea was tumbling us about at a tremendous rate. Mother Smith and her husband both turned sick, and made a serious uproar between them. The pious old lady began to pray, and the fireman who knocked the native down at Morpeth, knelt besides her in mockery, and filled up the pauses in her petition with "Amen." There was a young man, a ticket-of-leave convict from Morton Bay, who was in a dreadful state of alarm about going down; and his wife, a pretty young woman, with an infant in her arms, was clinging to him for support.

This state of things continued till we were opposite Red Head, about twenty miles from Newcastle. Here the old *Tamer* shipped a sea right over her bows, which broke the lashings of a large cask of tallow, sending it against the companion, with such force as to knock it in pieces; and a flood of salt water streamed down into the cabin. Mother Smith shrieked with all her might. The old lady cried, "Lord have mercy upon us;" the fireman responded by an involuntary "Amen," and then rushed upon deck; and the convict and his wife dung frantically to each other in mute despair.

The captain saw that no further progress could be made with safety, so he about ship, and ran for Newcastle. In about an hour and a half we were back past the Nobbies, and had the anchor down in the smooth water of the harbour.

About noon a boat was lowered from the steamer.

The captain, the second mate, and some more of the crew were going on shore, and I went along with them. I remained on shore about two hours, and got a good supply of milk, bread, and fresh butter for myself and Worth; I also made some arrangements about returning to reside at Newcastle for a short time; after I had seen all I desired of Sydney. I went up to the high land above the city to view the sea; there was still a strong wind from the south, and no prospect of our getting away that night.

Soon after dark, the firemen and several of the passengers and sailors formed themselves into card parties, and long before midnight the second cabin was a scene of uproar, drunkenness, and revelry. Drink was so freely circulated during the whole night that there was scarcely a single person on board who could be said to be entirely sober.

The wind began to fall off a short time before sunrise, and by five o'clock the sea had gone down so much that we up anchor, and were soon outside the Nobbies on our way to Sydney.

The coast between Newcastle and Sydney has but one place of refuge for vessels during a storm, Broken Bay; and we were apprehensive several times that we should have to put in there, but before we got opposite to the entrance of the bay, the sea had gone down so much that we kept on our course. It was nearly dark before we sighted

the Heads, and in little more than an hour after we swept round North Head into the harbour. In less than another hour we were safely landed on the Steamer's wharf, in Cockle Bay, where our friends were waiting to receive us. And it was long after midnight before we could satisfy them with an account of our adventures in our pleasure-trip to the "Garden of New South Wales."

Soon after this excursion, Walter Morris, a young sailor who had been in Sydney some years, during which time he had been a lodger with mine host, arrived from a three month's trial of the Victoria diggings. During that time he had realised about £500. He was an amiable young fellow, and every inch a sailor; he had all the good properties and many of the failings of the genuine English Tar. All those who had been kind to him were amply rewarded. Whenever we went out with him for a trip by sea or a drive into the country, he always insisted that he had a right to pay all the expenses, and considered himself highly insulted if he was not suffered to exercise that privilege.

The first Sunday after the Hunter river excursion, our host took us to see Leonard Elvy, a friend of his near O'Connor Town. He was a working-man, and the proprietor of a neat cottage and a plot of ground several acres in extent, which he had made into a garden. His house stood alone by the side of a grass-covered road that led to

some fields beyond; and a prettier lane scene can scarcely be imagined than this lovely retreat of well-merited industry. He had five milch cows and a family of five children. The oldest, a fine boy about twelve years of age, and the youngest (also a boy) about three months old, The other three were girls, and the prettiest little creatures I met with in the colony. We spent the whole of the Jay with Elvy; and my sailor friends and I often visited him afterwards, always providing a good supply of sweetmeats, oranges, &c., for the little beauties, with whom, it is needless to say, we were great favourites. I am certain we all felt better, if not wiser men, after witnessing such ample proofs of domestic happiness as we saw in that humble and happy home.

Soon after this, the death of the Duke of Wellington was proclaimed in Sydney. Notice was taken of the melancholy event, by firing minute guns from the batteries. There was a gun fired for every year he had been in the army, and one for each year of his life. All the vessels in the harbour hoisted their colours half-mast high, and every mark of respect was paid to the memory of England's greatest warrior.

The next exciting event was the arrival of the *Great Britain* steamer. She had been anxiously expected for several weeks, and the signal which was to announce her approach had been duly published in the newspapers. Every signal hoisted

on the Flagstaff was eagerly scrutinized by hundreds of telescopes. At length, however, *the* long looked for sign made its appearance; and the citizens of Sydney had the pleasure of seeing the finest steamer in the world, resting on the placid waters of their magnificent harbour.

Soon after this Morris, Worth, and myself paid another, and as regards myself, a final visit, to Elvy's cottage. We found Elvy and his wife in great consternation, owing to the brutal murder only the day before, of an old man, one of their nearest neighbours. He was a harmless old man, and resided with his wife, an aged woman, in a neat white cottage; which was pointed out to us by Elvy. He had been drinking at a public-house in O'Connor Town, on the evening of the day on which he was murdered, and on returning home, sat down under a tree to rest himself, and being drowsy, he fell asleep. While he was sleeping some ruffians approached, and one of them, armed with a rail, which had a large nail through the end, drove the nail several times into his head. Not being satisfied with that, they cut several gashes across his abdomen, from which his bowels protruded, and otherwise frightfully mangled him. He was found in this state early the next morning, by some of his neighbours, who conveyed him to his home. Elvy offered to take us to see him, but we unanimously declined.

A few days before I left Sydney, we had a boating excursion in the harbour, and we sailed several times round the *Great Britain*, as she lay at anchor near Pinchgut. Our party consisted of the master and mistress, the two sailors, and a few other acquaintances, including a couple of pretty currency lasses, and a little boy. The charge for a look through the *Great Britain* was 5s. each; so we declined paying a visit to her interior, contenting ourselves with an outside view, which it is needless to say, called forth exclamations of admiration and astonishment from all. After much sailing about in the snug little coves around the harbour, we put into a small inlet, where there was a landing-place, and a road leading from it over a rock. This road led to a neat little inn, which stood by the side of a green croft, completely surrounded by gum-trees.

The day was very warm, and in the inn we found a cool neatly-furnished parlour, in a style similar to that of most country inns at home. The walls were hung round with varnished prints, purchased of itinerant picture-dealers in the old country. They were mostly representations of poaching scenes, and the "Poacher's Progress." Two of them I had seen hundreds of times in different parts of England, and I looked upon them as old familiar friends which I was destined to meet once more in a strange land. One of these was a night

scene; the moon was blazing away far up in the sky, showing a mass of dark wood in the background, and a number of poachers and gamekeepers in the front, collaring and brandishing clubbed sticks at one another. Some of the heads had vermilion coloured spots upon them like blood; and a ferocious-looking bull-dog had the calf of one gamekeeper's leg in his mouth, from which a gory stream was pouring out upon the greensward.

The other was a scene before a puffy-looking and very gouty old magistrate. The gamekeepers were there with their heads bandaged, and the poachers whom they have captured were standing beside them awaiting their committal to duranee vile, by the country Solon, who appeared by the cravat round his neck, to be a sort of hybrid, or half priest half magistrate.

We remained in this cool retreat for a couple of hours, during which time my companions, both male and female, had partaken pretty freely of various refreshments. We then went down to the boat, and sailed a short distance from the landing-place, where we passed two ladies fishing. They were both very pretty, and condescended to laugh as we were passing them. We were all in a happy mood; and our sailor friends considered this a mark of respect that we ought in some way to return, so we lay to, and commenced chaffing, and a piece of good-humoured banter and repartee passed on

both sides for several minutes. While this was going on, our boat was drifting towards some sunken rocks in the shoal water, and before we were aware of our situation, she ran upon one of them and nearly capsized us all into the water. This accident turned the laugh of the other party so much against us, that we up stick and off as fast as we could towards our destination.

I took my final departure from Sydney on the 13th December in the *Rose* steamer, bound for Newcastle and Maitland. We started from the wharf about midnight. The night was dark and still; and as we passed slowly down the harbour, I took a last look into many of the bays and coves where I had passed so many pleasant hours. The beautiful city of Sydney, with its numberless brilliant lights, gradually disappeared behind the dark headlands of the harbour, and I saw it no more. A broad gleam of light flashed upon the heaving waters from *the* South Head, and before it passed away I went down into the cabin where I remained till early the next morning. When Red Head appeared, I went upon the deck, till no rounded the Nobbies and steamed alongside the wharf in Newcastle harbour.

I took up my quarters with Mr. Rogers, store-keeper. His house was too small to admit of my sleeping under his roof, and I was accommodated in an iron-bark hut along with two of his workmen,

at the rear of the establishment. This hut had a kitchen at one end, and the other end was both a workshop and a sleeping-room. The weather was very hot, and I found it a pretty comfortable place. We slept in bunks put up in the corner of the room, the same as on board ship. The place was often filled with smoke from the kitchen, but this kept away the mosquitoes which were very troublesome.

I went to the harbour every morning, at five o'clock, to bathe. The first morning I saw a small wooden house, with a narrow stone jetty, a few feet high, running out from it to beyond the high water mark. I proceeded along this, and entered the place, which I found to be a neat little bathing house, with several rooms to dress and undress in, and a space in front entirely surrounded with a sharkproof netting of wattles. I made no particular enquires about the place. There was no fastening to the door, and I concluded from this that it was free to any one; under this impression I made use of it several times. I found, however, that I was very much mistaken, indeed, about it being a public bathing house.

The last morning I bathed there I was greatly surprised. I had nearly finished dressing when the principal door opened and two ladies entered. My hat and some other parts of my dress were lying outside the door of *the* room where I was. As soon as they saw these unmistakeable signs of a

man's presence, they shrieked aloud and ran away as fast as their legs could carry them. This unexpected salutation startled me so much that I ran out to see what had happened, and called after them not to be afraid, as I would do them no harm. The sound of my voice did not make them slacken their pace, nor even look behind them till they were a long way off. As soon as they saw me coming away from the bathing-place, they returned towards me, and I waited to apologise for the fright I had given them, but they would accept of no apology whatever. They both told me "I had no business in the place, it was built entirely for the ladies." And they would tell both the Bishop and the magistrates, and I should be done all sorts of unpleasant things with. In vain I pleaded being a stranger, and promised not to intrude again,—all, however, was to no purpose. The Bishop must be told; and I was obliged to take leave of them, without even the shadow of a pardon.

On returning, I told Rogers about my morning's adventure. "Oh, never heed it," said he, "they're only the Miss Hinches, and you'll hear no more of it;" and I never did,—but ever after, I gave both the Miss Hinches and the bathing house a pretty wide berth.

I was then shown the public bathing places, about half-a-mile from Newcastle, in the direction of

Sydney, called the "Accommodence Hole," a trough in a rock, about 15 feet long, by 7 broad, and 6 deep. The sea washes over at high water, and keeps it always fresh. There is also a sort of cave cut out of the rock opposite, as a place to dress in.

These rocks abound with fossil remains of trees and animals now extinct. In some places small beds of coal lie under a layer of light blue metal. A drearier looking place could hardly be imagined. No part of Newcastle can be seen but the gaol, a large brick building on the top of a barren sand-hill, near the Flagstaff. I have stood upon *them* rocks and listened to the hoarse voice of the ocean, while lashed into fury by *the* north-east wind, and have been awed by the thundering sound of its seething waters, as I have never been by any of the awe-inspiring phenomenon of nature. *The* feelings awakened by this majestic scene are indescribable; and I never stood on any spot which so heightened the impressiveness of a scene so terribly sublime.

Newcastle is but a small city. It may contain about one thousand inhabitants. The principal street is a quarter of a mile in length. A short distance up to the left is a green plot of ground exceeding an acre in extent, bordered by two or three small cottages. A little further on the right is another green plot, two acres in extent, which is a public green; there the pitmen, the natives, and sailors congregate in the evenings. Beyond is the

court-house and the lock-up. The Court House is a fine building, with four Doric pillars in front, There is also an excellent spring of water, which supplies this part of the city all the year round. A short distance above is the old military barracks, now used as farm building. And above that is a half-finished kirk of the Presbyterians, who have been obliged to discontinue the work for want of funds.

Another long straggling street runs along past the court-house for nearly a mile, with only a house here and there in it. In some parts of it there are some good inns, and two or three fine shops or stores. A teetotaler might be alarmed about the morals of the inhabitants, as there are no less than seven public-houses.

The ground behind the city is hilly and barren, An unassuming little church, with burid-pound attached, stands on one of these hills. It dates back to the founding of the colony. Or the highest hill there is a pillar erected to commemorate the administration of Sir Charles Fitz Roy. The pedestal bears the date of erection, 1851, and the name of Sir Charles Fitz Roy, governor. Seats are placed round the monument for the convenience of visitors. From this point an extensive view of the surrounding country may be obtained. Looking towards the east the eye roams over the waters of the Pacific Ocean, towards the distant Heads of Port Stephens, marked by a bolder outline of

deeper blue than the sky, which assumes a dark green as the eye skims along the indented shore till it rests upon the olive-tinted scrub and white sand or the north side of the harbour. Turning to the north, the lovely Hunter, like a silvery thread, may be seen wending its devious way to the ocean, everywhere spreading beauty and blessing around its path. Again, to the south, there are dark looking glens and valleys, covered with thick tangled wildwood, where tall giants of the forest, which the devouring bush-fire and the axe of the pioneer had left, still grace the landscape and shelter the rude savages yet lingering in these wilds.

Looking east, the city of Newcastle is at your feet; the atmosphere is so clear that every building stands out with a distinctness of outline, which is a peculiar characteristic of all the Australian cities, when viewed from a distance. In the harbour, the rocks and shoals, which are several feet under water, can be seen distinctly.

The two hills called the Nobbies, at the entrance of the Hunter, are nearly a mile distant from each other; they are connected by a reef, or breakwater, made by convict labour. This reef prevents the sea from filling up the entrance of the harbour, between the far hill and the north shore. It is composed of loose stones from a quarry close by. The convicts bring the stones by hand, along a



tramway, in a mall waggon. The sea is continually making encroachments upon the work ; by the time that one chasm is filled another is ready. Gangs of convicts have been employed there more than thirty years ; there were a great number working upon it then.

A short distance from the Fitz Roy Pillar are two coal pits, with an inclined railway running from them to a shoot in the harbour; both pits were in active operation. vessels from California, and several other parts of America; and numbers of small schooners and brigs from Sydney and Tasmania were lying in the harbour waiting for cargoes. Some had been there more than two months; such was the scarcity of labour. Only small vessels, about fifty or sixty tons burthen, could go up to the shoot. All the large ships were laden by lighters, in the middle of the harbour.

The pitmen were from all the cod-producing counties in England and Scotland, but principally from Northumberland and Lancashire. Many of them were earning from £6 to £8 per week. About a mile and a half from the pits is a barrow month, in the side of a mountain. Coals are brought from thence on a railway to the shoot, in waggons drawn by horses. The coal mines of this district bid fair to become as important as those of our own far-famed Newcastle. The cod field extends over hundreds of square miles, and is all but inexhaustible.

The metal is of excellent quality, and was then selling at from £2 10s. to £4 10s. per ton.

The light upon the Nobbie on the main land, near the Flagstaff, was the effect of a large coal fire kept always burning. It was closely banked up during the day, and at night opened out on the side towards the sea.

A short distance from the shoot is an extensive preserved meat establishment. All the workmen employed there in making tins to secure the meat, had been hired for a term of three years. They were mostly from London, and although they were receiving from £2 to £3 per week, there was much dissatisfaction on account of their contract.

Beyond this is a large boiling down establishment, the immediate vicinity of which was a complete Golgotha. During the boiling down season several hundreds of cattle and sheep were slaughtered there every week.

Newcastle was at one time a penal settlement; and many heart-rending stories were related to me by some of the survivors of that period. The descriptions these men gave of the executions and floggings they had witnessed were truly horrible. To such an extent was cruelty carried, that if the Newcastle executioner did not come up to the mark in severity, the authorities had him sent to Maitland to be flogged. And the Maitland executioner was served in the same way by the Newcastle

one, if he did not do full justice with the merciless cat o' nine tails. Many a poor convict expired in great agony on the road between Newcastle and Maitland, and not unfrequently, ere life was extinct, the flies had made such havoc of their lacerated bodies, that they found mercy in death.

Those convicted of murder were strangled in the sand before the gaol in a most brutal manner. Frightful, however, was the revenge desperate men took upon their tormentors. Those convicts who could, escaped into the bush, transformed into fiends by cruel treatment, and eagerly watching for an opportunity to retaliate. Appalling was their revenge. The bare recital of their deeds would make one shudder. Their tormentors they often put to a most cruel and lingering death by placing them, naked, gagged, and bound, upon the ant-hills of the far bush until they were destroyed as it were, by piecemeal. Those who have been bitten by these ferocious insects, some of which are about an inch in length, can form some idea of the torture inflicted on those who were thus handed over to the tender mercies of these devouring executioners.

Many of the convicts remembered James Backhouse. Some who were present when he appeared among them said he left a lasting impression on the minds of the authorities, and the punishments for a long time after his visit were conducted in a manner much less cruel. I never heard the name

of that truly good man mentioned, even by the most abandoned, without becoming respect. The severity of the punishments was much mitigated during the administration of Governors Bourke and Gipps, and up to the time that Newcastle ceased to be a penal settlement.

Newcastle is in much repute amongst invalids. They flock thither from all parts of New South Wales on account of the celebrated Dr. Bowker, who has chosen Newcastle for his head-quarters. He has one of the best houses in the principal street at almost a nominal rent compared with that of the adjoining property. On one occasion, he said something about going elsewhere. But his house was so besieged with petitions from the inhabitants by whom he was intreated to stay, that he gave up all thoughts of removal. And so extensive did his practice subsequently become, that he was obliged to engage an assistant.

Dr. Bowker is a native of Nottingham. He went out with the intention of conducting a sheep farm on the upper Hunter. There he cured some very bad cases of ophthalmia, and his fame soon spread abroad, the people flocked from all quarters, so he abandoned sheep-farming, and returned to his profession. He is a tall gentlemanly like person, about 37 years of age. He has much property in the city, and is also the owner of two schooners engaged in the coal-trade. One of them, the

*Lavinia*, was the "pet" of the port. In a few years Dr. Bowker bids fair to become one of the wealthiest men in that part of the colony.

Invalids may be seen wandering about the streets and harbour at all times of the day. Some of them labouring under heart-disease and ophthalmia, and others from rheumatism and other diseases brought on by the hardships of life in the bush. There was a Sydney gentleman amongst the invalids, suffering from a rheumatic complaint brought on by searching after the bones of Leifhardt, who perished in attempting to explore the interior of the island.

The hospital was a small building erected on the sands between the gaol and the city. It was full of the poorer sort of patients, and to those the Dr. paid great attention. The lodging-houses and inns are always thronged with convalescents. Owing to the salubrity of the place and the skill of the Doctor, there was little mortality.

The greatest part of the inhabitants of Newcastle and some of the principal tradesmen, were convicts on ticket-of-leave. Many of them were very kind and honourable in their dealings; but there were others, who, although wealthy, found difficulty in practising honesty, and were frequently on the verge of crimes that would again imprison them. There were a few who might have been termed the pariahs of the city. They had been granted their tickets-of-leave for meritorious actions, such as

aiding in a case of fire, or saving life at the risk of their own. Some of these men, by cultivating small plots of ground adjoining the river, made considerable sums of money by selling the produce in the city and to the ships lying in the harbour. But there were many of this class, male and female, roaming at large, doing jobs of work for anyone, spending their money in drink, and altogether bereft of the comforts of home.

I witnessed a somewhat uncouth specimen of the everyday life of two of the better sort of these unfortunates. Both were Irish, and had farms up the river. They accidentally met in Mr. Rogers's shop, where I was, and a dispute commenced about a piece of land which once belonged to Newton, but was now in the possession of Phelim. The former was a tall thin man, much sunburnt, and apparently suffering from ill-health; the latter was a stout bluff sort of fellow, deeply pock-marked, and finished off at the lower extremities by a pair of large flat feet. The discussion carried on between them would have excited the risibility of a saint. But, as an Irish row is seldom confined to mere exclamations, they were not long in preparing for the combat. Out of the house they went, firing volleys of Irish oaths and epithets at each other; at first separating, like two bodies similarly electrified, but Newton's crowning observation on the build of Phelim, brought things to a climax. "I'll

tell ye what it is, Phelim," said *he*, "yer jist the two ends of a scoundrel, ye double-hoofed baste, ye!" Human nature and Irish blood could endure *this* no longer. "Och! by the holy frost," said Phelim, "I'll be at ye in a minnit, now." Newton made for the green space a little below, and threw off his coat. Before Phelim had time to doff his, Newton rushed upon him, and hocked him over on a heap of sand, and stood over his prostrate foe in triumph. Some of the bystanders interfered and set Phelim once more on his feet. By that time all Newton's courage had evaporated; and when he saw his opponent about to close with him, he desired a young Irishman standing by, to hold him, as *he* did not wish to fight any *more*. The young fellow paid no attention to him, and the combat went on. Just as they were again going to close, Rogers came down and rushed between them. Newton had aimed a blow at his antagonist which unfortunately fell on the bridge of Rogers's nose. This so exasperated Rogers, that he struck Newton a blow on the left jaw. On receipt of *this*, Newton set up a tremendous howl and bawled out, "Yu've broke me jaw! yu've broke me jaw!" and then ran into the nearest house, holding his face with both hands. So ended this dispute. Combats somewhat similar were of daily occurrence; but they were seldom of a sanguinary nature,

There were a few of a lower class than these, who

often abused each other in a shameful manner. The worst of that class was Reuben Page, an old tailor, from Birmingham, who had been sent out about thirty years ago. During the early part of his career in the colony, he had been a master in Sydney, and ha married the daughter of a convict, at Paramatta, by whom he had a large family. His wife had not been living with him for many years, on account of his vicious habits. She was then in Sydney. He had a small shop adjoining Roger's honse,—there he worked; and being a good craft, he earned a great deal of money, sometimes £6 or £7 per week. He kept two of the most wretched females about his place that I ever saw. Bidly, an Irishwoman, about thirty years of age, was his greatest favourite, but the usage she received from him was really dreadful. During their drunken bouts, which occurred at the beginning, or at the end of nearly every week, according to the state of the exchequer. Bidly was frequently so pounded upon the vizage by Reuben, that not a trace of the human face divine could be discerned. She was several times rescued by the police and the neighbours, and Reuben was put into the lock-up; but as soon as he was let out, they always managed to go together again.

The other was Jane, a Scotchwoman; she was seldom sober. I often had to step over her, lying in a helpless condition, half in and half out of an old kitchen where Reuben cooked his victuals.

There was another couple, man and wife, who occasionally lived together on Mosquito Island :— Tom and Polly Hyde. Tom had been a soldier, and when he came down to sell his produce. he amused the frequenters of the public-houses with narratives of his experience in the military line. And Polly, when she was in the city, mostly finished her daily career at the corner of some street, a public spectacle of helpless depravity.

Another incorrigible character, who mixed up with these, was Yankee Jack, a native of Canada. He had a ticket-of-leave, for saving the life of a soldier, who was thrown into the sea, by the upsetting of a boat, ten miles out from the Nobbies.

There were always a number of natives roaming about. There might be about 150 in all, of the Newcastle tribe. They were more wretched and filthy, and if possible, uglier than those of Adelaide. None of them were entirely naked except the pickaninnies; although some of the men wore only an old red or blue shirt that reached to the knee. Most of the gins had a blanket wrapt round them, and a few of them were arrayed in cotton gowns, which had been given them for services performed. Two of the oldest men—Old Flanagan and Old Bob—never went out of the city, and were peat favourites with the children of the storekeepers, who frequently gave them tobacco and broken meat.

All the earnings of the tribe (and they sometimes reached a considerable amount), were spent in tobacco and jerrawicke (colonial-made alo.) They seldom cooked any of their food, except the fish. I have seen the gins with sheep heads, plucks, &c., slung over their shoulders, which they carried to a convenient spot, and devoured raw. At night they usually lit a fire in a hollow place near the harbour, and squatted round it till morning. A more hideous looking spectacle can hardly be imagined than that presented by these savages around the blazing fire, carousing among jerawicke and the offal of slaughtered animals.

One of the old women, who roamed about near our place, was taken ill one morning, and expired behind the workshop. She was the *most* frightful looking human being I ever beheld. After her funeral (which was conducted with as much secrecy as possible) all the tribe went into mourning, by whitening their eyebrows and hair with pipeclay, and sticking white feathers behind their ears. They were very harmless creatures, and many of the sailors in the port often amused themselves by chasing the gins, "just for the fun of the thing," as they said. It was no fun, however, to the poor creatures they pursued; they ran as though it were for life, and seemed convulsed with terror on the near approach of their pursuers.

Newcastle contained a great number of large

men. In one family, the Hannels, natives of the district, there were three brothers, each exceeding six feet high, and proportionably stout. Nearly all the publicans and most of the tradesmen were men above ordinary stature.

No soldiers were stationed in the place, the new Barracks, above the city, were turned into dwellings for the pitmen, and others, employed about the port. Four policemen, and a superintendent were sufficient to keep order. There were often two hundred convicts in the gad, and upon the reef. *The* reason the place was so easily governed was, all who would work, had abundance of employment.

In the main-street, above Dr. Bowker's, the words "Mechanics' Institute," were painted at the end of a shoemaker's shop. But the words were all that remained of the Institute. When in Sydney, I saw the "Peoples' Reading Room," painted on the front of a shoemaker's shop, in King-street, attended with equally barren results. There were no books in either place. How these institutions originated, and failed, I did not enquire. It might be that leather and literature were too antagonistic in their natures to agree in the same building. Be the cause, however, what it might, they no longer existed in anything but a name.

There was no place of amusement, and very few of the working-men were addicted to reading: the women scarcely read at all, not even a newspaper.

The wives and daughters of the working-men, I mean, not those of the upper ranks, they were as intelligent as the same class in Sydney. In consequence of this want of a healthy recreation for body and mind, the operatives resort to public-houses, and spend their time and money in drinking and gambling. The remark about this, which I am going to make, may be laughed at by some, but it is a truism, nevertheless. To the inhabitants of such places as Newcastle, strolling players and mountebanks are public benefactors. And it will be found on close observation, that there is considerably less drinking and disorderly conduct while they remain there than at any other time. The reason is obvious,—the people want excitement suitable to their capacities; and not having been accustomed to anything more intellectual than what is thus supplied, they pay for it cheerfully, enjoy it heartily, and are content. When this pastime is not afforded, they too frequently resort to worse. The first step, then, by way of benefiting the working-classes here and everywhere, is to supply them with amusements of a healthy, moral, and intellectual character.

In New South Wales, most of the publicans accumulate fortunes in a few years. After this they generally return to England or remove from the place where their wealth has been accumulated, bearing with them what should have been the producing capital of the working-man.

Newcastle was not a whit behind Sydney for female beauty. There were some very pretty girls in the place, and two or three whom I knew would have made good helpmates for working-men. The belle of the city was Miss Polly Brunker, at least she was awarded that honour, by the majority of the young men; but there were many others who might have disputed her pretensions to that enviable distinction,

On the north side of the harbour there was a woollen cloth manufactory. The fabric woven is known by the name of native tweed. It is much superior in durability to our Scotch and English tweeds, but not so neatly finished. There is also a manufactory of this description in Sydney, and another a few miles from Newcastle, in the direction of Sydney, close to the sea. There was not much doing in any of these places—want of labour was the cause.

The end of December was approaching, and the weather was very sultry, with occasional hot winds from the north west; provision, however, was made for the enjoyment of Christmas, by every one, more or less. Even the blacks seemed to look less forbidding, by anticipating some of the good things, white fellow would give them at that season.

A large warehouse in front of our hut was tastefully decorated with the green bushes of the gum-tree, and hung around with flags of all kinds

procured from the ships lying in the harbour. These preparations were made by a baker, called Gardiner, who intended to treat the inhabitants to a ball on Christmas eve. It was a speculation; and from the great exertions he made in preparing refreshments for the occasion, it was quite evident that he looked for remuneration.

The day before Christmas came, and with it an exceeding hot wind from the north-west. At noon it had increased to a gale; the sand was blown about in clouds, and facing the wind was like fronting an oven. Work of all kinds was suspended, and the perspiration oozed from every pore with the least exertion. Towards evening, I went to the Fitz Roy pillar, and a broad track of country in the direction of Maitland was on fire. The heat from thence was great, and the atmosphere around me felt not unlike the hot air nigh a furnace mouth. In the distance, the flames shot upwards like vast forked tongues of fire, with a red and lurid glare. Smoke and ashes were tossed to and fro by the wind. During the pauses of the gale, I could see the appalling waves of desolating fire roll on to the verge of the horizon. The awful conflagration before me brought to mind the description of the "Black Thursday" of February 1851, so called because of the terrible bush-fire which on that day spread much ruin and desolation in the colony of Victoria.

When I returned to the city, the heat there was scarcely endurable. I went to one of the wharfs, and there was a boat just about to cross over to the north side of the harbour, with a Scotch gentleman from Maitland. He was a tall, corpulent man, and the perspiration was running down his face faster than he could wipe it away with his handkerchief. He said he was "nearly half boiled down," and wished to be on the north side as soon as possible, where he intended to remain under water till the hot wind had passed away. I wished to go aboard the *Royal George*, a London ship then lying in the harbour. On board I was somewhat surprised to find them in the same state of prostration as those on shore. I sat down in the cabin a few minutes, but found great difficulty in speaking. Indeed, so oppressive was the atmosphere, that conversation was scarcely possible. Captain Robson and I had not said many words about the weather (a general introduction to conversation by Englishmen in all parts of the world), when a low hollow murmur was heard to seaward, and in a few seconds a "southerly burster" swept towards the ship, booming and shrieking through the rigging, and bearing away in its course the dust and light substances which lay upon the deck. A few moments after, the atmosphere was reduced to a cool and bracing temperature, all our languor vanished, and we felt as though new life had been infused into us. Just

when things were becoming agreeable, the boat containing the Scotch gentleman ran under our lee, for shelter from the fury of the blast. The boatmen told me that if I wished to go ashore, now was the time, as there would not probably be another chance that night. The sea rolled heavily up the harbour. The Scotchman was now cool as a cucumber, and as anxious to be set on *terra firma* as he was before to be submerged. We pulled for the shore as fast as we could; the boat danced on the top of the waves, and we got a good sprinkling with salt water before we reached the wharf.

Hot winds are not productive of any bad consequences; the perspiration is always so copious while they last, and the southerly wind always sets in from the sea at eventide, thus bracing the nerves in a manner which makes many feel much better for the visitation. Judging by my own experience, I feel confident they are highly beneficial. They sometimes injure the vines and other fruit trees; but they seldom occur more than twice or thrice in a summer, and it is only when they are intensely hot that they do any injury. I must own that it is not very pleasant to go into any place sheltered from the southerly wind, when *the* hot wind has passed over, owing to the mosquitoes.

One evening, I took a walk on the Maitland road. The hot wind had been succeeded by a cool breeze from the south. About half-a-mile from the



city, I saw a neat inclosure which I had not observed before. It was a small cemetery, and contained several headstones bearing the names of captains who had died at the port. I went inside to examine this interesting spot; but no sooner had I crossed the fence than I was attacked by a host of mosquitoes which were sheltering behind it. My meditations among the tombs were brought to an abrupt conclusion; I was over the fence most speedily; and a strong breeze soon swept away my numerous tormentors, I might here say, that the wings of mosquitoes are large and gossamer-like, so that they are unable to fly in the face of a strong wind.

All new comers are much annoyed by them. I have seen some with both eyes swollen up from the effects of their bites; others marked as if with the small-pox. After a hot wind, mosquitoes are very troublesome in the house, but especially in the sleeping-rooms. Mosquito curtains are the best preventive, but few of the working classes are provided with them. Cow dung is often burned to keep them away; but no sooner does the smoke subside than they resume their torment with greater fury than before. In the houses, during daytime, they are not troublesome, and even a candle burning in the room, prevents them to a great extent at night. But no sooner is all dark and still, than a buzzing sound is heard in all parts of the room. This sound is very like the word *coozen*, pronounced

with the teeth close together; and you are in constant apprehension that some of these "coozens" will drop on your face. Four or five will perhaps sound their relationship in your ear at once. Suddenly the sounds cease, and as suddenly you feel pricked, as with a fine needle, on several parts of the face; this will give you an idea of their system of phlebotomy. The first impulse is to raise your hand and crush them; and this you will have to repeat at very short intervals as long as you remain awake. When you are asleep, they will feast or, till daylight warns them to take shelter in the secluded parts of the house. A twelvemonth's residence in the colony reconciles most people to these troublesome visitors. As for the old colonists, they scarcely notice them; for the bite of a mosquito seldom leaves a mark on any person who has been long in the country.

When I returned from visiting the *Royal George*, preparations were being made for the Christmas dinner. A goose and several ducks were made ready for roasting. A large piece of good beef and many excellent pies and tarts lay side by side upon the kitchen table. A plum-pudding,—an indispensable requisite to every Christmas dinner—was being stirred up in a large earthen bowl. Near the corner of an old building, a wood fire burnt brightly, and over it hung a large kail-pot, ready to receive the Christmas pudding.

About nine o'clock, the people began to throng towards *the* ball-room. The warehouse was soon crowded. At each end there sat a fiddler. A lively air was struck up, and the dance begun. The principal dancers on the male side were the sailors. The females were mostly natives of the colony; and lovely did the currency lasses look on that occasion. What with white dresses, artificials, jewelry, and bright eyes, the sight was perfectly dazzling; and they were famous dancers; no kind of figure seemed to come wrong to them. The ball was kept up with great spirit till "a wee short hour ayont the twal," without any disturbing incidents, except a short quarrel now and then between a couple of rival claimants, far the hand of a pretty girl as partner. Many of the ladies danced their boots to pieces, and had to be supplied with new ones. Not the least interesting party in this scene, were the lookers on. In front of the wide doors, which were left open, stood a group of natives, a number of Chinese coolies, and many others, who did not choose to join in the dance. The black fellows and the gins kept laughing and shouting "budgereee white fellow," at the end of every dance. And the Chinese made a continual chattering of "chow chow," during the whole time the ball lasted. When the dancing ceased, Mr. Rogers made a wind-up by a song "*Colin and his Cow*," the morality of which is about equal to that of some

of the ballads sung at our country fairs. It called forth great applause. This over, the assemblage dispersed quietly to their homes. Such was the manner in which a part of the inhabitants of Newcastle enjoyed themselves on a Christmas eve.

Great numbers of Chinese coolies have been imported into New South Wales during the last few years, to supply the demands of the labour market. They make good shepherds, middling house servants, and tolerable cooks. But very few are worth more than 5s. or 6s. per week, with rations. At all sorts of work requiring much exertion, one English labourer would do as much as half-a-dozen "John Chinamen." Mr. Rogers had one for a cook, and the kitchen was a general rendezvous for about twenty or thirty of them in the evening. They were exceedingly loquacious celestials; their conversation was sometimes perfectly deafening; and their noise resembled that made by a flock of lapwings, more than any other sound I am acquainted with.

Christmas-day came. The weather was very hot. The bush-fire was still raging, although its further progress was stayed by various impediments. Our Christmas dinner was to be held at the house of Mr. Michael Dwyer, Mrs. Rogers's father, the principal undertaker in the city. At one o'clock, p.m., headed by Rogers and family, we all marched towards the rendezvous. All the other guests had

arrived, and were waiting for us, that they might commence the feast. The entire number of guests would be about twenty. On reaching the dining room, we saw a large table, overspread by a white cover, on which rested the best china and crockery ware of the establishment. Rogers took his seat at one end of the table, and Mr. Dwyer at the other. The fowls were placed before them; but these almost defied *their* skill, they were so tough and stringy. Judge of our disappointment, when we noticed their almost fruitless efforts, and discovered that the fowls were only half-roasted. George Gardiner had been entrusted with this duty; but his exertions at the ball had so fatigued him that our Christmas dinner was spoiled in consequence. This failure threw quite a damp over the party, and mused the conversation to become flat and monosyllabic, which must have been anything but pleasing to the principal parties concerned in getting up the feast. A general attack was next made on the roast-beef, which fortunately proved eatable. After this, the plum-pudding was introduced as the *finale* to the solids. It presented an uninviting appearance, and was quite a failure. Whether it was owing to *the* ingredients, or their manipulation, or mismanagement in *the* boiling, I am not prepared to say; but it was nearly as tough as the goose, and would have been rather a dangerous charge to have *met* coming out of the

mouth of a cannon, even at the distance of a hundred yards. Very <sup>little</sup> of it was eaten, and the rest was soon removed to make way for the dessert, consisting of confectionery, fruits, wines, and other drinks. The conversation now became more animated, and the former failures wore for the moment forgotten. At this crisis, a young Irishwoman, whose husband had just expired, came in, and amid her many tears, ordered a coffin for her beloved. And she was only gone a few minutes when a workingman, who lived in the country, came in to order a coffin for his child. These two solemn incidents threw another chill over the spirits of the company; and in a few minutes afterwards, the company was dispersed over various parts of the city, searching after some more lively entertainment.

I have been frequently astonished at the very expensive manner in which the working-people conducted their funerals, especially those of the Roman catholic persuasion. I saw the coffin for the child before-mentioned, after it was finished. It was covered with the best black cloth, and the sides, ends, and lid were profusely ornamented with bright metal crosses. As there was no professional painter in the place, the name of the child was only rudely written on the bread-plate. The coat of the coffin was £5; that of an adult, similarly decorated was £7.

During my stay there, the bill of mortality was very light. I only saw two funerals, and they were both on a Sunday. The first was that of a young man, accidentally killed by the discharge of a fowling-piece, while stooping to gather some "pig's faces," a kind of fruit which grows by the river side. I was standing beside the Fitz Roy pillar, and looking towards Maitland, when my attention was arrested by a procession, moving slowly from a row of pitmen's houses near the railway. It wended its way round the foot of the hill, and up the long straggling street towards the church. No rural funeral at home could have been conducted more respectfully. All who met the procession either turned and went along *with* it, or stood with uncovered heads till it passed. The other funeral was that of William Rouse, an innkeeper. There was nothing unusual about it. The coffin was a very expensive one, and was deposited in the family vault.

The church yard is composed of dry sandy soil; and has the appearance of a true English burial place, a fac simile of which may be seen in most of our rural districts.

The last day of 1852, was one of the hottest that had occurred within the remembrance of the oldest colonist. There was a hot wind blowing the whole day, and many miles of thick bush was on fire only a short distance from the city. The resident

clergyman, Mr. Hilton, measured the mean bent by thermometer, at various intervals during the day, which he found to be 143 degrees fahrenheit. At noon it was 150 degrees in the sun, and nearly as much in the shade,—much ham was done to the grapes and other fruits up the river, by this scorching blast. On the evening of that day I went to reside with Joseph Spragg, storekeeper. The sleeping room I occupied there was one of the largest in the house, and on the first floor. The mosquitoes came upon me in hundreds. Several times during the night, I burned cow dung, but all to no purpose—on they came in swarms, as soon as the smoke cleared away. When daylight appeared I found great numbers which I had crushed by rolling over in the bed to avoid their bites. When I looked in the glass, my face was frightfully marked, but *not* swollen. Mosquitoes are not the only pests these hot winds waken into active life. Tarantulas, centipedes, and scorpions are often to be met with crawling about the houses, and sometimes before a change in the weather, cockroaches come from every corner in the house, and run about in all directions. They are about two inches in length, and of a beautiful dark green colour on the back. They are quite harmless.

My new host was one of the most extraordinary characters in the place. He had been twenty years in the colony. He was a native of London,

and had been sent out for housebreaking, but his conduct had been so exemplary, that he was appointed barber in the hospital, and organist of the church; and lastly, he obtained a ticket-of-leave to reside in any of the Australian colonies. Soon after this he married an amiable and industrious woman, a free emigrant, who had done much to guide him on the way towards wealth and independence. He was then the owner of the largest store in the place. His shop contained goods of nearly every description to the value of £1000. In constructing his house and store, he had been his own architect, and had devised several ingenious contrivances for fastening the windows and doors. There was scarcely anything he could not undertake to do. At one time he might be seen acting the barber, at another tailor. He painted nearly all the cart-signs and coffin-plates in his neighbourhood; and he would venture to represent any character in a play, or sing a comic song, at a moment's notice. Once a very amusing scene took place. A carman had ordered a cart-sign; the carman's name was George Hyde, and Spragg painted it upon a piece of tin in black letters. He then set the plate on the mantel-piece, examined it, and concluded that it was first-rate. Hyde came for the sign, and when he saw it, he used epithets of a very uncommendable character. Mr. Spragg defended his handiwork, but was eventually compelled to

paint in white the spaces between the dark letters. He was, however, well paid; the piece of tin was about Sin. by Gin., the work was done in a quarter of an hour, and the cost of the whole was 4s.6d.

Storekeepers and small shopkeepers were much wanted in Newcastle. The former were realizing cent. per cent. upon many of the commodities sold, owing to the lack of competition. There was no painter in the city; and no glazier, except an old man who knew little about it. Shoemakers and tailors almost wrought night and day, earning from £3 to £4 per week. Carpenters and joiners had abundance of employment, at from 13s. to 15s. per day. Beef was 3d. per lb.; mutton, 2d. to 2½d.; broad, 3d. Board and lodging, from 14s. to £1 per week. Fruit of all kinds came down the river in boat-loads. Peaches were 1d. per dozen, grapes 4d. per lb., and bananas, apricots, almonds, and pomegranates were equally cheap.

Land for building sites sold at enormous prices. I was present at one Government sale. The lots comprised small sections in the best business part of the city. The old barracks stood upon one of these sections, and that site was purchased at the rate of £70 per foot, for the length of the frontage—a price equal to that paid for the same kind of property in Melbourne.

Mr. Spragg's next appearance before the public was in the character of a comic singer at a public

concert given in the court-house by Mr. Chester. Mrs. Chester was the principal and only female singer. She had been a professional both in London and Sydney. Mr. Chester was a clerk at a store, and had only been a short time in the city. Concerts were rare things in Newcastle; and when the night came, the house was crowded with all the fashion and beauty of the city and neighbourhood. Mr. Spragg, in order to be in full trim for the occasion, had two nights of rehearsal in his own drawing-room. A short time before the concert hour, the kitchen was turned into a green-room, I lent him a long pair of ridgeand-furrow Scotch stockings, which he drew on over white trousers and fastened at the knees with pieces of red ribbon. A loose shooting-jacket was thrown across his shoulders, and a rustic hat well floured, crowned the whole man. As a finishing-stroke, his face was coloured with rouge, and his hair was dusted with whiting. He spent an hour at this evening's toilet. His duty was to shine in the character of a country clown; and before a large glass on the chimney-picce he studied his *part* so well, that he was "perfect" by the time he was called upon. Mrs. Chester sung several popular songs, accompanied by the piano; Master Sydney Chester, a boy of 14 years, sung several nigger melodies; Mr. James Hannel sung an Irish song; and then came Mr. Spragg, who sung the "*Country Fair*."

This song elicited a hurricane of applause, which died away in the gruff sounds made by some clever imitator of a braying donkey. The whole of the proceedings passed off so well, that there was another concert on the following week, at which Mr. Spragg appeared in the same character, and Mr. Rogers, grotesquely attired, sung his usual ditty.

Some days after this, a number of mountebanks, from Maitland, paid a visit to Newcastle, and by permission, located themselves in Mrs. Croft's yard, at the end of Mr. Spragg's premises. These nimble gentry stayed four days, and were amply enriched by their visit.

One lovely evening, while standing upon the verandah, amusing myself with a telescope I held in my hand, on directing it towards the sea, I saw a fine barque rounding the Nobbies and making for the harbour. After some time I went down to the wharf. She proved to be the *William Hyde*, of London, and had come from Sydney to take in a cargo of cattle, sheep, and horses for Wellington, New Zealand.

I had a great desire to see the country, so I engaged a berth in the cabin, at steerage fare, £8, and mess with the steward.

The crew consisted of eleven Maories, or New Zealanders, and six Europeans, in addition to the officers. The Maories all came into the city that

night, and their singular appearance attracted much attention. They were strapping young fellows. Some grotesquely tattooed; one or two had ear-rings of a peculiar kind of shark's teeth suspended by a piece of ribbon from their ears. There were a few who were not disfigured by tattooing, and their complexions were as fair as those of our agricultural labourers. The others were of a brownish olive tinge, but none were very dark. After strolling about the place for a considerable time, they mustered in front of James Hannel's, to look at a group of black fellows and gins, who were dancing a corrobory. The gins and their lubras, however, were so lazy that neither drink, tobacco, nor money, would induce them to go through aught beyond the preliminaries of that wild pastime. No sooner had they ended, than the Maories commenced their terrible war song. Squatting themselves down, with their legs crossed in the oriental fashion, they began by making a noise not unlike the snorting of an "iron horse," heard half-a-mile off. This noise was accompanied by violent gestures, and the rapid motion of their hands through the air. As they became more excited, their eyes rolled in frenzy, and their heads turned from one side to the other. And at every turn they sent forth roars the most piercingly savage and demoniacal that I ever heard from human beings. When the song was finished, one of them went round with his

cap and made a collection. After the collection was secured, they all started to their feet, gave a tremendous yell, ran down to the ship and divided the spoil.

There were some valuable materials that evening for an ethnologist. Four, at least, out of the five different races into which Blumenbacke has divided the human family were present in the city. The Negro race, by the natives; the Malay, by the Maories; the Mongolian, by the Chinese; and the Caucasian, by the English, and other Europeans.

The *William Hyde* would be ready for sea in twelve days, and I determined to have another excursion up the country before I left. I decided on going to Maitland. The distance from Newcastle to that place, by road, is twenty miles, and by river forty. The fare by mail was 4s.; by steamer 4s. 6d., and 2s. from Morpeth by omnibus, in all 6s. 6d. I chose the road, and took a seat in the mail cart. It was a low square box, firmly bolted together, seated on all sides, and well-adapted in every other respect for the roads of the bush. The driver was a fine young fellow—a native, and the best whip in the colony. My fellow passengers were two Irishwomen, a little girl, and a shepherd. The latter was nearly blind with ophthalmia, and was a patient of Dr. Bowker's, who had given him little hope of recovering his sight. We started on the journey about six o'clock in the morning. The

day was exceedingly hot, and nothing *but* the very lightest kind of clothing could be endured. A broad brimmed white felt hat, and a loose fitting linen blouse were my dress, and the others were arrayed in the lightest manner possible. One of the women, the mother of the little girl was both good-looking and agreeable. She had also that keen natural relish for fun, so peculiar to Irish females. The other was lean and ill-favoured, and to make matters worse, not entirely sober. There was only room for three of us in the body of the cart, on account of the mail bags. So I took a seat in front, by the side of the driver, the little girl sat on my knee. These preliminaries being arranged, off we started. The cart was drawn by three horses, which in powers of endurance and swiftness could not be equalled out of New South Wales. On we went at a rapid pace, down the long straggling street, and across the green space which borders the bush. The road, for the first two miles, had many windings, and was overhung by immense gum and iron-bark trees, giant cedars, and graceful wattles.

The rapid manner in which we swept along gave to the scenery a shifting character of the most romantic and enchanting description. The driver pulled up to cut a handle for his whip, which till then he had *not* thought of using. Shortly after, we came upon a fine piece of road, bounded on each side by a thick forest. This road, for two miles,

was straight as an arrow. We had not gone far till we met two handsome young ladies, riding on fine-looking bay horses. One was dressed in a tight fitting linen jacket and cabbage-tree slouch, the other in a black silk visite, and bonnet and veil, of the latest fashion from Sydney. Both wore long riding-habits, made of some light material. A few minutes more brought us opposite a small clearing, with a few shed-like buildings on the far side, close to the trees, and sheltered from the fierce rays of the sun. Three or four milch cows, and a few dairy utensils stood outside the dwelling. This was Iron Bark Farm, the residence of the two young ladies we had recently met. The road now became much worse; stumps of trees, deep ruts, and other impediments, tested the skill of the driver. We nevertheless, still kept on our course at full speed, and our whip felt proud while showing his ability in steering clear of all obstacles. Now and then however, we were well jolted, despite his dexterity. On one occasion, whilst passing over a very bad piece of road, the car gave a tremendous shake, and one of the women threw her arm round my waist, to avoid being thrown upon the mail bags. I must confess that I felt uncomfortable in this ludicrous position, although some of my fellow passengers seemed highly delighted at the predicament. And, as if to add to my discomfiture, the woman every now and then gave me a hearty



squeeze, by way of reminder of her "attachment." There was, however, no shaking her off, and no help for the annoyance; for had I made the least objection, I might have fared worse. So I bore it and laughed with the rest. The pleasant prattle of the little girl on my knee, and the lovely scenery through which we were passing, made me forget my tormentor.

The purity of the atmosphere, our rapid rate of travelling, and the bright gleams of golden sunshine that streamed through openings amid the trees, the clear blue sky above, long stretches of forest expanding before us, and here and there the Hunter river, like a brilliant mirror, reflecting the loveliness of the ever-changing scenery—did tend to impart a buoyancy to the animal spirits, and produce an impression on the mind similar to that made by the perusal of the first fairy tale read in early life. Again, passing through the umbrageous parts of the forest, where lofty trees and low scrub interwoven into a thick veil that shut out the sunlight, was like reading a gloomy page in the "Pilgrim's Progress."

We came next to a steep hill, called Iron Bark Brow, at the bottom of which there is a small creek and swampy ground. The creek was crossed by a low rickety wooden bridge. This place had been remarkable in the history of the road, for upsetting mail carts and other conveyances. Down

the hill, and across the bridge we went in a few seconds, to the foot of another brow of less elevation on the opposite side. After this ascent, the road turned to the right, and kept close to the left bank of the Hunter, as far as the eye could reach. A narrow strip of firm greensward, with the river on one side and the forest on the other, formed the road, and over it our horses bounded along at a marvellous rate. Many of the large trees we passed presented splendid specimens of the stag-horn fern, growing upon them, about fifty feet from the ground,

Iron bark huts, and other tenements, began to make their appearance, some with half-a-dozen children scampering about in the greatest glee, looking the very picture of health and contentment. We were then within the boundary of Hexham township, and in sight of the half-way house, at which we shortly after arrived. Mr. Smith, the owner of the place, and two brawny shoemakers with their leather aprons on, came out to receive us. These men had committed crimes, and were doing their lagging with Mr. Smith, who appeared to be a very humane man, and they seemed to have easy times of it. The house was a plain building, of two stories, having a kitchen and other out-offices at the rear. We entered the bar; it was presided over by Mrs. Smith, a pale looking slender Irishwoman, as agreeable in every respect as her husband.

Both of my female friends ordered a nobbler immediately as a foundation for breakfast; but I turned into the breakfast-room, and the rest soon followed. The breakfast-table was covered with a white cover, and spread over with joints of cold meat, bread, butter, cheese, and the most delicious cream, to which was added tea and coffee. The charge was 1s. Breakfast finished, the females again paid their respects to the bar, where they were joined by a tall broad-shouldered countryman of their own, a farmer in the neighbourhood. He paid particular attention to my good-looking friend, and a *piece* of pleasant banter passed between them that kept the place in a roar of laughter till the time for starting. This son of Erin wore a long blue coat and light fustian trousers. He was finished at the head with a large cabbage-tree hat, and at the feet by a pair of enormous brogues. His beard was long, stiff, and grizzly. When we were seated in the car, he came to shake hands with Mrs. Tierney, his lively countrywoman, and she flung her arm round *his* neck, and gave him a most loving salute in true Irish style. He was so much pleased with this unexpected frolic, that he doffed his hat, and threw it up in the air with gestures and a yell peculiar to excited Irishmen. Off we started, leaving him to finish his fandango, and the bystanders to recover their gravity. He scampered about in front of the house, amid the

cheers and laughter of the crowd; and the last thing we saw about the place, as it faded from our view, was the cabbage-tree hat rolling in the air, high above the top of the half-way house.

The next stoppage was at Hexham post-office. An old native, *the* last of his tribe, wall-eyed and nearly blind, came to the side of the mail cart, not to beg—but to speak to the driver, whom he knew. He seemed highly pleased with the little girl, and still more so when he was told she was a native like himself. His only covering was an old blanket, and in his face there was perceptible none of that low cunning, which is so peculiarly characteristic of savage tribes. On the contrary, his countenance was indicative of frankness and intelligence. His wants were abundantly supplied by a few individuals residing near the river, on whose banks he spent much of his time in basking in the sunshine. From his emaciated condition it was evident that the tide of life was ebbing fast, and that he would soon be gathered unto his people.

We took up another passenger here, a gentleman farmer, resident in Hexham, who was going to Maitland on business; and off we went again. The road passed through the principal part of Hexham. In the middle of this village there <sup>is</sup> a neat wooden chapel, and a short distance from it a small school, and about half-a-dozen houses scattered over the distance of nearly a mile among the fields. There

were grazing paddocks covered with rich herbage, fields covered with stubble, nearly a yard high, the remains of the last crop.' In others, rich crops of Indian corn enlivened the scene.

Two miles from Maitland there was a lone cottage by the road side, which presented a melancholy appearance. Its owner and his family had gone to the diggings. The windows were broken, some parts of the sod-work removed, and a portion of the roof had fallen in. The little square garden plot behind was full of rank weeds, in the midst of which stood a fine peach-tree heavily laden with luscious fruit; but none felt inclined to gather them. We arrived in Maitland about noon.

## CHAPTER VI.

Description of Maitland.. Scotch Barr.. Return to Newcastle.. German Lady.. William Hyde.. Putting the Cattle on Board.. Price of Cattle, Sheep, and Horses.. Their Quality.. Leaving Newcastle.. Passengers.. Mrs. Applethwaite.. Captain Applethwaite.. Natives, how we got them on board.. Jackey Jackey.. Jimmy.. Anecdotes of.. Last Sight of Australia.. Watering the Sheep.. Tempestuous Weather.. The Three Kings.. North Cape.. Ships.. State of the Cattle.. Fight with a Maori.. Bay of Islands.. Scenery of the Shores of New Zealand.. Entering into Auckland Harbour.. Appearance of Auckland.. John Wesley and other Ships.. Going Ashore.. First Night and Morning in Auckland.. Description of Auckland.. Fruit.. Dairy Produce.. Churches.. Missions.. Resemblance to Madeira.. Road Making.. Scoria.. Winery Pier.. Burial Places.. Remembrances.. Aspect of the Country.. Loweswater.. Buttermere.. Borrowdale.. Mechanics' Bay.. Maories.. Maorie War.. Sailor.. Anecdote.. Maorie Women.. German Women.. Jews.. Half-casts.. Maorie Dealers.. Dock Making in Prospect.. Appearance of the Country beyond Parnell.. Night Scene.. Gentlemen's Seats.. Keswick.. Ambleside.. Mount Eden.. Parnell.. Brandling Gill.. Mr. Churton.. Haseness.. Native Girls.. St. Michael.. Going on Board.. Preparing for Home.

MAITLAND is a town as large as Uxbridge, which it much resembles. A beautiful river the size of the Colne, meanders through it; and its sloping banks are laid out in neat parterres, well-cultivated gardens, and fruitful orchards, where flowers, and herbs, and fruit, grew in abundance.

The surrounding country, and the manner in which it was divided into fields, reminded me of Middlesex and Buckinghamshire.

All the inns, and even the small public-houses, had the chequers upon the door-posts, as may be

seen in the above-named counties. The neat little church, situate in the central part of the town, is a fac-simile of many I have seen in the south of England. The houses and shops surrounding the church called to mind the pretty village of Hillingdon, near Uxbridge. Some of the houses are of wood, rest upon wheels, and may be moved from one locality to another. The major part of the buildings are of brick, and a most irregular kind of architecture obtains.

There are many fine inns, and two or three coffee houses, where accommodation could be obtained at a reasonable rate. I went into one of the most respectable. It had a pillared front, and two projecting wings, and was only one storey high. At the entrance, placards were hung, stating the bill of fare. One of these was headed by the Australian arms, painted in water-colours, and manifesting little artistic skill, having also the motto—"Advance Australia," in large letters, on a red ribbon at the bottom. I was conducted through the place by the owner, who appeared desirous of making his customers as comfortable as possible. Some of the back rooms had been turned into shoemakers' shops to suit the requirements of some of his permanent boarders. These each paid him 14s. per week, a sum which many could earn in a single day.

There are several extensive corn mills, soaperies, tanneries and boiling-down establishments, in the

vicinity of Maitland. Great quantities of tallow are sent from here to Sydney for exportation.

Maitland has one newspaper. The *Maitland Mercury*, published twice every week, is well-conducted, and very popular throughout the colony. I was taken through the establishment by a brother of the editor and proprietor, with whom I became acquainted on my first visit to Maitland. The proprietor's house and the offices of the paper are under one roof, in a neat edifice, built of red brick, two storeys high, and situate in the central part of the town in the principal street. The words "Mercury Office," are painted in large black letters on a white ground, and were affixed to the eastern gable. The western end was overshadowed by a magnificent white cedar. In the rear, there is a large paddock, where Mr. Jones keeps two horses for his own use. The newspaper was printed by a Columbian press, constructed on an improved principle, and everything about the place was in first-rate order. In the clerks' office I met with a fellow Cumbrian, Mr. Carruthers, from Carlisle. He was the chief clerk; but he was then unwell, and had been at Newcastle only a few days before, consulting Dr. Bowker. It gave him much pleasure to converse with one who came from the same county in England, which he was likely never to see again. The pleasure was not one-sided.

In the afternoon I went to Mr. Gorriek's, and booked for a seat in *the* mail-cart returning next morning to Newcastle. This done, I partook of some refreshment with Mr. Jones, and then strolled out through the western part of the town into *the* country, taking the direction of Singleton. About a mile out, I came to a neat little dairy farm, and in the barn almost adjoining the house, two men were thrashing corn with flails. This was the first time since my arrival in the colony, that I heard this familiar sound, and I could scarcely resist going into the barn to have a swing with an old acquaintance. During my stay in Sydney, several complaints among the farmers had found their way into the newspapers. The farmers of Golburn in particular, complained of the rapid spread of the Scotch burr. This weed is a great annoyance to the Australian agriculturists. Indeed, so great a pest is it, that one correspondent of the *Sydney Herald* stated, that some fields in Golburn had been covered to such an extent that they were nearly valueless. I made several enquiries of the farmers in Maitland, but found that although it did exist there, it had not been productive of much injury.

London and its vicinity appears to have supplied the greatest part of the population of Maitland. The Cockney idiom is to be heard in every part of the town.

There are no places of public amusement, nor free concert-rooms as in Sydney. The principal pastime among those who frequent the inns is "Judge and Jury," a sort of performance in which parties personate the various characters of judge, jury, lawyer, criminal, &c. The cases brought before these mock tribunals are mostly of such a description as renders the morality of such pastime far from commendable. Maitland is noted for its horse-races. They are held annually, and attract great numbers of people from all parts of New South Wales.

Farm labourers were much in request. Wages were high, and food cheap and abundant. There is ample room for a large population between Maitland and Morton Bay. The land for hundreds of miles round is the richest in the world, either for pasturage or agriculture. Thousands of sheep, horses and cattle roam about in the immense plain, and hundreds never return to their owners, straying into the mountainous regions of New England, they become wild, and afford sport for the Australian hunter. Many a daring sportsman and his steed have perished in this perilous chase.

The Maitland women are very pretty, the young women especially. I do not remember seeing a single face that could be called either ugly or forbidding. The entire place had a well-to-do contented like appearance. I could not help thinking

how different in that respect this fine inland town was to similar towns at home. There was not a beggar to be seen; nor were there any pitiable ballad-singers, nor tormenting music grinders. Every one who could work had plenty to do, and was well paid for doing it. Like all other towns in the colony, it had too many public-houses. These to a great extent, absorbed the savings of the working-classes, and were highly detrimental to the interests of the community.

After strolling about till nightfall, I returned to the Mercury establishment, where I remained till morning. About six o'clock, the mail cart was ready for starting. The passengers were a gold-digger and his wife, a pitman's wife, and myself. A short distance from Maitland, the driver stopped to take up another passenger, an old German lady, who lived in a neat cottage by the roadside. A little pet dog was her companion, and she detained us a quarter of an hour in making arrangements for it till her return. At length, she made her appearance, and a singular one it was. Her style of dress had been obsolete at least sixty years. She wore a light buff-coloured gown, very straight in the skirt and short in the waist, with tight-fitting sleeves, fastened by a band round the wrist. A small drab-coloured shawl, fastened in front with a gold pin, covered her shoulders. A false front of dark auburn hair, fell in ringlets over her brow,

A large Leghorn bonnet, with a light brown gauze veil attached, adorned her head. Her feet were encased in high-quartered shoes, well blackballed, and neatly fastened with black silk ribbon, Australia was the last place in the world where I would have expected to meet with such an old fashion on a living model. The old lady was highly amused when we told her that the mail must be a very important personage, or the royal mail would not have stayed till she supplied the wants of her dog. While we were talking, crack went the whip, and away we bounded through the mazes of the forest. After an hour's pleasant drive, we arrived at the half-way house, and partook of an excellent breakfast. The German lady was shown into a private room, upstairs; but not relishing her morning meal in that unsocial style, she speedily joined us at the public breakfast-table. Her private history was, doubtless, an interesting one, though none of her fellow-passengers knew anything of it, and on the subject she was silent; yet all might easily perceive, from her politeness and general demeanour, that she had seen better days.

When the allotted time had passed, we resumed our journey, and speedily reached the foot of Iron Bark Brow. Here we all dismounted, and walked to the top. When near the summit I turned round, and was rather surprised to see the poor old lady nearly exhausted, and only a short distance from

the base of the hill. The gold-digger and myself immediately returned to her assistance. She very good-humouredly charged us with lack of gallantry, for which we apologized as politely as possible.

We soon after passed Iron Bark Farm, got upon the good road, and in the course of half-an-hour, the Nobbies and Fitz Roy pillar made their appearance. A few minutes after we went into Newcastle full speed; and such were the excellent qualities of our horses, that they seemed almost as fresh as when they left Maitland.

The *William Hyde* was now ready for her cargo. The fittings for the cattle and horses in the 'tween decks were complete, and the upper deck was covered with sheep-pens, made of thin scantlings nailed to the bulwarks. The cattle were shipped first. They had been driven into a fold upon the wharf, close to the vessel. At the entrance of the fold stood a sailor, having in his hand a long pole, by which he threw a running nooze over the head of the nearest animal. The nooze was attached to a rope which run through a pulley at the end of the mainyard. As soon as the nooze was affixed, the rope was hauled taut by those on board. The animal was then dragged by the neck into the water, close to the ship, a fore leg was then thrust through the nooze to prevent strangulation. An instant after, the animal was suspended in the air, swung over the hatchway, and lowered into the

hold. The cattle were all treated in this way, and many were severely injured. The horses were similarly managed; but when each reached the water it was conveyed between two boats fastened together by a spar across their bows, so that a horse could pass between them. A pair of strong canvas stays were then drawn underneath by an iron crook. On both sides of the stays were loops through which passed the rope that connected them with the block at the mainyard. A rope also prevented the stays from slipping. Three horses, harnessed in a light wagon, to which the tackle was attached, were driven along the wharf, raising the other horse into the air, where it was allowed to remain till it ceased pawing; the rope was then loosed from the wagon, and the animal gradually lowered into the hold. Two days were occupied in putting the cattle and horses on board. A gangway was then made for the sheep, and they were all driven on board in an hour.

There were upwards of 140 cattle, between 40 and 60 horses, 700 sheep, about 30 rams, and two calves. The whole of this living cargo was from Patrick's Plains, in the neighbourhood of Singleton. The average cost of the cattle was about £5 each, and the horses £10. The most valuable amongst them cost £40. The sheep cost about 6s. each.

The cattle were a mixed lot. Brown was the prevailing colour. They were all in good condition,

and two or three of them gave a considerable supply of milk. Tho horses were light-limbed, none would be more than 14 hands high, and some much below that. Tho prevailing colours were light bay and chesnut. A beautiful chesnut horse was killed by slipping out of the stags whilst suspended from the mainyard. The sheep were of the Spanish or Merino breed, and when fat would weigh about 40lbs. each ; but they are more prized for fine wool than for feeding properties in New South Wales.

Large ironbound trusses of hay were lashed on each aide of the poop, and stowed away in the ship. Maize and other requisites for the horses were shipped in abundance. TO these were added medicines, and a stock of fresh water, and our ship was ready for sea

I took leave of my kind friends, Mr. Spragg and his wife, on the morning of the 26th of February, 1853, and went on board the *William Hyde*, just as she was leaving the wharf. There were five cabin-passengers, Mr. Hayward, a German, and his wife, a pretty young Englishwoman ; Mr. Holstead and Mr. Trinidad, of Patrick's Plains ; and Mr. Singleton, of Singleton. In addition to these were Mrs. Applethwaite, the captain's wife, a nurse and two children, one a fine girl three years old, and the other a boy about ten months.

Mrs. Applethwaite was a pretty little woman, a native of Sydney, and about 22 years of age. She had in perfection the finely chiselled features so peculiar to the women of Sydney. Her hair was dark brown, and was shaded back in luxuriant tresses, fastened behind with a plain black ribbon. She generally wore a black satin dress, and a small white collar round her neck. Her name was Lucy, and she was as amiable as beautiful. Captain Applethwaite was a stout, broad-faced, good-looking Englishman, about 30 years of age, a thorough son of the sea, as strong as two ordinary men. Mr. Holstead was a noble-looking Englishman, about 40 years of age, and stouter than the Captain. He was a veterinary surgeon at Patrick's Plains, where he had both an inn and a large farm. He had been fifteen years in the colony. Mr. Trinidad was Mrs. Applethwaite's uncle, and an extensive farmer near Singleton, Mr. Singleton was about 25 years of age, exceeding six feet in height, stout and well-proportioned. He was a horse-dealer, and had assisted in shipping the horses. He resided at the village of Singleton, a name given to it by his father, who was the first resident there and an extraordinary and daring character. Mr. Hayward had been a shopkeeper in Melbourne ; but he disliked that place so much that he sold his stock-in-trade, and purchased a house in Wellington, of which he was now going to



take possession. He was fond of talking about Saxony and other parts of Germany; but his English was so bad that we understood very little of what he said, except on one subject, and that was, his love for duelling in early life. His right hand was minus the forefinger, which had been cut off in an encounter with a German student. He had a pair of beautiful duelling pistols, and a sword, which he kept for the purpose of defending his honour.

Mrs. Applethwaite's father-in-law, Mr. Holmes, of Sydney, came to see us off. He had purchased a large tract of land, which he called the Fitz Roy estate. It contained abundance of coal, limestone, and iron. He had sent some specimens of the iron to Mr. Herapath, of Bristol, to be analysed, and to Sheffield to be manufactured into knife-blades. The cutlers spoke in high terms of its excellent properties, and Mr. Herapath reported that the iron was superior in quality to any found in Europe.

The crew of the *William Hyde*, consisted of three able seamen, shipped at Sydney for £6 per month, two mates, and two apprentices, eleven Maories, and four Australian blacks. We had much coming to get the latter on board. When we lay in the harbour, we saw the tallest of them standing on the wharf, lifting his hand to his head in imitation of drinking. The other three were a considerable way off. These gestures had the

desired effect; they gradually approached the wharf and got into one of the ship's boats that was waiting for them. When they came on board, the captain told them they would get plenty of "boul," (rum) if they would consent to go and help to take care of the sheep and cattle. A black bottle of rum and water was handed to them by the steward with the cork driven in as tight as possible. They squatted down on the fore-castle, and after a great effort, extracted the cork and divided the contents, chattering and laughing at each other all the while, so delighted were they with the contents of the black bottle. Mr. Holstead, who was well acquainted with their habits, said that the more difficulty there was in extracting the cork, the more highly the contents were prized.

Two of these black fellows were very interesting characters. Jackey Jackey was a servant with the unfortunate Kennedy, who perished whilst on a surveying expedition in North Australia. The description this savage gave of the death of his ill-fated master was in the highest degree poetical; but unfortunately we cannot give it in his own words. Whilst exploring a part hitherto unexplored, they were surrounded by hostile natives. One of them threw a spear at Mr. Kennedy, and wounded him so that he expired soon after. Several spears were thrown at Jackey, but he dexterously evaded them. When Mr. Kennedy fell, the hostile

natives fled. Jackey then took his dead master on his shoulders, and carried him towards the setting sun till it went down. He then in the stillness of eventide, buried him amid *the* sands of the desert. After a perilous journey he reached *the* sea-coast, hailed a vessel, and told his tale of horror to the crew. Ultimately the government erected a tablet to the memory of Mr. Kennedy, in St. James's church. They also gave Jackey a pension, a horse worth £20, and a medal with an inscription upon it, relating to his master's virtues and his own.

The name of the other was Jimmey. He was a diminutive, broad-nosed, large-mouthed, curly headed fellow, with a good-humoured expression of countenance. He had been many years a servant with Mr. Holstead, who told us some very amusing anecdotes respecting him. We give one by way of illustration. On one occasion he had fitted out Jimmey with a new suit of clothes for the Maitland races. These consisted of a green Newmarket coat with bright brass buttons, a drab-coloured waistcoat, drab cord breeches, yellow top-boots, a white shirt, blue neck-cloth, and a black hat with yellow hat-band. Off went Jimmey in his new toggery to the races. Mr. Holstead followed him in an hour after, and found him capering about the course in his shirt. The other clothes had been so much admired by some of his tribe, that to please them, he divided the garments amongst them. On

the race-course, and proud of their acquisitions, might be seen Jimmey's friends; one with the hat, another with the coat—each wearing one of the items, which jointly conspired to make respectable Jimmey's outer man. Jimmey seemed to care so little about his property that he was the proudest man of the strange group; and as none of the articles were restored, Jimmey returned in his shirt to the house of his master.

The last day in the harbour of Newcastle we spent in fishing, and relating our experience of Australian life. The harbour swarmed with fish, so that if any offal was thrown into the water it was devoured directly. We caught several fine schnapper and some salmon. On this day also, several jars of honey and other delicacies were sent to Mrs. Applethwaite by residents on the river. Old Tom Hyde, of Mosquito Island, brought us a basket of green peas.

Next day at noon, the pilot boarded us, and the anchor was weighed and the sails trimmed for sea. Half-way between the Nobbies, the wind suddenly shifted, and we were taken all aback. Down went the anchor to prevent our grounding on the reef. In a few minutes the wind changed, we tacked several times, and shivered the mainsail, as the pilot directed, till we got outside the Nobbies. There we plunged into a short jumbling sea, which made the houses of the city seem as though they

were dancing a polka. About half-a-mile from the Nobbies, a fair wind sprung up, and the pilot left us, accompanied by Mr. Dent and Mr. Holmes. The yards were then squared, and before sunset nothing could be seen in our wake but a faint glimpse of the sunny shores of Australia.

We had fine weather and fair winds for the first two days. But the air was sultry, and the vessel swarmed with flies. At meal-times they annoyed us greatly by lighting on the food, and frequently the sugar-basin was covered with a black mass of these tormentors.

Wind-sails were rigged down all the hatchways, to cool the vessel. The horses and cattle were put in stalls athwart ships, with their heads towards an open space. Those that were restive were tied by strong halters to the stall posts.

On the second day came the tedious operation of watering the sheep, which was performed every alternate day during the voyage. This duty fell to the lot of the Maories, who each carried a bucket of water and a porter bottle. The bottle was filled with water, and put into the mouth of the sheep. After a sufficient quantity had been given to the animal, a piece of rope yarn was tied round its neck, to distinguish it from those not watered. There was little difficulty in getting them to take the water thus; and long before the end of the voyage they had become well-acquainted with the Maories and the black bottles.