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The Ebenezer Coal Works

By THE LATE JONATHAN DIXON.

A GRANT of land, having an area of 1280 acres, was promised to the Reverend L. E. Threlkeld by the Governor of New South Wales. This promise was made in the year 1829, and it was stipulated that there would be no reservation of the coal rights included in the deed.

Quite often, with respect to lands granted prior to the year 1829, the deeds were not issued for from ten to twelve years after the granting.

In the year 1830, the Australian Agricultural Company was given a monopoly for the working of all coal for a term of thirty-one years, and in the case of all grants after that year they were subject to the reservation of all coal under the land so granted.

When Mr. Threlkeld received his documents he noted that the Crown had made a reservation of the coal rights, and he at once took the matter up with the authorities in a letter dated 19th December, 1840, reminding them of the promise made in 1829 that there would be no reservation.

To his letter he received this reply:

Colonial Secretary's Office,
Sydney, 9th February, 1841.

Reverend Sir,

In reference to your letter of 19th December last, representing that the reservation of coal has been made in the grant of your 1280 acres of land at Lake Macquarie, which was authorised for you so far back as November, 1829, I have the honor to inform you that this reservation was inserted in error, and an
In the year 1841, Threlkeld opened his mine, which he named Ebenezer.

The mine was worked without machinery and the skips were run on wooden rails.

The mine plan shows the strata sunk through, the seam of coal, and a fanciful picture of the tunnel in which there are two skips being taken to a schooner in the Lake, just opposite the tunnel.

Threlkeld had great trouble to secure the necessary labour to work his mine as, owing to the monopoly held by the Australian Agricultural Company, the pledge of the Crown to give them all available miners prevented him from securing any.

However, some miners who had been formerly employed by the Company, had left owing to some disagreement, and had secured work at a factory in Sydney. These men were secured by Threlkeld on the recommendation of the factory manager.

This was in November, 1841, and he at once informed the Company of his intention to employ them. It was not until June 28, 1842, that word was sent to Threlkeld by Captain King, Commissioner of the Australian Agricultural Company, stating that he would be subject to prosecution if the men were kept on.

Rather than risk a prosecution, he dismissed the men, and made a statement that he believed the Australian Agricultural Co. had done this to try and prevent the working of the mine, as he was sending coal to the Sydney market in competition with the trade of the Company.

Ebenezer coal was much sought after for use on steamers, and was also used a lot on open fires, or parlour fires as the old documents of that day called them.

A Relic of '38

By W. J. Goodl.

When the walls of the old Bank of New South Wales, in Watt Street, were being demolished on October the 14th, 1870, a workman found a small lead case embedded in the plaster of the wall. It contained a half sheet of note paper in excellent condition, upon which was written the following:

Newcastle, July 10th, 1838.—This is to inform those who found this that the house was plastered by Thomas Simpson, from Leith, in Scotland.

This is an awful time with battle between the free and convicts. The latter is losing the power, they are going down like chaff before the free men, and it is right that they should, for when I came here in 1831 there was little else but convicts.

Remember me when you see (apparently a Masonic Emblem).