

CHAPTER V.

THE HUNTER AND MANNING RIVERS.

"Ditissimus arvis;
 Quinque greges illi balantum, quina redibant
 Armenta, et terram centum vertebat aratris."

VIRG. *Æn.* vii. 539.

"Five herds, five bleating flocks, his pastures fill'd,
 His lands a hundred yoke of oxen till'd." DRYDEN.

THE territory of New South Wales extends for a great distance from Sydney, as a centre point, to the northward, southward, and westward: I propose, therefore, to present the reader successively with a general description of each of these three great divisions of the colony, beginning with the Hunter and Manning Rivers to the northward.

Hunter's River rises in the great dividing range of the colony, and waters a large extent of valuable agricultural and pastoral country in its course to the Pacific. In the upper part of its course, it receives many tributary streams, each of which has its separate valley, with its agricultural and pastoral population; and lower down, where it is navigable by steamboats, it is joined by two other navigable rivers from the northward, the Patterson and the William. The counties of Northumberland, Hunter, Phillip, and Bligh are situated on the south side, or right bank of the river; and those of Gloucester, Durham, and Brisbane on the north, or left bank. The area of these seven counties is 15,590 square miles; and their population, on the 1st of March, 1851, was 30,758. With these counties, however, are connected the squatting districts immediately beyond them, of Bligh, Liverpool Plains, New England, and Gwydir, comprising an area of 59,096 square miles, with a population of 8,610,

that is, one person for every $6\frac{3}{4}$ square miles. The whole amount of the live stock, both in the counties and squatting districts, is as follows, viz.:—

Horses	-	-	-	-	35,367
Horned cattle	-	-	-	-	448,299
Pigs	-	-	-	-	16,465
Sheep	-	-	-	-	2,210,599

There is much alluvial land, of the first quality for cultivation, on Hunter's River, and its two principal tributaries; and there is much valuable pasture land in all the seven counties, together with much also of an inferior character.

The agricultural capabilities of much of the available land in this district generally are of the first order, as it not only produces fair crops of all the European grains, fruits, and roots, but is admirably adapted for the cultivation of the vine, and of tobacco and cotton. The district of Hunter's River is also the great coal-field of the colony, and the trade in coal is already considerable and rapidly increasing. The principal town in the district is Maitland, situated nearly at the head of the navigation, with a population of 4230; the town and port of Newcastle, at which the river disembogues into the Pacific, in latitude $32^{\circ} 55'$ having a population of 1340. There are other smaller towns in the district, which will be mentioned in the sequel.

The following is a Return of the agricultural produce, within the Police district of Maitland*, for the year ending 31st March, 1852:—

Total acres under cultivation, 14,891. Of these 7,122 acres were under wheat, for grain, producing 110,051 bushels, and 68 acres for hay, producing 18 tons; 4,997 acres under maize, for grain, producing 144,599 bushels, and 27 for green food for cattle; 799 acres under barley, for grain, producing 16,929 bushels, 69½

* Maitland, it must be observed, is only one of the police districts within the seven counties enumerated above.

for green food for cattle, and 71 for hay, producing 189 tons; 12 acres under oats, for grain, producing 220 bushels, 90 for green food, and 367½ for hay, producing 610 tons; 22¼ acres under rye, producing 443 bushels; 8½ acres under millet, producing 107 bushels; 222 acres under potatoes, producing 698 tons; 30¼ acres under tobacco, producing 293 cwt.; and 984 acres under sown grasses, producing 3,201 tons hay. These returns show an average produce, per acre, of 15½ bushels wheat, 29 bushels maize, 21 bushels barley, 19 bushels oats, 19½ bushels rye, 12½ bushels millet, 3 tons 3 cwt. potatoes, 9½ cwt. tobacco, and 3½ tons hay to the acre of sown grasses.—*Maitland Mercury*, May 5. 1852.

The principal exports from the district of Hunter's River are wool, tallow, and coal; but, independently of these great staple articles of colonial produce, there is an extensive coasting-trade to and from the district, as the following abstract of the exports for a single week will show.

Abstract, compiled from the "Shipping Gazette," of the principal produce (exclusive of wool and tallow), received coastwise, in Sydney, from Hunter's River, during the week ending January 16. 1852:—

Grain — bush.	- -	400	Tobacco—kegs	- -	41
Wheat—bush.	- -	2275	Grapes—cases	- -	4
" bags	- -	6	Horses - - -	- -	42
Maize — bush.	- -	3410	Calves - - -	- -	6
" bags	- -	278	Pigs - - -	- -	83
Barley—bush.	- -	763	Lambs - - -	- -	12
" bags	- -	20	Hides - - -	- -	258
Flour — tons	- -	10	Sheepskins—bales	- -	26
Maize Meal—bags	- -	40	" bundles	- -	10
Bran — bags	- -	58	Candles—boxes	- -	10
Hay — tons	- -	2	Cheeses - - -	- -	320
Potatoes—tons	- -	15½	" cases - - -	- -	3
" bags	- -	227	" packages - -	- -	3
Onions—bags	- -	95	Coals—tons	- -	204
Mustard seed—bush.	- -	5			

The town of Newcastle is finely situated for a shipping port, the ground rising gradually to a moderate elevation from the harbour; but the country around it, for a considerable distance, is generally sterile and uninteresting

—sandhills and swamps—the principal production of the locality being obtained from underground. There is a remarkable island, somewhat like the Craig of Ailsa on a smaller scale, called Nobby's Island, at the entrance of the port. Between that island and the main land, there was formerly a passage for small vessels; but a mole or breakwater has been constructed by convict labour, between the island and the main, to break the force of the surges of the Pacific in southerly gales, and to confine the current of the river to the principal channel. In quarrying down the summit of Nobby's Island, to obtain material for the breakwater, and also to form a level plateau for the erection of a lighthouse on the highest part of the island, the workmen were digging, when I visited the spot, through a seam of coal of two or three feet thick, which appeared from the deck of the steamboat like a black ribbon along the face of the rock, at a great elevation above the sea.

There can be no doubt that New South Wales will, sooner or later, become a great manufacturing country; and it is equally evident that Newcastle will become the principal seat of its manufacturing industry. It has the twofold advantage for this purpose of an inexhaustible supply of coal, and a harbour fit for shipping of any size; while the surrounding country, in addition to the collieries and the copper smelting establishment already mentioned, can supply to any conceivable extent the raw material for all the manufactures of Europe, viz. wool, cotton, flax, hemp, and silk. There was an iron foundery and a salt work for some time in this vicinity, but both of them have been discontinued for several years past. There was also a cloth manufactory of considerable extent in successful operation for several years at Stockton, an incipient village on the opposite shore; but the buildings having been unfortunately consumed by fire shortly before the gold discovery, it has not been resumed; both pro-

prietor and workmen having in the mean time gone to the "diggings."

When Newcastle was a penal settlement, there had been a windmill erected on the highest land near the town. It had been disused for many years; but it had stood so long, and was so conspicuous an object from the sea, that it had become a land-mark for mariners, and was indicated as such on the charts of the coast. Not adverting to this circumstance, however, the local government had ordered the materials of the old windmill to be sold by auction, and they were purchased accordingly by a Scotch builder in the place for 12*l*. No sooner, however, had the sale taken place, than the harbour-master, another Scotchman, who had not been consulted in the matter, and was not aware of the circumstance till it was too late, wrote to the Government, recommending that the sale should by all means be annulled, on account of the importance of the land-mark to navigation. But the wily builder, hearing of the circumstance, and not willing to forego his bargain, one evening, after they had finished their daily task under ground, who, marching up to the windmill in a body, pulled it down, and carried off the materials at once. Immediately thereafter, a shipmaster, a stranger on the coast, running along the land for Newcastle, and not finding the windmill where his chart directed him to look for it, was either kept at sea for days together, or had to return to port without reaching the place of his destination. The Government had therefore to erect an obelisk of solid masonry on the site of the old windmill, the cost of which was necessarily much greater than the sum realized from the sale of the materials, while it was much less conspicuous as a land-mark for mariners. But this is merely one of the numerous benefits and blessings which the colony derives from the system of centralization.

There has been a large expenditure incurred, within the last few years, in the erection of a military barrack in the

town of Newcastle, with all the expensive appendages of quarters for everybody which such an establishment implies. But there are now no longer any soldiers in the place, and the buildings are consequently going to wreck and ruin. A similar but much more extensive suite of buildings had just been completed in the city of Sydney, at a cost of about 50,000*l*., which was paid by the colony on the condition of getting the site of the Old Barrack, which it seems belonged to the Ordnance Department, when an order came out from home to reduce the military establishment of the colony to a Governor's guard. At the late general election, I suggested to the citizens of Sydney that the New Barracks, which were thus in great measure rendered unnecessary, should be converted into a Lunatic Asylum, as an appropriate memorial of the wisdom of the projectors. I learned in the city of Charleston, in South Carolina, that the British barracks of the old colonial regime in that city had been converted into a College for the education of youth after the War of Independence; the Americans finding that they had no further use for such an establishment after they had achieved their freedom. In short, barracks are required for keeping a colony down—not for keeping it up.

To the northward of the Port of Newcastle, the land trends away, for about thirty miles, to the eastward, forming a deep bight on the coast, immediately to the northward of which is Port Stephen; and still farther north, in latitude 32°, is the entrance to the Manning River. Port Stephen is the head quarters of the Australian Agricultural Company, one of the numerous joint-stock companies of the year 1825. It was incorporated by Royal Charter, having a capital of one million sterling; and it obtained from the Government of the day a million of acres of land in the colony, free of cost, with as much convict labour besides as the Local Government could spare, and a monopoly of all the coal mines of

the country for thirty years! It is fortunate, however, for the public that these magnificent schemes of individual aggrandizement at the expense of whole communities, very rarely succeed. The Australian Agricultural Company put forth at its outset the fairest professions and promises, as to what it was going to do for the colony, not forgetting even the Aborigines, who were to come in for a share of the benefit. I have never heard, however, of its doing any thing for the colony in any way. In short, cupidity was its mainspring; its management was long characterized by the sheerest folly*, and its natural result was disappointment. One of the directors has recently gone out, at the instance of the Company, to reduce the establishment, and to revolutionize the whole concern; and in both of these objects, I understand, he has made considerable progress already. My advice to those concerned would be to divide the estate, and other property, into such portions as would sell to private proprietors, and to dissolve the Company as speedily as possible. The land was originally selected between Port Stephen and the Manning River; but Sir Edward Parry, who was the Company's Commissioner for a time, recommended that the land immediately on the coast, which was generally worthless, should be surrendered to the Crown, and a new selection made of part of the grant; and this recommendation being acceded to by the Colonial Office—a thing which would never have been done in the case of a private individual—about 600,000 acres of fine pastoral country were selected on

* Only think of the town of Carrington, in Port Stephen—the Company's principal town, where much English money has been uselessly expended—being situated where vessels cannot come within a mile of the shore! If there had been no deep water within the port, there might have been some excuse for this; but there was a place where the deep water is close to the land, and fresh water, which was not found in the first instance in that locality, has recently been obtained there by boring.

the Peel River and Liverpool Plains in the interior, in lieu of a similar extent on the coast.*

With these preliminary observations, the reader will understand the allusions in the following *Rough Notes* of a Journey which I made in the month of November, 1850, to Hunter's River, and from thence across the Australian Agricultural Company's land, to the Manning River. They were published at the time in a popular colonial journal in Sydney; and as a personal narrative is generally more interesting than a mere description of

* Agricultural Company's Estate at Port Stephen and across to the Manning River	-	-	437,102	acres.
Ditto, at Liverpool Plains, a tract of an oblong shape	-	-	249,600	"
Ditto, at the Peel River, a tract of irregular outline	-	-	313,298	"
Total	-	-	1,000,000	

The following is a description of the Liverpool Plains country, from an unpublished letter of Dr. Leichhardt's. Cassilis, the starting point, is in the Upper Hunter District.

"I went up the Liverpool Range (from Cassilis) with a gentleman who was going to establish a sheep-station at the Range. All the spurs and secondary ranges, as well as the Liverpool Range itself, are entirely flat at the top. You climb up with great difficulty over loose, sharp-edged, hard rocks, and you find yourself, to your agreeable surprise, on a plain so smooth that you might drive in a carriage. The plain of the Liverpool Range is almost three miles broad. The rock becomes frequently cellular, and the cellules are filled with white crystalline substances—different species of zeolite. The principal trees are the bastard box, the white gum, and a gum which the sawyers called black butt at Piri, but which they call forest mahogany here. It resembles much the stringy bark in its external aspect.

"Next day I descended into the Liverpool Plains,—an extensive level country, showing a black soil covered with grass, with *Compositæ* and *Leguminosæ*, formerly the bottom of a large inland lake, with hills and ridges rising like islands. These hills are either sandstone or basalt. The sandstone is coarse and soft. The water and atmosphere have washed the sand off, and formed a layer of sand from one to three miles broad round the principal mountains."

scenes and scenery, I trust they will not be unacceptable as sketches of colonial life, and colonial travelling.

“NOTES OF A VISIT TO THE UPPER HUNTER AND THE MANNING RIVER.

“Sydney, Nov. 6. 1850.—Left Sydney, by the *Rose* steamer, for Morpeth, at ten P.M., and reached Newcastle, after an agreeable passage, at six A.M. of the 7th. Very pleasant to have the ocean part of the voyage disposed of during the night. Newcastle harbour quite a contrast now to what it has ever been till very recently for twenty-five years past. Formerly, like the Dead Sea, no sign of life upon its still waters, except when a solitary steamer was passing to and fro between Hunter’s River and the capital; now, full of life and motion, flaunting with *stars and stripes*. It was thought remarkable last century that the earthquake at Lisbon should have been felt in the West Indies; but it is surely still more remarkable that the shaking of earth in their tins and cradles by the gold seekers of California should have been so sensibly felt as it is here on the remote coast of Australia, across the boundless Pacific, and in the opposite hemisphere. No fewer than twenty American ships loading coals for San Francisco at present in this harbour—it is a most interesting sight. Only think of these vessels transforming such solitary isles as we have hitherto been accustomed to consider Tahiti, Pitcairn’s Island, the Sandwich Islands, and the Navigators’ Islands, of the vast Pacific, into the mere half-way houses of one of the great commercial highways of the world. This is decidedly one of the most wonderful revolutions of this revolutionary age.

“Thursday, Nov. 7.—Had the Bishops of Newcastle and New Zealand as fellow passengers to Morpeth; but as these ecclesiastical dignitaries neither slept in the general cabin, nor breakfasted at the cabin table, nor paced the deck with the common herd of cabin passengers, but maintained the isolated position they had taken up, from early dawn till the vessel’s arrival at her destination, on the elevated platform extending across the vessel between the paddle boxes, we had merely the honour of their company and nothing of the benefit. Artificial dignity perhaps requires a little isolation for its support—at least the Grand Lama of Tibet thinks so. The Apostle Paul, however, was of a different opinion, when a passenger on board the good ship *Castor* and *Pollux*; otherwise he could not have made so many converts as he did during his voyages.

“These two bishops, it seems, are styled *missionary* bishops, and a Board of Missions has just been formed in the colony under their

auspices, in professed accordance with the practice of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America. Happy that the Colonial Episcopal Church has had the good sense to copy anything from that quarter. Hope it will continue the practice, as there is something else to be copied from the same quarter of at least equal importance. For example, every congregation in the American Episcopal Church has the choice of its own pastor, as also of a lay delegate from among its own members, who has an equal vote with the pastor at all meetings of the Bishop’s or Diocesan Court. The bishop himself also is always chosen by the whole body of pastors and lay delegates in each diocese; and when any clergyman, like Mr. Russell* and Mr. Beamish* (now of Port Phillip), has charges of any kind brought against him, he is allowed to speak for himself in open court; and every member of that court, whether clerical or laic, has liberty of speech also on the case; which is decided at length by the votes of the majority, the bishop merely giving his casting vote when there happens to be an equality of votes for and against. Now this is *religious liberty* in reality, and it is essential to the progress even of *civil liberty* in this colony that the Protestant Episcopal Church, which comprises so large a proportion of the entire population, should obtain this measure or degree of liberty as speedily as possible; for civil liberty and religious liberty always go together. The Colonial Episcopal Church, however, will never obtain this measure of religious liberty until, like its sister Church in America, it is entirely separated from the State, and left to its own inherent energies and the Christian sympathies of its people. For every Episcopalian congregation in this colony to have the choice of its own minister, as well as of a lay delegate to represent and vote for it in all cases, like those just referred to, in the Bishop’s Court, would be of infinitely greater consequence to the real welfare and advancement of that communion than even to have 15,000*l.* a year, as at present, from the public treasury, for the support of religion. For that money, although professedly contributed by the Government, is in reality taken out of the pockets of the people in the first instance, and would doubtless be much more judiciously distributed if left by the Government in the hands of the people, to be dealt out by themselves to the most deserving. Changes even of this magnitude will

* Clergymen of the Colonial Episcopal Church who could not conform to the rampant Puseyism of the colony, and who had therefore been obliged to leave it for Port Phillip.

be quite practicable under our forthcoming Constitution, and all who have the welfare of the colony at heart will of course do their utmost to effect them.

"My brother, Mr. A. Lang, of Dunmore, J. P., had sent a mare for me to ride over to his place, about four miles from East Maitland. I accordingly took the road about noon, but I had scarcely left East Maitland when it began to rain very heavily, and I naturally enough put up my umbrella to protect myself from it. But like certain other colonial authorities, the mare it appears had passed a *regula generalis* for all travellers on her back, to this effect—no UMBRELLAS ALLOWED HERE, although she had inserted no notice of it in the GAZETTE, as she ought unquestionably to have done, after the very frequent example of the said authorities.* Perceiving my mistake, I proceeded of course to rectify it immediately; but before I could put down my umbrella, the mare had got me down at full length on the highway for transgression of the rule aforesaid, my humble plea of ignorance notwithstanding. I escaped, however, without injury; and, thinking of the late Sir Robert Peel at the moment, was thankful it was no worse.

"Maitland, both East and West, has nearly doubled itself in size and population since my last visit to this locality about five years ago. Agreeably to appointment, delivered a lecture to a numerous audience at the Rose Inn in the evening, on the general interests of the district: pointing out the necessity for a constant and extensive influx of industrious and virtuous population from home for the development of the vast resources—mineral, agricultural, and pastoral—of Hunter's River, and showing how easily so desirable an object might be accomplished. Directed attention particularly to the growth of cotton, which has been grown successfully on Patterson's River, as well as at New Town, Sydney, by Mr. Bucknell, and which promises in a few years to become a staple product of the district, as important and as valuable as wool.

"Nov. 8.—Rode from Dunmore to Singleton—thirty-four miles—the day remarkably fine for travelling, though latterly rather hot. Was met, by appointment, a few miles from town, by a few friends who accompanied me to the residence of my hospitable host, Mr. T.

* This was understood as a satire upon the Chief Justice, for his needless multiplication of GENERAL RULES for the practice of the Supreme Court, which had become a perfect nuisance to the legal profession. It was not likely, however, to be forgotten in that quarter.

W. Robinson, who conducts with great credit and success a respectable academy at Singleton, and occupies the Scotch Manse. Mr. R. was one of a numerous corps of schoolmasters whom I had been instrumental in bringing out to the colony in the year 1837. It was peculiarly gratifying to find him doing well—much and deservedly respected.

"I had not been at Patrick's Plains for nineteen years before. The town of Singleton*, which is really a respectable colonial town, with a considerable number of creditable buildings, has sprung into existence in the interval; although I was sorry to find that property of all kinds in its vicinity had latterly been sadly reduced in value, while not a few of the neighbouring proprietors had suffered serious reverses. It cannot be supposed, however, that in a locality so favourably situated as Singleton, property should long continue at its present depreciated rate. All that is requisite to insure its rapid rise is the steady influx of an industrious free immigrant population from home, to develop the vast resources of the Hunter's River district.

"Delivered a lecture, similar to the one at Maitland, in the Court House, which was full to overflowing in the evening: in which I directed attention particularly to the cultivation of cotton, as a much less precarious and much more profitable crop than wheat. The subject appears to be exciting much interest and attention among the small settlers or practical farmers in the northern districts of the colony. They seem to think at first that there is something mysterious in cotton cultivation, and consequently, when proposed to them in a cursory way, they do not give it the requisite attention; but when told that its cultivation is as simple and easy a process as that of maize, and much the same in its character, they take a strong interest in it, and resolve to make the experiment as soon as they can. It was precisely in this way that the cultivation of cotton became general in the cotton growing States of North America. Was entertained at supper by a few warm friends at the close of the lecture. There was no noise, nothing approaching to excess—quite an intellectual treat, and much interest shown in the welfare and advancement of the colony.

"Saturday, Nov. 9.—Rode to Muswellbrook, twenty-eight miles—the day very hot. The road at Singleton crosses Hunter's River, or rather its bed, for unfortunately the river has not been flowing for

* Containing 630 inhabitants.

some months past, and the coast rains have extended no farther into the interior than Singleton, or rather Black Creek, about half way from Maitland; the country higher up assuming more and more the character of a desert at every step, till at length not a blade of grass is to be seen in any direction. The river making a considerable detour to the southward in this part of its course, the road leaves the valley of the Hunter to the left, and the country assumes the character of an open forest, of varying pastoral capabilities.

"Muswellbrook is well chosen as the site of an inland town, both from its distance from Singleton, and from its being the centre of a considerable extent of grazing country. It is a mere straggling village, however, occupying four times the space it ought to have done for the convenience of all concerned. There seems but little land in the neighbourhood fit for cultivation, and the present long drought is very discouraging. For this reason I found the population had rather been decreasing of late. (Population 204.)

"Sunday, Nov. 10.—Preached in the Presbyterian Church, a neat brick building, to a congregation of about a hundred—a good one for the interior. The minister at Singleton visits this locality once a month. Afterwards rode over to Aberdeen, an incipient village about eight miles further, and preached again to a congregation of about fifty, at four P.M. Donald McIntyre, Esq., of Cayuga, M.C., and Thomas Hall, Esq., J.P., of Dartbrook, both reside in this neighbourhood, and were present at divine service with their families. After service rode to Mr. Hall's, where I spent the night. Mr. Hall is one of the sons of the late Mr. Geo. Hall, of Pitt Town, who arrived in the colony as one of a small body of Presbyterian emigrants, chiefly from Scotland, and formed an interesting settlement on the banks of the Hawkesbury, at Portland Head, where they erected, in the year 1809, at a cost of about 400*l.*, the first place of worship erected by the voluntary contributions of the people on this continent; one of their own number, the late Mr. James Mein, of Portland Head, a truly apostolic man, officiating for them as a catechist, without remuneration of any kind, for the long period of twenty-four years. When staying for a night at old Mr. Hall's many years ago, the old gentleman told me, with a degree of self-complacency which was quite natural, that he had seven sons, and that his eldest son, who was married and settled near him, had seven sons also. 'At that rate,' I observed, 'you will soon over-Hall the colony.' Mr. H., I recollect, was much pleased both with the pun and with the com-

pliment.* His sons have very extensive possessions in this part of the colony, both in land and in flocks and herds.

"Monday, Nov. 11.—Rode about eight or ten miles to Scone, over a beautifully undulating country of the richest soil imaginable, but exhibiting not a single vestige of vegetation in the shape of pasture for stock of any kind. It is an extremely dismal prospect and presents a most remarkable contrast to the luxuriant vegetation observable everywhere towards the coast. The heavens are as brass above, and the earth as iron beneath. It looks as if a curse had lighted upon the country. There is still, however, some pasture on the hills and in particular localities in the mountain valleys; and to these the sheep and cattle are driven at such seasons. Agriculture in such circumstances is almost out of the question; but the population of Scone and its vicinity does not depend much upon agriculture. There are about 250,000 sheep shorn in the neighbourhood; and public houses, which are neither few nor far between, grow very well in such localities, even without rain.

"Delivered a lecture, or address, suited to the general state and prospects of the district, in the Court House, at Scone, at three o'clock, P.M.; pointing out the importance and necessity of making some combined effort for the preservation of a sufficient supply of water in such localities, both for the ordinary purposes of man, and for partial irrigation, against the recurrence of such calamitous seasons of drought as the present; and showing how other countries, similarly situated as to climate, especially in the ancient world, had to depend principally, if not exclusively, on artificial supplies of water. I also pointed out the wonderful adaptation for the purposes of conveyance, of cheap tramroads or wooden railways—to be constructed entirely of the indigenous timber of the colony—to the wants of such a country and climate as ours in the interior, where neither food nor water can be obtained for the working cattle in seasons like the present. With artificial supplies of water and wooden tramroads, both of which would be quite practicable at a comparatively small cost in many localities in the interior, numerous tracts that are now uninhabitable could be made to support a comparatively dense population.*

"At the close of my lecture I had the honour to be presented, by Thomas Hall, Esq., J.P., with a very gratifying address, signed by

* *Oerhaud* is a sea phrase, well known to all who have made a sea voyage, signifying to put things to rights.

† The present population of Scone is 180.

himself, Mr. Donald McIntyre, M.C., and about 140 of the inhabitants of Scone and its vicinity; to which of course I made a suitable acknowledgment. In the evening I preached in the Court House, agreeably to appointment, to a much better congregation than I anticipated at such a time, and afterwards rode back to Mr. Hall's, where I arrived about eleven P.M.

"Scone has always been rather an aristocratic neighbourhood, of which I had a rare specimen. An ex-skipper, of the name of Bingle, who is settled in the vicinity as one of the dispensers of justice in the interior, and who, it seemed, had been studying the learned nonsense of those worthy senators, Messrs. Wentworth, Donaldson, Murray, and Co., about Demagogues, Democrats, Communists, Socialists, &c., presuming, from some mistake about my *number*, in his Marryatt's signal-book, that I was sailing under one or other of these hostile flags, and should not therefore be permitted to cross the line into his aristocratic preserve, had written a letter to the Clerk of the Bench, which I saw, forbidding him, at his peril, to allow the use of the Court House to Dr. Lang, unless he were duly authorized to do so by the magistracy. (Mr. Hall had already consented to the use of the Court House for the purpose, and Captain Dumaresq, when referred to, had made no objection.) The best of it was, however, the use of the Court House, for any public purpose whatever, is usually granted to anybody and everybody that asks for it, and had recently been granted even to some strolling players!

"Speaking of aristocratic magistrates in the interior, but without any particular reference to the case of Scone, the Local Government has for nearly thirty years past, or ever since the days of good old Governor Macquarie, been virtually in a sort of conspiracy with these functionaries to ruin and debase the working classes of the interior, and to prevent the possibility of their gradual elevation in the scale of society. Every facility, for example, is held out to the shepherd or stock-keeper, or other hired labourer in the interior, to spend his money in riotous dissipation, in one or other of the numerous public houses which these aristocrats, forsooth, have got so conveniently placed, and licensed for the purpose, on their respective estates. But where are there any facilities for the working classes of the interior to invest their earnings in stock, in land, or in comfortable houses of their own? Governor Macquarie deserves the highest praise, not only for what he attempted, but for the actual good he did in this way, with the very inferior materials he had to work with in the old penal times of the colony; as the banks of the Hawkesbury, the districts of Airds and Appin, and

the older settlements of the colony generally, bear witness still. But what Governor since has ever even attempted to follow his admirable example to this present hour? The system hitherto pursued for the last thirty years has been to create only two classes in the colony, viz.—lords (or rather liekspittles) and serfs. Nay, instances even in which trumpety cases have been systematically got up against unoffending individuals of the working classes, at these remote benches of the interior, to effect their utter ruin by due process of law, have been numerous beyond belief, and have not been confined to any one district in particular. I have even been told of well authenticated cases in which heads of families have been systematically persecuted and ruined, whose only offence had been their presuming to defend the honour of their wives and daughters from the profligacy or brutality of their *bettors*.

"'For dark as the accents of lovers' farewell

Are the deeds that they do, and the tales that they tell.'

In this way hundreds of reputable families of the humbler classes that, to my certain knowledge, would greatly have preferred spending their days in the interior, have been virtually driven back into the colonial towns; till Sydney, in particular, has become in New South Wales what Cobbett used to describe London as having become in England, viz., a prodigious wen, totally disproportioned to the size of the living body, on which it is a mere unhealthy and morbid excrescence.

"Tuesday, Nov. 12.—A requisition having been forwarded through Mr. Hall, from some persons at Musswellbrook, on Monday, requesting me to deliver a lecture there on my return, Mr. H. had dispatched a man on horseback at daybreak to give notice that I should deliver an address or lecture at Musswellbrook at eleven A.M. I accordingly found an audience, on my return to that locality, of a respectable character, and sufficient to fill Mr. Johnston's large billiard room, and accordingly delivered a lecture of pretty much the same purport as the one I had given on the previous day at Scone. Afterwards rode on to Archerfield, the estate of George Bowman, Esq., of Richmond, about ten miles from Singleton, making about thirty miles altogether for that day. There had been a thunder shower about one o'clock on Sunday at Musswellbrook, which lasted, however, but a few minutes. There was another to-day of about a quarter of an hour, towards evening, so heavy as to wet me completely, and to set all the little rills a-running. It

* Now a Member of Council.

was not felt, however, at Mr. Bowman's house, although only two miles distant.

"Wednesday, Nov. 13. — Arrived at my brother's place at Dunmore towards evening, after another long ride of about forty-five miles, my horse having done his work remarkably well.

[Mr. Lang's estate of Dunmore consists of about 2560 acres, or four square miles, of land on Patterson's River, which, in that part of its course, is navigable for the largest vessels; the alluvial land on its banks being of the richest description, and the indigenous vegetation most luxuriant. The course of the river being rather circuitous, it forms the boundary of the property for five miles. Hunter's River, into which the Patterson empties itself about three miles farther down, forms the other boundary for a short distance from a point at which the two rivers approach within 200 yards of each other, and then diverge, forming a peninsula of 1100 acres of the richest alluvial land; the isthmus being my brother's boundary towards the peninsula. This peninsula has formerly been a lake, and been converted into solid land, in the course of successive ages, by the deposits from both rivers in seasons of inundation; for the former proprietor of the peninsula has told me that in digging a well on the land he had found quantities of charred wood at a depth of nine feet under the present surface, or about the present level of the rivers. My brother's property comprises about 1500 acres of alluvial land, including the dry beds of several lagoons; the rest being forest or grazing land. Under the convict system of former years, Mr. Lang farmed pretty extensively, having usually about 300 acres under wheat, and employing about forty convict servants with a hired overseer. Now he lets his land in small farms, of various sizes from 20 acres to 150 acres, to a reputable free emigrant tenant, who cultivates grain and other agricultural produce for the Sydney market, which the advantage of steam navigation enables them to do with great facility. The land lets readily in this way, according to the supposed value, at from ten to twenty shillings an acre yearly rent. The property has a population of about 300 souls. It has a steam flour mill of fourteen-horse power on the river bank, a Presbyterian church, and a school under the National Board. The last time I visited the school, it had seventy-six pupils, all of whom but three were the children of the tenantry on the property.]

"Thursday, Nov. 14. — Being refreshed by a night's rest after my return to Dunmore from my visit to Scone, I started again this morning for a longer journey, to the Manning River. Dunmore, my brother's estate, is situated on the right bank of the

Patterson River, one of the principal tributaries of the Hunter. The Patterson, notwithstanding its most unpoetical and forbidding name, which I am sure will be the very detestation of every future Australian poet, is an interesting and beautiful river, throughout its entire course, and is broad and deep enough at Dunmore to float a seventy-four. Crossed the river in a punt, and then rode across the country, about nine or ten miles, to Mossman's punt, the crossing place on William's River, another of the principal tributaries of the Hunter, if it should not rather be considered the principal stream, for it is decidedly the largest of the three. There is much alluvial land of the first quality on Patterson's River, and a considerable extent also, although not so much, on the William. The low country everywhere at present looks beautiful, and a luxuriant wheat crop is rapidly whitening for harvest.

"My brother had accompanied me to Ballycarry, the residence of his father-in-law, H. Caswell, Esq., R.N., about twelve miles from Dunmore; and on starting again for Stroud, Mr. Caswell proposed to accompany me a few miles through the bush to put me on the right road; but he actually gave me more than even a Scotch convoy of twenty miles, to Booral, one of the principal stations of the Australian Agricultural Company, and the residence of the present commissioner, Mr. Ebsworth.

"I was gratified at observing that Mr. Caswell had actually done what I had so recently before been recommending to others somewhat similarly situated, up the country, viz. constructed a dam across the bed of a natural torrent or watercourse in front of his house, for the retention and preservation of the surface water of the vicinity. It was quite full from the late rains, and formed a beautiful sheet of water more than 30 ft. deep at the lower end. This practice is likely to become general all over the colony—I mean wherever it is practicable and necessary—at a much earlier period than many might imagine. For I learned at Dartbrook a fact of which I was not previously aware, and which cannot fail to give rise to very serious apprehensions, viz. that the underground supply of water is now failing in many localities in the interior, in which it had previously been abundant. Mr. Hall, for example, informed me, that about eighteen years ago, when he first settled at Dartbrook, he had obtained an abundant supply of water for his establishment from a well 16 ft. deep; but the supply having failed at length, the well had afterwards to be deepened; and this process had been continued from time to time, especially in seasons of drought, inasmuch that the present depth of the well is not less than 42 ft. And this, it seems, is quite a general case in that part

of the country. In short, the grand problem in physics for this community will very shortly be, 'How to secure a constant and sufficient supply of water for all the purposes of man, especially in seasons of drought.'

"The land through which the road from Raymond Terrace* passes to the northward is generally of a very indifferent character, although remarkably well watered. After the first few miles, it belongs exclusively to the Australian Agricultural Company. On the banks of the Karua River, at Booral, there is a considerable extent of alluvial land of the first quality, on which a few agricultural families, principally Scotch, are settled as tenants of the Company; and the scenery altogether has as much of the character of a rich English landscape as anything I have seen in the colony. Mr. Ebsworth's cottage is beautifully situated on a natural terrace overlooking the river and the cultivated land; and everything about it indicates the residence of an English gentleman of refined taste and in affluent circumstances. In short, John Company has been by no means niggardly in the accommodation he has provided for his agents and *chargés d'affaires* in Australia. At the same time, there is nothing that could reasonably be objected to on the score of expenditure at Booral. We called on the commissioner, whom we found preparing to resign his office and return to England. There is evidently something wrong with the Company's machine of government at present, and things are rapidly tending towards an entire revolution in this little *imperium in imperio*.

"The Company's land from Booral to Stroud, seven miles, consists of hill and dale, and forms very good grazing land, the Karua River winding along in a deep valley, and presenting but a very limited extent of alluvial land to the left. Arrived at Stroud a little before sunset, after a ride for the day, which was very hot throughout, of thirty-nine miles, having still the same willing horse as on my journey to Scone.

"Friday, November 15.—Stroud is decidedly one of the finest villages or inland towns in the colony; and if the sight of it should not exactly suffice to console the proprietors at home, under the bitterness of feeling which so many annual announcements of *no dividend*, or of only *one per cent.* are likely to create, it will, doubtless, tend to alleviate that feeling considerably; for when people's money is virtually thrown away, as not a little of the Company's has been, it is somewhat consolatory to think that there is some-

thing worth looking at to show for it after all. Like the 'lang town o' Kirkcaldy,' Stroud consists of a single street; the houses, which are principally neat cottages, being thrown back a considerable distance, on each side, from the line of road, with flower gardens and shrubberies in front. His Honor the Superintendent of Port Phillip used to call the squatting station of Miss Drysdale (an unmarried sister of the late Sir William Drysdale, treasurer of the city of Edinburgh, who had emigrated to that district shortly after its settlement, and fixed herself near Geelong), the model squatting station of Port Phillip, from the air of neatness and comfort it exhibited throughout, with a comparatively slight expenditure of capital. Stroud may, in like manner, be called the model inland town of New South Wales. It reminded me rather of a New England village, such as I had seen in the States of Connecticut and Massachusetts, than of an English village. There is one ornament, however, of which the Americans are very fond, which it wants; I mean a row of umbrageous trees on each side of the wide road or street in front of the little garden fences by which the different allotments are bounded. This is one of the most interesting features of American civilisation, and gave me a high idea of the real refinement of the people. In the Northern States, the trees planted in this way are generally plane trees, oaks, or elms; in North and South Carolina, where the climate is considerably hotter, like that of this colony, the pride of India is the tree usually employed for this purpose.* But in our inland towns—with such wisdom the Australian world is governed!—there is no room left even for the planting of a row of trees on each side of the principal street! There is not even an inch of ground left anywhere, in our inland towns, for a public square; I presume, lest "the mob" should congregate occasionally in such places, and pass disagreeable resolutions about the powers that be.

"There is a considerable extent of good agricultural land in the neighbourhood of Stroud; and one of the thickest seams of coal in the colony crops out a few miles distant. This seam or stratum is said to be thirty-five feet in thickness. But the site of the town has not been judiciously chosen after all, and in the event of the Company's expenditure on it being discontinued shortly, which is not improbable, there is nothing to keep it up. Indeed, without alluding to the Company at all, Colonial Government incapacity is in nothing more conspicuous than in the sites of towns. Cupidity and dishonesty combined, on the part of people in power, have

* A rising inland town, at the junction of the William and Hunter Rivers. Population 318.

* The White cedar, *Melia Azedarach*.

doubtless had something to do with it in not a few instances; the public interest having been frequently sacrificed to benefit So and So, Esq., of So and So, J. P., who has had a friend in the right place.*

"Rode from Stroud to Gloucester, one of the Company's agricultural and grazing stations, thirty miles distant, over a good pastoral country, of hill and dale, and remarkably well watered. I saw it doubtless in its very best state, for the season has been peculiarly favourable. Gloucester is one of the best sites for an inland town I have seen in the colony; and if the road to and from New England should take this particular direction, as it is supposed likely to do, at least by the Company's servants, it would soon become a place of some importance. A range of picturesque mountains, called by the aborigines The Buccans, of about 1200 feet in height, bounds the horizon to the westward. Along the base of these mountains, the river Gloucester wends its way to the northward, leaving a large extent of alluvial land on its right bank, which the Company has cleared and brought into cultivation; the site of the buildings that form the station, including a house of accommodation for travellers, being on a rising ground to the eastward of the alluvial flats. It is altogether a beautiful spot in the wilderness, and there are many such on the Company's estate.

"Saturday, Nov. 16.—Started at eight, with a mounted aboriginal native for my guide for the first ten miles; for whose services in that capacity I had been indebted to the good offices of Mr. Darby, the Company's overseer of stock at Gloucester, to whom I had had a note of introduction from a mutual friend, Dr. Douglas, at Stroud. The country for the first ten miles is pretty much of the same character as that which I had passed over on the previous day between Stroud and Gloucester—hill and dale with occasional flats and good pasture. On this part of the route the Barrington River is crossed twice. It contains a large body of water, reaching nearly to the saddle girth, and flows with a rapid current. The Barrington rises in the mountainous country towards the sources of William's River. It flows along the base of the range called the Buccans, to the westward, and receives the Gloucester river at the northern termination of that range, a mile or two below the Company's station. Still lower down it is joined by the Bowman River; and on all these rivers I ascertained that there was a considerable,

* The population of the towns on the property of the Australian Agricultural Company is not given in the recent census; for what reason, I do not know.

although by no means a large, extent of alluvial land, well adapted for the settlement of an agricultural population. The Barrington is one of the principal tributaries of the Manning. It is always running, although subject, like all Australian rivers, to occasional floods. The blackfellow told me that the native name, either of it or of the Gloucester (for I could not ascertain which he meant) was Wittuck, and that of the Manning, Broey-gangallinba. But I could not ascertain afterwards that the natives of the Manning district knew the river by that name, and was told they had various names for it at different parts of its course.

"After crossing the Barrington a second time we met two blackfellows on foot, and shortly afterwards a third, a servant of the Company, on horseback. From the two pedestrians, Watty, my guide, ascertained that there had been a fight among the aborigines on the Manning River, in which one man had been killed. In describing the fray, and especially the multitude of spears that had been thrown upon the occasion, the blackfellow was particularly eloquent, illustrating his narrative by pointing with his own spear in all directions, and using as much gesticulation as a Frenchman. Watty informed me, after we had left them, that both the horseman and the two pedestrians were to wait for him on his return, as he wished "to hear the news." They are a very social people, as unlike the American Indians as possible.

"Watty had scarcely taken leave of me, at the ten miles station, to return to Gloucester, when it began to rain in right earnest, and I was very soon completely drenched. The road also, from this point, was one of the worst I had ever travelled in the colony; with steep ascents approaching almost to the perpendicular, and the path occasionally running along the face of precipitous hills, with the river, which has again to be crossed twice in this part of the route, flowing deep and broad at their base. The rain had also made the clay soil so slippery that I found it dangerous to walk erect, as a single false step might have precipitated me into the river; and I had frequently to scramble along the best way I could on my hands and feet, dragging my horse behind me. In short, it is a miserable road *in wet weather*, and I was heartily glad when I found I had cleared the last hill, and got down, although wet and weary, into the valley of the Manning.

"The Manning, in the upper part of its course, forms the boundary of the Agricultural Company's estate in this part of the territory; and there is doubtless a considerable extent of alluvial land within that boundary, as well as on the Barrington and its confluent, available for the settlement of an industrious population.

But the whole extent of the land fit for cultivation on the Company's estate of 430,000 acres, in this part of the territory, is comparatively very small. And so also is the extent even of good pasture land—for I understand I had seen the best of it; the sterile and worthless quality greatly predominating, especially towards the coast.

"Unlike the Hunter, the Manning derives its supplies from perennial sources among the mountains of New England, and therefore never fails. From the great extent of its dry shingly bed, it is evidently subject, like most Australian rivers, to extensive inundations, and must throw an immense body of water on these occasions into the Pacific. I crossed it at a ford which I easily found, and then rode down partly through a thick brush on its left bank, for about two miles, to the house of Mr. Joseph Andrews, where I received a very cordial welcome, the ride from Gloucester having been twenty-two miles. Mr. Andrews had come out to the colony under my superintendence, as a schoolmaster, in the same vessel with Mr. Robinson, of Singleton, in the year 1837. He had acted in that capacity for several years in Sydney, and afterwards at Dummore, in teaching a school on my brother's property; but having purchased, at a comparatively low price, the property on which he now resides—an estate of 750 acres with a good house on it and other valuable improvements—he is now one of the resident proprietors on the Manning.

"Having written two letters from Sydney to Mr. Andrews, informing him that I expected to reach the Manning on the 16th, and would preach at one or two suitable stations on the following day, I had intended, if the weather had continued fine, and I had reached Mr. A.'s place in good time, to have borrowed another horse and ridden down the river in the afternoon other eighteen or twenty miles, to where I had understood the population was more concentrated. But Mr. Andrews had never received either of my letters, both of which, I ascertained before leaving the river, were then lying safe in the post office at Port Macquarie.* As no intimation, therefore, of my coming had been given; as I found, moreover, that I had had enough of it for one day after crossing the mountains under torrents of rain; and as the rain still continued, I remained under Mr. A.'s hospitable roof till the following morning.

"Sunday Nov. 17.—Got a fresh horse, and started early with Mr. Andrews for Redbank, towards the mouth of the river, where there is a considerable Presbyterian population from Scotland and

the north of Ireland. The vegetation on the alluvial land on the banks of the river is superb, and I was happy to learn it is easily cleared and burned off, compared with the labour and cost of clearing similar land on the Hunter. There is an endless variety of vines or creepers and parasitical plants, and the nettle-tree abounds in the thick brushes, and grows to an immense size. It is easily destroyed, however, its interior being quite soft and fungous. Crossed the river a mile or two below Mr. A.'s, and struck into the open forest on the opposite side, to cut off a great bend which the river takes to the left. Had thus to forego the pleasure I anticipated in following the river down, which indeed is scarcely practicable.

"After a ride of eighteen miles, reached the house of a highly intelligent and respectable settler from the North of Scotland, whose wife—a woman of superior education and peculiarly engaging manners and disposition, who I learned had been universally esteemed in the district—had shortly before committed suicide during a paroxysm of puerperal insanity, leaving her unfortunate husband with a family of five children in extreme desolation. Expected to have crossed the river in a boat at this locality, and then crossing an isthmus on foot, where it sweeps round a peninsula with a long circuitous course, to have gone down to Redbank by water; but uncertainty as to whether we should find a boat at the place where we should have wanted it, induced us to perform the rest of the journey, about twelve miles by land, also on horseback. It was a very disagreeable ride, for it rained heavily, and I soon got completely drenched once more. My reception at Redbank, where, from the circumstance I have mentioned, my visit had not been expected, was gratifying in the highest degree. I took up my abode at the house of Mr. Samuel Gibson, a respectable Presbyterian settler from the north of Ireland, who had been six years on the Manning, and was farming upwards of 100 acres of the richest alluvial land, which he had purchased on its bank. The usual bush fare was immediately got ready, and a large fire, which speedily blazed on the hearth, was not more necessary to dry our habiliments, than it was from the cold of the day. I afterwards found that the 17th had been an unusually cold day for the season of the year all over the colony. Preached in the evening to a congregation hastily assembled, but consisting almost exclusively of Scotch and north of Ireland Presbyterians settled on the adjoining farms.

"Monday, Nov. 18.—The rain all gone, and the weather delightful. Preached again, at nine A.M., to a congregation considerably more numerous than that of the preceding evening. At the close of the service, succeeded in making the requisite arrangements

* Ninety miles farther north, having been forwarded by sea.

for the immediate settlement of a Presbyterian minister in the Manning district, which had been the principal object of my visit. The people of Redbank—having just got a schoolmaster from home, who, I was happy to find, was giving them great satisfaction—were building him a substantial schoolhouse of twenty-six by fifteen feet, which was also to serve as a temporary place of worship, the school being under the Denominational Board. The number of scholars was already upwards of thirty. I told the people they must expect to be put under the National Board after next year, to which they seemed quite resigned. There will be comparatively little difficulty in effecting such a transformation, as far at least as the Presbyterian schools of the colony are concerned.

Understanding that there had been some excitement in the district on the subject of the cultivation of cotton, and that one or two proprietors of considerable tracts of land, in particular Mr. Atkinson, had been recommending it to their tenants, I had announced my intention to deliver a lecture on the subject in the course of this day at Tahree, a central locality about five miles up the river by water; and I learned accordingly in the course of the morning, that a good many of the Redbank people were going up to attend it. To save them this trouble and inconvenience, however, I proposed to deliver the lecture, as far as they were concerned, on the spot, which was cheerfully acceded to, and I did so accordingly. It is a noble country for that species of cultivation; and as Mr. Gibson's wheat crop had been destroyed by rust, which had cut it off after the late rains, I took occasion to show how much less precarious a cotton crop was likely to prove in that climate than wheat, and how much more profitable. The Manning is just within the thirty-second degree of south latitude, precisely in the same latitude as that of Charleston, in South Carolina, one of the principal cotton-growing states of America, in the opposite hemisphere. The Redbank people expressed themselves much gratified at my visit, and at the little effort I had thus made to supply them with information on a subject on which they were all apparently anxious to obtain it. Mr. Andrews and Mr. McLean (another fellow-traveller for the last twelve miles), having to return by land with the horses, I was rowed up the river in a boat to Tahree, by one of the Redbank settlers, a tall, stout, intelligent farmer from the north of Ireland.

"The Manning is a noble river in the lower part of its course, and I am confident there is a much greater extent of land of the first quality for cultivation on its banks, and on those of its numerous tributaries, as well as on the islands towards its mouth, than there is

altogether on the Hunter, Patterson, and William Rivers. It is navigable about the same distance inland as these rivers; but there is this great difference between the two districts, that whereas a large proportion of the land on the Hunter, towards the coast, is comparatively worthless, the good land on the Manning extends to the very heads, and is almost all within reach of steam navigation. In short, it is quite unaccountable that a district of such superior agricultural capabilities should have remained for so long a period comparatively unknown. To use the language of the Moon in the fable, when, complaining to the Sun that he looked so dull and cheerless at her during an eclipse, she observed that it was that dirty planet the Earth that had got between them; I presume it is the Agricultural Company's estate that has hitherto got between the Manning and the settled districts of the colony generally, and prevented the colonists from recognizing the superior capabilities of that important district.

"The Manning has two entrances, a southern and a northern, the two channels being separated by Oxley and Mitchell Islands, which again are separated from each other by a navigable channel; Mitchell Island being towards the ocean, and Oxley Island inland. The southern entrance, however, has for some time past been filled up, and the northern channel is of course the only one used. There is a bar at its mouth, as in most Australian rivers; but that bar, I was informed, would prove but a comparatively slight obstacle in the way of steam navigation, as it is more practicable at present than that of almost any other barred river on this coast. Redbank is opposite Oxley Island to the southward, and is only about five or six miles from the southern entrance. There is much land of the first quality in this vicinity, as well as on all the islands, for there are others, besides those I have mentioned, higher up. Mr. Atkinson's estate of 15,000 acres, formerly the property of Hart Davies, Esq., M.P., is on the northern channel, opposite Oxley's Island. It is called by its native name, Cundle Cundle. Mr. A. has already formed a small agricultural settlement upon it, like that of Redbank, and has had the estate surveyed and laid off recently in small farms. There is all the difference in the world, however, between the condition of small farmers, settled on their own land, like the people at Redbank, and a mere tenantry such as Mr. Atkinson proposes to form. And it is one of the most gratifying circumstances imaginable in the case of the Manning district, that there is still a large extent of land of the first quality on that river in the hands of the Government, which is at present in the course of settlement by small proprietors from other parts of the colony,

chiefly from Hunter's River. Mr. Gibson, of Redbank, felicitated himself not a little, in conversing with me on the subject, on the circumstance of being no longer a tenant; which, however, he had been for six years after his arrival in the colony at Hunter's River. If a man cannot say of this country, "This is my own, my native land;" let him at least be able to say of a few acres of the best of it less or more, "This is my own, my purchased land." I heard of not fewer than nineteen families of this class that were expected to settle at the Manning after harvest. A large proportion of these families, as well as of the present population of the district generally, consists of emigrants from Scotland and the north of Ireland. In short, there are few districts in the colony of which the population promises to be of so peculiarly healthy a character—I mean socially, politically, and morally—as that of the Manning River.

"Arrived at Tahree, formerly the property of W. Wynter, Esq., R.N., now that of his son-in-law,—Flett, Esq., about two P.M., and after dining with Mr. Wynter and his family, delivered a lecture or address on cotton cultivation in a neat schoolhouse recently erected in the vicinity of Mr. Wynter's residence. The notice had been very short, and the Redbank people were absent for the reason I have mentioned, but the attendance was very fair notwithstanding.

"The estate of Tahree, consisting of 2,560 acres, or four square miles, forms a peninsula, bounded on three sides by the river. It consists almost exclusively of alluvial land of the first quality, thickly wooded. Mr. Wynter's house is on a natural terrace towards the isthmus, and the view from it over the cleared land, the noble river, and the dense forest slowly disappearing under the axe of civilization, is decidedly one of the finest in these colonies. In the lower part of its course, the river is generally from a quarter to half-a-mile in width, and the land in the alluvial flats on its banks is of surpassing fertility. When I stated, on the authority of Mr. Bucknell, of Newtown, that four acres in cotton, at the rate of produce he had himself realized, would be sufficient to maintain an industrious family, Mr. Flett told me that he had himself calculated that two acres of flooded land on the Manning would be sufficient for the maintenance of a family—that he had himself seen the produce of maize on the river actually measured at the rate of 100 bushels an acre—that two crops could be reaped in the year—and that any conceivable amount of food for man, and for pigs and poultry could be raised even on that small extent of ground by an industrious family. If the cultivation of cotton should become general, as I am confident it will, a single establishment, at some central point,

like Tahree, would be sufficient for cleaning and fitting for the market the produce of the whole district, by means of a small steamer to run to and fro on the river. There is no doubt whatever that, with its vast natural resources, the Manning will, at no distant period, be one of the wealthiest districts of the colony, and form the seat of a dense population.

"The Government has been strangely neglectful of this district. It has no post-office, and letters directed to the Manning are at present forwarded to Port Macquarie, more than eighty miles farther, where they may lie for weeks or even months. A weekly post from Stroud could be kept up at a comparatively small expense, and would prove of incalculable benefit to the district.* Whether it has even a single constable or not as yet, I did not learn.

"Tuesday, Nov. 19.—Mr. Flett, who is a native of Caithness, in Scotland, and who has a fine, healthy Australian family growing up around him, walked with me in the morning across the isthmus to where Mr. Andrews was to meet me with a boat on the opposite side of the peninsula. Mr. Flett also very handsomely promised accommodation in a vacant cottage on his estate for the minister and his family whom I had arranged to send up to the district. The situation is peculiarly eligible for such a purpose, from its being central, both for the Upper and for the Lower Manning. I was much gratified at having succeeded in this minor arrangement. On crossing the river we ascended what is called a creek, but must unquestionably have been the river itself at some earlier period; a peninsula of alluvial land, which it forms with the river, having evidently been an island, and been united with the mainland by what brother Jonathan calls a *raft* of fallen timber blocking up one of the channels in a time of flood. One of the distinguishing features of the Manning is the number of creeks or rivulets flowing into it; on most of which, as on Dingo, Bobo, and Burrell Creeks, there is a greater or less extent of alluvial land fit for settlement.

"Rode up with Mr. Andrews, and Mr. McLean to Mr. Andrews' house, eighteen miles, arriving about noon. Then, after halting for an hour, mounted my own horse again and resumed the road or rather beaten path to Gloucester, Mr. Andrews giving me a further convoy of a few miles. Towards evening, when I had done nearly forty miles, and was getting rather tired, and riding with a slack

* There is a direct postal communication with Sydney now.

rein, I was suddenly aroused from a reverie into which I had fallen at the moment by the fall of my horse. He had been trotting gently down a very slight declivity, and I was thrown with some violence over his head on the road, but providentially escaped a second time almost unhurt. The sun was slowly descending behind the Buccans as I reached Gloucester, rather stiff, and a little lame from my fall.

"Wednesday, Nov. 20. — Left Gloucester at eight A.M., stopped nearly an hour at the cottage of a Scotch family in the service of the Company by the way, and reached Stroud at two P.M., after a ride of thirty miles. Had given notice the previous Thursday that I should return to Stroud this day and perform divine service at four P.M. in the court-house, which had been granted for the purpose, there being a considerable number of Scotch families in the vicinity either as tenants or servants of the Company. Preached accordingly at the hour appointed, the attendance being considerably better than I anticipated, one family having come in ten miles. Whatever part of the colony I happen to visit, I always find families or individuals who have either been members of my own congregation in Sydney perhaps for years together, or who have come out to the colony through my instrumentality; and from such persons, especially when comfortably settled in the world, as is generally the case, I always experience a cordial reception. Even a vote of censure and condemnation passed upon me by the famous thirteen, or DEIL'S DOZEN, of the Legislative Council, has no effect upon such people — and I found some of them here.

"Very hospitably entertained by Dr. Douglas, a genuine Scot, and Mr. Corlette, of the Company's service, at Stroud. Visited a Scotch family after service, about two miles from Stroud, where a young woman, a daughter of the family, was reported to be dying. There are several Scotch families, tenants of the Company, in the neighbourhood, very comfortably settled. They are mostly from the Highlands of Scotland.

"Thursday, Nov. 21. — Rode to Booral, seven miles, and rested an hour or two (for the day was excessively hot), at Mr. Renwick's, a tenant of the Company, occupying a tract of alluvial land on the Karua river. There are three or four Scotch families very comfortably settled here, the Company being excellent landlords. Mr. Renwick is a thorough-bred farmer from the south of Scotland. One of his sons had returned from California a month or two ago, having been very fortunate. Other two had just arrived at San Francisco, when the first was on the eve of returning to the colony. He had just time to see them fitted out and start off for

the mines. I was sorry, however, to learn, on my arrival at Newcastle, that the two younger brothers had both returned again to the colony, having lost their health at the "diggings." However calamitous it may be to individuals, it is surely well for these colonies that this California mania should receive a check even in this way. Mr. Renwick's elder son and other two young men who had accompanied him had cleared 100*l.* each at the end of the third week after their arrival at San Francisco, in the capacity of draymen employed in unloading vessels. They had done well, but not quite so well as this, at the mines, and they had enjoyed perfect health during the whole period of their stay in California. The two younger brothers, I was informed, had returned in a worse plight than they left the colony in, with loss of time, of passage money to and fro, and even of health.

"Left Mr. Renwick's at one o'clock. The day was excessively hot, and I felt the next twenty miles the most fatiguing part of my journey. Arrived at Mr. Caswell's, at Ballycarry, where I again experienced a very hospitable reception, towards five, P.M.

"Friday, 22nd Nov. — Rode down to Raymond Terrace, ten miles, with Mr. Caswell, early in the morning. Got into the "Thistle" steamer, as she passed, and arrived at Sydney, after a pleasant voyage, at seven, P.M.

"I had thus, during the sixteen days of my absence — besides the voyages, of about 100 miles each, to and from Hunter's River — ridden 400 miles, chiefly under the hot sun; preached six times; lectured or delivered addresses six times; been thrice drenched with rain, and twice thrown from my horse. The object of my tour was chiefly clerical, to ascertain the spiritual condition of certain districts, and to make arrangements for the settlement of ministers in the interior; and in this respect it was quite successful. The lectures were intended merely to do a little good, of a different kind, by the way."

I made a similar journey in the month of March, 1851, to another part of this extensive district, of which I also published a few Rough Notes at the time, in another colonial journal; and as observations made on the spot are likely to be of more value to intending emigrants than mere general deductions, I shall make no apology for inserting them here.

“ROUGH NOTES OF A VISIT TO DUNGOG ON WILLIAM'S RIVER.

“Having had occasion to visit the beautifully picturesque village of Stroud, which forms the head-quarters of the Australian Agricultural Company's establishment, on my way overland to and from the Manning River, in the month of November last, I had determined to embrace the first opportunity that might offer of escaping for a few days from the dust and other annoyances of Sydney, to visit the settlement of Dungog, William's River, which is only about sixteen miles distant from Stroud; as it appeared to me that the two localities, (of which I was only acquainted with the former by report,) presented a sufficiently extensive and peculiarly eligible field for the settlement of a Presbyterian minister. I accordingly left Sydney by the steamer “Thistle” on the evening of Monday, the 17th of March, and reached Dummore, Patterson's River, the residence of my brother, early on the following day. Before the introduction of steam navigation into this colony, by the late Captain Biddulph, R.N., in the year 1831, the usual mode of travelling to the Hunter's River district was on horseback over the mountains, and the journey usually occupied three full days; the expenses of man and horse, at the inns and public-houses by the way, being generally considerably more than the entire fare, with the cost of refreshments included, by the steamboat. In short, steam navigation has been the making of Hunter's River, and it is, doubtless, destined to render the same service to a whole series of other rivers of a similar description along the coast to the northward.

“For the first fifteen or twenty miles by water from the mouth of the river, the land on either side is generally low, swampy, and sterile, though for the most part thickly covered with timber; but higher up, and along the banks of the two tributary streams, the soil for a considerable distance from the banks is entirely alluvial, and of the highest fertility, and the scenery from the water exceedingly beautiful. Let the reader figure to himself a noble river, as wide as the Thames in the lower part of its course, winding slowly towards the ocean, among forests that have never felt the stroke of the axe, or seen any human face till lately but that of the wandering barbarian. On either bank, the lofty gum-tree or eucalyptus shoots up its white naked stem to the height of 150 feet from the rich alluvial soil, while underwood of most luxuriant growth completely covers the ground; and numerous wild vines, as the flowering shrubs and parasitical plants of the alluvial land are indiscriminately called by the settlers, dip their long branches

covered with white flowers into the very water. The voice of the lark, or the linnet, or the nightingale, is, doubtless, never heard along the banks of the Hunter; for New South Wales is strangely deficient in the music of the groves: but the eye is gratified instead of the ear; for flocks of white or black cockatoos, with their yellow or red crests, occasionally flit across from bank to bank; and innumerable chirping parroquets, of most superb and inconceivably variegated plumage, are ever and anon hopping about from branch to branch. I have been told, indeed, that there is nothing like interesting natural scenery in New South Wales: my own experience and observation enable me flatly to contradict the assertion. There are doubtless numerous places throughout the territory uninteresting enough, as the reader may conceive must necessarily be the case in situations where the prospect of a settler's cleared land is bounded on every side by lofty and branchless trees: but in many parts of the territory, both to the northward and the southward of Sydney, both beyond the Blue Mountains to the westward, and for many miles along the Hawkesbury and Nepean Rivers that wash their eastern base, I have seen natural scenery combining every variety of the beautiful, the picturesque, the wild, and the sublime, and equalling any thing I had ever seen in Scotland, England, Ireland, or Wales.

“The following pastoral, by an Australian poet, will show that there is something to captivate the admirer of nature in the woods and wilds of Australia, and will also afford the reader some idea of the rural scenery on the banks of Hunter's River and its tributary streams:—

“ODE TO YIMMANG WATER.*

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

There would I walk at early morn
Along the raiks of Indian corn,
Whose dew-bespangled tassels shine
Like diamonds from Golconda's mine,

* Yimmang is the aboriginal name of Patterson's River, one of the principal tributaries of the Hunter.

While numerous cobs outbursting yield
Fair promise of a harvest-field.

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

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

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

Meanwhile, perch'd on a branch hard by
With head askance and visage sly,
Some old Blue-Mountain parrot chatters
About his own domestic matters :
As how he built his nest of hay,
And finish'd it on Christmas-day,
High on a tree in yonder glen,
Far from the haunts of prying men :
Or how madame has been confin'd
Of twins — the prettiest of their kind —

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

† Corrobory is an aboriginal word, and signifies a noisy assemblage of the aborigines: it is also used occasionally in the colony to designate a meeting of white people, provided their proceedings are not conducted with the requisite propriety and decorum.

How one's the picture of himself —
A little green blue-headed elf —
While 't'other little chirping fellow
Is like mamma, bestreak'd with yellow :
Or how poor uncle Poll was kill'd
When eating corn in yonder field ;
Thunder and lightning ! — down he flutter'd —
And not a syllable he utter'd,
But flapp'd his wings, and gasp'd, and died,
While the blood flow'd from either side !
As for himself, some tiny thing
Struck him so hard, it broke his wing,
So that he scarce had strength to walk off ;
It served him a whole month to talk of !*

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

" My brother, Mr. A. Lang, J. P., of Dunmore, being absent attending the court at Maitland when I reached his place, I paid a visit to his principal vine-dresser, my old friend Mr. George Schmid, a Würtemberger, from the neighbourhood of Stutgardt, — a highly favourable specimen of the class to which he belongs, the industrious, virtuous, and thoroughly Protestant peasantry of the south of Germany. I am sure my brother would never have had a vineyard but for this most valuable man. He had come out entirely at his own expense, and had brought a wife with him from Germany; but she took ill and died a few years after his arrival in the colony, and he has since replaced her with a native of the Highlands of Scotland, who fortunately cannot reproach him with his imperfect acquaintance with English, as it is evidently still a foreign tongue to both. German and Gaelic form rather a singular, but still a very ancient and venerable conjunction; for Ariovistus the German, and the ancient Gauls of France, must have held their parleys in these

* Parrots and cockatoos (the latter especially) are very destructive to the growing corn, and are sometimes shot by the settler or his servants in *flagrante delicto*. Of course the Australian parrot cannot be supposed to understand the mystery of fire-arms yet so well as a European bird.

two ancient tongues on the banks of the Rhine, many centuries before the English language was ever spoken by man — before either *Parlez vous* or *How d'ye do?* was heard on either side of the British Channel.

“Mr. Lang’s vineyard, which comprises about eight acres, all carefully trenched before the vines were planted, is situated in the rich alluvial deposit on the banks of the Patterson River. In the year 1837, I observed a whole series of vineyards in a somewhat similar situation on the Rhine, in the Grand Duchy of Nassau; and I was rather surprised at the time to find the vine cultivated in such a soil and situation, as I had been given to understand that it preferred a light sandy or gravelly soil on the slopes of hills, like those of the Johannisberg, Hochheimer, and Rudesheimer vineyards, along the course of that classical stream. But Mr. Schmid assures me that the locality was well and judiciously chosen, as indeed it must have been when he was satisfied with it. The hills in the County of Durham are generally of trap formation, and their *debris*, which forms the alluvial land on the banks of the Patterson and William’s Rivers, must be a good soil for vines. I suspect, however, that the vine in such situations will be more remarkable for the quantity than for the quality of its produce.

“The vineyard at Dunmore is divided into compartments by walks crossing each other at right angles; and in the centre, where the two principal walks cross each other in a natural hollow, there is a draw-well with a cover, over which Mr. Schmid has erected what the Germans call a *lust-haus* or *pleasure-house*. It is a circular erection, formed of trellis-work, and is already almost covered with vines, which form a most agreeable shade from the hot summer sun of this scorching climate.

“I was quite astounded at the items of information I picked up from Mr. Schmid and my brother, respecting the produce of this vineyard. Mr. Lang told me that last year he had sold, from a single acre of vines, of the Black Hamburg variety, thirty pounds’ worth of grapes, and had had seventeen hundred gallons of wine from it besides. The grapes are sold by wholesale on the spot at the rate of three half-pence per pound, 120 lbs. being reckoned to the 100. They are removed in cart-loads by the purchasers, I believe principally for the Maitland fruit market. From an eighth part of the same acre of vines, Mr. L. told me that there had already been sold during the present year, twelve pounds’ worth of grapes, that is at the rate of 96*l.* an acre! Mr. Schmid, who acknowledged that he had never seen such produce in Germany, I mean to the acre, showed me a single vine of which he had just

weighed the produce, after having unloaded it of its burden. It weighed 44 lbs.; which, at the wholesale rate of three half-pence a pound, would amount to 5*s.* 6*d.* for the produce of a single plant! In short the agricultural capabilities of this country are great beyond all calculation, and squatting is evidently destined, at no distant period, to be fairly eclipsed by agriculture. At all events the idea that an acre of vines might yet be found as profitable as a thousand sheep, is no absurdity.

“This is the season of the vintage, and I found Mr. Schmid, when I reached his cottage, engaged in distilling brandy from the refuse of the grapes, after they had been subjected to the action of the wine press. It is clear and colourless like Highland whiskey, though rather fiery.

“I had some writing to do for the Sydney market before starting for Dungog, and had reserved it for the evening; but after walking about under the hot sun all day, as a sequel to a night in the steamer, I found it was useless to attempt it. So I got up next morning at four, and lighting my candle, finished it off in time for an early breakfast; after which I mounted my horse for what proved to be rather a longer day’s journey than I anticipated. My brother accompanied me on horseback as far as the wooden bridge across Tokell Creek. The country in this neighbourhood is both rich and beautiful, being finely diversified with hill and dale, and presenting a large extent of cleared land of the first quality for cultivation.

“The estate of Tokell, formerly the property of the late J. P. Webber, Esq., J. P., one of our earliest Hunter’s River colonists, now belongs to Felix Wilson, Esq., of New Town. The mansion house is a fine building, quite in the style of a country gentleman’s residence in England, and is beautifully situated on a rising ground, with two fine reaches of Patterson’s River in view. A mile or two from Tokell, we met a respectable old man driving a chaise cart toward Maitland, who, I learned, as he passed, was a working gardener, who rents the garden at Tokell from Mr. Wilson, for which he pays 30*l.* a year. There is no doubt that an industrious family will be able to make out a very comfortable living in such a situation, and it is gratifying to find that as the vast resources of the country are gradually developing, such families are establishing themselves in comfort and comparative independence in all suitable localities. There is a boundless field for them in this rich agricultural district.

“The bridge across Tokell Creek is a very creditable structure. It was erected, I believe, by the District Council, and cost little more than 300*l.* and no fuss about it. It is a substantial wooden structure, and may stand perhaps twenty years. A bridge of a

similar description, a little stronger and wider, over Wallis Creek near Maitland, might have served the public for many years to come, and might have been erected, under the superintendence of the local authorities at a comparatively small amount; but from some reason which I did not enquire into, the District Council, probably feeling itself snubbed in a certain quarter, threw up the matter in disgust, and the Government—the omnipresent Government—has accordingly sent down a Superintendent of Bridges, forsooth, (whose salary and expenses will absorb no inconsiderable portion of the whole available funds) to be quartered upon the district till this Government work is finished. But this is only a specimen of the intolerable system of centralization to which this colony has been so long subjected, and of which the fruits have been so bitter and so calamitous to the community. The Local Government, or in other words, the Colonial Secretary (for the phrases are now pretty nearly synonymous) virtually says to gentlemen in the interior, however intelligent and however deeply interested in any matter of common concernment, like the one in question—'Gentlemen, you have heads, and so has a pin; but we have a head here for which the public have to pay 5000*l.* a year, and which has therefore a right to think and decide for you all. Get about your business, therefore; we will do it all for you.'

"A case of a somewhat similar kind, and one of peculiar aggravation, has just been brought under my notice from a different part of the country. A bridge was to be erected over the Yass River, and a committee of gentlemen on the spot was appointed to get the work accomplished. A builder of the name of Gunning tendered for it, and his tender being accepted, he had carried it half way to completion; borrowing money as he could upon the head of it, till he should be entitled to draw what he had given value for. In this stage of the transaction somebody feels dissatisfied with the work, or has views of his own to promote in a different quarter, and sends a secret complaint to the Government, forsooth; and the Government send up a surveyor all the way to Yass*, who tears down a portion of the building with a crow bar, and makes a report to the Government and then leaves the locality; the committee, in the mean time, who are merely acting on behalf of Her Majesty, coolly telling the contractor that they have washed their hands of the matter. The contractor is refused a copy of the report on the spot, and has to come to Sydney to beg for it through a

* A hundred and eighty miles from Sydney.

solicitor from the Government, by whom it is of course refused! In the mean time, the poor man is utterly ruined. I have no wish to express any opinion upon the character of this man's work; but I maintain, that the system under which such acts of atrocious injustice as the one of which he has evidently been the victim are perpetrated, ought to be got rid of, as an intolerable nuisance, as speedily as possible.

"I had scarcely crossed Tokell Bridge when it began to rain heavily, the rain being mingled with hail, and I was completely drenched before I reached the town of Patterson. My brother, who had in the meantime returned in the opposite direction, got only a few drops of this rain, and I observed that it had not extended more than a mile or two beyond Patterson. The conformation of the country probably accounts for this peculiarity, Patterson being surrounded by ranges of hills of very considerable elevation.

"The town of Patterson is very picturesquely situated, but it ought certainly to have been a mile or so higher up the river at the head of the navigation. The loss which the district will sustain in all future time from this inexcusable blunder, on the part of the Local Government of the time, is quite incalculable. Precisely the same thing was done here as at Maitland; there being highly eligible sites for commercial towns in both localities at the head of the navigation; but the land in both cases was in private hands when the towns were projected—at Morpeth in those of E. Close, Esq., formerly M. C., and at the Old Wharf, on the Patterson, in those of an officer's widow, Mrs. Ward, whose present name I do not recollect. It was natural for these parties, on finding that they had got possession of eligible tracts of land, to stand out for a good price when they understood that the Government, which ought never to have alienated such land except for towns, wished to buy it back; and it was folly in the extreme for the Government to refuse them the price they asked, even had it been ten times more than it was. But the Government refused, in both cases, the reasonable prices which were asked for the only proper sites in both localities; and the community will have to suffer for that folly in all time coming.

"Patterson's River is not only a superior grain-growing country; it is equally famous for its vines and tobacco. Mr. Park, an extensive proprietor on the upper part of the river, and a nephew of the great African traveller, has a vineyard of not less than 35 acres; and the produce of tobacco in the district is very considerable. I was sorry to find, however, that the cultivation of the vine has as yet been by no means favourable to the morals of the district. A

large portion of the labouring population of this country is so hopelessly addicted to intemperance, that the temptation of cheap wine, which they purchase in bucketfuls from the growers, is irresistible; and continual poverty and extensive ruin are the lamentable result.

"It appears to me that the rapidly extending cultivation of the vine in this colony, is likely to lead, at no distant period, to some organic change in our entire Custom House system. Depending as we are in great measure for a revenue at present on the import duties on wines and spirits, that revenue will necessarily fall off greatly as wine and brandy of colonial growth supersede the foreign article, as they are sure to do eventually. What then shall we have to do by and by? Why, we must greatly curtail the expenditure on the one hand by diminishing salaries, and abolishing offices and we must endeavour on the other to get rid of the Custom House altogether—declaring Sydney a Free Port like Singapore, and raising the small revenue we shall require for our cheap Government by direct taxation.

"The town of Patterson has not advanced as it ought to have done from the great advantages of its situation, as being near the head of the navigation of a noble river, and in the midst of a grain-growing, vine-growing, and tobacco-growing district. This has probably arisen from another piece of governmental wisdom, which the locality exhibits; for instead of holding the purchasers of town allotments bound to erect buildings of some kind upon these allotments, within a limited period, the township fell into the hands of a few speculators, at the rate of 5*l.* an acre, for which the moderate price of 75*l.* is now asked, and of course asked for the most part in vain. In short, the class of persons for whom the establishment of a town was peculiarly desirable, viz. mechanics of all descriptions, shopkeepers, &c., have been virtually prevented from purchasing allotments in the town, and erecting houses for themselves. Notwithstanding all these serious drawbacks, however, Patterson cannot fail, eventually, from its commanding situation, to be an inland town of very considerable importance.

"The road to Dungog, on William's River, leads off to the right a little way beyond Patterson; but like many others who have been travelling in the same direction, I took the road to the left, and only found out my mistake after I had ridden up the Patterson nine miles beyond the point at which I ought to have turned off. The discovery of having eighteen miles added to a day's journey of sufficient length already, has rather a disheartening effect upon a traveller, besides deranging his plans; but there was no help for it in the present instance, and I had just to make the best of my way back

to the right road, and commence my journey to Dungog afresh. I lost other four miles by taking the wrong road a second time in a subsequent part of my route, and it had been quite dark for upwards of an hour and a half when I reached Dungog, after a ride of upwards of fifty miles, including these two awkward additions.

"Dungog is finely situated for an inland colonial town, and it cannot fail, at no distant period, to become a place of importance. There is much alluvial land of the first quality for cultivation, within ten or twelve miles of it, both up the river and down; and as land of this character is generally found in detached patches, with a larger or smaller extent of pretty good pasture adjoining it, it is peculiarly adapted for the settlement of an agricultural population; and many reputable families of this class have accordingly settled within a moderate distance of the town during the last ten years.

"The country has a hill and dale character, which pleases the eye, and the Dungog mountain is of considerable elevation, while its sides afford good pasture in most seasons.

"Much of the available land in the district of Dungog is still in a state of nature, and the rich brushes on the river banks still abound with cedar of superior quality. C. L. Brown, Esq., J. P., one of the oldest colonists in the district, with whom I had long been acquainted, and whose hospitality I experienced during my short stay, rode out with me to one of these brushes on his estate, to see the process of cedar-cutting, and in particular, to see a remarkable tree of that description, the largest Mr. B. had ever seen. It was 9 feet in diameter, where it had been cut through with the cross-cut saw, and 29 feet in circumference at the ground. It was perfectly sound throughout, and was estimated to yield 30,000 feet of timber. Mr. Brown sells the timber to a contractor at 1*l.* per thousand feet, payable on the spot. The big tree was therefore worth not less than 30*l.* The ground on which this noble tree grew had been bought by Mr. B. from the Government at 5*s.* an acre*, and several sections, or square miles, which he had purchased on the same terms, had been entirely paid for from the cedar growing on the land at the time of the purchase.

"The cedar trade gives employment to a considerable number of sawyers, who are principally old hands, and who, I am sorry to add, are by no means patterns of virtue, either in regard to temperance, or to anything else at all creditable to the individual. On

* From fifteen to twenty years ago, when the minimum price was 5*s.* an acre.

the contrary, they too frequently spend the high wages they earn in scenes of beastly intemperance—setting all the deccencies and proprieties of civilised life at defiance. I rode up with Mr. Brown to the miserable bark-but in the bush where a pair of sawyers and their families were domiciled. One of them was an old hand, a relic of the olden times of the colony, who, I understood, had exhibited in his whole character and conduct a perfect disregard of everything reputable and virtuous. His mate, who, I was sorry to find, had been following his bad example, although but a recently arrived free immigrant from England, was a remarkably good-looking young man. I was surprised to find that both he and his wife, a tidy little English woman, recognised me as an old acquaintance, having both been present at a lecture I delivered on the capabilities of the colony as a field for emigration, in the town of Leeds, in England. It was one of the largest meetings I had addressed on the subject in England, and was most enthusiastic. The young man had been a clothworker at home, and his father, who had died young, and left his affairs in questionable bands, had had a cloth-factory of his own. He had taken up his present occupation at his own hand, allured by the high wages which it offered; but it was evident he had been going fast down hill, from the bad company into which he had fallen. I asked his wife whether I had told any stories about the colony at Leeds? She acknowledged that I had not, but observed that it was a much rougher sort of life they were leading than she had anticipated. I told her that that was entirely their own fault; for even in their present occupation they might easily make themselves very comfortable if they chose, especially with the high wages they were earning. But if they spent their money in drunkenness, as the husband acknowledged they had been doing, what could they expect but misery and ruin? Mr. Brown and I gave the two sawyers a joint lecture on temperance and the other Christian virtues; the old hand professed to be very penitent, and both promised, at least, to reform for the future.

“The cedar trade is at present the principal dependance of this vicinity, and I was credibly informed that it brings into the Dungog district not less than two or three hundred pounds a week. Quantities of this valuable timber are discovered from time to time in localities in which its existence had not been suspected before. For instance, an old life-guardsmen of Waterloo, now a Wesleyan Local Preacher at Mulunda, about seven miles from Dungog, had rented a farm from a brother of the late R. Windeyer, Esq., M. C., on the Upper William's River. Finding a quantity of cedar on the land,

he offered Mr. W. 50*l.* for the standing timber, which of course was gladly accepted; but, at the time of my visit, cedar to the value of 300*l.* had been sold off this very land by the tenant, and he had still an equal quantity to sell.

“The town of Dungog has a population of about 300; it has a steam flour-mill, a tobacco-factory, one or two good inns, an episcopal church nearly finished, a national school, and a court house,—a very creditable building indeed.

“There is a clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. Mr. Thoms, who has been recently settled in Dungog, and who, I was happy to learn, is generally and deservedly popular in the district. At the suggestion of certain of the inhabitants, I caused it to be announced that I should preach in the court house, which had been granted for the purpose by Mr. Brown, in the evening of the day I spent in the district; and small as the village is, and short as was the notice given, I was gratified to find a congregation of about 100 persons assembled for divine service. It was a very favourable indication indeed of the character of the place.

“Mr. Brown's house, called Cairnmore, from a mountain in Galloway in Scotland, is beautifully situated on the face of a hill about half a mile from the village. Mr. B.'s estate, comprising much brush land of the first quality for cultivation, is 6,000 acres in extent. The district of Dungog, like that of the Patterson, is admirably adapted for the vine and for tobacco, as well as for the growth of maize; and that the cotton plant will succeed equally well in both, I had ocular demonstration. In short, there is every reason to believe, that Dungog will soon become an important inland town, and that the surrounding district will ere long be the seat of a numerous, industrious, and virtuous agricultural population.

“I left Dungog on Friday, 21st March, after first crossing the river to dispense the ordinance of baptism at the residence of a reputable Scotch family, long settled in the district. The course of the river is very circuitous, and as there are generally considerable patches of alluvial land on one or other of its banks, there are many small farms of a thriving appearance along its course. About four miles below Dungog, on the road to Clarence Town, I turned aside to the left to see the farm of the Messrs. Baxter, two respectable unmarried Scotchmen, from the neighbourhood of Glasgow, who, I had been told, were the best practical farmers in the district. They merely rent 40 acres of alluvial land, of the first quality, from the Messrs. Hooke, extensive proprietors of land and stock on William's River; of which 30 acres are cleared and in cultivation, their present rental being only 6*l.* a year. Messrs. Baxter's

farm forms a peninsula, being nearly surrounded by the river; and the soil is of surpassing fertility, showing 12 feet deep of the richest mould. I did not ascertain what extent of ground they had had in wheat, or what had been the rate of produce; but the maize crop—the second crop or stubble corn, after the wheat crop—had yielded 80 bushels to the acre. They had two and a half acres of tobacco, the produce of which, amounting to two tons, they had contracted to sell to Mr. Pitt, a manufacturer of the article in West Maitland, at 5½*d.* per lb. Now this is surely as remunerating as squatting, and it shows what is to be expected from the soil in extensive tracts of this country, under a judicious system of cultivation. But the great difficulty here, as elsewhere, is the want of labour. The Messrs. Baxter had had two labourers—free immigrants, brought out in one of the Government ships*—but they had been obliged to get rid of them before they had been more than six months with them, as they were persons of such a character that they could not consider their lives safe, so long as they remained on the farm. Mr. Baxter added that if they could only get two or three such labourers as the farm servants of the west of Scotland, they could easily clear 500*l.* a-year off their farm.

“But what I felt the greatest interest in seeing on Messrs. Baxter’s farm was, a small plat of cotton—about a quarter of an acre—grown from seed procured, through A. Warren, Esq., William’s River, from S. Donaldson, Esq., M. C. It had been planted in rows, three feet apart, the usual distance in South Carolina; but it will evidently require to be planted in rows five or six feet apart in the alluvial land of this country. It had covered the whole of the ground at Messrs. Baxter’s, and the plants were evidently much too close to each other. Some of it was in blossom; other plants had pods fairly formed and resembling a small pear; and on one of these plants Mr. Baxter informed me he had counted upwards of 500 pods! He was satisfied it would answer for both the soil and climate of this country admirably. There is therefore a boundless prospect of remunerating employment for an agricultural population in this branch of cultivation on these rivers.

“After a ride of twelve miles through the bush, from Messrs. Baxter’s—occasionally getting a peep at the river and at the cultivation farms along its course—I reached Clarence Town. What the population of Clarence Town may be † I could not ascertain, but was told that it was much inferior to Dungog, which, as I have

* They were regular Tipperary boys.

† By the census of 1851, it appears to be 193.

already observed, could boast of only 300 inhabitants. Bishop Tyrrell, from Newcastle, had been in the place some time before, and when asking where the town was, was told he was then in the middle of it. I could readily believe the story, for I confess there is very little to be seen but trees.

“Clarence Town is beautifully situated, with a broad river in front, a natural terrace running along its right bank, and a fine range of hills presenting a bold outline on the opposite side. It is not quite at the head of the navigation, but it occupies the point where the road to Dungog strikes the river. Mr. Lowe, the ship-builder, had a vessel on the stocks at his building-yard close to the township.

“As a heavy thunder shower, which was followed by a gentle rain for an hour and a half, came on just as I had reached the inn at Clarence Town, I had only about an hour and a half of daylight remaining when I started for the Patterson, and it soon got quite dark. The valleys of the Patterson and William’s Rivers are separated from each other by a dividing range of very considerable elevation, which terminates on William’s River at Porphyry Point. On the road from Patterson to Dungog, this range is called the Wallaroba Hill. On the road from Clarence Town to the Patterson, it is called the Hungry Hill. I had never travelled the road before; but presuming that my horse had done so, I left the matter pretty much in his hands. There had been an extensive fire on the mountain, which had quite obliterated the track in some places, and I could not help admiring the sagacity of the animal in finding it again repeatedly when we had lost it, although we did differ in opinion occasionally as to the proper route. It was nine o’clock when I reached a shoemaker’s hut in the valley of the Patterson, who proposed that I should give an apprentice boy he had a shilling to mount a horse of his and guide me by the numerous slip-rails to the punt. To this arrangement I gladly assented, and I found my guide an intelligent boy, the son of one of the free immigrants from France, who had been sent out to the colony by the Home Government shortly after the last French Revolution. It was ten o’clock before I reached my brother’s, and I returned to Sydney by the Rose steamer on Saturday evening.”

The squatting districts of Bligh, Liverpool Plains, New England, and Gwydir, comprising a vast extent of pastoral country to the northward and north-westward, are all connected with the Hunter’s River district; their pro-

duce, chiefly wool and tallow, being forwarded for exportation to London principally by way of Maitland. The district of Liverpool Plains is separated from the county of Brisbane by a range of mountains, called the Liverpool range, of the ascent of which, as well as of the physical character of the country generally, a description by the celebrated traveller, Dr. Leichhardt, will be found in page 195.

Liverpool Plains comprise an area of 16,901 square miles, and are 921 feet above the level of the sea: the principal entrance from the eastward is by a pass, discovered by the late Alan Cunningham, Esq., called Pandora's Pass. The town of Tamworth, on the Peel River, which is now the centre of an extensive gold field, has already a population of 254 persons; the Agricultural Company's Estates of nearly 600,000 acres being in the immediate neighbourhood.

The squatting district of New England forms a parallelogram of about 130 miles in length, from south to north, and 100 in breadth, from east to west, comprising an area of 13,100 square miles, or upwards of eight millions of acres. It consists of elevated table land, rising gradually for thirty miles from the summit of the coast range to the westward of Port Macquarie, and then falling gradually for a similar distance towards the interior; the more elevated portion of the Plains or Downs being considerably upwards of 3000 feet high, while the surrounding mountains tower upwards to 6000 feet, and are frequently covered with snow. The climate is consequently much colder than on the coast. Maize does not grow, but Cobbett's corn, a small species of maize, called by the Italians *cinquantino*, from its coming to maturity in fifty days, succeeds well. Wheat has never failed. The country is thinly wooded, and well watered by numerous streams with rocky and pebbly beds, like mountain streams in Scotland. The soil is generally light, but very productive; and the country, with its rich crops and green

fields, has quite an English aspect. Armidale, a rising town in New England, has already a population of 556. It is 270 miles from Maitland, and 370 from Sydney. New England is decidedly a pastoral country, having already 1,905,134 sheep, besides horned cattle and horses; but a large portion of it is admirably adapted for agriculture, and it is capable of supporting a numerous population. In short, there is probably as much good land in New England as in the whole colony of Van Dieman's Land.

AN
HISTORICAL AND STATISTICAL
ACCOUNT
OF
NEW SOUTH WALES:

INCLUDING

A VISIT TO THE GOLD REGIONS,

AND A

DESCRIPTION OF THE MINES;

WITH AN ESTIMATE OF THE PROBABLE RESULTS OF THE
GREAT DISCOVERY.

BY

JOHN DUNMORE LANG, D.D. A.M.

RECENTLY ONE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITY OF SYDNEY IN THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES;
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF FRANCE, OF THE AMERICAN
ORIENTAL SOCIETY, AND OF THE LITERARY INSTITUTE OF OLINDA,
IN THE BRAZILS.

THIRD EDITION;

BRINGING DOWN THE HISTORY OF THE COLONY TO THE
FIRST OF JULY, 1852.

IN TWO VOLUMES. — VOL. II.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1852.