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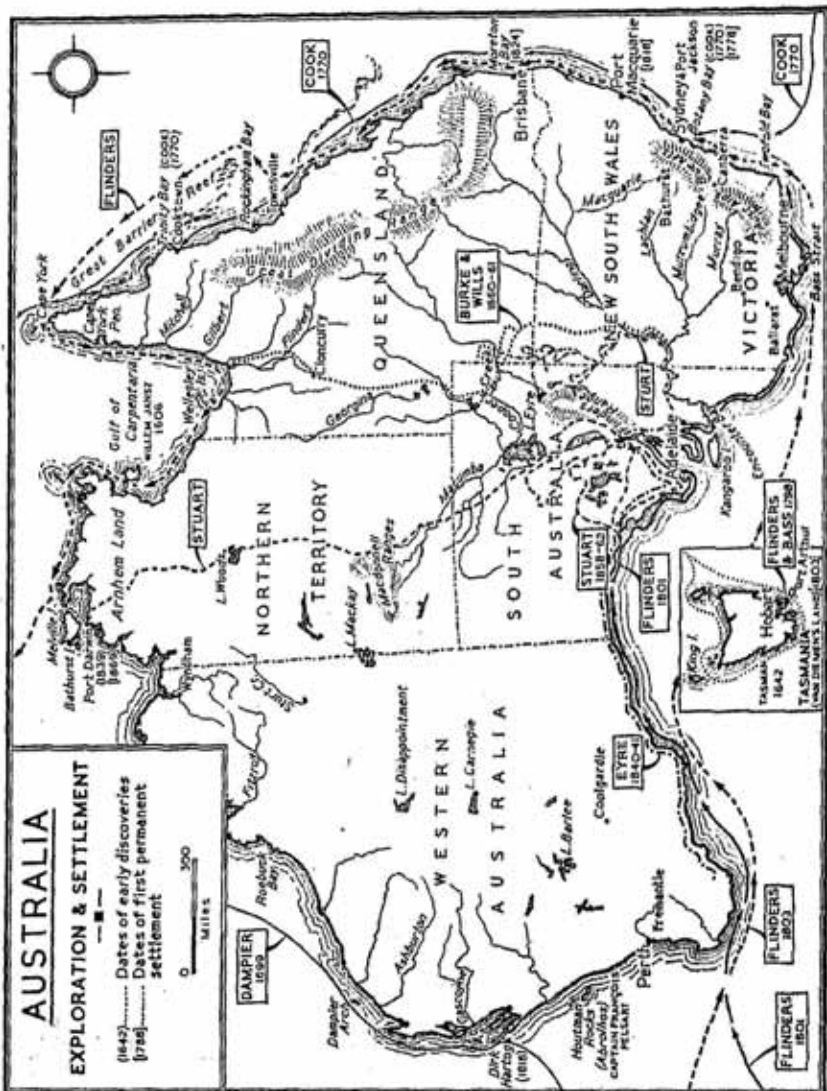
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AUSTRALIA: HER STORY

EXPLORATION & SETTLEMENT

	Dates of early discoveries	Dates of first permanent settlement
[1642].....		
[1780].....		



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AUSTRALIA: HER STORY

Notes on a Nation

BY

KYLIE TENNANT

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Australian history is almost always picturesque; indeed, it is so curious and strange, that it is itself the chiefest novelty the country has to offer, and so it pushes the other novelties into second and third place. It does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies; and all of a fresh new sort, no mouldy old stale ones. It is full of surprises and adventures, and incongruities, and contradictions, and incredibilities; but they are all true, they all happened.

MARK TWAIN



CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE STRANGE COASTS	I
II. PIONEERS, O PIONEERS	12
III. THE REIGN OF THE RUM CORPS	24
IV. PURE MERINO VERSUS EMANCIPIST	32
V. A CONVICT LEAVES HIS MARK	42
VI. THE INLAND SEA	45
VII. 'THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY'	54
VIII. 'VANDEMONIA'—CONVICTS, SEALERS AND BLACKS	66
IX. 'VANDEMONIA'S' PRESS VERSUS THE SYSTEM	83
X. PRIVATE ENTERPRISE TAKES A HAND	92
XI. THE KINGDOM OF THE SQUATTERS	107
XII. THE SAGA OF THE SHEEP	117
XIII. THE RACE ACROSS A CONTINENT	124
XIV. THE ROARING DAYS—GOLD AND REBELLION	139
XV. COBB AND CO.	154
XVI. THE EMIGRANTS	159
XVII. THE KINGS OF THE ROAD	174
XVIII. THE STRUGGLE OF THE GIANTS	193
XIX. COLOUR PROBLEMS AND THE NORTH	207
XX. THE STORMY 'NINETIES	218
XXI. THE COMMONWEALTH	226
XXII. THE PASSING OF THE LIBERAL	237
XXIII. LABOUR 'BLOWS ITS BRAINS OUT'	246
XXIV. THE GLUGS OF GOSH	258

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXV.	FATE TAKES NO NOTICE	268
	IMPORTANT DATES	281
	INDEX	285

MAP—AUSTRALIA: EXPLORATION AND SETTLE- MENT	<i>Frontispiece</i>
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CHAPTER I

THE STRANGE COASTS

THE ROARING WESTERLIES that carried the Dutch on their way from the Cape of Good Hope towards the Spice Islands tempted many a ship out of its course. Compasses and charts were poor, reckonings uncertain. Under a great cloud of canvas the ship would be rippling along through the moonlight, with the captain below writing up his log, when a howl from the lookout, a grating crash, and a chorus of doleful cries, would send him rushing on deck, to christen, in a burst of good Dutch oaths, that portion of the unknown 'Southland' he had just discovered.

Boatloads of starving, sun-shrivelled mariners crept north to Java, with tales of a coast that had given them a welcome as sinister as the grin on a skull. Great seas bursting over the treacherous green and violet coral, steaming mangrove swamps, blazing sand-dunes and the empty cries of sea-birds, and naked black savages were all that greeted them.

The first known discovery of Australia was made in 1606 by Willem Jansz, captain of the *Duyfken*, a Dutch yacht which, after exploring the south coast of New Guinea, the 'Land of Gold', sailed some way down the east coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Jansz had part of his crew killed by the aborigines and reported the new coast as a place to avoid. Not even a Dutchman would find anything there out of which to make money, and for seventeen years it was left severely alone.

Then Commander Hendrick Brouwer, a brilliant navigator, pioneered a new route from the Cape, sailing four thousand miles east before turning north. This cut the passage from Amsterdam from eighteen months to six, and captains were

advised to follow his example. On this new route the Dutch captains frequently found themselves carried too far east; and one group of islands, little more than a great reef thirty-eight miles from the mainland, was given dishonourable mention on the chart as Abrolhos—*abri vossos olhos*—‘Keep you eyes open’.

It was here that the first reluctant settlement in Australia was made. Captain François Pelsart, in command of the crack ship *Batavia*, had gone below sick, leaving the steering to the master. It was 4th June 1629; the sea was calm, the moonlight deceptively peaceful, and the great ship, with its freight of soldiers, sailors, passengers, jewels, chests of money and scarlet cloth, went confidently along, the good westerly behind it.

With a hideous crunching the coral teeth of the Abrolhos bit into the keel, and the proud *Batavia* lurched over on her side, while aboard bedlam broke loose. Above the screams of the sick, the women and children, Pelsart furiously cursed the sullen master. They tried to warp off the ship, but in vain. A heavy sea rose and swamped the decks, while the soldiers and sailors broke into the wine stores and were soon rolling drunk. The only thing to do was to land the passengers on two islands, leaving aboard the *Batavia* the super-cargo, Jerome Cornelis, and some of the crew who were curiously eager to stay. All the way from Holland they had been plotting to mutiny, seize the *Batavia* and turn pirate; and it looked as though their chance had come at last.

Pelsart, half-distracted, set off to the mainland in search of water, and finding none he resolved on the desperate voyage to Java to bring help. He had one little boat and one keg of water, and with them a hundred-to-one hope for all those stranded passengers. If he perished on the thirty-four-day journey to Java, they would perish too. He had to leave nearly two hundred men, women and children on the flat islands of guano and coral, to fry, die, or wait for him.

Casks of water and wine, luckily, floated ashore and, unluckily, as the ship broke up, there also floated ashore, clinging to the mainmast, their evil genius, Jerome Cornelis. It did not take him long to gather thirty-six of the worst men and propound a very simple proposition: 'There is too many people and too little food.'

Cornelis and his cut-throats stole the remaining boat and murdered one hundred and twenty-five of the castaways, all who did not find refuge with Webbye Hays, one of the ship's officers, who had been left in charge on the other island. Webbye Hays, with forty-seven men and weapons made out of nails and hoop-iron, stood knee-deep in the surf to beat off the attacking mutineers.

The minister, an unwilling envoy, was sent with a flag of truce. He had not only his own life to save but that of his daughter, who had been portioned out as part of the loot to one of the gang. Webbye Hays discovered that the flag of truce was a treacherous attempt to buy over some of his men with a bribe of five thousand guilders each. He managed to kill four of the mutineers and the fight went on. Stout-heartedly he prepared to fight to the last, while on the other island the drunken cut-throats pursued a life of murder, wine and riot.

They dressed in scarlet cloth and gold lace, and, according to a Dutch account published in 1647, 'Jerome Cornelis had gone so far in his satanic pride that he had not scrupled to wear different clothes every day and to deck himself out in silk stockings and garters with gold trimmings.' He took as his share the most beautiful and highly-born of the women, Lucretia Jansz, and drew up a solemn document in which the mutineers swore to abide by the allotment of the others on 'their souls' salvation'.

In the midst of the fighting and revelry they were dumb-founded by the sight of a ship that 'bore through the rollers and the dirty depths' straight for them. The hundred-to-one

chance had come off and Pelsart was back again. The faithful Webbye Hays and his men were rescued and the mutineers forced to surrender. Pelsart's first work was to gather the jewels that lay scattered about. They were all recovered except a chain of gold. One of the castaways, while fishing, discovered the money chests resting in the weed, and half a dozen of these were brought to the surface.

What seems to have hurt the rescuers most was the way the stores had been plundered. All that good red cloth and gold lace spoiled! A long document was drawn up condemning Cornelis and his gang. As the ringleader, Cornelis, had to have some mark of distinction: 'First, both his hands shall be cut off and he shall next be punished with the cord at the gallows.' The other chief plotters had only one hand cut off before they were hanged, while their followers were merely hanged.

Pelsart then proceeded in due judicial form to apply the torture deemed necessary to extract the truth of the whole affair. He was shocked to discover that Cornelis 'was not only tainted with abominable crimes but had adopted a most abominable creed'—he did not believe in the Devil or Hell!

The rescuers sailed away, leaving behind them a significant memorial of their visit—a handsome set of gallows from which swung all that remained of the mutineers. Two of the gang, about whose guilt there was some doubt, were marooned on the mainland—Australia's first white settlers!

War with the Portuguese and the reluctance of the Dutch to waste ships which might be spent in profitable trade, kept the Southland a realm of speculation until the shrewd and ambitious Antony van Diemen became Governor-General of the East Indies. Van Diemen commissioned Abel Tasman, as skilful a seaman as ever came to Batavia, to find out what lay south of the arid coast discovered by earlier voyagers. The Governor-General could not believe that this most

wretched of countries was all there was to be found of the fabulous Great South Land.

In two dubious ships and with what stores could be spared, Abel Tasman scoured the South Seas from Mauritius to New Zealand, touching upon the only part of Australia that existed in such latitudes. This land he dutifully called Van Diemen's Land; today it is more correctly named Tasmania. Here the seamen saw no natives, but they saw notches on the trees five feet apart. People who climbed trees in five-foot steps must be surely of very tall stature. If the giants could be persuaded to order Dutch trousers, good business might be done. Had the seamen looked on the other side of the trees, they would have seen other notches which would have decreased their estimate of the height of the giants.

From New Zealand the Maoris came paddling out furiously, rammed the ship's boat, and killed four seamen with short thick clubs. Clearly no place to call for 'refreshment'.

After discovering New Zealand, which he thought might be part of the mythical Great South Land, and circumnavigating Australia, Tasman was reprimanded for not doing more. He was sent out to find his way through Torres Strait, which he failed to do, though he charted a thousand miles of the north-west coast. But he discovered 'no cloves, no nutmegs, not even a peppercorn'. The seventeen elderly gentlemen who ruled over the Dutch East Indies from the company's office in Amsterdam saw no sense in venturing further round a land as huge as it was useless. 'It were to be wished,' wrote these same directors in 1645, when they were faced with the problem of some newly discovered islands, 'that the said lands continued still unknown so as not to tell foreigners the way to the Company's overthrow.'

Curiosity was largely the motive which brought the British to Australia. A pirate named William Dampier printed his journal in 1697 and it became a best seller. In it he argued the possibility of sailing from Cape Horn to Nova Hollandia

'and so make some profitable discovery without going out of your way'. He had been ashore near Buccaneers' Archipelago on the west coast, where, he declared, 'the natives were the miserablest people in the world'. There had been a slump in piracy since the Spanish made peace, and the more industrious pirates had moved to the Pacific. Dampier was not of the more industrious sort—unless with a butterfly net. In his journal he gave one sentence to the sack of Porto Bello in which he took part, and two pages to a description of a sea-cow.

'A man who has no particular objection to the ten commandments, who cannot even raise a thirst when in the tropics, has no right to be a pirate,' comments Professor Arnold Wood. 'Dampier was making use of an honourable trade to serve his personal convenience. When he should have been thinking about murder and loot, he was thinking about crocodiles and beetles. No wonder his exasperated comrades talked of eating him. And looking at his portraits and remembering his habits, no wonder they didn't.'

It was on a fifty-one-day voyage across the Pacific that Captain Swann learned he would have been first choice for the pot because of his fat. 'Ah, Dampier,' he said, 'you would have made them but a poor meal.'

The success of Dampier's journal and the curiosity it aroused concerning Nova Hollandia put Dampier in the way of a new job. He was given a ship into which the carpenter dare not drive a nail because the timber was so old and rotten it broke away like dirt, a crew of ruffians soaked in rum, and a mutinous mate. With these and the blessings of the British Admiralty he was sent in 1699 to the end of the earth to report on the mysterious continent.

He could not approach Australia from Cape Horn, the route he wished to take, because he was instructed to sail at the wrong time of the year. In order to give his mutineers no chance he avoided calling at Cape Town, and even slept on the

quarterdeck with such officers as he could trust and with small-arms within reach. His voyage along the inhospitable north-west coast revealed nothing new. He could find no water, his ship fell apart under him, his precious journals were mostly lost, and he returned home to face a court-martial for marooning the mate. It is little wonder that Dampier returned to piracy and left an account of Australia that discouraged all further attempts at exploration for seventy years.

Much as the Dutch wished to preserve the Spice Islands as a commercial monopoly, English scientists wished to retain the transit of Venus across the sun as peculiarly their own affair. In 1639 a poor young curate named the Reverend Jeremiah Horrocks had hurried through the church service so that he might rush back to his half-crown telescope and record for the first time the passage of Venus across the sun—something no astronomer had ever seen before.

In 1768 the Royal Society petitioned George III for a grant of four thousand pounds so that the transit might be observed, among other places, from somewhere in the South Pacific, for 'the like appearance will not happen again for more than a hundred years'. The money was granted, partly for the sake of science, but also with the object of finding the southern continent and taking possession of it.

Venus was to prove a lucky star for the expedition. Its ship, the *Endeavour*, was not the usual cast-off which the authorities felt might charitably be wasted on a forlorn hope and some uncharted reef. She was a roomy, seaworthy collier, a cat-built bark, well fitted and with ample provisions for eighteen months. 'It was the good qualities of the *Endeavour*,' its commander wrote, 'which enabled me to remain so much longer in the South Seas than anyone had ever been able to do before.'

Another lucky choice was the commander. Lieutenant James Cook, the son of a day-labourer, had risen to command

by sheer ability. A self-taught navigator, astronomer, mathematician and cartographer, he was a leader of men as well. With him on the *Endeavour* went Joseph Banks, a young gentleman of fortune, and his retinue of four servants, four artists and one botanist. With contempt Joseph Banks had rejected the advice of his friends that it would be better that he should make the usual grand tour of Europe. 'Every blockhead does that,' he replied. 'My grand tour shall be one round the world.'

He took with him a neat library and scientific gadgets for capturing whatever crept, swam or flew. All in all it cost him ten thousand pounds—more than twice the cost of the expedition itself. Aboard a craft about half the size of a ferry steamer the galaxy of scientific talent sadly squeezed the ship's officers, but in three years they had plenty of time to get used to it.

The transit of Venus was observed to everyone's satisfaction from the island of Tahiti. Cook then plunged one thousand five hundred miles to the south, where the theorists held the southern continent should be, but found nothing beyond some seaweed and a seal. He sailed round the two islands of New Zealand and struck out to the unknown east coast of Australia.

The first landing was made at Botany Bay, which Cook at first called Stingray Harbour in memory of some excellent meals he made there. The country was a tract of poor scrub, sand dunes and swamp, and Banks thought it unutterably desolate. Cook was more cheerful, and wrote that parts of it might bear settlement. He crossed out Stingray Harbour in his journals and let Banks have his 'Botany Bay' as the value of the vegetable finds became more apparent.

Up the coast they went, leaving behind them a trail of names as inspiring as a mouthful of ashes. Then they struck the Great Barrier Reef. Today the Barrier Reef conjures up visions of flame-tipped fishes, violent-hued corals and green

tranquil pools in which naturalists gaze as into paradise. To Cook it was a hell, and even Banks forgot his enthusiasm for nature in anxiety for his neck. 'It is a wall of rock,' he wrote, 'rising perpendicularly out of the unfathomable ocean, always overflowed at high water, generally seven or eight feet, and dry in places at low water. The large waves of the vast ocean, meeting with so sudden a resistance, make a terrible surf breaking mountains high.' The tide dragged them within eighty or a hundred yards of the breakers. 'The same sea that washed the side of the ship rose in a breaker prodigiously high the very next time it did rise; so that between us and destruction was only a dismal valley, the breadth of one wave, and even now no bottom could be felt with a hundred and twenty fathoms.'

They tried inside the reef and outside the reef. When the *Endeavour* struck, the ship's luck still held, for a chunk of coral wedged itself conveniently in the hole until she could be plugged, drawn ashore and patched up. The luck would have been of little use without Cook's masterly navigation. 'We have sailed over three hundred and sixty leagues by the lead,' he wrote, 'without ever having a leadsman out of the chains.' It was a phenomenal performance. They hoisted the flag and took possession of the country, calling it New Holland, but as an afterthought Cook gave it the name New South Wales.

Off the coast of Java the *Endeavour* got her first news of the world she had left two years before. The position at home was that 'the Government was in utmost disorder, the people crying up and down the streets: "Down with King George! King Wilkes for ever!"' while 'the Americans had refused to pay taxes of any kind and an English army had been sent to deal with the rebellion'.

In Batavia they found that the ship's timbers were so nearly eaten through that only the thickness of a worn sixpence remained between the hold and the sea. They had to stay for

repairs, and here the luck began to break. Cook had been prouder of the way he kept the crew healthy than he had been of anything else. Sauerkraut was a preventive against scurvy, and he used a plan to popularise it, 'which I never knew to fail with seamen'. He had sauerkraut dressed for the cabin table for the benefit of the officers. The seamen could take it or leave it. There was such a run on sauerkraut that Cook had to put everyone on an allowance. Cook always divided any turtle or shark, fish or kangaroo, equally among the men, and they were all in excellent health as a result of his care. But in Batavia fever struck the ship. Her course across the Indian Ocean was marked by a sinister trail of sharks waiting for the dead to be flung overboard. Twenty-three died, and Banks, after suffering 'the pains of the damned', was the only stricken man to recover.

Back in England Joseph Banks was lionised. 'The new-found country ought to be named Banksia from its discoverer,' wrote the famous botanist Linnaeus.

Cook returned twice to the Pacific, in the end to be clubbed to death by natives in Hawaii. 'Cook,' wrote the French explorer La Pérouse, 'will always appear to me to be the greatest of navigators.' The *Endeavour* was bought by the French, renamed *La Liberté*, and, laden with whale oil, was chased by an English frigate into Newport, Rhode Island. Trying to leave Newport she ran aground and was left to rot, the only scraps of her that remained being made into the sampson-post at Newport and a carved box which was presented to J. Fenimore Cooper. The keel which had braved so many dangers of storm and coral reef settled slowly into the mud, unregarded.

Botany Bay, the name which was to arouse such sinister echoes in British history, stayed in the mind not only of Joseph Banks, who was prompt to recommend it as a fit place for a convict settlement when a Commission consulted him some years later, but it was fixed just as vividly in the

memory of a certain midshipman, Magra, whose parents were solid citizens of New York. Off the coast of New South Wales Magra had found himself in hot water and had been listed in the log as 'good-for-nothing', because Cook's clerk had gone to bed drunk and awakened to find that while he slept someone had cut off not only all his clothes, but the tips of his ears. Cook justly recorded that it was partly the victim's fault. 'Still,' so the matter seemed to him, 'there was something wrong on board if a well-meaning man could not go comfortably to bed dead drunk without danger of finding when he woke up that the ends of his ears had been cut off without his knowledge by someone whom he could only suspect.'

The entry against Magra was later crossed out as Cook was in the habit of crossing out entries against men who proved their heroism as great as their lapses. Midshipman Magra, grown up, a respectable worthy, with his name changed to Matra, wrote a paper in 1783 in which he advocated that the American loyalists should be settled at Botany Bay. This proposal was read by Lord Sydney, the Home Secretary, who nevertheless left the loyalists to starve in London. Four years later the slow-moving Sydney remembered that paper when he had to consider some plan for dumping the unwanted convicts out of England.

'Botany Bay?' he pondered. 'Hm! A very good place. Joe Banks says so. Farthest spot on the globe from England. Not a hope of the beggars getting back. Excellent!'

PIONEERS, O PIONEERS

*Scarce can our fields—such crowds at Tyburn die—
With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply.*

SO DR. JOHNSON in his satire, *London*, touched on the horror that was attracting the attention of even the rulers of England. Hulks full of human wreckage lay rotting on Britain's shores, the filthy, verminous convicts screaming, fighting, groaning in their chains, so that the respectable citizens were scandalised. Hanging them did not seem to deter other criminals, and year by year more laws were passed against evil-doers until the death sentence was given for nearly two hundred offences.

A woman who tried to pass a bad shilling was strangled and burnt; a nineteen-year-old mother who had taken a piece of coarse linen for her starving and naked children was hanged for it, the baby suckling at her breast as the cart started for Tyburn. In 1815 a private member in the House of Commons tried to get a bill through, abolishing the death penalty for the theft of five shillings. It passed the House of Commons but was defeated in the House of Lords.

The starving unruly poor, their numbers and their rat-like savagery, made the rich uneasy. Until the American states rebelled, it had been possible to ship out to the planters a surplus whose sale brought in the tidy sum of forty thousand pounds a year. The Declaration of Independence upset this convenient arrangement, and in 1779 a committee was set up to consider how to establish 'a Colony of Disgracefuls at some distant part of the earth'.

Ten years later there were in England a hundred thousand convicts of whom forty thousand were awaiting transportation; and while gaol fever carried off hundreds, there was still an annoying multitude eating off their heads at sixpence a day. A proposal to sell them to the slave markets of Morocco was regretfully discarded; shipments were sent out to the fever coast of Africa where the death-rate was known to be high, but the soldier guards died as well as the convicts, and their relatives raised an outcry. An attempt to send convicts to Gibraltar brought furious protests from the Governor. New South Wales, so favourably recommended by Sir Joseph Banks, had the advantage of being the furthest removed British possession. It was calculated that a convict in the hulks cost twenty-six pounds fifteen and eleven pence a year, while he could be transported ten thousand miles for less than twenty pounds. The view of the Government was that it could easily spare any number of convicts for the experiment so long as it was not asked for too much money. But there was no notion of a colony as a society. Pitt and Sydney, the statesmen responsible, merely wished to solve a troublesome problem.

The First Fleet was made up of one frigate, an armed tender, six transports and three store-ships. The scene of departure at Portsmouth was one of excitement and confusion, the ships cluttered with boxes and luggage, pens containing sheep, goats, pigs, puppies, kids, turkeys, geese, ducks, chickens, pigeons and cats. The soldiers were buying and storing away all they could afford, even to a piano; the sailors being signed on hung about the docks getting in the way of the wagons and the shouting officers. Long lines of convicts with heavy iron locks and fetters riveted on them clanked dismally towards the ships, not too distressed—despite their swollen and inflamed legs—to snatch at the hats or watch-chains of the onlookers and exchange jokes and abuse with the crowd.

Captain Arthur Phillip had been appointed Governor of the new colony, an appointment that came as a surprise to everyone. An obscure post-captain living on half-pay and quietly cultivating his farm, he must have felt a little surprised himself. A neighbour of his, a most important functionary known as 'Old George Rose', had recommended him apparently because they shared a common passion for farming. Governor Arthur Phillip was a man whose heroism was so quiet that everyone overlooked it. He took it as a matter of course that he should advance single-handed and smiling towards bands of hostile natives who had been driven to frenzy by the ill-treatment of soldiers and convicts.

In almost every case he won the natives' confidence and friendship, but on one occasion he was speared in the shoulder. He would not allow the spear to be withdrawn until he had set all his papers in order, because he knew that drawing out a spear often proved fatal.

He was conscientious, even-tempered, an excellent navigator, and for his time and his training in the brutal school of the Navy, a humane man. His unusual care for the convicts filled the other officers with astonishment. He wrote to the authorities with innocent industry suggesting improvements, begging for an increase in the convicts' rations, protesting against over-crowding, asking that the ships be cleaned and fumigated, requesting wine for the sick, clothing, saddles, fruit-trees, cuttings. It was not his fault that no records of the convicts' sentences were sent out until two years after they landed. He wanted the convicts carefully graded and selected. Instead he was given all the convicts the superintendents of the hulks wished to get rid of; there were old men and women, one woman of eighty-seven; the women were almost naked and very filthy, some mentally afflicted, many diseased, several pregnant. Fine material for colonists! The women's clothing stores were left behind, and, as no needles and thread were provided, they were in an embarrassing condition at

the end of the voyage. The surgeon threatened to leave when he saw the disease-ridden wrecks he was expected to tend.

The chaplain, who had spent the time before the fleet sailed in a round of London parties, would not endanger his health by going down into the hold where the air was putrid. If a dying convict wanted his ministrations, he ordered the convict to be brought on deck. The ship was well supplied with tracts, but the tools were of the cheapest and poorest quality, and only one man knew anything about farming.

No convict overseers had been sent out, and the marines refused from the first to do anything except guard duty. Their officers were quarrelsome, petty, disappointed men, and through the neglect of their major they had neither musket-balls, cartridge paper, nor tools to keep the small-arms in repair.

The ships swarmed with bugs, cockroaches and rats, particularly rats. The women were sick and fought. The sailors demanded extra pay—with which they bought provisions to bribe the women. Through all, Phillip went equably on his way, adjusting affairs as best he could, buying extra unauthorised provisions to keep the convicts alive, rationing the water as it ran low, trying to keep the peace with Major Ross, the commander of the marines and the greatest grouch of the expedition.

If Arthur Phillip had any illusions about the future awaiting him, the sight of Botany Bay must have dispelled them. Sir Joseph Banks, in his botanical enthusiasm, had forgotten the flat, grey scrub with the heat-haze dancing, the white-hot glaring sand-dunes, the wind-swept shallow anchorage, the flies, the huge red and black ants, the snakes, the air of desolation which brooded over Botany Bay. A careful survey convinced Phillip it was impossible. He went scouting up the coast, and eight days later he moved the settlement out of Botany Bay into the ample and peaceful harbour of Port Jackson, which he delightedly acclaimed as the finest harbour in the world.

There was a stream of fresh water, natives as friendly as could be desired, deep sheltered anchorage. Landing in the late summer evening of 26th January 1788, under the shade of the gum trees he had the King's Commission read and three cheers for the King given; then he issued a pint of rum to every man and a half-pint to every woman. The first British settlers in Australia began gathering sticks for their camp-fires, with apprehensive glances at the black shadows of the unknown creeping on them as dusk closed down.

If only he had fifty free settlers! Sitting alone in his tent, turning a deaf ear to the noise of the officers' piano, the carousal of convicts and soldiers who had certainly had more than a pint of rum, Phillip must have faced the future with a sinking heart. Most of the convicts were too feeble for the hard work of clearing, felling trees, tilling and planting. Everywhere was confusion, muddle, incompetence. He had no overseers, and to elect them from the convicts would cause trouble with discipline. But what else was he to do when the marines refused to do anything but idle about, eating, drinking, quarrelling? If he buried his head in his hands and groaned, nobody heard him. He was sick himself; he had a terrible gnawing pain in his side which was to be his constant companion during the five years of his sojourn. Sometimes on his exploring trips he would fall unconscious with pain, but he always got up, apologised, and went on again.

There was a great range of blue peaks that rose like a wall to the west. He was burning to explore them. The convicts began to tell stories of a white nation beyond the Blue Mountains waiting to welcome the scarred, lonely exiles, and every now and then one or other, believing the story, would slip quietly away to die of hunger, thirst, or the black men's spears.

Phillip punished any theft from the stores by hanging. He hanged the convicts and marines with equal impartiality. Thieves, thieves, everywhere! The blacks stole, the marines,

the convicts stole. The convicts were quite well behaved, Phillip wrote patiently: 'Their crimes, with few exceptions, have been confined to procuring the common necessities of life, crimes which it may be presumed will not be committed when a more plentiful ration renders these little robberies unnecessary.'

The ration was poor enough. Each person received for a week's supply: two and a half pounds of flour, two pounds of sodden rancid salt pork which had been years in the cask and could not be boiled because it shrank by half, a pint of hard dry peas and a pound of rice, of which each grain was alive and wriggling. Convicts ate their week's ration in two meals, and then, desperate with hunger, stole to keep alive.

Soldiers and convicts were merciless to the natives, and Phillip wished the natives well treated. Captain Tench tells in his journal how 'a convict was taken in the act of stealing fishing tackle from Daringa, wife of Colbee. The Governor ordered that he should be severely flogged in the presence of as many natives as could be assembled, to whom the cause of the punishment should be explained. Many of them of both sexes accordingly attended . . . there was not one of them that did not testify strong abhorrence of the punishment and equal sympathy with the sufferer. The women were particularly affected. Daringa shed tears, and Barangaroo, kindling into anger, snatched a stick and menaced the executioners.'

It took time to educate the simple natives up to white men's standards. They were not squeamish and their traditional courtship was a blow on the head with a club. But a 'Botany Bay dozen' was twenty-five lashes, and for trying to escape a man might receive a thousand lashes. A severe flogging cut a man into a red jelly through which the bones protruded, and onlookers complained that at twenty-five yards the skin, blood and hair spattered all over them.

Phillip, besides the problems of justice and discipline, had the morals of the convicts at heart. 'The women,' he wrote

in his dispatches, 'I shall suppose to have neither virtue nor honesty . . . I don't know but that it may be best if the most abandoned are permitted to receive the visits of the convicts in the limits allotted to them at certain hours, and under certain restrictions. The rest of the women I should keep apart and by permitting the men to be in their company when not at work they will, I suppose, marry.'

The day Phillip's fleet left Botany Bay two French ships commanded by the explorer the Comte de La Pérouse put into that anchorage. La Pérouse spent two months in Botany Bay careening his ships and building two boats, while some of the first scientists of France studied the country. This encounter was a cheering one for Phillip and his officers. After all, New South Wales was not the lost and forgotten hole they had thought. The French were given a friendly welcome and frequent visits were exchanged. The last tidings ever heard of La Pérouse were of his stay at Botany Bay. Then he sailed out into the Pacific and vanished. Many explanations have been advanced as to his end, but the most evidential is that his ships were wrecked at Vanikoro and all who escaped shipwreck were killed by the natives.

It was suspected that with La Pérouse's ships went two fair shoplifters who were missing after the Frenchmen sailed. Convicts were always ready to leave by whatever means. A little family stole Phillip's gig and in it made a harrowing journey of three thousand miles to Timor, discovering the first coal deposit on their way. In Timor, instead of being presented with a medal, they were snugly returned to the punishment awaiting them. Another convict came back with wild tales of gold, but he was accused of having manufactured the gold out of a shoe-buckle and was flogged.

The settlement began to starve in good earnest, and even when the weak and sick died in increasing numbers, there was still not enough for the survivors. A man who was invited to a feast of rat or crow, to a delicious dog stew,

considered himself blessed. Just when Phillip calculated that the rations, spread out as far as desperation would go, could still last only four months, a ship came sailing in, and the guns boomed their welcome. Mothers fiercely kissed their children and rushed to the shore to feast hungry eyes on the miracle. They were not forgotten. England had remembered them. All the dreadful loneliness and silence, the hard work, the pain and hunger! Men and women wept together with thankfulness.

The ship, the *Juliana*, carried no food. She brought over two hundred prostitutes, and the news that the supply ship had been wrecked off the Cape of Good Hope. Over two hundred useless mouths to eat their provisions! The voyage had lasted eleven months and the women were in bad shape. Worst news of all was that a second fleet was being fitted out to pour more convicts into the struggling settlement.

Phillip put a good face on things and gave a banquet at Government House—a slightly better hut than the others. Each of the officers invited brought his own bread impaled on the point of his sword. The exiles learned that the French had rebelled against their rulers and were sending them to the guillotine. The news must have shocked to the soul men who were accustomed to hang anyone who stole a morsel of bread, particularly men like Major Ross who took such a vicious delight in flogging the prisoners and insulting the Governor that Phillip finally sent him off to Norfolk Island with the worst of the convicts. There he could flog men to death, but he could deliver complaints and insults only by letter.

The marines had been a pest, but had Phillip known what was approaching in the Second Fleet he would have welcomed even Major Ross back in exchange. 'There shall be no slavery in a free land,' the Governor had written proudly, 'and consequently no slaves.' He had been authorised by his commission to import native women from the islands for the soldiers and convicts, but he refused to do it. Why should

they be brought to Sydney to suffer needlessly? Then the Second Fleet arrived, and the first officers to board the ships returned white, sick and swearing.

'The slave trade is merciful to what I have seen in this Fleet,' Captain Hill reported. Dead convicts were lying in their irons among the living, and the survivors were so starving that they took the tobacco out of the mouths of the dead men and chewed it themselves. They were allowed half a pint of water a day. To each was allotted the space of two average-sized coffins, and they were not even in chains, but in iron shackles or bolts nine inches in length, which did not permit them to move except at the risk of a broken limb. The contractors were not interested in making a quick voyage. They drew sixpence a day for the food of each convict, and the longer the voyage the longer the subsidy lasted. Of course, if the convict died, that was just clear profit.

Phillip's Colonial Surgeon, Dr. White, wrote: 'A great number of them were lying, some half and the others quite naked, without bed or bedding, unable to turn or help themselves. The smell was so offensive that I could not bear it. Some of these unhappy people died after the ship came into the harbour, and their dead bodies, cast upon the shore, were seen lying naked upon the rocks.'

The human fiends in charge of these wretched creatures had taken all their few belongings, their clothes and knives, and opened a store in Sydney to sell them. However, the prices they asked were too high, and they did not make the profit they expected. More ships came in, and these carried on board, as well as old diseased convicts to add to the burden of the settlement, the notorious New South Wales Corps, the 'Rum Corps' of infamous memory, which included in its ranks the ancestors of some of Australia's most prosperous families.

A certain get-rich-quick Major Grose had proposed to the Home Secretary that he should enlist a force for service at

Botany Bay. Major Grose would raise two companies without expense to His Majesty's Government if he received a lieutenant-colonelcy of the corps and the pickings that went with it. His recruiting sergeants combed the hulks, particularly the soldiers' hulk, the *Savoy*, and a promising pack of human wolves was assembled.

Of the New South Wales Corps Governor Hunter later wrote: 'Characters who have been disgraceful in every regiment of His Majesty's service have been thought fit and proper recruits for the New South Wales Corps.' There was no rush for commissions, officers with any reputation preferring to hold aloof. The Irish political prisoner, Holt, describes 'these old tailors and shoemakers, stay-makers, man milliners, tobacconists and pedlars who were called captains and lieutenants'; and all were drawn into the corps by the hope of making easy money. Their geographical knowledge was of the slightest. Some had come prepared to shake the pagoda tree by trade with the Eastern potentates. Others had visions of themselves reclining languorously under the palm trees, waited upon by silk-clad natives.

In January 1791 the first contingent of the Rum Corps arrived, and the Governor noted with alarm the familiar way in which the soldiers mingled with the convicts, almost as old acquaintances. They not only fraternised with the criminals and quarrelled over the women, but broke into open mutiny four days later when they tore down the house of a man who had offended them. 'It is natural enough in every inhabitant of this colony to entertain apprehensions of the safety of their persons,' the Governor reported.

The soldiers were jealous of what they called, quaintly enough, the honour of the corps, and they took a magnificent oath not to suffer any soldier to be punished, no matter what crime he might have committed against the civilians. The officers imported rum in proportion to their importance; they had first choice of the women; and by their little

transactions brought in from five hundred to one thousand five hundred per cent profit. For half a gallon of rum they could buy up an acre of wheat, which would have maintained the owner for a year. The officers were the first to board any vessel entering the port, and they formed a ring to buy up the whole cargo. Any member was fined a thousand pounds for buying outside the ring, but the profits were so enormous that there was no real temptation.

They framed subtle and slanderous lies against a succession of governors who fought to curb their rum traffic. Phillip was more broken by the schemings of the corps than by any other misfortune. He had had no illusions about an earthly paradise in the new country, but the Rum Corps had made it into a hell run on commercial and military lines.

When Philip left, in October 1792, the Rum Corps was free to rule without a governor for three years. Not that a governor made much difference. Captain John Macarthur, one of the most astute of the officers, openly boasted that he had engineered the dismissal of every governor up to Macquarie's time, and his unscrupulous exploits made this most credible.

Governor King's reports were stolen on one occasion and worthless paper substituted. The officers interfered with every branch of the administration. The first general order issued by Lieutenant-Governor Grose suspended the civil magistracy set up by Phillip. All authority was to be vested in the Rum Corps. Seven officers constituted a criminal court and a majority of five could pass a death sentence. When Captain John Hunter came to the colony as governor in 1795, his first act was to restore the civil power, and from then on it was war between the corps and the governors. The officers might fight duels among themselves, but to the governors, the free settlers, the convicts, they presented a united front.

In the hurly-burly of conflicting interests the convicts, of course, found themselves no better off. One of the favourite

camping spots of the blacks had been a little island in the harbour which the new settlers appropriated as an excellent place for leaving convicts to starve, playfully renaming the island Pinchgut. Here, in 1796, a large gallows was erected and one Morgan was hanged there, being dipped in tar so that he might the longer remain as a landmark. In those days it was the fashion to record any appropriate speech from the gallows, and legend reports that Morgan's last remark was: 'You have here indeed a beautiful harbour.'

The last thing the convicts saw on leaving their home was a gallows; the first thing they viewed on arrival was the beautiful harbour with the remains of its admirer still dangling from the Pinchgut gallows. The welcome was significant.

CHAPTER III

THE REIGN OF THE RUM CORPS

THE CONVICTS sent to Australia were those the English ruling class felt they could not hang. Since anyone could be hanged for the theft of a few shillings, those transported for seven years were often first offenders who would nowadays be dismissed under a First Offenders' Act. Children were transported for life for stealing a handkerchief or a pewter pot. An old soldier who was starving was transported for stealing a broom.

The 'indigent poor' were a menace. When the aristocracy enclosed three million five hundred acres of village land, it drove to the towns villagers benefited by the slightly better measures of sanitation prevailing there. Strange as it may sound, there came a lowering of the death-rate as a result of this living in towns. The birth-rate did not rise, but there were more people who lived to a marrying age. England, the rich felt, was being over-crowded by poor, and not the nicest, most submissive kind of poor. Worst of all, educated men were framing petitions asking for a vote for these poor, asking for reforms, for higher wages. This came under the heading of sedition. There were already laws to deal with the workman, one giving him three months' gaol for even tending to 'hamper' his employer.

As for the villagers, the Game Code kept them in order. Men with starving wives and children broke stones on the edge of great parks where game was preserved for the pleasure-shooting of the rich. Any villager of spirit became a poacher.

'How do you live,' a Surrey roadmaker was asked, 'upon two and six a week?'

'I don't live upon it,' he answered.

'How do you live then?'

'Why,' he said, 'I poach. It's better to be hanged than to starve to death.'

It was found impossible to hang all the poachers. In 1829, for example, nineteen poachers were tried at Warwick, eleven of them under the age of twenty-one. All except two were given the death sentence, but mercy was shown and they were reprieved and transported, seven for life, nine for fourteen years, while two were sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour at home.

The Hammonds, in their grand book *The Village Labourer*, described 'the loss a village suffered when its poachers were snapped up by a game-preserving bench and tossed to the other side of the world. The village Hampdens of that generation sleep on the shores of Botany Bay. Those who blame the supine character of the English labourer forget that his race was passed through a sieve and only the weak-spirited left.'

Then, of course, there were the Irish, always considered by the English ruling class as 'undesirables'. In the First Fleet more than a third of the convicts were men who had expressed their dislike of the atrocious Government which was considered good enough for Ireland. A letter from a priest, one of the most humane and pitiful documents in history, praying that he might have the 'happiness' to accompany the Irish prisoners at no cost to the state, was contemptuously ignored. No one was going to have any happiness if the Government could help it.

In 1801 Governor King complained that the colony was swamped with political prisoners. At the same time he assured the Government of their orderly behaviour, and added: 'I wish I could say as much of some officers in the New South Wales Corps.'

A notable group of convicts were the Dorsetshire labourers. Their crime was not the advocacy of political reforms, but

the still more dreadful crime of suggesting that they should get enough to eat. The wage considered adequate for a labourer in the southern counties was about sixpence a day if he were single, a shilling if he were married. Men and women were living on roots and sorrel; in the summer of 1830 four harvest labourers were found under a hedge dead of starvation, and theirs was no exceptional case. 'All they say they want,' a spy wrote, after visiting the village pot-houses, 'is two shillings and sixpence a day, and then they will be comfortable.'

Instead of giving them the two and sixpence, the House of Lords decided that 'the sword of Justice shall be unsheathed to smite . . . the rebel against the Law'. The Archbishop of Canterbury, at the request of the Privy Council, composed a prayer which began: 'Have pity, O Lord, on the simple and ignorant, who have been led astray, and recall them to a sense of their duty.'

The simple and ignorant were arrested in hundreds. At least four hundred and seventy-five were transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. Four hundred rotted in English gaols; the ringleaders were hanged. This was at a time when convicts, particularly in Van Diemen's Land, dropped on their knees and thanked God when they heard they were to be hanged.

Side by side with the poacher and the pickpocket, scholars and heroes toiled in the new land under the lash. In 1793 a group of young Scotchmen had reprinted, in Glasgow, pamphlets asking for reform of Parliament and universal suffrage. They were transported, the Government refusing to make the slightest difference between them and 'other felons'. One of them, Margarot, served fourteen years and lived to testify before the Parliamentary Commission investigating transportation.

The other ringleader, Thomas Muir, a Master of Arts and Edinburgh advocate, was sentenced to seven years' transportation. George Washington interested himself in the

fitting-out of the *Otter*, ostensibly a trading vessel, which sailed into Sydney Harbour and rescued Muir. On the journey to America the gallant little *Otter* was wrecked off the coast of California. Only Muir and two others escaped. After walking over three thousand miles to Panama, Muir shipped aboard a Spanish man-of-war in order to reach his friends. The ship was chased and captured by a British frigate and the unfortunate Muir was badly wounded. When the boarding-party came to throw him overboard, the officer in charge noticed the Bible that the young man clasped in his arms. Idly he opened it, and then noticed Muir's name. Thomas Muir! The officer knew him for an old friend and schoolfellow. Quickly he assured himself Muir was still alive. He had him cared for all the way to Cadiz, where he was lodged in hospital.

The news of Muir's adventures ran over Europe. The French Directory invited him to Bordeaux, where leading citizens gave a magnificent banquet in his honour. At the public welcome in Paris he fainted from weakness and excitement. Wherever he went, he was cheered. But he did not live long to enjoy his fame. In 1798 he died at Chambley, and was given a state funeral by the French Government. He was only thirty-three.

New South Wales governors complained that prisoners bred up in 'genteel life or professions' and unaccustomed to manual labour, were a dead weight on the stores. Pickpockets made good shepherds because the lazy life suited their shiftless disposition, but a forger or embezzler was likely to be too restless for such occupation. Many of the convicts, city-bred, were happier carrying on dram-shops for the officers to whom they had been assigned than in following a plough.

The whole trade of the colony was carried on in rum; food was bartered for rum; land was bartered for rum. It was the currency of the colony. When on one occasion a hundred acres were given in half-acre blocks to the common soldiers,

John Macarthur placed a hogshead of rum upon the ground and bought the lot with it.

Soon the officers of the corps brought out their own distillery plants to manufacture rum from the crops which should have fed the hungry colony. The quarrelsome, dangerous Macarthur was one of the great men of the colony. He and his party were opposed to giving land to the 'idle poor and worthless' while they could take it for themselves. They fought with the Governors over the granting of land to free settlers and ex-convicts, and a constant stream of lies trickled home from the corps to England.

In 1801, when Macarthur was hastening to give his friends his version of an intrigue, he stopped off at India to see Sir Robert Farquhar. That gentleman was crestfallen under official disapproval for having unsuccessfully attacked the Dutch possessions at Amboyna. Macarthur persuaded him not to send the letter of apology he was framing.

'Tell them,' he coolly advised, 'that you are determined to renew the attack. Having thus written, do so—and mind you take the place.'

Farquhar took the advice, the place, and the consequent promotion. Macarthur had made another and influential friend. It was strange that a man of his dangerously bad temper could always find important friends. On the way out with the Second Fleet he had insisted on changing ship in mid-ocean because he could not get on with anyone who was fool enough to challenge him. He was unscrupulous and an intriguer, but for all that he was an excellent land-owner whose flocks, particularly his imported merinos, multiplied and whose acres stretched in ever-increasing distances. 'Half of the colony belongs to him already and he very soon will get the other half,' Governor King complained.

The sale and barter of rum became a scandal. The chief gaoler, though not exactly permitted to convert the gaol into a grog-shop, had a licensed house right opposite the gaol

door, in which he sold rum publicly on his own behalf. Magistrates rolled drunk on the bench while they sentenced prisoners for being drunk. The trouble was that men set out from England with the best intentions, but the strangeness of everything, the eternal shrilling of the locusts, the heat, the monotony and the loneliness drove them desperate. Those who made a struggle could succeed, but against the dry sunlight, the wide freedom of the land, men had set a system as narrow and rigid as an iron wall.

But there began to grow up outside the officer class and the system by which they grabbed land, flogged and broke convicts, a class of people who had been what the settlers politely called 'Government men'. Men with scarred backs and hard faces, who nevertheless carried their heads high and looked their betters in the eye.

Governor King, in the hope of breaking the power of the Rum Corps, gave ex-convicts leave to sell rum, and they soon began to compete with the officers in trade. They were not so greedy, they would advance loans at less interest, but the officers were bitterly enraged at the insult the Governor had heaped upon them in expecting them to compete with convicts. They set ugly rumours going about King; they published anonymous and venomous lampoons against him. The campaign spread to England and King was recalled to explain himself. Only with difficulty did he extricate himself from the snares of Macarthur and his group.

In England it was perceived that the Rum Corps had become not only insolent but over-powerful. The next governor, Captain William Bligh, 'Bligh of the *Bounty*', was sent out in 1805 with orders to put the Rum Corps in its place. An honest, brutal, high-tempered mariner, he was no real match for Macarthur, although at first he held his own.

Macarthur met him with every profession of friendship, and as a generous gesture he offered to take a large number of convicts off the public stores, 'just a friendly little arrangement',

which would give Macarthur five shillings' worth of labour out of each convict for the price of his food, which was five pence. Bligh bluntly refused the offer. He declared war by issuing stringent laws against the barter of rum for food and clothing. He showed himself energetic and painstaking in the way he dealt with one of the periodic famines caused by a flood of the Hawkesbury River farmlands. He opened the King's stores to the settlers and allowed them generous terms for repayment. He slaughtered Government cattle to feed the people. All in all, he cut the profits of the Rum Corps to a modicum of the former one thousand five hundred per cent.

When Macarthur imported stills, the Governor impounded them, to the indignant astonishment of that defender of private property. Then matters came to a head over a court case, again concerning Macarthur. An ex-convict was caught escaping on one of Macarthur's ships, and the Chief Justice, an old enemy of his, issued a warrant against Macarthur. Macarthur sent word that he spurned it, with further reflections on the Chief Justice. Bligh sent two chief constables with three assistants armed with cutlasses and staves to arrest Macarthur. Released on bail, Macarthur gathered his adherents together and prepared for action. The night before his trial Macarthur, the six officers who were to act as jury, his two bailsmen and his son, were entertained at a public mess-dinner, the regimental band playing and the colours flying. The case opened with the officers suggesting to the Chief Justice that he should retire and leave the matter to them. He refused; and when they ordered him to leave the bench, he adjourned the court. The next day, the 26th January 1808, the Rum Corps marched to Government House, arrested Governor Bligh and confined him to barracks for twelve months, during which time the corps carried on the government, and there were more land grants than ever before.

With their usual flair for slander the officers circulated the story that Bligh had been captured hiding under his bed. Many people had given red-hot opinions of 'Bully' Bligh, but no one had ever accused him of being a coward. To be locked in a barracks for twelve months nearly drove him demented. When the corps finally permitted him to leave Sydney, he sailed to Tasmania, hatching crazy schemes for revenge.

Lachlan Macquarie, the next governor, arrived in Sydney in December 1810, to be greeted with effusive loyalty. He listened tolerantly to the half-frenzied babblings of Bligh. The man, he wrote to his brother, was 'a great plague'; he was 'heartily glad to get rid of him'; a 'most disagreeable sort of person to have any dealings or publick business to transack with'. Nor had he any time for Bligh's foes or 'their rebellious and mutinous conduct'.

Bligh, like all previous governors, was a naval man. Macquarie was a soldier and he brought his own 73rd Highlanders with him. There would be no more of this undignified brawling if he knew it. Macquarie did not realise his own luck in that Macarthur had set out post-haste for England, where he was to remain for many years under threat of criminal proceedings if he set foot in New South Wales. By the time the tiger slunk back his teeth had been drawn, and meanwhile Colonel Macquarie could condescend to Captain Macarthur's able and astute lady, who so wisely ruled her spouse's possessions in his absence.

The Rum Corps was disbanded, and the officers, given the chance of resigning or returning to England, were only too pleased to resign and stay on in New South Wales. It was better far to cling to their wealth in the new land than to be nobodies at home. As private magnates and lords of the soil they were to become quite as big a pest as they had been in their military capacity.

PURE MERINO VERSUS EMANCIPIST

LACHLAN MACQUARIE was a big, ugly, warm-hearted Scot who came prepared to spread his benevolence like a plaid over his feudal retainers. He was governor of a convict settlement? Good! He would reform the convicts by kindly treatment. Free settlers begged his fatherly care? Good again! He would protect them. In his scarlet uniform and gold lace he drove about in his carriage pointing out necessary improvements. For centuries his clan had clung to the sea-swept islands of west Scotland like a grim twisted pine to a cliff. In this hot, generous Australia he rejoiced in his strength, and unfolded all the curious, lovable quirks which had lain so long frozen under the hard surface of the military martinet.

The authorities in England became alarmed at the results of Macquarie's good treatment. 'The dread of transportation,' wrote Lord Bathurst dolefully, 'is very much diminished among the lower classes. Those sentenced shouted and huzzaed.' Macquarie reversed the old methods of criminology which believed in torturing a man into good behaviour and killing him when he did not respond. Naturally he met with the disapproval of the more worthy landholders, in particular the Reverend Samuel Marsden, the principal chaplain of New South Wales, who became one of Macquarie's principal detractors. To Samuel Marsden Macquarie's policy was misguided if you looked at it in the best light, but he did not always look at it in the best light.

Macquarie also had a 'good deal of misguided affection' for the aborigines. He held an annual distribution of blankets

and had an ox roasted for their benefit. He was always vainly trying to protect them from the unruly farm occupants who, maddened by their own illicit brew of raw alcohol, indulged in frequent and brutal slaughters of the blacks.

But the Governor's worst crime, in the eyes of the 'pure merinos' (as the magnates untainted with convict blood came to be called) was that he hobnobbed socially with men who had come to the country in chains. Just as the knife-edged Blue Mountains kept the little colony safe from knowledge of the great plains of the interior, so the barrier of convention had neatly cut off the officer class from contact with ex-convicts. It did not matter that some of the emancipists were now men of wealth and importance. Once they had been convicts; that had always been a sufficient bar.

Now, with the impetuous Macquarie ready to demonstrate his belief that the emancipists were free and equal with anyone in the colony, gentlemen were not safe when dining at Government House. They might find themselves passing the mustard or, worse, the wine to a man who had crawled on hands and knees from the hold of the Second Fleet to lie half-dead on the shore. The military officers said openly that their mess rather than the dinner-table of Government House set the social standards of Sydney.

The Governor could afford to smile. 'There are only two classes of persons in New South Wales,' he wrote to the Home Secretary. 'Those who have been convicted and those who ought to have been.' The best doctor in the colony was William Redfern, who, as a young navy surgeon knowing the foul conditions of the sailors, had dared to murmur to the mutineers of the *Nore* that they ought to stick together. For that he had been transported, and the fact that he had been transported was quite sufficient for the military mess. When Redfern was invited to dine by their colonel, they rose in a body and left the room. One minute there was the long

snowy table of the mess glittering with silver, flaring with candles, the officers in their scarlet coats with their scornful faces turned towards the polite, white face of Redfern and the purple, angry face of their colonel; the next minute they had filed quietly out, leaving the chief to curse and apologise as much as he pleased. If the Governor wished to make a personal friend of Redfern because he was witty and brilliant, that was the Governor's affair.

Andrew Thompson, son of a Scotch pedlar, transported for burning a farmer's hayrick as a boy, and now one of the great landholders of the Hawkesbury, was another of the Governor's 'pets'. He left Macquarie six thousand pounds when he died, and the Governor built him a sumptuous tomb inscribed with his virtues. Simeon Lord, a great merchant prince, an economic adventurer with imaginative schemes for bringing flax from New Zealand for his manufactures, was another. Lord backed the experiments of a forger from York, one John Hutchinson, in his efforts to manufacture dyes, cloth, pottery and glass. Hutchinson tanned leather with bark, improved a carding machine, a wire-drawing plant, made soap, paint, white paper. Simeon Lord set up mills at Botany overlooking a lagoon which he peopled with black swans and set with flowering shrubs. Here in his mills weavers transported for their part in the Luddite riots manufactured cloth, stockings, blankets and hats.

Lord had come to the colony as a boy for some long-forgotten offence. He was, said the gentlemen, objectionable, undignified, illiterate; and he very late married the mother of his large family. They forgot he was charitable, generous and broadminded. Then there was Eager, the emancipist attorney, who established the ex-convict's right to bring an action in a court of law: Samuel Terry, 'the Botany Bay millionaire'; D'Arcy Wentworth, aristocratic medical student and ex-highwayman; Michael Robinson, whose habit of reciting his poetry aloud at Government House may have been one

valid reason for the officers' avoidance of the Governor's tea-parties. His services as poet laureate of the colony earned him two cows from the appreciative Macquarie. Fulton, the clergyman, respected for his learning and transported on the mere suspicion of being implicated in the Irish rebellion, was yet another whom Macquarie gathered into his private circle. It was not a large circle but it must have been more interesting than the officers' mess.

The currency of the colony was still rum. Macquarie had to pay out four hundred gallons to get the main street properly paved. In return for a three-year questionable monopoly on rum, D'Arcy Wentworth and two of Macquarie's emancipist friends undertook to build a handsome new hospital in place of the sagging wooden shack left over from Phillip's day. If they made an immense profit—thirty thousand pounds on a building which cost forty thousand pounds—they faithfully fulfilled their side of the bargain. 'A stately hospital,' reported Macquarie, 'one of the finest buildings in any of His Majesty's colonies', rose at no expense to the Government by the simple and patriotic plan of drinking forty-five thousand gallons of rum in three years.

Macquarie loved big, ample, plain buildings with his name on the foundations in large, crisp black letters. He had an enormous force of convict labourers, and, despite the penny-pinching policy of his superiors, he laid out six townships, encircled Sydney for fifty miles with serviceable roads, and remodelled the scattering of ramshackle huts nearer to his heart's desire.

The scavenging of the streets was done by gaol gangs; the lighting was with oil-lamps and home-made tallow candles; most of the houses had been and were built of slabs. The mugs and cutlery were of iron. Wallaby soup and kangaroo steak were delicacies. 'I found the colony barely emerging from infantile imbecility,' wrote Macquarie to Lord Bathurst, answering charges of extravagance.

Shops had sprung up selling many quaint mementoes for sailormen, from dried Maoris' heads to white, sulphur-crested cockatoos. The inn-signs swung and creaked on every corner. In the streets goats and cows roamed at their sweet will, bullock teams toiled past, and chain-gangs shuffled along in their clinking irons to work as blacksmiths, locksmiths, coopers, sawyers, painters, lead-casters, cabinet-makers, tailors. Solitary convicts straggled here and there dressed in their white woollen Parramatta frocks and trousers, or in grey and yellow jackets with duck overalls, all daubed over with broad arrows and various numerals in black, white and red. From the dockyards came the sound of hammering where Macquarie's ships were building. Across the harbour, where the whaling ships lay, blubber was being 'tryed out'—not very fresh blubber, either. And in and out went Macquarie with a new regulation for observing the Sabbath, or for preventing goats from the footpath, or for pushing all the fences back into line with his new streets.

A new currency made up of promissory notes was not a success, so Macquarie, his Scots instinct uppermost, ordered Spanish dollars to be punched into two coins, the 'holey dollar' and 'the dump'. The Spanish dollar was the commonest coin in the Southern hemisphere, and by punching it in two Macquarie made sure it would stay in New South Wales. The success of this monetary policy allowed him to open the first bank.

'Currency Lass' and 'Currency Lad' were the contemptuous terms the upper strata applied to the sons and daughters of ex-convicts. This new generation was proving strangely different from the stock from which it sprang. Longer in the limb, free, clear-eyed, contemptuous of their parents' vices, the currency lads had an enormous care for freedom, a strange skill. 'They could do everything but talk,' as one of the admiring visitors reported. They hated talk and soldiery, but were hardy, clannish and courageous. From the

convicts' Mecca, 'the Rocks', they would turn out at Christmas time and on St. Patrick's Day and beat the redcoats back into their barracks; bludgeons, fists and three-pound stones their chief weapons.

In Macquarie's time wages rose to be higher than English wages. Convict mechanics began to earn six, seven and eight shillings a day. They were free to earn wages in their spare time, and this, for four days a week, was from three in the afternoon. Only the women convicts were still treated abominably. Time and again Macquarie protested and pleaded. When he sent back ships' officers for some atrocious crime against the women convicts, he was censured for doing so. He was not allowed to build a new women's factory at Parramatta until the year before he left, despite the unspeakable conditions in which the women lived. The old factory was described by Samuel Marsden as 'an infamous brothel'. It was large enough to give shelter to only sixty women; the others had to earn their night's lodging as best they could.

Yet despite the evil picture of these women's lives, their children grew up strong and pleasant, and parents were pathetically eager that their sons and daughters should have the good education Macquarie tried to obtain for them. In the currency lads and lasses the love of sport, which has distinguished Australians ever since, was becoming firmly fixed. The Governor noted, not without approval, the beginning of Sydney's horse-races.

The colony was bursting out of the bonds of convictism. It rose and bubbled and roared with life. The great, blue, knife-edge barrier of the mountains, so long believed to be unscaleable, was crossed with comparative ease by a farmer, Gregory Blaxland, Lieutenant Lawson, and D'Arcy Wentworth's hopeful young son, William Charles Wentworth. They simply walked along the ridges instead of following the valleys, and soon Governor Macquarie's new road followed

their tracks. Over the road, built in six months by convicts promised their freedom for the job, poured a host of land-seekers. Men who had found the coastland monopolised by the great rum families packed their wagons, yoked their bullocks and piled their children on top of the goods on the dray.

Macquarie was immediately interested. He and his lady set out on a camping trip to the limits of the colony, as far south, north and inland as any settlers went. His copious journals give a glowing account of his travels. Mrs. Macquarie knocked up meals with great success, and Dr. Redfern and other friends were there to echo his frequent and enthusiastic cries of 'Gentlemen! What a marvellous place for a gentleman's residence!' and to help him drink bumpers to the christening of towns.

Going out and back on these jaunts they always called on Elizabeth Macarthur, still living in that small cottage where the great old tiger, her husband, was to die in sight of the fine mansion he did not live to inhabit, but which passed to his sons. Legend will have it that the rich land to which John Macarthur clung so grimly was granted 'while he stood upon his feet', and that he stands to this day on his feet, his coffin upright in the clay of that favourite hill whence he viewed his acres, his dead face still grimly set to guard his privilege.

Past him, dead or alive, the life of the colony flowed out to the new lands beyond the mountains. In 1821, at the end of Macquarie's governorship, the population had increased from ten to forty thousand. There were ten times as many cattle, twelve times as many sheep, and five times the farmland as when he arrived. In his governorship the colony had squared the growth of the previous twenty years. Macquarie said of himself that he found a gaol and left a colony.

Not only had the big emancipists seized their chance; the little men had plucked up hope. Ex-convicts owned farms,

they kept shops and inns, they were prosperous tradesmen; a convict was crier in the Supreme Court, and another was the Judge Advocate's copying clerk. An artist from the penal settlement at Newcastle won his freedom by painting an altar-piece and came to Sydney to do a thriving trade. The leading schoolmasters were ex-convicts. 'We have individuals in New South Wales,' wrote the naval surgeon, Cunningham, 'who fifteen years ago were driving government dung carts, and shuffling along with hods of mortar on their shoulders, now possessed of incomes larger than I can mention with the hope of being credited.'

This cheerful picture lost a little of its lustre when seen through the jaundiced eye of an English Government anxious to cut expenses. What it had wanted was a receptacle for convicts, and a cheap receptacle at that. Macquarie was always wasting money. He created a scene because a ship's captain and crew had fired into the hold of the ship and killed some convicts who, they said, were about to mutiny. Not only did Macquarie illegally detain the captain for murder, but he wasted money sending convicts back to England to witness against the captain in a court of law. For this he was sternly reprimanded. The Government had gone to a lot of trouble sending these convicts to New South Wales, and because of a slight incident which could easily have been ignored, Macquarie had sent them all the way back again!

With Macquarie there had arrived a Judge Advocate, Ellis Bent, whose difficult task was to give the Governor legal advice. Ellis Bent recommended that his brother Jeffery be made Chief Judge, and the unsuspecting Macquarie agreed. No sooner had the younger Bent, a brilliant but unpleasant young man, arrived than he joined with Ellis in a vendetta against the Governor. Jeffery Bent refused to open the Supreme Court because the only lawyers were ex-convicts, and he insisted on having two respectable lawyers sent out.

The settlers, however, preferred the able and successful ex-convicts. The respectable lawyers were not only of dubious morality, but one of them cheerfully admitted forging his brother's signature to a petition against Macquarie. The Bents used every insolence to make Macquarie's life unbearable. Ellis sold land that had been granted him; he complained about his house, which was a better one than Macquarie's; he claimed that Macquarie's new port regulations were illegal, and refused to help administer them. Jeffery refused to pay threepence to go through the toll-gate on the grounds that Macquarie had no right to raise taxes. They would not even stand up in church when the Governor came in.

In the magistracy the same hostility towards the Governor made the Reverend Samuel Marsden resign from the bench because Macquarie appointed Lord and Thompson magistrates. The emancipists were finally forced out. Macquarie had to advise his own nominees to resign. The same thing happened when he tried to appoint his friend, Dr. Redfern, to the vacancy caused by Marsden's resignation from the magistracy.

Macquarie at this time was writing home asking that his own regiment be recalled. He was tired of insults, of gross and obscene caricatures scrawled on walls, of the sneers and laughter of his subordinates. If it had not been for Mrs. Macquarie, happily at work landscape gardening around the harbour, and the friendship of Fulton and Redfern, he would have been very lonely indeed. In 1817 he put in his resignation and the English Government decided to send out a Commissioner to investigate the whole situation.

Unhappily it plumped on Mr. J. T. Bigge, a gentleman with a very strong sense of his own importance, who was received with open arms by the 'pure merinos'. He had only to look at Sydney, they suggested, and he could see for himself how the Governor was mismanaging things. Everywhere were great, clean sandstone buildings with the name of Lachlan Macquarie on the foundation stone. Lachlan Macquarie was

laying out a city. Who wanted a city? Parks, pleasure grounds, streets, Government buildings—he had them all planned. He even had an architect, and a brilliant architect at that, who had come out as a convict, but with a special letter of friendship and recommendation from ex-Governor Phillip to Governor Macquarie.

Bigge agreed with the 'pure merinos' that it was terrible to see such a waste of money. He complained that the convicts in the new Hyde Park Barracks lived too luxuriously, and grimly noted the Governor's simple joy at the first dinner served, 'a most excellent dinner, Plum Pudding and an allowance of Punch being given to them'. He admitted that Macquarie's humanitarian policy had been successful; that even the worst convicts improved, and the better ones became excellent settlers.

For two years he lived with Macquarie, dogged his steps, and wrote niggling reports about him. In 1821 Macquarie, reduced to the state of nervous exhaustion which marked all the early governors, left the colony. He took with him as a gift from the colonists a five-hundred-guinea service of plate, no man being allowed to give more than a guinea to the fund.

CHAPTER V

A CONVICT LEAVES HIS MARK

OUT FROM East Maitland, in the Hunter River Valley, is a bare, green hill-slope, where the tombstones stand up from the short grass and old horses crop slowly between the mounds. White ducks dabble in a little stream at the hill's foot. Far away, the brilliant green of the river willows shows below the spires and the smoke of the town.

The warm, cream sandstone of the tilted tombstones is very beautiful, and the words '... Sent to a Lonely Land ... Persecuted by Cruel Men ... By Unjust Judges ...' have been only half wiped out by the hand of time and the golden lichen. The reproaches against other dead men on some of these stones have not lost their anguish in more than a century.

It should be a bitter, lonely place, but however cold and grey the day, this ancient graveyard is always glowing with a secret pleasure, a warm reminiscence of forgotten evenings and mellow friends, with a sunlight all its own like an old yellow wine drained from the glass of life.

Under one of the nameless waves of grass lies the dust of Francis Howard Greenway, and it is his ghost that protects the tombstones from those who would otherwise remove them for doorsteps or the paving of pig-yards.

Just before sunset he walks there. He may be seen as a slight quivering of the air, drifting over to admire the most admirable of the carved masterpieces, one of those by a forgotten craftsman who signed himself 'Cobby'. Perhaps he regards it as his own stone, for he can be seen standing there, a stout, rather stooped figure, his plump chin sunk into his stock, enjoying the almost Chinese perfection of the stone's shape and moulding.

Starved in life, his ghost has charmed the bitterness of death into beauty.

If you enquire why no one has ever cut up the graveyard for suburban allotments, the neighbours will evade the question. They are vaguely troubled by the omission. The tradition in Australia is to tear down all old buildings, to write advertisements across tombstones, or, if not advertisements, the name of the visitor. Hide the old, put it away, forget it.

'I wouldn't go messing about there,' the owner of the white ducks advises.

'Why not?'

'He gets angry.'

'Who does?'

'The owner does. One of them.' He jerks his thumb at the tombstones. 'Seems to own it. Doesn't like it touched.'

Francis Howard Greenway, buried by the local schoolmaster, died in poverty. He was one of those pathetic and extraordinary creatures who unite a capacity for brilliant artistic achievement with a total lack of business ability. Of all Commissioner Bigge's reports the most bitter concerned this 'Colonial Architect' who, as a convict on a salary of three shillings a day, erected so many immortal monuments to the name of Lachlan Macquarie, the only governor whose name, besides that of Phillip, the average Australian can remember.

Transported for an excess of honesty in revealing his effects in bankruptcy, his arrival was a godsend to Macquarie. Their taste did not always agree, and there is a queer stamp of dejection in some of Greenway's best work, like the cut of the convict arrow in the old stones. He was a socialist, and he never truckled to those in authority. His plans were stolen by overseers and others who claimed the credit of his work. He was constantly belittled, his buildings were mutilated.

Commissioner Bigge complained of the severe simplicity of Greenway's work that it was too ornate, and there is a quaint story of the architect begging for the cupola of St.

Matthew's Church, Windsor, and being grudgingly granted a much smaller cupola than he thought artistically necessary.

The Hyde Park Barracks, now law offices, were among his best work. The stables he built for Governor Macquarie have become the Conservatorium of Music. A market-house, a town hall, a magnificent toll-house, with a score of other buildings, have been destroyed in the cause of 'progress'. Macquarie gave him his pardon when he completed the South Head Lighthouse, but Bigge considered the cost of keeping him for five shillings a day as a free man was unjustifiable, and when Macquarie left Greenway was dismissed.

From that time he passes out of the official records, and is buried in a nameless grave. He was the first to see the architectural possibilities of Sydney, and the plans he laid down for the city, had they been adhered to, would have made it one of the most beautiful in the world. In the opinion of a modern architect Greenway was 'the most accomplished architect ever to have dwelt in Australia'.

Overlooking one of Sydney's busiest streets is the Church of St. James. Some years ago a European journalist, Egon Kisch, wrote a book about his stormy visit to Australia. In it he described St. James's as the 'Westminster of Australia', and told of its memorials to explorers, scientists, doctors, governors and judges. Why, he asked, was there no memorial to the architect? And he answered his own question: 'He was a convict.'

The church trustees decided to rectify the omission. In the wall of the beautiful northern portico a stone was set for all the busy street to read: "In memory of Francis Greenway, architect of this church, and of the artisans and labourers who erected it." It is the only memorial in Australia to the convicts.

CHAPTER VI

THE INLAND SEA

MATTHEW FLINDERS was the first explorer to be struck by the possibility of an Australian inland sea. 'In the case of penetrating the interior of *Terra Australis*,' he wrote, 'either by a great river, or a strait leading to an inland sea, a superior country, and perhaps a different race of people, might be found.' In those first years of discovery, in his daring voyages down the south coast, through Bass Strait and round the south of the continent, the vision went before him. When he found and named the two great gulfs, Spencer and St. Vincent, he thought for a time that one might lead him through the continent.

It was not until 1802, when he had surveyed the Gulf of Carpentaria also, that his dream of a voyage through some great estuary faded. The rotten state of his ship brought an end to his charting of the Australian coast, but not his desire to explore the interior of the continent. 'With five or six asses,' he wrote to Sir Joseph Banks, 'to carry provisions, expeditions might be made into the interior of *Australis* from the head of the Gulph of Carpentaria . . . and from the head of the great gulph on the south coast . . . In case of again being sent to *Australis*, I should much wish this was part of my instructions.'

The modesty of Flinders' needs for such a journey makes an interesting contrast with the outfit thought necessary by an eminent French geographer, Malte-Brun. His proposals sound like an extract from the works of Jules Verne. There should be oxen from Buenos Ayres, mules from Senegal, and dromedaries from Africa or Arabia. Dogs should be taken

to raise game and to discover springs of water, while pigs could be used to discover esculent roots in the soil. In addition the explorers should be provided with a balloon to spy out obstacles in the distance.

Had not Flinders been imprisoned for six years on the island of Mauritius by the jealous and brutal General de Caen, he would no doubt have attempted to carry out his plan; but broken in health as a result of his long imprisonment he died at the age of forty. A hundred and forty years after he wrote in anguish, 'I had hoped to make such records that there would be no need for any man to follow, but in such a ship I know not how it may be achieved,' Ernestine Hill found the captain of a lonely lugger traversing the wide Gulf of Carpentaria with no other guide than Flinders' chart of 1802. No navigator could seek a better memorial. He was only twenty-eight years old when he circumnavigated the continent he named Australia, but his visions were too vast for the little group huddled around the shores of Sydney Cove.

By the time the people of the First Fleet had harvested their crops after wailing that the land would never grow anything, the newcomers of the Second Fleet, pushing further out, raised the same cry of 'Desert', 'Inhospitable wilderness'. When they reached the mountains, the tide of settlement halted there for twenty years. The coastal strip, men admitted, might be fertile, but beyond the mountains was all desert.

The convicts, however, when they were partly convinced that there was no main road to be found between Port Jackson and the Chinese Empire, developed a theory that a colony of white people existed three or four hundred miles in the interior. The legend even reached the stage when furtive written instructions were circulated giving guidance to this Arcadia. Governor Hunter decided that the convicts had better be shown there was no such tribe of white men before the

rumour fanned a rebellion. Four men were selected by the rumour-mongers and four soldiers added by the Governor. Among the convicts selected was one who had been living with the natives and who claimed to know the country for a hundred miles around. Ten days later the little party struggled back more dead than alive, the convicts having begged to return rather than be left to die in the mountains.

Even today the Blue Mountains, within fifty miles of Australia's largest city, enjoy a holiday season of sensational rescues, police search-parties, and starving amateur explorers. It is still possible to be hopelessly lost between the sheer cliffs five hundred feet high, the tangled scrub, the impassable ridges and spurs.

When King became governor, his star explorer was an Ensign Barraillier, whose expeditions were notable for accurate and industrious surveying. There was some bickering between the Governor and Colonel Paterson of the New South Wales Corps, the colonel objecting to Barraillier being detached from his military duties.

'I was obliged,' King complained, 'to give up his services after this unhandsome claim, but claimed him as my *aide-de-camp*, and that the object of discovery should not be relinquished, I sent him on an embassy to The King of the Mountain.' He tactfully did not enquire the result of the embassy. Barraillier's journal, he said, 'being wrote in such an unintelligible hand, I have not been to get it translated or copied, but have sent it under your address to Lord Hobart . . . I have not had time to decipher and read it.'

King was worried by a possible French threat to occupy the south coast of Australia, and he was busily collecting a little expedition which he proposed should settle where the city of Melbourne now stands. The proposed founders had no liking for the job, and the constant whining from their leader, Colonel Collins, finally induced King to transfer the settlement to Van Diemen's Land.

Meanwhile, to the tender mercies of the Blue Mountains and their vague monarch only runaway convicts and stray cattle entrusted themselves. Neat and tight the settlements nibbled apprehensively at the broad lands below those expressionless battlements. Then the increase of flocks and herds, with a severe drought in 1813, made the need for new grazing land desperate. Gregory Blaxland, a sheep-farmer, made two unsuccessful attempts to cross the range before he hit upon the simple expedient of following, not the valleys, but the high ridges between.

With Lieutenant Lawson, young William Charles Wentworth and four convicts, Blaxland made the crossing in nineteen days. On one day they could cut their way through only a mile and a half of scrub; on another day they travelled three and a quarter miles. Their hands were skinned; each morning their clothing was soaked through by the heavy dew; again and again they followed a ridge only to find it ending in an impassable precipice. The dreadful loneliness began to prey upon the minds of the convicts, who huddled away from the camp-fire at night peering into the heavy darkness. After twelve days' struggle they reached a height from which they could see in a straight line, eighteen miles away, the settlements they had left.

Blaxland's journal is the baldest of all the explorers' narratives, but he is stirred to emotion when he tells how one morning they stood bareheaded watching the mountain mists rise over the magnificent Kanimbla Valley and how they turned silently to shake hands in mutual congratulation. The natives were now bolder, and their camp-fires gleamed around the party each night like so many watchers. One morning the explorers witnessed a group of warriors, armed with spears, boomerangs and shields, perform a lengthy war-dance in a nearby gully. Water was scarce always, and the nights were so cold that their food was sometimes frozen. Often they had to cut little trenches in the mountain side with a hoe to give the pack-

horses a foothold, and more frequently than not they had to carry the packages themselves. They struggled on till their provisions were exhausted, their boots worn through and their clothing was in rags. Twenty-six days after their departure from Blaxland's farm near Windsor, they arrived back with the news that the barriers were down, there was no desert; great plateaux and plains stretched inviting and immeasurably beyond the ranges.

Now explorers were faced with a new problem. Why should the inland rivers flow away from the coast and where did they go? Could it be there was an inland sea? John Oxley, the surveyor-general, thought there was. He crossed twelve rivers all flowing north and north-west. He tracked two of them, the Lachlan and the Macquarie, until each ended in a dreary swamp stretching as far as the eye could see. Then, to lift his hopes high, he thought he found one river flowing out of the inland sea. He had been sent up the coast to find a place for a convict settlement far from the ever-expanding belt of free settlers. These came so close on the heels of the explorers that if an official party stayed away for six months, it might return to find the tide of settlement had advanced another fifty miles in its absence.

Oxley's excitement when he found a northern river which he felt must flow out of the inland sea was intense, but his botanist, Cunningham, a pertinacious heretic, crossed the ranges and proved him wrong. The river which Oxley, with his usual originality, had named the Brisbane, after the governor then in office, was just another short coastal stream. Out of the very unpleasant convict settlement set up at its mouth there grew the capital city of Queensland.

Even after Hamilton Hume, a native-born explorer, had journeyed overland to Port Phillip, opening up millions of acres of good land watered by never-failing rivers, the great problem still remained unsolved: Where did the western rivers flow?

The problem was solved by Captain Charles Sturt, a soldier who did not like soldiering, and who preferred to find adventures in opening up a new country. No braver or kindlier man could have been found for the job. His fair treatment of the natives time and again saved the lives of his men. He was unfortunate in that all his explorations were carried out at times when drought altered the face of the whole country, but it was the drought also which aided his success.

In 1828 he followed the course of the Macquarie, pushing through the marshes which had held up Oxley, until he came out on the banks of the Darling when the river was so low that salt springs trickling into it had made it undrinkable. He describes how they reached the river, seventy to eighty yards broad, and virtually covered with pelicans and other wild fowl. The parched men dashed down the banks forty-five feet to the water below. 'Nor shall I ever forget the cry of amazement that followed their doing so, or the looks of terror and disappointment with which they called out that the water was so salt as to be unfit to drink.' For six days they followed the southward course of the new river. At one stage they came upon a native village of seventy huts each capable of holding twelve to fifteen men, and in the huts they found beautifully made fishing nets of about ninety yards in length. The party was discovered by the natives, who had been fishing, and an attempt was made to rout the white men by firing the bush. As the columns of dense smoke rose above their heads, the chief came forward seeking to frighten them by his weird contortions. 'When he found that all his violence had no effect, he turned his rear to us in a most laughable manner, and absolutely groaned in spirit when he found that this last insult failed of success.'

Within an hour Sturt had won him over to such a degree that the old man gave orders for the net to be drawn from the river to satisfy Sturt's curiosity, and a little later began to

confide to the explorer the troubles of his tribe, which was suffering from some kind of skin disease.

Sturt and his men reluctantly decided that they must turn back, though a new problem had succeeded the old. Where did the Darling flow? Into an inland sea, or did it run to the south coast? Had Sturt but known it, the wonderful inland sea for which he was searching lay beneath his feet. Where his parched horses staggered, today a chain of Government bores tap the waters of the greatest artesian basin in the world. In Jurassic times that sea had been on the surface, stretching through the middle of the continent, when the giant emu, tortoise and wombat roamed a smiling, fertile country. Now the waters were stored underground for six hundred thousand square miles, in a layer of sandstone between two layers of harder rock. Artesian water keeps open the great stock-routes and provides millions of gallons yearly for private landholders.

On his next trip Sturt managed to piece together the great network of waterways which make up the Murray-Darling system, the 'Old Man River' of Australia. He set out with a large party along the banks of the Murrumbidgee, one of the westward-flowing rivers discovered earlier by Hamilton Hume. When the swamps through which the river ran made further progress by land impossible, Sturt fitted out a whale-boat and a small skiff, and, sending back the rest of the expedition, set off down the river with seven men. He followed the Murrumbidgee till it entered the Murray River, 'a beautiful and noble stream', and deduced that the Darling was sure to enter it somewhere along its course.

He made friends with the natives as he travelled, and some of them accompanied him along the banks. At one place a hostile tribe came crowding out on a spit of land which jutted nearly across the river. They were singing their war-song and they were painted and armed as they generally are prior to their engaging in conflict. Some who had marked their ribs,

and thighs, and faces, with a white pigment, looked like skeletons, others were daubed over with red and yellow ochre, and their bodies shone with the grease with which they had besmeared themselves.'

The situation looked ugly for Sturt's party, when a man dashed from the opposite bank, swam across the sand-spit, and delivered an oration in Sturt's favour, in face of the six hundred hostile spearmen. It was one of the natives with whom Sturt had previously made friends.

While this providential rescuer was still disputing, Sturt's attention was distracted to a 'new and beautiful stream' flowing into the Murray just where the horde of natives had collected. The explorers pulled up the newly discovered junction of the Murray and the Darling, but were checked by a native net. 'I say *checked*,' Sturt recorded in his journal, with typical consideration, 'because it would have been unfair to have passed over it with the chance of disappointing the numbers who apparently depended upon it for subsistence that day.' So hoisting the Union Jack and giving three cheers, they shot away downstream, leaving the natives to puzzle over the curious interruption to a day's fishing.

Sturt and his men followed the Murray till they reached the great shallow Lake Alexandrina, where the sound of the surf came gratefully to their ears and the Murray entered the sea. After one brief glimpse of the ocean, they started on the return journey. For fifty-six days they toiled up against the strong current. For over a thousand miles they rowed twelve hours at a stretch. Hostile natives threatened them; friendly natives helped them lift the boat up the rapids. The men fell asleep at their oars, they prayed to Sturt to let them die, but they never murmured against him, and even begged him to take the last of the tea and sugar. Just as their last ounce of flour was being served out, the relief expedition came upon them. One man had gone mad as a result of their privations. The welcome

THE INLAND SEA

given to Sturt in Sydney was given to a blind man. He was blind for years afterwards.

Other men were left with only a few loose threads to tie together. There was no inland sea beyond the great plains. Instead there was a great river system. After Sturt's voyage down the Murray the whole of eastern Australia was open to the settler.

'THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY'

WILLIAM CHARLES WENTWORTH was the eldest son of D'Arcy Wentworth who had been treated always with great favour by Governor Macquarie. It was D'Arcy Wentworth who, with two of his emancipist friends, built Sydney Hospital in exchange for a three years' rum monopoly. He consistently identified himself with the wealthy emancipists, although he had not himself come out to the colony as a convict. When a wild young medical student, he had been tried as a highwayman, but his aristocratic connections had worked in his favour, and the case was dismissed on his undertaking to emigrate to New South Wales as a 'voluntary exile'.

After serving as Assistant Surgeon at Norfolk Island and later as Superintendent of Convicts, D'Arcy Wentworth became the largest landowner in New South Wales. In 1807 he was temporarily suspended by Captain Bligh for 'applying convicts to private labour whom he received into the Hospital at Parramatta as sick men'. There seems little to choose between D'Arcy and the next greatest landholder, John Macarthur, save that Macarthur had a jewel of a wife, while D'Arcy's domestic affairs suffered from some confusion.

Whether he ever married the convict woman who was William's mother, or even the mother of his younger children, is uncertain. He minded his own affairs and there were few to hold up shocked hands. Commissioner Bigge, in his confidential report on D'Arcy Wentworth, unctuously records the gossip that the ex-highwayman was 'living in a state of concubinage' with the wife of a free settler, and also

had another female living in another house, and had a family by another female convict with whom he had lived at Norfolk Island.

Of the family of D'Arcy Wentworth's Norfolk Island days, William was the eldest, the result of a liaison with a convict woman on the journey out from England. At the age of seven the small boy was sent to England to be educated. When sixteen he came back to Sydney for a few years' holiday, and it was then, as a stripling of nineteen, that he joined Blaxland's expedition across the Blue Mountains. The hardships of the trip caused an inflammation of the lungs that affected him for years afterwards. By his father's influence the lad was given the important position of Provost Marshal of the colony, one of his duties being to preside at meetings of the notables, and to prepare receptions for the Governor.

Young Wentworth was popular; he was on friendly terms with the Governor, the free settlers, and the 'pure merinos', but he hotly disliked the officer class who were his father's and the Governor's foes. He earned no little notoriety as a writer of lampoons against them, in the fashion of the day, and was altogether quite a figure in the colony.

His aspirations to the hand of Macarthur's daughter were considered by William and Sydney society as both romantic and fitting. D'Arcy Wentworth was the greatest landholder, Macarthur was the next greatest. What could be better than the joining of the two families in an aristocratic mingling of birth and wealth? They were the natural rulers of the land, and their children should possess it for ever.

Young Wentworth had no illusions about his own talents, for he knew that he stood head and shoulders over men his senior in years. A big, awkward, slouching young man with a cast in one eye, he was nevertheless a natural orator, intelligent, fiery and impressive. He set sail for England once again to make a career, confident in his powers and in the success that must lie before him. He had always in mind, he wrote to

his father, 'the future respectability and grandeur of our family'.

In England he received a series of shocks which were to inflame his pride as the journey over the Blue Mountains inflamed his lungs. Of the two, the lung affection was the less hurtful. In the 'open letter' written by Bennet to Lord Sidmouth on the state of New South Wales, there was a glancing reference to D'Arcy Wentworth as an ex-convict. William Wentworth was indignant at this slur on his ancestry, and he set himself methodically, as a budding lawyer should, to find out the true facts. He was able to contradict the statement that his father had been a convict, but he unearthed in his researches much that he had not known before, including the fact that he was probably illegitimate.

At the same time another blow struck him. It was the uncompromising refusal of his suit for the hand of Macarthur's daughter. Young Wentworth had always been friendly with James, Macarthur's son, but his friendship now swung to a bitter hostility. Previously he had decided not to go to Oxford, saying quite truthfully that he already knew more than most graduates. He worked furiously at his law, and in 1818 published an *Historical, Statistical and Political Description of New South Wales*, in which he advocated a bicameral legislature to which ex-convicts should be eligible for admission. The book was a powerful plea for free settlers, and it set out the possibilities of New South Wales in glowing terms.

In 1822 he was called to the bar, but the snub from the Macarthurs still rankled. Wentworth felt that somehow he must eclipse James Macarthur's university career. Now twenty-nine years of age, he decided to spend a few terms at Cambridge University, where he wrote the poem 'Australasia,' which, the author was quite convinced, would win the Chancellor's Medal. It was highly praised but did not receive the prize.

Had Wentworth stayed in England there is little doubt

that he would have made his mark there sooner or later. Men whom he eclipsed in New South Wales were to reach positions of power in England.

In Australia, from the time when, at the age of thirty-two, he set out to meet and vanquish the Macarthurs on his native soil, Wentworth was the outstanding figure in the politics of his country. 'Australia has no past but she has a future,' was his watchword. He himself might have no glorious ancestry but that did not prevent his name ringing down future ages. If he could not have ancestors, he would be an ancestor himself. He would show the Macarthurs, who proclaimed the untainted blood of their family and their flocks, that he was a man and an Australian, the first of the new breed.

With Wentworth to Australia came his friend, Robert Wardell, aged thirty-four, a Doctor of Laws, with whom Wentworth built his practice and founded the newspaper, *The Australian*, which was to fight for the wealthy emancipists' interests. *The Gazette* was the voice of the Government, while *The Pioneer* championed the free settlers and convicts, a paper so popular that landowners complained that their convicts would walk miles just to read a copy.

Well might the Macarthurs look with apprehensive resentment on that huge, lurching figure striding forward in public life. The first Australian admitted to the English bar, he had chosen to return to his native land to practise. He had been granted land in recognition of the Blue Mountains expedition. His father was a man of prestige and wealth, and the great emancipists saw in him their pre-ordained champion. He arrived at a propitious time.

In 1824 the recently granted Legislative Council had been appointed. It was a nominee body of seven members with power to advise the Governor on certain matters, and no other power whatever. A certain measure of trial by jury had been extended to the citizens, so that they, as well as

military men, might sit in civil cases. However, when the Sheriff's list was made public, the names of all the emancipists had been excluded. Wentworth and Wardell were briefed by the emancipists to call upon the Sheriff to show cause why their names were not on the jury list. The application was dismissed. The struggle for free institutions had begun and it was to over-top all others.

In 1820 Judge Barron Field had warned Commissioner Bigge: 'I see the shadow of the spirit of American revolt at taxation rising in the shape of the petition for trial by jury; it will next demand legislative assembly; and in the end in declaring itself a nation of freebooters and pirates.'

In his book Wentworth had hinted at the probability of a rebellion in New South Wales and pointed to the example of the American colonies. Unless autocratic government was abolished, might not the people of New South Wales turn from Britain and appeal for protection to the United States? He considered, quite gravely, whether such a rebellion could be put down by British troops. If the rebels retreated with their flocks and herds behind the Blue Mountains, what good could troops do? The only connecting ridge by which an army might reach the interior was in places not more than thirty feet wide, sheering away to tremendous cliffs. 'Of what avail,' wrote the fierce young author, 'would whole armies prove in these terrible defiles, which only five or six men could approach abreast?'

Wentworth's chance as a popular hero came over what was known as the 'Sudds case'. Soldiers had been deliberately committing small crimes, so that they might be convicted and, after serving a short term, become free settlers. Two had maimed themselves in order to get out of the army, and Governor Sir Ralph Darling, an honest but none-too-intelligent military officer, decided that next time he would make a dramatic example of the would-be criminals. When two soldiers, Sudds and Thompson, ordered some goods and

refused to pay, they were sentenced to seven years' transportation to a penal settlement, which the Governor commuted to seven years' work in the road gangs. They were to be impressively drummed out of the regiment, and for the ceremony would wear a spiked collar with a set of chains attaching it to the ankles. Whether Sudds was fitted with a number fifteen collar for his number seventeen neck, or whether he died of 'inanition in conjunction with his unfortunate situation', as the surgeon reported, he died.

The thunder of Wentworth's oratory rolled up heralding the storm of indignation. It was in vain that Governor Darling and his supporters protested that Sudds had been sick anyway, and that an iron collar was no unusual punishment, that it had long been fashionable for women-convicts and was often in use on the Coal River.

The Governor had made an enemy of Chief Justice Forbes by refusing him a choice grant of land on which his Honour had set his heart. Now the Chief Justice came forward and questioned the legality of the punishment. Sudds became a rallying cry for those who demanded an elective council instead of a nominee one. The thought of the rising at which Wentworth had hinted was always at the back of Governor Darling's mind. The newspapers were drawing the men of the colony together in a sense of their common grievances, and once they were united what would become of English rule?

Darling brought before the Council a series of bills to chain the press, forbidding publication of a paper without the Governor's licence and setting out the heaviest penalties for libel. The exclusivists were only too ready to pass such a bill, for they had suffered from *The Australian's* and *The Monitor's* attacks. However, the Chief Justice unrelentingly declared the bills to be illegal. Darling decided to impose a stamp duty on newspapers. Again the Chief Justice, deaf to conciliatory offers, declared the bill illegal. The Governor

was left only with the recourse of libel action, and for the next few years the courts were so crowded with the Governor's libel actions that no other business could be done. Wentworth and Wardell made brilliant play against the legal talent the Governor brought into the field. Only by briefing an emancipist lawyer did the Governor succeed in having the *Monitor* editor banished, but the Home Government denied his right to banish anyone.

Wentworth sent to England his impeachment of Darling for the murder of Sudds, and the Home Authorities grew more and more restive as the enormous bills for legal expenses mounted up. A representative of every prominent family, except the Macarthurs, signed a petition for full trial by jury and a representative assembly. Twenty-four of the emancipists' signatures to it represented wealth of a million pounds.

Darling was recalled to England, and Wentworth and the emancipists celebrated the most vindictive rejoicings. Vaucluse House, which Wentworth had bought as a fitting ancestral seat for himself, was the scene of a feast shared by four thousand people. An ox was paraded through the streets, garlanded with flowers and ribbons, and bearing a notice that it would form the chief dish at the fête. A dozen sheep roasted whole, four thousand loaves of bread and immense hogsheads of drink were provided free.

Wentworth's appearance was the signal for cheers. He was carried round the grounds shoulder-high. At night bonfires flared out over the water, with two mottoes neatly contrived of little oil-lamps, one showing loyalty to the King and the other the opposite sentiment for the Governor. Darling, waiting with his family to sail, had an excellent view from a ship in the harbour.

With the departure of Darling, Wentworth's career as a firebrand was at an end. Governor Sir Richard Bourke, the next in office, was a shrewd, friendly Liberal, who took Wentworth's advice and almost deferred to him. The

champion of the people, while never ceasing his agitation for representative institutions, could settle into the life of a great landholder and businessman. He could afford to make cause with his old enemies, the Macarthurs. As the tide of free settlers, which as a young author Wentworth had so ardently favoured, began to sweep over the colony, the exclusivists and the wealthy emancipists found they had a good deal in common; for instance, the preservation of their wealth and their great stretches of land.

Wentworth took his place as the defender of the old aristocracy against the new, land-hungry men pouring into the country with what, to the ex-firebrand, seemed dangerously radical views. In 1834 old John Macarthur died, the last of the old officer caste with their contemptuous dislike of the mingled strain of men who were Australians. In the same year Robert Wardell, Wentworth's friend, was murdered by three prowling convicts and his body covered by bushes to keep it from the dingoes. The links with the past were snapping and Wentworth and the younger Macarthurs could afford to forget the ghost of a convict mother peering wistfully from behind the trappings of Wentworth's grandeur. He was near the fulfilment of his great desire, the establishment of a Wentworth family, cultured, rich, with vast estates, ruling by hereditary title and influence.

It would have been difficult to explain all these secret dreams to Governor Sir George Gipps when that energetic officer exposed Wentworth's design for buying most of New Zealand. Gipps had called a conference with certain Maori chiefs who were visiting Sydney and fascinating the citizens with their tattooed faces and strange clothing of mats. The chiefs had not kept their appointment with the Governor, and Gipps found that Wentworth had kept them away, offering a trifling annuity in return for a hundred thousand acres in the North Island and twenty million acres in the South Island. 'Talk of jobbery!' the Governor stormed, in his

address to the Legislative Council. 'Why, if all the corruption that had defiled England since the expulsion of the Stuarts were gathered in one heap, it would not make such a sum as this, which Mr. Wentworth asks me to lend a hand in perpetrating; the job, that is, of making him a grant of twenty million acres of land at the rate of one hundred acres for a farthing.'

Gipps scotched the deal, but he aroused the undying enmity of Wentworth and his fellow squatters. Sir George Gipps was fighting to preserve for future settlers the great stretches of land seized by the squatters, of whom Wentworth was now the leader. Gipps believed that the prosperity of the colony depended upon the squatters being allowed to use the immense stretches of country, but also he was determined that they should not regard *possession* as synonymous with *ownership*. He required that they pay a licence fee for the land they held; the amount was small and the Governor was well able to ridicule Wentworth's cry of ruin when called upon to pay a hundred and twenty-five pounds annually for the rental of over a million acres of land. The sting was, however, in the fact that payment of the licence fee meant recognition that vast lands were held by favour of the Government and not as an hereditary right.

In 1842 the former champion of the people made himself immensely unpopular with the free immigrants by demanding the return of convict transportation, which had been recently allowed to lapse. The wool industry had been built on convict labour, and free immigrant labour was less amenable to discipline. A ship sent out with a special sample of convicts was met at the quay by an angry mob which prevented the convicts landing. By the mob Wentworth was denounced as the 'duke of the lash and the triangle', the plutocrat who wanted to run the country for the wealthy squatters.

There were riots at the election for the newly reformed Council a few months later. Dr. Bland, the last of the old

emancipists, was nearly strangled in his neckcloth by a horny-handed democrat, while Wentworth only saved himself by a masterly retreat. One speaker, pelted from the hustings, raced down to the quay and armed the crew of his whaler with harpoons, lances and spears. By the time he led them back, the mob had gone elsewhere to break plate-glass windows, and he met instead a detachment of mounted police who chased the avengers to their ship.

The restricted franchise resulted in the elected Council being a squatter-dominated body, and the colony witnessed the spectacle of the Governor, so often regarded as the symbol of British tyranny, fighting a lone battle for the rights of future settlers on the land. But behind Wentworth and the squatter members of the Council stood also the weight of the gigantic land companies supported by English capital, and eventually Gipps was forced to resign. Wentworth had triumphed against another governor, but this time his triumph was that of the entrenched interests against the free immigrants.

In 1851 the British Government offered the Australian colonies self-government, and it was Wentworth who dominated the committees by right of his long fight for that very concession. In his great house at Vacluse on the shore of the harbour, the men who were to draw up the constitution met and argued and discussed the wording of every clause. The crystal chandelier gleamed down on the rich, heavy mahogany, the silver, the rich man's cabinets of curios. Wentworth's stone house was a colonial version of the baronial hall, with the fountain playing on the green lawn, the wistaria, the heavily shaded walks, the enormous coach-house, the reception-rooms and ballroom. Even his uncomfortable sunken bath was lined with tiles from Pompeii. The place had originally belonged to the gay and popular Sir Henry Brown Hayes who had been transported for abducting a beautiful Quakeress. After a career as a most insubordinate and troublesome convict, Hayes had settled down in Sydney

to a life as fashionable as his former life in Cork. He even went to the trouble of importing tons of Irish earth and setting it in a trench around the estate to keep out the snakes. Vacluse House remains a show place to this day, the Government recognising that the dwelling of 'The Father of His Country' is worth preserving. In the 'Constitution Room' where the all-important draft was prepared, the very ink blots present an aspect of sanctity.

Wentworth's proposal for an Australian House of Lords was laughed to death by the low and vulgar, but the nominee principle of the Upper House is a vestigial remnant of it. With Sir Edward Deas Thomson he took to England the treasured constitution and lobbied it enthusiastically through all stages in the English Parliament. In the process, his cherished 'safeguards' which preserved power for the monied men were stripped off one by one, and the mutilated constitution was mourned by him to his death. Five years later he returned to Australia for a brief visit. Beneath the triumphal welcome he received he saw the forces of democracy everywhere in the ascendancy.

Within a year he returned to England to live the life of a grand seigneur. His enemies charged him with inconsistency, but they failed to realise that in his early life he was a man suffering from a sense of injustice. He made the cause of the wealthy emancipists his because they were in opposition to the officer class which had slighted him. The arrival of free immigrants with new ideas made him realise that he had more in common with his former enemies than with the new democracy. For thirty years he fought for self-government for the colonies, but as his bitter opponent, Sir Henry Parkes, claimed: 'Constitutional reform with him meant putting an end to government from Downing Street, and handing over the affairs of the colony, including public lands, to his own class.' When he found that constitutional reform meant handing power over to the rising democracy, he preferred

to return to England where his wealth and assumed descent from the seventeenth-century Earl of Strafford were received with proper reverence.

Only when he was dying in 1872 did the underlying Australian in him rise again. He asked that his body be carried back to Vaucluse for burial, and back it went to a tremendous state funeral. His end was one with his life—a triumphal progress in which marched his friends and his enemies with tributes, some of them sincere, to the first great Australian statesman. Everyone was there, even the king of the Port Stephens blacks, in a pair of regimental trousers begged from a judge. The seemingly endless funeral wound through the crowds of spectators to Vaucluse, with a tolling of church bells, muffled drums, and all the pomp of a state funeral. Vaucluse received its owner into a vault cut out of the solid rock of one of his favourite lookouts. The consecration was carried out by the Bishop of Sydney, and the Chief Justice in his oration spoke of 'the conspicuous memorial to all who enter and to all who leave our port' which the chapel would afford.

In the tangle of flats and houses a stranger would search bewildered for any such landmark, and the chapel, like the fame of the first Australian, has been almost crowded out of the modern landscape. His pomp has passed, but the core of the man remains, when, in a strange naked simplicity, he affirmed: 'I can truly say that the love of my country has been the master passion of my life.'

CHAPTER VIII

'VANDEMONIA'—CONVICTS, SEALERS AND BLACKS

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND, the early name for Tasmania, smelt so high that as soon as the free settlers won their long fight against the Convict System, they changed the name of the country. A 'Vandemonian' was looked upon by the rest of the world as a man soaked in cruelty and crime, whether it was one of the officers who administered the System, or one of its brutalised victims. No innkeeper in London would accommodate anyone foolish enough to admit that he came from Van Diemen's Land. It was the ultimate circle of hell.

The first settlement had been made by Governor King in 1803 to forestall what he feared was a French grab for the island. It soon became more of a burden than even he had anticipated. Lieutenant Bowen and his little gang of convicts and soldiers nearly starved to death. The young lieutenant, anxious to return to naval duty in Europe, hurried up to Sydney with the excuse that he had to bring back a soldier who had been helping himself to the stores. Colonel Collins, who had been sent, much against his will, to warn off the French from Port Phillip, was transferred to Van Diemen's Land. Bowen, sent back to his deserted post, was almost shipwrecked on the way, and the shrewd skipper of a Yank whaler charged the Government four hundred pounds for rescuing him.

Thereafter Governor King pursued a policy of leaving the unpleasant place to stew under its reluctant Lieutenant-Governor, a policy followed by succeeding governors of New South Wales, with the exception of Bligh who, after

the 'Rum Rebellion', came sailing into Hobart with demands that Collins join him in an attempt to 'batter down bloody Sydney'. Collins displayed no enthusiasm for the idea, and when he found that Bligh was inviting the free settlers to voice their grievances to him, he hastily bundled Bligh back aboard his ship and told the free settlers they were to have no communication with Bligh.

In 1810 Lieutenant-Governor Collins died, worn down by the strain of twenty years' service of the most exacting kind. As a young man he had been Phillip's Judge-Advocate and private secretary. He had faced famine both in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, and his usefulness to the early governors had time and again prevented his return to England when promotion in the army might have been offered him. His history of the first twelve years of the colony of New South Wales is the chief record of the toil and suffering of that period. The year-long struggle with his truculent superior officer and prisoner, Bligh, was a heavier strain on him than famine, convicts, bushrangers and insubordinate marines had been. For nearly three years after his death the colony was ruled by military officers. Lachlan Macquarie paid a visit and expressed himself as much dissatisfied with the way Hobart was laid out. After seven years it was still merely a collection of huts made of posts stuck in the ground with wattle twigs woven in between and daubed with mud. The chimneys were of stone or turf, and the roofs were thatched with grass.

Van Diemen's Land was during these years outside ordinary British criminal law. The English Government, when defining the legal position of Australia, had thought Van Diemen's Land part of the mainland, and the sweep of water through Bass Strait placed the island out of the jurisdiction of the New South Wales courts. The Lieutenant-Governors simply set up their own baronial courts and appointed magistrates who developed a Common Law of their own peculiar pattern. A free settler might be sentenced to five hundred

lashes—practically a death sentence—for stealing a watch. A magistrate tied a carter to the wheel of his wagon and inflicted three hundred lashes for ill-treating his bullocks.

One commandant, Colonel Geils, fixed a spiked collar on the neck of a free woman and had her exhibited in the streets of Hobart Town. Another woman he tied to the tail of a cart and flogged bare-backed through the town. 'Mad' Governor Davey ordered to the triangles a free man who had indignantly protested that Davey had no power to flog him. The Governor affected to be much amused by the naïveté of such pleading. 'I shall try,' he responded blandly. Even the official doctor could have the blacksmith flogged for presenting his bill. A judge remarked on one occasion that the 'constancy of the wretched man was astonishing'—considering the wretched man was being tortured to extract evidence. Unsatisfactory witnesses were reformed by the simple process of being taken outside the court and given a hundred lashes.

A free man could be deported from one part of the settlement to another, even after he had been acquitted, and there were bribes, bribes, and more bribes to pay. Depositions were destroyed, and the only resource the free settlers had was to post up their complaints secretly by night on a big tree-stump where now the two main streets of Hobart meet.

At one time there were many complaints of a shopkeeping middleman who swindled the settlers out of their grain. One settler was discovered by the storekeeper pasting up a denunciation of his swindling in the open light of day. The swindler at once complained to the military commandant who happened to be passing, and then and there the commandant acted as judge and jury and sentenced the settler to three hundred lashes at the drum-head. The whole process of judgment lasted a few minutes and it would have taken an hour to administer the lashes. When the settler had been given two hundred lashes, news was brought that an English

ship was in the river. The military pomp and deliberation of the flogger deserted him. He hastily applied a mere semblance of the last hundred lashes, thereby probably saving the settler's life. Away at a run went the officer, the drummer, the soldiers and the flogger, shouting as they went: 'What news from England?' The settler was left bleeding on the ground.

Macquarie's disapproval was not abated by Collins's successor, 'Mad' Colonel Davey, who earned his name by walking ashore to his official welcome with his coat over his arm, because the day was hot. Macquarie felt that Davey was not a gentleman, and Davey said he didn't care a damn. He had been in charge of the marines at Trafalgar, and he thought more of rum and gunpowder than manners. His luggage had been sent out by a separate ship which was captured by an American privateer. After some really tall lying as to the value of his luggage, Davey received a grant of three thousand acres compensation.

He persuaded Macquarie to send down some convict women, and Macquarie obliged with two hundred. Lack of women was one of the problems of the place. *The Hobart Town Gazette* recorded on 1st June 1816: 'A Hibernian whose finances were rather low, brought his wife to the hammer this morning and, although no way prepossessing in appearance, to the amazement of all present, she was sold and delivered to a settler for one gallon of rum and twenty ewes. From the variety of bidders, had there been more in the market, the sale would have been brisk.'

Collins had been forced by lack of provisions to let the convicts range loose to hunt, and the bushranging gangs that sprang up as a result were one of the greatest scourges to the settlers, who until 1816 were mostly ex-convicts and a group of deportees from Norfolk Island. In 1816 a shipload of free immigrants arrived. They had not been encouraged to come. Hobart, to that date, had been a closed port, only authorised

ships from Sydney having entry there. The free settlers were given a labour force of convicts who would burn the very farm implements for the iron, as they would rob the gibbet for its chains, wrench the plate off the coffin of a merchant, tumble out his body and strip it of its shroud. They would do anything to get money for rum.

Yet the settlers were forbidden under heavy penalties from offering inducements in the form of money or wages to make their convict assignees work. The rich would be likely to have their servants taken from them, and poorer settlers who, from pity, tossed a few pence or a fig of tobacco to men in the chain gangs might find themselves working at the treadmill with the prisoners.

'Mad' Davey retired to live on his three thousand acres and he was succeeded by Colonel William Sorrell, an admirable administrator, who realised that the great danger to the settlement came from the bushrangers. Men like Whitehead and Michael Howe were not only burning settlers' farms, barns and wheatstacks, but were laying waste whole settlements such as New Norfolk. In a foray when the soldiers killed Whitehead, Howe cut off the dead man's head, under fire, to deprive the soldiers of their reward. With hundreds of men like this roaming the country, it was not possible, even with the greatest of industry, to hang all of them, although so thorough was Sorrell's purge that an eyewitness likened the bodies on the gallows to 'tassels on a blind-cord'.

Macquarie Harbour, on the bleak, storm-swept west coast, was opened as a receptacle for the most hardened criminals. Here they were perpetually lashed, starved and ill-treated. To a long heavy cable about sixty convicts would be riveted, so that the cable had something the appearance of a human centipede. Some of these chain gangs were set all day, under the whip, to rolling and lifting heavy logs from one place to another and then back again. The rations were a little flour, water and salt, mixed in a kind of thin gruel. If a man did not

go mad or strangle one of his companions so that he could be hanged, he sometimes managed to escape, to make his way over the awful country of the interior, emerging very often as a cannibal, or at least a monster whom only death could stop in his career of vengeance.

All the convicts were not subjected to the gloomy horror in which Australian fiction has invested the gaolbird's life. One of the highlights of an annual meeting of the Agricultural Society of Van Diemen's Land was the presentation of 'A suit of clothes and four dollars to James Gordon, Esquire, for good character and five years with his master, minding seven hundred sheep during that time'. There were many convicts who served out their sentences to become thriving settlers.

The lot of a convict woman was hard enough and bad enough, but it had its humorous side, and sometimes the lordly male came off second-best. There is the excellent story of the twelve females at the factory who, when each was asked the name of the father of her child, 'confessed' that it was Parson Ford. This was the type of joke Hobart enjoyed immensely.

Another was the domestic misadventures of Jorgen Jorgenson, the one-time 'King of Iceland'. Jorgenson had been with Matthew Flinders on his heroic exploration of the Australian coast. Traveller, spy, political prisoner, dispensing chemist, the author of works on travel, theology and political economy, he was a cultured, amusing knave. His most notorious exploit had been his appropriation of Iceland in the name of Great Britain. There he had established trial by jury, improved the educational system and set himself up as Governor until the British Government disowned his actions. He was given a place in Britain's secret police until his gambling losses caused him to pawn his landlady's furniture, for which offence he was imprisoned and later transported for life. Jorgenson, alone, carried out a remarkable exploration, crossing the rugged mountainous roof of the island from south

to north and discovering the excellent grazing country of the Surrey Hills. Appointed as a constable, he earned the hatred of the convicts whose crimes he was all too successful in detecting. His triumphs arose from his connection with a convict woman who sold rum for him and acted as a spy. Unfortunately Jorgenson's woman had a strong character and managed to blackmail the ex-adventurer and man of fortune into marriage. Thereafter it was one of the sights of Hobart to see the powerful and influential Jorgenson flying down the main street with his helpmate in pursuit, loudly vowing her intention of 'smashing a bloody broomstick over his head'.

The colonists were deeply disappointed when the British authorities refused to renew Sorrell's term of office in 1824. It was his habit to stand at the gate of Government House and chat with anyone, bond or free, who might be going by. He found Hobart a miserable collection of huts, and when he left he could look with satisfaction on stone barracks, gaols, water-mills, houses, quays, piers and streets. The grateful colonists settled on him an income of five hundred pounds a year from their own pockets. Sorrell was the last of the Lieutenant-Governors, for by act of the British Parliament Van Diemen's Land was made independent of New South Wales, and Governor Arthur, who succeeded Sorrell, had a nominee council to advise him.

Arthur conscientiously carried on Sorrell's war with the bushrangers. Bands of escaped convicts, as many as a hundred together, were sweeping the country, murdering and pillaging. Arthur hunted them down so successfully that thirty-seven were sentenced to death at one court sitting.

But the main anxiety of Arthur's governorship was the Black War, a war which led to the extermination of one of the races of mankind, *Homo Tasmanianus*. The Tasmanians were a kindly disposed and peaceable people, but the human wolves who preyed on them soon taught them savagery. Worst of all corrupters of the natives were the sealers who,

from their stormy islands in Bass Strait, defied the authorities with impunity.

Shortly after the first small party had landed in Van Diemen's Land, a convict, Duce, and half a dozen others had made off in Lieutenant Bowen's boat with the idea of sailing for New Zealand or Timor. They had neither compass nor provisions, and one of them who tried to wrest the only gun from the leader was marooned on a waveswept rock. The others fell in with some sealers, and Duce plotted to seize their ship and murder them. He and his fellow desperadoes were marooned, and the other convicts who had betrayed the plot sailed off with the sealers. The men engaged in sealing had a rough fellowship with the convicts, and always sheltered them, for they themselves were usually only one jump ahead of the law. From that time onward a convict-sealer cross developed with a very dubious reputation.

The seals of Bass Strait, timid, harmless creatures, had greatly interested the French scientist Péron, whose expedition had been the cause of such consternation to Governor King and had prompted the settlement of Van Diemen's Land. 'The English have invaded these long-protected retreats,' wrote Péron. 'They have their organised massacres throughout.' The sealers, with their lances, fifteen feet in length, seized the time when the animal raised its left fore fin and plunged the weapon to the heart. 'And,' says the Frenchman, 'as they see themselves attacked, they seek to fly. If their retreat is cut off, they are violently agitated; their looks carry the expression of despair; they shed tears.'

A convict who escaped to the islands of Bass Strait was in a paradise of criminals. Seal skins sold at eight to a dozen for a gallon of rum, and the oil was worth six shillings a gallon. In September 1803 a vessel brought eleven thousand skins to Sydney. The slaughter was so great the numbers soon shrank, and they are now almost extinct. In 1826 *The Hobart Town Gazette* urged the Government to protect the

seals during the breeding season. It wrote that 'Young Scott who has been an inhabitant of the Straits, and has co-habited with a black woman by whom he has three children, declares that he has known three hundred pups to have perished on one bank, owing to the premature desertion of the mothers, driven away by the unseasonable disturbance of the sealers'.

The association with native women was one of the distinguishing marks of the sealer. The need for a supply of labour led the Straitsmen to take a harem of girls. They raided the native tribes for women to pluck mutton-birds; and four women or half a dozen women were better than one. The mutton-bird, or sooty petrel, furnished large amounts of oil from its fat, and its feathers were made into beds. The eggs were sold in Launceston markets, and the birds themselves were pickled in brine kegs, each cask containing some three or four hundred birds. It took about twenty-five birds to produce a pound of feathers, which sold for sixpence.

On the rocky islands of Bass Strait the women were entirely at the mercy of the men who caught them. They were made to collect sea-birds and feathers, preserve the skins of wallaby, collect the nautilus shells driven ashore, and take a turn at the oar. It was not altogether a bad life, and no doubt the gins were as happy as they would have been with their native husbands, who were not notable for gentleness of disposition. The stories of the revolting cruelty of some Straitsmen, men who would torture and shoot a woman merely because she wouldn't clean the mutton birds, are modified by the history of men such as old Munro, the 'King of the Sealers', who for a quarter of a century lived on Preservation Island, so called from a crew shipwrecked there. Munro held absolute rule over the wild Straitsmen, who always went to him for judgment of disputes, although it was hinted by some that his power lay not so much in the astuteness of his counsel as in the long words and wise looks with which he accompanied it. Munro had three native

women and a half-caste family, and seems to have been a most patriarchal character.

An interesting story for the anthropologist is that of a sealer named O'Brien, who made a descent on the mainland and carried off a native woman to share his island. She had with her a boy twelve months old, and O'Brien, according to custom, was about to kill the child when the wild pleadings of the mother stirred what might by courtesy be called his heart. O'Brien declared that, 'as he had stolen the dam he would keep the cub'. In a few years the cub, now known as Bill, could handle an oar, help capture a seal, and was no mean shot. He acquired a rich Irish brogue, and in the absence of the sealer could barter skins and melons for tobacco and clothing from the crews of passing whalers. He looked with contempt upon the natives. 'They're dirty brutes,' he told a white man. 'I don't like black fellows, they're a dirty, lazy lot.'

Neither did the blacks like him. It was their custom to kill all half-caste children by throwing them in the fire or by beating in their skulls, a custom which materially helped to end a race which had not much chance of survival except in the form of mixed blood. What with the sealers carrying off their women, the settlers feeding them poisoned flour or shooting them on sight, there was little chance for the blacks of Van Diemen's Land. Even shortly after the settlement at Hobart was made, the Lieutenant-Governor was chatting after dinner to the chaplain, when they were startled by the boom of a cannon. About three hundred natives had been chasing kangaroos when the animals hopped towards the white settlement. What happened is a little confused, but the officers of the New South Wales Corps were drinking at the time, and they had not only discharged muskets but added to the fun by firing off the cannon 'to see the niggers run'. The doctor of the settlement, Dr. Mountgarret, was filled with scientific curiosity and sent a note to a friend to know if

he would like to see one of the killed men dissected. At the same time he wrote to Parson Knopwood to christen 'a fine native boy', whose father and mother had both been killed. Mountgarret was one of the few white men to take an interest in the natives; he had the bodies of some of the murdered men put in lime and sent in barrels to Sydney as scientific curiosities.

The efforts of the Governors to keep peace with the blacks had no meaning for those settlers who openly boasted of the number of 'black crows' they had shot. Bushrangers made a practice of killing off natives as meat for their dogs. Stockmen and station hands, when they captured a solitary native, would tie him to a tree, mutilate him and set him free. In this way they taught the natives methods of procuring the next white man a slow and agonising death. Governor after Governor denounced the cruelty of the whites, who threw native babies into the fire, outraged and then shot the women, and generally, as *The Colonial Times* reported of a party which succeeded in getting within thirty yards of a camp-fire, killed an 'immense quantity of blacks'.

Speared cattle, burnt homesteads and fences, lonely murders of women and children were the blacks' reply. The state of hostilities came to a head in 1826 when 'The Great Black War' was officially inaugurated. Five pounds was the price for the capture of a native, but 'five-pounders' usually killed more than they caught. They put in returns which read: 'Nine men taken and three killed near St. Paul's River. Ten men shot and two taken near the Eastern Marshes.'

One of the most terrible enemies of the whites was a gin named Walloa, who had been stolen by scalers and had learned to use a gun. She escaped and returned to her tribe, where the ferocious manners she had acquired so alarmed the blacks that they gave her to another sealer. She escaped again, and raised a band which she led into atrocities against lonely settlers, boasting of her numerous killings of the

'black snakes', as she termed the settlers. It was always the partly civilised blacks who acted most cruelly towards their former masters.

The guerilla warfare of blacks with wooden spears against settlers with guns went on spasmodically, until in 1830 Governor Arthur decided that he would draw a cordon across the island and drive the natives down into a narrow peninsula where they could all be captured. The settlers were delighted. Young officers of the volunteer force which was to drive the natives to the sea swaggered about airing their uniforms and acquiring the nickname of 'the Elegant Extracts' or 'Dirty Duffs'. Preparations for the Line were drawn up with the most military attention to detail. 'Holy Willie Bedford', the colony's chaplain, prepared, at the Governor's request, a fitting form of supplication for the success of the drive to be used in divine service on the Sunday before the expedition departed.

The country over which the hopeful Line was to be drawn was a tumbled mass of mountains and dense scrub. Officers wrote pathetic letters to their superiors pointing out that they had worn out their boots and clothes and would soon be as naked as their men. They complained that, on an average, only five out of every twelve muskets would go off. *The Colonial Times* declared sarcastically that: 'During the advance of the Line, the despatches received and sent equalled in number those forwarded by the allied armies during the last European wars.' Governor Arthur rode indefatigably up and down his Line, and was lost for three days in a place sarcastically called Paradise by the settlers.

There were rumours that runaway convicts were leagued with the blacks and were helping them to escape. The Line shivered with terror at the thought of a league of convicts and blacks: Three thousand men were beating the bush and not one native to be seen. The Governor was shocked at the bluntness of a settler who remarked that the Line was worse

than an Act of Parliament, for while a coach-and-six could be driven through the latter, a wagon-and-eight could quietly pass through the Line.

The Line sagged and wavered, men clustering in groups instead of spreading out. From behind came alarming news of new atrocities, more homesteads in flames. There was nobody who could be spared to chase the marauders. The neck of the peninsula was reached, and the 'Great Black Line' closed in on its prey. When the peninsula was entered, not a black was found! The settlers returned home with worn-out boots and clothes in rags. The Government admitted spending thirty-five thousand pounds but the cost was more probably near seventy thousand. The total capture effected by a hundred and nineteen parties, of over eight hundred soldiers, seven hundred convicts and two thousand settlers, was one black gin and a child—who were found asleep!

A meeting in Hobart congratulated the Governor on his efforts but hinted that some further action was needed. Those natives who had earlier been captured by the 'five-pounders' were put in charge of a Protector of Aborigines, a warm-hearted, red-headed little Methodist named George Robinson, who had hobnobbed with the natives around the wharves and learned their language. Robinson felt it was his mission to save the blacks, and he was prepared to go to any lengths to do it. Before the Line started, he had been out for a year combing the mountains, trying to persuade the blacks to come to the settlements. He met with little success and was once chased for five days by the tigress Walloa. After all, he had little to offer. Those who did surrender were given a ration of bread and potatoes. Tobacco was forbidden, and Robinson, in the miserable settlement at Bruni Island, was already familiar with the cry: 'No good this place—bad place—no egg—no kangaroo—no like—all die.'

He shared his own scanty rations with his charges, wrote pleading letters to the Governor, raged against the debauching

of native women by the men of a nearby whaling station. From denunciation he was reduced almost to despair because the women preferred the whalers with their plentiful supplies of food to their own men starving on Government rations.

The protector had his little faults. He was autocratic to his fellow whites. He hated anyone to have better success with the blacks than he, but he was utterly fearless. He swooped down on the sealers and shanghaied their native women away from the islands by bribes, threats and persuasion. His raids on the Straitsmen and their kingdom of 'slavish and licentious concubinage' became so devastating that the sealers' king, Old Munro, prepared a neat little stratagem.

From curses and violence, the Straitsmen turned to sweet goodwill. They were ready, they said, to help Mr. Robinson in his work of persuading the natives to come to the missions; but they needed their faithful and affectionate wives returned to act as guides. It was a tempting bait, and Robinson took it. The sealers knew the haunts of the blacks; they had boats; they were adept at capturing natives for their own purposes, so why not for his? Once they got their women back, Robinson found that the sealers were still 'enemies to the cause of humanity'. They hardly worried to capture any blacks for him, merely laying claim to any agreeable woman on whom they laid hands.

After the failure of the Line, Robinson was given his opportunity. Unarmed, he went among the tribes, his party of 'tame' blacks painting an alluring picture of the joys that awaited the savages who laid down their spears. The leader of Robinson's blacks was Truganina, a woman of great beauty and intelligence, who devoted years to entrapping her own people and saving Robinson's life. She loved adventure and she had no scruples. Robinson's women were decorated as decoys in gaudy ribbons and trinkets. Marvelous toys were handed about among the amazed men. Red

feathers, red strings, and other fascinating trifles were left hanging in the trees.

In 1831 Robinson was able to report that he had won over sixteen tribes. His chief success was the capture of the dreaded Big River Tribe. To advance empty-handed upon natives armed with eighteen-foot spears while they shouted their battle-cry, was a test of a man's nerve. The tame blacks were paralysed with terror. The white helpers thought their end had come, but Robinson's fearlessness filled the chief with a wonder that arrested the flight of spears. The interpreters came forward and the Big River Tribe was persuaded to surrender.

They knew they were beaten. 'They had fought for the soil and were vanquished,' their champion, Bonwick, wrote. 'They had lost fathers, brothers, sons in war. Their mothers, wives, and daughters, harassed by continued alarms, worn by perpetual marches, enfeebled by want and disease, had sunk down one by one in the forest, leaving but a miserable remnant. Their children . . . had perished of cold, hunger and fatigue, or had been murdered by parental hands to prevent a worse fate.' They yielded to Robinson as friends, not as prisoners. They showed him their scars and told him of the revolting cruelties they had suffered.

The march to Hobart was a triumphal progress, and festivities at Government House welcomed Mr. Robinson's vassals. A few days later the natives were induced on board a ship on which they suffered horribly from sea-sickness. Their children were taken from them to be placed in an orphan asylum. The ships conveyed the blacks to the bleak and unpleasant island where they were to linger out the remnant of their days.

Robinson went on from strength to strength. He toured the country bringing in one tribe after another, undergoing suspense and danger that would have killed a man not fired with so high a sense of his mission. He floated down rivers

on logs, lay for days without food, was nearly speared times without number, and, by the courage and loyalty of his own party of blacks, brought his terrible mission to triumph. Men perished in the snow, were lost in the scrub, were eaten by their mates, travelling over the country where the indomitable Robinson trudged on his frightful journeys. For seven successive days his party went up to their waists in snow. In 1834 the last party of natives ran forward to meet them.

Robinson was granted a thousand acres of land and a sum of money partly subscribed by the Government and partly by the settlers. He went over to the mainland to become protector of the aborigines around the new settlement of Melbourne, later retiring to England with his fortune.

The natives he had brought in as his friends were cooped up on a barren little island, from which Robinson, with his accustomed impetuosity, had ejected a family of sealers, burning their huts and turning them out to convey their few goats and bits of furniture across the ocean by whaleboat. The natives, in sight of their old hills, 'died in the sulks like so many bears', as a convict expressed it. The koala bear, when captured, simply mopes and refuses food until it expires, and the blacks did the same.

A remnant, shifted to another island, perversely caught chills, rheumatism and consumption. The tribes fought among themselves, and the sergeant-in-charge rounded up fifteen of the fiercest men—those who objected to the soldiers' seizure of their women—and put them on a granite rock, where they were rescued in a dying state by a ship's captain.

After that a better superintendent was sent, but there was more Christian teaching than there was food. They received instruction in the catechism and caught skin diseases from being clothed. They learned to answer such questions as:

'What will God do to this world by and by?'

'Burn it.'

'What sort of a country is Heaven?'

'A fine place.'

'What sort of a place is Hell?'

'A place of torment.'

'What do you mean by a place of torment?'

'Burning for ever and ever.'

When twelve men were left with twenty-two women and ten children, they were moved to a settlement a few miles from Hobart. Here they lived in filth, the blankets given them being stolen by the whites or bought for gin. Soon the cemetery grew larger than the settlement.

One of the last to die was Truganina, the gay, devoted native woman who had done as much as Robinson himself to introduce the wild blacks to the blessings of civilisation. She pleaded, as she was dying, to be buried in the mountains where formerly her tribe had wandered. Her remains were neatly mounted as a specimen and placed in a glass case in the museum.

'VANDEMONIA'S' PRESS VERSUS THE SYSTEM

THE MEN who were transported for the Chartist riots of 1839 were sent to Van Diemen's Land, and in that country they lived to see nearly all the demands of the Great Charter adopted as part of the political system of Australia. The Irish Rebellion of 1848 brought a group of distinguished prisoners, men of ability and education, who played for high stakes and lost. One of these, Mitchel, after five years, made his escape to America with half a dozen others who were aided by Irish-American sympathisers.

The 'Dorsetshire Labourers' had been transported for forming a 'Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers', whose members pledged themselves not to work for less than ten shillings a week. Among them was Loveless, a sincere, honest man, whose book *Victims of Whiggery* threw a revealing ray of light into the dark recesses of the Vandemonian System.

These gentlemen convicts had a knack of starting newspapers, such as *The Irish Exile*, and reckless newspapers they were. A free man might own them, but it was the educated convict who wrote the searing protests against the Governor's clique, the exposure of jobbery in high places. The free settlers supported the newspapers as more effective outlet for their grievances than pasting an accusation on a tree-stump.

Governor Arthur's high-handedness, intolerance of criticism, his rigorous Convict System, his belief that he was employed 'not to build up a free community but to hold in check the criminality of an Empire,' inevitably provoked a struggle with the local Press. For Arthur, Van Diemen's Land was a gaol

to be efficiently administered. It must be made a place of terror to the convicted. Macquarie had removed the fear of transportation to Botany Bay; Van Diemen's Land was to be a rude shock to the law-breakers of England. Arthur was just in his dealings with the well-behaved convict, his personal integrity unquestioned, but his robe was too pure for a once-convicted man to touch its hem. 'No emancipist or time-expired convict has ever been received at my table,' he proudly informed the Home Government, 'none have ever been promoted to a higher municipal office than that of a constable.'

To strengthen his administration he created an official class, chiefly of military men, trained to implicit obedience almost to the point of sycophancy, and he advanced his nephews to the most important positions in the colony. Naturally he could see no place for a free Press in a gaol. The struggle between the often scurrilous little newspapers and the Governor stirred up all the fundamental issues between a Police State and free institutions.

The Governor soon decided he must suppress *The Hobart Town Gazette* published by an emancipist, Andrew Bent, who was pugnaciously inclined towards authority. Arthur set up his own Government paper, pirated the title *Hobart Town Gazette*, and had it serially numbered as if it were a continuation of Bent's journal. His editor was James Ross, a doctor of laws of Aberdeen University, who found the conduct of a newspaper war more congenial than supporting his family of twelve on a settler's block of a thousand acres.

Bent was forced to change the title of his paper to *The Colonial Times*. While he served a gaol sentence for libel—he called the Governor a 'Gideonite of tyranny'—his paper was edited for him by a bigamous ex-military officer described by the Governor 'as the most able and most depraved man living.' Bent was still in gaol when he was again convicted for libel of the Governor.

Arthur now had the power, after the separation of Van

Diemen's Land from New South Wales, to pass his own laws, and he pushed through his Executive Council an Act 'to regulate the printing and publishing of newspapers . . . and for the prevention of blasphemous and seditious libels.' No one should publish a newspaper without a licence which was to remain in force for one year only. Arthur immediately refused Bent a licence and continued to refuse a licence to anyone who employed Bent. Bent was about to sell his types and presses when the exciting news came that the Home Government had annulled Arthur's Licence Act. But the war with Arthur had ruined the 'Father of the Press of Van Diemen's Land'. For thirteen years Bent had, with pluck and determination, struggled to bring out his little weekly sheet. Repeated fines and imprisonment saw him penniless and broken in health.

He was not the only pressman to go to gaol. Gilbert Robertson, first of *The Colonial Times*, and later of *The True Colonist*, charged Arthur with felony, and his nephews and whole Government with all kinds of jobbery. For printing charges in *The True Colonist* which set out specific acts of embezzlement by Government officers, he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment and a fine of fifty pounds. Henry Melville bought *The Colonial Times* and carried on. He was fined two hundred pounds and sent to gaol for twelve months, lodged with Robertson in the condemned cell, where the vermin and the cramped space did not prevent him from sending out a memorial to the British Parliament. Broken in fortune, he returned to England and died.

But the colonists did not forget. They added the ruin of Bent and the death of Melville to a long-outstanding score. The Executive Council, composed of heads of departments under Arthur's thumb, was a travesty of government. With public meetings and petitions to the English Parliament begging for trial by jury, the settlers' hostility was openly declared.

The colonists began to talk of enforcing their rights by force of arms. They had chosen a particularly unlucky time to plead for freedom. England was in an uproar over the rejection of the Reform Bill. Bristol was in the hands of the mob; its Mansion House was on fire and so was the Bishop's Palace; prisoners were released from gaol. Nottingham Castle was fired. The riots kept up until the House of Lords gave in, in June 1832. No one could bother about a distant Vandemonia with England ripe for revolution.

The settlers sent yet another petition to the King, but nothing came of it. In all, Arthur ruled for twelve years, and the day of his ship's sailing was hailed by the papers with dramatic thanksgivings: 'We have now a prospect of breathing. The accursed bloodsucker will be destroyed. Colonists, rejoice!' Arthur left behind the official class he had created to be a thorn in the flesh of the next governor, the popular Sir John Franklin.

Franklin had been a midshipman with Flinders and was a personal friend of William IV. There were great hopes that he would root out the System, but he found that the legacy of officialdom was too much for him. Arthur's two nephews and their followers ruled Hobart. John Montagu claimed to trace his descent from the Norman Conquest. Franklin was the son of a Spilsby tradesman. Montagu's insolence to Franklin and his wife was only increased by Franklin's generosity and kindness. When finally forced to dismiss Montagu, Franklin found himself reprimanded, and Montagu was given twenty-one thousand pounds which he claimed he had lost by leaving Van Diemen's Land. He then had all his libels against Franklin bound and sent out for private circulation.

Sir John Franklin did all in his power to advocate the settlers' rights, to obtain a House of Assembly and Trial by Jury, but there was a Tory Government in power in England. Chartists were being sent to Vandemonia in chains for asking

very much the same political rights as the colonists sought. The Convict System, however, was reviewed, and it was decided, to the dismay of Franklin and the settlers, to abolish the custom of assigning convicts as servants. This form of slavery had left the convict absolutely at the mercy of his master, but if convicts had been badly treated by individual settlers, at least public opinion had acted as a slight check on the evils of the penal code.

Transportation to settled parts of Van Diemen's Land was to cease, and only places such as Port Arthur, to which settlers had no access, were to be used for convict settlements. Van Diemen's Land was no longer to be termed a penal colony, but would be put on the same footing as the other colonies. This might have been a benefit, but Franklin had been long enough in the island and knew enough of the System to beg that the proposal should not be put into operation.

When the free settlers had been removed from Norfolk Island, and it had been made a special convict settlement, it had blossomed into an exclusive paradise for the sadist. Now it was proposed to set up yet other settlements where men, hardened by long contact with the System, could have their way unchecked. Franklin's protests were disregarded and the settlements of Port Arthur, Point Peur for the 'reform' of boy convicts, and Maria Island, were presently in full swing. Eight hundred convicts of all classes and grades of crime were imprisoned at Port Arthur. Among them was one who can be looked up to by all champions of the grand Australian custom of complaining. He bore the significant name of Doherty and had been transported for mutiny. For forty-two years he had never known an hour's freedom, and in that time he had received nearly three thousand lashes—but he protested, how he protested! He protested against everything in the System, and, weighed down with chains, he still complained against the convict dress, which was brown one side and yellow the other.

At Point Peur were children who had been transported, some of them only seven years old. A boy and a girl had been transported for stealing food valued at twopence. Boys of ten years were tied to the triangles and lashed equally with the hardened criminals.

As a result of agitation in England against the System, Captain Maconochie was sent to Norfolk Island with orders to reform the convicts by kindness. His easing of the iron grip of the warders gave the prisoners their chance, and they attempted to seize a ship. By the time they had killed the guards and the sailors had killed the convicts, the ship was a shambles. Maconochie's experiments in humanitarianism were brought to an abrupt halt, and Norfolk Island was attached to Van Diemen's Land. Maconochie was blamed for making the convicts restless, and John Price, whose callousness equalled his sadism, was appointed to Norfolk Island to restore order.

Sir John Franklin, burdened with Norfolk Island and kindred establishments on the mainland, had no regret when summarily recalled from Vandemonia. During the years of his governorship four thousand convicts, or practically the whole of Britain's transported criminals, were sent to Van Diemen's Land. When he sailed to the Arctic in 1845 in search of the North-West Passage, he embarked on the voyage which was to be his death with a lighter heart than he had ever felt during his six years in Vandemonia.

The chaplain at Norfolk Island, the Reverend T. Rogers, was a different type from the usual run of rum-drinking parsons. For daring to remonstrate with Superintendent John Price on his revolting cruelty, Rogers was forced to leave. He was not silenced, however, and he gave a gruesome account of the dreadful misery, the vice and horror of the place, to the future Earl Grey, the Home Secretary. It was decided that the convicts should be removed to Port Arthur, and the free settlers of Van Diemen's Land began to hold meetings and

send petitions praying that no more hardened criminals be loosed on them. Lord Stanley, Secretary for the Colonies, decided they were a fretful and carping lot. Millions had been spent on the System and why should a few recalcitrant colonists upset it? Moreover, he declared that as money had to be paid the settlers for grain and farm produce, the convicts must be taken from the road gangs and set to raising crops for their own support. This was a sound plan for everyone except the settlers. The sale of Crown lands had come to an end; bad seasons set in; the colony had to maintain the police and the gaols. The island's debt grew rapidly.

When Governor Wilmot tried to raise money by putting a tax of fifteen per cent on tea, sugar and foreign goods, six members of the Legislative Council defied him to tax the colony for the support of convictism. There were to be taxes on auctioneers, publicans, butchers, eating-house keepers, stage-coach and steam-boat proprietors, cabmen and watermen. Processions of cabs and wagons paraded the streets. Thousands of handbills were distributed:

NO TAXATION

A MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE THEATRE.

Auctioneers, rise at our bidding,
Pawnbrokers, pledge the public your interest,
Butchers, show your pluck,
Publicans, prove your spirit,
Stage coachmen, drive on,
Cabmen, make a stand,
Carters, put your shoulders to the wheel,
Eating-house keepers, support the constitution,
Boatmen, a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull together.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

In the face of rebellion, the Governor surrendered, but he complained of the disloyalty of the 'Patriotic Six' who had

stood against him, and the insulting remarks of the newspapers. The papers in Van Diemen's Land were like a pack of wolves when they began to hunt a man down. Gladstone, then Secretary of State, charged Governor Wilmot with neglecting the vices of Sodom so common for many years at the penal stations; and at that Wilmot lost his temper and replied that he had not made it a point of duty 'to examine the inner world of the convict's mental, moral and spiritual state'. He was at once recalled.

This injustice turned the yells of fury to pity and commiseration. From all parts of the island men came to show their sympathy; the newspapers their change of heart. Wilmot, old and broken by the accusations against him, died at Hobart a few months later in the cottage of his private secretary. The new Governor had already taken over Government House.

The British Government estimated a convict's labour as worth sixpence a day, and with every prospective wage-earner it sent the protesting Vandemonians it debited the colony sixpence. Convicts were being poured in in thousands, and there was no demand for their labour. They outnumbered the free population two to one, and the tone of society sank lower and lower. When the 'Patriotic Six', after a fierce struggle, were reinstated in the Legislative Council by special order from England, the settlers felt they had gained their first victory.

They had agitated and agitated for twenty years for a free Assembly, and now they had it almost within their grasp. The new Governor was determined to maintain the old order despite the pressure from Earl Grey in England, but Grey was a Liberal and convinced that the time for colonial self-government was long overdue. His bill for 'The Better Government of the Australian Colonies' was passed by a bored House of Commons when only one-half the members were present. 'These wretched colonics', as Disraeli called them, were little

'VANDEMONIA'S' PRESS VERSUS THE SYSTEM

better than so many rubbish tips; they might go to the devil and govern themselves.

The wild rejoicings in 'the wretched colonies' were nowhere greater than in Van Diemen's Land, where a round of public banquets celebrated the great constitutional victory. Vandemonia and her hideous traditions were dead. Tasmania rose magnificently from the ashes of the System, from white slavery, oppression, the lash and the gallows.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE TAKES A HAND

AFTER the Napoleonic War and the ending of the long blockade of the Continent, the English wool industry faced disaster from competition by cheap high-class German wool. New materials were being manufactured; gentlemen dressed themselves in broadcloth, in soft fine Indianas and merino weaves; and the wool of English sheep, too short and coarse for the new clothes, became absolutely worthless. Germany was dumping long fine merino wool on the market at a price that left the English product hopelessly behind. Breeding sheep spelt ruin; and English wool, the country's greatest staple since the sixteenth century, went rapidly to ruin.

The redoubtable John Macarthur imported merinos into New South Wales, and concentrated on the production of a fine silky wool. Every time he went to England to fight out to the bitter end one of his political quarrels, he also argued the cause of Australian wool, persuading Select Committees, submitting samples to merchants, arranging to send home trial bales of his merino fleece.

At first 'Botany Bay' wool was looked on as a joke. But when, in 1822, Macarthur was voted two gold medals by the Society of Arts for importing wool as good as the finest Saxon, the public took notice of the newspaper accounts. Enthusiastic merchants realised that wool could be brought from Australia at less than the cost from Germany, otherwise ships delivering supplies would have to come back in ballast or with empty bottoms. The Australian wool was longer, silkier, and more resilient than any but the best Saxon wool; it also mixed well with the English wool, and might be the

salvation of the home industry. Parliament reduced the duties on Australian wool until the German import had to pay six times as much; and the triumph of Australian wool, despite the frantic efforts of the Germans, was assured. The famous J.M.A. brand stood supreme, while prices rose and fell.

In Germany conditions became worse as industrialisation and the pressure of population combined with the fencing of the common lands to ruin the German sheepmen. By 1840 Australian wool was competing on the German home market. In ten years Australia had risen from producing a tenth of Germany's output to two-thirds. In another ten years she was producing nearly five times as much as Germany.

The 'thirties in England saw the rise of large joint stock companies, and it was Macarthur's son, John Macarthur Junior, who made the first shrewd attempt to divert some of the stream of capital towards Australia. He could point to the phenomenal success of the Australian wool-grower as an inducement. With cheap convict labour and land given away, wool should be a fine investment. The Australian Agricultural Company was formed with a million pounds of English capital behind it. The company's modest request for a million acres was granted and its advisers proceeded to select a patch of sheep country that was mostly salt swamp, lakes and gum trees.

After some awful blunders in the choice of managers, Sir Edward Parry, the Arctic explorer, was selected as governor of the company's vast lands, a choice surprisingly effective. Parry managed to exchange the company's more worthless lands on the New South Wales coast for a coal-mine at Newcastle and six hundred thousand acres of rich inland plains. He dealt efficiently with a second-in-command who, living in a hut ten feet away, refused to communicate with Parry except by voluminous letters; with the domestic disputes of the six-hundred-odd servants of the company; with such disappointments as a prize stallion which was

interested in nothing but grass. He laid out towns; built schools, gaols, hospitals, churches; led expeditions for the exploration of twenty-three thousand square miles; rounded up bushrangers and rum-runners; conducted church services every Sunday, and performed the baptisms, marriages and burials for his miniature kingdom. His manuscript journal in three volumes in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, is a magnificent record of long-forgotten, unassuming courage.

Other companies, such as the Van Diemen's Land Company and the Cressy Company, took up vast estates. Capital poured into the colonies, but the company which was responsible for the settlement of Western Australia enjoys the distinction of promoting the most colossal failure in Australian history. There had been a small semi-military establishment on the big toe of the west coast for years, but it was little more than a 'no trespassers' sign to prowling French ships. Captain James Stirling, stirred by the beauty of the country around the Swan River, tried to interest the British Government in settling a colony there, but the Government showed a complete lack of interest. Stirling tried the capitalists. Land, valuable land, square miles of land, was waiting only for wealthy men to develop it! The Government, which balked at giving away four million acres, or an area half the size of Holland, finally agreed to grant a million acres, settlers to have forty acres for every three pounds they put into the colony. Instead of a yearly salary the Governor was to be paid in land—a hundred thousand acres of it. A rich man, instead of putting his money into high-priced land in England, could come to Western Australia, bringing with him his grand piano, his carriage, his furniture and other assets; and the Government would give him an acre for every one-and-sixpence worth of property landed.

The company which had been formed to exploit the Swan River district did not consider even these terms good enough, but Thomas Peel, who had formed it, did, and he invested

fifty thousand as an incentive to others. Captain Stirling agreed to become Lieutenant-Governor and arrived with the first shipload of colonists in June 1829.

The first uneasy warning that the land-hungry migrants received was when the pioneer batch found that the sandy stretch around Fremantle was not the paradise it looked from the sea. But eight hundred hopeful settlers were on the way, and narrowly escaping shipwreck on the reefs that had been the graveyard of Dutch ships two centuries before, the would-be colonists were dumped on an island while a site was chosen for the new city. They sheltered as best they might in little brushwood huts and tents from the howling storms, the rain and the wind of the winter, while exploring parties found only scrub and sand, save where the Swan River, several miles from its mouth, expanded into a wide lagoon.

There the city of Perth was founded; but the mouth of the river was impassable for ships, and the goods of the colonists were landed on the surf-beaten beach and carried overland through miles of scrub. The grand pianos, the carriages, the fine furniture and lace curtains lay half buried in the sand, beaten by sun and rain; the costly implements and ploughs rusted, while their owners squabbled as to the value of the goods they had brought with them and refused to take any land except what they hoped would be in the heart of the city. Horses and cattle wandered off into the scrub because the country had not been surveyed, and no fences could be put up until it was. The wealthy men whose grants exceeded a square mile were given first choice, and all land near the town went to them. Many held districts as large as an English county, while small purchasers and genuine farmers were pushed farther out, away from the water supply, into the dangerous interior, where they died of hunger, disease or the spears of the blacks. The sheep were nearly all killed by eating poison weed, and the price of food soared out of the reach of the ruined and angry multitude.

Thomas Peel had brought out three hundred labourers to work the quarter of a million acres he was to receive. He could not keep his men because everyone wanted labour and wages jumped with prices. There were plenty of masters, but no servants; velvet and lace curtains, but no windows to put them on; costly furniture but no houses. Peel, who had spent everything on the colony, was left a broken, miserable figure, in a small hut with a clay floor, with his silver forks and spoons, his expensive equipment; hoeing his little potato patch with the aid of one black servant, while his two hundred and fifty thousand acres lay useless.

Western Australia was a beautiful example of how not to colonise a country. Governor Stirling hung on gamely while the settlers drifted away, some to the east coast, others to Tasmania. Stirling encouraged expeditions which found better land. Wool was bringing a good price, and when some of the land wasted in enormous grants was recovered it was made available to small farmers, and the colony slowly gained strength. But what was the use of finding coal, wonderful timber and pearls, where there were no miners, no axemen, no divers? The labour problem continued to harass the west for a decade.

In England, one Edward Gibbon Wakefield watched the ghastly mess with some satisfaction. His theory of colonisation was to have an enormous influence on Australia, particularly his insistence that public land should not be given to broken-down naval and military men, but sold for a 'sufficient price'. Wakefield had been employing his leisure in gaol writing such a good book about New South Wales that it was taken for granted that the author lived there. Edward Gibbon Wakefield came of a family noted for 'aggressive philanthropy', but determination to marry money was his downfall. He began his dangerous career of running off with heiresses by eloping with a wealthy young ward in Chancery, but was able to persuade the Lord Chancellor to condone

the marriage. His wife died four years later, leaving him with two young children. Six years later he decoyed another young heiress from her boarding school, married her at Gretna Green and left for Calais. The girl's parents prosecuted him, and after a notable trial Wakefield settled into a three years' gaol term which he occupied with plans for reform of the prison system. His gruesome and successful journalism successfully drew the startled attention of the public to the gaols. It was only a step to prison colonies, and from prison colonies Wakefield became interested in the theory of colonisation. He published a *Sketch of a Proposal for Colonizing Australia* followed by *A Letter from Sydney*. The book was a sensation in literary and political circles.

It described the annoyances of a cultured, refined gentleman who had emigrated to the Australian colonies. He could have no intellectual society; he could not enjoy books, pictures, music, elegant conversation. Why? Because he had to work like a menial. He had to labour for his daily food. Land was so cheap that emigrants quickly saved enough to buy it and become their own masters. Although such a place might be good for a poor man, it was dreadful for a gentleman.

The remedy was to sell land at a 'sufficient price', a price high enough to keep land out of the reach of the working man. The money obtained from the sale of land could be used as a fund to bring out from England 'young marriageable persons' whose reproductive powers might embarrass the over-crowded homeland, but would be of advantage in the empty spaces. This system of colonisation by men and women in equal numbers would also improve the moral tone of the colonies. The splendid soil and resources of Australia would allow a gentleman of small means to live like a lord, if only there were enough servants. Labour was the trouble, and in a new colony with dear land and plenty of labour to minister to the wants of the moneyed man, this difficulty would be overcome.

So far everyone could see the beauties of the scheme. What

made the authorities extremely suspicious was that Wakefield also advocated the revolutionary idea of self-government for the colonies. Instead of the arbitrary rule of the British Colonial Office, the colonies, according to him, should not only manage their own land sales but all their own affairs. To have accustomed the British authorities to the idea that colonial self-government was an intelligent and natural solution of their problems was as much to Wakefield's credit as the founding of South Australia, or his settlement in New Zealand.

Wakefield gathered around him a brilliant group of Benthamites to support his demand for a new colony in which to try out his plans. One of his adherents became secretary of the National Colonisation Society which won over the Colonial Secretary, the future Earl Grey, to its ideas. In 1831 free grants were abolished in Australia, sales by auction taking their place, with the result that during the next ten years one million one hundred thousand pounds was received for the sales of land, and the money used to bring out fifty thousand free settlers.

For four years the Colonisation Society agitated for a new colony. Wakefield's proposal to settle South Australia by a chartered company was rejected by the authorities not only because of a suspicion of the financial ambitions of those behind the scheme but also from a dislike of Wakefield's daring proposals for liberty of religion, freedom of trade, citizen militia, annual parliaments and adult male suffrage.

When the whole scheme seemed at a standstill, the publication of Sturt's journey down the Murray revived the demand for the new colony. Why not set it at the mouth of this magnificent river or somewhere near the river? By abandoning the political side of the scheme the new South Australian Association at last managed to get permission to start the colony. It was necessary to lobby all sorts of Members of Parliament, even the Duke of Wellington, to get the bill

through in a mutilated form that nearly broke Wakefield's heart. The Iron Duke alone saved it from being thrown out, his support being gained by hints that the grateful colonists would probably name their chief town after him. Wakefield was true to his half-promise. When, under his influence, another powerful settlement took place in New Zealand, he called the capital Wellington.

The colony of South Australia was settled on a compromise basis, and as such was from the start bound for trouble. Wakefield's idea of a chartered company with rights of government was rejected. The South Australia Company was allowed to put up the money and find the colonists, but the Governor was appointed by the Crown. Control was to be divided between the Governor and a board of eleven Commissioners appointed by Parliament to manage the Wakefield system of land sales.

Since colonial governorships were regarded as rewards for long navy or army service, Sir John Hindmarsh was given the position. He was a veteran of Nelson's days, an autocrat of the old school, well-intentioned but headstrong. To stand the expenses attendant on the governorship he had to raise a loan from one of the wealthy founders of the colony, George Fife Angas. The unfortunate Governor, despised by his officers for the manner in which he tried to keep down his expenses, maintained what dignity he could with a salary of eight hundred pounds a year and a log dining-room, the canvas roof of which dropped centipedes the while he wrote to Angas begging for an extension of his loan and such necessities of his position as a supply of wine.

Hindmarsh made the initial mistake of obtaining an old rotten navy transport called the *Buffalo* as one of the migrant ships and commanding it himself. The bulwarks were six feet in height and the colonists were penned in surrounded by rows of 'filthy hogs'. The ladies' confinements, for lack of space, were conducted in the lifeboats. Immigrants were not

allowed on the quarter-deck, although the officers and passengers had that part of the poop not occupied by hay and hens. His dogs roamed the ship and he kept the mainsails furled for weeks lest the draught should upset his cows. It was not until five months after the first colonists reached Kangaroo Island that the *Buffalo* arrived.

Kangaroo Island seems to have been selected as a suitable place for settlement because someone had liked the charming sketches of kangaroos and emus in Matthew Flinders' thirty-year-old book *Voyage to Terra Australis*. Colonel Light, the official surveyor, realising that fifteen ships loaded with emigrants were close upon his heels, that the island was impossible for settlement, and that his instructions to survey one thousand five hundred miles of coast in three weeks were ridiculous, selected the best possible site, where the city of Adelaide now stands.

Adelaide is six miles inland, and ladies and gentlemen who had paid for land they had never seen, were disgusted on their arrival to find themselves in a mangrove swamp where there were neither porters nor cabs. A funny little drawing of 'Port Misery' shows gentlemen in top-hats staggering unhappily ashore bearing on their shoulders ladies who display a daring stocking, and even their little frilled pantalettes. On the wharf a group of tarry sailors split their sides laughing, while barrels, hat-boxes and portmanteaux sail slowly down the stream half-submerged.

The colonists had to camp in tents on a grassy plain where the only indication of the hoped-for city were boards nailed to trees and inscribed with the names of the streets. When they surveyed the rather sinister wilderness which their fancy had planted with lawns and orchards, and considered how many years and how much sweat would be needed before the dreams came true, the settlers hated the idea of going yet further into the empty spaces. In any case they could not go until their land was surveyed. After all, town allotments would

be sure to rise in price; why not buy land in the heart of the city? The same bright idea occurred to everyone, and a land boom set in.

The poorer immigrants who had been brought out as a labour force found nothing to do. That was the flaw in Wakefield's scheme. He had not bargained for wholesale unemployment. He had been so concerned with the deplorable qualities of poor men who preferred to take up cheap land and work for themselves rather than work for a master that he forgot that rich men often chose to speculate with land rather than to cultivate it. The poorer immigrants could find neither land nor work. The colony's revenues were being spent on importing provisions while the Governor and the resident Commissioner fought out their private feuds, the land remaining unsurveyed and more shiploads of colonists pouring in.

When Hindmarsh was recalled and Governor Gawler appointed, he realised that the need of land survey was urgent, and he spent all his emergency funds as well as his own fortune to speed up the work. Meanwhile, to give the desperate poor a chance to eat, he constructed roads, bridges and wharves. The South Australia Company honoured his first drafts and then when more bills came in became panic-stricken at the cost and refused to pay. The colony was declared insolvent just when Gawler had got it to its feet.

With the crash everyone tried to sell the land they had bought at fancy prices. This gave genuine settlers a chance to start farming, and they found that wheat grew splendidly. A lucky find of copper started the rich mining industry. The 'overlanders' came from Sydney driving flocks and herds; Sturt, that gallant adventurer, among them, and Edward John Eyre, afterwards famous as the first man to cross the desert to West Australia.

The 'overlanders' treated the enormous and heroic journey quite casually, two of them driving tandem from Melbourne

to Adelaide. In scarlet shirts and broad-brimmed hats, their belts filled with pistols and their horses gaily decorated, they made Adelaide ring with their exploits. In a year or so they had brought fifty thousand sheep overland, and the colony began to pull itself out of the slough by its own bootstraps.

Gone were the visions of great gentlemen sitting elegantly outside their country seats watching the menials toil. Some of the best settlers in the country were the hard-working German Lutherans driven from their land by religious persecution. They were the type for which Australia had been waiting. Frederick William III had decided to weld the German states together by means of a state religion, and many Lutherans found they were criminals if they baptised their children or held services. They were fined, imprisoned, banished, but they doggedly defied their rulers. When the clergy and leading elders were imprisoned, the congregations carried on without them. When the military tried to break into a church, they stood quietly ten deep in the doorways. On Christmas Eve, five hundred soldiers entered Honigern and surrounded two hundred Lutherans who had stood guard around their church in the snow throughout the bitter winter night. The only resistance they met was the singing of a hymn. Loading their muskets the soldiers charged and beat down the Lutherans with sabres and the butt-ends of their rifles.

Pastor Augustus Kavel went seeking help from England and was promised the support of the South Australia Company to get his people to Adelaide. George Fife Angas made the promise to Kavel on behalf of the company, but found that the company could do nothing, and, of course, the British Government would do nothing. Sooner than go back on his word, Angas himself bore the cost of removing the Germans to the new colony. 'I wrote to Mr. Ward to dispose of my carriage. . . .' Angas stated, in 1838. 'These are not times for needless expense when the people of God are in a state of persecution.'

Even the lure of the gold diggings failed to draw the Germans from their peaceful devotion to the land. 'Neatness, cleanness, sobriety and devoutness' made them pillars of the community. They introduced vine-growing, built schools, put up patiently with inconveniences that set the English settler cursing, and kept to themselves in their pretty villages of Bethany and the Valley of Praise. Their missionaries were the sturdiest defenders of the aborigines; and one of their geologists, a hare-brained visionary who believed that the Devil spoke to him from the trees, found some of the richest lodes of copper and other minerals. The women did the sheep-shearing and were experts at it. Beer-brewing, cricket-bat making and hop-growing are all industries they introduced and which are still flourishing today, while South Australian wines enjoy a world-wide reputation. The only failings of the Lutherans seem to have been religious disputes and the founding of breakaway churches. Kavel, who had led them across the world and lived to see a large number naturalised Australians, was buried in the new land beside Angas, the man whose bounty had opened the way from persecution to peace.

The unfortunate Gawler was made the scapegoat for the financial crash in South Australia; the harvest of his administration being reaped by Captain George Grey, a young officer, who had led a rash exploring expedition along the West Australian coast. On his appointment as Governor, Grey retrenched in every direction, cut expenditure to the bone, and set the finances straight. He insisted, however, that the British Government meet the bills drawn by Gawler, a proposal that the English Exchequer most reluctantly accepted. The financial stability of the country was achieved partly by Grey's work and partly by the finding of minerals.

A carter dragging a log behind him as a brake down a steep mountain track knocked out a bright glistening rock. He brought it to Adelaide, and presently silver and lead were

being prospected on the Mount Lofty Range. Further north, in the same range, an overseer out searching for sheep found a bright-green ore which he brought to his employer, Captain Bagot. The captain quietly took up eighty acres of the useless-looking land at the fixed price of one pound per acre. He astonished the colony by opening the Kapunda Copper Mine. After that the range was examined with loving care, and fifty miles away at Burra Burra more copper ore was located. According to the regulations the land must be put up to auction, and there was bound to be a scramble for it, but speculators saw a way of keeping it from such sacrilege. The law of 'special survey' allowed that a large compact block of land of twenty thousand acres could be bought for one pound an acre cash down. Captain Bagot and his friends decided to apply for a 'special survey' and assembled a company of Adelaide gentlemen to put up the money. Governor Grey knew the land was priceless, but that he was obliged to let it go for twenty thousand pounds. He insisted that cash meant *gold*, not cheques and bills. There was a rumour that Sydney capitalists were on their way laden with gold. A rival South Australian syndicate had been formed to bid for the land, but found itself equally baffled by the Governor's determination.

Necessity drove the two companies to club their funds and buy the land together. Even by uniting their funds they were still short of the necessary sovereigns and had to go round collecting from friends. The two companies took possession of the land, the Sydney speculators arriving a few days too late.

The land was to be divided equally between the two Adelaide companies as they could not agree to work it together. A line was drawn down the middle. Captain Bagot's company was known as the 'Nobs', being composed of wealthy and rather haughty landowners. The men in the rival company were the 'Snobs', small farmers and tradesmen. The 'Nobs' selected the northern half; the 'Snobs' the southern half.

To the disgust of the haughty 'Nobs' most of the copper proved to be on the side of the 'Snobs', who made their fortunes over and over again. Miners brought from Cornwall cut themselves dwellings in the solid rock, with beer barrels for chimneys, and the creek bed for the main street of the village. For years they lived there until one night the creek bed was filled by a racing flood, and the houses with several of their residents were swept away.

In 1845 Burra Burra was a lonely moor. Five years later it was ringing with the noise of engines, pumps and forges. Acres of land were covered by the company's warehouses and offices; the handsome residences of the managing staff; the great mounds of blue, green and dark-red ores. Eight hundred bullock teams plodded constantly to and from the coast drawing copper to a fleet of England-bound ships.

On the wealth of the mines South Australia thrived. Later the colony pushed a railway across the border to New South Wales and exploited the enormous riches of Broken Hill. One of the most astonishing enterprises of the colony was the building of the overland telegraph. The tropical region of the north was always to the South Australian view a perquisite. Just as the colonists had exploited the wealth of the Broken Hill silver and lead mines, so they were determined to exploit the Northern Territory. The laying of a cable between England and America in 1866 aroused in Australia attention to the slowness of communication. Orators shouted that England could go to war with another power and the first tidings to arrive on Australian soil might be hostile shells. In Queensland politicians talked of putting a cable through to Malaya, for by this time the Queensland settlements were stringing all round the Gulf of Carpentaria. But South Australia, anxious not to be isolated by such a move on Queensland's part, rushed in to claim its rights.

In 1870 the overland line, designed to connect at Darwin with a submarine cable from Singapore, was commenced in

three sections. The southern section did not present any great difficulties, but the remaining thirteen hundred miles was through country unknown except for the explorations of McDouall Stuart. The tropical climate made the work almost impossible for whites. Even the timber for the posts, dragged across hundreds of miles of desert, was eaten by white ants. The contractors failed utterly and the cable company threatened a law suit against the Government if it did not have the telegraph ready by the appointed day.

Charles Todd, the energetic superintendent, having completed the difficult central section, took over the northern section. With great determination he imported coolie labour, fetched iron posts instead of wood, and, aided by a break in the company's cable, had his overland line ready and waiting before the cable was repaired. There were not two hundred thousand people in the colony, but they bore the entire cost of the two thousand miles of telegraph. The Lord Mayor of London standing at one end of the line sent his hearty congratulations to the Mayor of Adelaide, who answered back over twelve thousand five hundred miles. It was the crowning glory of South Australian enterprise.

Tradition in the other states reports South Australians as conservatives. No people ever less deserved the reputation. Many of the early copper mines have now been worked out, but at Port Pirie huge smelters still refine the silver-lead wealth of Broken Hill. From Iron Knob and Iron Monarch, two mountains of solid ore, comes almost the entire iron production of Australia to the manufacturing cities of the East. South Australia was the first state in Australia to assemble and manufacture motor cars, and today its aeroplane factories employ many thousands of workers. Probably South Australia's reputation for conservatism rests solely on its obvious prosperity.

THE KINGDOM OF THE SQUATTERS

A HUNGER gripped the country with the rise of wool in the 'thirties, a sudden madness that led gentlemen to desert the pianos and garden parties, the counting houses and quays. It was a hunger for the sharp blue ranges and the great silver plains. The elegant equipage with a groom was swapped for a bullock dray, the dainty collation for an uninterrupted diet of greasy mutton, damper and black post-and-rail tea. They loaded their creaking wagons, took a last drink all round, and departed into the unknown, where the coloured smoke-signals rolled to call the tribe to the war-dance. They went accompanied by a patter of thousands of tiny hoofs, the drumming and thundering of cattle, and history was the path they beat out. They were the squatters.

The name 'squatter' had been used contemptuously for the old lag, the crafty bush-rat who 'sat down' by a man's fence and lived off his stock. Perhaps he owned a shanty, or he might have a cellar of fire-water to tempt shepherds away from their sheep, or be hand in glove with the bush-rangers. Any unbranded cattle or missing sheep were pretty sure to find their way to the squatter's run. Decent settlers raged against thieves, but there was usually no evidence and they were far from any centre of justice.

The Government, always fearful that a wide scattering of convicts into the immensity of the bush would bring on a massacre instead of those lonely murders which were so common, set its face against settlers straying off in search of better land. An official line was drawn around what was called the Nineteen Counties and within that line the law abode.

Outside it, the blacks, the lurking murderous escapees, and all forms of sudden death might take the wanderer without vengeance from the law. In 1835 there were a hundred and eleven mounted police for a whole continent, and two hundred and twenty bushrangers had been captured in five months. So the authorities set their faces against the dispersion of settlers. Mr. Wakefield preached that a neat, tight little colony was much more profitable to all concerned; and, anyway, a small colony was easier to manage. If a settler wanted new land, he could buy it at an 'upset' price of one pound an acre.

This official reasoning the settler refused to follow. Why should he buy land when there were millions of acres to be had for nothing? No governor, no Wakefield theory, not even a regiment of soldiers could have stopped the outward flowing surge of sheep and cattlemen. The whole continent was Crown land as much Her Majesty's property as Windsor Park? Very well; but was it to be left to a few kangaroos, while the colony's flocks, enormously increasing, needed grass? This dog-in-the-manger Government could like it or lump it, but land the settlers would have—thousands of acres, if they could get it, tens of thousands of acres. They were drunk and crazy for land.

It was not the shady characters who were squatters now, but the men of fortune, the sons of the 'pure merinos', the gentlemen from England, emigrants of all ranks, but strong, determined, well-armed men, pushing out into the back country. 'Squatter' came to mean a man who was occupying Crown lands without permission—and because such men were usually rich, aristocratic, well-educated, it became a term of respect.

'The principal settlers were also the principal squatters,' wrote Judge Therry, Governor Bourke's right-hand man. 'Settlers as to their own lands, squatters as to the Crown lands they occupy.'

A new recruit to the army of squatters would ride eagerly ahead of his men and flocks, until he came to a country where the only marks of occupation were a set of initials cut in a tree or a ploughed line. The men farthest out might point across the river and tell him all the land on the opposite side was not taken up, or that the hill shaped like a saddle was good pasture. There the squatter would 'sit down' or build his station—a few huts, rude enough and miserable enough, but a home, the beginning of his great mansion. If he were dissatisfied, he would move on farther out; he might halt half a dozen times in his wanderings before he settled permanently, or he might take up three or four runs.

As the good country was all taken up, a newcomer virtually had to fight his way in. Marked trees would be cut down, vague boundaries like a hill or a river any man could claim. When the Government set up Commissioners with arbitrary powers to deal with such disputes, the squatters hated the Government worse than ever and claimed the Commissioners were unconstitutional and an insult to free men. Their bitterness was increased when their stock was taxed to pay for the Commissioners and the police.

In 1836 the Surveyor-General, Major Mitchell, led an expedition to the south, partly because he hoped to disprove Sturt's conclusions as to the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers. Mitchell crossed the Murray and from a mountain-top looked out over a land which he declared to be the very Garden of Eden. He came back to Sydney singing the praises of the rich south; and it was along the tracks made by his wagons, 'the Major's line', that the greatest rush took place. The squatters rode south, spreading along the rivers, delighted by land that grew kinder and more welcoming as they advanced, towards the Strait which separated the mainland from Van Diemen's Land. Since 1803, when Colonel Collins had condemned Port Phillip, settlers had not been allowed there. The place had been officially denounced, and anyway

it was too far from Sydney. So that when Major Mitchell, riding overland and proclaiming himself 'the only Adam in this Paradise', came to Portland Bay, he was much astonished by the sight of a house and a whaling ship riding at anchor.

The illegal dwellers came out to welcome him with gifts of green vegetables, and the gallant major was only too glad to enjoy their hospitality. He knew they had no right there. They also knew they had no right. They could only hope that if they hung on long enough and kept quiet, the Government might let them stay. This family, the Hentys, had come out from England to Western Australia. They had broad acres in England, but the thought of the princely estates to be held in Australia tempted them. Disgusted by the muddle of the Swan River Settlement, where their sheep ate poison weed and died, they sailed off to Van Diemen's Land, and some of the sons found niches for themselves in the public life of the colony. Young Edward Henty, however, knowing of the good lands across Bass Strait, made application to the Sydney authorities for permission to settle at Portland Bay. He was refused, as all other settlers were refused. The determined Hentys loaded their private ark, the *Thistle*, with thirteen heifers, two working bullocks, pigs, turkeys, guinea-fowls, dogs, the plough, seed plants, vines, apple and other fruit trees, the fishing boat and nets, timber for the house, servants; they forgot nothing. In heavy gales, the little *Thistle* was driven drunkenly to and fro, battered and smashed by great seas. But her cargo of squatters landed, fenced and built their house. By the time Mitchell came overland, they could sit on their own veranda and watch their whaleboat chase whales up to the bay to slaughter them at the bottom of the front garden. And behind them, in Van Diemen's Land, yet more would-be squatters were preparing to defy the ban.

John Batman, famous in the island for his capture of natives

and of Gentleman Brady, the bushranger, decided to take a party to the rich well-watered country around Port Phillip. He was refused permission and, like the Hentys, went without. He was a long time tossing in the straits before he arrived at Port Phillip, where, finding a tribe of blacks in possession, he offered to buy a part of their land. Batman honestly believed that by the distribution of tomahawks, looking-glasses, knives and blankets, and by the blacks scrawling their marks on a carefully prepared legal document, he had bought six hundred thousand acres of land. He certainly introduced a new principle into Australian civilisation: he had actually given the blacks something in exchange for their country, even if only looking-glasses and blankets.

Batman went round carefully notching trees so that there would be no question which was his land, and slept happily in the midst of his black friends. 'This will be the place for a village,' he wrote in his diary, as he gazed round at the stretching forest where later was to rise the city of Melbourne. Leaving three white men to guard his land, he went back to bring over the other colonists. The news of this fine country created a sensation in Tasmania, and the editor of a Launceston paper, John Fawkner, chartered a schooner to cross the strait. After nineteen days of seasickness he was still in sight of the Tasmanian coast, so he decided he would be put ashore. His followers, with their pigs and sheep and bullocks, landed in Port Phillip, where Batman's men were astounded to see the ship's topmast projecting above the tree-tops and hastened to warn the newcomers they were trespassing on the land of the Port Phillip Association.

The new group of squatters was derisive when they heard about the beads and blankets bargain. They simply went on chopping down trees and clearing the land. Fawkner arrived with more squatters, and it became clear that the two rival parties would just have to settle in together. They were joined by the first settler of all, William Buckley, a convict

who had escaped from Collins's settlement and who for thirty-two years had been living with the natives.

Within a year two hundred squatters had established themselves on the shores of Port Phillip, bringing with them more than fifteen thousand sheep. Too late the blacks perceived the nature of Batman's treaty with their chiefs, and they planned revenge. Two men who had been sent with a bullock to fetch some of Batman's gear fell an easy prey to them, the blacks luring one man away on pretence of having seen a kangaroo. 'When they got them separated,' runs the account of an old settler, 'they got behind the man that had his gun in his hand and laid his head open; then the other man saw this, he had nothing to defend himself with but his hands, the blacks, with thiere tomeyhawks and spears, they killed him. Thay was boath killed . . . Some short time the blacks came and told us that those two men were killed, our overseer whent in search of them, and found them under a tree covered with branches of trees, but all the flesh ate of the boans.'

It was partly because of this trouble with the blacks that the Sydney authorities decided to take action. Governor Bourke issued a solemn proclamation warning the settlers they had taken possession of Crown lands and were liable to be dealt with as other invaders. When this had no effect, he followed up his proclamation by sending police, a lieutenant-governor, customs-house officers, and all the regalia of the law. A wattle-and-daub building was put up as a police station, but one night natives undermined it, or, some say, Mr. Batman's bull rubbed against it. Anyway, it fell down.

The men who came to Port Phillip from Van Diemen's Land came because they were dissatisfied with the despotism of the System. They wanted freedom, and were not disposed to exchange the tyrannical rule of Van Diemen's Land for the more distant despotism of Sydney. Port Phillip was *their* colony, their very own, and from the first they took a mutinous tone towards what they considered infringements of their

rights. Without any organised scheme of settlement, there were over twenty thousand people in the country around Port Phillip in less than seven years.

Of course the first thing the colonists did was to set up a newspaper. The first nine issues were written by hand and advertised the proprietor's, John Fawkner's, hotel as providing: 'Mental and Bodily Refreshment unrivalled in this quarter of the Globe. Lodgers allowed the use of the Library gratis. There are seven English and five Colonial Weekly Papers and seven monthly and three quarterly Reviews from Britain.' The bodily refreshment at Fawkner's Hotel was simple, the accommodation consisting of a large attic subdivided into separate ovens in which guests were roasted in hot weather and chilled in winter. It was owned by a colony of fleas as enterprising and enthusiastic as any of the other settlers.

John Batman had a palatial mud hut twenty feet long and twelve broad, known as the 'Mansion House'. *The Melbourne Advertiser* in 1838 reported that: 'In John Batman's house, on the right hand of the hall door, was a small room which he called the parlour by day, but which was converted into a sleeping room, by a feather bed being thrown down on the floor. Then there would be a rush for tenancy, and the four or five fortunate emigrants to get first into the room flung themselves down in the clothes they stood upright in and established their claim.'

The Lieutenant-Governor had a little wooden hut to himself, and the military one was 'nearly as bad'. The few other houses were 'unworthy of notice'. Yet the pride of the residents in the city was immense. The first issue of *The Melbourne Advertiser* pointed out—in copper-plate handwriting—that 'the giant-like strides of the colony filled with astonishment the minds of all the neighbouring states'. It adds that 'the Sons of Britain languish when debarred the use of that Mighty Engine, the Press'. So the editor will continue to write the paper by hand until he can arrange to print it.

Before long a rival editor came sailing upstream with a rickety press and a job lot of type, wondering aloud why he had ever left Sydney and what a couple of kangaroos and a scattering of blacks could be wanting with a paper. The two papers fell busily to work attacking each other, the Sydney Government, the sister colonies, particularly South Australia, which regarded Port Phillip as a cuckoo in its nest. The only thing they were in agreement on was the 'giant-like strides' made by their town.

In the early years of the colony at least eleven ships were kept ferrying sheep across from Van Diemen's Land to Port Phillip. The inevitable 'overlanders' from Sydney arrived with herds of sheep and cattle. An 'expedition' was the term for an official exploring party. When a settler took a journey of a thousand miles to sell his sheep, he was simply 'overlanding'. Later, when the goldfields were opened up, he would load his wife and children on a bullock dray and set out from Adelaide to Bendigo, or from the Darling to Turon. Laws were passed to prevent the overlander stealing the squatter's grass—'Dodging Pompey' it was called; and the bones of starved bullocks, broken drays and old rusted axles marked the path of the overlander. Also, it must be sadly admitted that Governor Gipps reported that the overlanders' route from Sydney to Melbourne 'could be tracked by champagne bottles'.

The overlander had to be a big gambler. He invested his capital in a venture which might return enormous profits or be lost for ever. The value of a herd, the property of an overlander who arrived in Adelaide in March 1840 from New South Wales—eight hundred and fifty-five cattle, sixty-two horses, nine hundred fat wethers—was, at a low estimate, thirteen thousand, eight hundred and forty-five pounds.

The overlanders were drawn from every rank but they were the most daring men of their day. Their great beards, blood or half-bred Arab horses, sombreros trimmed with

eagle plumes or fur, scarlet shirts and broad belts filled with pistols and knives, gave them a reckless, dangerous air. In a few days the picturesque specimens would have exchanged their camping garb for the latest in gentlemen's suiting and would be frequenting fashionable evening parties as became their aristocratic connections and wealth. The son of an English earl and the Oxford man were even more given to overlandng than the emancipists.

In 1839 the first land boom set in at Melbourne. The near west was already crowded and there were quarrels over the gentleman's agreement which ran 'three miles per man'. Low persons were taking up land with less than three miles between homesteads. Speculators from Sydney picked the eyes out of the town when they were put up for auction, and the residents were not far behind. Land sales were a gamble conducted to the accompaniment of popping champagne corks. The farmer could buy only from speculators. The pioneer settlers, including the Hentys, fared badly also, having much trouble in forcing a recognition of even a portion of their claims. 'For want of land, a company which had planned to ship out four hundred Scots to Portland Bay had to send them instead to Texas and the United States,' *The Port Phillip Gazette* indignantly recorded.

To add to the colony's land troubles South Australia insisted that its very existence depended on the price of land all over the continent being raised to a Wakefield minimum price of one pound per acre. The South Australian system was introduced into Port Phillip, and by the 'special survey' regulation enterprising capitalists were able to buy up blocks of twenty thousand acres. By 1841 such scandalous land grabs had been perpetrated by big speculators that the 'special survey' system was abolished. The bitterness remained. Sixteen per cent of the population held half the total area of the colony and paid only one-fifth of the revenue.

The settlers had begun to demand separation from New

South Wales as early as 1840—indeed, from the very first they had never wanted to be part of New South Wales. It was not until 1851 that they were granted their separate Government. By that time the colony was in the hands of the men with money, so much so that some of the big land-owners spoke of calling out the military to prevent men looking for gold. The smaller men, ruined by the 'boom-and-bust' methods of the early 'forties, simply loaded their drays and went into the country beyond the borders. With a few hundred sheep, a score of cattle, and some flour, tea and sugar, they went from the Garden of Eden in the sweat of their brow. They had to live on their drayload until they could send back a load of wool to exchange for more provisions.

For them no more the pleasant valleys, with running streams as permanent water. The arid plains of the interior had to be fought and conquered. Behind them lay the loveliness of Victoria, the cool green land, where rivers with banks of golden blossom lay between swelling, beautiful hills. Before them lay the grim, baked-up no-man's-land. They marched into it and squatted once again.

THE SAGA OF THE SHEEP

THE GREAT BULLOCK WAGONS, loaded with bales of wool, would come slowly creaking and groaning into town, amid the crack of whips, the curses of the drivers, the grunts of the bullocks, while the town merchants waited impatiently until they could wait no longer. Imports were pouring into the country by every ship, but the ships would go back with empty bottoms unless they got a cargo of wool, which, with whale-oil, was the only export of Australia. Wool-buyers on fast ponies raced to intercept the incoming bullock drays. They cut a slash in a bale, plunged in a fist, trusting to luck for a fair sample, and over a tot of Bengal rum bought the lot there and then.

In the inn-yards of the Farmer's Home, the Square and Compass, the Woolpack, they argued and shouted and drank the bargain through. The squatter had lonely months in the bush to figure out his price, and despite all the tricks of the merchants, their impatience was on his side. The ships had to have a cargo and wool prices were soaring. In London, at Garraway's Coffee House, in Change Alley, Cornhill (where Mr. Pickwick wrote his letter to Mrs. Bardell), the wool was auctioned. The sale lasted an hour. A bale would be exposed and a candle lit. Bids were taken in the time the candle burnt down an inch. It was on that guttering candle that the wealth of Australia depended.

In 1840 there were a few low bids, the candle guttered down, and on the other side of the world merchant houses guttered down with it, banks crashed, ruined squatters came grimly back from the runs that had cost them the best years of their

lives, men starved in the streets. For half a century afterwards the years 1841-4 were known as 'the bad times'. The fall in the price of wool was the push that brought the unbalanced economy of the colonies toppling. Men had borrowed from the banks to stock runs with high-priced sheep and cattle; huge sums had been wasted speculating in land. There was no agriculture worthy of the name, and cheap foreign wheat was imported wholesale. Nine-tenths of the country homesteads, the city mansions, were mortgaged to the hilt, so that the owners might put the money into sheep. Now, sheep bought for sixty shillings each were worth only a shilling, then they were sixpence each, then a shilling a dozen. Stations were given away to anyone who would pay a few pence for the sheep. Sixty-guinea Arab horses were sold for eighteen shillings. Hundreds of distressed labourers were being fed by the Government, and hundreds more shipped off to Valparaiso. So many luxurious coaches were for sale that unemployed coachmen bought them for a song, and a new type of cab appeared on the streets.

When the banks failed it seemed as though the end of the world of wool had come. 'Some rioting took place,' Governor Sir George Gipps reported coolly to England. He did not mention that two men were killed. Gipps walked into the office of the Savings Bank when it shut its doors, forced the manager to produce the assets, and bluntly told him he 'would not give two straws for them'. *The Austral Asiatic Review* of 1842 neatly summed up the position: 'There is upward to a million in paper in discounted bills at the bank. There is not quite nineteen pence in specie in the pound in the whole Colony—banks, Commissariat, Treasury and all—with which to pay the million in paper.'

When the squatters' bank, the Bank of Australia, failed, the astute William Wentworth brought in a bill in the Legislative Council to dispose of the bank's assets by lottery. The Governor and the Home Secretary declared the lottery was illegal,

but Wentworth's lottery went through and the attraction of the gamble even at such a time secured the bank's clients the money due to them. Wentworth's Lien on Wool allowed the squatter to raise money against the coming wool crop to tide him over until it was shorn. This was a great help; and then the squatters discovered that a sheep boiled down for tallow was worth fourteen shillings. Odorous boiling-down works sprang up all around Sydney, and a constant stream of sheep came pouring into the vats. The tallow men built huge boilers to hold three hundred sheep at a time, and by 1850 two and a half million sheep a year were marching into the tallow vats.

One of the worst blows to the squatters had been the action of the English Government in suddenly cutting off the flow of convicts. In 1839 a parliamentary committee of the House of Commons recommended that transportation be stopped just as quickly as it was humanly possible to stop it. There was another reason, of course, besides all the nauseous evidence submitted to the committee, and that was that transportation was costing half a million pounds a year and there was nothing to show for it. From 1840 no more convicts could be sent to New South Wales and Port Phillip, although transportation continued to Van Diemen's Land and Norfolk Island. The free immigrants who had been brought to the country on Wakefield's plan, by the use of money obtained from the land sales, found that life on a sheep run at a convict's wage and under convict's conditions did not suit them, and they swarmed back to the towns to swell the army of unemployed. No more money was coming into the colony to pay for the convicts' keep, and this tightened the financial situation even more than the drought.

The squatters, headed by James Macarthur, petitioned the English Government to bring in Indian coolies, alleging that with drought and the depression they could not afford wages. The labourers forwarded a counter petition through Governor

Gipps, pleading that if Indian coolies were brought into the country immigration of free men would stop, as they could never compete with coolies in the labour market.

Sir George Gipps, of course, was blamed for everything from the drought to the depression. The English Government told him that by bringing immigrants into the country with the money from the land sales he had precipitated the crash. Gipps was often unpopular owing to his desperate desire to be fair to all parties. He had been urged by the Colonial Office to stop the speculation in land and had raised the fixed price from five shillings to twelve shillings, and then to a pound an acre. With every rise in the price of land the outcry against him grew louder.

In the first year of his governorship, 1839, Gipps had called a special council meeting to discuss the way the squatters were shooting down natives and defying the power of the Government Commissioners for land. He brought in a bill which gave the Commissioners an almost unlimited power over the squatters, and there is no doubt some Commissioners exercised their power very arbitrarily. Their allotment of boundaries, for example, was drastic.

But the vital struggle between Gipps and the squatters centred round the possession of the land. Gipps held that the squatters' temporary occupation of land under licence gave them no permanent rights over it whatever. On the other hand the Supreme Court of the colony had ruled that a squatter's right was good against all comers except the Crown, and had fined an intruder two hundred pounds, although he only claimed a Crown licence over a portion of a run. The squatters bought and sold runs between themselves; erected their homes; put up fences and dug themselves in. They resented being forced to take out a licence for 'their' land, and had hinted that Governor Bourke had convict sympathies when he made the squatters take out licences.

By the time Gipps took over the problem the licence law

was a dead letter. The scheme the squatters favoured was simple. A body of gentlemen landowners, say, for instance, the Legislative Council, should share out the land among all the other gentlemen landowners. In 1844 Gipps drew up a series of regulations whereby each licence issued should cover only one run. No run was to exceed twenty square miles or carry more than four thousand sheep. He proved that one man held twenty-seven stations under a single licence and had no less than three million acres, while the whole of the Liverpool Plains was in the hands of eight men. The indignation aroused among the squatters by these regulations was nothing to the storm that broke over the next set of regulations which allowed the squatter to *buy* part of his run. If he did not buy within a certain number of years, then someone else could. The regulations were fair and moderate, but the squatters did not want any regulations at all. They refused to recognise that the British Crown had any right to the land, any right to tax them. *They* owned the land, not the Queen of England.

Even the least excitable claimed they faced 'Ruin and Rebellion'. The Pastoral Association of Squatters fostered a Press campaign that did not stop with the colonial papers. In England, even in India, the papers put forward the squatters' views. In Port Phillip a proclamation announced: 'The Squatters of Australia Felix will meet on horseback on Batman's Hill, Melbourne on the first day of June for the purpose of forming a mutual protection society. From the Murray to the sea-beach, from the Snowy Mountains to the Glenelg, let no squatter absent himself.'

In London a meeting of business men, bankers and merchants stressed the effect on British industry if the squatters' threat to cut off the supply of wool was put into action. Ben Boyd, the manager for a great English pastoral company, with a private kingdom on the Monaro Tablelands, sent home his brother, and later went himself, to rally powerful forces. In New South Wales the newly reformed Council refused

to ratify the regulations, one of their reasons for refusal being: 'Your Excellency has repeatedly held that Her Majesty is the absolute owner of the Waste Lands of this territory, and that her prerogative is sufficient for their management.' The Council adjourned with the express intention of not meeting again until Gipps left the colony.

Ill and broken, Gipps fought to the last, declaring that it was still unlawful to occupy Crown land without a licence even if there was no power to enforce the Crown's rights. He left Sydney amid the vindictive rejoicings of the land-grabbers and some curious demonstrations of affection and loyalty from the common people. They knew that Gipps was fighting for their rights, for the rights of their children, in the common land. Where the squatters saw an unflinching insistence on the prerogatives of a far-off Crown, the common people saw an unflinching defence of the interests of the growing nation against the boundless cupidity of a wealthy minority. Gipps was the third and last of the great governors, ranking with Phillip and Macquarie as an administrator and builder. It was a strange irony which made Gipps, a Liberal, anxious for the extension of self-government, spend his chief energies in combating the colony's first elected Council.

In 1846 he wrote: 'A lease for 21 years would in New South Wales be in a great majority of cases a lease for ever.' But in England powerful influence from the monied men persuaded Downing Street that the Australian lands must be leased, and leased for a long time so that the poor squatter might feel secure. An Order in Council reversed every principle that Gipps had stood for, seven months after he left the colony, and just as he was dying of heart disease brought on by his long struggles. The lands were practically given away to the occupiers. Robert Lowe, later Lord Sherbrooke, was not far wrong when he declared: 'Once grant these leases and beyond the settled districts there will be no land to be

sold . . . Be the capabilities of these lands what they may, *they are to be a sheepwalk for ever!*'

But wool prices were rising again, and the squatters grew richer—richer and more powerful. The abandonment of the principle for which Gipps fought left a problem that a century of bitter wrangling and land legislation has not solved.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RACE ACROSS A CONTINENT

ALL the Australian coast, thanks to Matthew Flinders, had been examined by 1815, and twenty years later all south-eastern Australia up the Queensland border was not only known but sparsely settled. There remained four-fifths of the continent to tempt the succession of explorers who plunged into the interior to face black tribes, hunger, thirst—particularly thirst—and the curious cat-and-mouse playfulness of the inland's personality which often ended them as a heap of dried bones, sometimes with a spear protruding, while the desert mirages danced and shimmered over them.

South Australia, early in its political history, realised that its future was bound up with that of the tropical Northern Territory; but between the young colony and the undeveloped north lay a great belt of salt lakes and barren desert. This country frightened the colonists; the empty immensity, the meagre water drying so quickly into the sand, the spinifex and mallee, the limitless plains of saltbush. North of the settlement of Adelaide lay a belt of great hollows, glaring salt-covered deserts in the dry, and deep black mud in the wet. When these were skirted, the barren ridges of Mount Hopeless or Mount Deception showed an unending stretch of plain, without a drop of water for a hundred miles. Salt lakes and undrinkable salt streams filled the cup of bitterness. But the South Australians refused to accept this as all. For the man who came back with news of good country, no reward, no public honour, would be too great.

Edward John Eyre, gallant to the point of pig-headedness, set out on an expedition to the inland in 1840, and found his

way blocked time after time. Determined not to go back, particularly as he had put up half the money for the expedition and begged the other half from a Government grudging every penny, he decided he would go round the shore of the Great Australian Bight to West Australia. The Government forbade him to try and ordered him back, for after all Flinders had charted the coast and reported it barren rock. So Eyre sent back all his party, except his overseer, Baxter, and three native boys; and with them set out to cross the thousand miles of desert.

The agony of the horses, driven on for days without water, the sullenness of the native boys, who ran away but were forced by hunger to return, made the overseer Baxter very low-spirited. Friendship for Eyre had brought him to a desert that was to grudge him even a grave, and some foreboding of his end seems to have hung over him.

The explorers were forced to scramble along the tops of rough, frowning cliffs, three to six hundred feet above the sea. If they left the coast to journey inland, they crossed great stretches of moving sands which filled their eyes and ears, covered them when asleep, and filtered through their food when they ate. Day after day they walked through a broiling sun, their water all gone, and not a drop to be found on the burning soil beneath them. The sheep on which they depended for food were six days without water and the horses five. The animals were too parched to eat the few withered tufts of grass on their way. The seventh day they found a little water by digging in a sandhill, and they managed to struggle on.

One cold windy night Eyre had taken the first watch and was guarding the horses some distance from the camp. He heard a shot. In his absence, two of the blacks had started to pillage the baggage with the idea of making back and reporting the only too probable death of the explorers. They were interrupted by Baxter, and Eyre came running up in time to have Baxter die in his arms. The two blacks fled with

the greater part of the provisions, the water, the guns, leaving only the black boy, Wylie, who was too terrified to go with them.

'At the dead of night,' Eyre wrote in his diary, 'in the wildest and most inhospitable wastes of Australia, with the fierce wind raging in unison with the scene of violence before me, I was left with a single native, whose fidelity I could not rely upon, and who for aught I knew might be in league with the other two, who perhaps were even now lurking about with the view of taking my life. . . . Three days had passed since we left the last water and it was very doubtful when we might find any more. Six hundred miles of country had to be traversed before I could hope to find the slightest aid or assistance.'

An unbroken sheet of rock extended for miles in every direction, and Eyre had to leave the body of Baxter wrapped in a blanket. He pushed on with the prospect ever before him of meeting another bullet. The murderers followed, trying to coax away the black boy Wylie, but they finally vanished into the desert. Lying sick and cold by the camp-fire, Eyre thoughtfully reviewed the shooting, and did all he could to see the point of view of the blacks. One had been with him for four years, the other two and a half, on all his journeys. But they were tired and hungry, and from Baxter's dispirited remarks had gathered that there was no chance of ever getting through. 'They had resolved to take with them a portion of the provisions we had remaining, and which they might look upon, perhaps, as their right. Nor would Europeans have acted better.'

It was greatly to Eyre's credit that, at a time when most men would have concentrated on their slender chances, he did his best to justify the men he perhaps felt he had unknowingly led to crime.

At a native well, the thirst-tortured horses were able to get a drink, and one was killed for food. The country improved,

and Eyre and Wylie struggled on. Their provisions were quite exhausted when they sighted a whaler, the *Mississippi*, whose captain took them on board, fed them, rested them for ten days, and supplied provisions when Eyre determined to complete his journey.

On his return to Adelaide Eyre received a warm welcome. His trip was not so much a journey of exploration as a struggle for life, and the picture of the lonely man, with his murdered companion and plundered camp, six hundred miles from his goal yet refusing to turn back, overshadowed all his errors of judgment.

Today east and west are connected by the Australian Trans-Continental Railway which travels through the desert along whose fringe Eyre staggered. For a thousand miles the railway runs over absolutely unoccupied country. It crosses the Nullarbor Plain, four hundred and fifty miles of treeless waste. Here the railway runs in a straight line for three hundred and thirty miles, the longest straight section of railway in the world.

In 1844 Captain Sturt, the discoverer of the Murray-Darling river system, was empowered to conduct an expedition into the interior. He was instructed to reach the centre of the continent, to find out if there was a sea there, or a range of mountains; and if there was a sea, to note the flow of the northern rivers, but not to follow them to the northern sea. Sturt had studied the flight of birds and believed that fine country existed in central Australia. He had done magnificent work for the South Australia Company. The crisis in the company's affairs had seen him pitchforked into the worthless and idle post of Registrar-General, and to escape it he would have led an expedition to the moon. He had been among the foremost of the little group of able men who had held the South Australian colony together in its darkest days, but he felt that his real job was to unveil the secrets of the heart of the continent.

The party set out with high hopes. There were sixteen men, thirty bullocks and two hundred sheep. They even brought a boat in case they found the inland sea. Sturt moved slowly, riding ahead until he found a creek or pond, and then bringing the expedition up to it as the next place of encampment. They worked their way north, past the Barrier Range, till they came to a 'beautiful sheet of water, on the banks of which the camp was established' on 27th January 1845. It was 17th July before they were able to leave. 'It was not until we had run down every creek in our neighbourhood, and had traversed the country in every direction, that the truth flashed across my mind, and it became evident to me, that we were locked up in the desolate and heated region into which we had penetrated, as effectually as if we had wintered at the Pole. It was long indeed ere I could bring myself to believe that so great a misfortune had overtaken us, but so it was. Providence had, in its all-wise purposes, guided us to the only spot in that wide-spread desert where our wants could have been permanently supplied, but had there stayed our further progress into a region that appears to be forbidden ground.'

As the months went by, the water on which their lives depended began to sink, and a disease, which they thought to be rheumatism, but which proved to be scurvy, was added to their other miseries. In a single day the teeming flocks of birds—the parrots, pigeons, bitterns, cockatoos and hawks—which haunted the pool, all flew north-west, leaving the gaunt men to gaze after them longingly. The heat was appalling, but Sturt conscientiously explored the country in every direction, remembering his instructions to find grazing country. In all the hundreds of miles he travelled he could find no water. 'Under the effects of the heat every screw in our boxes had been drawn, and the horn handles of our instruments, as well as our combs, were split into fine laminae. The lead dropped out of our pencils, our signal rockets were entirely spoiled; our hair, as well as the wool on the sheep, ceased to grow,

and our nails had become as brittle as glass. The flour lost more than eight per cent of its original weight. . . .'

Poor Poole, Sturt's second-in-command, had one chance of life, and that was rain. The rains came after six months, but too late, for Poole died on the day he was moved. He was buried at the depot beneath a tree on which his initials were cut; his memorial a pyramid of stones eighteen feet high which he himself had suggested should be erected as a trigonometrical station.

Sturt divided his party into two, and sending back a number of men, made a dash for the centre with the others. The rain pools gave them the chance to push on quickly, until, after toiling over the great level plains and long sand ridges, they found the water was giving out. Sturt saw before him an immense flat of dark-purple hue with its horizon like that of the sea, boundless in the distance. It was the Stony Desert. Sturt crossed it and a week later found a grassy watercourse which he called Eyre's Creek after his friend. The creek, as they went along it, became salt. Sturt may have remembered his wild hope of an inland sea at that desperate pinch. He did not know that he was almost within reach of permanent flowing rivers which would lead him as far north as he cared to go. His men were sick; the water was drying up behind him. The Stony Desert had beaten him and there was nothing left but a retreat to the depot four hundred and forty-three miles behind. When the madness of any advance became unmistakably clear, Sturt sat for an hour with his head in his hands.

'I had traced almost every inland river of the continent and had followed their courses for hundreds of miles . . . I had run the Castlereagh, the Macquarie, the Lachlan, the Murrumbidgee, the Hume, the Darling and the Murray down to their respective terminations . . . I looked upon Central Australia as a legitimate field, to explore which no man had a greater claim than myself, and the first wish of my heart was

to close my services in the cause of Geography by dispelling the mists that hung over it.'

Back at the depot, having travelled nine hundred miles in eight weeks, Sturt prepared for yet another attempt. With McDouall Stuart and two others he rode out to what seemed almost certain death. This time he tried the north-east and came on Cooper's Creek, part of the inland river system of Queensland, the last important river system to be discovered. The waters were drying up rapidly under the exceptional heat, and crossing Cooper's Creek Sturt once more entered his Stony Desert. The strange alternations of fiery heat by day and cold by night caused the boulders in the near-by ranges to split and crash with an explosion that sounded to the lonely travellers like the firing of heavy guns.

As Sturt turned to go back a flock of parakeets flew shrieking overhead. He wavered, for those birds proved his theory was right; there must be good country ahead. How could he give up the quest, asks Professor Ernest Scott, while 'those birds, speaking like oracles, flew in arrow-shaped formation to the north, with the sun glancing from their burnished plumage as they disappeared into the purple distance?'

Weak and ill, the explorers were forced to rest a whole day while a great wind-storm made progress impossible. At noon Sturt 'took a thermometer graduated to 127 degrees out of my box and observed that the mercury was up to 125 degrees. Thinking it had been unduly influenced I put it in the fork of a tree close to me, sheltered alike from the wind and the sun. In this position I went to examine it an hour afterwards when I found that the mercury had risen to the top of the instrument and that its further expansion had burst the bulb.'

The boat that was to have floated on the waters of the inland sea was left to rot at Depot Glen, and the final retreat over two hundred miles of nearly waterless country began. Sturt had to be carried on one of the drays. He did not want to live,

and he was seriously ill. The Stony Desert had snatched from him the glory of being the first to reach the heart of the continent. That grieved him less than the thought that they had endured freezing and burning, starvation, disease, death and hopelessness—for what? It was all in vain that they had struggled on and on, carefully surveying and ‘chaining’ the country, where other men would have lain down and died. Sturt would sooner have rested beside Poole in the desert than return, but his courage did not fail him. If he had not the credit of discovery, he had other things.

‘If I failed in that great object,’ he wrote, ‘I have one consolation in the retrospect of my past services. My path among the savage tribes has been a bloodless one, not but that I have often been placed in situations of risk and danger, when I might have been justified in shedding blood, but I trust I have ever made allowances for human timidity and respected the customs of the rudest people.’

Thanks were offered in the churches where prayers had been read so long for the safety of the missing men. The Government graciously raised Sturt’s salary by a hundred pounds a year. The optic nerve of one of his eyes was permanently destroyed and a few years later the sight of the other eye began to fail and he was given a pension. All he would submit, when unwillingly induced to be nominated for knighthood, was a brief calculation of the length of his expeditions. The honour was granted when he was lying at peace under a slab which bore the words: ‘Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.’ He was the greatest, best loved, and most unfortunate of all the Australian explorers.

Where Poole died is now the large mining town of Broken Hill. Flourishing gardens and prosperous homes, tall black chimneys and the roar of machinery break the monotony of the dry plains. The fires of the battery and the furnace burn steadily day and night in sight of the place where for

six months Sturt wearily watched and tended his dying friend. Through the lower shafts of the silver-lead mines trickle the waters of subterranean streams of which Sturt never dreamed. His bitter prophecies of the uselessness of the interior have not been fulfilled. Water conservation has allowed of great herds grazing in the ranges while the stock routes, the railheads and markets are kept open by artesian bores. Sturt explored the centre in a year of terrific drought and heat, but in the main his summing up of it was correct. 'It takes two rivers to make a creek' in that part of the world with five inches of rainfall a year. Except in times of flood the rivers are only distinguishable from the plain by the fact that they are sandier. The better parts of the country are the borderland of settlement today, and the men and women of the 'inland' are the modern pioneers.

The explorer whose name has been mysteriously bound up with the centre was a certain Dr. Ludwig Leichhardt, who came from Germany to escape the Prussian army service. He scraped together a little money and an expedition of sorts with which he made a series of most resounding discoveries around the Gulf of Carpentaria. He kept to the rich, well-watered country, as his stores were always low, but he won a reputation for the great tracts of rich land he made known. He was christened 'The Prince of Explorers', and money was raised for a lavishly equipped expedition with which Leichhardt was to cross the continent from east to west. The rains came down, fever broke out; Leichhardt had strangely omitted to bring any medicine, and after losing all their stocks through the leader's mistakes the party was forced back.

Fearful that he might be forestalled in the crossing of the continent, Leichhardt set out again, this time with a badly-equipped small party. His second-in-command was a German relation qualified as an explorer by his sea experience. Leichhardt felt that a man who had been shipwrecked was excellently

qualified to take charge under him of a band of explorers. The party vanished as completely as if it had been swept off the earth and was never heard of again. Most of the importance of Leichhardt lies in the valuable explorations made by the parties which went out in search of him. Modern writers have claimed that the success of his first expedition around the Gulf of Carpentaria was due to a buh man, Gilbert, who shepherded it to safety but was himself killed by blacks.

Leichhardt's fate has been a fertile breeding-ground for argument and romance ever since. Because of the habit squatters had of leaving initials cut in trees so that they might find their runs again, there is a doubt if the trees marked 'L' were really marked by Leichhardt. To test the evidence for the many theories advanced, theories involving mutiny, desertion, survival among the blacks, death by thirst and destruction by fire, is to attempt to solve a mixture of jigsaw puzzles. For a moment the pieces appear to fit; and then they fall apart, leaving nothing tangible, nothing coherent.

In 1857 the joyful news was received in Adelaide that the Deputy-Surveyor-General had found a large sheet of fresh water stretching to the north as far as the eye could see. With a telescope he picked out the bluffs and headlands, the bays and perpendicular cliffs. The Surveyor-General immediately started out into the promised land, taking with him a boat and an iron punt. The feelings of the people of Adelaide were beyond description when the great freshwater lake proved to be a mirage, just such a mirage as deceived poor Poole when he returned to camp on Sturt's expedition and swore he had seen the inland sea. The water in the lake was no more than six inches of mud and slush, while the cliffs, the headlands and the grassy shores were all built up on the basis of the mirage.

Undeterred, the South Australian Government offered ten thousand pounds to the first explorer to cross the continent from south to north. Mirages might deceive a man, but

ten thousand pounds in solid cash ought to produce better results. Victoria, prosperous and progressive, decided to fit out an expedition to cross the continent. All the lands of the tight little colony were explored and the motives which led Government and people to subscribe twelve thousand pounds were entirely disinterested. Twenty-six camels were brought from Peshawar, and an energetic committee equipped the expedition with everything possible for taking scientific observations.

Robert O'Hara Burke, a hot-headed inspector of police, with little bush experience and no scientific qualifications, was chosen to lead the party. No sooner had the expedition started than Burke quarrelled with the man in charge of the camels and put in his place an affable stockman with whom he chummed up on one of the sheep stations en route. Burke, with Wills, his second-in-command, six men and half the camels went forward to Cooper's Creek, where they founded a depot to await the arrival of the main party.

They were in good quarters, with plenty of grass and water, but Burke grew impatient and began to fear that someone would cross the continent before him. He split his party again; some were to remain at Cooper's Creek, while with three men—Wills, King and Gray—he decided to make a mad dash for the Gulf of Carpentaria. All the costly scientific equipment was jettisoned because they must travel light; the botanist, the naturalist and the geologist of the expedition were left behind, and the leader of the expedition with three utterly inexperienced men went dashing ahead.

Burke made yet another mistake, urging his small party so fast that they were soon all exhausted. The camels sank down unable to go any farther; the one horse bogged; and Burke and Wills hurried until they came out on a mangrove swamp on the gulf. They did not even have a view of the sea, as it would have taken two days to work around the swamp. There was nothing to do but to go back again. Burke killed a snake

and decided to eat part of it as the natives did. It made him very ill. The mad journey north under a tropical sun, when the four men averaged a hundred and forty miles a week, had told on their endurance. Gray became very sick, and Burke, with his usual discernment, decided he was 'gammoning'. He found Gray eating a little mixture he had made of flour and water, and, accusing him of stealing the provisions, fell upon him and thrashed him. Gray died a week later.

The other three were living skeletons when they tottered into the Cooper's Creek Depot to find that the party left there by Burke had departed that very morning. They had remained there a month and a half longer than they were told, and had buried a supply of provisions which they could ill spare under a marked tree. Burke's camel-manager had loitered at an outback town for three months amusing himself, and when he did set out he went so slowly that he never arrived at the depot.

Burke, despite the opposition of Wills and King, took a mad decision not to follow the depot party, but to make through for South Australia. It is useless to follow the record of accidents which resulted in Burke and Wills meeting a lingering end by starvation. It was the same story—had they gone a little farther, had they waited but a day, had they left but a sign. Instead they died, and one haggard survivor, King, in a few rags of clothes and half a hat, stepped out from a tribe of natives to show the relief expeditions where the bones of Burke were lying.

Burke, Wills and Gray died as a result of Burke's mistakes. Burke ill-treated the natives who had fed him, he bullied his men, he failed to use judgment or common sense. He was given a magnificent funeral amid the general mourning of Victoria. Statues perpetuate his fame and testify to the esteem in which the nation holds his memory. Many a hard, capable bushman must have reflected that the way to achieve honour as an explorer was to make all the mistakes

possible and then either starve to death or vanish without a trace. Look at Leichhardt! Look at Burke!

A few months before Burke and Wills made their dash across the continent, John McDouall Stuart, Sturt's draughtsman on his last expedition, fulfilled his old leader's ambition to place the Union Jack in the very centre of Australia. Three times McDouall Stuart tried to cross the continent and each time suffered dreadful hardships. When attacked by natives within two hundred and fifty miles of the coast, which if he had reached it would have brought him ten thousand pounds' reward, he decided he could not risk the lives of his men and returned to report that he had crossed more than four-fifths of the continent.

Again he set out from Adelaide and reached a point a hundred and fifty miles farther on, but was this time turned back by a scrub known as Stuart's Hedgewood, which forms an impervious hedge by interlacing its branches with its neighbours on either side. He arrived in Adelaide to learn that Burke and Wills had crossed the continent, but, undeterred, he set out again. This time he was successful and, unlike Burke and Wills, dipped his hands and feet in the sea itself at Van Diemen's Gulf. But his health was failing; scurvy affected his right hand; eight years of exploration of the interior had ruined his constitution, and his eyesight and memory began to fail. He was carried back to Adelaide too ill to care who had won the race.

A few hours after this party entered Adelaide, another party bore in the bodies of Burke and Wills, on their way to Melbourne. Along the trail Stuart had blazed so well, the overland telegraph was soon to span Australia from Adelaide to Darwin. Large areas of the Northern Territory were opened up as a result of his discoveries. It was not all in vain that he had returned so often to the difficult task of battling his way across the continent.

Overland from Western Australia explorers began to make

their way through to the east. The Forrest brothers started in search of Leichhardt, then paralleled Eyre's track around the Bight. When the overland telegraph was completed, in 1872, it served as a convenient landmark. On their third and fourth expeditions, the Forrest brothers aimed to reach it, first from the Murchison River on the hip of the continent and then from the Fitzroy River a thousand miles to the north. They opened up millions of acres of cattle country, and their tracks were followed by men who found gold in the ranges where they had found water.

Ernest Giles was another persistent frequenter of the interior. He had a great faith in camels and also believed in blacks, for finding water, and bushmen on general principles. The out-back men could make tea contentedly out of black mud, and, on one occasion at least, Giles's party lived on dead horse that was refused by hungry dogs. These bushmen loved the inland. Tickens, one of Giles's men, writes of the Musgrave Ranges gloriously carpeted with flowers, and the broad well-grassed valleys and creeks fringed by great gum-trees, the mountain walls of perpendicular granite, or sixty miles of spinifex sandhills. Men were learning to understand the land.

In the 1930s Donald Mackay, the most modern of Australian explorers, set out to map the whole of the inland by aeroplane. He had spent his youth roaming; through Japan and China, around Australia by pushbike, in search of treasure in the Pacific, or exploring in Papua. He had gone to the centre with camels, but he did not agree with Giles. He found the stony going bruised their feet. Mackay decided that the aeroplane was the key to the inland, but before flights could be made air landings had to be constructed and all the petrol taken by camels to the landings. He received no government aid and little recognition for flights totalling sixty-five thousand miles or the mapping of three quarters of a million square miles. By the time Mackay had transported petrol to his first base aerodrome it was costing seven shillings and sixpence

a gallon, and he paid for it all himself. He was a private explorer who kept two aeroplanes where another man would keep a dozen camels. When the aeroplane began to roar through the mirages, the desert became merely a highway to all the coasts.

In 1942, with the threat of a Japanese invasion, a great road was run clean across the continent in ninety days. Over the plains where men had perished, the tractors chugged their prosaic way, crashing through the thorny spinifex that may have swallowed Leichhardt, rolling across the tribal hunting grounds, the waterless wastes. In a cloud of dust, great motor trucks roared tirelessly where the horses and camels had lain down to die. The terrors of the 'great grey chaos' were gone.

THE ROARING DAYS—GOLD AND REBELLION

ACCIDENTAL DISCOVERIES of gold were made in the early days, but they were kept very quiet. In a chain-gang on the road to Bathurst a convict was flogged for having a piece of gold in his possession, on the assumption that he must have melted it down from stolen jewellery. An enthusiastic schoolmaster-geologist, tapping about with his little hammer in 1841, discovered gold in a creek near Bathurst, but Governor Gipps, fearing the effect upon the convicts, was anything but pleased. 'Put it away, Mr. Clarke,' he ordered, 'or we shall all have our throats cut.'

A shepherd walked into a Sydney jeweller's shop and dumped a rock streaked with gold on the counter; a Port Phillip shepherd found gold where a tree had been blown down; a man digging a post-hole found a nugget which he sold for a hundred pounds.

The attitude of the Governors to these gold-finders changed with the discovery of gold in California. Immigrants were being brought to Sydney at the expense of the Government, and no sooner did they land and embrace the misery so often the lot of the immigrant, than they decided to go off to the Californian gold-fields. Everyone in Sydney was talking of California and the fortunes to be made there, and the 'Sydney Ducks' were off to try their luck.

They met with a chilly reception in California, for the habits of the 'old hands' gave Sydney men a bad reputation, and the Californian diggers rated them as little above the Chinese.

A Bathurst bushman named Edward Hargreaves went off to the Californian fields, where he was soon down on his

luck. Sitting in a gully in a state of despair, it struck him that the landscape was making him homesick—the rocks were the same as those around Bathurst. No sooner had the resemblance dawned on him than he was off hot-foot to find a ship home. He had come thousands of miles to seek gold when it was lying almost on the front doorstep of his farm. On 12th February 1851, with a young bushman named Lister, he rode along the dried-up bed of Summer Hill Creek looking for a pool of water. At the first wash he struck gold, and as he washed pan after pan of payable dirt, he cried to Lister: 'I shall be a baronet, you will be knighted; my old horse will be stuffed, put in a glass case, and sent to the British Museum.'

Being a hard-headed man, Hargreaves decided that he would get more by an interview with the Colonial Secretary than by shouting his find aloud. The Colonial Secretary saw the political implications of the find. 'If this is gold country,' he observed, 'it will stop the Home Government from sending us any more convicts, and keep the immigrants who are leaving for California.' At first Hargreaves claimed a modest reward of five hundred pounds, but received, after much delay, a reward of ten thousand pounds.

The news began to leak out. A Bathurst blacksmith took eleven pounds of gold from one hole; a Sydney merchant rushed off to the diggings and came back with a thousand pounds' worth of gold. An alarmed land commissioner wrote from Bathurst that stringent measures should be employed to stop men leaving their jobs—there were eighteen hundred people already on the gold-fields. But he little realised that this was but the first trickle of the torrent. Ophir, Hargreaves's field, was soon eclipsed by the opening of the Turon; and the city of Sydney was left like a deserted village. Ships lay idle at the quays because the crews had rushed to the country; shops were closed; business was at a standstill. Bank managers sent to establish branches on the gold-fields preferred to hunt gold for themselves; bullock drivers left their teams unloaded,

farmers their unharvested crops, shepherds their flocks. The Anglican cathedral was left unfinished for want of workmen; while the Roman Catholic archbishop and the Presbyterian moderator shifted their headquarters to the gold-fields, where their open-air services were attended by thousands.

Prices rose to fever height. When the gold-seekers returned to Sydney they found that speculators had bought whole streets and now demanded thousands for what had cost them hundreds. Meanwhile more and more ships were breaking records out from England laden with impatient gold-seekers.

An aboriginal shepherd, who had listened to the talk of gold, noticed a 'big pfeller yellow stone' and carefully spread his blanket over it until he could tell his boss, who split it into two lumps and carried it to town in his saddle-bags. At his first night's resting-place a stockman noticed how heavy the bags were and asked, laughing, if they were full of gold. The owner of the bags replied: 'Yes, what else would I be carrying these times?' The stockman thought it a great joke, and the fortune was left hanging all night over the stall rail in the stable. In Bathurst next morning the two great chunks of gold were passed from hand to hand among the excited crowd which gathered at the news. The total weight of gold in the two lumps was one thousand one hundred and seventy-two ounces and it was sold for four thousand one hundred and sixty pounds. 'Bathurst is mad again,' reported the local paper despairingly, as men streamed out to the scene of the find.

In Melbourne, a committee of wealthy citizens offered large rewards for gold discoveries, because people were drifting off to New South Wales. Gold was found in Golden Gully, Bendigo, and at Ballarat. The wild excitement of the 'roaring fifties' in Victoria and their fabulous riches made the earlier discoveries in New South Wales look unimportant. In a fortnight, forty-five ships sailed from London carrying fifteen thousand gold-seekers. In less than twelve months over a hundred thousand poured into Melbourne and out to

the diggings. In ten years Victoria produced gold to the value of one hundred and ten million pounds.

Only by begging military help from Tasmania could the Governor find enough troops to escort the gold. Tasmania could spare only thirty soldiers, but she had already sent three thousand of the 'Vandemonian demons'—convicts, murderers and outlaws. While the diggers saw to it that the gold-fields were free from crime by the simple process of using their own rope, other parts of the state swarmed with bushrangers. Runaway convicts in boats made reckless voyages across the stormy Bass Strait. Their career was usually a short one; but money easily won was easily spent, and the diggers could and did light their pipes with banknotes. The man who tossed the barber a sovereign one day and waved away the change, might be destitute a month later, but still confident he could find another fortune.

It was not only the individual fortunes made on the gold-fields that changed the country. Fortunes were being made in the cities, and the Australian shipping trade leapt out of stagnation to become the most important in the world. The *Lightning*, packed with human freight, arrived in Melbourne and took back one million pounds' worth of gold, making the journey to the Mersey in the record time of sixty-four days three hours.

It was owing to the discovery of gold that the first appeal was made to England for protection of Australian exports. The petitioners suggested that: 'It would be highly conducive to the interests of Your Majesty's naval empire if the Sydney Harbour were constituted an Admiral station for Your Majesty's fleet . . . as the frequent departure of unarmed vessels containing vast sums of gold can scarcely fail to attract at no distant period the attention of piratical adventurers.' The request was not unwarranted. On one occasion a group of bushrangers boarded the ship *Nelson* in Hobson's Bay, overpowered the crew, and removed gold worth twenty-four

thousand pounds, remarking as they lowered the boxes over the ship's side that it was the best gold-field they had ever seen.

With the discovery of the Eureka, Gravel Pits and Canadian Leads, Ballarat became the gold-miner's greatest hope. In 1853 there were forty thousand diggers at work on the Yarrowee, and hotels, theatres, even a tiny church, sprang up among the long line of tents on the slopes above the creek. At one time it looked as though Ballarat had been 'played out', for the shafts bottomed on pipeclay and were abandoned. Then a miner named Cavanagh decided to dig through the pipeclay layer and came upon the rich grain gold which made Ballarat the greatest gold-field in the world. For centuries an ancient stream had flowed along that hidden channel, rolling along little pebbles of gold, sifting the gold-dust from the rocks of the distant mountains, and depositing it in the pockets of its rocky bed. One pocket might hold gold worth thousands of pounds.

From the fjords of Norway to the villages of China the news spread, and the Chinese came in packed like cattle, meek under the kicks and curses of the whites, but industriously taking up abandoned holes. The escaped convict from Tasmania worked side by side with Robert Cecil, later Marquis of Salisbury and Prime Minister of Great Britain; the Irishman from a Dublin slum and the English aristocrat took up a shaft together. It was on the gold-fields that Australian 'mateship' was coined into a tradition more sterling than the nuggets, more lasting than the money the diggers threw away. What was to be the backbone of the fierce Australian trade unions, the determination to stick together, stiffened the thousands among the mullock of the diggings. The squatter who thought that gold-digging should be prohibited because it interfered with his sheep; the autocrat who saw in the diggings the threat to his power, to those flogging sentences before which the convict had cringed—both were right. What did men care for the wealthy when they themselves might dig out ten

thousand pounds between Saturday morning and Monday evening, or pick up nuggets like pebbles on a beach? The military power found itself facing English Chartists, French Republicans who refused to acknowledge the *coup d'état* of Napoleon III, Italian patriots and German revolutionaries of '48; thousands of determined men who hated tyranny, the Convict System and all it stood for.

By day the red and yellow mounds of sand clattered as thousands of picks and spades went to work. Men with sacks of wet earth on their shoulders staggered along the narrow runways between the shafts to the water, or pushed their load in creaking barrows. The shallow creek was stained yellow with mud, the diggers were coated in yellow mud, as they stood shoulder to shoulder on either side of the river, rocking the cradles for gold. But when the sunset gun was fired and the billy of tea bubbled over the fire outside the tent; when the day's scraping and squelching gave place to the sound of the concertina, and darkness hid the ugly sores of the earth, men sat together and talked.

The great white stars flared over the scrub; from the grog-shops came drunken uproar; men gambled for matchboxes filled with gold-dust, by the light of flaming oil-cans. But the groups around the camp-fires went on talking; fierce and active men with keen minds hammered their ideas into their stupid mates. Was this new country to be a prize for snobs and swells? Was there any justice for the diggers? Weren't they just a gold-mine for everyone else? Diggers had swarmed out of town to harness themselves to the coach that brought Lola Montez, the dazzling star of the stage, to the diggings. But they threw eggs at her instead of nuggets when she put on a bad performance. She was only one more gold-digger exploiting the man who broke his back under the loads of yellow dirt. What about the storekeeper, with three layers of carefully perforated brown paper on his scales, so that when a miner came to have his gold weighed, it was returned to him

less the dust that had sifted through the brown paper into the storekeeper's clutch? Look at the shanty-keepers getting rich on drink that was pure poison, and the earnings of their 'barmaids!' And what about the police with their hands held out for bribes, yet ever ready to 'run a digger in' from pure spite?

The first nuggets and the fabulous fortunes soon gave place to the heart-break of deep holes and 'schisers' with nothing in them. The diggers invented a mocking table of gold weights which ran: 'Ten shadows—one fainter; ten fainters—one colour; ten colours—one speck; ten specks—one grain; twenty-four grains—one pennyweight.' Men would work for months without earning a penny, only to have a haughty policeman on a horse demanding thirty shillings for their licence. They were rounded up if they could not pay, and were treated to a display of the autocracy which had been bred by convictism.

'The nicest thing imaginable,' *The Ballarat Times* reported wrathfully in 1853, 'is to see one of these clumsy fellows with great beards, and oh, such nasty, rough hands, stand before a fine gentleman on the bench, with hands as white as Alpine snow. There the clumsy fellow stands, faltering out an awkward apology. "My licence is only just expired, sir—I've only been one day from town, sir—I have no money, sir, for I had to borrow half a bag of flour the other day for my wife and children." "Ahem," says his worship. "The law makes no distinction. Fined five pounds."'

Peter Lalor, the leader of the diggers, declared: 'I have known men asked for their licence four or five times in the course of a day. The water to be contended with in deep sinkings compels the diggers frequently to change their dress. In doing so, they often leave their licences behind. Under such circumstances, should they be visited by the police, they are dragged, wet and dripping as they may be, to prison like common felons.'

When they had plenty of money the thirty shillings a month was not much to pay, but when the average earnings worked out about eight pounds a month, the tax for most of the diggers was insufferable. To be rounded up by the police, who regarded 'digger hunting' as a sport, just when they felt they were about to strike on a heavy bottom of gold, drove the diggers nearly mad. The type of man in the police force was not a good one. Petty bullies, harsh, ostentatious, malicious, they had a spite as a body against the diggers. Many of them were ex-convicts from Tasmania who had made life miserable for their fellows as 'trusties' under the System. To a fawning and helpless convict, their manners might have been unbearable, but he could make no complaint. The Americans, the Germans who had fought in 1848, the old Chartists, the Italians who had fought against Austrian tyranny, were not men to submit tamely to a corrupt magistracy or be hounded for sport by ex-convict police. Even to the digger not earning a penny, with a wife and children sharing his anxieties in a tent on the sun-scorched, barren hills, the tax itself was not so intolerable as the method of collection. The hatred which led to the Eureka Stockade was bred by the sight of the pack of mounted bullies who, sweeping through the gully, rounded up the unfortunate diggers, chained them to logs in the centre of the camp, and then marched them to the place that served as a gaol, there to be chained to a tree until the squatter magistrates arrived.

The most interesting and vivid account of the troubles leading to Eureka is given by a red-headed Italian digger, Raffaello Carboni, nicknamed 'Great Works' from the exclamation he was always excitedly uttering. An inflammable, lovable man, a former member of the Italian *Risorgimento*, he was, like Peter Lalor, no friend 'to too much yabber-yabber'; he believed in deeds rather than words. He had been to the rushes in Canadian Gully, Mount Alexander, Ballarat and Bendigo; and his first experience of 'this bullock-

driver's land' was a policeman peering down at him from the top of the claim, a six-foot fellow in a blue shirt, thick boots, the face of a ruffian, and armed with a carbine and fixed bayonet. Showing his licence, Raffaello reflected bitterly to himself: 'I came then sixteen thousand miles in vain to get away from the law of the sword.'

The ownership of a claim was too often settled by a yell of 'Ring! Ring!' as men ran to watch the rivals fight the matter out. A dropped tooth or a cracked rib settled the matter. Raffaello tells how, at Bakery Hill, a party of Britishers, 'bank on the gutter', 'bottomed on gold', but a party of Yankees with revolvers and Mexican knives—the garb of the 'bouncers' of the day—jumped the second hole of the Britishers, dismantled the windlass and God-damned as fast as the Britishers cursed. The Commissioners ruled in this flagrant case of jumping that the Yankees could keep the hole as the Britishers owned two claims.

When the 'traps' or police were out, a yell of 'Joe, Joe!' would go up, and the hunted diggers would dive for the safety of the holes and gravel-pits. It was hard, the diggers felt, 'to confine a man in the lousy lock-up at the camp because he had no luck'.

The first outburst came over a drunken digger who was murdered. His mates suspected an ex-convict shanty-keeper had committed the murder with a spade. However, the hotel-keeper, Bently, was discharged by a magistrate who was known to owe him money. A big meeting was held and two hundred pounds subscribed to have the case reopened. The meeting was an orderly one, but the crowd was annoyed by the ostentatious placing of troops around the hotel. A boy began throwing stones at the hotel, and the crowd turned ugly. Commissioner Rede began to read the Riot Act, but the paper was torn from his grasp, tossed to the mob, and torn to shreds.

The hotel was stoned in earnest then, and presently flames

began to shoot from the windows. The police horses plunged and reared, frightened by roaring smoke and the sheets flung out from the second story.

'Porter with the chill off, boys!' men shouted, and began tossing out bottles hot from the burning bar. Stones, sticks and bottles flew through the air. Bently escaped, but he was later tried again and sentenced, showing that the diggers had grounds for their suspicions.

Four hundred and fifty police were sent to the field by the Governor, Sir Charles Hotham, 'New-Chum Charlie', on whom the diggers had centred all their hopes. The main responsibility of the tragedy of Eureka may be attributed to Governor Hotham's mishandling of the situation. He had been immensely popular with the diggers and they were quite willing to take him as their arbiter. When they found that the sending of troops was his only reply to their petitions, they began to talk of taking action for themselves. Ten thousand men formed the Ballarat Reform League which asked for full and fair representation in Parliament, manhood suffrage, abolition of the property qualification for Members of Parliament, payment of members, short duration of Parliaments, immediate alteration in the government of the gold-fields, and the total abolition of the licence tax. It was the programme of the English Chartists adapted to an Australian scene.

The arrival of the soldiers on the gold-fields was greeted with a shower of stones; six soldiers were wounded and one afterwards died. Here again the fault of the disturbance did not lie entirely with the miners. Two diggers had approached the commanding officer, Captain Wise, and asked him if it were true that the wagons he was escorting contained guns. The officer contemptuously replied that he had no information to give a parcel of rebels. The angry men attacked the military convoy, captured one wagon, overturned another, and scattered the troops. The mounted police then dashed forth to rescue what ammunition had not been seized by the crowd or

destroyed. They rode among the people slashing with their swords, and many were wounded.

Among the miners there were two dominant groups, the old Chartists and the Young Irelanders—the last, rash, misguided and fiery. On the 29th November 1854 ten thousand diggers gathered on Bakery Hill. Speeches were made, and one, Kennedy, recited his poetic couplet:

*Brother diggers, moral persuasion is all humbug,
Nothing will convince like a lick in the lug.*

Fires were lighted and scores of licences tossed into the flames. Of course, 'Great Works' Raffaello was among the speakers, and repeated the oath: 'We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other and fight to defend our rights and liberties.' There is real poetry in the miners' descriptions of the hoisting of the flag of the Southern Cross. What it meant to those landless men of many nations was something that the autocratic Government could hardly comprehend:

'The Southern Cross was hoisted up the flagstaff—a very splendid pole eighty feet in length and straight as an arrow. There is no flag in old Europe half so beautiful as the Southern Cross of the Ballarat miners, first hoisted on the old spot on Bakery Hill. The flag is silk, blue ground with a large silver cross similar to the one in our southern firmament, no devices of arms but all exceeding chaste and natural.' Thus the fervent Raffaello.

The police reply was to organise a digger hunt the next day. One digger was shot and eight taken prisoner. In such circumstances, the one man among the diggers with a definite policy became their natural leader. The Chartists could give the miners a political platform, but confronted with a direct attack the advocates of gradual reform gave place to more revolutionary spirits. Peter Lalor, son of an Irish Member of the British Parliament, although only twenty-seven, became the central figure in the miners' resistance.

Lalor called for volunteers to resist the police. 'I then,' he testified later, 'called on the volunteers to kneel down. They did so and with heads uncovered and hands raised to heaven they solemnly swore at all hazards to defend their rights and liberties. They promised to meet next morning.' The likelihood of violence kept many away, but next day one thousand five hundred men armed with guns, pikes, hay-forks, or without any weapons at all, gathered on Bakery Hill. They hoisted their flag once more, organised into companies, and marched to Eureka Flat, a plateau of rising ground where they erected a pitifully flimsy barricade. Lalor was elected commander-in-chief, and Vern, a bombastic German, was second-in-command. Lalor said of the stockade: 'In plain truth it was little more than an enclosure to keep our men together and was never erected with an eye to military defence.'

By Saturday evening there were one thousand five hundred men in the enclosure, including the Independent Californian Rangers Revolver Brigade headed by McGill. The Americans were somewhat blamed later for the way they had boasted of their prowess. 'There was, however,' says Raffacello, 'a brave American officer who had command of the rifle-pit men. He fought like a tiger.'

Saturday night was cold and dreary and most of the men drifted back to their tents. There were only a hundred and fifty men in the enclosure, and they were mostly asleep, when about three o'clock in the morning of Sunday, 3rd December 1854, the signal was given that the troops were advancing. The diggers were outnumbered two to one. Two volleys from the troops swept the log parapet of the stockade, and when Lalor gave the order to the pikemen to advance, they broke and fled. The soldiers were over the top in a few seconds and in among the diggers. In the hand-to-hand fight that followed, the miners had little chance against well-armed and trained troops. About thirty out of the little garrison of a hundred and fifty lost their lives, while five soldiers were

killed or died of wounds. The soldiers were said to have fought chivalrously, but the police were later censured by a coroner's jury for their brutal conduct. They killed at least two men who had already surrendered.

The scene on the gold-fields as the bodies were carried in was tragic. 'Poor women crying for their absent husbands, children frightened into quietness, carts of dead and wounded horribly stained with blood,' says Raffaello, preceded the sullen bands of captured diggers. The police increased the panic by setting fire to the tents, and the captives had the added bitterness of seeing their poor possessions burning before their eyes.

During the fight Peter Lalor had been wounded in the arm, but the miners contrived to carry him outside and cover him with slabs. Suffering greatly from loss of blood, he managed to escape and disguised himself in a long black coat and hat. He found his way to the home of a friendly priest where doctors amputated his arm, which was thrown down a worked-out pit, to be later fished up and buried. Lalor remained concealed in the bush and in Melbourne for twelve months, and although a reward was offered for him and many people knew of his whereabouts, he was never betrayed. A year later he entered the Victorian Legislative Council as the representative for Ballarat; he was twice a Minister of the Crown; and for six years was the Speaker of the Legislative Council.

Peter Lalor had been the only real leader. Vern, an empty-headed braggart, ran at the firing of the first volley. When he later sighed in print for a warrior's grave, Raffaello, who had been four months in gaol, commented: 'Fate, be damned; the immoderate length of your legs was fatal to your not getting a warrior's grave.'

Melbourne people were disgusted with the behaviour of the police. A great public meeting was held at which it was claimed that the whole affair was a result of the digger hunts

being carried on at a time of excitement on the gold-fields. The captured diggers were four months in gaol, some of them worrying about their wives and children. Then they were taken, chained two and two, to the city for trial; tall, red-haired Raffaello chained to a big mulatto called Joe.

'On passing through Eureka,' Raffaello writes, 'I got a glance at my snug little tent where I had passed so many happy hours and was sacred to me on a Sunday. There it lay, deserted, uncared for! My eyes were choked with tears, and at forty years of age a man does not cry for little.'

Thirteen men chained together in three carts, they went jolting to judgment. The troopers stopped for breakfast. 'They had biscuits, cheese and all served to them before our teeth.' The half-starved prisoners could only with difficulty beg from their guards a little water.

'What will be the end of us, Joe?' Raffaello asked the big mulatto to whom he was chained.

Joe was a realist. 'Why, if the jury lets us go, I guess we'll jump our holes again on the diggings. If a jury won't let us, then . . .' He bowed his head over his left shoulder, poking his thumb between the windpipe and the collar-bone, and, opening wide his eyes, gave such an unearthly whistle that Raffaello could perfectly understand what he meant.

The authorities were determined to 'crush the scoundrels', and had selected the thirteen prisoners with the object of making an example of them. But the city of Melbourne was solidly behind the diggers; the first two tried were acquitted in circumstances very discreditable to the Crown; and the legal battle ended with a general amnesty. Raffaello trudged back to the diggings on foot along the road he had ridden in chains. In his absence someone had rifled his 'snug little tent'. He never managed to reclaim the clothes and money the police took from him, and the diggers who had profited by the lifting of the tax immediately after the Eureka Stockade

showed little gratitude, though Raffaello was elected after his trial to the newly formed Ballarat Local Council.

Whether the political reforms which took place in Australia earlier than in other countries were a result of the Eureka Stockade is a question of controversy. The Royal Commission that enquired into the outbreak held that the causes of the disturbance were the licence fee, the land question, and the lack of political rights. Acting upon the Commission's recommendation, the Government abolished the licence fee and instituted a Miner's Right, for which one pound per annum was paid. Within a year, manhood suffrage was granted and property qualifications abolished for the Victorian Legislative Assembly. Cautious historians doubt whether the liberalising of the governing institutions was a result of the brief skirmish with authority, but the verdict of a former Justice of the High Court of Australia, Dr. H. V. Evatt, is that Eureka was 'one of those rare cases where tyrannical enforcement of a harsh law is met by active resistance leading to the repeal of the law'.

The diggers may have been, as the official proclamation declared, 'A large body of evilly-disposed persons of various nations who had entrenched themselves in a stockade on the Eureka'; but their blue, starry banner has been the inspiration of Australian labour orators ever since.

CHAPTER XV

COBB AND CO.

*Oft when the camps lay dreaming, and fires began to pale,
Through rugged ranges gleaming would come the Royal Mail.
Behind six foaming horses, and lit by flashing lamps,
Old Cobb and Co., in royal state, went dashing past the camps.*

Henry Lawson.

'COBB AND CO.' is a name that means bullet-holes through the driver's hat, a hundredweight of gold in the boot, and a team of beautifully matched horses, anything from six to twenty-two of them, flashing over the country from the most southern towns of Victoria to the tropical north of Queensland.

There had been other coaches before the 'Golden Fifties', creaking, slow coaches that clopped a sedate ten to twenty miles in dusty discomfort. But in the 'rush' to the Ballarat gold-fields came four shrewd Americans, including Freeman Cobb, who saw that more money could be made by providing the miners with comfortable travel from Ballarat to Melbourne than by themselves chancing the luck of the diggings. They imported from Abbott Downing & Co., Connecticut, several coaches especially adapted to rough roads by leather springs or braces. The coaches cost three thousand dollars apiece but their greater pliability and comfort soon drove all other coaches off the road.

For their manager, Cobb and Company had James Rutherford, a New Yorker, who, after an unsuccessful turn at gold-digging, had travelled the whole eastern coast of Australia, buying horses, exporting them to India, dealing in stock, and

timber-getting. He saw Cobb and Co. had possibilities far beyond the modest schemes of its founders. When Freeman Cobb returned to California, Rutherford bought out the firm and formed a new company.

From America Rutherford brought crack drivers, men who had had experience with famous American firms such as Wells Fargo and Ben Halliday. They were smart and they drove the best horses money could buy. They were paid ten, twelve and seventeen pounds a week, and some even a thousand pounds a year, with free accommodation wherever they went. But at the same time Rutherford was building up a body of Australian drivers, carefully trained and ready for the continual expansion of the firm. Rutherford always had an eye for the spectacular. A journey on his coaches was not merely a drive, it was a procession. For years the most important daily event in Melbourne was the departure of the teams of twelve snow-white horses from the Bull and Mouth Hotel on their trip to Ballarat. The Great Leviathan Coach ran from Castlemaine to Kyneton. It carried seventy-five passengers and was drawn by a team of twenty-two horses. Beautifully groomed and bright with polished harness, with rosettes of blue on the ear-buckles and saddle-cloths of blue with silver mountings, the team of twenty-two light-grey horses would set out with the guard energetically blowing his horn, the four postillions leaping up with a jingle of harness, and the flag on its special flagstaff flaunting over all. The reins were run through rings rising from the footboard, and even with four postillions, the end of the trip saw the man on the box with strained muscles and inflamed hands.

Rutherford steadily worked his way up from the south, capturing all the mail runs of Victoria, before he began his famous invasion of New South Wales. He did it as he did everything else, with a flourish. 'We acted the liberal and cracked two cases of champagne for the benefit of our men, which they seemed to swallow with relish.' It was this

liberality that won the hearts of the diggers. The services in operation in New South Wales were poor, and the cavalcade which came gaily over the border was a thing of poetry. A hundred and three splendid horses, eighty of them in harness, in ten brilliantly painted coaches, and three feeder wagons, a team of six matchless greys, another of six roans, another of six bays! As they made their way through the Riverina, they had a triumphal welcome at every town. News of their progress spread ahead and crowds came out to meet them.

In the New South Wales' gold region extending from Bathurst north-west to Gulgong and west to Forbes, Rutherford made his attack. The established companies were desperate, and their methods of fighting were not altogether scrupulous. Oats were costing fifteen shillings to twenty-five shillings a bushel; the country was drought-stricken, and the roads were in an execrable condition. Gradually Cobb and Co. won through. The opposition companies were bought out or driven out of existence for lack of patronage. Within a few years Cobb and Co., controlled the whole coaching service of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. By 1870 they were harnessing six thousand horses a day, and their coaches travelled twenty-eight thousand miles a week. They received ninety-five thousand pounds in mail subsidy annually and paid out a hundred thousand a year to their drivers.

Through the tall dark bush, over gaps, high ridges, down across yawning gullies and creeks, over grey, marshy, curlew-haunted flats, the coaches wove a pattern of gallant chances taken. On a Victorian road the brake-band snapped as the coach was bounding down a steep hill. At the foot was a deep gorge with a precipice at one side of the road. The driver summed up the situation, and without turning his head he loudly muttered: 'I'll have to capsize you all', and he did. Over crashed the coach into the bush, and thirty passengers owed their lives to the driver's judgment. The only mishap was a broken arm.

A famous driver was held up one night by bushrangers. They fired on him, but he refused to stop. He explained later to the passengers that he didn't like the bushrangers' tone. He might have stopped, he said, if he had been asked more politely. The same driver, when held up on another occasion, pointed out to the bushrangers that there was no sense robbing a man of the cheques he carried. If they took them, they wouldn't be able to cash them, and the passenger would be destitute when he reached town. The bushrangers agreed that he was right and returned the cheques. At the same time the driver noted that one of the bushrangers wore a blue shirt with a distinctive pattern. The police managed to trace the sale of that brand of shirt and arrested the bushrangers.

'Silent Bob' was a driver who was a by-word for his dislike of conversation. Asked once by a passenger what plant was growing in a field by the road, he made no reply. A week later, when the same passenger was on his way home, Bob turned and snarled at him: 'Lucerne, I tell yer.'

'Cabbage Tree Ned', so-called from his hat woven from cabbage-palm fronds, was the most famous of the drivers. Seventy passengers were nothing to him. With a team of twelve beautiful white horses he drove the first team of English cricketers to visit Australia. Rutherford always treated his men well, and he enjoyed travelling with one of them, Breen, who constantly abused the company, its wages and equipment, and especially the way Rutherford drove. When Breen retired, Rutherford gave him a farm, horses and goods to start it.

As the railway systems began to spread out their slow cobweb of lines over the country, Cobb and Co. went further and further west, but in an age of motor transport they were still competing successfully, and the last coach ceased running only in 1924. The genius of Rutherford was behind the organisation for fifty years. At the age of eighty he was thinking of going to South Africa to develop lucerne growing, and at eighty-five he was still doing the rounds of his Queensland

stations. He once remarked that his word was good—he bought stations without paying a penny down. When informed during a financial crisis that a certain bank had stopped payment, he merely interrupted his conversation to observe that he had an overdraft of two hundred thousand pounds with it, but 'they will carry me through'.

On one occasion a pompous politician came to Rutherford demanding three hundred pounds to supplement his parliamentary salary. Rutherford freely told him where he could go to look for it, and the furious gentleman threatened that he would ask a question in Parliament about the contract for the conveyance of mails, and what the total of the other contracts came to. Rutherford only chuckled. That was information he had been vainly seeking for years. Sure enough, the member asked his question, and Rutherford found that his tender was twelve thousand pounds a year less than the combined tenders of all his competitors. Next year he increased his tender by ten thousand pounds and still secured the contract.

Cobb and Co. have become a legend in Australia, a legend of daring and generosity and colour. The old coaches are preserved where old public buildings would be torn down, because the coaches appeal to the Australian imagination. There will always be romance riding beside the driver who, with a ton of gold and a desperate woman on board, raced eighty miles over a waterless track to reach the hospital with the mother and the baby—born on the way—before he turned towards the bank.

THE EMIGRANTS

' Mr. Micawber is going to a distant country, expressly in order that he may be fully understood and appreciated for the first time. I wish Mr. Micawber to take his stand upon that vessel's prow, and firmly say, " This country I am come to conquer. Have you honours? Have you riches? Have you posts of profitable pecuniary emolument? Let them be brought forward. They are mine."

Mrs. Micawber to David Copperfield.

IN a heavy downpour of rain, a huge crowd collected on Sydney quay. Shops were shut, business ceased, while orators addressed to a sea of wet, upturned faces, dripping top-hats and waving umbrellas, a denunciation of a ship. It was the *Flashemy*, a ship waiting to unload a cargo of ' reformed ' convicts at that very quay. Ladies in bonnets and shawls sheltered under the shop verandas, small boys climbed posts and roofs, roars of cheering greeted the reference to ' free men ' and ' the glorious future of Australia '.

The detested convict ship lay in the harbour surrounded, as the orators pointed out, by fifteen ships bearing free immigrants eager to land. Was the country to be overrun with convicts when English free men were only too anxious to come there? Let the convicts land over the bodies of the citizens if the authorities dare to land them! Who were these men who insisted on bringing in criminals against the wishes of the Australian people? The great landowners and squatters, anxious for servile cheap labour to develop their great estates, men who grudged a decent wage to decent men when they could get criminals body and soul for nothing.

The British Government had years ago agreed not to send any more convicts. Who, by their petitions and demands, their power in the Council, had brought convicts in again? The squatters, the great landholders, the wealthy oligarchy corrupted by power. Just as the Virginian slave-holders clung to the institution of slavery, so did the squatters cling to convictism.

The meeting grew stormier as the next speaker began to embroider the character of Governor Fitzroy and the morals of Government House. The crowd turned up its collective coat collar, hoisted its umbrella higher, and settled down to enjoy the Great Protest Meeting to the full. It was in vain that W. C. Wentworth in Parliament thundered against the Anti-Transportation League as a gang of socialists, communists, uprooters of law and order, with an 'arch-anarchist' at their head in the form of a young immigrant, Henry Parkes. Some of the most influential men in the colony were supporting the League: men such as Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, a man of wide lands, important business connections and great wealth; representatives of the oldest Sydney families such as James Norton, fiercest in his denunciation of the 'slave-holders'; legislators like the brilliant Robert Lowe, later Viscount Sherbrooke and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The mind of the country was made up. Protest meetings in Melbourne rejected the new 'reformed' brand of convict as definitely as they had done the old brand who came out clanking their chains. The *Hashemy's* cargo had to be landed in Western Australia and Queensland where the demand for labour was greater, and even then the abuse heaped on those unfortunate colonies by the others showed how widespread was the resentment.

Two years later came the gold-rushes, bringing an overwhelming wave of free colonists. The hopes of the great landowners were finally crushed, and in 1852 the Orders in Council which authorised the revival of transportation were

revoked. After that the landowners turned their attention to the possibility of bringing in coloured labour, and the fighting spirit of the democrats was turned to the battle for the 'White Australia' policy.

The big landholders were not tyrants inspired by a desire to crush free men. They were hard-headed employers with a business to run, and they knew, from bitter experience, how badly they had been served by free immigration. Just at the time when Australia was struggling in the depths of the financial crisis of 1842-3, the English Government graciously agreed to the requests to cut off the supply of convicts, the landholders' cheap labour. Humanitarians in England since 1830 had pointed out that the poor could be shipped out of the country to the colonies without waiting for them to commit a crime requiring transportation at Government expense. Wakefield advocated the immigration of labourers, and his powerful influence was the deciding factor in the abolition of transportation.

An emigration committee was formed in England, but with the old jobbery at the helm. Contractors approached work-house masters and bargained to take off their hands the old feeble poor from whose work the master made no profit. They scraped the remains of their complement from the gutters; and squatters, hopefully applying for labour, were bitterly disappointed by the physical and mental incapables they received, and to whom they had to pay wages. The scandal was so flagrant that a system of bounties was introduced. Employers wishing to import men brought them out under contract, and the shipowner was paid a bounty when the immigrant landed. It was a fruitful field for graft, and often the immigrant had no idea that he was tied for a term of years to one employer. Imprisonments for breach of contract ran into thousands.

The British Government blamed the 1842 financial crisis on the Gipps' payment of bounties, so 'assisted' immigration

took the place of the bounty system. The immigrants were dumped ashore to perish or fight their way as best they could. An inquest on one family showed that its members had all died of starvation after pawning everything they possessed.

The men who came out hoping to make their fortune in the new land grew restless in the monotony of a shepherd's life; and, quickly realising that at twenty pounds a year they could never become independent, they drifted back to the city. They hated working with convicts on the stations, and felt that they were being depressed to the convicts' level. They loathed the brutality of the flogging system, the hang-dog servility expected of the convicts.

At 'Castle Forbes', a squalid set of slab huts belonging to a certain Major Mudie, the convicts mutinied and threatened to kill the overseer. In court they told a horrible story of starvation, bullying, flogging, false accusations of insubordination intended to keep the men from ever obtaining their liberty. The convicts begged to be hanged rather than returned to Mudie's tender care, and the judge saw to it they were hanged. But, as a mark of disapproval, Mudie's name was removed from the list of magistrates; and he was so incensed at this slight that he published in England a pamphlet in the abusive style of the day assailing the Governor and the judges. The son of one of the judges gave him fifty lashes with a horse-whip in the main street, and when Mudie was granted fifty pounds damages, gentlemen of the colony clubbed together to pay the fifty pounds. Subscribers were asked to 'buy' one of the fifty lashes, and so gladly did the public respond that Mudie was forced to leave the country.

While the horrible exposures of the 'Castle Forbes' affair were still fresh in the public mind, the cold-blooded shooting of a tribe of friendly blacks by eight convict stockmen increased the feeling that the remains of the Convict System must go for ever. The manner in which the big landowners

defended the convicts and opposed the death sentence on them, the outcry they raised when the stockmen were hanged, seemed to point to an unpleasant alliance between convicts and squatters.

The *Hashemy* uproar was really the bursting of a long-simmering resentment that the colony should be governed by a few wealthy men in the Legislative Council, men like the Macarthurs and Wentworth. It was in vain that those interested explained that the convicts aboard the *Hashemy* were already reformed by a new system, the darling of gaol improvers. The Pentonville system depended on long periods of solitary confinement, and it was not uncommon to find a man reformed by this system who went around with a dazed look muttering incessantly to himself. The more glib a man was in his protestations of reform, the greater favourite he was with the authorities. Dickens, in *David Copperfield*, gives a description of the model gaol, Pentonville, and leaves Uriah Heep as the darling of the officials.

"Well, Twenty Seven," said Mr. Creakle, mournfully admiring him. "How do you find yourself today?"

"I am very umble, sir!" replied Uriah Heep.

"You are always so, Twenty Seven," said Mr. Creakle.

'Here, another gentleman asked, with extreme anxiety: "Are you quite comfortable?"

"Yes, I thank you, sir!" said Uriah Heep, looking in that direction. "Far more comfortable here, than ever I was outside. I see my follies now, sir. That's what makes me comfortable."

Mr. Peggotty and Wilkins Micawber, Dickens sent out to Australia as types of free emigrants, and the citizens of their new country were better pleased to have the misfits like Micawber than the Uriah Heeps, the 'Pentonvillians', as they were termed. However, in England the gaols were overflowing, and transportation rid the mother country of its unwanted refuse. The official view was that, after all, the

colonies had been set up by England and they ought to be willing to suffer a little for England's good, particularly as patriotic and wealthy men kept assuring the Colonial Office that they were perfectly ready to receive convicts, and it was only a disgruntled mob of nobodies which raised the clamour against them.

The treatment that emigrants received was, however, little different from that meted out to the convicts. To the horrors of crowded ships, where the contractors were only too happy to save rations on a heavy death rate and half-starved emigrants, were added the miseries of a strange land where no one cared what became of them. Worst of all was the fate of the young women attracted by the hope of high wages as dairy workers and domestic servants. Hundreds of them were left to shelter under verandas and doorways, to sleep under a rock by the waterside. It wasn't anybody's business to look after stray girls. All the money a party of sixty-four girls had between them when they landed was fourteen shillings and a penny-halfpenny. There were in 1841 six hundred respectable women unemployed in Sydney.

It was a surprise to Governor Sir George Gipps when a Mrs. Caroline Chisholm demanded an interview, and he was even more amazed that she was not a severe old lady in a cap and spectacles, but 'a handsome, stately young woman who appeared to argue the question as if she thought her reason, and experience too, worth as much as mine'. Caroline Chisholm's experience and reason were, in some respects, better than Governor Gipps's. A housewife with a semi-invalid husband and a family of children, she had come to beg for a shelter for immigrant girls. After humiliations and rebuffs, she was allowed to occupy a slab hut on the understanding that the 'Home' must be no expense to the Government. Her own description of the place shows the indomitable character of the woman who was to be revered as the 'Immigrants' Friend'.

'On closing the door I reflected on what I had been compelled to endure for forty-nine square feet . . . My courage was put to the proof at starting. Scarce was the light out than I fancied from a noise I heard that dogs must be in the room, and in some terror I got a light. What I experienced on seeing rats in all directions I cannot describe . . . I, therefore, lighted a second candle and seated myself on my bed . . . until three rats descending from the roof, alighted on my shoulders. I felt that I was getting in a fever and that, in fact, I should be very ill before morning . . . but to be out-generalled by rats was too bad . . . I had two loaves and some butter . . . I cut them into slices, placed the whole in the middle of the room, put a dish of water convenient, and with a light by my side I kept my seat on the bed, reading "Abercrombie" and watching the rats until four in the morning.'

To this hovel Caroline Chisholm gathered the homeless. She kept an employment office, appealed to the public for subscriptions, and led her convoys of immigrants into the fearful bush from which they had shrunk as a place of bush-rangers and snakes. 'Her journeys became longer and parties larger. One hundred and forty-seven souls left Sydney in one party, increasing on the road to two hundred and forty, Mrs. Chisholm leading the way on horseback.'

The country people helped. Inns provided free accommodation. It became one of the familiar sights of the colony to meet with Caroline Chisholm and a party of women trudging behind a dray. Half the girls would ride, while the others walked, and they made long and, in the state of the roads, often dangerous journeys into the interior. The *London Punch* in later years wrote of her:

*Who led their expeditions? And under whose command
Through dangers and through hardships sought they the
promised land?*

*A second Moses, surely, it was who did it all,
It was a second Moses, in bonnet and in shawl.*

One of the worst aspects of immigration at the time was that parents had been torn from their children, sisters and brothers parted, whole families dispersed. Caroline Chisholm kept careful records, and after seven years set out for England to find the missing ones. It was a colossal task. She became a thorn in the flesh of Her Majesty's Land and Emigration Commissioners, to whose office she went grimly day by day. Two shiploads of children were transferred from English workhouses to Australian farms as a result of her persistence. Then she fell like a scourge upon the English shipowners who had made so handsome a profit from overcrowding their miserable passengers. They abused her, hinting that she 'must be making plenty out of it', and protesting that her proposals would rob them of ten per cent of their profits. But she now had the backing of influential people such as Lord Shaftesbury; her scheme for voluntary colonisation was becoming an actuality; she was lecturing at meetings, encouraging emigrants, answering over a hundred and twenty letters a day. Vast crowds gathered to farewell the seven shiploads of emigrants she despatched.

With the gold-rush it was no longer necessary to encourage immigrants. Caroline Chisholm came back to Australia to find a new task waiting. She had urged that families should come to Australia, but families needed homes, and there was no land, for the squatters had seized it all.

'The great grievance of the diggers,' she said, 'is that they cannot get land. . . . It is an unaccountable act of folly for the Government to let the money these men earn be spent on articles of foreign produce when they have the ground idle about them on which they could grow the same.' When the people had homes, 'the country would be a great country—not till then. Talk about compensation to the squatters! Children ought to take precedence of sheep!'

In the fight for homes the hard work of many years began to tell on Mrs. Chisholm. Her health broke down and she

had to give up the long journeys and grinding office work, though she lectured for many years. Conditions were changing and unemployment was taking the place of a demand for labour. The easy gold was soon worked out, and the diggers became miners employed by big companies with capital sunk in machinery and workings. Many of them drifted back to the cities, but industries made slow growth in a country devoted to the economic theory of free trade.

When their shepherds rushed off to the gold-fields, leaving the sheep untended, the sheepowners wailed that they would be ruined. They found, however, that the sheep, left to themselves, thrived better than when they were followed by shepherds; that, in fact, shepherds were unnecessary. The more sheep were out of the yards and hurdles the better they became. Free to roam instead of being cooped up every night and getting footrot, they improved in carcase and wool. The sudden deprivation of shepherds was a piece of luck for the squatter. Wire fences replaced wooden ones, which was another cut in the cost of labour. The convict shepherds went for ever and were replaced by the married boundary rider and his family, a distinct change for the better. The figures worked out at twenty-five per cent more fleece, twenty-five per cent less expense, and fifty per cent more sheep to the run. The old squatter who might have a quarter of a million acres with two hundred and eighty miles of river frontage began to give way to the city company or bank owning the property for shareholders.

Nevertheless the 'pure merinos' exercised the strongest political control, and they looked with horror upon the outspoken republicanism of men such as stout-hearted, kindly, bull-headed Dr. John Dunmore Lang. 'After the gross injustice which the Australian colonies have so long experienced from the mother-country,' Dr. Lang asserted in one of his many books, 'and the unworthy treatment they have received at her hands, I am decidedly of the opinion that there is

nothing really worth struggling for in Australia but entire freedom and national independence.'

The 'pure merinos', as a delicate compliment to Dr. Lang, inserted a clause in the Constitution of New South Wales forbidding clergymen to sit in the Legislative Council. It was deleted, and Dr. Lang continued to sit as a member for Port Phillip, all the time stoutly advocating the separation of Port Phillip from New South Wales. In 1844 he introduced a bill for the separation of the southern settlement, and although the bill did not get through, the electors gave him a public banquet. He was a vigorous preacher, Member of Parliament, a newspaper proprietor and editor, a prolific writer, an immigrant agent, and college principal. Whenever he went to England he lectured on immigration, and as early as 1831 he was bringing out Scottish stonemasons to build his Scots College.

When in 1857, Port Phillip having secured its separation, he was returned for Moreton Bay, he at once advocated the division of that district from New South Wales as a separate state to be known as Cooksland (it was later Queensland). Lang was able to induce many able men to go to Moreton Bay as cotton-planters, and he looked to his electorate as the future supplier of the English cotton mills. The squatters of Moreton Bay, after Lang had spent three years in England collecting likely cotton planters, rejected the immigrants with abuse, and because of a technical flaw in their papers Lang and his supporters had to pay heavy costs for bringing them out.

Lang advocated federation of all the colonies, but a federated Australia and a republican Australia seemed to him to be practically identical ideas. All his long life was one public and private sequence of hot-headed challenges to majority views. For instance, when the Crimean War began, the colonists broke out in a rash of patriotic fervour and declared war on Russia too. The only speaker against the declaration was Dr. Lang, who pointed out that the Czar had fifty-four

million subjects and New South Wales's population was two hundred and fifty thousand!

One of Lang's most valuable contributions was his insistence on the necessity of farming. The colonies had never raised enough wheat for their populations to live on. Half the money from the wool clip was going to buy foreign grain. Australia, it was said, would never be a wheat-growing country. The gold-rushes gave force to Lang's demand that the great estates be opened to small farmers; but the cry of 'Unlock the lands' was met by the squatters' insistence on 'Compensation'.

Each state set about dealing with the problem in a different way, and none of the ways led to an effective solution. In Victoria the squatters, who held fifty-five million acres, formed a Pastoral Protection Society (1855) to fight for their interests against the free selectors. They managed to introduce a Bill giving their members all rights to the land until it was proved that it was needed for agriculture. This 'Squatters' Charter' was mangled in the Council, and there were bonfires and rejoicings throughout the colony. From all districts of Victoria representatives gathered to form a 'Land Convention' which became a parliament outside Parliament. The Land Convention put forward the American land system, a simple programme of free selection and free grass. The programme was as popular as it was unattainable, and the belief gained ground that the Legislative Assembly was neglecting the wants of seventy thousand people in favour of two hundred and seventy squatters. Mass meetings were held in the grounds of Parliament House, men with red badges demanding for each 'a vote, a rifle and a farm—the rifle to defend his property'.

Ministry after ministry did its best, until finally a Bill was brought in which set aside ten million acres for agriculture, four of them to be proclaimed at once, and two to be constantly open. The uproar from the squatting interests outdid

anything that had gone before. The new Act broke down in the first two days. The land office was rushed with false applications from the squatters. A man's chance of a block depended on the number of slips he sent in, and only one-twentieth of the land fell into the hands of genuine farmers. There was no law to deal with 'dummying'. Three squatters secured fifty thousand acres, and another twenty thousand acres. Twenty years after the passing of the Act the best lands of the colony were still a wilderness grazed by a few sheep. Statesmen looked piously to time and economic circumstances rather than legislation to effect a change. Every few years a ministry would tinker with the land Acts, but mostly they were left alone, and when drought or some other disaster broke up a great estate, the small farmers settled on the carcase.

In New South Wales farmers began to clash with the squatters in the 1850s, for the gold-fields were not so rich as they were in Victoria, and the farmers were proportionately keener to find land. In 1861 John Robertson, himself a squatters' man, but disinterested enough to consider the needs of the farmers, brought in a Bill to open the great estates to selectors. The squatters found that by 'peacocking' their runs—selecting all the good patches or the water-holes—or by means of 'dummies', they could keep the selectors out pretty effectively. When the squatters had used all their own money, they appealed to the banks to advance more so that they could pick the 'eyes' out of their runs. There developed a false boom in land values, because millions borrowed by the Government overseas and deposited with the banks were advanced to the pastoralists to buy their land from the Government. The Government again deposited the money in the banks and it was re-loaned to the squatters for further purchases.

'Dummying' was the device by which the squatter forestalled the genuine selector. Asylum patients, hospital patients,

unborn children and station hands all served as 'dummies'. After a year's 'residence', the holding could be handed over by the 'dummy' to his employer. In one case a station of two hundred and fifty thousand acres was secured for sheep by the purchase of seven hundred forty-acre blocks along the river frontage. On the other hand, cunning selectors might take up choice blocks, not with the idea of farming, but so that they might blackmail the squatter into buying them out.

The country became divided into two hostile camps, pro-squatter and pro-selector. The selector poisoned the squatter's sheep pools; the squatter's men set fire to the selector's crops. The selectors were called 'cockatoos' because, in the squatter's view, they settled like a flock of the white, sulphur-crested cockatoos on the land. Today an Australian speaks of a 'wheat-cocky' or a 'cow-cocky'.

Much of Australian literature of the 'eighties and 'nineties centred around the fight between the selector and the squatter. The free selector added to his heart-breaking tasks of clearing and fencing the burden of hate for the neighbouring squatter.

Between the homes for many years the devil left his tracks,
wrote Henry Lawson,

*The squatter pounded Ross's stock and Sandy pounded Black's.
A well upon the lower run was filled with earth and logs,
And Black laid baits about the farm to poison Ross's dogs.*

The squatter who had watched his property and fought through flood, drought, footrot, bank mortgages, land regulations and labour troubles, now had the bitterness of seeing his best land taken from under his eyes unless he bribed someone falsely to swear it into his possession again. One of the best known of the squatter-versus-cocky stories ends with the admirable solution of the selector, driven off his head by

the squatter's tactics, going into a lunatic asylum where he is presently joined by the squatter who has had a nervous collapse as a result of the ruin brought on by droughts, floods and the banks. The selector and the squatter become bosom friends.

Very much the same thing happened in fact. The squatter and the cocky fought each other to a standstill, and the next generation of Australians intermarried and forgot their fathers' feuds. Changes and reverses saw here a squatter go down and a farmer come up, or there a farmer fall in the fight. Towns grew where there had been a tiny shanty at the creek ford, and the towns needed farms around them for food. The railways pushed out, and the fight the squatters fought was a losing one.

One of the good results of the land struggles was that land transactions suddenly, by a new system, became simple and easy. Up till 1858 it had been necessary to hire a lawyer to search through masses of documents to determine the rights of all parties. The buying of land had been full of cost, delay and uncertainty. South Australia, leading the way in reform, passed a Real Property Act, which was to have repercussions all over the world. Torrens, a brilliant young man who held the post of Collector of Customs, had been so impressed by the simplicity and directness of the shipping register that he advanced the suggestion that the method be applied to the maze of land titles. An official registry should be kept so that a purchaser might see at a glance what mortgages or encumbrances must be met. Commissioners would be appointed to enquire into previous titles and set them straight and issue certificates to landowners.

Lawyers made a great outcry against the proposal, but Torrens forced the Bill through and set up the machinery. As soon as the system was in operation, everyone saw its advantages. It was cheap and adaptable. Before long it had been extended to thirty-one legislative units of the British

THE EMIGRANTS

Empire, to sixteen territories of the United States, to parts of Britain and a great area of Europe. One American economist declared that 'no legal or economic principle is of greater moment than the system known as Torrens'. From the tumults and growing pains of the Australian states emerged a universal legal reform.

THE KINGS OF THE ROAD

THE BUSHRANGER of Australia remains in the popular imagination as the rebel against society; and because it is believed that he voiced the protest of the oppressed, he has lived in tradition. The early bushrangers were, in fact, merely the ugly product of the Convict System, whose unspeakable cruelty turned lawbreakers into devils and so warped the minds of decent men that they sympathised with crime because of the way the criminals were punished. The second generation were young men bred up in a society which looked with more than tolerance upon cattle and horse stealing. They had absorbed the old convicts' hatred of police and their grudge against society. Given the tempting venue of lonely distances, scattered and unprotected little towns, and wild country in which to shelter, it was only natural that the most worthless of the bush larrikins should pass from horse stealing to highway robbery and murder. At the trial of the Clarke gang, in 1867, the judge defined bushranging as the old leaven of the Convict System not yet worked out; and the proof that he was right was the swift vanishing of bushranging with the conditions that bred it.

It was natural that in Vandemonia, where the Convict System went to its most repulsive lengths, the most repulsive set of bushrangers should appear. The little colony, when first set up on the island, ran short of food, and the convicts were let free to hunt kangaroos or to starve. At first the convicts were as fearful of the great ranges as their keepers, but they soon learnt that the silent grey trees were pleasanter, the lonely valleys and hills kinder than the chain and lash,

the sharp commands of warders and the walls of the gaol. The taste of liberty seems to have sent them mad. Irreclaimable gangs infested the country and became more of a danger to the settlements than the natives. A 'bushranger' became the official description of the convict who 'bolted' or took to the scrub, and for a time these gangs of bushrangers had the country in their hands, slaughtered cattle, burnt barns, and often left behind them murdered men and women. There was not sufficient soldiery at 'Mad Davey's' command to enforce law and order, and at the suggestion of Macquarie he proclaimed a general pardon to all who gave themselves up at the end of six months. 'Better to hang than to live in hell,' the bushrangers replied.

The most notorious of the Tasmanian gangs of bushrangers was that of Whitehead, who in 1810 organised a group of escapees and for three years terrorised the roads and lonely little settlements. Whitehead was chiefly distinguished for his ferocity, on one occasion tying moccasins full of red soldier ants to the feet of a suspected informer so that the victim died in agony. In a brush with soldiers he was shot, his lieutenant, Mick Howe, taking over command of the gang. Howe's last office for his chief was to cut off the dead man's head. No seeker after blood-money could claim on a headless body, so Mike Howe, with the soldiers firing at him, coolly stopped to cheat the soldiery of their gains. In the chase that followed he had to throw away his burden in some bushes, and it was found and carried to Hobart in triumph, where the reward was duly paid.

Mike Howe, the Motherland's gift to Vandemonia, was a striking person. Clad in patches of kangaroo skins, with a long black beard hanging to his waist, the savage giant might have represented some weird monster of the southern mountains. He had once served in a British man-of-war, and he drew up a shipshape oath for his crew, an oath which was solemnly taken on the Bible. He instituted a code of penalties

ranging from short rations to strokes of the cat-o'-ninc-tails. A chapter from the Bible was read on state occasions beside the camp-fire, and in all things Howe took himself seriously. He adopted the title of 'The Governor of the Ranges', and addressed despatches to his confrère in Hobart, whom he called 'The Governor of the Town'.

In one such despatch Howe offered to surrender if he received a pardon, and actually came into Hobart while the terms were being arranged, but left again, either because there was some doubt about their being ratified, or else, as some accounts allege, because the free pardon could only be obtained by betraying his gang. The suspicion that this was the case lodged in the minds of his followers. They suspected him of treachery, and he suspected them, killing two on the mere suspicion. He had a black wife whose bushcraft and loyalty on more than one occasion had been his salvation, but when he was closely followed by the soldiers, he turned and shot her because she could not keep up with him. His bullet failed to kill her, and in revenge she revealed his hiding-place to the soldiers. Two of Howe's followers decided to carry him to Hobart and obtain a free pardon. They succeeded in knocking him down and tying him up. One went ahead gun in hand, the other also followed with a levelled gun. Howe suddenly snapped the ropes with one heave of his great muscles, stabbed the man in front of him, snatched his gun and shot dead his other captor.

His end came when he was decoyed to the hut of a ticket-of-leave man who had joined with another of his breed and a soldier to capture Howe. In a running fight the soldier sprang on Howe just as he was gaining the scrub and knocked his brains out. When his knapsack was searched, a record of his dreams was found written in blood on a kangaroo skin. From the notes it appeared that he was haunted by visions of his old companions who were murdered or hanged. He also dreamt of his sister. A strange side of his character was his love of

gardening. On the skin were written the names of seeds, fruits, vegetables and flowers he hoped to take back to his mountain retreat.

Matthew Brady, who next took command of Vandemonia's roads, did not take himself as seriously as Howe, but when Governor Arthur offered a reward for his arrest, he posted up a notice that read: 'It has caused Matthew Brady much concern that such a person known as Sir George Arthur is at large. Twenty gallons of rum will be given to any person who will deliver his person unto me. (Signed) M. Brady.' Brady, who was known as 'The Gentleman Bushranger', had his own code of ethics, and for violence to a woman he shot one of his followers through the hand, thrashed him, and then solemnly threw him out of the gang. 'Gentleman Brady' held almost complete control of the roads between the isolated settlements; but not content with this, he descended on the township of Sorrell, locked the soldiers in the cells of the gaol and freed all the prisoners, and putting a soldier's coat on a log of wood, propped it against the gaol door with a musket and bayonet beside it so as to look like a sentry. He was never a killer, but he burnt down the houses of those who offended him. On one occasion when captured by two soldiers while sleeping, he held his bound hands over the fire until the rope burned through and so escaped. His end came when, wounded and ragged, he was limping painfully through the scrub and was followed and captured by that able bushman, John Batman, later the founder of Port Phillip. 'Are you an officer?' Brady asked, when called upon to surrender. 'I am not a soldier. I am John Batman,' the famous settler replied. 'You are a brave man,' Brady said, as he flung down his gun, 'but I would never give in to a soldier.'

He was most disgusted when he found he was to be conveyed to Hobart with the cannibal and murderer Jeffries, and sat as far as possible from him in the cart. At his trial ladies wept so heartily that the judge had to call for

silence before he could pronounce sentence on the popular hero.

On the mainland the criminals imported from England and given in slavery to isolated settlers under the assignment system, often took to the bush. Bad treatment bred the type of bushranger who returned in search of his master so that he 'could stick his head on the chimney as a mantel ornament'. Ben Hall, one of the famous bushrangers, declared in Goulburn Gaol, 'I've been all over this country without taking the life of anyone. I'm only sorry now I didn't shoot every tyrant in New South Wales. I'd go to the gallows as comfortably as Biddy.'

This attitude was typical of the bushranger who, in other circumstances, might have turned his energy and daring to better ends. 'Jacky-Jacky', William Westwood, one of the most popular of the first generation of bushrangers, if sent from the mother-country as a free man would probably have been an overlander, a squatter, a 'pioneer'. A bright, pleasant-mannered lad, he was transported when sixteen years of age for some trivial errand-boy's offence. His gay manner and friendliness made him the hero of innumerable legends. He took pride in holding up a man and asking him to mark the time of the robbery. Then he would race a hundred and fifty miles across country and rob someone else. Bushrangers stole racehorses for preference, and at one time no racehorse could be moved without police escort. Old lags and humble shepherds worshipped Jacky-Jacky because he was generous; he avenged them, and from great heights of recklessness and good-humour identified himself with them.

Jacky-Jacky was captured and sentenced to penal servitude for life. Detected in an attempt to escape from gaol, he was removed to Cockatoo Island, believed to be absolutely escape-proof. He organised a conspiracy whereby at a given signal twenty-five prisoners jumped on a warder, tied him up, and began a three-quarters-of-a-mile swim across Sydney Harbour.

Somebody gave away the plot and the swimmers were captured. Jacky-Jacky was sent to Port Arthur and almost succeeded in capturing the brig that took him there. He escaped from Port Arthur, was recaptured and sent to Norfolk Island. At last the iron of Norfolk Island broke the spirit that had upheld him so long. He addressed his fellow prisoners as their leader: 'I have made up my mind to bear this oppression no longer, but, remember, I am going to the gallows. If any man funks, let him stand out; those who wish to follow me, come in.'

Of nearly one thousand eight hundred prisoners, one thousand six hundred followed Jacky-Jacky. The sentry, the police overseer of works and a warder were met and killed. The mob made a rush for Government House, but a guard stood in the way. Jacky-Jacky burst in the door, slew each constable in turn with a stroke of his axe, then, having made certain he would be hanged, he coolly drew aside, lighted his pipe, and sat down to watch the end. A line of soldiers with levelled muskets checked the revolt. Jacky-Jacky, with the other leaders, was hanged. He was twenty-six at the time, with the fair hair, blue eyes and clear complexion of a British youth. The letter he wrote from the death-cell to the chaplain is a terrible indictment of the System. 'The sweetest draught is that which takes away the misery of living death,' he wrote. 'It is the friend that deceives no man. All will then be quiet. No tyrant will there disturb my rest.'

Of a similar character to Jacky-Jacky was the 'Jewboy', who was only slightly less popular. For three years with an ever-changing gang the Jewboy plundered the wild country of the New England ranges. Policemen were few and far between, but on one occasion the Jewboy, chancing on a force of police and volunteers, rounded them up, emptied their pockets and rode away laughing. His hospitality was notorious, and when holding up an inn at Yass he invited all the victims to refresh themselves at his expense. One of his guests

dropped his roll of notes into a hot cup of tea before being searched, and slipped quietly out of the room holding the soaked fortune in front of him as though it were too hot to drink.

There was no organised police force in the outback at the time, each town having a tradesman employed to act as a constable for a year, while a mounted patrol was supposed to control a huge stretch of open country. The bushrangers would emerge from the scrub, 'hold the road' for some days, robbing every coach or horseman who passed. Then they would vanish as completely as if the hills had swallowed them. Only perhaps a dropped silver candle-stick or a shattered wine-bottle hinted at the haste of their retreat. The Jewboy never killed anyone, and when he was captured (by civilians, not police) he was sent to penal servitude. His career illustrates the maxim that it pays to be polite—even when engaged in robbery.

The second generation of bushrangers presents an interesting study in the persistence of a criminal outlook in the free descendants of criminals. Many of the old hands preferred to seek out lonely selections beyond the reach of the law. There, among the wild ranges, running out from the Great Dividing Range, in the tangled granite ridges, on the flanks of the Australian Alps, in mountain pockets and isolated settlements, the Kellys and Clarkes and their ilk were bred, ignorant, uncouth, passionate and dangerous, perfectly at home in the broken rock and jagged splintered crags, in the grey moonlit loneliness of the scrub. On a horse's back, with a rifle in their hands, they were any man's equal, but incapable of sustained work and despising it. To break the law was a jest, to miss a shot at a policeman a disgrace.

This second generation of bushrangers extended from 1852 to 1878. The squatters were at loggerheads with the Government over the land laws. The selectors were mostly nursing a grievance against the administration. Gangs of outlaws,

secure in the sympathy and co-operation of half the community, took command of the roads, robbing the mails and holding up whole townships. Even when a bushranger was taken alive, it was impossible to find a jury in his own district to convict him. In nearly every case the venue of the trial had to be changed to Sydney.

Frank Gardiner, the 'King of the Roads', was a man who trained a school of bushrangers with all the loving care that a craftsman might give to the apprentices who will carry on after him. He was arrested time and again but either escaped from gaol or managed to persuade a puzzled or admiring jury that, in face of all the facts, he was not guilty. When he was finally brought to book, he still escaped the gallows, and, loaded with a sentence of thirty-three years' imprisonment, did not serve a fourth of it. Before eight years were up, men of rank, even Ministers of the Crown, were petitioning for his release. In a queer burst of sentimentality which swept New South Wales a general release from gaol was made of all bushrangers, and with it went Frank Gardiner, to end his astonishing life in respectability and wealth in California.

Frank Gardiner—his real name was Christie—was bred in a wild district near Goulburn, and went off to the gold-fields, where he found stealing horses, at which he was an adept, more gainful than pick-and-shovel work. He made an unlucky choice in one victim when he carried off all a station's horses in a single swoop. The owner was a Scot, and he followed grimly on the trail of the thief, ran him down and got Gardiner and his two accomplices a sentence of five years' imprisonment.

At the end of five weeks Gardiner had escaped and returned to horse stealing. He was caught and sentenced to seven years' hard labour, but before half of the term had expired he had charmed a ticket-of-leave out of the authorities. At once he organised a gang and founded the school of criminals which for the next ten years carried on the master's traditions.

One of his most daring exploits was the robbery of the Eugowra Gold Escort. The road to this day is rough and winds through dark cypress scrub. Just where the hold-up occurred a rampart of tall, grey rock splinters stands on a rise above a bend of the road. In June 1862 the coach started from Forbes carrying two iron chests containing fourteen thousand pounds' worth of gold. The driver sat on the box with the sergeant beside him and three policemen inside with the gold, a particularly stupid arrangement because the police offered an easy target and were hampered in returning the fire of the bushrangers. As the unsuspecting gold escort came round the bend, it found its way blocked by two bullock teams drawn across the track. The coach had to swerve in under the very sheer of the rocks, and as it did so six men with blackened faces and red shirts sprang out and poured in a volley at the word, 'Fire!' Then they jumped back and six more took their places. It was a miracle of bad shooting that no one was killed, and only two of the police wounded. The frightened horses dashed off at a gallop, the coach capsized and the bushrangers scrambled down the rocks, seized the two iron boxes and disappeared into the scrub, where they halted long enough to share out the gold, using a powder flask as a measure. Then they scattered. One abandoned pack-horse loaded with gold was later recovered with the aid of black trackers. The chief of police, riding into town, pounced upon three young men whose horses were too well bred to be anything but racehorses. The men escaped, but a pack-horse was seized which was found to be loaded with yet another bag of gold.

Frank Gardiner, having looted some twenty-seven thousand pounds from the road, retired from bushranging, taking with him the wife of a settler, and for two years nothing was heard of him. He was living peaceably in Queensland keeping a store and public house in a little settlement, but a whisper of his whereabouts crept abroad. A detective and two constables

disguised as miners identified him by his bullet-scars—he was a walking collection of scars—and exercising great care, for fear of a rescue, pounced on their prize and bore him off to Sydney. In Brisbane Gardiner's admirers tried to rescue him, and even in Sydney the jury returned a verdict of not guilty after a three days' trial. Two more trials followed, but Gardiner had an excellent lawyer and he was convicted only on charges that would not bring him to the gallows. He was never brought to trial for the Eugowra robbery and he went to gaol with the distinction of being the only bushranger who ever managed to keep his ill-gotten gains. Gardiner had a strange power of fascination. While acting the part of store-keeper in Queensland he had been entrusted with the duty of escorting the local gold to the coast. Gardiner faithfully carried all the gold to its destination.

Ben Hall was the man nearest to Gardiner in the qualities of leadership. He had been a good-natured, hard-working settler until soured by the elopement of his wife, police persecution, and a run of bad luck which culminated in a charge of robbery under arms. Hall was locked up for six weeks without a trial, and when he was discharged he returned to his farm to find all his stock had been stolen. He took to the roads in earnest, and in seven months his gang committed at least fifty robberies, with arson and murder thrown in for good measure; two policemen being killed and four wounded.

'Messrs. Hall, Gilbert and Dunn seem to have obtained a lease of the Main South Road,' a newspaper commented angrily. 'They have robbed the up and down mail from Gundagai for two successive weeks.'

Hall's gang were a sociable band of young robbers and revelled in such jests as asking an ex-policeman and his wife to rise from their bed, dress and escort the bushrangers to a ball. On one occasion they held up the town of Canowindra for several days, holding races in the main street, treating citizens to drinks, though they would only drink bottled ale themselves,

and left in a spirit of good fellowship to burn down a suspected informer's house.

When robbing the Burrowa mail, they reverently laid aside a black-edged letter with the remark: 'We must respect death.' They complained that no one was sending money by mail, only cheques. So angry did they become that they almost decided to burn the cheques, but their sense of fair play restrained them. They raided homesteads, on one occasion holding a settler to ransom for five hundred pounds, the victim sitting all night playing cards with his captors while his wife galloped through the darkness to obtain the money. A reward of four thousand pounds was offered for the arrest of the gang, and Parliament passed a special Act of Outlawry, but neither action had much effect.

The order that all coaches were to be accompanied by police guards, and the murder by the bushrangers of several constables, converted the struggle into one in which neither police nor bushrangers gave quarter. When Hall himself was shot by the troopers, his clothes and body were virtually ragged with bullet-holes. His corpse was stuffed into a chaff bag, carried into town over the back of a horse to be exhibited, then buried in the unconsecrated portion of the Forbes cemetery. He was twenty-eight years of age. Hall had a famous horse, Troubadour, a race-horse originally belonging to a wealthy station-owner. On three occasions Hall had lost Troubadour, but he always managed to steal him back. When the horse died, many years after his master, seven bullets were found in his body.

Captain Thunderbolt was another matchless horseman who for seven years, as a farmer might cultivate his land, 'worked' the Main Northern Road which runs through the narrow Hunter Valley and up through the New England ranges. Thunderbolt knew every creek, every hill or patch of scrub. He avoided the mistake of ever forming a gang, but sometimes took a boy apprentice whom he would train with care, never

failing to correct breaches of etiquette or to stress the need for courtesy to ladies. He had a half-caste wife, a well-educated woman, who was absolutely loyal to him and pathetically tried to keep a home for him in the wild gulfs of the ranges. She distributed their children among sympathisers, always keeping the youngest with her. Thunderbolt returned her affection, and when she fell ill, nursed her with rough tenderness. Late at night he made his appearance at a settler's house and told the settler's wife that his 'mate' was dying. Might she be brought in under the woman's roof? No one would be harmed; the police were following him closely and he could not stay. Mike Howe had shot his wife when she could not keep up with him. Thunderbolt risked his life to find his dying 'mate' shelter. She was lying under a rough canopy of boughs, but carried to the house she died as she was brought in.

Thunderbolt had a longer career than any other bushranger. For seven years he defied the police with whom he was always ready to shoot it out. He could outride, outrun, and outfight them. He had a sense of humour, and on one occasion after robbing a peripatetic German band, he made them play for him while he beat time with a loaded revolver. When the Germans pleaded for their money back, Thunderbolt said he would if he won at the Tamworth Races then in progress. He won, and promptly posted them twenty pounds. His end came in grim duel with a solitary trooper across a mountain stream, a bullet passing through his lung.

The bushranger Power was a man of fastidious habits, and his escape from gaol by allowing his mates to tip the garbage truck over him and cover him in rubbish must have been a great sacrifice to his personal vanity. He met with another adventure which disturbed him greatly, according to his account. He bailed up a carrier but the man stubbornly refused to hand over his money. Power remonstrated with him. If he let the carrier go, other men might follow his evil example.

Where would bushranging be? Anyone might refuse to hand over his money. 'I'll give you five minutes to think it over,' Power told the carrier. 'Then I'll have to shoot you,' Going behind a tree, Power said, he then prayed to God to soften the man's heart. He again demanded the money, and this time the man gave it without a murmur. It was a great relief, Power told the police; he hadn't liked the idea of shooting the carrier.

Power would come out of his lair, hold up a coach, and compel the passengers to come out one by one and empty their pockets on the ground. When he had about a dozen glum-looking victims sitting side by side on a log, Power would gather up his loot of money and watches and vanish into the scrub. The reward of five hundred pounds tempted one of his gang to turn traitor. The police were led to a cleft in the range, past the house of a rough character called Quinn (later associated with the Kelly gang) where a pack of fierce dogs and a peacock gave instant warning of anyone approaching, the peacock being the best watchdog of the lot. In a blinding storm at night, when even the peacock had sought shelter, the police crept past guided by a black tracker. The tracker snuffed about like a pointer dog and found a hollow tree, 'Power's Lookout'. Nearby was a little shelter from which projected the legs of the sleeping bushranger. Power received a fifteen years' sentence, after which he became a gamekeeper and ended his life by drowning in the Murray River while fishing.

One of Power's apprentices was Ned Kelly, the leader of the last of the bushranging gangs. There are several reasons why the Kelly gang made the most permanent impression upon the public memory. For one thing the invention of the electric telegraph and cable gave them more than a local fame. The Kelly gang also appeared in Victoria, which had always proudly boasted that the New South Wales bushrangers would not last a week if they crossed the border; yet the gang cost

the Victorian Government one hundred and fifteen thousand pounds and severely damaged the reputation of the police force before Ned Kelly was finally hanged. The use of shot-proof armour in their last fight with the police also seized public imagination, although it was a stupid and clumsy ruse which failed hopelessly. Today men who know nothing of their country's history will express admiration in the term: 'As game as Ned Kelly.' Businessmen's methods are compared to his disparagingly. A football supporter will declare, 'If Mrs. Kelly saw her sons playing with that team, she would call her boys inside.' The Kellys have become the Australian symbol for toughness and cool audacity.

The Kelly heredity was significant, the father, 'Red Kelly', having been transported to Tasmania for attempting to shoot his landlord. Settling thirty miles out of Melbourne, near a family called Quinn, he married the daughter. The Quinns and Kellys then moved north across the border, where they settled in wild country, forming a nest of cattle-duffers. Ned Kelly admitted that he alone stole two hundred and eighty horses, and he was only one of a large clan all engaged in horse and cattle stealing.

The father died before Ned and Dan Kelly were fully grown. He left three sons and four daughters, the girls just as wild and daring riders as the boys. The two Kelly boys served sentences before they were out of their 'teens. Of the other members of their gang, Steve Hart was just a bush larrikin, Joe Byrne was a good-looking, intelligent young man. He wrote accounts of the gang's exploits in prose and verse and tried to get them published. When holding up the town of Jerilderie, the Kellys were infuriated at finding the editor of the local newspaper missing from his bed; Joe Byrne had a manuscript which they had hoped to force the editor to publish.

In March 1878 a warrant was issued against Dan Kelly for cattle-stealing. A constable was sent out to arrest him, and

Ned Kelly shot him through the wrist. The sentimental version declares it was because the constable insulted one of the Kelly girls. Ned Kelly himself denied this. 'I would have shot him dead if he had,' he said. Warrants were issued for the whole family, but only the mother and sister were arrested. For five months nothing was heard of Dan and Ned Kelly. They were fortifying their hideout in the ranges and enlisting Hart and Byrne. A party of four police was sent out after them, and the Kellys wiped out three of the four, a confused account of the fray being brought back by the sole survivor. Ned Kelly compelled Byrne and Hart to fire into the wounded body of Sergeant Kennedy so that the whole gang should be concerned in the murder.

The Kellys were proclaimed outlaws, but the crime remained unavenged. Greta was full of Kelly relations and sympathisers, and beyond Greta stretched a hundred miles of mountains into which the gang could retreat. Beyond Wangaratta, where Steve Hart's people lived, were the Warby Ranges; and at the back of Woolshed, where Byrne's family had a holding, more trackless hills. The gang had three vast retreats of over eleven thousand square miles of mountains and dense scrub.

The gang's next exploit was the capture of a station a few miles out of Euroa, where they rounded up everyone who visited the station, including a hawker whose van proved most useful. While Byrne guarded thirty prisoners, the other cut the telegraph lines from the town, drove in the hawker's cart to the bank, removed at leisure the contents of the strong-room—two thousand pounds in cash and thirty ounces of gold—and drove the bank manager and his family out to the station. The manager, his wife, his mother-in-law, seven children, two servants, two bank clerks—the Kellys added them all to their bag, and drove through the town in the hawker's cart, with two extra carts to carry the prisoners, without raising an alarm. Leaving their fifty prisoners at the station

the robbers rode quietly off with their booty into the ranges and disappeared.

The police bribed one of the 'bush telegraphs' of the gang, Aaron Sheritt, and he brought news that the Kellys were planning to cross the border and rob the town of Jerilderie in New South Wales. All the crossings were watched but the Kellys quietly slipped through. Jerilderie is in the middle of a plain with no concealing gorges or mountains. The four bushrangers rode up to the police station, timing themselves to arrive after dark, and Ned Kelly shouted that a murder had been committed at one of the hotels. Out hurried the two constables, half-dressed, to be instantly captured. They were locked up, and the wife of one of them was warned that if she tried to escape her husband would be shot. Steve Hart kept watch while the others went comfortably to sleep in the police officers' beds. Next morning—it was Sunday—Ned Kelly and Joe Byrne dressed themselves in the constables' uniforms. The constable's wife was escorted to the court-house, where she always prepared a room for the Roman Catholic Church service. In the afternoon, still dressed as constables, Hart and Byrne strolled down the town with the two captured policemen, telling them that if anyone asked who the strangers were they were to say that the new policemen had come to protect the town from the Kellys.

On Monday morning the Kellys began business, riding down to the hotel, where they explained they wanted the public room for a few hours as they were going to rob the bank. After looting the bank Ned Kelly and Byrne rode leisurely from the town, leaving Dan Kelly and Hart to race up and down the main street yelling and firing their revolvers until they tired of the sport.

Two states were now offering huge rewards for the Kellys. The importation of black trackers from Queensland scared them into the depths of an old mine, which they fitted out with many months' supply of provisions. Their third big

exploit was their last. It was planned that Byrne and Dan Kelly should ride to Sherritt's house one Saturday night and shoot him. The news of the murder would be sent to Melbourne, and if, as the authorities threatened, a special train of police and black trackers were despatched, it was to be derailed near Glenrowan and all who escaped the smash shot down.

Byrne and Dan Kelly duly rode off and murdered Sherritt. They missed a group of four policemen who, panic-stricken, lay trembling inside the hut. After trying to set the place on fire the bushrangers gave up because the wood was wet. On Sunday morning the special train, as anticipated, set out loaded with police, black trackers, newspaper reporters, and those with enough influence to beg a passage.

Hart and Ned Kelly herded into the hotel at Glenrowan sixty-two people including the station-master, who refused, despite all threats, to give the signal they required. They rounded up two line-repairers and forced them to take up the track. The bar of the hotel was kept open and the place did a good trade. There was even dancing. Many of the prisoners were Kelly sympathisers and others enjoyed the excitement. One man, Curnow, the local schoolmaster, resolved to prevent the wholesale murder of police in the approaching train. He worked desperately to win Ned Kelly's sympathy, even informing him of a hidden revolver among the captives and assuring him of his sympathy. Then he begged permission to take his wife and sister home. With a candle and his sister's red scarf he stopped the approaching train and warned the passengers.

Ned Kelly was addressing his 'guests' on the subject of his own virtues when the train whistle interrupted him. He told his hearers they had better go home before the firing began, but the landlady urged him to finish his speech. With the unfortunate vanity of most public speakers he was still talking when the police train drew in to the station. The Kelly

gang climbed into its armour of hammered ploughshares, and the unfortunate hostages flung themselves on the hotel floor to escape the bullets from the police. An old man and the landlady's son were killed. The first shot smashed the wrist of the police leader and he was carried out of the fight, leaving his force to carry on as best it could. Byrne was killed by a chance bullet. Throughout the night the police fought in a muddled, bewildered manner while Dan Kelly and Hart, also leaderless, sniped at the encircling troopers. Ned Kelly had slipped out when the firing began, to follow out a scheme of his own. Finding the police had the place too closely hemmed in to permit a diversion, he tried to fight his way back to his friends, and with the bullets harmlessly rebounding from his weird iron plating, might have run the gauntlet had not a police sergeant shot at his legs and brought him down.

The police shouted at the people to come out from the hotel, and thirty-five persons actually threw themselves on the ground at the superintendent's feet. One of the police crawled forward and lit a bundle of straw against the wall. When the building had burnt to the ground, the charred remains of Hart and Dan Kelly were found encased in their armour, but without their strange pot-shaped helmets. A bullet had struck each in the head. Ned Kelly was hanged.

The notoriety of the Kelly gang gave rise in England to the idea that Australia was peopled mainly by blacks, bushrangers and kangaroos. This conviction was later displaced by the certainty that Australia's chief export was confidence men. The bushranger has become a disproportionate figure partly because of the unauthentic accounts of his doings. Almost every second farmer in parts of Victoria has a great-uncle whose ploughs were those used by the Kellys to make their armour. Half the country population of New South Wales is related to someone who, when 'bailed-up', acted with an agility and courage so remarkable that it is a wonder bush-ranging ever flourished as it did. Those who regard the Kellys

and their ilk as heroes are naturally aroused by any account which suggests that they were adolescent morons with an unfortunate heredity. The bushranger remains a semi-mythical figure blending into the deceptive moonshine of the ranges, fading into the forest of tradition, where the modern Australian is quite willing to leave him.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE GIANTS

THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY, and for some years the only Australian industry, was whaling. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, whalers, most of them Americans, swarmed out to the Tasman Sea, and they so often helped convicts to escape or else deliberately stole them to cke out a crew, that orders were given that any ship sailing without a clearance should be fired upon. When the whaling skippers had no use for convicts, they simply marooned them, just as they marooned the South Sea Islanders whom they shanghaied to make up crews.

Simeon Lord, the great emancipist merchant of Macquarie's time, who drew his three hundred per cent out of whaling, had great hopes of importing New Zealand flax; but the whalers were better content to give the Maoris seed potatoes and buy the crop back the next year. They fought the Maoris or made friends with them as policy dictated. As the sperm whales were exterminated off the New Zealand coast, the hunters turned to the sleepy Right whales which, heavy with young, came spouting up the bays on the Tasmanian coast, making such a noise at night that His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor complained that he could not sleep for them. These mother whales were easily slaughtered in the shallows, one row-boat killing four in a day. Soon there were over a hundred bays along the Australian coast from which whales were regularly hunted.

Picking on a likely bay the whalers would set up a cooperage, a cook-house, a store-house and a 'try-house' for boiling down the blubber. Some sort of ramp for hauling up the

whales would be constructed, and perhaps a look-out tower. To keep the men in debt for the season, goods would be sold to them at exorbitant rates; the chief of the local tribe would come up to haggle over the price of wives, or individual husbands appear to barter their brides for tobacco and rum. All these little preliminaries settled, the whalers would begin work; and an awful smell of dead whale proclaimed their success. The boats were cedar, clinker built, with five, seven or eight oarsmen, and the job of securing a whale was no easy one. Competition was keen, and as many as four whalers might have their harpoons in the one whale. Fights which broke out over the disputed whales were supposed to be settled by a special Act of Parliament, but the disputes were more often settled in favour of the crew with the biggest fists. Between 1830 and 1860, as the industry grew less profitable with the wholesale slaughter of the whales, the crews of the whaling ships grew worse. They were the scourge of the Tasmanian ports when they came roistering ashore to fight over the convict women and defy the authorities to keep them in order.

Whaling along the coast of the mainland will always be associated with the name of Ben Boyd. At Twofold Bay, near the southerly hip of the continent, there stand the ruins of Boyd Town: the stone church, the old Seahorse Inn and the lighthouse that was never finished because Boyd insisted that it should light only to show his ships home. Boyd's ambitions did not stop at whaling, though he had nine whalers operating from Twofold Bay, and in one year the value of his catch exceeded forty-two thousand pounds. He planned to make Boyd Town the centre of a separate principality embracing the greater part of the eastern tablelands. An English company had sent him out to buy up half a million pounds' worth of property, and he soon had roads built over the mountains, while his fleets of merchant ships carried wool, hides, tallow and oil to Sydney for trans-shipment to London.

When the transportation of convicts ceased, finding labour

for the large estates became a problem, Boyd tried to solve it by bringing in Kanakas—South Sea Islanders—but they proved hopeless as a labour force. ‘Too much work, too little eat,’ was their verdict. Soon they were escaping to Sydney, begging their passage home, or working about the wharves. Boyd’s great schemes crashed as the result of a complicated series of troubles and he sailed off in his yacht *Wanderer* for the Californian gold-fields, where he met with no better luck. On his way back he was exploring with the idea of setting up another kingdom in the Pacific Islands based upon native labour. Going ashore at Guadalcanal to survey his future kingdom he was speared by some of his predestined subjects and his body was never recovered.

Most of the squatters of the golden age of flocks and herds were well-born sons of the English ruling class or of local officials, adventurous Scotsmen forming a majority. Small capitalists caught in a financial crisis, army men turned adrift at the end of the Napoleonic Wars with liberal pensions, Scots, more Scots, and then more Scots, all sailed to Australia to become wool kings. They were often cultured men, fond of books, music, art, good conversation and a certain Latinity.

Jimmy Tyson, who built up the cattle kingdom that Ben Boyd aimed at, was a simple, hard-working bushman belonging to a later generation, the generation of native-born pioneers. No one ever ‘bullocked’ harder than Tyson did. Starting as a station overseer he took up land, selling one run for a little rum and another for twelve pounds, which he never managed to collect. Going to Burraborang for a draft of cattle, he had only a shilling, and he swam the Murrumbidgee to save it. Coming home after a gruelling trip he met his brother hastening to him with the news that they no longer had a run because the water on it had given out. Tyson went back to droving, overlanding cattle to the Western Australian gold-fields, a feat other bushmen had deemed impossible,

killing and auctioning the stock himself. On one occasion he had to camp in three feet of water and build his little fire on floating logs. On another trip he built seven different bridges over the streams of the Murrumbidgee. By tenacity and hard work he possessed himself of station after station until his name meant money in three states. His IOU for twenty thousand pounds scribbled on a piece of tobacco-wrapping was honoured without question in the city's largest bank. It surprised no one when, in a time of gloom and depression, Tyson offered the Government an interest-free loan of half a million pounds. The same man slunk out of a city bank to ask help of a friend because, he said, the cashier looked at him and made him nervous.

With the building of the great sheep and cattle runs, there was need for an export trade to dispose of the meat surplus. The overseas market could take the wool, tallow and hides, but for the meat there was only a local market. The solution to the problem was found by Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, who started life in Sydney as the twenty-four-year-old clerk of a leading business. He had risen to partnership when the financial crash of the 'forties sent the business down in the ruin, and Mort started again as an auctioneer, working a sixteen-hour day and finding time to do a little gardening by candle-light. He had the brilliant idea of starting wool-sales in Sydney, persuading wool-men that he could get them a better price. Very often in London Australian wool had been sold for a song because the owner was not present to step in and stop the sale. The English merchants were enraged by Mort's revolutionary move, but soon buyers from all over the world were making their way to the sales in Sydney and Melbourne. Today British, French, Russian, American, Italian and Belgian buyers jostle their way into the Wool Exchange for nine months of the year to buy, at the rate of ten million pounds a week, the million-odd bales sold each season. Few of these buyers ever pause to glance at the statue

opposite of the man who started the wool sales with a boy ringing a bell and a wool-bale for an auctioneer's desk.

Mort did not confine his interests to wool. As a result of the 'Free Selection Act', little dairy farms sprang up everywhere, but the price of their produce was so low and their management so muddled that they did not pay their way. In 1877, with the invention of the cream separator and its improvement, butter-making moved out of the class of domestic industries; but the difficulty of preserving perishable goods, such as milk, butter and eggs, was the despair of the producers. Mort bought fourteen thousand acres on the south coast, where he conducted experiments to determine the best stock for dairying, the best pastures. He imported blood stock to improve the herds, brought new grasses from England, erected model factories for butter, cheese and bacon curing. His Fresh Food and Ice Company handled the dairy produce and marketed it to the consumer.

Transport problems greatly interested Mort, from ferry traffic on the harbour to overseas shipping. His ferry companies ended the days when a workman at the whaling depot at Mosman Bay had to pay a pound to be rowed across the harbour to his home. His Mort's Dock and Engineering Works laid the foundations for the building of an Australian merchant fleet and permitted the repair of overseas vessels. He tried to make the engineering firm a co-operative concern, and it was not his fault that the great works are not a co-operative business today.

One morning at breakfast Mort smote his fist on the newspaper and electrified his family by shouts that he had 'got it'. The paper described how the body of a prehistoric monster had been found in an immense mass of ice, perfectly preserved through countless centuries, as fresh as it was on the day it died in the avalanche. If Nature could preserve a carcase in ice, so could science. Mort set out with his engineer, Nicolle, to perfect a process of freezing meat for export. Nicolle

worked out a device of using the same ammonia over and over again in the pipes of the refrigerator. Mort confidently built slaughter-yards eighty miles out of Sydney and railway trucks with hollow roofs to hold ice, so that the carcasses might be shipped to the big new works in Sydney and loaded on his refrigerator ships.

'There is no work on the world's carpet greater than this in which I have been engaged,' Mort declared. 'Its object and aim may be summed up in these words: "There shall be no waste!" That is the sentiment that has kept me nerved to the great battle I have been fighting, which has induced me single-handed to risk so large a portion of my children's heritage. The time has arrived, or, at all events, is not far distant, when the various portions of the earth will give forth their products for the use of each and all; then the overabundancy of one country shall make up for the deficiency of another . . . "The Earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof", and it is certainly within the compass of man to ensure that all His people shall be partakers of that fulness.'

The *Northern* set out to carry the first consignment of frozen meat to England, but in mid-ocean the chemicals ate through the pipes, the meat went bad, and the whole cargo had to be thrown overboard. Only a few tiny changes were needed to turn failure into success, but Mort never lived to see that success. He died the following year, crushed by the blow. The failure of his costly experiment made such an impression upon financiers that it was ten years before another cargo of frozen meat was shipped to England. It arrived in perfect condition. Further improvements permitted the sending of chilled meat to England, and Australian beef soon competed with Argentine beef.

Dairying and meat industries were not the only ones in which great advances resulted from individual initiative and imagination. The first wheat had been grown by James Ruse, who boldly struck himself off the public stores in 1791

when he declared he could grow his own food. This was in the 'starving times' when the settlement was eking out life on salt pork and biscuits. The same spirit, a hundred years later, animated William Farrer who, while farmers clamoured that they were ruined by rust in the wheat, went quietly to work to produce a rust-resistant wheat by cross-fertilisation.

Farrer would gather the healthy ears in a blighted field and cross them with wheats from Canada, the United States, Russia and India. At a convention called in 1891 to consider the ruin of the harvest by rust, Farrer laid his findings before the astonished assembly. He had labelled and studied and sown hundreds of crosses yearly. By many he was regarded as a fantastical dreamer, but the desperate position of the industry determined his appointment as Government Wheat Experimentalist.

Within four years Farrer's wheats had not only conquered rust but a parasite known as bunt. Australian wheats, when he started his experiments, had been soft and deficient in gluten. Farrer produced a hard grain, rich in gluten, and giving a clean white flour. Nor did he stop there. Before he began his work no wheat was expected to grow beyond the twenty-inch rainfall. Farrer produced a drought-resistant wheat which would grow with a rainfall of twelve inches, providing the rainfall came at the right time. When he died, in 1906, he left the Australian grain equal to any in the world. He had come to the country an invalid whom incipient lung-trouble had robbed of his hopes of becoming a doctor. For years he was out in the fields every day before half-past six, and there he would stay until after dark, when he would begin his work of recording his experiments and the results of his crosses. The papers he read before scientific bodies would fill volumes. His wheats, 'Federation', 'Comeback', and 'Bobs', have been the foundation of all succeeding wheats grown in Australia. As a Canadian scientist said of Farrer: 'He made the world's bread better.'

Farrer's drought-resistant wheat made possible the 'dry-farming' of South Australia. This courageous advance into country that had been branded as desert was helped also by the 'Mallee' roller, which crushed down the scrub, and the 'stumpjump' plough. But the greatest blessing, not only to the Australian farmer but to farmers all over the world, was the stripper-harvester invented by a shrewd farm-boy, Hugh Victor McKay. The Ridley stripper, which replaced the old reaping-hook and stripped the grain, had been considered a marvellous invention, but McKay wanted a machine which would strip, thresh and clean the grain in the field. He set up a forge and a bark-roof shed for a workshop on his father's farm, and hammered out the ironwork of his machine, while his brother did the woodwork. Travelling about on a push-bike he urged sceptical farmers to try his patent harvester. Little by little it won ground, and when McKay gained the prize offered by the Victorian Government for the best harvester made in Australia, he set up his own works for producing harvesters, works that grew until he was employing two thousand people, and around the 'Sunshine' factory lay a garden city for its employees. Harvesters were shipped to South Africa, the Argentine and elsewhere. They were adapted for wheat, barley, oats and rye. The later improved machines driven by a tractor would cut a swathe ten feet wide, strip, clean and bag the crop. On the irrigation areas the harvesters handled rice, Australia being the first country to harvest rice by machine.

The Mallee country of Victoria grew a stunted eucalypt with a beautiful twisted root beloved by the wood carver and hated by the farmer. In 1880 the Mallee was a vast wilderness, 'a desert', where over a hundred acres was allowed to one sheep. When a rabbit plague swept the state, the Government realised that the Mallee must be settled or it would become a vast rabbit warren. A squatter, Edward Lascelles, had cut up his run into small holdings and was demonstrating that by

irrigation and light railways farmers could make a good living on 'worthless country' growing Farrer's drought-resistant wheats. The Mallee roller levelled the scrub, the stumpjump plough ignored the twisted roots. Settlers, encouraged by the Government to reclaim the desert land, found it marvellously fertile. South Australians, particularly the hard-working Germans, poured over the border to take up land.

It was the success of desert reclamation in the dry west of America which gave the impetus to the irrigation schemes of Australia and opened a new era of land settlement. As far back as 1843 a Major Cotton, in Tasmania, had planned and sweated to irrigate the land, and had actually reached the stage of setting convicts to build dams when, after two years' toil, the Government arbitrarily ordered him to cease the work. He went to India and became one of the famous irrigators of the North-West Provinces. Eighty years later Tasmania began irrigation works, using the same dam sites and the same rivers over which Cotton had fought with the wooden-headed Government of his day. Not until Alfred Deakin, the 'unpractical idealist' of Victorian politics, made his survey of American irrigation systems were the Governments aroused to the need for locking the rivers and sanctioning private irrigation experiments. Deakin's report was reprinted by the United States Government as a text-book for students and agriculturists, and his Irrigation Bill of 1886 marks the beginning of the irrigation era in Australia.

The Chaffey brothers, who had founded a successful desert colony at Ontario, California, were given, by special Act of Parliament, a chance to do for the 'desert' areas of Mildura in Victoria, and Renmark in South Australia, what they had done in America. They had the right to occupy fifty thousand acres at Mildura and thirty thousand at Renmark. In return for water rights they were to spend ten thousand pounds in twelve months, thirty-five thousand pounds in five years and three hundred thousand pounds within twenty years in each

colony. Beginning at Mildura they spent ten times the amount and within two years had placed one thousand five hundred people on one of the most prosperous fruit-growing areas in Australia. The land was subdivided into ten-acre blocks and sold at a reasonable price, and the whole experiment, despite the founders' entanglement in a bank failure, has proved a permanent success. Land that once maintained a few sheep now annually produces millions of pounds' worth of dried fruits, pears, apricots, peaches and plums. Further up the Murray, the canneries of the Goulburn Valley each season turn out twenty million tins of fruit, most of it for export.

Western Australia, drowsing dejectedly for lack of manpower, woke suddenly in 1893 to find itself the object of a great gold-rush. Thousands of men were coming to the fields, but in the hot weather lack of water drove them out again. Typhoid raged from the dust blown into the tanks. Official warnings were issued, but the miners still crowded to the diggings, and by their very sufferings forced action. Luckily 'Big John Forrest', the explorer, had risen to a high position in the Government. He had been insisting for years upon the need for a 'yeoman' population, and here were his yeomen coming in. He had once been glad to drink the blood of a hawk shot in the desert, and he was not the man to see the diggers perishing for want of water. The labours of Forrest and the Government engineer, O'Connor, were astonishing. In the face of the usual public opposition Forrest raised overseas loans for his public works. O'Connor toiled to make a proper port on the Swan River instead of the old open roadstead at Fremantle. Railways were pushed out, and most important of all, a pipe-line thirty inches in diameter was run across three hundred and thirty miles of dry country to Kalgoorlie, and through it were pumped five million gallons of water a day. The water takes four weeks to make the journey from the Darling Range to Kalgoorlie, but it gets there. 'Never,' said Sir George Reid, in his speech at the opening of the pipe-

line, 'have I seen so much enthusiasm for water—and so little of it drunk.' The miners had come to avoid water in its raw state. On the eve of the triumphal opening O'Connor committed suicide, worn out with work and worry. The pipeline was not his only achievement. His lieutenants had worked frantically to conserve the water supply in the dry north as well as for the gold-fields. Low retaining walls led the rain from the great granite bosses to covered dams which would shield the water from the enormous evaporation. Unsuspected artesian supplies helped. Much of the land supposed to be desert was reclaimed for farmers, and with the help of Forrest's Agricultural Bank farms and wheat towns were soon stretched along three-quarters of the pipe-line, drawing their water from it.

The brave rule of Forrest woke Western Australia from its long daze and helped it to overtake the other states. Forrest, later Lord Forrest of Bunbury, is remembered as a great man whom no title could raise higher than his own work. He was the first Australian to receive an hereditary title, but the strain of his public life was enormous; he died worn out and the hereditary title perished with him.

Just as settlement had changed, the wool industry changed, and the old squatter had to adapt himself to business methods and new developments. The 'nice fine wool' of the merino sheep, on which Macarthur and Marsden had built the early wool industry, was replaced by a stouter staple. A new demand arose for cross-breds, supplying a heavier carcase for the frozen-meat trade, and a useful all-purpose wool. Rabbits and scab and pleuro, changing land laws, dams and artesian bores, high interest rates and uncertain markets, all had to be studied. Pastoralists found it worth while to finance university laboratories where sheep diseases, wool shrinkage and other industrial nuisances might be overcome.

In the late 'seventies a shearing machine was patented by Frederick Wolsley which allowed the shearer to take off the

fleece closer and cleaner than the old hand blades had done. Shearers opposed the shearing machine at first, and there were some strikes over it, but its adoption soon became universal. The shearing record, however, was made with blade shears, by Jack Howe, who at Alice Downs Station in Queensland 'barbered' three hundred and twenty sheep in a little under eight hours. Bigger tallies have been claimed, but Howe's record still stands, although fast shearers with the aid of machinery frequently reach the three hundred mark.

Greater efficiency in shearing and handling sheep and wool kept pace with the reorganisation of the cattle industry. Sidney Kidman, beginning with five shillings and a hatred of waste, came to control twenty-five million acres of cattle country, more of the British Empire than any other man had ever owned. Kidman hated the sight of a leaky bucket and would never throw away even an old hat. Buying a mob of cattle, he would take them across the continent, often 'following the thunderstorms' for two or three hundred miles to fatten his mob on the green which sprang up miraculously as soon as the rain passed over the thirsty face of the country. He knew the inland from the gulf to the great cities, and he culled information from tribes of blacks, Afghan camel-drivers and wandering drovers. He was always an easy mark for tribal rain-makers, and on one occasion contracted with a rain-maker to bring rain within three weeks. The rain-maker delivered the goods, and Kidman, true to his promise, handed over the best buggy on the station.

No man was ever more scornful of the 'desert' myth, for he had driven huge herds all over the centre of Australia and fed them on the 'desert'. When the gold-rush to Western Australia began, parties of diggers crossed the continent from Queensland and Adelaide, pushing their tools in wheelbarrows. Kidman went with them to the diggings. He ran mail coaches in Western Australia for Cobb and Co. His drovers, travelling hundreds of miles as part of their routine,

supplied meat to White Cliffs, the most famous of the opal fields, Lightning Ridge, where the great black opals lie, Coolgardie, where the early prospectors broke off gold in bucketfuls, or to any of the distant fields, with the same ease that they supplied the great cities. From the Gulf of Carpentaria, where, on the vast treeless plateau, stations of six, seven and eight hundred square miles used horseshoes by the ton, Kidman's men brought the herds to whatever city he pleased. He broke all the world records for stock movements. He could bring herds through Queensland and New South Wales and be on his own property all the time, or on property in which he held large interests.

Kidman's horse sales at Kapunda were world-famous, and buyers from India and the East came there year after year. Kidman could identify, on a pitch-black night, a horse he had not seen for twelve months. The movements of the great herds and the payment of huge sums he worked out in his head like chess moves. His huge organisation, the capital of London financiers invested in meat companies and meat works in the north, all depended on one man's brain.

Towards the end of Kidman's life the desert in which he never believed became an actuality. Too great an enthusiasm among cattlemen for travelling large mobs over scantily grassed country resulted in the 'eating out' of wide areas. The shallow red soil, no longer held in place by permanent shrubs, began to move in great dunes, killing all before it, leaving a bare clay waste behind. The manmade desert replaced a land in which for thousands of years the vegetation had been slowly gaining ground. Stations had to be 'spelled' or abandoned. Pressure in the artesian bores sank under the demands of many thousands of thirsty cattle.

Kidman was one type of cattle king. Of a different type was Sir Samuel McCaughey, who with a mere million acres set his trust in care and cultivation. The Yanco Irrigation Area is the result of his example and hammering at the Government.

On his property he constructed a hundred miles of irrigation canals and always and ever he preached irrigation and practised what he preached.

It is too simple to dismiss the great merchants of the nineteenth century as mere capitalists grasping a profit. More and more, Australians realise that the old problems with which men wrestled are still there, the conservation of water, transportation, the care of assets our ancestors tossed away with prodigal waste. All of Australia's great men set themselves against waste. They set themselves against the great Australian vice—extravagance, waste of land, of water, of resources. 'There is no work greater than this on the world's carpet,' an echo of Thomas Sutcliffe Mort cries faintly. 'There shall be no waste!'

COLOUR PROBLEMS AND THE NORTH

'NORTH AUSTRALIA, forsooth!' fumed that 'old disturber', Dr. John Dunmore Lang, repudiating the proposed name of a colony that never came to anything. 'Why, I have no doubt that in a very few years hence there will be three or four British colonies along the Northern coast, all equally entitled to the same designation.'

Dr. Lang made seven voyages to Britain to worry the English Government into sending emigrants to the tropical north. There white men could and would grow cotton, sugar, tobacco, all kinds of tropical products. He bellowed himself hoarse on the hustings on the subject, very often so much at loggerheads with his egg-throwing audience that the police had to turn out and protect him. Today his statue stands where he once stood, addressing crowds that hooted or worshipped him and paid his libel suits.

As soon as the colony of Queensland became a separate state, it adopted the policy of the man who fought to make it one, the policy that 'the only way to settle a country like Australia is to offer the intending immigrant a bonus in land equivalent in value at least to the whole cost of his passage out'. As a result of the adoption of Lang's policy, Queensland's increase in population and prosperity was rapid. There had been a convict settlement on the Brisbane River where the capital now stands, because it was believed to be far enough from the southern settlements. Not many years passed before the sheep and cattle men came surging up, and the isolation which had formed one of its main charms as a convict gaol departed. Mr. Gladstone, in England, became Colonial

Secretary and whisked a vigorous new broom. He decided that a colony of 'North Australia', or the Gladstone Colony, as it came to be called, should be set up yet farther north near the Tropic of Capricorn. There, ex-convicts from the crime-tainted Tasmania, where unemployment was rife, reformed Pentonvillians, and free settlers should mingle happily together. A certain Colonel Barney was sent to this new colony, but after a great deal of trouble and expense, a new Government came in and vetoed the idea. Governor Barney was ordered back and the Gladstone Colony lapsed into a topic for the vitriolic verse of Robert Lowe, who described how Barney:

*Ate his dinner with tremendous gust
And with champagne relieved his throat adust;
Fished for his brother flatfish from the stern,
And thus victorious, did to Sydney turn!*

The short-lived colony revived for a time when a wild gold-rush brought hordes of diggers from the southern colonies. The diggers fought for passages, leaving Sydney and Brisbane amid shouts and cheers and bands playing 'The Girl I Left Behind Me', to be greeted in Gladstone port by cries of 'A schiser!' from returning shiploads of disappointed gold-seekers. There was gold in payable quantities, but the diggers didn't want just a little gold, they wanted tons of it. Strangely enough they missed what turned out to be one of the greatest gold-mines in the world, although some of them must have actually walked over the top of it. Mount Morgan paid a million pounds of dividends in a year, and assayed forty ounces of gold to the ton. In twenty-five years fourteen million pounds' worth of gold was taken from it.

Dr. Lang had been interested in the growing of cotton in the Brisbane Gardens, and had preached cotton for the north, but it was not until the American Civil War and the blockade of the Confederate States that the high price of cotton tempted

landowners to try it as a crop. There was the usual obstacle in the way—the lack of cheap labour. Towns, a Sydney businessman, decided to import South Sea Islanders to work his northern plantations. Towns was quite well-intentioned, and even invited missionaries to co-operate with him. He advised that he wanted natives who need only come for twelve months and bring their wives and families with them. When their contracts expired, they would be sent back to their homes. The well-meaning capitalist could not go himself to recruit his labour force, and he employed the infamous Ross Lewin, one of the most brutal of the 'blackbirders'. Lewin's schooner had been a fast clipper running opium from India to China, and after supplying the Towns plantation with two hundred and sixty natives he set up himself as an importer of labour, inserting a newspaper advertisement which begged 'to inform his friends that he intends immediately visiting the South Sea Islands and will be happy to receive orders for the importation of South Sea natives'. His customers might rely on 'having the best and most serviceable natives to be had among the Islands'. Terms, seven pounds a man. Lewin certainly never brought back any but the best and most serviceable natives, because he threw the old and sick overboard to the sharks. He was finally killed and eaten when on one of his raids.

The natives were sometimes lured on board the slaver's vessel by the pretence that it belonged to the beloved missionary Patteson; blackbirders even taking the trouble to dress as missionaries and distribute tracts. Patteson was killed by the avengers of men who had been kidnapped by bogus missionaries. Sometimes slavers would entice a canoe alongside, then drop a rock through the bottom of it, picking up the most saleable of the occupants. They would bribe a chief to sell his people into captivity or promote inter-tribal war or kidnapping raids of one tribe on another. Some of them made a profitable side-trade of dried human heads.

The authorities gave their approval to the subjection of the natives to 'the civilising and humanising influence of regular employment in a Christian land, like Queensland'. By the beginning of 1868 there were two thousand and seventeen South Sea Islanders in Queensland, and the half-caste problem began to take on new complexities. The late 'sixties saw the islands almost stripped of young men, for after the three years' service most blackbirders would not be bothered with returning the natives to their homes. They were simply dumped anywhere handy in the islands, very often with unfriendly tribes, where they were killed and eaten. The natives who did reach home often took with them the white man's guns. Any second visit by recruiters was likely to be met with a welcome of bullets.

The protests of the missionaries continued to come in with what must have seemed to the bored Government monotonous regularity. The blackbirders found that the Polynesians simply turned their faces to the wall and died 'under the civilising and humanising influence' of work on the cotton-fields. The fiercer Melanesian headhunters were more energetic. One employer described how his 'boys' on their Sunday holiday would have great sport spearing the local blacks and even brought home a young boy trussed so that they could give the white man's wife a lesson in the proper preparation of meat for the table. They showed some disappointment when she begged the boy off.

The British Navy had a traditional dislike of slavers, and when H.M.S. *Rosario* overhauled a ship crammed with recruits, though her papers gave her no right to do so, the captain of the man-of-war brought the captain of the blackbirder before the Sydney Water Police Court on a charge of feloniously taking certain natives to Fiji to be used as slaves. A well-known lawyer-politician appearing for the defence had no trouble in extracting damages from the man-of-war's captain, and, warned by his unhappy example, other warships

left the slavers severely alone. The trade went on gaily for another twenty years. A half-mad doctor could shoot down the natives in the hold of his ship, to the tune of 'Marching Through Georgia', and throw their bodies overboard with no other consequences than some regret when he sobered up and reflected on his lost profits. Bully Hayes could stroll unmolested down the quays, followed by three fat white poodles, and forget the natives he had had to toss overboard because they were not amenable to his disciplinary methods. He once even threw away a bag of Mexican dollars with which he had been battering his supercargo, because he conceived a distaste for anything that touched the man. It was not until the unions forced the 'White Australia' policy upon the state Governments that the trade in natives came to an end.

Besides cotton, enterprising growers soon found the rich soil of Queensland excellent for bananas. Unfortunately many of them preferred to sublet their land to Chinese, who seldom realised that a banana crop quickly exhausts the soil. A fatal root-worm appeared, and the remedy of constantly opening new land and abandoning the old could not be applied for ever. Not until the twentieth century did scientific research and strict Government control place the industry on a sound basis.

Meanwhile Louis Hope had shown that sugar-cane was more profitable. Within six years of his first crop there were twenty-eight mills, and a rush for sugar land set in, until almost the whole of the east coast was taken up. For thirty years the cotton and sugar industries depended upon black labour imported from the islands or from India. The ever-growing agitation against coloured labour was met by threats from the Queensland landowners to move over the border into the Northern Territory where, they hoped, they might be left to 'develop' their industries in peace.

The control of this enormous rich wilderness had fallen to South Australia largely because McDouall Stuart had

explored the inner portion of it, and, following his tracks, the overland telegraph was run through from Adelaide to Darwin. Cattlemen spread into the Northern Territory from Queensland, but the problem of developing the land was always knitted up with the difficulty of obtaining labour. In the land-hungry 'sixties South Australia offered selections in the north, and, unseen, they were taken up but never surveyed. Years went by, and some of the angry selectors took the Government to court and forced it to return their money. After that some of the land was surveyed, but small selectors did not like being left alone in the jungle, great distances from anywhere. Large holdings and great private companies seemed to offer a way out, but the distance from their markets hampered them. Then the South Australian Government decided that schemes with cheap coloured labour would pay better. Officials were sent to Java and Ceylon to entice sugar specialists. From 1874 onwards agents in South China brought in coolies and Manila men by hundreds.

In 1876 negotiations were opened with Japan to bring in farmers and peasant proprietors, and an ex-missionary was empowered to arrange a large-scale immigration of Japanese, on the promise of a free passage and a bonus to the first sugar-producer to grow five hundred tons. The Japanese Foreign Office was agreeable, and sites for the settlement were being discussed, when a revolt of the feudal nobles flung the Japanese Government into a civil war. It had no time to think of emigration, and the South Australian Government sorrowfully wrote to its representative regretting that his negotiations were not successful.

The Northern Territory was left to the great monopolistic companies, save that every now and then an over-enthusiastic Government would start up with schemes for railways that never appeared, and settlements of sugar and peanut growers along the barren ridges and swamps that were worthless to the cattle companies. Before the Government could do

anything, it would go out of office, and the next Government would leave the Territory to sludge in peace.

The whole problem of the north of Australia has been bound up with the thorny 'White Australia' policy. On the gold-fields the diggers had shown an antipathy to the Chinese that had behind it a genuine fear. The Chinese lived 'on the smell of an oil-rag'; they spent nothing; they kept to themselves. The diggers from California had detested the Chinese there; and now in Australia they found the Chinese swarming in once more. Petitions asking that the Chinese be excluded had no effect, so the diggers determined to drive the Chinese from the gold-fields. Many of the Chinese were humble coolies who had left a brother or sister as a slave with agents who advanced their passage-money. They could not spend anything because they were sending it home to redeem their relatives. They were certainly not bona fide settlers because their one dream was to strike enough gold to go home. In their numbers was the hatred of the whites; also their insanitary habits, in a land with a small water supply, made them feared as a source of disease. In three years forty thousand Chinese came to the Victorian gold-fields. Restrictions and prohibitions were of no use. The Chinese landed elsewhere and came overland.

The first outbreak of violence was on the Buckland gold-field, where the Chinese outnumbered the whites three to one. An orderly meeting resolved to ask the Chinese to go, and give them fair time to remove their effects. The more violent section of the crowd took no notice of the resolution and set out then and there to hunt the Chinese from the diggings. The panic-stricken, unarmed Chinese were hunted, knocked down, and robbed; what baggage they had rescued was snatched and flung in the river. Three of them were murdered, and so great was the mass of their bedding and belongings flung in the water that the river could be crossed dry-shod. 'If such a thing had happened in China,' a Chinese writer declared bitterly, 'if a number of English miners had been

subjected to such cruel and wanton outrage, every newspaper in Great Britain would have been aflame with indignation; your envoy at Peking would have demanded prompt reparation and adequate compensation; and if this had not been acceded to, some man-of-war would have been ordered to the mouth of the Pei-ho.'

Thirteen rioters were arrested and all were acquitted. The same violence in New South Wales aroused public sympathy for the miners and none for the Chinese. Public meetings presented to the inflamed mind of the mob a picture of a Chinaman who slunk into the country to overpower the population by numbers, who lured the flower of Australian girlhood into opium dens. People who were not economically affected by the Chinese virtues of living contentedly in awful conditions and working for a small wage, joined the Anti-Chinese League to protect their nation and the beautiful Australian girls from a fate worse than death. Economy and content were not virtues the Australian workman admired. His heroes were men who fought the bosses for better conditions and wages.

In Queensland, where there had been no thought of restrictive legislation, sugar-growers were quite ready to encourage the Chinese to work their plantations. The greater number, however, made for the gold-fields, and on the Palmer River Field in one year they practically ousted the white diggers with seventeen thousand Chinese to one thousand four hundred whites. Over parts of the state the proportion rose to one Chinese to every ten whites, and even the Government began to be alarmed. The American Commissioners were issuing reports that the influx of Chinese into the U.S.A. was 'ruinous to our labouring classes, promotive of castes, and dangerous to free institutions'; and the Queensland Government decided to take action. An Act was passed compelling the Chinese to pay more gold-mining fees than whites. When the British Government tried to reserve the

Bill on the ground that it affected Imperial relations, Queensland called on the other states to stand by the right of self-government.

A new and stricter Bill excluded aliens from the gold-fields and encouraged the Chinese to return home by refunding their passage-money if they went within three years. Life was not made easy for the Chinese who stayed, and many of them were glad to go. The sugar-growers, their supply of yellow labour snatched away from them, agitated for the importation of Indian coolies; and their demands being refused, they threatened to move their mills into the Northern Territory, only to find that the opposition to coolies was so strong that the South Australian Government dared not grant their terms. The sugar-growers, therefore, in 1892, gracefully agreed to stay in Queensland, provided the importation of Kanakas was renewed. The Queensland Government granted their request.

The spread of smallpox, the discovery of cases of leprosy, and the Chinese practice of exporting criminals to Australia, led to a clean-up of the Chinese quarters of Sydney. The states began to realise that only concerted action could stop the Chinese infiltration. When an Intercolonial Conference was discussing ways and means of dealing with the trouble, it learned that Western Australia was allowing indentured Chinese labourers to be brought in. Protests from all the other states were treated as 'a meddling piece of busy-bodyism'.

The most disputed zone was that of the Northern Territory. Interested financiers claimed that the Territory must be 'developed' and that it could only be developed by coloured labour. However, when the Chinese were brought in to supply the labour, the Government had to provide relief work to keep them from starving. Presently a reported discovery of rubies brought with it a rumour that rich merchants in Canton were ready to send their countrymen to work the

fields. An indignant delegate from the Northern Territory came post-haste to rouse the other colonies, and he succeeded. The South Australian Government felt that if the Chinese did find rubies in the McDonnell Ranges, some kind of expedition would have to be sent out to save them from starving. Port Darwin was closed and the stream of immigrants flowed round to the eastern states.

The storm of public indignation burst with rumblings and repercussions, and 'Please explain' notes from the British Government and protests from the Chinese Government. There had not been so much uproar, so many public meetings, since the threatened revival of transportation. A large mob arrived at Parliament House, Sydney, to interview the Premier. In Brisbane and Sydney, mobs attacked Chinese and smashed their property. Panic legislation was forced through the Parliaments and later proved illegal in the courts. Ships loaded with Chinese were forbidden to land even those passengers who had been born and reared in the country. The shipping companies were so disgusted that they decided not to bring any more Chinese until the whole matter was settled, and soon it was settled by further restrictions in all the states.

In 1901 the Chinese population had dwindled to a little over thirty-two thousand; the 'White Australia' policy was firmly accepted and had been stabilised by the new Federal Parliament. One of the first moves of the Australian Commonwealth Parliament was to introduce a language test which was to be given to any unwelcome stranger. If he could not write out fifty words, at dictation, from any selected language—the language to be judiciously selected from those he did not know—he was refused admittance. The racial bitterness which attended the birth of the 'White Australia' policy has largely died away, but the fundamental object remains unaltered. It is, the average Australian declares stubbornly, not a racial or national discrimination, but an economic necessity. Its aim is 'to maintain the standard of living and the degree of

civilisation existing in Australia. Cheap labour of any kind which will tend to lower this standard is to be excluded.'

In the north, the result of the 'White Australia' policy, particularly after the Federal Government took control of the Territory, was to leave that vast rich land to its loneliness, until the as yet unbuilt railways and communications might bring with them the white population which, in Queensland, had shown itself perfectly capable of working in the tropics. After all, it was argued, there was plenty of land, plenty of time. Why worry? Tomorrow was also a day.

THE STORMY 'NINETIES

TO Sir Henry Parkes, harassed by the maritime and shearers' strikes of 1890, came doddering a picturesque white-whiskered gentleman of the old school.

'I'll tell you how to put an end to these strikes, Sir Henry. It's not the strikers who are to blame. It's the agitators who lead them on. You have them arrested and brought before a magistrate. The magistrate will order each of them three dozen lashes—remember, three dozen, Sir Henry. Then you will have each of them given *two* dozen lashes. Tell them to come back in a month's time for the other dozen. You'll never hear of the agitators again. And without the agitators the men won't go on striking.' It was all so simple.

Over the 'eighties had lain a thick, sticky gloss of prosperity with land companies masquerading as banks, and London boards decorated with ex-governors, ex-premiers and agents-general to reassure the speculators. The old political giants, headed by Sir Henry Parkes, who had dominated New South Wales politics for half a century, were still grimly holding the stage, and the political question over which they fought was protection for the budding industries versus the traditional free trade. Sir Henry, supporting free trade, found himself rather dubiously on the side of the squatters, who believed that protection would increase taxes and raise prices. In Victoria, David Syme, the raw-boned Scottish enthusiast editing *The Age* and dictating the policy for a whole state from his office chair, was haunted by the knowledge that a large body of tariff advocates were in favour of it because, with tariffs as a taxing medium, land and incomes might be left alone.

Before 1887 the squatter had been master of all he surveyed. He was the magistrate administering the law, and there was a stringent law—the Masters and Servants Act of 1846—to keep the employee in his place. A shearer might write and ask for a 'pen' and sign a contract agreeing to the owner's terms. Should the squatter declare the sheep were not shorn to his liking he could reduce the contract price, perhaps pay nothing at all for a whole pen full of sheep because one was badly shorn. Exorbitant prices were charged at the station stores, and the men were prohibited by their contract from buying at any other store. Shearers travelled sometimes hundreds of miles between jobs and kept themselves on their earnings while they did it. The shearers' hut was often a draughty shed without windows, allowing six feet of bunk when shearers ran from five-feet-ten to six-feet-seven. The hut reeked with the smell of burning fat, dirty socks and flannel shirts impregnated with greasy wool yolk. In the uneven mud floor lay pools of water, and typhoid appeared annually on the worst stations.

There had been ever since Chartist times little unions here and there, but they had been weak and disunited. In 1899 W. G. Spence, a cool, shrewd miner, decided to give all his time to organising one big mining union to cover coal, silver, gold and other types of mining. Men were now being employed in dangerous, deep levels, and Spence's union fought for safety conditions against the companies which now controlled mining. When the miners were out of work, they often went shearing, and it was natural that they should turn to Bill Spence to form a Shearers' Union. This became the nucleus of the immensely powerful Australian Workers' Union which ranged together all bush workers whatever their occupation.

The outback unions, with their gospel of 'mateship', did much to improve the jealous little craft unions of the cities. Shearers, sitting up by the light of a slush lamp to read aloud

Bellamy's *Looking Backward* or the Queensland shearers' paper, *Boomerang*, talked of the great co-operative state they would one day found. The editor of *Boomerang*, William Lane, became the ethical leader of thousands of men to whom he preached the brotherhood of all white workers—strangely blending a virulent hatred of all coloured workers into the gospel—and his sincerity and enthusiasm became the mantle of a prophet. No man ever had more loyal followers. When the English dock-workers struck in 1889, Australians at his bidding sent thirty thousand pounds in strike funds, an amount which helped greatly in the winning of the strike.

One interesting element in the rise of the Labour movement was the immigrant Irish. By 1888 the Irish formed between one-fifth and one-fourth of the total population. In New South Wales, where they were an even greater proportion, they formed something of a blister on the body politic aggravated by the wounding of the Duke of Edinburgh by a half-witted Irishman. Sir Henry Parkes declared this incident a Fenian conspiracy, and from that date no true Irishman voted for Parkes. A stream of the most narrow black bitter sectarianism was directed against the Catholics, who met it with equal bitterness. Parkes's great work in the establishment of free secular education and the refusal to grant Government subsidy for church-schools kept the venom active. But into the Australian Labour movement the Irish flung all the ardour and devotion of generous men. Many of them hated England and they gravitated to the republican section of Labour. The Irish vote went to the political Labour Party as soon as that party was formed. It was not surprising that, as many Irishmen owned public houses, what was known as the 'liquor vote', with the financial support it carried, was early bound up with Labour Party politics.

Labour began flexing its muscles for the struggle, and had it had less Utopian and more practical leadership might have avoided a tragic and bitter débâcle. The employers were not

fools. During the boom years a rise in the shearers' cheque could be met by running a few more sheep; but in 1889 came the first skirmish, when the Queensland squatters decided to employ non-union shearers. The unionists talked of guarding the border with mounted men. Wharf labourers promised not to load wool, the trade unions showed a solid, well-prepared front. Sensing defeat the squatters wisely agreed to employ only unionists.

The next year they formed their own protective association. The depression was on them, and they were fighting for self-preservation. Wheat and wool prices were dropping; unemployment was widespread, and the squatters prepared to make life unpleasant for any of their number who might accede to the men's requests. The unions allowed themselves to be hopelessly out-manoeuvred. At a time when the unionists could least afford, a costly strike flared up, beginning with a squabble about the right of the Ships' Officers' Union to affiliate with the Melbourne Trades Hall Council. First the waterside workers and then the seamen came out on strike. Then the strikers' Defence Committee made the ruinous move of calling out the shearers at the height of the season. Sixteen thousand shearers stopped work, and this meant not only forfeited wages for broken contracts, but that the main source of strike funds dried up. The unions were hopelessly beaten and had to go back in every case on the employers' terms. They had discovered the very bitter fact that 'standing by one's mate' can inspire a man, but if he has a hungry wife and children he may recant this masculine gospel in favour of providing his family with food at any cost to his self-respect. They also learned that many of their so-called Liberal representatives in Parliament would stand by and see men imprisoned without a fair trial and not raise a voice in their defence.

In 1891 conferences of pastoralists decided that they would ignore the Shearers' Union during the coming season. Queens-

land was the obvious testing-ground with its avowedly 'socialistic spirit' and fierce support of the 'White Australia' policy, which the squatters regarded as an infringement of their rights. The pastoralists began bringing shearers from the cities of Victoria and New South Wales, many of them men who had never seen a sheep. The unions replied by setting up camps of young men whose method of inducing strike-breakers to stop work was to offer them a union ticket or a black eye.

It was lively in the camps with lectures and marching and bands; sometimes five hundred to a thousand men forming a tent town with the blue republican flag flying from a tree. There was wild talk on both sides of 'blood staining the wattle'. A bridge was destroyed, logs placed across the path of a train bringing strike-breakers. Special constables and a detachment of soldiers were despatched to the storm centres; severe penalties were invoked against 'unlawful assemblies'. Prominent unionists were arrested on charges of conspiracy and often taken long distances in chains. At Barcaldine the members of the strike committee were tried in private, sentenced to gaol for three years, and ordered to find sureties after that term. A police magistrate was removed because he reported the local shearers' camps as law-abiding. The magistrate appointed in his place was instructed by telegram: 'Don't dilly-dally. Exercise vigour even if it causes bloodshed.' There seems ample evidence that on the employers' side there was an attempt to provoke violence, but there was sufficient common sense among the strikers' leaders to prevent action which would have started shooting.

The employers could not afford to give in. Overseas loan money was being withdrawn, town securities were collapsing. Between July 1891 and April 1892 twenty-one banks closed their doors in Melbourne, twenty in Sydney, failing for eighteen million pounds liabilities. Owners lacked the money even to pay wages. Thousands were sold up, cattle, sheep and

land going for token prices. Men who a few years before had refused to recognise the Shearers' Union were shearers themselves, tramping into the nearest township with despair in their hearts and their wives and children in a wagon drawn by a team of bullocks they had 'lifted' from their own properties behind the bailiff's back. Everywhere the most awful misery and anger prevailed.

Labour had walked to the brink of declaring a republic and wisely decided that the forces of police, army, magistrate, Parliament and employer would beat it. It could turn to the Utopian scheme of a Co-operative Commonwealth or it could place its faith in 'gradual socialism', the winning of first one concession, then another within the existing social and economic framework. It could quietly and deliberately build up a political party to fight in Parliament for better wages and conditions, better national policy, and the federation to which men looked so hopefully as a way out of the muddle politicians had made. Part of the Labour movement stood firm for Utopia. That section followed William Lane to Paraguay and slaved itself sick clearing the jungle, living on fruit and pumpkins, while supporters in Australia sent money, often depriving themselves of boots and clothes to keep up their contributions.

The section of Labour which decided on the political way out went ahead after the smashing of the 1891 strike and won thirty-seven seats in the New South Wales Parliament. The analysis of this gain showed that there must have been a solid swing from the middle-class to Labour, and this was very disturbing to the established parties whose hoary chiefs had for so many years formed Governments in a privileged rotation, one man out, the other man in. Shearers made political capital of their strike penalties. Just as earlier Peter Lalor had gone to the Victorian Assembly minus an arm lost in the Eureka riot, so now a future premier of Queensland proudly kept the newspaper clipping which announced:

'From Gaol to Parliament!

Union Prisoner Ryan carries the Squatters' Stronghold.'

The Labour platform included electoral reform, control by the state of water conservation and irrigation, a more democratic form of federation (the extreme wing wanted a republic), the enforcement of the 'White Australia' policy, an eight-hour day, free education, compulsory military training, equal rights for men and women. Its method was to offer support to whatever party in Parliament would make most concessions, until it could form a Government of its own. Emphasis on social legislation thus became a feature of all political parties bidding for Labour support. A series of Factory Acts covering working hours and conditions were introduced. By 1908 every state had universal suffrage for both men and women, and Australia's social legislation was far ahead of most countries. The solid vote of the Labour members could keep a Government in power or send it into opposition.

When William Lane sailed with two hundred and ten supporters to make his New Australia paradise in South America, a young man by the name of Charles Holman sailed with him. His elder brother, William Holman, was the chief speaker at the farewell in the Sydney Domain, but William Holman remained in New South Wales to become the builder of Labour's political machine. He was the 'gradual socialist' who, as Premier of New South Wales, introduced the experiment of a state-owned brick-works, cement-works, clothing factory, coal-mine, ferry service, quarry, dockyard, insurance company and trawling fleet. These state enterprises were not monopolies but competed in the open market with private enterprise, and by sheer efficiency justified their establishment. With William Morris Hughes, at first his friend and always his rival, Holman was the most dominating figure of the Labour movement for more than a decade.

The scething of ideas and enthusiasm in the 'nineties meant much for the nascent literature of the country. Labour and union papers gave a chance of literary expression to men who would otherwise never have found themselves in print. The republican tone of the *Sydney Bulletin*, its contempt for a 'cant-ridden community', its sneers at the vice-regal society stiff with snobbery, heartened the bohemian writer as much as did the novelty of payment for contributions. J. F. Archibald, proprietor and editor of *The Bulletin*, built up an 'orchestra out of a concertina', revising and printing any early but promising efforts, infusing his own Gallic wit into the earnestness of young men and impressing on his paper the stamp of his own vital personality. He hated the vestiges of the System still to be found in the judicial, social and parliamentary life of the day, and there was a pointed significance in *The Bulletin's* publication of Price Warung's factual studies of the old regime. Barbara Baynton, 'painting the back-blocks in the colours of hell' with terrible truth, Henry Lawson wringing tears with *The Union Buries Its Dead* or with humorous and tragic sketches of the outback selection—a host of writers with a new, simple, familiar approach suddenly appeared. In the 'nineties people read books. Every little country school of arts was solid with classics. One country newspaper boosted circulation by printing Ruskin's *Unto This Last* in its leader columns; navvies, drovers and miners attended lectures on French poetry, Darwinism, Henry George and the land laws of Leviticus. There was a stirring quality, a pride of men who found themselves enlisted in great causes. The sap of the future rushed up the nation's stem. It is to the 'nineties that the modern Australia looks back, almost wonderingly, surprised that men should have wholeheartedly believed and fought and suffered—for what? For ideas which might not even bring them any particular profit. Just for ideas.

THE COMMONWEALTH

'I AM TIRED of being called a colonist,' declared the redoubtable Samuel Griffith when the Australasian Convention met in 1891 to consider the question of one Government for all the states. 'The colonist is regarded as a person who is in some respects inferior, who does not enjoy the same advantages, and is not entitled to the same privileges as other members of the Empire.'

It was this view spreading ever more widely which was the real force behind the federal movement. The British Government was sympathetic, but wary. If the Australians wanted one Federal Government or six separate Governments, Her Majesty's ministers had learned to leave them to work it out their own way. New Zealand was noncommittal. West Australia, or rather Sir John Forrest, who was the real government of the state, swore that it 'would never be handed over body and soul to the larger colonies'. Tasmania and South Australia insisted that only if the smallest colony had equal rights with the largest would they join any sort of union. New South Wales could see no advantage in joining other colonies to its august self unless its superiority were acknowledged or if it was given all its own way. But there remained, above the bickerings of colonial Governments, the feeling of ordinary men and women that they were tired of being 'colonists'. They were going to be citizens of an Australian nation.

The two main political issues of the 'nineties were the federation of the Australian states and the introduction of tariffs. These were curiously knotted and tangled and confused until orators were virulently denouncing the move to federate

the colonies because either the tariff for the whole country would not be as high as it was in the home state or else because the treasured cause of free trade would be sacrificed.

It was natural that as the available land was sold or leased, the revenue from its sale diminished to vanishing point, and immigrants found that without capital there was no land for them. What was the use of encouraging new settlers if they formed a jobless and discouraged city population? The old days of the gold diggings, when luck and strong muscles might win a man a fortune, were gone. Deep mining had replaced the scraping of surface gold, and a great deal of money had to be sunk into the ground, companies formed, equipment purchased, before the old-time digger found himself down in the dark, working on a wage for the city investor. Gold-mining became a share-pusher's province and as a method of making money something on a level with horse-racing.

There remained the new industries springing up in the cities. They would provide work for those who could not or would not face the hardships and long monotony of agricultural labour. But how could a prospective factory owner compete with the flood of imported goods, pay the high wages which the high cost of living demanded, and still make a profit? Surely the brave *entrepreneur* setting up a little business must be shielded and allowed some advantage? If a prohibitive tax were placed on everything that could be made in the country, it would bring in revenue and foster home industries. Orators were dewy-eyed as they described the paradise protection would create. The worker enjoying his high wages would joyously toil for the philanthropist who provided him with the opportunity to do so. The satisfied merchant and factory owner would, of course, with a fair profit, refrain from passing on any extra cost to the consumer, and if he did the Government benevolently stood ready to intervene.

New South Wales, the oldest and richest colony, was sourly free trade. Victoria, with the highest tariff, had flourishing new industries and, through the urgency of the Anti-Sweating League, the first Factory Acts. No state could be said to regard any other state as more than a menace along its borders. In the old days of colonial autocracy it was easy enough to define the functions of Government. It existed to uphold the majesty of the English Crown and adjust the balance between feuding groups of notables. The granting of self-government had meant a succession of ministries always shuttling in and out of office. The legislators, refusing to be trammelled by party ties, voted very much as they pleased. For a few months one group of gentlemen would have a majority, only to be unseated by another group of equally able but contentious members. The life of a Parliament in any state was about eighteen months, and the patched and makeshift legislation possible in such a period was as likely as not to be undone by the newcomers. South Australia had forty-two ministries in a little over forty years. Other colonies had an equally rich and ferocious public life coloured by threats, denunciations, prosecutions for criminal libel, and assault where a member of the House of Commons might have raised his eyebrows. Long-suffering members of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly cheered Sir Henry Parkes when he crushed an interrupter by indicting him as the honourable member who was believed to have committed every crime except the one that could easily have been forgiven him—suicide. But although the game of politics was absorbing to the participants, half the electors might ignore their right to vote or sell it to some enterprising canvasser.

Not only were there high duties to be paid for taking goods from one state to another, but the collection of customs along the inland waterways became shameful in its absurdity. One state would drive a costly railway through miles of scrub solely with the intention of draining the trade of one town to

its own side of the border. Each Lower House quarrelled with its Upper House as well as with the Parliaments of neighbour colonies, and the Upper Houses fought for their privileges even in the very teeth of reason. Meanwhile, the question emerged in the minds of intelligent men: 'What are the functions of Government?' And the answer arrived at was a singularly unfortunate one which has coloured all Australian political thinking to the present day, namely that the function of a Government is not only to legislate for the benefit of the community, but to interfere in any activity which might seem to demand interference. 'Why doesn't the Government do something about it?' became an Australian chorus long before the simple European had raised his head from hoeing his own row and tending his own affairs.

It was obvious that there were many phases of life about which a Government could do nothing unless it were an overall Government controlling that phase for every state, and the idea of one great all-enveloping Government began to hover on the political horizon like a thundercloud which might be dispersed or wafted forward to shower blessings on the multitude. Besides the internal confusion there was the danger from foreign powers in the Pacific. To the north, New Guinea, an island of three hundred thousand square miles, was an open invitation to any European power with Pacific ambitions. The north-eastern section had passed into German hands because the colonies had refused to share the financial burden involved in annexation. The British Colonial Secretary, Lord Derby, had been very upset when he learnt that the Queensland Premier had defied his authority and had taken possession of the south-east corner. He had sent a polite embassy to Germany to apologise for the Australian colony's rudeness and was assured that Germany had no intention of annexing any portion of the island. While the embassy was still conferring, a German ship raced full steam and annexed the north part of Papua and the adjacent islands under the noses

of the enraged Queenslanders. For good measure Germany annexed Samoa also, and the language used in Australia about the trustful nature of the British Foreign Office was not nice.

It was the realisation of the danger the colonies were in for lack of a centralised governing body to deal with external affairs and defence that quickened public approval of a Federal Government. It was not a new idea. It had been put forward by William Charles Wentworth when the Australian colonies first gained their own Parliaments, and Wentworth, in his English retirement, had done all he could to forward it. But each colony in its struggle to balance the budget and keep the opposition out of office had paid little attention. It was the astute old Sir Henry Parkes who decided in 1889 that if he wished to crown his career with the great achievement of federation—and he was meanly accused of bringing it forward as a vote-catcher—he had better start before his approaching seventy-sixth birthday. He made a ringing speech at a border town between Queensland and New South Wales, where the inhabitants had nothing to lose, and the echoes of his speech, multiplied in letters he sent to the premiers of the other colonies, roused a new generation of enthusiasts. The other premiers, however, pointed out that there was already a Federal Council meeting to consider questions relating to all states, and that Sir Henry Parkes, who had been a prime mover in setting up the council, had excused himself from joining on the grounds that the council had no powers. Just what powers could it ever gain if New South Wales kept out? Sir Henry, taking this as an invitation to expand his views, began to lay down the constitutional foundations of what he called 'The Commonwealth of Australia'.

To the more conservative this had an alarmingly republican ring. They remembered that Dr. Dunmore Lang had also advocated federation, but had linked it with the formation of an Australian republic. Would the 'radical element' not be

able to seize power if power were given to a Government over all states? There must be safeguards, they insisted, and more safeguards.

Had not Sir Henry been thrown from a cab, broken his leg and found his strength waning, federation might have been achieved years earlier than it was. A series of conventions, in which the best legal brains of the colonies not only met together, but agreed together, had set out a model of what the Australian people wanted. They had admirably discussed, improved, referred to committees, taken up points of detail. In style and spirit the Bill which emerged from their deliberations was the creation of Sir Samuel Griffith, and it had his boldness and lucidity.

But the year 1891 which saw the drawing up of the draft constitution was also the year of the depression, of the financial crash. The feeling in New South Wales, even in Parkes's own cabinet, was against federation. The general opinion agreed with Sir John Robertson of Land Law fame who had considered talk of federation as 'high-flown nonsense'. He had added a string of chosen adjectives to his indictment. 'Why should we,' he demanded, 'close our gates to all the world in order to trade with those fellows across the Murray who produce just the same as we do, and all they can send us is . . . cabbages!' G. H. Reid, who led the opposition against Parkes, condemned the constitution as the work of 'the great ambitious statesman of Australia', and Parkes decided to drop the Bill.

Federation in New South Wales was left to a little band of theorists. Sir Henry Parkes, out of office, confined himself to jeremiads against the men who had stood between him and his goal. Alfred Deakin tells how the old man attended a meeting of the enthusiasts held in a room which contained groceries. The practical old politician soon saw that nothing was to be gained from such a gathering. He seized and opened a pot of jam. 'Do you know this brand?' he enquired of his

hosts, men of exemplary politeness and most of university education. They did not. Parkes tasted the jam, pronounced it good and sent out for bread, and closed the conference with a meal of bread and jam. No one could more majestically brush the crumbs or the creditors out of his long beard. But it was only when defeated at the polls, penniless and near death, that he gave up the struggle and handed the prophetic mantle to a political opponent, Edmund Barton, who laboured under the handicap of being labelled 'Australia's noblest son'. Despite an easy-going disposition which allowed him, time and again, to be jockeyed out of honours for which secretly he had little taste. He was a brilliant constitutional lawyer, a man of wide learning, and a loyal worker for the cause of federation, but he was no Sir Henry Parkes.

The leadership of the federal movement passed to Victoria, where the Australian Natives Association, a virile body of the most politically active electors, argued in debating societies or dreary little town institutes against the inertia and suspicion of the average voter. The apostle of the movement, the leader of these young men, was that brilliant idealist, Alfred Deakin. The vision of one united Australia was always referred to in Victoria as 'Deakin's Dream', but Deakin brought to its realisation a formidable tenacity of purpose, charm and good humour, combined with a self-effacement truly remarkable in a cabinet minister. He had been a cabinet minister, or had refused a seat in the cabinet, ever since he first entered the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1880 at the age of twenty-four, after fighting four closely contested elections in the space of eighteen months. He was never thereafter defeated and was recognised as the greatest public speaker of his day.

From the time the federal movement began to gain momentum after the Tenterfield speech of Sir Henry Parkes to the second referendum of 1899, which brought a clear majority in every state, there lay ten years of meetings, committees, conventions, the by no means negligible opposition of the

Anti-Federation League, public agitation and all the Press discussion and pamphleteering inseparable from such an issue. The resolutions and amendments to the draft constitution of 1891, the various Enabling Acts passed by the states, the reports of the 1897-8 Convention sessions in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne, have filled volumes of historical cud and now lie somewhat heavy and indigestible on the chest of Australian history. Throughout all moves the figure of Deakin, cordial, conciliatory, the most patient and courteous of men.

In the last crucial convention session held in Melbourne, it was Deakin who, as 'a kind of invisible lubricant', still kept the wheels turning, the committees deliberating, the difficulties smoothed out. By this time the temper of the convention was much more frank and cordial; the fifty delegates had developed almost a parliamentary spirit; but the temper of the public, which did not see the immense amount of work done, only the banquets and jauntings of delegates, was becoming increasingly sour. The powerful *Age* had begun a campaign against the constitution which the convention was about to submit to the people. The Victorian Government, which depended upon the support of *The Age*, was quite willing to shelve the whole issue. In New South Wales the newspapers were even more hostile than *The Age*, and Premier Reid was encouraging the anti-federationists. Sir John Forrest from Western Australia had always been frankly hostile. It seemed that another ten years might elapse before anything more came of the federal proposals.

Deakin, however, in a famous speech to the delegates to the Australian Natives Conference, roused that powerful association to champion the Bill at all hazards. He followed up with a lightning campaign throughout the country, and the Commonwealth Bill was carried forward in Victoria on a wave of popular enthusiasm. The anti-federalist movement of New South Wales managed to defeat the first referendum, but in

the following year even that state, soothed by the promise that the federal capital should be established within its boundaries, returned the necessary majority.

The constitution for the Commonwealth of Australia was then submitted to the British Parliament for approval. In London, the small, devoted band consisting of Edmund Barton, Kingston, the South Australian firebrand, and Deakin, defied the British Government, the rest of the Australian delegation, and the six state Governments of Australia, all quite willing to allow whatever mutilations or amendments seemed suitable to Her Majesty's ministers. The courteous Alfred Deakin became as dangerously abrupt as the fiery Kingston when it was a question of rights of Australians to draw up rules for their own government. The three stood out against cables from their own premiers urging capitulation. They had fought for the constitution for ten years, they had carried it through two referenda; and they were going to have it.

Deserted by their own Governments, Barton, Kingston and Deakin entered on a new campaign. They went out deliberately to capture the ear of the London Press, the City and the highest aristocratic circles, in the fight to preserve their Clause 74, the clause which named the High Court of Australia as the final arbiter on constitutional questions. They spoke at public banquets and private dinners, at clubs and halls and receptions. At the Empire League Barton addressed the Prince of Wales and five hundred guests; at a little dinner given by the proprietors of a small newspaper he engaged on a close legal analysis of the debated clause which lasted for forty-five minutes.

Joseph Chamberlain, then Colonial Secretary, was resolved that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament should be demonstrated by some amendment to the Bill. If the delegates, he declared, thought they were going to get their Bill without some amendment, he'd see them damned first. He called them to a final conference, and told them how

disappointed and pained he was by their obstinacy. He intended to introduce the Bill to the Commons with the deletion of Clause 74. Kingston growled that the delegates might as well pack their bags, and it needed Deakin's conciliation to prevent a show of temper. The Bill went before the House without the disputed clause, but three days later Chamberlain again sent for the three obdurate delegates. The diplomats of Downing Street had realised that though they might have every weapon on their side, the uproar of the colonials had created an embarrassing situation.

Would the delegates, Chamberlain asked, be prepared to accept a redrafting of the clause to permit appeal to the Privy Council, on a disputed constitutional issue, by consent of the Australian Governments concerned? The precious Clause 74 was saved. Shown to a room where they might discuss the compromise, the delegates held a noiseless private rejoicing. They seized hands and danced madly around the room, three middle-aged lawyers who had fought as stoutly and devotedly for their cause as ever did knights in shining armour.

In Australia their victory was greeted with an outcry from the conservative classes that they had destroyed the bonds of Empire and should be immediately recalled. A last-minute effort was made by the anti-federationists to withdraw the whole Bill, and it needed the wisdom of Samuel Griffith, the architect of the first draft constitution, to suggest the compromise finally accepted, namely that appeal to the Privy Council should be by consent of the High Court itself.

That the inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth should coincide with the new century suggested to Australians that they were entering a period of promise. There were processions through the streets and bonfires on the heights. On the 9th May 1901, in the presence of twelve thousand fortunate spectators the Duke of Cornwall and York formally opened the first Federal Parliament in the great Exhibition Building, Melbourne. There were, of course, banquets, shining

carriages, speeches, the waving of straw hats, the excitement of little boys in sailor suits and little girls in sunbonnets who were exhorted to remember this unforgettable day. Unto them had a Parliament been born, and a constitution, though everyone was a little hazy about the constitution.

Alfred Deakin took a more sombre view than the rejoicing crowds. He had been elected with a huge majority to the new House of Representatives as Member for Ballarat. 'The Commonwealth Constitution,' he wrote, 'will begin to take effect on 1st January, but everything which could make the union it establishes more than a mere piece of political carpentry will remain to be accomplished afterwards.'

THE PASSING OF THE LIBERAL

THE COLONIAL PARLIAMENTS of the nineteenth century had been a form of businessman's club, where able lawyers, squatters and merchants lent, chiefly, a courteous ear to each other's speeches, and the real government was carried on by powerful groups of men who might not even bother to sit in Parliament, but who made up the public's mind to what it wanted. The business of the country was, on the whole, efficiently managed, budgets were balanced, bills discussed by the keenest legal minds were ably drawn up.

Victoria acknowledged as its ruler for many years the editor of *The Age*, David Syme, a Scotsman of vision and force. If a ministry was to be formed, 'King David' was naturally consulted. The carpet on his staircase was said to have been worn away by cabinet ministers. But Syme's rule was suave. A suggestion from him might be as good as a command, but it took the form of a suggestion. David Syme was interested in irrigation and so was Alfred Deakin, a former *Age* journalist. So *The Age* saw that Deakin was sent to America and India to study the latest methods. Bills were presented to set up irrigation projects in Victoria. David Syme was not making a penny out of it. He was just a man who liked his own way and got it.

When the first Federal Parliament assembled with a small group of twenty-four Labour members in both Houses, the Liberals were prepared to give them a cordial welcome. But Labour's view was hard and practical. Parliament was an institution for passing necessary legislation, and the Labour

members were there to use their votes to get legislation which favoured the workers. Until they were strong enough to form a Government of their own, they would support whoever would give them most. The conservative Free Trade Opposition made its first task the destruction of the Liberal policy of 'New Protection', whereby a manufacturer might be shielded from overseas competition only in so far as he paid a fair wage. But the opposition was quite ready to vote against anything else the Government might have in mind. From the very first the speeches in the House of Representatives were blunt to the point of brutality; the abuse and ferocity reached a pitch no one had foreseen.

Edmund Barton, as first Prime Minister of Australia, was soon to find this out. There had been a slight preliminary unpleasantness when Lord Hopetoun, the Governor-General, called upon the wrong man to form a ministry, none other than William Lyne, that Premier of New South Wales who had fought tooth and nail to see that no Federal Parliament ever came into being. But as no one of the political élite would join with Lyne, he had to be content with a seat in Barton's cabinet. The new Prime Minister, after fifteen months of office, betook himself to one of those Colonial Conferences in London which were lavish with banquets and speeches but negligible of results; except that the Prime Minister became Sir Edmund Barton. It embarrassed him rather in his new knighthood to hear that the Commonwealth Parliament had refused to refund to the Governor-General the large amount he had spent from his private income in entertainment during the inauguration of the Commonwealth. Members had wasted three months discussing the pay of a Senate messenger, but they had never got round to the Governor-General's salary, apart from calling him 'a parasitic aristocrat' and 'a minion of a decayed imperialism', and in discussing how he could most cheaply be sustained. The Governor-General finally announced that he must resign before his position

ruined him. The country blamed Parliament and Parliament blamed the absent Prime Minister.

In Italy, on his way home, Sir Edmund Barton ventured to say a few polite words to the Pope, and was welcomed back in Parliament with a petition from thirty thousand Protestant voters demanding that, until he faced the electors and explained his action, any position of honour or dignity be withheld from him. The Governor of Victoria was to give a lecture on 'The Navy and the Nation', and a member rose and demanded whether, if the Governor said anything improper, the Prime Minister would write to England and have him instructed not to meddle in federal politics. Sir Edmund said he would do nothing of the kind.

On the day following the innocuous little lecture a senator, who was also editor of a socialist newspaper, moved a vote of censure on Sir John Forrest for the vote of thanks he had proposed at the Governor's lecture. The senator gave the House over an hour's review of British history from Richard II to the Stuarts. The incredible part of the business was that the censure motion was debated for two months before it was finally defeated by nineteen votes to five. The Senate had nothing better to do because in the House of Representatives men talked, first with a view to hindering all business, and secondly because they were in love with the sound of their own voices.

The constitution had provided for a High Court which would give rulings on points of law. At first Parliament refused to sanction the cost, then it cut down the salaries of the judges and debarred them from any pension rights. So many amendments were added, so much was the Bill mangled, that Alfred Deakin, as Attorney-General, declared he would not be responsible for it. However, it finally limped through, thanks to the Attorney-General's efforts; and no sooner was there a High Court than the Prime Minister thankfully retired to it, leaving the government to Deakin, who carried on that

thankless task for the greater part of the next ten years. Sir Edmund Barton had realised two important facts, borne out by the experience of all his successors; firstly, that a Prime Minister committed political suicide by going abroad during his term of office, and that he committed actual physical suicide by enduring the heart-breaking responsibility for more than a limited time.

The enemies of Alfred Deakin said he was a cross between Christ and Machiavelli. The fact remains that he was the only man who could hold the reins of that tempestuous early Parliament. His social legislation was far ahead of even Labour's expectations; he was completely disinterested; and, governing largely with Labour support, did not hesitate to tell rash Labour men that their proposals were often not only bad law but completely ridiculous. In all the years he was Prime Minister his party never once had a majority; but he had a supreme contempt for party prejudices. He would work with any party or fraction of a party which would help get the country's business done. The Labour policy of voting as a majority of members decided at a private meeting seemed to him a negation of responsible government.

With Sir Edmund Barton there went to the High Court two other framers of the constitution, Sir Samuel Griffith and R. E. O'Connor. It was not to be expected that such men would take a lenient view of attempts to claim for the Commonwealth powers over state employees or private industries. The Labour Party's struggle to impose such control meant that a procession of arbitration and conciliation acts were always fighting their way through hostile and time-wasting sessions with further acts to amend earlier ones found invalid. It was not until 1920 when the earlier Liberals had been replaced by judges of Labour appointment that the High Court would yield the point that the Commonwealth possessed supreme power in the industrial field. By this time the more extreme wing of the Labour movement was beginning to lose

faith in the principles of conciliation and arbitration anyway and regard them as a capitalist conspiracy to keep down strikes.

The other great thorn in the flesh of Parliament was the rising tariff. Victoria, ever since the colonial legislatures had been given power in 1890 to impose tariffs, had been following a policy of strong protection, linked by David Syme with the idea that any manufacturer protected from overseas competition must be prepared to pay a 'basic wage' on which a worker and his family could maintain a reasonable standard of life. The 'New Protection' was carried over into the Federal Parliament, and as tariffs rose into newer and more wonderful heights, each Custom Tariff Act following and amending the previous Act, the opposition worked itself into a frenzy, the states with few industries claiming their people were being indirectly taxed to support the cities of Sydney and Melbourne. The Commonwealth was obliged under what was known as the 'Braddon Clause' to return to the states, for at least ten years, three-quarters of the revenue it collected. The tariff was almost the only source of revenue for the Commonwealth, and to carry out its comprehensive programme of social service, such as old-age and invalid pensions, it had to raise four times the amount it actually spent!

One of the results of the tariff struggle was the death of the South Australian radical, Kingston, who, as Minister for Customs, fought so hard for his Tariff Bill of 1902 that he enfeebled his health and sowed the seeds of a long illness which carried him out of Parliament for ever. Over the question of arbitration he had resigned from the Barton cabinet. Fierce, able and autocratic, he chafed at the unendurable dallyings of the Federal Parliament. One of the Bills he had introduced, the Manufacturers' Encouragement Act of 1902, which was to give a bounty on pig-iron and set up a steel industry, was passed the year after his death. A time-lapse of six years was a very moderate allowance in the Federal Parliament.

Then there was the Papua Act of 1903 which authorised the

transfer from the British Government to the Australian Commonwealth of a territory the size of the State of Victoria. The Act was a wise and considerate one; there were ample safeguards of native rights, the land was not to be alienated, and once passed the Bill made the administration of Papua something of a model for colonial Governments. Unfortunately, in the Bill's passage, the temperance party managed to wedge in an amendment prohibiting the sale of intoxicants not only to the natives but to the white settlers. Governments rose and fell, two years went by and still the temperance amendment prevented the Bill's passing, until Deakin's genius for compromise triumphed and it was agreed that the white settlers should have the right to prohibition if they so desired it.

Defence was another important issue. By the time machine measures to take over the state forces had been approved, five years after federation, the forces had dwindled from twenty-eight thousand men to twenty thousand four hundred. Labour's view of defence ranged from the principle that every man must be trained to defend his country to the belief that military forces must be whittled to a minimum lest they be used for imperialist ventures. In 1907 and 1908 Deakin struggled to complete defence measures, fighting the British Admiralty and trying to convince both the Imperial Parliament and the Australian people of the necessity for an Australian fleet manned and controlled by Australians. In November 1908 the Labour Party bluntly informed the Prime Minister that they withdrew their support and would form their own Government. Deakin bowed to the inevitable, and Labour came into office for a brief six months. In May 1909 the four opposition groups had so far forgotten their differences as to request Deakin to lead a Fusion Party. Deakin once more faced the House as Prime Minister with a following consisting of his bitter opponents since federation and the remnant of his own Commonwealth Liberal League, four of whom had united with the enraged Labour opposition. By a judicious use of the 'closure' on the

speechifiers Deakin accomplished more in a few months than he had managed in years. The Fusion Government dealt with forty-seven important Bills, including the Northern Territories Acceptance Act to take over an area six times the size of Victoria. Twenty-two of these Acts were passed, nine of them to correct errors in previous legislation which the High Court had ruled out. On the last day on which he met Parliament as Prime Minister, 8th December 1909, Alfred Deakin cabled the order for the nucleus of the Australian battle fleet, 'Deakin's tin-pot navy', the battle cruiser, light cruisers, submarines and destroyers which changed the course of Pacific history in 1914.

Deakin's Fusion Ministry was taken as an act of treachery, and he was greeted with yells of 'Judas' whenever he appeared; a future Labour Prime Minister, Mr. W. M. Hughes, distinguishing himself by a particularly elaborate piece of invective in which he declared that the insult was 'not fair—to Judas'. At the election of 1910, when Labour was triumphantly returned to office, meetings howled for Deakin's blood, and he was accompanied by a police bodyguard, a state of affairs which the fallen Liberal bore with his usual equanimity. A few days after his political defeat he expressed his feelings in verse:

*O bird-song! can it be
That I, at last, am free,
This mellow autumn morning-time, to muse and list to thee?*

and, turning to those secret notebooks in which he lived his real life, began a comparison of Loisy's and Tyrrell's views on Christianity and a summing-up of Bergson's contributions to philosophy. The Defence Act which Labour passed so closely resembled Deakin's that his defeat hardly mattered. For years afterwards the Bills passed were the ones he had worn himself out trying to get through Parliament.

The ferocity of the Labour forces during its early period of office was the result of a striving for 'socialism in our time' and a conviction that a Labour Government must be a class government of and by the workers. Labour Councils were still largely socialistic in outlook, and they saw that the parliamentary member did not succumb to any capitalist lure or liberal idea that the good of the whole community should be consulted.

Bills there were, such as the Commonwealth Bank Bill, which had wide public support. But Labour members, like those of many later Governments, had often unfounded faith in the power of a parliamentary majority to do as it pleased. Above the grandiloquence of many proposals could be heard the voice of Deakin from the opposition benches pointing out that this or that honourable member's Bill was unconstitutional and would never stand the test of the High Court.

There is nothing more annoying to men in power than to be told that their actions are against 'the rules'. Their thought is always how to alter the rules. In 1911 the third Labour Government asked the Australian people to agree to two amendments to the constitution: the first was to give the Federal Parliament power over all trade, commerce and industry within the Commonwealth, the second was to give the federal Parliament power to nationalise any business which the Government might declare a monopoly. The Labour vote at the elections had convinced the Government that they might confidently expect such powers to be granted. Even with Deakin, a sick man but still formidable, stumping the whole Commonwealth in defence of his beloved constitution, there was little doubt that Labour should have won the referendum. It rubbed salt into the wound to discover afterwards how many of their own supporters must have voted against them. For the referendum was lost. The Australian people just did not trust this mighty new Parliament, swelling like a bull-frog

on powers it was unceasingly filching from the states. The people not only voted 'No' at that first referendum; they continued to vote 'No' at almost every referendum which sought, however subtly, to transfer further power to the Commonwealth.

LABOUR 'BLOWS ITS BRAINS OUT'

THE MOST CONSIDERABLE FORCE in the political and industrial life of Australia in the past fifty years has been the Australian Labour Party. In its early years it was the party of radicals and revolutionaries; and it is still galvanised by a strong left wing of 'militant' unions. In fact, the Labour Party balances precariously on two horns of a dilemma; gored on one flank by the conservative small farmers, the Roman Catholic industrial groups, the wealthy liquor and racing interests, and the more comfortable middle-class adherents; and prodded on the other side by well-organised Communist influences in the trade unions. The spirited grapplings and throttlings by which one faction seeks to discredit and outvote another have always made the life of a professional Labour politician one for heroes.

In 1891 fourteen idealists, who could barely raise their fare to meetings, formed the first Labour Electoral Leagues. Two of the idealists who tramped the Sydney pavements with worn bootsoles were a young carpenter and an immigrant school-teacher from Wales. They had appointed themselves the evangelists of the Labour Leagues and they would in those days have agreed with the 'worker' that the Labour Movement needed no leadership and possessed no leaders. 'In conference assembled they formulate their policies and decide their tactics. In mutual associations they select their candidates and discuss their campaigns.' The Leagues were, in theory, perfect democracies. In practice things often worked out quite differently. The two young men were keen on the principle that a majority vote must decide any course of action.

Anyone who deviated from a party line, once it was laid down, was a 'rat' or a 'traitor'. There is an apocryphal story that these two, counting heads at a conference, realised they needed one more vote to give them a majority. They sallied out to a seaside suburb, mounted a soap-box, gathered a crowd, formed yet another Labour League on the spot with the usual minute membership, elected a delegate from that League to the conference, and returned citywards with the bewildered delegate who, instructed on the way, cast his vote so that the good cause won the day.

The Welsh school-teacher, by name William Morris Hughes, after starving and battling from job to job round the back country of Queensland, had settled in Sydney in a poor shop in a grim dockside area. There he repaired anything from umbrellas to brass fittings and sold second-hand books, while the élite of the Labour Movement used his shop as a meeting-place where they could thrash out their policies and practise their oratory on one another. The young carpenter, William Holman, was presently able to launch out in a country town where he became the proprietor of the local newspaper and a member of the New South Wales State Parliament. Hughes turned from shopkeeper to union organiser, and founded the powerful Waterside Workers' Federation. He, too, entered the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, but left it to enter the first Federal Parliament as the only Labour representative for the city of Sydney. By 1900 he could boast that there was not a man working on the Australian waterfront from the far north to Fremantle who did not wear the metal badge of the Waterside Workers' Federation on his belt. 'Billy' Hughes had been unvaryingly successful in winning any dispute for his union, and the hulking cargo lumpers swore by this deaf, dyspeptic, nervy little man. 'Billy' Hughes led them, and what he decided was official policy.

In the tumult of rejoicing over federation Labour kept very much to the background. This was not due to any excess of

modesty. It had campaigned for a 'No' vote, urging that the proposed federation was not 'democratic' enough, that the Braddon Clause, which returned three-fourths of all revenue to the states, would impose a crushing burden of indirect taxation, whereas Labour demanded direct taxation of land and income. Some of the rejoicing, Labour men suspected, came from the belief that the Federal Parliament would be beyond the reach of the 'six-pound-a-week' state politicians. As early as 1894 Cardinal Moran had declared that federation was the only means of preventing one or other colony jumping over to socialism. Nor was Labour's leaning towards an Australian Republic forgotten.

But by 1910 the third Labour Government had taken office in the Federal Parliament with a large majority and was urging a referendum to give the Commonwealth power over trade and industry. William Morris Hughes, as Attorney-General, was the prime mover in this, and it was he who drew up the appeal to the people. Both he and his ex-comrade, Holman, had qualified in law, knowing how necessary legal knowledge was to their party. Holman, now the most powerful man in the New South Wales Parliament, quarrelled with Hughes over this referendum proposal, which Holman considered an unauthorised grab for power. At the annual Labour Party Conference the majority was with Hughes. However stormy the meeting, however narrow the majority by which you won, democracy postulated that the man who had the numbers must necessarily be right. Holman was forced to promise that he would not oppose the referendum proposal. He certainly did nothing to help it.

Hughes was positively winsome about state rights. The states, he argued, could not control powerful monopolies, and these should be nationalised. As for state rights, what were they? They were only the rights of the people who were in the states, who were also electors of the Commonwealth. 'They have, and always will have, full control over

the use to which these powers are put. Are not the people to be trusted to look after their own interests?' Apparently the people thought not. The referendum was crushingly defeated.

This should have been a lesson to Hughes, but he had this particular blind trust in the healing power of a majority vote. Long years of counting heads at Labour Conferences may have had something to do with it. At any crisis in his career he wanted a referendum. In 1913, after Labour had been in power three years, he tried again. The bewildered electors were faced with no less than eight voting slips, one for members of the Senate, one for the House of Representatives, and the other half-dozen on which they might record their distaste or approval of Hughes's referendum proposals. It is not surprising that Labour lost the election. However, the incoming Government had the advantage of only one member, and when he was appointed Speaker, Labour, by the most relentless pressure, forced the Government out of office. Hughes was, of course, the man who planned each move, and he could not understand why some people considered the moves unscrupulous. He was just doing everything in his power to win, wasn't he?

The return to office of the Labour Party coincided with the outbreak of the First World War. Labour had always denounced militarism, a large section of the party had followed Holman when he denounced the Boer War as unjust bullying of a small nation. But it was the duty of citizens in a democracy to defend their country, so in the Commonwealth Parliament Hughes had advocated compulsory military training for every male, and supported, even in opposition, the naval and military Bills of Deakin's Government. Now, as Attorney-General again, Hughes found himself drafting police measures such as the War Precautions Act and innumerable regulations. Everything was justified by the war: price fixing, control of shipping, an income-tax bill that would ordinarily have

brought sturdy resistance. The poor health of Andrew Fisher, the Prime Minister, gave Hughes the excuse to centre every authority in himself. He worked with demoniac energy.

Holman, now Premier of New South Wales, was not a whit behind his former team-mate in throwing aside all Labour's long-hoped-for social legislation in favour of war measures. In 1912 there had been the paradoxical situation of Holman, the opponent of monopolies, guaranteeing every facility to the Broken Hill Proprietary to set up great steel mills at Newcastle. Hughes had opposed the Newcastle steel works as the very thing the Federal Labour Party was fighting. He insisted that Holman was assisting a capitalist monopoly that should be nationalised. However, with the war, Hughes must have been secretly grateful that Holman had won. Munitions could be turned out from the Newcastle works. It no longer mattered that they were a capitalist concern.

Australia, almost with surprise, discovered that greatness had descended on the nation. On the exposed slopes above Anzac Bay, on the Gallipoli Peninsula, half-naked men, digging, tunnelling, carrying food and water up dusty, precipitous tracks, played war as a curious new game at which they found they excelled. They had been landed by mistake on a foreshore considered impossible for a night attack, and had hauled themselves up the heights by the stems and roots of the low holly and arbutus scrub. In the grey dawn they found themselves overlooking the wild, scrubby country, deeply folded and indented, and proceeded to dig in as best they could, since all the plans for attack seemed to meet with some desperate misfortune or miscalculation.

They had no bombs, but they learned to throw back the Turkish bombs like a cricket ball. They made grenades out of snippets of metal rammed into jam-tins, improvising a factory on the beach. But however ingenious they might be in such devices they could not escape heavy losses when they were flung against the Turkish machine-guns in full daylight.

The troops were certainly inexperienced; their officers were over-cager; orders were frequently misunderstood; but they hung on to the scarps of Anzac, to Quinn's, The Nek, and Steele's, like a cocky farmer to a selection he intended to clear of mortgages and rabbits. They cursed the flies, the dysentery; they devised cunning mines, met the Turkish charges with yells of 'Baksheesh!' and 'Eggs-a-Cook', as they flung their improvised grenades.

The slaughter of the Turks was immense, and the Australians began to admire and like their enemy. On one occasion when Australians attempted to rescue some Turkish wounded, a short, informal armistice led to a more formal truce. They buried their dead in a sap which had been an embarrassment to both sides whenever they were ordered to take it.

There were times when the attack on Gallipoli might have succeeded. There were others when only the fortunes of this blind-man's-bluff saved the invaders from being cast out of their few miles' foothold into the sea. What made the British commanders so curious was that the Anzac men went about their affairs, buried their mates, rescued their wounded, as though courage was the air they naturally breathed, and a hard dry joke the only reward they expected. When the Australians heard that the ground for which they had sweated and climbed and starved was to be abandoned, they took it quietly. 'The heads' must know what they were about. The men went about tidying the graves of their mates. 'I hope they won't hear us marching down the deres,' one remarked. Others, with a curious echo of the stubborn unionism of peacetime, contended that 'I was here first and I have the right to be last to go.'

While the High Command congratulated itself on withdrawing the expedition with scarcely a casualty, the shock of the withdrawal struck Australia and New Zealand with incredulity and horror. Andrew Fisher had resigned from the prime ministership in favour of the little wicked-tongued

Hughes, who pounded his desk and swore docksider's oaths about those 'heads' who had left eight thousand Australians and two thousand five hundred New Zealanders dead at Gallipoli. There were twenty-four thousand wounded.

Hughes launched a recruiting drive in the teeth of accusations that he had gone over to the Tories. The Irish section of the Labour Party, embittered, raised the cry: 'He's going to make us all die for England.' Always the Allied High Command demanded more and more men. Hughes flung off to England to devil the Asquith Government out of its 'business-as-usual' attitude. He claimed the British were 'too perfectly civilised'. Nobody believed that about William Morris Hughes. He, the Welshman, was hailed as typically Australian; his every appearance was a triumph; cities rose to his barnstorming as he hammered the length of Britain with the message that if you want to win you must fling every ounce you have into the fight. Men at home who had spoken of him as a withered little political wasp, or 'one of those black things you find under big flat stones', watched amazed as Hughes argued down the august of Britain. He was offered a cabinet post, a peerage, an annuity of ten thousand pounds a year. His refusal confirmed the British conviction that Australians were peculiar.

Meantime, commanders on the Western Front found them wonderful fellows to head an attack, a sharp spearpoint to pierce the German lines, a spearpoint that must often so unfortunately be withdrawn—if there were any men left to withdraw—because something had gone wrong with a plan that looked so good on paper. Hughes saw the divisions he had raised sinking into the Flanders mud, where in the black winter of 1916 men prayed that the bullet with their name on it might find them and put them out of the cold. The troops from Gallipoli were surprised that what were called trenches were often breastworks built of sandbags, because any depression filled with water. There was no safe

shelter against even medium high-explosive shells. As men worked, they were buried and, dug out, they were buried again.

What were praises of 'your magnificent troops' to Hughes returning to a country from which he must demand more men? To rely on volunteers would never meet the impossible demand of the High Command for eighty-two thousand men in four months, when the previous four months' enlistments had been twenty-seven thousand. Holman was ready to support conscription; Bill Spence, father of the powerful Australian Workers' Union, was against it. The Labour Conference at Melbourne in May 1916 carried a blunt resolution against conscription by three hundred votes to one. The large Labour majority in the Senate could defeat any conscription bill. Hughes decided once again on a referendum. His cabinet was weakened by resignations; the bitterness and fury of the campaigning split the Labour Party from top to bottom. Men who had been comrades for a life-time denounced each other as traitors or blood-thirsty monsters.

In Western Australia a newspaper editor called John Curtin coolly set out the anti-conscription arguments, unaware that in the next war he would be Prime Minister of Australia and die like a tired cart-horse straining to pull the country through it. In New South Wales a rising Labour aspirant, J. T. Lang, used those powers of persuasion later so effective when he was Premier of that state.

Hughes fought the referendum with his usual ferocity. He had the Press behind him, the most influential citizens, the dignitaries of the Churches, with the telling exception of the Irish Archbishop Mannix. Those against conscription were a queer mixture: trade unionists, obscure pacifist clergymen, syndicalist members of the Industrial Workers of the World, Irish Sinn Fein sympathisers, and ordinary citizens who felt that Australia was 'doing her bit' and conscription was unnecessary. In the vote the states were equally divided, but

the large 'No' majority in New South Wales defeated the referendum.

Hughes faced a caucus meeting of his own party and a vote that 'the Prime Minister no longer possesses the confidence of this party as a leader'. He walked out of the meeting, taking twenty-three of sixty-five former supporters with him; and the Labour Party stayed out of office for thirteen years.

The split in the Labour Party over conscription also determined the political future of Holman. When a vote of no confidence in his leadership was proposed, he remarked that 'we are to be governed by a Parliament not a junta'. The idea of heading a coalition Government, once as abhorrent to him as it would have been to Hughes, now forming a National Party of his own, became not only justifiable but the only possible course. The Labour Party might later realise that to make the conscription issue the acid test was a disastrous mistake; but Hughes and Holman had always been inclined to regard criticism of their policies as disloyalty to them. Now, with the country at war, they regarded opposition as sedition.

The country which had rejected Hughes's referendum returned him and his new Government to office with a large majority in both Houses. Did he, as he faced the slender Labour opposition with a ministry composed chiefly of his former opponents, remember how he had taunted Alfred Deakin with the cry of 'Judas'? The year 1917 was a grand year for Hughes. In Palestine the Australian Light Horse swept forward to Jerusalem. There were strikes in Australia, and he smashed the strikes. He ruled the country as though it were a set of recalcitrant dock-workers, and with much the same forceful language. The soldiers, with one in seven killed or missing, supported him. From the War Office he won the grouping of five Australian divisions under an Australian, General Sir John Monash. He had promised at the election

not to introduce conscription, but when recruiting fell away he announced another referendum. The 'No' majority increased in every state.

In London Hughes met with other ministers from the Dominions to be officially told by the War Cabinet that the Allies faced disaster. Hughes remarked that this was the result of 'persistence in methods some of which savoured of tribal warfare'. None of the ministers from the Dominions—which had sent a million men to war—were in a mood to save anyone's feelings. They voiced their views of the High Command's incapacity. 'The bravest of the brave, at all times ready to expose themselves to desperate endeavours to extricate their men from the positions created by their own incompetency.' For Hughes, the gloom was lightened by the Australian victory at Beaumont Hamel, where again the troops, as so often before, were muttering: 'Why did we stop before reaching his guns?' Sir John Monash's careful arrangements furnished a model for almost every attack made with tanks and infantry during the remainder of the war. Hughes had been out visiting the troops just before the attack, and came back to London heartened to the task of selling his country's wool, wheat, copper, butter, hides, tallow, and finding ships—always finding ships—by means that the British Shipping Controller considered most unscrupulous. He bargained, he haggled, as he never had in his repair-shop days.

He went to the Peace Conference bargaining still, brushing aside the diplomatic question of how far Australia deserved to be represented. He was there to get the best terms for his union—in this case, the Commonwealth—and he looked with hard contempt on President Wilson, a man with ideals. Wilson felt a definite aversion to the violent little man and his habit of forming cabals against such generous proposals as giving the Japanese the widest range in the Pacific. The Japanese were persuasive and gentlemanly. Hughes was brutal and, finally, victorious. He would have no Japanese in New

Guinea, and if that insulted the noble Japanese allies, he really could not be made to care. He was abused for a narrow-minded horse-trader; he was a militarist who would not meet the Japanese half-way.

The return to Australia, after the initial triumphal welcome died down, was disappointing. A third party had risen in the Federal Parliament, the Country Party, to whom Hughes was anathema; and it held the balance of power. That Hughes solved their greatest economic problem by disposing of the wool clip and stabilising the market did not seem to lessen their hostility. He went in 1921 to yet another Imperial Conference in London to war with Winston Churchill over the need to provide direct wireless communication with Australia, so that never again could that country in wartime be left without contact with the outside world. The English 'heads' preserved their old policy of 'plenty of time', but he beat down their objections, organised Amalgamated Wireless, with the Government holding fifty-one per cent of the shares, and did the same with the Commonwealth Oil Refineries. Yet the dislike of his autocracy increased. Although at the elections of 1922 he led the Government parties back to office, he was considered no longer acceptable as leader, and was replaced by a more gentlemanly person, who had aroused the derision of his countrymen by wearing spats, a deed which required the same cool courage as landing at Anzac. Stanley Melbourne Bruce symbolised the urbane prosperity of the times, and Hughes could be relegated to adjusting his hearing-aid on a back bench. As he began to be an elder statesman, it was thought he might mellow. He showed no more signs of mellowing than a hatchet. Specialising still in denunciation, he was leniently regarded. He denounced the idea that Australia could any longer nestle under Britain's feathers; he denounced the League of Nations; he denounced the Japanese; he denounced the prevailing optimism, the borrowings, the sunny hire-purchase luxuries

of government. After all, his confrères whispered hopefully, he was getting old.

In 1931 Hughes was joined in the Federal House by his old friend and enemy, Holman, who had also been elbowed out of power by his conservative allies. Holman was straining every nerve to make a political return. He had made the amazing statement at the election that every striker who joined an unauthorised walk-out should not be allowed to vote for four years. Manoeuvring for a seat in the Federal Cabinet, Holman died just before the election of 1934. He had a tremendous record of practical work and had lived to see all his cherished state enterprises sold up for a song to private companies. The comfortable businessmen's Parliament which arranged the sales, handed over to their associates the assets of the state brickworks, metal-quarries, concrete-works, pipe-works and fish-trawlers, all the enterprises which had helped to keep prices at a reasonable level. The 'virus of State socialism' was eradicated, and private competitors had no more to fear. Holman, nearly as poor as when he first went into politics, died abused both by Labour and the Government parties.

THE GLUGS OF GOSH

PROSPERITY!—the slick prosperity that goes with big cigars, taxis, boxing-promoters, hotels, that was the prosperity the average Australian was interested in. The satisfaction at someone 'coining big money' out of an enterprise that might not be as sedate as knitting, the newspaper scandals, the avid interest in crime, sport, racing or the newest craze, all the cheap little credulities of the city dweller who played wise—these increased with the progress and prosperity of the nineteen-twenties.

The war years had swelled the population of the cities. So many articles were desperately needed that had never been manufactured in the country: dyes, weights and balances, typewriter ribbons, electrical batteries, dynamos and radiators, sheep dip, even gas and aeroplane engines. Many other articles including the all-important galvanised iron and wire netting were unprocurable. Wages were high, but so were prices. By 1920 the prices index had risen from 100 to 247. In the same year the declared basic wage was 14 per cent less than that laid down in the famous Harvester Award which, thirteen years earlier, had established the principle of a 'living wage' for a man, his wife and family. When the Commonwealth Arbitration Court proclaimed that principle, the wage-earner had been receiving 56.2 per cent of the earnings of industry. In the war years his share fell to 48.4 per cent. It was still falling when the Harvester base was abandoned in 1931.

But money was flowing into the country. Where, before the war, it had been invested in gold-mines and pastoral

companies and Government railways, now there was no doubt the shift of capital was towards the heavy industries, the base metals, textiles. Electrification was advancing. Once it had been cheaper to send goods from England and Europe, even with the import duties of the 'New Protection', which had certainly fostered little local industries, but had also had the perplexing result of raising to a flourishing condition certain hoary and well-established monopolies, such as tobacco, sugar, steel and shipping. These monopolies had plenty of money to invest in branch industries.

The overgrown cities meant larger shops, commercial travellers, more buses and railways, suburbs a-building. More and more people were employed, not in producing goods, but in transport and communication, recreations, as middlemen, as clerks in Government departments. While the country workers increased by 10 per cent, the city workers advanced in numbers by 54 per cent. The country became a Cinderella in the social and financial organisation. Gold-mining no longer mattered. Although Australia supplied a quarter of the world's needs in wool, the actual number of sheep in 1920 was no more than in 1891, the increased production being in the quality and weight of fleeces.

Money was in steel not wool. As an investment the primary and secondary industries, between 1914 and 1940, neatly changed places. More than half the money not in the banks was in 1914 invested in coal, gold-mining and pastoral companies; but by 1940 it had sunk to less than a fifth. Manufactures which had been less than a fifth in 1914 now absorbed the half share previously invested in the products of the land.

The companies were expanding, floating new share issue; but the Governments were fluttering in the golden rain as well. During the war the Federal Government had found that the money available for borrowing in England (London financiers had always held 70 per cent of Australia's debt) was inadequate for war needs. An internal loan was asked for the

first time, and the Government continued to ask and to receive. After the war, loans for 'development' poured in from British and American investors. Just before the bubble burst, in 1930, Australia owed £554,000,000 in London and £47,000,000 in New York. Many of the public works on which the money was spent were urgently needed. They were not prodigal spending but as necessary to a war-worn economy as horseshoes for a hard road. But some slight uneasiness was surely justified by the knowledge that every year the country was happily borrowing to pay the interest on debts already contracted. More uneasiness might have arisen from the closer settlement schemes on which so much loan money was spent. In one case it was disclosed that the Government had settled 1,700 migrant dairy farmers at a cost of £9,000,000.

By 1931 43.4 per cent of the population in the sugar areas of the north consisted of Italians who worked in family groups, undercut the local Australians, absorbed their farms and brought out more Italians. Government mistakes, soil deficiencies, droughts, all wrought together against the resounding plans for settlement of returned soldiers. The Government had advanced money through the banks to buy land, implements, stock. Now they found that not even the most skilful and hard-working could make a living and still pay off their holdings. Too little capital, inexperience, the falling prices of what they could produce, whatever the cause, 30 per cent of the soldiers settled in Victoria, 50 per cent in New South Wales, 55 per cent in South Australia and 60 per cent in Western Australia were found to have left their farms, adding each his family tragedy to a mounting roll of dissatisfaction, unemployment and restless resentment.

People were asking questions. Why did the coal-miners strike so often? Coal turned all the wheels of the cities, provided the electric power, but men were leaving the coal-fields; those who stayed were fighting a stubborn battle against

new methods and mechanisation. In 1929 there were 22,470 men employed in the coal industry, and the owners said they were being ruined. Five years later the tonnage of coal produced had slightly increased, but there were only 13,465 men in the industry.

The British migrant with up-to-date information on the position in Australia was not easily wooed by Government promises to a land where strikes, lock-outs and disturbances of all kinds were accepted as the ordinary course. The Australian birthrate was falling; and the great open spaces must be filled, the statesmen declared; but there was an ugliness underlying the slick gloss of financial and political varnish. But the Glugs of Gosh, as their poet, C. J. Dennis, sang in his bitter allegory:

*continued, with greed and glee,
To buy cheap clothing, and pills, and tea:
. . . They all grew idle, and fond of ease,
And easy to swindle, and hard to please . . .
And the Knight, Sir Stodge, with a wave of his hand,
Declared it a happy and prosperous land.*

The demand was all for new markets, new fields for investment. In New Guinea, where the lands of German settlers had been confiscated and the former owners turned away often in circumstances of great hardship, gold-mines were being opened up; but whereas the Australian administration could not find the money for native schools, it gladly remitted tax to 'encourage' the export of millions in gold.

Nauru, rich in phosphates, had passed to Australian control, and could be worked by cheap coolie labour from China. The share market promised riches to investors in gold-mines in Fiji, in gold and diamonds in Borneo, and there were forty-seven Australian companies operating tin or rubber holdings in the Malay States, Burma and Siam. The *Pacific Island Year-Book* spoke glowingly of selling the natives and Asiatics of the

Solomon Islands 'European standards of life', particularly cloth and bully-beef.

Sir Hubert Murray, whose inspired administration of Papua, had kept that country, despite the most niggardly treatment in the matter of finance from Australia, as a bright spot upon its escutcheon, made a dignified protest against the operation of the Navigation Act passed by the Commonwealth for the protection and encouragement of Australian shipping. Only ships complying with Australian conditions and worked by European or Australian seamen could call at Papuan ports. This meant that now only one ship a month from one shipping-line provided transportation for passengers and cargo, and that only with one Australian port. Before the passing of the Navigation Act the cheap freights on the Dutch and German boats calling at Papuan ports had greatly aided the planters, but now, when a sudden strike or dispute delayed the monthly ship from Sydney, the planters had no food for their labourers. Still it was a very profitable run for the Australian shipping company.

Australia's interest in the South Seas extended as far as the Antarctic, where the Commonwealth modestly took control, under the Antarctic Acceptance Act, of 2,472,000 square miles of territory. There was unfortunately no prospect of a consumer demand among the seals and penguins; but the area included what expert geologists declared was the largest unworked coalfield in the world, a field over 1,000 miles long and 50 to 80 miles wide. There were certainly other minerals to be mined, and the whaling industry was of growing importance.

At home, in the expanding coastal cities, the ferment of discontent was seething against the financial oligarchy. Through interlocking directorates a comparatively small group controlled the sugar, iron, steel, tobacco, chemicals, shipping, cement, textiles, and the private banks which linked all together. They owned the great grazing properties, the

great city stores, shares in this company, a controlling interest in that, and they provided every soap-box orator with powder and shot. He could point out that every pound earned by the New South Wales Government Railways paid the investor 6s. 1d. in interest in 1928 and 9s. 7d. in 1934.

But the abuse heaped on the rich Australian was mild compared with that lavished on the British bondholder. A lasting effect of the struggle over conscription had been a dangerous anti-British sentiment. Britain, the extremist urged, treated Australia as a reservoir of men in wartime and a field for capital investment in peace. Australia was 'England's mortgaged estate'. This had been primarily the view of that violent minority organisation, The Industrial Workers of the World, which, advocating sabotage and revolution, found itself during the war years quite naturally blamed for everything from failing crops and bad weather to murder, arson and forgery. On the charge of arson a dozen of its leaders found themselves in gaol on evidence which was, to say the least of it, doubtful. Under an amended Unlawful Associations Act other members were rounded up and the organisation virtually destroyed. Its vacant place was taken, on the principle that Nature abhors a vacuum, by the comparatively small Communist Party. People were demanding an explanation of the economic forces which beset them, and the Communists had a plausible answer that it was all the fault of the wicked capitalist system.

In the 'twenties, and more so in the 'thirties, people felt that if they could only grasp some first cause of the whole muddle, they could remedy society and its woes. By the time the Second World War had ploughed up the economic surface, the wicked capitalist had given way, as the villain of the piece, to the entrenched bureaucrat, who sat spinning regulations to enmesh the helpless, whose numbers increased under the eyes of the victims, whose powers were unlimited and elusive. The sturdy optimism which declared that all you needed

was a revolution was replaced by a dejection and feeling of helplessness, a bewilderment which feels no solution to be adequate.

But the prophets whose voices were uplifted in the 'thirties were quite certain that, if only a sufficient number of people joined them, they could be led through the Red Sea of unemployment, want, desperation, which was rising about them; for by 1930 even the young ladies in the cocktail lounges had met a man who knew there was a depression and what should be done to end it.

Had the British bondholder wished to retort, he could have pointed cynically to the fate of the Northern Australian Meat Company, which invested nearly a million pounds in the cattle industry and meat-freezing plant at Darwin. It was a subsidiary of a well-known set of capitalists called Vesteys, and the white workers of Darwin naturally treated it as an enemy. So outrageous were their demands, so sudden and triumphant their strikes, that they permanently wrecked, not only Vestey's freezing-works, but their own chances of employment. They secured the recall of one administrator, boldly deported another, and with him the Commonwealth judge. Production stopped, industry ceased, shipping disappeared. It was a triumph for the unions, who had seen to it that the British bondholder entirely withdrew his capital and quitted his investment at a loss. Nor was he likely again to dare the might of the entrenched workers in Darwin. Meanwhile the entrenched workers were out of a job.

The Northern Territory, up to 1939, specialised in producing only deficits. The huge cattle holdings, 470 of them totalling 183,728 square miles, paid one-twenty-fifth of a penny rental per acre, and then complained they were not making a profit. The Federal Government could see no reason to spend money on a place where there were not sufficient voters to form an electorate.

After 1927 the Federal Government dwelt in splendid

isolation high among the windy sheep pastures of Canberra, quarantined from the fevers and excitements of the cities, the disgruntled working classes and any electors who could not afford the expensive and uncomfortable journey to the Federal capital. It was a Government which seemed to mis-handle every disagreement between capital and labour. Stanley Melbourne Bruce, who led it, had outraged the best feelings of the Australian people by wearing spats. He said it was merely to keep his feet warm, but there were suspicions that the spats were yet another proof of his anti-working-class sentiments. The strikes and industrial disturbances became so monotonous that at a meeting of state Premiers Mr. Bruce delivered an ultimatum. Unless the states handed over all industrial powers to the Commonwealth, the Conciliation and Arbitration Act would be repealed. The passing of that Act had ruined three Governments and the threat to repeal it ruined the Bruce-Page Government. Tens of thousands, whose interest in politics was less than their interest in dog-racing, lived and worked by awards of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. The Bill passed its second reading with a majority of four, and then Mr. W. M. Hughes, who had never forgiven or forgotten his relegation to obscurity by the Bruce-Page regime, led four other members across to the opposition, destroying the Government's majority.

In the ensuing election Labour was returned to office with an overwhelming majority to face, with an almost pathetic lack of competence, the blame and gloom of the Great Depression. Thirty per cent of the union membership was subsisting on the dole or tramping the country looking for work or charity. The young men of the Labour Party were busy forming Socialisation Units to advocate the restoration to Labour's immediate objectives of the nationalisation of all basic industries, including the long-established monopolies.

At the invitation of the Federal Government the Bank of England sent out a mission headed by Sir Otto Niemeyer to

advise public and private economies. Australian securities abroad had fallen sickeningly. The Commonwealth Bank refused further overdrafts to the Federal Government. But in New South Wales the Premier, Mr. J. T. Lang, was smiting the British bondholder hip and thigh from every possible platform. He did not make any distinction between the comparatively small war debt of £92,000,000 and the £500,000,000 borrowed for development. They were both part of the sinister grip which the British financier had fastened on the country. The Lang Plan demanded that Australia repudiate these overseas debts, and the enthusiasm for Mr. Lang's ideas was hysterical in its fervour. Banners at huge rallies proclaimed that 'Lang is Right'; hundreds of thousands of men and women were ready to discard in their desperation every last link with the existing financial system. They followed him in monster processions through the city, stood blocking the streets round the Premier's department waiting their leader's fateful decision.

Mr. Lang was the closest approach to a National Socialist leader that Australia possessed, and had he wished to lead a revolution he could have done so. However, he did not have the temperament. When the State Governor dismissed the Lang Government from office on the grounds that it had violated the constitution, a proceeding unique in the country's history, Mr. Lang accepted the dismissal; and his following fell into confusion and dismay.

The more conservative leadership of Federal Labour cut Government expenditure, wages, internal loan interest. A split in the party over the Lang Plan destroyed Labour's majority. The leader of the breakaway group, the mild and schoolmasterly Mr. Lyons, was rushed into office by yet another movement, this time called 'All for Australia', which held its huge rallies and sold its little buttons on street-corners and otherwise added to itself the tens of thousands of human sheep bleating to follow any leader to firm ground.

THE GLUGS OF GOSH

For the next eight years the good, moderate, unenterprising Lyons Government allowed the country to pull itself out of the depression by its own bootlaces. It was greatly assisted by the Hoover Moratorium in America, and the British Two Year Moratorium on the War Debt Sinking Fund. Australia's securities abroad recovered; the panic subsided. The banks gave credit again. Unemployment began gradually to fall, and by 1937 it was reduced to 9.3 of the total union membership. The heavy metal industries were recovering. In fact they were beginning to boom again. There were, of course, unpleasant things happening on the other side of the world, but Australia by singular luck and the protection of Providence could always count on being safe.

FATE TAKES NO NOTICE

IN PEACETIME, pugnacity and enterprise in army chiefs was encouraged by making them fight for every penny they got from the Government. The Commonwealth's attitude towards the army and navy was identical with that adopted towards the aborigines. They were kept in existence, but at the least cost and a 'lowered level of vitality'.

As early as 1919 the chiefs of naval intelligence were urging that Australia's huge naked coastline made her as open to attack as a stranded whale. They worked out a plan for enlisting isolated settlers, planters, missionaries, traders and Government officers in a volunteer Coast Watching Service, not only in Australia but in Papua, the Solomon Islands and New Guinea. As the coast watchers would cost nothing, the scheme was given official approval. By 1939 the purse-strings were loosened to provide tele-radio equipment where none was available. During the Second World War many of these coast watchers stayed on in Japanese-held territory, calmly perched on some convenient and well-screened hillside, taking hairbreadth risks and dying with laconic hardihood. Had it not been for their information of the movements of shipping and troops, the war in the north might have taken a very different aspect. The coast watchers' organisation—known as 'Ferdinand', from the bull that did not fight, but only smelt the flowers—enlisted the élite of the islanders, as the white men long settled around the Coral Sea were called. The islanders were accustomed to living alone and with natives, each a law unto himself; and ready to do anything from treating the diseases of the coconut to walking several

hundred miles through hostile country while suffering from scrub typhus, malaria or tropical ulcers. When 'Ferdinand' became too well organised and sedate, its former members turned commando and went happily hunting Japanese, each with his own little band of natives.

The outbreak of war in 1939 found three-fifths of the Australian people living in the cities. The refugees who had fled from the Nazis had shown no more inclination to brave the cow- and sheep-infested countryside than the Australian born. They preferred to set up sweated backyard industries and snatch a profit from the luxury trades. It was not altogether possible to ignore the outbreak of war in Europe; indeed, every help in men and money must be contributed to put down Hitler, whose methods roused Australians to indignation, but at the same time the leisure of the people and the mid-weekly racing fixtures must be in no wise disturbed.

The Communists, denouncing the 'phony war', boasted that 'there had been more strikes in the heavy industries than ever before because we have made strikes our business'. There were scandals over profiteering, the cost-plus system which left so many loopholes for the unscrupulous contractor, complaints of sub-standard goods supplied to the Government. There were shortages of supplies and machine tools. That detested capitalistic monopoly, the Broken Hill Proprietary, was found to have imported a stockpile of raw materials and machines which suddenly became a national asset and the basis of the war effort.

As the German armies poured like a lava flow across Europe, the pinched anxiety over Dunkirk, Greece, Libya, mingled with resentment at the inevitable mistakes and bunglings of the Government. Under the National Security Regulations, the Federal Government had taken to itself extraordinary powers which only war made acceptable to the public. The position had developed that power really lay in the hands of

the Country Party, without whose support Mr. Menzies, the Prime Minister, would have no majority. It was not a happy coalition, and every invitation to the Labour Party to join a National Government was refused. The rigid organisation of that party, its policy of rewarding long service with a seat in Parliament, its insistence on unity, its firm links with the unions, all these were now an accumulated source of strength.

John Curtin, as leader of the Federal Labour Party, had worked for ten years to bring his men to the Treasury bench. He laid down three axioms and grimly maintained them: An opposition was necessary when the Government had such autocratic powers; Capitalism as an economic system was too loose to deal with the problems of modern war, and the continent's population of seven millions had man-power sufficient only to defend the territories of Australia. The last was considered to be in very bad taste. Everyone, except for a few scaremongers like W. M. Hughes, knew that Australia was perfectly safe from attack. The powerful base of Singapore protected the north. There was the British Navy. The Japanese were incapable of handling modern weapons of warfare. Certainly there were rumours that the Japanese luggers poaching shell, trochus and bêche de mer around the north of Australia had mapped these reef-toothed waters until they knew them as well as the Australian Navy. But it was so easy to forget that Australia swung by an umbilical cord from the mainland of Asia. If the United States was willing to be the source of fifty per cent of Japan's overseas war supplies, there could be no harm in Australia preserving Japanese friendship by large shipments of scrap-iron. Curtin's blunt warning that Japan was only waiting until she was ready for war with the democracies was regarded as illiberal and undiplomatic.

It was inevitable that, as the war approached closer home, Curtin's firmness, the simple directness of his policy, should

bring Labour to office. The Prime Minister committed the fatal error of leaving a bickering coalition Government while he visited Great Britain and the Middle East. He returned to find his position so invidious that he resigned the leadership of the United Australia Party to that elderly firebrand, W. M. Hughes, with the Country Party leader, Arthur Fadden, as Prime Minister. Within a few weeks the break-up of the Government parties was complete; two independents crossed the floor of the House, and Labour, after ten years, occupied the Government benches.

On 7th December 1941 Japanese aircraft descended on Pearl Harbour and left the American fleet stationed there in a calamitous state. A breath of the approaching typhoon of war chilled the southern cities, but there was always Singapore. Then came news of the sinking of the two great British battleships, the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*. There came a lessening of the belief that there must be always some providential cushioning between the chosen inhabitants of Australia and unpleasant realities.

The new Prime Minister did nothing to encourage a false confidence. A cool and intelligent man, he did not pretend to brilliance, but attracted brilliant men to him. His great quality was a direct, blunt simplicity. It was no hardship for him to do without luxuries. He drove the people to 'work or fight'; he argued with them; he broadcast speeches in his rather drawling, nasal voice, letting them know as much as he dared. He was a patient man—long years of waiting had made him so; a firm man. By the middle of 1942 a larger proportion of the Australian people were either fighting or in war-work than even of the people of Great Britain. The luxury trades were wiped out; the Government controlled employment. There was total mobilisation.

In January Curtin, in a broadcast, frankly stated: 'The Australian Government regards the Pacific struggle as primarily one in which the United States and Australia must have the

fullest say in the direction of the democracies' fighting plan.' The offence this gave was increased by his request for a Pacific War Council where Australia might have some voice. But what really condemned the proposal to the Downing Street waste-paper basket was the suggestion that the Empire sign a pact with Russia in order to throw some of that country's strength eastward to take the Japanese in the rear. As it was not desired that Russia should have any foothold in the Pacific, this proposal amounted to diplomatic impertinence.

The Australian representations were ignored and a purely local British advisory council was set up to assist Alfred Duff Cooper, the resident Minister at Singapore. Although the Australian Government was given no place on this council, it could not be prevented from urging reinforcements in Malaya, and its own supplies and men were promptly sent. A great body of the troops were lost in Malaya.

The Australian Government continued desperately to demand some direct communication with the United States. A Pacific War Council was formed in London, and on this Australia was given representation, with China, India and the Netherlands. Still, at no point did representatives of the United States meet the representatives of Australia. Decisions were cabled back and forth from London to Washington, vetoed, altered, discussed again, while Japan moved down the edge of Asia. The war chiefs were occupied in Europe and the Pacific was of subsidiary importance.

Bombs were falling on Darwin and smashing the fixed idea that the continent would never know the impact of invasion. Singapore fell on 15th February 1942. The first explosion of overwhelming military and naval strength had carried the Japanese so far south that in January their Zeros were over New Guinea. The Curtin Government was not to blame for the decision to build only slow Wirraway training craft instead of the fast fighters which should have met the Japanese. Out-gunned, out-manoeuvred, out-speeded, the Wirraways

were shot down as the Japanese proceeded to punch holes in the flimsy defences of Rabaul.

In May the Japanese were established on a line running roughly from Akyab in the west down through the Andaman Islands, along the coast of Sumatra, Timor, the Aru Islands, to Dutch New Guinea, and thence across to Salamoia, to New Britain, New Ireland, the northern Solomons. Their impetus had of necessity to decrease with the distance. Both sides knew that the capture of Port Moresby, on the south coast of New Guinea, must be the first move towards the invasion of Australia. Then did Curtin, in one of his broadcast talks to the Australian people, tell them that the little harbour of Port Moresby was their real Singapore, a fortress guarded only by the will of the people to work and fight, and by the great serrations of the New Guinea and Papuan ranges, peaks towering to fifteen thousand feet like the spikes of some sprawling tyrannosaurus with its tail in the sea, the great volcanic chain continuing in coils of islands dwindling to mere underwater cones, clusters of coral, burst bubble-rings of land on the wide blue water, where here and there blazed the corrugated-iron roofs of some defenceless settlement.

For the first time Australia, as a nation, demanded an equal voice in its own defence, emerging with almost indecent haste from the shell of comfortable trust. For Australia was an independent nation. In a manner that would have delighted the heart of Alfred Deakin, that enthusiast for international co-operation, it had peacefully drifted into the position of a free and equal member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. By the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and the Statute of Westminster in 1931 it had achieved independence without anyone taking much notice. True, the Commonwealth had not bothered to ratify the Statute of Westminster, and it was not until the Curtin Government had found that some legal inconvenience over shipping could be smoothed away by

confirming certain clauses, that the constitutional position was remedied.

In March 1942 the Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth broke with precedent and sent a personal, direct request to the President of the United States that General Douglas Macarthur be appointed Supreme Commander of the Allied forces with his base in Australia. The appointment was a master-stroke of genius, for Macarthur's defence of the Philippines had stirred the imagination of Australians. Civilians and military alike began to feel that Australia had a chance. With Macarthur American forces began to arrive. In that decisive May month, the Japanese were held at Port Moresby, and in the Battle of the Coral Sea, a series of engagements over a wide area, badly beaten. The Japanese attempt to reach Port Moresby over the Papuan Ranges was repulsed, as was the infiltration down through the Solomon Islands. After weeks of hard fighting the Japanese airstrip almost completed on Guadalcanal was captured by naval and amphibious forces.

It was difficult to convince the Australian people that the war was not as good as won, and that the time had come to relax. The Prime Minister, in a way that would have been inexplicable to the Russians or Germans, still found it necessary to argue and persuade. 'We cannot expect to rely on strokes of luck,' he declared. In September he was still preaching 'austerity', and was unfavourably regarded for doing so, although the fighters in New Guinea were holding on amid the leeches, the malarial swamps, disease and fever; the Navy and Air Force were desperately employed for every gain.

The ordinary Australian regarded war as something which must as little as possible interfere with his freedom. Those who had to fight, fought with consummate ferocity, but soldiers and civilians alike detested the organisation, the discipline, the red tape of war, the being moved by someone else's orders to an unknown destination. The casualties were only half those of the First World War; but whereas in the earlier war life

had not been very different from the life of peacetime, there was now general industrial conscription, and fifty-six thousand women were involved in the general call-up. There was a heavy, cumbersome bureaucracy directing, advising, checking and inspecting every aspect of life.

With general industrial conscription there was also the promise of conscription for the armed forces. No one knew better than John Curtin, who had helped lead the fight against conscription in 1916, that one false move on this issue would split the Labour Party again. He placed his proposal before the annual Labour Conference before submitting it to Parliament. It was a simple resolution asking that the Government be authorised to extend the territories covered by the Defence Act to include 'such other Territories in the South-west Pacific Area as the Governor-General proclaims as being Territories associated with the defence of Australia'.

The conservative Press expressed indignation that Curtin should dare to submit his proposal to a Labour Conference rather than to Parliament. But there could be no opposition in the House, for the United Australia Party and the Country Party were already pledged to support any measure which would give a unified army for Macarthur's command. Hitherto there had been two separate Australian fighting forces: the A.I.F., a voluntary body, and the militia for the defence of Australian territory. As the limit of Australia's territory was New Guinea, this was highly inconvenient. To the critics in his own cabinet Curtin replied: 'Rabaul is farther from the Australian mainland than Timor. It is not feasible for me to be a good Labour man when I conscript men for Rabaul and New Guinea, and to be a "suspect" Labour man for doing the same thing in respect of Timor.' His proposal was so reasonable, so astute, that the vote fell out exactly as he predicted. The Labour Conference voted twenty-four to twelve in favour, four states to two. It was a triumph of political management.

The Commonwealth had taken control of the income-tax field. Under the rather ambiguously named 'Uniform Taxation' scheme, all taxes were now paid to the Commonwealth, and although the states appealed to the High Court, they lost their case. As the Commonwealth also had control of customs and excise, this left the state administrations dependent on whatever dole their federal confrères might think sufficient. Nor was it to be expected that taxation would greatly decrease. Wages were rising, costs were rising; and already, in the midst of the problems of war, the Curtin Government was haunted by the prospect of peace, a peace in which it must relinquish those powers which alone made the war situation supportable. Remembering 1919, they feared an economic chaos.

The victory over uniform taxation was so heartening that Curtin proposed a referendum. The people should be asked to extend the Government's powers for five years after peace was declared. He went about this referendum in his usual canny manner, first calling a conference of Premiers and party leaders. Mr. Menzies and Mr. Fadden strongly protested against any extension of 'controls'. They took up the position that they were defending the people against the continuance of a bureaucratic dictatorship. The state Premiers discussed, modified, made their own proposals. The eighty-year-old W. M. Hughes advised caution. He had just been expelled by his own party for rejoining, at Curtin's personal request, the Advisory War Council after the United Australia Party had withdrawn its members. Hughes suggested to the Labour Attorney-General, Dr. H. V. Evatt, that to ask for fourteen different sets of powers under one blanket vote, powers which included everything from price control to the welfare of the aborigines, was not the way to get them. He himself had always advocated wider powers for the Commonwealth, but had once made the mistake of asking for too much. His advice was disregarded, and the 1944 referendum was defeated with the same flat negative which had met previous proposals

to extend federal powers. The hatred of wartime regimentation had certainly not made the voter more amenable to the centralisation of government in Canberra.

John Curtin died in July 1945. His Treasurer and friend, J. B. Chifley, who had carried the financial administration of war, now for three years, as Prime Minister and Treasurer, coolly and efficiently eased down the country's economy at a time when reaction from war strain was worst.

In the post-war world no country could be more eager than Australia to participate in international affairs. In the councils of the United Nations, in the reconstruction of Western Europe, wherever there was discussion of remedies or agreements there were representatives of Australia. Particularly did the Government urge a pact of Pacific Powers and declare its deep interest in that sphere. Even towards the Antarctic two stations were set up, one on Heard Island and one on Macquarie Island, which might be useful for more than weather observation.

For the Australian people, peace meant the joyful prospect of clearing away wartime controls, and the hosts of officials who administered them. However, one in four continued to work for the Government, and the most important member of the community became the man who was ready to work with his hands. By 1951, a hundred and seventy thousand displaced persons, New Australians, had been brought from Europe under promise that they would give two years' labour where it was most needed, in the public works and heavy industries; but still the demand for labour outstripped the supply. The population rose to eight and a half millions; the birthrate was no longer dropping, and the need for houses, food, clothing, goods, services, had never been greater. The Governments were faced with the necessity for spending large sums on public works, particularly on dams and water conservation after devastating floods had stripped the countryside. The states annually insisted that they could no longer provide

the social services of schools, hospitals, police and transport, on the portion of taxes allowed them.

The country was never richer. The price of wool, to which the whole Australian economy was geared, was seven to eight times greater than it had been before the war. Overseas capital flowed into the country, £176,000,000 of it in 1950-51 compared with £29,000,000 in the pre-war year. Interest rates were low, loans were easily obtained, the stock exchange was booming. Despite international monetary problems, and the two-hundred-and-fifty-per-cent increase in the price of imports, somehow raw materials and machines were being brought from overseas. Wages were higher than they had ever been. But everyone complained.

With the industrialists, the sore points were taxation, Government regulation of trade and industry, the imposition of a forty-hour week, and the refusal of the workers not only to increase production in an economy starved for goods, but even to maintain it at a pre-war level. In those unions more openly under Communist control, the wharves and shipping, heavy metal industries and coal, the Communist policy of seeing that capitalism did not recover from the war fell in very happily with the viewpoint of the ordinary worker who felt that he had only his labour to sell and that he was going to sell it at the highest possible price. Overtime payments would mean, in most cases, merely increased taxation for the man who worked overtime. While insisting that no extra men be employed on threat of strike, a ban on overtime became one popular way of irritating the management. Coal-miners saw to it that there was no opportunity for any reserve of coal to be built up, and that industry worked from hand to mouth. Electricity supplies and gas supplies were cut to a stage where the cities became more uncomfortable than the outback. Strikes which would withdraw key workers and throw thousands of others out of employment were tried and improved on.

The exasperated population dismissed the Federal Labour Government and replaced it with a new Liberal Party and Country Party Government led by Mr. Menzies, who went into office on promise to deal with the 'Communist Menace'. His Communist Party Dissolution Act was coldly disallowed by the High Court in 1950. Returned to power in 1951 the Menzies Government set out to obtain by referendum not only powers to deal with Communists but to alter the Conciliation and Arbitration Act and to control the economy of Australia to meet the threat of war. Insisting that there would be another war in a few years, and that defence must be the first expenditure, that services and goods must be cut, the Menzies Government had come, ironically enough, full circle back to the position of John Curtin whose 'austerity' its members had so often opposed.

The recruiting drive was intensified, and the prospect of either war or an economic collapse darkened the horizon. Nobody liked the setting-up of a rocket-range for testing war inventions in the central deserts. Nobody could see good reason to save for an old age they felt they might not see. Overpaid, overtaxed, bewildered and not a little sullen, the Australian people faced the Jubilee Year of Federation. No longer could they feel that they were safe. After one hundred and fifty years of living in the privacy of their own seas, they were tied to the fate of the world. They marched forward, firmly shackled to the other peoples of the earth, and their invisible leg-irons clinked, as their invisible overseers drove them to a destination, distant, unforeseeable and wild as once had been the shores of Botany Bay.



IMPORTANT DATES

- 1606. Willem Jansz visited Northern Australia.
- 1629. François Pelsart left first white settlers.
- 1642. Abel Tasman discovered Tasmania and New Zealand.
- 1688. William Dampier visited Australia.
- 1770. Captain James Cook discovered east coast of Australia.
- 1788 (Jan.). Captain Arthur Phillip, Governor 1788-1792, landed at Botany Bay and established penal colony. Port Jackson, later renamed Sydney, founded.
- Colony at Norfolk Island founded.
- Comte de La Pérouse at Botany Bay.
- 1792. Governor Phillip resigned; succeeded by Lieutenant-Governors Grose and Paterson.
- A. J. d'Entrecasteaux explored south and west coasts.
- 1795-1800. Captain John Hunter, Governor.
- 1797. John Macarthur began breeding of Merino sheep in Australia.
- 1798. Discovery of Bass Strait by Bass and Flinders.
- 1800-1806. Captain Philip G. King, Governor.
- 1800-1805. Grant and Flinders surveyed coasts of Australia.
- 1804. Hobart founded.
- 1806-1808. Captain William Bligh, Governor.
- 1808. Governor Bligh deprived of office for his tyranny.
- 1810-1821. Colonel Lachlan Macquarie, Governor.
- 1813. Expeditions into the interior by Wentworth, Lawson, Blaxland.
- 1814. Civil Courts set up in New South Wales.
- 1821-1825. General Sir Thomas Brisbane, Governor.
- 1828. Second constitution of New South Wales.
- 1825-1831. General Sir Ralph Darling, Governor.
- 1828-1831. Sturt's expeditions into South Australia.
- 1829. Swan River settlement (later Western Australia) founded.
- 1831-1837. General Sir Richard Bourke, Governor.
- 1831-1836. Sir Thomas Mitchell's expeditions into South Australia.
- 1834. South Australia Act.
- Settlement of Port Phillip.
- 1836 (Dec.). Colony of South Australia founded.

IMPORTANT DATES

- 1837 (April). Melbourne founded.
Grey explored North-Western Australia.
- 1838-1846. Sir George Gipps, Governor.
- 1838-1843. Explorations of Strzelecki in New South Wales and Tasmania.
- 1839. Discovery of gold at Bathurst and Wellington.
- 1840. Eyre explored Western Australia.
- 1841-1846. Caroline Chisholm's efforts for female immigrants.
- 1842. Sydney created a city.
- 1843. Lander and Lefroy explored Western Australia.
- 1845. Sturt reaches middle of the continent from South Australia.
- 1846-1850. Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy, Governor (Governor-General of Australia 1850-1855).
- 1847. Kennedy's last expedition.
- 1848. Gregory and von Mueller explored north and interior.
- 1849. Agitation against revival of transportation.
- 1850 (Aug.). Australian Constitution Act: Victoria separated from New South Wales; South Australia and Tasmania granted representative government.
- 1851. Hargraves's discovery of gold.
Victoria proclaimed a separate colony.
- 1853. Transportation ceased.
- 1855. Responsible government in all colonies except Western Australia.
- 1856. Tasmania given self-government.
- 1858-1862. Stuart's expeditions.
- 1859 (Dec.). Queensland separated from New South Wales and created a colony.
- 1860-1861. Burke, Wills and others crossed the continent to Gulf of Carpentaria.
- 1861-1862. Stuart, M'Kinley and Landsborough crossed continent.
- 1865. Transportation abolished.
- 1870. Western Australia granted representative government.
- 1883 (June). Direct railway between Melbourne and Sydney completed.
- 1885. Inter-state negotiations for federation.
Federal Council of Australasia Act.
- 1890. Australasian Federation Conference at Melbourne.
Responsible government in Western Australia.
- 1891. National Australasian Federation Convention: title of 'Commonwealth of Australia' adopted.
- 1893. Australian Federation Conference at Sydney.
- 1895. Australasian Federal Council at Hobart.
- 1897. Australian Federal Council at Hobart.

IMPORTANT DATES

- 1898. Australian Federal Convention at Adelaide.
- 1900 (July). Federal Convention at Sydney and Melbourne.
- 1901 (Jan.). Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act.
- 1901-1903. Institution of Commonwealth of Australia.
- 1901-1903. Lord Hopetoun (later Marquess of Linlithgow), Governor-General.
- 1901 (May). First Federal Parliament opened by Duke of Cornwall (later King George V) at Melbourne.
- 1901-1903. Edmund Barton, Federal Premier.
- 1903-1904. Lord Tennyson, Governor-General.
- 1903-1904. Alfred Deakin, Federal Premier.
- 1904-1908. Lord Northcote, Governor-General.
- 1904. John Christian Watson, Federal Premier.
- 1904-1905. George Houston Reid, Federal Premier.
- 1905-1908. Alfred Deakin, Federal Premier.
- 1908-1911. Lord Dudley, Governor-General.
- 1908-1909. Andrew Fisher, Federal Premier.
- 1909-1910. Alfred Deakin, Federal Premier.
- 1910-1913. Andrew Fisher, Federal Premier.
- 1911. Northern Territory of South Australia passed to Commonwealth control.
- 1911-1914. Lord Denman, Governor-General.
- 1913-1914. Joseph Cook, Federal Premier.
- 1914-1920. Sir R. C. Munro Ferguson (later Lord Novar), Governor-General.
- 1914 (Aug.). Declaration of war on Germany.
- Australian troops landed on German possessions in Pacific and embarked for Europe.
- 1914-1915. Andrew Fisher, Federal Premier.
- 1915. Gallipoli campaign.
- 1915-1923. W. M. Hughes, Federal Premier.
- 1919. Australia received mandate over former German possessions in Pacific.
- Treaty of Versailles.
- 1920. Australia became founder member of the League of Nations.
- 1920-1925. Lord Forster, Governor-General.
- 1920. Visit of Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII).
- 1922. First air service established between Derby and Geraldton.
- 1923-1929. S. M. Bruce (later Viscount Bruce), Federal Premier.
- 1925-1930. Lord Stonehaven, Governor-General.
- 1927. Visit of Duke of York (later King George VI).
- 1929-1931. James Scullin, Federal Premier.

IMPORTANT DATES

1930-1931.	Lord Somers, Governor-General (Acting).
1931-1936.	Sir Isaac Alfred Isaacs, Governor-General.
1931.	Statute of Westminster.
1931-1940.	J. A. Lyons, Federal Premier.
1939.	Declaration of war on Germany.
1936-1944.	Lord Gowrie, Governor-General.
1940-1941.	R. G. Menzies, Federal Premier.
1941.	Arthur Fadden, Federal Premier.
1941-1945.	John Curtin, Federal Premier.
1941.	Declaration of war on Japan.
1943.	Capture of Salamoia by Australian troops.
1944-1945.	Sir Winston Dugan, Governor-General (Acting).
1945-1947.	H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, Governor-General.
1945-1949.	Joseph Chifley, Federal Premier.
1945.	Surrender of Germany and Japan.
1947.	Sir Winston Dugan, Governor-General (Acting).
1947-1953.	Sir William McKell, Governor-General.
1949-	R. G. Menzies, Federal Premier.
1953-	Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, Governor-General.

INDEX

- Abbott Downing & Co., 154
 Abrolhos rocks, 2
 Adelaide: selection of site, 100; the 'overlanders' come to, 101-2, 114; Germans promised passage to, 102; discovery of silver and lead reported at, 103-4; and discovery of copper, 104; telegraphic communication between London and, 106; the deserts north of, 124; Eyre returns to, 127; and exploration into the north, 133, 136, 211-12; Convention sessions in, 233
 Admiralty, British, 6, 242
 Advisory War Council, 276
 Age, *The*, 218, 233, 237
 Agricultural Bank, 203
 Agricultural Society of Van Diemen's Land, 71
 Alexandrina, Lake, 52
 Alice Downs, 204
 All for Australia movement, 266
 Amalgamated Wireless, 256
 Amboyina, 28
 America, United States of: receives convicts, 12; New South Wales and, 58; and Deakin's report, 201; Civil War, 208; and the Chinese, 214; Deakin sent to, 237; supplies Japan, 270; Pacific War the concern of Australia and, but no contact between them, 272; Curtin appeals to, 274
 American Loyalists, 11
 Amsterdam, 1, 5
 Andaman Islands, 273
 Angas, George Fife (1789-1879), 99, 102, 103
 Antarctic Acceptance Act, 262
 Anti-Chinese League, 214
 Anti-Federation League, 233
 Anti-Sweating League, 228
 Anti-Transportation League, 160
 Anzac Bay, 250-1
 Archibald, J. F. (1856-1919), 225
 Argentine, the, 198, 200
 Arthur, Lieutenant-General Sir George (1784-1854), Governor of Van Diemen's Land 1823-1837, 72, 77, 83-6, 177
 Aru Islands, 273
 'Australasia' (Wentworth), 56
 Australasian Convention, 1891, 226
Austral Asiatic Review, *The*, 118
 Australia: discovered by Dutch, 1ff.; first settlement, 2ff.; curiosity brings British to, 5-7; Cook lands in, 9; first convicts settle in, 16; type of convicts sent to, 24; wages in, rise higher than in England, 37; 'most distinguished architect' of, 44; possibility of inland sea in, 45; Flinders' circumnavigation of, 46; early expansion of settlement in, 46; William Wentworth's position in, 57ff.; British offer self-government to colonies in, 63; Wentworth and constitution for, 64; Chartist demands and political system of, 83; beginnings of wool industry in, 92ff.; Wakefield and sale of land in, 96; Wakefield and self-government in, 98; sale of land in, 98; slowness of communications in, 105; wool and whale-oil as only exports of, 117; bad financial situation of, in 1840s, 118, 119; coast examined, 124; settlement of, by 1835, 124; Sturt the greatest explorer in, 131; spanning of, by overland telegraph, 136, 137; great road built across, 138; White Australia policy, 161, 213ff.; whaling in, 193-4; wool sales in, 196-7; meat industry in, 197-8; wheat-growing in, 198-202; Labour and, 222, 224; social legislation in, in 1890s and 1900s, 224; spread of culture in, 225; movement towards federation, 226ff.; shape of government in, 228ff.; fight for Commonwealth constitution, 233-5; transfer of Papua to, 241-2; early defence problems, 242; extra powers not granted to Federal Government by referenda, 244-5; 1913 elections and referendum, 249; and Gallipoli, 250-2; prosperity of 1920s, 258ff.; three-fifths

INDEX

Australia—*contd.*

of population lives in cities by 1939, 269; Pacific War the concern of United States and, but no contact between them, 272; its status as an independent nation, 273; taxation system, 276; and international affairs in the modern world, 277; population, 277

Australian, The, 57, 59

Australian Agricultural Company, 93

Australian Imperial Force, 275

Australian Natives Association, 232, 233

Australian Trans-Continental Railway, 127

Australian Workers' Union, 219, 253

Bagot, Charles (1788-1880), 104

Bakery Hill, 147, 149, 150

Balfour Declaration (1917), 273

Ballarat, 141, 143, 146, 151, 153, 154, 155, 236

Ballarat Reform League, 148

Ballarat Times, The, 145

Bank of Australia, 118

Bank of England, 265

Banks, Sir Joseph (1743-1820), 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 45

Barcaldine, 222

Barney, George (1792-1862), 208

Barrailleur, Francis (1773-1853), 47

Barrier Range, 128

Barton, Sir Edmund (1849-1920), 232, 234, 238, 239, 240

Bass Strait, 45, 67, 73, 110, 142

Batavia, 4, 9, 10

Batavia, 2

Bathurst, 139, 140-1, 156

Bathurst, Henry, 3rd Earl (1762-1834), 32, 35

Batman, John (1800-1840), 110, 111, 112, 113, 177

Baxter (explorer), 125-6

Baynton, Barbara, 225

Beaumont Hamel, battle of, 255

Bedford, 'Holy Willie', 77

Bendigo, 114, 141, 146

Bennet, 56

Bent, Andrew (1795-1850), 84, 85

Bent, Ellis (1779-1815), 39, 40

Bent, Jeffery (1780-1852), 39, 40

Benthamites, 98

Bentley (hotel-keeper), 147, 148

Bethany, 103

Big River Tribe, 80

Bigge, J. T. (1780-1843), 40, 41, 43, 44, 54, 58

Black War, 72, 76-77

Bland, William (1789-1868), 62-3

Blaxland, Gregory, 37, 48, 49, 55

Bligh, William (1754-1817), Governor of New South Wales 1805-1808, 29, 30, 31, 54, 66-7

Blue Mountains, 16, 33, 37, 47, 48, 55, 56, 57, 58

Boer War, 249

Bonwick, James (1817-1906), 80

Boomerang, 220

Borneo, 261

Botany Bay, 8, 10-11, 15, 18, 25, 34, 84

'Botany Bay Dozen', 17

Bourke, Sir Richard (1777-1855), Governor of New South Wales 1831-1837, 60, 108, 112, 120

Bowen, John (1785-1827), 66, 73

Boyd, Benjamin (1796-1851), 121, 194-5

'Braddon Clause', 241, 248

Brady, Matthew ('Gentleman'), 111, 177

Breen (coach-driver), 157

Brisbane, 49, 183, 207, 216

Brisbane, Sir Thomas (1773-1860), Governor of New South Wales 1821-1825, 49

Brisbane, river, 49, 207

Brisbane Gardens, 208

Bristol, 86

Britain, and British Government: British brought to Australia by curiosity, 5-7; autocratic government by, in New South Wales, 58; offers self-government to colonies, 63; refuses to renew Sorrell's term of office, 72; and South Australia, 98-103 *passim*; cuts off supply of convicts, 119; and Gipps, 120; and Australian policy after Gipps' departure, 122-3; agrees to send no more convicts, 160; and Gipps' payment of bounties, 161; and federation, 226, 234-45; and Australian defence, 242; Hughes and, in World War I, 252; extremist attacks on, 263; grants two-year moratorium on War Debt Sinking Fund, 267; Menzies visits, 271

Broken Hill, 105, 106, 131

Broken Hill Proprietary, 250, 269

Brouwer, Commander Hendrik, 1

INDEX

- Bruce, Stanley Melbourne, Viscount (1883-), 256, 265
 Brun, Malte, 45
 Bruni Island, 78
 Buccaneers Island, 6
 Buckland, 213
 Buckley, William (1780-1856), 111
 Buffalo, 99-100
 Bulletin, 225
 Burke, Robert O'Hara (1820-1861), 134-6
 Burna, 261, 273
 Burra Burra, 104, 105
 Burrageorang, 195
 Burrowa, 184
 Byrne, Joe, 187-91 *passim*
- California, 139, 140, 181, 195, 201, 213
 Cambridge, 56
 Canadian Gully, 146
 Canberra, 265
 Canowindra, 183
 Cape Town, 6
 Carboni, Raffaello, 146-53 *passim*
 Carpentaria, Gulf of, 1, 45, 105, 132, 133, 134, 205
 'Castle Forbes', 162
 Castlemaine, 155
 Castlereagh, river, 129
 Catholics, 220
 Cavanagh (miner), 143
 Ceylon, 212
 Chaffey brothers, 201, 202
 Chamberlain, Joseph (1836-1914), 234-5
 Chartists, 83, 86-7, 144, 146, 148, 149
 Chisley, J. B. (1885-1951), 277
 China, 137, 261, 272
 Chinese, 211, 213ff.
 Chisholm, Caroline (1808-1877), 164-6
 Churchill, Winston S. (1874-), 256
 Clarke, William (1798-1878), 139
 Clarke gang, 174
 Coal River, 59
 Coast Watching Service, 268-9
 Cobb, Freeman, 154, 155
 Cobb and Co., 154-8
 Cockatoo Island, 178
 Collins, David (1756-1810), Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania 1804-1810, 47, 66, 67, 69, 109, 112
 Colonial Conference, 238
 Colonial Office, 98, 120, 164
 Colonial Times, The, 76, 77, 84, 85
- Commonwealth Arbitration Court, 258, 265
 Commonwealth Bank, 266
 Commonwealth Bank Bill, 244
 Commonwealth Liberal League, 242
 Commonwealth of Australia: Parkes and, 230; Bill carried in Victoria, 233, and in other states, 233-4; British government and, 234-45
 Commonwealth of Nations, 273
 Commonwealth Oil Refineries, 256
 Communists, 263, 269, 278, 279
 Communist Party Dissolution Act, 279
 Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 265, 279
 Conscription, 249, 252-3, 254, 255, 263, 275
 Cook, James (1728-79), 7-11
 Cooksland, 168
 Coolgardie, 205
 Cooper, Alfred Duff, Viscount Norwich (1890-), 272
 Cooper, J. Fenimore, 10
 Cooper's Creek, 130, 134, 135
 Coral Sea, 268, 274
 Cork, 64
 Cornelis, Jerome, 2-3, 4
 Cornwall, 105
 Cornwall, H.R.H. Duke of (later King George V) (1865-1936), 235
 Cotton, Major, 201
 Country Party, 256, 270, 271, 275, 279
 Cressy Company, 94
 Crimean War, 168
 Cunningham, Allan (1791-1839), 49
 Cunningham, Peter (1789-1864), 39
 Curnow (schoolmaster), 190
 'Currency Lads and Lasses', 36, 37
 Curtin, John (1885-1945), 253, 270-9 *passim*
- Dampier, William (1652-1715), 5, 6, 7
 Daringa (aboriginal), 17
 Darling, Sir Ralph (1775-1858), Governor of New South Wales 1825-1831, 58-60
 Darling, river, 50, 51, 52, 109, 114, 127, 129
 Darling Range, 202
 Darwin, 105, 136, 212, 216, 264, 272
 Davey, Thomas (d. 1823), Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania 1812-1817, 68-70, 175

INDEX

- David Copperfield* (Dickens), 159, 163
 de Caen, General, 46
 Deakin, Alfred (1836-1919); and irrigation, 201, 237; and Parkes' meeting in grocer's shop, 231-2; and federal movement, 232-6; elected M.H.R., 236; succeeds Barton as Federal Premier, 239-40; and prohibition, 242; and defence, 242-3, 249; and federal constitution, 244; Hughes and, 243, 254; and international co-operation, 273
 Defence Act, 243, 249
 Dennis, C. J., 261
 Depot Glen, 130
 Derby, Edward Stanley, 14th Earl of (1799-1869), 89
 Derby, Edward Stanley, 15th Earl of (1826-1893), 229
 'Dirty Duffs', 77
 Disraeli, Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield (1804-1881), 90
 Doherty (convict), 87
 Dorsetshire labourers, 25, 83
 Duce (convict), 73
 Dutch, the, 1ff, 7
 Dutch East Indies, 4, 5
Duyfken, 1

 Eager (attorney), 34
 East Maitland, 42
 Edinburgh, H.R.H. Prince Alfred, Duke of (1844-1900), 220
 Edward VII, H.M. King (1841-1910), 234
 'Elegant Extracts', 77
Endeavour, 7, 8, 9, 10
 England: Westworth in, 55-7, 64-5; Robinson retires to, 81; Melville returns to, 85; wool industry in, 92, 121; Kavel in, 102; cable laid between, and Australia, 105; sending of frozen meat to, 198; strike of dock-workers in, 220. See also Britain, London
 Eugowra Gold Escort, 182, 183
 Eureka, 143, 146, 148, 151-3, 223
 Euroa, 188
 Evatt, H. V. (1894-), 153, 276
 Eyre, Edward John (1815-1901), 10, 124-7, 137
 Eyre's Creek, 129

 Factory Acts, 224, 228
 Fadden, Sir Arthur (1895-), 271, 276

 Farquhar, Sir Robert (1776-1830), 28
 Farrer, William (1845-1906), 199-201
 Fawkner, John (1792-1869), 111, 113
 Federal Council, 230
 Federation, 226ff.
 Field, Judge Barron (1786-1846), 58
 Fiji Islands, 261
 Fisher, Andrew (1862-1928), 250, 251
 Fitzroy, Sir Charles Augustus (1796-1858): Governor of New South Wales 1846-1850, Governor-General of Australia 1850-1855, 160
 Fitzroy, river, 137
 Flanders, 252-3
 Flinders, Matthew (1774-1814), 45-6, 71, 86, 100, 124-5
 Forbes, 156, 182
 Forbes, Sir Francis (1784-1841), 59
 Ford, Parson, 71
 Forrest, John, Lord (1847-1918), 202, 203, 226, 233, 239
 Forrest brothers, 137
 France, 18, 19, 27, 47, 66, 94
 Franklin, Sir John (1786-1847), 86-7, 88
 Frederick William III, King of Prussia (1770-1840), 102
 Free Selection Act, 197
 Free Trade Opposition, 238
 Fremantle, 95, 202
 Fulton, Henry (1761-1840), 35, 40
 Fusion Party, 242-3

 Gallipoli, 250-1
 Gardiner, Frank (Christie) (1830-1895?), 181-83
 Gawler, George (1796-1869), Governor of South Australia 1838-1841, 101, 103
Gazette, *The*, 57
 Geils, Colonel, 68
 George III, King (1738-1820), 7
 George V, King (1865-1936), 235
 Germany, 92-3, 102, 103, 132, 229-30
 Gibraltar, 13
 Gilbert (bushman), 133
 Giles, Ernest (1836-1897), 137
 Gipps, Sir George (1791-1847), Governor of New South Wales 1838-1846, 61-3, 114, 118, 120-2, 139, 161, 164
 Gladstone, 208
 Gladstone, W. E. (1809-1898), 90, 207-8
 Glasgow, 26
 Glenrowan, 190
 Golden Gully, 141

INDEX

- Goldfields, 139ff., 202, 208
 Good Hope, Cape of, 1, 19
 Gordon, James, 71
 Goulburn, 178, 181, 202
 Gray (explorer), 134, 135
 Great Australian Bight, 125, 137
 Great Barrier Reef, 8-9
 Great Black Line, 77-9
 Great Dividing Range, 180
 Greece, 269
 Greenway, Francis Howard (1777-1837), 42-4
 Greta, 188
 Grey, Henry, 3rd Earl (1802-1894), 88, 90, 98
 Grey, Sir George (1812-1898), Governor of South Australia 1841-1845, 103, 104
 Griffiths, Sir Samuel (1845-1920), 226, 231, 235, 240
 Grose, Francis (1754-1814), 20, 21, 22
 Guadalcanal, 195, 274
 Gulgong, 156
 Gundagai, 183

 Hall, Ben (1837-1865), 178, 183, 184
 Hammond, J. G. and B., quoted, 25
 Hargraves, Edward (1816-1891), 139-40
 Hart, Steve, 187-90
 Harvester Award, 258
 Hashemy, 159, 160, 163
 Hawaii, 10
 Hawkesbury, river, 30, 34
 Hayes, Bully, 211
 Hayes, Sir Henry Brown (1762-1832), 63
 Hays, Webby, 3, 4
 Heard Island, 277
 Henty, Edward (1809-1878), 110
 Hentys, the, 110, 111, 115
 High Court of Australia, 234-5, 239, 240, 243-4, 276, 279
 Hill, Captain, 20
 Hill, Ernestine, 46
 Hindmarsh, Sir John (1782-1860), Governor of South Australia 1836-1837, 99, 101
Historical, Statistical and Political Description of New South Wales (Wentworth), 56
 Hobart: laying out of, 67; woman exposed in streets of, 68; complaints posted on tree in, 68; a closed port, 69; and the twelve women, 71; growth of, 72; in Great Black War, 75, 78, 80, 82; Arthur's nephews rule, 86; Wilmot dies at, 90; Howe and Brady at, 175-7
 Hobart, Robert, Lord (1760-1816), 47
Hobart Town Gazette, The, 69, 73, 84
 Hobson's Bay, 142
 Holman, Charles, 224
 Holman, William (1871-1934), 224, 247-50, 253-4, 257
 Holt, Joseph (1756-1826), 21
 Hoover Moratorium, 267
 Hope, Louis, 211
 Hopetoun, John Hope, 7th Earl of (later Marquess of Linlithgow) (1860-1908), 238
 Horn, Cape, 5, 6
 Horrocks, Jeremiah (1617-1641), 7
 Hotham, Sir Charles (1806-1855), Governor of Victoria 1854-1855, 148
 House of Commons (British), 12, 90
 House of Lords, 12, 26, 64, 86
 House of Representatives (Federal), 238, 239
 Howe, Jack, 204
 Howe, Michael (1787-1818), 70, 175-6, 185
 Hughes, William Morris (1864-1952):
 Holman and, 224; and Deakin, 243, 248; and Labour Electoral Leagues, 246-7; as Attorney-General, 248, 249; and nationalisation, 248-9; and World War I, 249-50; Premier, 251-2; and manpower for war, 252-3; in England, 252-3, 255; and Labour Party split over conscription, 253; leaves Labour Party, 254; returned with large majority, 254; at Peace Conference, 255-6; at Imperial Conference, 256; his growing unpopularity and replacement, 256; as an elder statesman, 256-7; deserts Government, 265; a scaremonger in World War II, 270; takes over leadership of United Australia Party, 271; and controls, 276
 Hume, Hamilton (1797-1873), 49, 51
 Hume, river, 129
 Hunter, John (1738-1821), Governor of New South Wales 1795-1801, 21, 22, 46-7
 Hunter River Valley, 42, 184
 Hutchinson, John, 34
 Hyde Park Barracks, 41, 44

INDEX

- Iceland, 71
 Imperial Conference, 256
 Independent Californian Rangers Re-
 volver Brigade, 150
 India, 121, 154, 201, 205, 211, 237, 272
 Indian Ocean, 10
 Industrial Workers of the World, 253,
 263
 Irish: amongst convict settlers, 25; 1848
 Rebellion and settlers, 83; and Labour
 movement, 220; and conscription,
 252, 253
Irish Exile, The, 83
 Iron Knob, 106
 Iron Monarch, 106
 Irrigation Act, 1886, 201
 Italians, 260
 Italy, 239

 Jansz, Lucretia, 3
 Jansz, Willem, 1
 Japan, 137, 138, 212, 255-6, 271-4
 Java, 1, 2, 9, 212
 Jeffries (murderer), 177
 Jerilderie, 187, 189
 'Jewboy', 179-80
 Johnson, Dr. Samuel, quoted, 12
 Jorgenson, Jorgen (1780-1841), 71-2
Juliana, 19

 Kalgoorlie, 202
 Kanakas, 195, 215
 Kangaroo Island, 100
 Kanimbla Valley, 48
 Kapunda, 104, 205
 Kavel, Pastor Augustus (*d.* 1859), 102,
 103
 Kelly, Dan, 187-92
 Kelly, Edward (1854-1880), 186, 187-
 92
 Kelly, 'Red', 187
 Kennedy (miner), 149
 Kennedy, Sergeant, 188
 Kidman, Sidney, 204-5
 King (explorer), 134-5
 King, Philip G. (1758-1808), Governor
 of New South Wales 1800-1806, 22,
 25, 28, 29, 47, 66, 73
 Kingston, Charles Cameron (1850-
 1908), 234, 235, 241
 Kisch, Egon, 44
 Knopwood, Robert (1761-1838), 76
 Kyneton, 155

La Liberté, 10
 La Pérouse, Comte de (1741-1788), 10,
 18
 Labour Electoral Leagues, 246
 Labour Movement: immigrant Irish and,
 220; beginnings of, 220-1; turns from
 violence and revolution, 223; aims of,
 224; and literary expression, 225; uses
 W. M. Hughes' shop, 247; and
 federation, 247-8. *See also* Labour
 Party
 Labour Party (Australian): Irish and, 220;
 wins thirty-seven seats in New South
 Wales Parliament, 223; platform of,
 in 1890s, 224; Holman and Hughes
 and, 224; in first Federal Parliament,
 237-8; and Deakin, 240; and High
 Court, 240-1; and defence, 242; first
 term of office, 242; second term, 243,
 244; third term, 244, 248; the most
 considerable force in political life,
 246ff.; fourth term of office, 249;
 Irish in, and Hughes' appeal for con-
 scription, 252; conference in Mel-
 bourne and conscription, 253; Hughes
 leaves, 254; split in, over conscription,
 254; returns to power in 1930s, 265,
 266; refuses to join wartime coalition,
 270; returns to power during war,
 270-1; Curtin proposes conscription
 to, 275; fall of Chifley Government,
 279. *See also* Labour Movement.
 Lachlan, river, 49, 129
 Lalor, Peter (1823-1889), 145, 146, 149,
 150, 151, 223
 Land and Emigration Commissioners,
 166
 Land Convention (Victoria), 169
 Lane, William (1861-1917), 220, 223,
 224
 Lang, John Dunmore (1799-1878),
 167-9, 207, 208, 230
 Lang, J. T. (1876-), 253, 266
 Lascelles, Edward, 200
 Launceston, 74, 111
 Lawson, Henry (1867-1922), 154, 171,
 225
 Lawson, William (1774-1850), 37, 48
 League of Nations, 256
 Leichhardt, F. W. L. (1813-1848), 132-3,
 136-8
Letter from Sydney, A (Wakefield), 97
 Lewin, Ross, 309

INDEX

- Liberal Party, 279
- Liberals, 221, 237, 242
- Libya, 269
- Licence Act, 85
- Light, William (1784-1838), 100
- Lightning*, 142
- Lightning Ridge, 205
- Linnaeus, 10
- Lister (bushman), 140
- Liverpool Plains, 121
- London, 106, 117, 121, 196
- London (Johnson), 12
- Looking Backward* (Bellamy), 220
- Lord, Simcon (1771-1840), 34, 40, 193
- Loveless (Tolpuddle martyr), 83
- Lowe, *see* Sherbrooke
- Luddite Riots, 34
- Lutherans, 102, 103
- Lyne, Sir William (1844-1913), 238
- Lyons, Joseph A. (1879-1939), 266-7
- Macarthur, General Douglas (1880-), 274
- Macarthur, Elizabeth, 38
- Macarthur, James (1798-1867), 56, 119
- Macarthur, John (1767-1834): and the dismissal of governors, 22; and the granting of land, 28; King and, 29; and Bligh, 29-30; and the Chief Justice, 30; goes to England, 31; his burial place, 38; Wentworth's and, 54, 55, 56, 57; his death, 61; imports merinos, 92, 203
- Macarthur, John (1794-1831), 93
- McCaughy, Sir Samuel (1835-1919), 205
- McDonnell Ranges, 216
- McGill (miner), 150
- Mackay, Donald (1870-), 137-8
- McKay, Hugh Victor (1865-1926), 200
- Maconochie, Alexander (1787-1860), 88
- Macquarie, Lachlan (1761-1824): Governor of New South Wales 1809-1821, succeeds Bligh, 31; his task, 32; Marsden and, 32; his difficulties, 33; his rewards, 33-5; and currency, 36; and convicts and wages, 37; and expansion, 37-8; British Government and, 39; the Bents and, 39-40; his offered resignation, 40; Bigge and, 40-1, 43; and Greenway, 43-4; and Wentworth, 54; and Hobart, 67, 69; his removal of fear of transportation, 84; a great governor, 122; and the bushrangers, 175
- Macquarie, Mrs., 38, 40
- Macquarie Harbour, 70
- Macquarie Island, 277
- Macquarie, river, 49, 50, 129
- Magra (midshipman), 11
- 'Major's Line, The', 109
- Malaya, 105, 261, 272
- Mallee, 200
- Mannix, Archbishop (1864-), 253
- Manufacturers' Encouragement Act, 241
- Maoris, 5, 36, 61, 193
- Margarot, Maurice, 26
- Maria Island, 87
- Marsden, Rev. Samuel (1764-1838), 32, 37, 40, 203
- Masters and Servants Act, 219
- Mauritius, 5, 46
- Melbourne: King's expedition to settle at site of, 47; Robinson at, 81; overlanders go from, to Adelaide, 101; founding of, 111ff.; the first land boom, 115; demand for separation from New South Wales, 116; meeting of squatters called for at, 121; Burke's body taken to, 136; and gold discoveries, 141; *Lightning* arrives at, 142; Lalor hides in, 151; people of, and Eureka Stockade, 151-2; departure of coaches from, 155; and reformed convicts, 160; the Kellys at, 187; Mort's wool sales in, 196; closing of banks in, 222; Convention sessions at, 233; first Federal Parliament opened at, 235; Labour Conference in, 253
- Melbourne Advertiser, The*, 113
- Melbourne Trades Hall Council, 221
- Melville, Henry, 85
- Menzies, R. G. (1894-), 270, 271, 276, 279
- Mersey, river, 142
- Mildura, 201, 202
- Miners' Right, 153
- Mississippi*, 127
- Mitchel, John (1815-1875), 83
- Mitchell, Sir Thomas (1792-1855), 109, 110
- Mitchell Library, Sydney, 94
- Monaro Tablelands, 121
- Monash, General Sir John (1865-1931), 254, 255

INDEX

- Monitor, The*, 59, 60
 Montagu, John (1797-1853), 86
 Montez, Lola (1818-1861), 144
 Moran, Cardinal (1830-1911), 248
 Moreton Bay, 168
 Morgan (convict), 23
 Morocco, 13
 Mort, Thomas Sutcliffe (1816-1878),
 160, 196, 197, 198, 206
 Mosman Bay, 197
 Mount Alexander, 146
 Mount Deception, 124
 Mount Hopeless, 124
 Mount Lofty Range, 104
 Mount Morgan, 208
 Mountgarret, Dr., 75-6
 Mudie, James, 162
 Muir, Thomas (1765-1798), 26, 27
 Munro (scales), 74, 79
 Murchison, river, 137
 Murray, river 51, 52, 53, 98, 109, 127,
 129, 202
 Murray, Sir Hubert (1861-1940), 262
 Murrumbidgee, river, 51, 129, 195, 196
 Musgrave Ranges, 137

 Napoleonic War, 92
 National Colonisation Society, 98
 National Party, 254
 National Security Regulations, 269
 Nauru, 261
 Navigation Act, 262
 Nelson, 142
 New Australians, 277
 New Britain, 273
 New England Ranges, 179, 184
 New Guinea, 1, 229, 256, 261, 268, 272,
 273-5
 New Holland, 9
 New Ireland, 273
 New Norfolk, 70
 'New Protection', 238, 241, 259
 New South Wales: Cook names, 9;
 recommended for convict settlement,
 13; French in, 18; transportation of
 discontented agricultural labourers to,
 26; Governors of, and genteel
 prisoners, 27; Macarthur threatened
 with proceedings in, 31; principal
 chaplain of, 32; Macquarie and the
 classes in, 33; Bennett's report to
 Sidmouth on, 36; Wentworth's book
 on, 36; Legislative Council appointed,
 57-8; Wentworth hints at probability
 of rebellion in, 58-9; demand for
 elective council in, 58-9; tenure of
 land in, 62; election for Council in,
 62-3; Governors of, and Tasmania,
 66ff.; Collins's history of, 67; jurisdic-
 tion of courts and Tasmania, 67;
 Tasmania made independent of, 72;
 Agricultural Company's worthless
 lands in, exchanged, 93; Wakefield's
 book about, 96; railway from South
 Australia to, 105; demand in Mel-
 bourne for separation from, 116; no
 more convicts come to, 119; Supreme
 Court of, and squatters, 120; Council
 refuses to ratify Gipps' regulations,
 121-2; and gold discoveries, 141;
 Rutherford in, 155-6; 'pure merinos'
 and constitution of, 168; population
 in 1854, 169; farmers clash with squat-
 ters in, 170; demand for release of
 bushrangers in, 181; Kidman's pro-
 perty in, 205; anti-Chinese riots in,
 214; Parkes' domination of politics
 in, 218; the Irish in, 220; shearers from,
 taken to Queensland, 222; Holman
 builder of Labour Party in, 224; and
 federation, 226, 230, 231, 233, 234;
 and Free Trade, 228; Holman and
 Hughes in state Parliament, 247, 248;
 Holman Premier of, 250; J. T. Lang
 and, 253; and conscription, 254; re-
 settled soldiers in, 260; Lang Premier
 of, 266
 New South Wales Corps, 20, 21, 22, 25,
 27-31, 47, 75
 New South Wales Government Rail-
 ways, 263
 New York, 11
 New Zealand, 5, 8, 34, 61, 98, 99, 193,
 226, 251
 Newcastle, 39, 93, 250
 Newport, Rhode Island, 10
 Nicolle (engineer), 197-8
 Niemeyer, Sir Otto (1883-), 265
 Nineteen Counties, 107
 'Nobs', 104-5
 Nore Mutiny, 33
 Norfolk Island, 19, 54, 55, 69, 87, 88,
 119, 179
 'North Australia', 207-8
 Northern, 198
 Northern Australian Meat Company, 264

INDEX

- Northern Territory: South Australia and, 105, 124; large areas of, opened up, 136; Queensland landowners threaten to move over into, 211, 215; private and public enterprise in, 212-13; disputed zone, 215-16; taken over by Federal Government, 217; economic state of, 264
- Northern Territories Acceptance Act, 243
- North-West Passage, 88
- Norton, James, 160
- Nottingham, 86
- Nova Hollandia, 5, 6
- Nullarbor Plain, 127
- O'Brien (sealer), 75
- O'Connor, Charles (1843-1902), 202, 203
- O'Connor, R. E. (1851-1912), 240
- Ophir, 140
- Offer, 27
- Overlanders, 101-2, 114-15
- Oxford, 56
- Oxley, John (1781-1828), 49, 50
- Pacific Island Year Book, The*, 261
- Pacific Ocean, 6, 7, 18, 137, 195
- Pacific War Council, 272
- Palestine, 254
- Palmer River Field, 214
- Papua, 137, 229, 241-2, 262, 268
- Papua Act (1903), 241
- Paradise, 77
- Paraguay, 223, 224
- Parkes, Sir Henry (1815-96), 64, 160, 218, 220, 228, 230-2
- Parramatta, 36, 37, 54
- Parry, Sir Edward (1790-1855), 93-4
- Pastoral Association of Squatters, 121
- Pastoral Protection Society, 169
- Paterson, William (1755-1810), 47
- Patteson, John Coleridge (1827-1871), 209
- Peace Conference (1919), 255
- Pearl Harbour, 271
- Peel, Thomas (d. 1864), 94, 96
- Pelsart, Captain François (seventeenth century), 2, 4
- Péron, François, 73
- Perth, 95
- Peshawar, 134
- Philippine Islands, 274
- Phillip, Captain Arthur (1738-1814), Governor of New South Wales 1788-1792, 14-19, 22, 41, 43, 67, 122
- Pinchgut, 23
- Pioneer, The*, 57
- Pitt, William (1759-1806), 13
- Point Peur, 87, 88
- Poole (explorer), 129, 131, 133
- Port Arthur, 87, 88, 179
- Port Jackson, 15-16, 46
- Port Moresby, 273, 274
- Port Phillip, 66, 109, 111-15, 119, 121, 168, 177
- Port Phillip Gazette, The*, 115
- Port Pirie, 106
- Port Stephens, 65
- Portland Bay, 110, 115
- Porto Bello, 6
- Portsmouth, 13
- Portuguese, 4
- Power (bushranger), 185-6
- Preservation Island, 74
- Price, John (1808-1857), 88
- Prince of Wales, H.M.S.*, 271
- Privy Council, 235
- Punch, 165
- Quinns, the, 186, 187
- Queensland: spread of settlements in, 105; Sturt and Stuart in, 130; Cobb and Co. control coach service in, 156; Rutherford in, 158; *Hashemy* unloads in, 160; name changed from Cooksland to, 168; Gardiner in, 182-3; black trackers from, hunt Kellys, 189; becomes a separate state, 207; Kanakas in, 210, 215; banana growing in, 211; landowners in, and Northern Territory, 211, 212; Chinese in, 214-15; whites able to work in tropics of, 217; *Boomerang*, the paper of, 220; beginnings of labour troubles in, 221-2; Ryan Premier of, 223-4; annexes south-east of New Guinea, 229; Hughes in, 247; mentioned, 205
- Rabaul, 273, 275
- Rede, Commissioner, 147
- Redfern, William (1778-1833), 33-4, 38, 40
- Reform Bill (1832), 86
- Reid, Sir George H. (1845-1918), 202-3, 231, 233

INDEX

- Denmark, 201
 Republicanism, 223, 225, 230, 248
Repulse, H.M.S., 271
 Riverina, the, 156
 Robertson, Gilbert, 85
 Robertson, Sir John (1816-1891), 170, 231
 Robinson, George (*d.* 1866), 78-81, 82
 Robinson, Michael (1747-1826), 34
 'Rocks, The', 37
 Rogers, Rev. T., 88
Rosario, H.M.S., 210
 Ross, James, 84
 Ross, Major, 15, 19
 Royal Australian Navy, 243
 Royal Society, 7
 Rum Corps, *see* New South Wales Corps
 Ruse, James (1760-1837), 198
 Ruskin, John, 225
 Russia, 272
 Rutherford, James (1827-1911), 154-8
 Ryan, Thomas Joseph (1876-1921), 224

 St. Vincent Gulf, 45
 Salamao, 273
 Salisbury, 4th Marquess of (1830-1903), 143
 Samoa, 230
Savoy, 21
 Scots, 195
 Scots College, 168
 Scott (sealer), 74
 Scott, Prof. Sir Ernest, 130
 Seals, 73-4
 Senate (Federal), 239
 Shaftesbury, 7th Earl of (1801-1885), 166
 Shearers' Union, 219, 221, 223
 Sherbrooke, Robert Lowe, Viscount (1811-1892), 122, 160, 208
 Sheritt, Aaron, 189, 190
 Ships' Officers' Union, 221
 Siani, 261
 Sidmouth, Henry Addington, Viscount (1757-1844), 56
 Singapore, 105, 270, 271, 272
Sketch of a Proposal for Colonizing Australia (Wakefield), 97
 Slavery, 20
 'Snobs', 104-5
 Society of Arts, 92
 Solomon Islands, 262, 268, 274
 Sorrell, 177
 Sorrell, William, 70, 72

 South Australia: Wakefield's proposal for settling, 98; settlement of, 99-102; development of, 103-6; and Port Phillip, 114; and price of land, 115; and Northern Territory, 124; offers prize for north-south crossing of continent, 133; Burke decides to make for, 135; Real Property Act in, 172; dry farming in, 200; settlers from, in Mallee, 201; irrigation schemes in, 201-2; controls Northern Territory, 211-12; and Japanese, 212; and Chinese labour, 216; and federation, 226; instability of governments in, 228; resettled soldiers in, 260
 South Australia Company, 99, 101, 102, 127
 South Australian Association, 98
 South Head Lighthouse, 44
 South Sea Islanders, 195, 209-10
 Southern Cross Flag, 149, 150, 153
 Spanish, 6
 Spanish dollars, 36
 Spence, W. G., 219, 253
 Spencer Gulf, 45
 Spice Islands, 1, 7
 Spilsby, 86
 Squatters, 107ff.
 Stanley, Lord, *see* Derby, 14th Earl of
 Stingray Harbour, 8
 Stirling, Sir James (1791-1865), Governor of Western Australia 1829-1839, 94-6
 Stony Desert, 129, 130, 131
 Strafford, Earl of, 65
 Stuart, John McDouall (1815-1866), 106, 130, 136, 211
 Sturt, Charles (1795-1869), and the western rivers, 50-3, 98, 109; goes from Sydney to South Australia, 101; and expedition to the interior, 127-36
 'Sudds Case', 58-60
 Sumatra, 273
 Summer Hill Creek, 140
 Supreme Court, 39
 Surrey Hills, 72
 Swan river, 94, 95, 110, 202
 Swann, Captain, 6
 Sydney: Phillip and bringing of native women to, 20; Otter at, 27; Bligh leaves, 31; Macquarie builds roads round, 35; beginning of horse-racing at, 37; artist comes to, 39; Macquarie

INDEX

Sydney, Phillip.—*contd.*

and, 40-1; Greenway and, 44; Sturt in, 53; Maoris at, 61; Hayes at, 63; Bowen at, 66; Bligh returns to, 67; only ships from, can go to Hobart, 70; sealskins brought to, 73; embalmed Tasmanian natives sent to, 76; overlanders from, go to Adelaide, 101; speculators from, in South Australia, 104; and settlement at Port Phillip, 110, 112, 114; speculators from, in Melbourne, 115; tallow vats built in, 119; Glpps' departure from, 122; and California gold rush, 139; and Bathurst gold find, 40-1; suggestion of naval harbour at, 142; arrival of *Hashemy* at, 159; unemployed women in, 164-5; prisoners swim across harbour, 178; trials brought to, 181; Gardiner brought to, 183; Boyd at, 194; Kanakas in, 195; Mort's wool sales in, 196; Mort builds slaughter yards in, 198; clean-up of Chinese quarters in, 215; anti-Chinese riots in, 216; closing of banks in, 222; the *Bulletin*, 225; Convention sessions in, 233; Hughes and, 247; service from Papua to, 262

Sydney, Thomas Townshend, 1st Viscount (1733-1800), 11, 13, 20

Sydney Hospital, 54

Syme, David (1827-1908), 218, 237, 241

Tahiti, 8

Tariffs, 226ff., 241

Tasman, Abel (1602-1659), 4, 5

Tasmania (Van Diemen's Land): Tasman discovers, 5; early transportation to, 26; Bligh goes to, 31; Col. Collins' settlement transferred to, 47; early settlements and change of name, 66-7, 73; made independent of New South Wales, 72, 85; little chance for black races of, 75; Chartist rioters brought to, 83; Governor Arthur and his mission in, 83-4; Franklin's efforts for constitution for, 86; transportation to, to cease, 87; Norfolk Island attached to, 88; and removal of convicts, 88-9; agitation for free assembly, 90-1; Western Australia settlers come to, 96; the Hentys come to, 110; and founding of Melbourne, 111, 112, 114;

transportation to, continues, 119; and gold discoveries on the continent, 142; ex-convicts from, as police in goldfields, 146; 'Red' Kelly transported to, 187; whaling off coast of, 193-4; Cotton's efforts at irrigation in, 201; ex-convicts from, in Queensland, 208; and federation, 226

Tench, Watkin (1759?-1833), 17

Tenterfield, 232

Terry, Samuel, 34

Therry, Sir Roger (1800-1874), 108

'Thistle', 110

Thompson, Andrew, 34, 40

Thomson, Sir Edward Deas (1800-1879), 64

Thunderbolt, Captain, 184-5

Tickens (explorer), 137

Timor, 18, 273, 275

Todd, Sir Charles (1826-1910), 106

Tolpuddle Martyrs, 25, 83

Torrens, Sir Robert (1814-1884), 172-3

Torres Strait, 5

Towns, Robert (1791-1873), 209

Trade Unions, 219ff.

Trafalgar, Battle of (1805), 69

True Colonist, *The*, 85

Truganina (aboriginal), 79, 82

Turks, the, 250-1

Turon, 114, 140

Twofold Bay, 194

Tyburn, 12

Tyson, James (1823-1898), 195

Union Buries Its Dead, *The* (Lawson), 225

United Australia Party, 266, 271, 275, 276

United Nations, 277

United States of America: receives convicts, 12; New South Wales and, 58; and Deakin's Report, 201; Civil War, 208; and the Chinese, 214; Deakin sent to, 237; supplies Japan, 270; Pacific War the concern of Australia and, but no contact between them, 272; Curtin appeals to, 274

Unlawful Associations Act, 263

Valley of Praise, 103

Valparaiso, 118

Van Diemen, Antony (1593-1645), 4

Van Diemen's Gulf, 136

Van Diemen's Land, *see* Tasmania

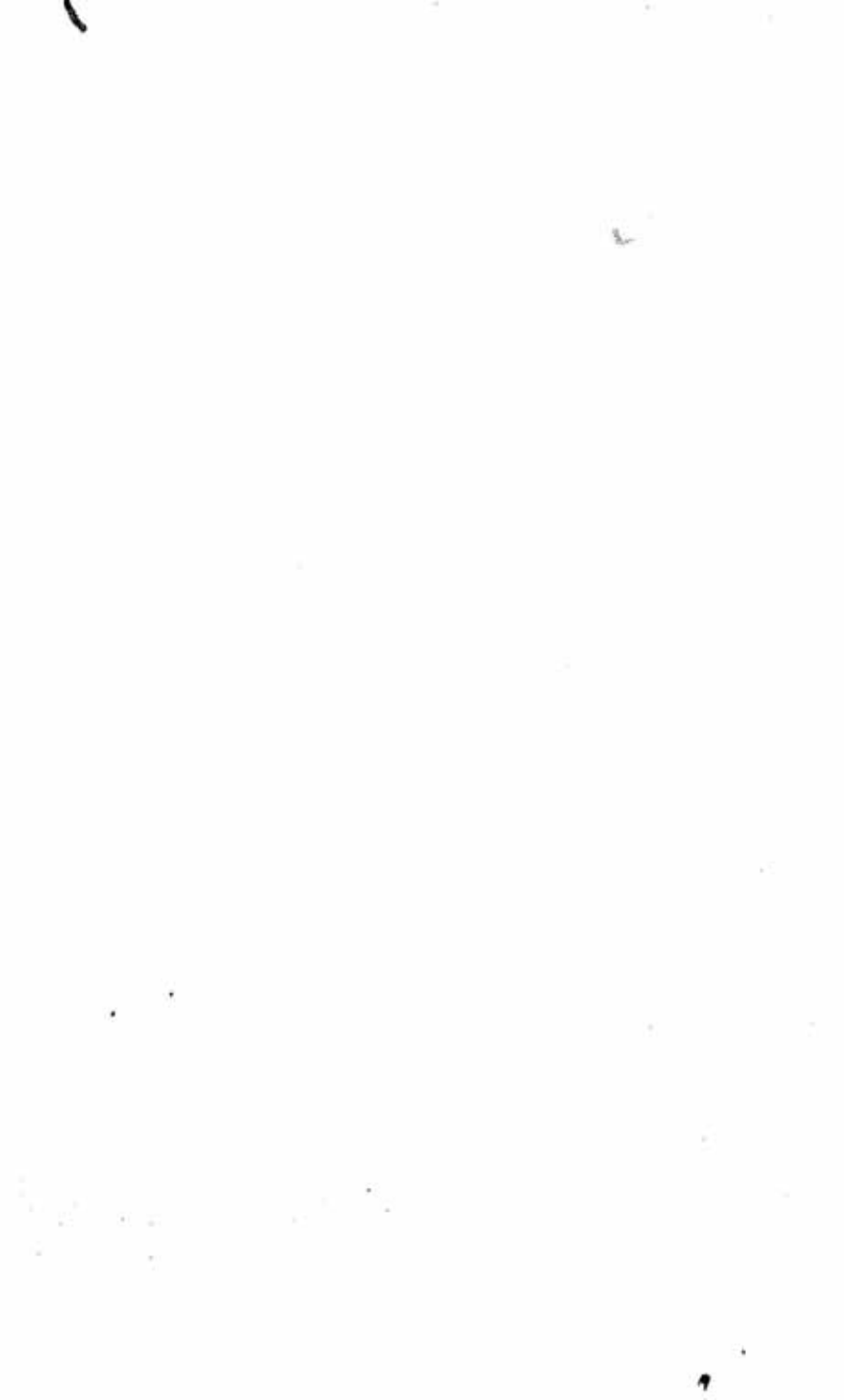
Van Diemen's Land Company, 94

INDEX

- Vanikoro, 18
 Vauluse House, 60, 63, 64, 65
 Venus, transit of, 7, 8
 Vern (miner), 150, 151
 Vestveys, 264
Victims of Whiggery (Loveless), 83
 Victoria: beginning of, 116; and Burke's expedition for crossing the continent, 134, 135; and gold discoveries, 141-2; Lalor a Minister in, 151; political reform in, 153; Rutherford captures mail runs of, 155; Pastoral Protection Society in, 169; Land Convention in, 169; Kelly gang and, 186-7, 191; prize for best harvester offered by, 200; irrigation schemes in, 201-2, 237; Chinese in, 213; shearers from, taken to Queensland, 222; and Free Trade, 228; leadership of federal movement passes to, 232, 233; David Syme as ruler of, 237; Governor's lecture on 'The Navy and the Nation', 239; follows protectionist policies, 241; resettled soldiers in, 260
Village Labourer, The (Hammond), quoted, 25
Voyage to Terra Australis (Flinders), 100
 Wakefield, Edward Gibbon (1796-1862): and sale of land in Australia, 96, 119; his private life, 96-7; and gaols, 97; and colonial self-government, 98; and colonisation of South Australia and New Zealand, 98-101; and the compact colony, 108; advocates immigration of labourers, 161
 Wales, Prince of (later King Edward VII) (1841-1910), 234
 Walloa, 76, 78
Wanderer, 195
 Wangaratta, 188
 War Cabinet, 255
 War Office, 254
 War Precautions Act, 249
 Warby Ranges, 188
 Wardell, Robert (1793-1834), 57, 58, 60, 61
 Warung, Price, 225
 Warwick, 25
 Washington, George (1732-1799), 26
 Waterside Workers' Federation, 247
 Wellington, 99
 Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of (1769-1852), 98-9
 Wentworth, D'Arcy (1762-1827), 34, 35, 37, 54-5, 56
 Wentworth, William Charles (1793-1872), 37, 48, 54-65, 118-19, 160, 230
 Western Australia, 94-6, 110, 160, 202-4, 215, 226, 233, 253, 260
 Westminster, Statute of (1931), 273
 Westwood, William, 178
 Whaling, 193, 262
 Wheat-growing, 198-200, 221
 White, John (d. 1832), 20
 White Cliffs, 205
 Whitehead (bushranger), 70, 175
 Wilkes, John (1727-1797), 9
 William IV, King (1765-1837), 86
 Wills, William John (1834-1861), 134-6
 Wilmot, Sir John Eardley Eardley- (1783-1847), Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania 1843-46, 89, 90
 Wilson, President (1856-1921), 255
 Windsor, 44, 49
 Wirraway aircraft, 272
 Wise, Captain, 148
 Wolsley, Frederick, 203
 Wood, Prof. Arnold, quoted, 6
 Wool: industry in England after Napoleonic War, 92; beginnings of industry in Australia, 92-3; as one of only Australian exports, 117; trade in, in 1840s, 117ff.; prices begin to rise again, 123; Mort begins wool auctions in Sydney and Melbourne, 196-7; changed structure of industry, 203-4; depression in trade, 221; in 1920s, 259; price after World War II, 278
 Woolshed, 188
 World War I, 249-55, 274
 World War II, 263, 268-77
 Wylie (aboriginal), 126-7
 Yanco Irrigation Area, 205
 Yarrowee, river, 143
 Yass, 179
 Young Irishlanders, 149

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