EARLY SKY-LARKING AND DUELLING.

SYNOPSIS.—Sergeant Staunton.—Origination of Larrikinism.—The Early Sky-larkers.—"The Charcoal Boys."—Two "Gentleman Johns."—"Jack" T. and "Jack" F.—Old Sam's Peccadilloes.—Dr. Martin and the Secreted Padlock.—D. and his Sword.—The Melbourne "Nickers."—The Dog-and-Bell Trick.—The Fiasco.—The Melbourne "Thirty-six Commandments."—The First Duel.—Peter Snodgrass versus William Ryrie.—A Nocturnal Ride in Search of Pistols.—A Lady on the Scene.—The Honourable Gilbert Kennedy versus Demoulin.—"Jam Bullets" and "Jam Satis."—Ross Challenges Croke.—Playne Challenges Curr.—A Poultry Dispute.—Griffin Challenges Synnott.—Bulletless Pistols.—Another Fiasco.—The Honourable Gilbert Kennedy versus C.—Sprot versus Campbell.—A Flash in the Pan.—Doctor F. versus Doctor T.—Allan versus Purcell.—Arrest of the Principals.—Mr. Frank Stephen and the "Hand and Foot Trick."

WILD OATS.

Little ingenuity has been employed in tracing the origin of the term "larrikinism," as designating a comparatively modern human development, which has gathered into the most mischievous social ulcer of the present day, for its contagion communicates to both sexes of successive rising generations of young colonists. Philologically, the word "lark" is traceable from more than one root; as, for instance, from the sky-lark that mounts in the air, and sings flying. And so, "sky-larking" was adopted as a nautical term for mounting the highest yards of a ship and sliding down the ropes, a species of marine recreation permitted under certain conditions. Others derive it from the Anglo-Saxon word _lac_ (sport), and also from "leary," an old cant word, signifying flash, sly, knowing—viz., "leary bloke," a clever customer. I am disposed to adopt the first etymology, and by extending the Jack Tar metaphor, apply sky-larking or larking, as engaging in fun or frolic in an unrestrained and boisterous style, just such an ebullition of the animal spirits as would exactly fit in with the essentials of an uproarious nocturnal grog spree. Furthermore, much misconception exists with reference to the prolongation of the dissyllable to a trisyllable, _i.e._, stretching lark-ing into lar-ri-kin, but I am in a position, from personal observation, to definitely settle that point. About 1850, there was in the City Police Force, a Sergeant John (or as he was commonly called "Jack") Staunton, a medium-sized, bull-headed Irishman, with darkish face, slightly asthmatic, and thick lips, through which, when giving evidence in the Police Court, he slightly "slavered," and thereby acquired a habit of frequent application of his coat-cuff to his mouth. Staunton, though somewhat dull, was a plodding and highly useful officer, and in his day did good service in ridding the community of some of the wicked excrescences which have existed in every state and every age. Little Bourke Street, with its purlieus, was then as now the main nursery of city crime, and Staunton was not only a power but a terror to the thieving and night-birding fraternity. Staunton's education was on a rather limited scale, and in his vocabulary he was wont to include as "larkers" everyone engaged in nocturnal illegalities about town, especially disturbances originating in public-houses, or indulged in by persons during the enjoyment of late hours. Upon such offenders "Old Jack" had what is known as a terrible "down," and frequently appeared as police prosecutor in such cases. There was something wrong about the tip of his tongue, rather too big for its place, I thought, which imparted a lisping and stammer to the enunciation of some of his words, especially those where double consonants interposed, and one especially, "larking," he could never distinctly master. The "r" and the "k" conjuncted seemed too much for him, though separately
he could manage them well. But when both united against him the guttural and palatal requiring for their amalgamation, a quivering motion of the tongue, with its pressure against the roof of the mouth, and a depression of the under jaw, was a mouthful quite beyond his capacity. Therefore, when a magistrate would ask Sergeant Staunton what his charge was against a particular prisoner, he would give his lips a wipe and a screw, and would try to answer "He was a lar—" the "k" caused him to stammer and draw breath, and in his plunging towards the far end of the word, he floundered between the "r" and the "k," and to enable him to reach the terminus, the "r" was duplicated and backed by an "i," a third syllable being so formed, which Staunton employed as a stepping-stone, and jumped across. The response therefore, took this form, "He was a lar—ri—kin, your Worship," and so was coined a word now of common use, which will yet be incorporated in the English language, like other slang expressions seemingly so necessary that one wonders how they could ever have been done without.

But, though the designations are analogous as coming from the same shell, it would be a gross injustice to rank the ancient larkers with the modern larrikins as birds of a feather, for there was a wide divergence between the two classes in action, motive, and even temperament. Larrikinism is the outcome of various causes, climatic, dietary, defects in the educational bringing up, moral, religious, &c. In its indulgence it far exceeds the traditional limits of the sky-larkers, and drifts into excesses of the most criminal kind, not unlike in some respects, the ruffianism of the Mohocks, with which the streets of London rang in the beginning of the 18th century. In all their mad wild revels, their

" Reckless days and reckless nights,
Unholy songs, and tipsy fights,"

The larkers in old Melbourne would as soon think of cutting their own throats as robbing a man, and I have found no authenticated instance of their having offered insults to any woman passed in the streets in their intoxicated raids.

The old sky-larkers were drawn from the cream instead of the scum of society, the scions of families of good blood and reputation, who came to Australia in search of fortunes—gay sparks, some with light and few with heavy purses, the contents of which were sent flying in every direction. Many of them took up land in various parts of Port Phillip, commencing on the Plenty, and trending northwards along the rivers in the interior away to the Murray. From this aggregation stood out prominently what was known as the "Goulburn Mob," dashing, gentlemanly, intellectual and good-looking fellows, who led a monotonous, industrious, life in the bush; but the moment they got a chance flocked to Melbourne, went the pace there in a manner conducive to the health of neither body nor pocket, enjoyed life while they could, then returned to the drudgery of station work, and so came and went until the "wild oats" were not only sown, but the crop reaped with a vengeance. Some of them, at the turn of the tide, settled down quietly and amassed fortunes, afterwards enjoyed both in the colony and at home; but death made sad havoc with many, for the best and the brightest and the gayest of the frolicsome scapegraces went down before its remorseless scythe.

The first head-quarters of what the newspapers were wont to designate the "Waterfordians" (after the mad Marquis of Waterford), were established in 1839, at the Lamb Inn, the second hotel in Melbourne, an unpicturesque, ramshackle, straggling wood and brick batch of apartments, thrown together on the site of the present Scoffs Hotel, in Collins Street. For some reason or other, not known to posterity, they passed under the title of "The Charcoal Boys." Possibly it was because of some association of ideas in the colour of charred wood, and the darkness under cover of which their escapades were indulged. The Lamb Inn was opposite the then Melbourne Club, which got into full swing in 1840, and this proximity afforded a favourable opportunity for uniting the several forces in the event of any combined movement; for, be it written, not to their disadvantage, that the Waterfordians usually pulled well together; there was no splitting into factions, and, unless a row over the dining or card-table, and a hostile meeting ending in an abortion, no inter se feuds ever existed. In a short time, the Club completely eclipsed the mad doings of the Lamb, and in the course of a few years the Prince of Wales, in Little Flinders Street, was an occasional contributor;
but the Club finally outran all competition, and its larking achievements did not die out for nearly a
decade. The Club was in itself the focus of every barroom-scum undertaking that could be imagined,
and to such a height did its post-prandial excesses in a short time reach, that it became necessary
to establish in connection with it a “receiving house” as a harbour of refuge—a queer unaccompanied
sanctuary, to which such as were pro tem unfit to mingle with the ordinary Club society, voluntarily
banned themselves like fallen angels. This rookery’s home was an old shed-like, brick-nogged,
roomed rookery, perched rearward of where the Australian Club-house is erected, in William Street.
The maître d’hotel of this retreat was a biped known as “Old Sam,” who made it clear that he would cure
for a living Cerberus, only that he was one-headed. It differed from the Club in its mode of
maintenance, for there were no annual or other subscriptions, and no bills to be squared up—as
revenues arising solely from voluntary donations, given with no stinted hand. It was regulated by a
code of sumptuary laws of a very peculiar nature, few in number, and as immutable as those of the
Medes and Persians. Ex. gr., the comestible was of the simplest kind, viz.—bread, bacon and eggs,
steaks and chops fried or grilled, beer in the pewter, with brandy either neat or infused in cold or
hot water and sugar. Potatoes, tea, coffee, or other un-alcoholic or unfermented drinks were rigidly
prohibited. Plates or forks were not permitted; a tin dish full of smoking food was placed on a
rough table, and every one disposed for a feed cut a junk of bread, covered it with a wedge of meat,
and so could “cut and come again” as often as he wished. There were two or three rough stools for
common use, and such a convenience as a stretcher or bedstead was tabooed. A dozen mattresses,
with a pillow and blanket each, were littered along the sides, and thus couched on these “shakes-down,”
the inmate could eat, drink, sleep, and wake, ad libitum; but on no account was any person to
devast himself of any wearing apparel other than his hat, overcoat, and boots. A rigid embargo was
placed on cigars, but “baccy” might be puffed or chewed until doomsday. There was not much
luxury in this human sty, but it was wonderful how speedily shattered nerves were braced, and the
equilibrium of a swimming head restored, by the unrefined regimen of this refuge for inebriates. It
was known as “the Den,” and though its life was a merry, it was not a long one, for both “Sam”
and “the Den” soon dropped out of existence, and were utterly forgotten long before the last of the
larkers retired from the stage.

The ancient rowdies were under the leadership of two “Gentlemen Johns.” A Mr. “Jack” T commanded the regular Club contingent, and a Mr. “Jack” F wielded a despotic authority over the “Denites,” from which there was no appeal. This brace of “Jacks” embodied two plucky, high-spirited and jovial gentlemen, high-minded and honourable in the
ordinary pursuits of life. After their exuberance of animal spirits had in some degree evaporated,
they settled down into comparatively easy-going customers, and no doubt looked back with regret
upon many of their by-gone frolics. “Jack” F— was the master of a graceful and eloquent pen, and
some of his contributions to the Port Philip Gazette for which he occasionally wrote, displayed
inconsiderable ability. They have both long since passed away from earth, and though there have
been many better, there have been a great many worse colonists amongst us.

To attempt any detail of the madcap pranks of this constantly-recruited horde would be a futile
task, for their name was legion; and any specific enumeration would be as tedious as going
through the catalogue of a public library. A few samples will therefore be given in a general way
picked up at random from memory and hearsay. “Old Sam” was a worthy of wicked proclivities,
and fertile in devising the nocturnal exploits to be undertaken. Some of the most desperate raids
would be plotted at the “Den,” from which the party detailed for duty would emerge like a
pack of demons, coursing through the inadequately protected streets, knocking over the private
watchmen, or “Charlies,” mobbing the police, breaking windows, removing sign-boards, and planting
them in out-of-the-way places. Stables would be forced open, the horses turned adrift, and traps
carried off and used as barricades across the streets. An audacious attempt was one
night made to capsize a theatre, the ludicrous particulars of which have been given in a previous
chapter. Neither the places of public worship, nor some of the ministers of religion were deemed
sacrosanct, for the boys once ascended to sacrilege by scaling the tower of St. James’ Church, and
removing the bell, which they restored next day. This was wicked enough in all conscience, but it was subsequently cast into the shade, when a furious trio rushed the residence of Parson Thomson, the Episcopalian minister, in Church-street, broke into the place, fustigated his reverence, and smashed several articles in his parlour. The next morning a Police Court prosecution was initiated, but influence was brought to bear as a successful mediator, and the outrage was condoned upon terms never made public, but which included an apology in writing. Even so late as 1849, church gates used to be abducted, and the Independent and Scots' Churches were the last levied on in this manner. In the Western Market Reserve, a few yards from the Police Office, stood a venerable bald-headed gum-tree, where a bell was fixed ostensibly to ring the convict labour gang, employed on the streets, and the few other assigned servants at work about, to and from the depot, but made generally useful in the case of a fire breaking out in warning the public. This belfry would be climbed by the night owls, and a stunning alarm pealed forth, which from the furious rapidity of the ding-donging, would lead to a supposition that all Melbourne was in a general conflagration. The bell was even carried off bodily and interred near the cemetery, where it was afterwards unburied, and resurrectionized into its former prominent position.

Once upon a time, during the Christmas holidays, an effort was made to induce the old clipper-clapper to do duty as a joy bell and in order to properly superintend the operations, a jovial Solicitor, and one of the original members of the Club, was appointed Master of Ceremonies, and he planted himself in an adjacent branch for the purpose. The bell was worked by a couple of ropes attached, at each of which three or four pair of unsteady hands pulled, and the hilarious bellringers shouted and yelled, and ya-hooed and tugged like a watch of bewitched sailors; and so between them and the bell, there burst forth such a sonorific medley, the overwetted whistles now in the ascendant, and immediately drowned by the metallic uproar, that the townspeople started in their beds in bewilderment, not knowing what all the turmoil was about, but fancying that Melbourne was either in a state of earthquake or overwhelmed by some other calamity. Those who ventured out of doors could perceive no reason to account for the tintamar, though the bell kept clinking away in a spasmodically eccentric style. The police hurried towards the quarter from which the pell-mell evidently proceeded, and on their approach the roisters ran away, leaving their coryphaeus aloft to look out for himself. In trying to get down, this worthy got dovetailed between the two limbs, and, gripped around the waist by some of the branches, was kept in a state of suspension—a kind of Mahomet's coffin the reverse of agreeable. His recent carousals and the manner in which he was left to shift for himself aloft, so ruffled his plumage as to cause his temper to belie the Meek-ness of his name, and he shouted and plunged and kicked in such fashion that only for the hard and fast manner in which the old tree clutched him, he would have jerked himself from his anchorage, and been either brained or maimed through his impetuosity. When the constables arrived all they could see was a pair of legs working in convulsions; but a little further investigation revealed the whole case, and the belated blusterer was with some difficulty extricated from the precarious position in which he had so singularly jammed. Instead, however, of being relegated to the adjacent lock-up, as a man found under suspicious circumstances deserved to be, he was allowed to go home quietly, for the guardians of the peace in such times were disposed to overlook trifling improprieties, for certain well understood considerations. "False fire-alarms" was another of the favoured recreations. The watchman and constables were provided with rattles to spring in any emergency, and the roisterers roared and rattled about the street too, and with such frequency that the shouting of "Fire! fire!" grew into something like the proverbial cry of "Wolf! Wolf!" and the townspeople were often in such uncertainty as to be unable to decide as to whether they should consider the uproar as a signal of fire or no fire. Pickets of twos and threes often detailed themselves from the main body for special duty. For years there was a formidable-looking water-hole at the eastern conjunction of Collins and Elizabeth Streets, and it was called Lake Cashmore, after an Israelitish draper, whose shop was within a couple of yards of its northern extreme. Though not deep enough to drown a person, the unfortunate wight pitched into it got well soused in slushy water, and it was
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in every sense a mud bath in which no sane individual would like an immersion. The night-hawks would prowl about here within the shadows of the houses or concealed behind a fence, and when a constable or watchman passed he was pounced upon, chucked into the lake and had to scramble ashore blowing like a porpoise and shaking himself like a water-dog.

Many of the spolia opima would be carried to the “Den” and the Club, and one of the annexes of the latter place, a sort of lumber-room, was used as a store for the wreckage, and was at times quite a Curiosity Shop, from the miscellany of odds and ends collected there, such as bobbies’ batons, door-knockers, bells, bell-pulls, and bell-handles, and even bell-toppers, snatched from the heads of passers-by. There was in Collins Street an ironmongery establishment kept by a Mr. Jackson, and known as the “Golden Padlock,” by virtue of which a large wooden gilt symbol of the trade swung out from over the shop door. This was unhooked one night, and borne away as a great prize, and for safe keeping was placed under a bed in one of the principal sleeping apartments of the Club House. Dr. Martin, a most peaceably-disposed individual, arrived in town from a long bush journey at an early hour in the morning, and, feeling too fatigued to proceed to his residence at Heidelberg, turned into the Club for a bed, and was shown the room where the big padlock was quietly reposing. He went to bed over it, and slept the sleep of the tired, unsuspecting of the mischief that was tacked away beneath him, and was very disagreeably surprised by the entrance of the Chief-Constable before breakfast, an intrusion which was an unwelcome disturber of the sleeper’s blissful oblivion. Martin was a Territorial Magistrate—a thing not to be lightly trifled with—and awakened so suddenly, he looked angrily about, and sharply inquired the reason of the intrusion. The officer apologized, but intimated that he should do his duty, disagreeable as it was. An audacious outrage had been perpetrated during the previous night; Jackson’s monster padlock, the admiration of Melbourne, had been carried off, and for safe keeping was placed under a bed in Dr. Martin’s bedroom. A search was instituted, and it did not take much time or trouble to fish out the stolen property from under the bed. The discovery riled Dr. Martin considerably; he cut up roughly over the “roasting” that awaited him next day, and vowed vengeance on the jokers, if he could only find them out, for he was incapable of entering into the spirit of what was regarded as capital fun by the young bloods, who were only too glad of a chance to tease such a dry old stick. The fact was, the Doctor’s arrival was expected, and the room reserved for him, and the golden padlock was purposely secreted in its hiding-place. The depot at the Club was an advantage, for, as its existence was well known, the owner of an abstracted article, or the police, knew where to look out for missing strays, and people in quest of a sign-board, a knocker, bell-pull, or kindred trifles, of which all traces had been apparently lost, would call there the same as visits are now made to a railway luggage-room or a dead-letter office.

Demolishing the Corporation channel-bridges at the street corners was a prevalent diversion, and also visiting a wooden punt that did duty before the advent of a bridge over the river. The puntman (an inscrutable old fellow) resided in a hut at the southern side, and every night before retiring the punt would be hauled over and made fast round a tree-stump. The larkers would cross by the “Falls” or in a boat, and, creeping round, unwar the punt quietly, pull across on it to the northern side, and then, by shouting and yelling, break the slumbers of the old punter, who would rush out to find himself powerless, with a large amount of insult added to the inconvenience, for he would have to get a boat next morning wherever to cross, and take possession of his raft. In their nocturnal peregrinations some of the larkers would be literally so blind drunk as to be unable to see where they went or what they did. There were then no public lamp-posts for them to bob against; but if a bit of fancing barred their way, they fancied it to be something obstructing them, and would pitch into it in rare style. Once three of them were staggering through William Street, and they fell against a small empty brick store. In their cups, imagining that it was some huge fellow that was showing fight, they set to work and levelled it. Another time the trunk of a tree on the site of the present Town Hall incurred the displeasure of a couple of them, and they kept hammering away at it for a couple of hours, until compelled by the police to forego their intentions.
There was a well-known Attorney named D——, who used to indulge in some extraordinary single-handed vagaries. A member of a militia corps in England, whence he emigrated in 1838, he brought with him his military outfit, and when regularly on the "ree-raw" he would dress himself up in his regiments and, armed cap-a-pie with his drawn sword brandished over his head, rush like a maniac through the streets, and if he met any notable person on his way, would compel him, irrespective of the state of the weather, to drop on his knees and beg his life. One wet night, when Collins Street was not only inches, but almost feet, in slush, this madman was in his tantrums, and one of the most precise and punctilious of Melbournians had the misfortune to cross his path. The sword was immediately flashing in the moonlight, while the holder of it grasped the other by the collar, and vowed instant decapitation unless he dropped on his marrow bones and begged his life. The condition, uncomfortable in every sense, was complied with, and the head stipulated for was in after time the wearer of a judicial wig for many years in Victoria.

There was one fast gentleman of the period who singularly enough afterwards attained high position in the Police Department, who never ventured abroad on any after-dark expedition without the companionship of a formidable stick; and so that he might never be left alone in this respect, he appointed an old fellow named Austin McGinty his "Stick-in-Waiting," or cudgel-keeper. McGinty was caretaker at St. Patrick's Hall, a connection which, doubtless, specially fitted him to be the custodian of shillelaghs. However, he was the Groom of the Sticks, which were stabled under the Hall stairs, and he received a weekly stipend for keeping them in order. Three or four times a week, about midnight, a thundering knock would be rattled on the door, and a croaking voice from within would screech out "Who's there?" to which would be made the interrogative response, "Are you awake, Ginty?" "Aye, aye, your Honor," would be crooned out; "What do you want now?" Whereupon the mandate would be thundered forth, "Come, jump up quick, man, and give me a stick." Ginty would spring from his lair, and, opening the door, would produce two or three of the saplings in his charge, one of which would be speedily selected and marched off with. However, I never heard of any broken heads following, and the sticks were never known to do much harm.

At the Restoration a section of the London street bullies was known as "Nickers" (whether after Old Nick or not I cannot say), and their missiles were some of the least-valued coins of the realm. According to Gay in the Trivia—

"His scatter'd pence the flying Nicker flings,
And with the copper shower the casement rings."

And the amusements of the Melbourne scamps and used to be diversified by the shying of coppers in the theatres and other places. On the 10th January, 1845, an audacious exhibition of this kind occurred at noon-day in the heart of Collins Street. On the site of the Union Bank then stood the Royal Hotel, the resort of the sporting fraternity, and on the opposite side was the most fashionable draper's shop in town, known as Williamson's. Here there was a cheval glass, valued at £17, kept for the convenience of the numerous customers, and it attracted the drunken attention of half-a-dozen "Nickers," who procured a large supply of a mintage then in circulation, long since called in—a species of heavy penny-piece. With this artillery, or rather rifle practice, a firing party commenced across the street, which was kept up for some time, luckily without knocking out any eyes or cracking any skulls, though several squares of glass in the shop windows were destroyed, and the mirror shattered in pieces. A bet of a dozen of champagne was the prompter of the outrage. The leader of the exploit was a Mr. J. D. Hill, one of whose limbs was so enlarged by elephantiasis that he was known as "Montefeetio." How he managed to drag himself along was matter of surprise, but more so was the possibility of showing his heels with sufficient quickness out of several scrapes with which he was mixed up, and this he would contrive to do rapidly and cleverly too. In the present instance he cleared off at once out of town, and the Police Court proceedings, which old Charlie Williamson vowed he would take, were deferred until something could be known of "Montefeetio's" whereabouts. In the meantime the affair was compromised, like many other transactions of a kindred kind.
But of all the eruptions in which the Waterfordian distemper manifested itself, the most comically grotesque was the dog-and-bell trick, which was thus performed:—A certain house, where there was a strongly-secured door-bell, was selected, and after the family had retired, an ill-natured dog was put into a collar and a two-ended rope, the extremities of the cordage being securely fastened to both bell and door handle. The dog immediately after commenced to bark and plunge furiously, and the bell got into such a state of terrible tinkling that the inmates, believing the house to be on fire, rushed promiscuously to the door to ascertain what was up. When an affray was made to open the door, the dog pulled fast the other way, the bell all the time merrily going, a half-a-dozen larkers encouraging the animal to resist in every possible way. And so it continued until either the bell-wire or rope broke, or some of the not over-active police arrived to quell the fiendish hullabaloo. The gentleman who stabled his sticks in St. Patrick’s Hall, was of an inventive turn of mind, and one day he conceived a happy notion of improving on the dog trick, and succeeded to his heart’s content. His invention was this:—The dog was to be no longer tied to the rope, which was to have instead a shin of beef or a sheep’s head firmly annexed. The dog was then set on the bait, and the animal lost no time in endeavouring to emancipate the joint. He pulled and plunged, and snarled and gnawed, whilst the bell was actively at work, and the astounded residents were hastening to the rescue. At every attempt to draw in the door, the prize receded from the dog, was sometimes jerked out of his mouth, and he was made furious, by the belief that some opposing power was trying to cheat him of his booty. Labouring under such a mistaken notion he would jump towards the door, which, in self-defence, would be jammed in his face, and not again opened in a hurry. Other vagabondizing dogs usually joined in the fun, and the shindy was often indescribable. The inventor is still (1888), I rejoice to write, alive and well in Melbourne, and no one, to see the respectably sedate, good-humouredly-serious, and mildly-mannered looking man, who now contemplatively struts along “the Block,” could ever imagine him to be the deviser of the most screaming farce that was ever put upon a stage, with an ill-conditioned brute of a dog as the principal of the dramatic personæ.

Such is a meagre outline of an institution which made no small noise during the infancy of the colony, and though totally indefensible upon any moral or rational ground, there was a vein of chivalry permeating the “larkism” of old, when compared with the “larkinins” of modern times. The old night prowlers, though gentlemen in name, were guilty of many ungentlemanly indiscretions; but with all their rowdiness they were generous in a way, and ever ready to make compensation for injuries inflicted. If they cut a head, they were not unwilling to supply a plaster, which accounts for the almost total absence of prosecutions against them. In only one very outrageous case, where a sergeant of police was dangerously assaulted, was a Criminal Sessions conviction obtained, and even then a further pecuniary amende was voluntarily made to the sufferer. There was a complete absence of malice in their out-door revelry, which might be compared with their duels, as displaying a penchant for fun more than for mischief; and as for murderous street robberies, the cold-blooded mutilation of policemen, befouling the streets with obscene language, assaulting or insulting women, would not be thought of. They were fast and furious, reckless and extravagant, impulsive and intemperate; and where too much steam was generated, the high pressure should be reduced by some safety valve or other. As a body, they paid the penalty of their excesses, for the many went the way of all flesh, prematurely, and the few remained as striking examples of how years and circumstances will sometimes effect such a metamorphosis in the man of fifty from the stripling of twenty, as to make it impossible by any evidence short of ocular demonstration to induce a belief that they were actually the one and same individual.

THE DUELLO.

At the period of what is known as the Batman-arn-Fawkner occupation of Port Phillip, pistol-shooting as a fancied mode of retaliation for personal affronts was in vogue in Great Britain, and during the ten years—1835-45—eight remarkable meetings are recorded as having taken place in
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England, two of which terminated fatally, and in two others severe wounds were inflicted. It is, therefore, by no means surprising that it should be imported with other conventional usages from Home. But it is a singular fact, that in none of the several duels fought, or pretended to be, in this colony, not one instance has occurred in which either challenger or challenged, or seconds, ever drew blood from the other. No life was sacrificed, no limb injured to the extent of an adverse scratch, not even the slightest personal casualty witnessed, if I except the incidents where one belligerent skinned one of his own toe-tops; another ignited his nether garments, and the coat and hat of others were perforated. It is difficult to account for such general harmlessness in the indulgence of a dangerous practice upon any other grounds than a presumption that the challenges were given under certain stimulating influences, and acted on with an impatience that allowed the nervous system insufficient time to recover its ordinary steadiness, and the eyes to banish the faculty of double vision, which over-indulgence in inebriating fluids is supposed to confer. The hand was therefore shaky, the aim uncertain, and the result innocuous. Furthermore, the Port Phillipian duelling was impregnated with an element that would not be admitted into English or Irish affairs of honour, viz., a desire on the part of seconds, concurred in by some of the principals, to turn the affair into a joke—an Antipodean travestying quite foreign to the recognized style in which such matters were disposed of in other places. Ireland was the hot-bed of the Duello during the eighteenth century, and the modus operandi there may be quoted as an authority on the subject. At the Summer Assizes held at Clonmel, the capital of Tipperary, a meeting of gentlemen delegates from the great fire-eating counties of Tipperary, Galway, Mayo, Sligo, and Roscommon assembled (Anno 1777) to settle the practice of duelling and points of honour. In this serious and solemn conclave a code of honour was affirmed and prescribed for general adoption throughout the country, and the fighting community accepted it as a text book. It was an elaborate production, embodying no less than three dozen rules of practice, and was irreverently known as the "Thirty-six Commandments." From a copy before me I transcribe two of the regulations as relevant to the subject under treatment:

"No. 13.—No dumb shooting or firing in the air admissible in any case. The challenger ought not to challenge without receiving offence, and the challenged ought, if he give offence, to make an apology before he come to the ground; therefore child's play must be dishonourable on one side or the other, and therefore it is accordingly prohibited."

"No. 15.—Challenges are never to be delivered at night, unless the party to be challenged intend leaving the place of offence before morning, for it is desirable to avoid all hot-headed proceedings."

There is much good sense in these stipulations, which were as a rule utterly disregarded in Melbourne, for the challenges were generally off-hand, the dumb-shooting and air-firing frequent, while such by-play as blank-loading was never once contemplated as a possibility by the fighting authorities referred to. The facetiously-termed "hostile meetings" were of frequent occurrence in the early years of the colony, but as no record of them is obtainable, anything like a complete list is not to be thought of, and I am therefore necessitated to confine my selection to a few of the more remarkable, as gathered from the old newspapers, though the most amusing of them have been hunted out by personal enquiry of the very few old colonists now living, and capable of giving information.

THE FIRST DUEL.

It would be difficult to meet with a funnier episode than is to be woven out of the circumstances connected with the first summons to the field of honour in Port Phillip; and it is questionable if anything racier ever happened even in Ireland, a country proverbial for powder-burning gentry during the eighteenth and a portion of the nineteenth centuries. The Christmas-tide of 1839-40 was a "brighte and a merrie" one, for there was an influx of filled purses from Home, and everyone who could scrape up anything for a "ran-tan" in town, rushed thither to see "life," and, as invariably happens in certain cases suffer for the transient enjoyment. The Melbourne Club was
then about to prepare its first year's balance-sheet. Matters were warm and comfortable there, though frequently somewhat too fast and furious, and is, and the Lamb Inn, just over the way, were the head-quarters of the fastest and most furious of the hot-blooded youngsters about town. On the evening of the 1st of January, 1840, a select dinner-party assembled in one of the club-rooms to bid hearty welcome to the newly-arrived year, and here gathered as choice a dozen of exuberant spirits as could well be found from that day to this. They sat round a table of "full and plenty," where no stint was imposed upon the animal enjoyment of eating and drinking; and after dinner there was no disposition to bring the convivialism to anything like a premature termination, so there they stayed without giving a thought to an early break-up—

"Bousing at the nappy,
An getting fou and unco happy."

But happiness, wherever and whenever it does happen, must, like all other mundane visitations, have an end. And so the inevitable came sooner than expected on this occasion. When the wine, or rather the brandy, was in the wit flew out. "A cup difference" arose between Mr. Peter Snodgrass and Mr. William Ryrie, and heated words and offensive insinuations followed. Snodgrass was the son of a Lieutenant-Colonel of distinction, and may be supposed to have inherited a martial ardour, which he was never reluctant to suppress when any occasion arose to excite it, and accordingly, a circumstance not surprising to those who knew his temperament, he forthwith challenged Ryrie to mortal combat. The verbal cartel was accepted as willingly as it was offered, and the next essential to be looked to was the selection of seconds, when Lieutenant Vignolles, of the 28th Regiment, a detachment of which was then stationed in Melbourne, was chosen as the challenger's best man, Mr. T. F. H—lt—n consenting to act in a like amicable capacity for the challengee. The shooting match was fixed for daybreak the following morning, on the western slope of Batman's Hill, now the site of the Spencer Street Railway Station, and there was not much time for effecting the preliminary arrangements. But an unexpected and formidable difficulty interposed in limine. Strange and unaccountable omission! The Club was not provided with such gentlemanly indispensables as duelling pistols; and worse too, it was impossible to procure any in town without exciting a curiosity which might spread the matter abroad, and conduce to its interruption by police or other interference. Not only were the two principals, but even all present, eager to see the frolic out in what they conceived to be the only legitimate and gentlemanly way, and a council of war was held to consider how the fix could be removed.

Mr. Joseph Hawdon, of Heidelberg, was the possessor of a splendid case of hair-triggers, which could be got, if only their owner could be got at; but he was enjoying the pleasures of his peaceful home, and that was eight miles in the country. This was a gloomy and disheartening look-out. "The golden hours" were plying their wings, it was close on eleven o'clock, and the dawning of the day could not by an human agency be deferred even for a minute. Fortunately, there was present a man worthy of, and equal to the occasion. H—lt—n, Ryrie's second, had a good horse in the Club stable, and fresh from the "land of green heath and shaggy wood," was an expert plucky rider, as firm in the pig-skin as on the solid ground, and jumping up, proclaimed his readiness to ride instantaneously to Heidelberg, storm the Hawdon domicile, and either return with the pistols, or never more show his honest face amongst them. This offer was rapturously applauded, and forthwith carried into effect, for the nag was readied in quick sticks, and the pistol-hunter dashed out of the Club-yard amidst the hearty congratulations of his confreres, who wished him God speed on his unpeaceful mission, and promised to make a night of it until his return.

"Wae mounted on his grey mare Meg,
A better never lifted leg.
Tam skelpit on,"

And no stranger night-ride was ever effected in the colony. It could not be compared to Tam O'Shanter's drunken canter, for as the Scots' Church did not lie in the route, there was no
Kirk of Alloway to pass, and therefore no chance of hearing old Clooties blowing bagpipes, or being “caught wi’ Warlocks i’ the mirk.” And lucky was it for the madcap equestrian that it was so, for if chased by witches, he had no brig of Doon with its running waters to save him from being “cutty-sarked,” for the Merri Creek was then dried up, and there was not as much of a current as could by any possibility operate as a spell upon supernatural pursuers. There was no analogy between it and the achievement of John Gilpin, except -

“That like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong.”

For the rider was even better in his work than the horse; and there was this difference between it and Turpin’s famous ride to York, that Tom rode a white mare while Dick’s Bess was black, and there was besides no turnpike in Port Phillip to be jumped. Arriving at his destination, the dreaming Hawdon was broken in upon, the pistols were obtained, and the eight miles back were thundered over again in a double-quick time never out-paced since. It was about 1 o’clock when the courier galloped up Collins Street, flourishing a pistol in each hand, very much inclined to shout out his success, but that he was partially tongue-tied through gripping the bridle between his teeth. Re-entering the Club and exhibiting the emblems of his good fortune, he was welcomed with uproarious applause, and regarded as the hero of the moment. A further hitherto unthought-of complication now arose, for though they had the pistols, there was no ammunition. On the Christmas Eve preceding, an explosion occurred in the Market Reserve, which blew up the “Sporting Emporium” (the only powder and shot mart in town) with its whole stock of combustibles, and there was only one other place where cartridges could be obtained; but the difficulty was how to procure them. The Military Commandant was a Captain Smith, who resided at the Officers’ quarters at the West end of Bourke Street, and it was proposed that Lieut. Vignolles should rouse up his superior officer and endeavour to procure the needful. But this he point blank refused to do, as the consequences of such an application by him might turn out rather unpleasantly. It was suggested that the meeting should be deferred, but the intending combatants were so intent upon a mutual slaughter that it would not be listened to, and again H—lt—n stepped into the breach, and vowed that sooner than have the fun fall through, he would go and get what was wanted at any risk. Again, the reverse of a “messenger of peace” he sped forth; but this time on foot, and making his way to the mansion of Captain Smith, knocked up that warrior, and obtained an interview. After much hesitation, the captain yielded, and the ambassador had just converted a capacious coat-pocket into a powder magazine, when the Captain’s wife, fancying something very wicked was going on under her roof-tree, quietly left her bed, and peeping through a partially-opened door, saw what they were up to. Starting out en deshabille, she seized the new-comer by the collar, and commanded him to unpocket what he had so carefully secreted. There was a regular tussle over Tom’s pocket, the lady pulling and shaking him a good deal; but, of course, all he could do was to passively resist by holding tight by the magazine, which was so poked and knocked about, as to lead to some apprehension of a blow-up from the friction. However, Tom was determined not to surrender what his wrestler was disposed to regard as contraband of war, and he directed his efforts to retreat towards the doorway through which he jumped, snatching his half-severed coat-tail out of the fair fury’s grip, and emerged into the open air, not only with a divided skirt, but rent up to the shoulder-blades. Away he retraced his steps; and now that the pistols and ammunition had been secured, the next thing to be looked up was a surgeon, for they were all positively certain that, so deadly would be the fray, a surgeon’s services should be provided. There was then resident in Bourke Street a Mr. D. J. Thomas, a son of Old Cambria, though much more given to talk of the leek than to eat one. No person was better known in the by-gone times than “Dr. Thomas” as a surgeon of considerable skill, and an ardent lover of practical jokes, and so it was that he was called upon to turn out and take the field, which he did without much reluctance. Every obstruction now removed, the party moved off to the convincing ground, a grassy common on the verge of the swamp northwardly adjoining Batman’s Hill. By this time it was clear daylight, and
as fine and fresh a summer morning as could be desired. The distance was measured, the pistols primed, and the men placed; but just as the fatal signal was about to be given, Snodgrass, who was always a victim to over-impatience, or ultra excitement on such occasions, so mismanaged his hair-trigger, that it went off too soon: so, instead of slaying his antagonist, he wounded himself in the toe, and came to grief. Ryrie, as a matter of course, could not think of behaving so un handsomely as to shoot a man down, and forthwith flared up in the air. Thomas was immediately at work with the wounded patient, who, though literally prostrated, was found to have sustained no serious injury. There was no decollation of the stricken member; the nail was gone, the flesh slightly abraded, and the haemorrhage but minimum. Some lint and bandaging which the surgeon brought in his pocket soon made the warrior right, and he was laid out on the grass right with the others, foiled in their fun, resolved to improvise a substitute of some kind, it did not matter much what it might be. There were about a dozen present, and it is no exaggeration to say, taken as a whole, they were more than partially inebriated. They had come there for a special purpose in which they were disappointed; but they were not to be done out of their morning, so there should be a shine, even if some of themselves were to die over it. Several suggestions were made and put aside, until one drunken humourist hiccuped something in effect that as the captain's ammunition was nearly all there, they could not do better than back Dr. Thomas against a tree as a mark for some pistol practice. Thomas, who had a slight impediment in articulation, grew alarmed, and stuttered out a vehement objection. Though a great joker himself, he had no liking to be turned into an Aunt Sally of this kind and experimented on with bullets instead of sticks. A compromise was finally effected by Thomas consenting to allow a new bell-topper he wore to do proxy for himself, and upon this corpus nailed to a gum-tree they operated in rotation with the two hair-triggers, until the Smithian cartridges were exhausted, and the medico's head-gear well riddled. Thomas looked with a wry face upon his well potted tile, upon which it was not necessary to have a post mortem.

The party now thought of returning home, and by the aid of a couple of stout, though unsteady arm-holders, the wounded hero managed to limp, the principal figure in a grotesque procession which made its way in a condition of loud jollification to William Street, for not wishing to show at such an unfashionable hour at the Club, they turned into the "Den" of old Sam previously described, resumed their compotations, and remained there until that period vaguely defined by the phrase known as "all hours." The two principals and the medico have long since "gone under." The seconds are still (1884) in the land of the living—one a settler in Queensland, another in Victoria, where he has served his adopted country in more than one capacity, and is generally accounted to be, if not the wisest, about the best fellow throughout all its length and breadth. And such is the story of the curious and dramatic incidents surrounding the first "affair of honour" in Port Phillip never before printed, and communicated to the writer by one of the two survivors.

The Hawdon Duelling Pistols.

History is silent as to what became of the brace of "bulleteers" referred to in the preceding sketch, and this is to be regretted, for as relics of a banished epoch they were almost as deserving of preservation as the Henty plough or the Fawkner printing press. But though the shooters have sunk into oblivion, it is a remarkable fact that the man who first utilized them in the colony, and on Her Majesty's service, too, is still "alive and kicking" in Melbourne. In 1837, Mr. Joseph Hawdon contracted with the New South Wales Government to convey a mail overland to and from Yass—a portion of the route to Sydney; and the work, then an arduous and dangerous undertaking, was commenced on the 1st January, 1838. The first mailman was John Bourke, a Hawdon employé, and before starting the Joseph Hawdon duelling pistols were placed in his hands as a means of defence against the aggressions of possible bushrangers and probable Aboriginal assailants. I have in my possession an autographic account of Bourke's first three months' journeys, and a marvellous narrative it is. He continued overlanding in this work for a year, during which he rode eleven thousand miles, and must have had a charmed life to have escaped the innumerable dangers which
beset him every league he travelled. I have not heard whether he was ever obliged to use the shooting-irons with effect; but in such an emergency he would be equal to the hair-trigger, for he was a good marksman, and would be more likely to kill or wing an opponent than to "toe" himself, as happened in the first duel described. Thirty years ago John Bourke was a man of means and position in Melbourne, was on terms of special intimacy with Sir (then Mr.) John O'Shanassy, and it was on his repeated suggestions that O'Shanassy, when Chief Secretary, took up and expedited the memorable adventure to be known subsequently and for all time as the "Burke and Wills expedition."

In those days of affluence Mr. Bourke little dreamed that the whirligig of time would bring him to the low-water mark of a sub. or super in a Government department; but in his, as in many other cases, the French proverb was verified and the unexpected happened. For years he filled an humble billet in the General Post Office, and being advanced in years his lowly position became precarious. Bourke was superannuated recently (1888), but it was a pity to divorce him, the first Melbourne and Sydney overland mailman, from the Post Office, so long as he was able to render any value for the very moderate wage he received.

The second "affair of honour" was disposed of at the beach close to Sandridge, in February, 1841. The belligerents were the surgeon of a recently arrived immigrant ship, and a Mr. H——l. They were placed at twelve paces, and a pistol handed to each. H——l fired without effect, whilst the other refrained from firing. The medico then asked his adversary if he was satisfied, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, proclaimed H——l to be no gentleman. He also demanded to be paid £5 2s. 6d. as damages for the tarring of the mattress and blankets on the voyage out. H——l declined to settle the little bill, and there the matter was allowed to rest. The doctor had been "called out" by the other for using insulting language, provoked by the desecration of the Esculapian bedding.

One evening in July of the same year a Mr. S and a Mr. D. Mc formed two of a dinner party at a Melbourne hotel, when the potations being more potent than the Yarra fluid, hot words ensued, and S applied an embrocation of steaming whiskey-punch between Mac's eyes. An appeal to arms was a matter of course, and the diners-out adjourned, with some friends, to see it out in the moonbeams at the Flagstaff Hill. Two aimless shots were exchanged, the warriors made it up, and the gathering returned to convivialism, and did not get home till morning, by which time the carousers were all gloriously drunk, 

"In vino Veritas, and the truth leaked out,

amidst much merriment, when the seconds accounted for the bloodless battle by declaring that they had forgotten to put bullets into the pistols. The flash in the pans, however, accomplished as effectual a peace-making as a leaden recipe might have done.

In August, 1841, occurred a hostile meeting, remarkable in consequence of the position attained in after time by the principals. Mr. Peter Snodgrass was by no means the least pugnacious individual of an extinct generation, and it did not take much to get up a casus belli with him.

Mr. Redmond Barry was a gay and promising young Barrister, and the two were prominent members of the Melbourne Club. Barry had written a letter to a friend, who injudiciously showed it to Snodgrass, about whom it contained some reference, which was deemed to be personally offensive, and a challenge was the consequence. The gage of battle was taken up, the preliminaries were quickly arranged, and in the rawness of a winter's morning the meeting came off by the side of the "sad sea waves," between Sandridge and the present Albert Park Railway Station. Though the weather was the reverse of promising, Barry made his appearance on the ground done up with as much precision as if attending a Vice-regal levee. Even then he wore the peculiarly fabricated bell-topper, which a future Melbourne Punch was destined to present to the public in illustrated variety; he was strap-trousered, swallow-tail coated, white-vested, gloved, and cravated to a nicety. He even carried his Sir Charles Grandison deportment with him to the pistol's mouth, and never in after years appeared to such grandiose advantage as on this occasion. When they sighted each other at the recognized measurement, before Barry took the firing-iron from his supporter, he placed his hat with much polite tenderness on the green sward near him, ungloved, drew down his spotless wristbands, and saluted his wicked-looking antagonist with a profound obeisance that would do credit to any mandarin that ever learnt salaaming in the
Celestial Empire. Then taking his pistol, and elevating himself into a majestic pose, he calmly awaited the word of command. Snodgrass fussed and fidgetted a good deal—not from the nervousness of fear, for he was as brave as an English bull-dog, but rather from a desire to have the thing over with as little ceremonial nonsense as possible, for he was Barry's antithesis as a student of the proprieties. It was his over-eagerness on such occasions that caused his dwelling to eventuate more than once in a fiasco, and unfitted him for the tender handling of hair-trigger pistols. By a laughable coincidence, the present "engagement" was terminated in a manner almost precisely similar to what happened at the duel of the year before, when a hair-trigger was prematurely fired off, the pistol held by Snodgrass, getting the start, was by some inadvertence discharged too soon, whereat Barry at once magnanimously fired in the air. Little could either of the duelers foresee what futurity had in store for both. The one grew into the esteemed and popular forensic Advocate, and on to the eminent and universally-valued Judge; whilst the other, in the following year, was a gallant capturer of bushrangers, and ended his career as an active Member of Parliament, and a voluble if not eloquent Chairman of Committees in the Legislative Assembly.

In 1842 Mr. F. A. Powlett, a Commissioner of Crown Lands, quarrelled with Mr. A. Hogue, a merchant, concerning one of the many entanglements into which the commercial affairs of the well-known Mr. F. A. Rocker were involved, and there was a challenge in consequence. The well-known Mr. C. H. Ebden was Hogue's second, and the meeting was held under the hill at Newmarket, near Flemington. There were two exchanges of shots, an evidence that mischief was meant; yet no injury was sustained by either side, if Hogue's coat be excepted, through which Powlett sent a ball each time.

Mr. Skene Craig had charge for a time of the first branch of the Commissariat Department established in Port Phillip. He subsequently joined Mr. A. A. Broadfoot in mercantile pursuits, and the firm of Craig and Broadfoot occupied a displayed place in the old Directories. Once they happened to have quarrelled over a matter not immediately connected with the counting-house, and C. challenged B. They met at three o'clock on a fine summer morning on the northern slope of Batman's Hill, and at the urgent request of one of them, who firmly believed he should be winged or otherwise maimed, Dr. W. H. Campbell was in attendance for any surgical operations that might be impending; but luckily his services were not called into requisition. Craig discharged his pistol at the other without hitting him, and Broadfoot returned the fire by aiming at the moon, which happened to be quietly and sadly looking down on their harmless folly. A reconciliation was without much difficulty effected, and ratified at a champagne breakfast given by Broadfoot, which was shared in by the principals, seconds, half-a-dozen extra official friends, and of course "the doctor."

"Putting on jam," a phrase of modern slang, and increasing in popularity, has a very different meaning from the manner in which that much appreciated conserve was applied on the occasion of a duel professed to be fought forty-five years ago (1843). There was then in the colony the cadet of a noble Scotch family, known as "the Honourable Gilbert Kennedy," who, though afflicted with lameness, was nevertheless sufficiently "game" to be in almost every mischief that happened within miles of his whereabouts. On the occasion now written of he got up a "tiff" with a Mr. George Demoulin, more for fun than other reason, and lost no time in challenging him. Demoulin was something of the "softie," and it was arranged that he should be the subject of a soft practical joke, which would have no more disastrous effect than the loud laugh it would raise at the expense of the individual operated on. A harmless arrangement was entered into by Kennedy and the two seconds, that Demoulin's pistol should be charged with powder only, and Kennedy's with powder and jam, which was accordingly done. The meeting came off soon after sunrise, on a wide open space, near the junction of Lonsdale and Spencer Streets, and all concerned, with half-a-dozen outsiders in the secret, put in a punctual appearance. So far as Demoulin was aware, it was to be a deadly struggle fought at close quarters, and consequently the warriors were stationed at only a few paces from each other. They were both accounted good shots, and one of them at least had but slight hope of either or both of them withdrawing from the strife without loss of
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life, or most certainly being maimed. On the word being given both pistols were discharged, and behaved as well as they could under the circumstances, that of Demoulin's going off and doing nothing more, whilst Kennedy's went home to the point towards which it was directed. Kennedy took cool steady aim at his opponent's head, and the jam cartridge landed on his forehead, scattering over the bridge of his nose and eyes, the unusual effect so alarming him that he sang out his brains were blinding him. He did not fall, but was in such a terrible state of alarm that it was some time before he could be made sensible of the fact that his cranium was unbroken, and he still retained in his head as much brains as that upper storey was ever furnished with. On clearly comprehending the trick played on him, he was very wroth, but could not long withstand the peals of merriment by which he was encircled, so he yielded with good grace to the spirit of the time, and joined heartily in the laughter evoked at his expense. The young sparks who embarked in the wild frolics of the period were generally well educated at high class schools in the old country, and a knowledge of the grand dead languages of Rome and Greece was not unfamiliar to them. In an outburst of exhilaration the sobriquet of "Jam Satis" was conferred by some classic humourist on Demoulin, who, however, never could take kindly to it.

When medical men appear on a battle-field it is generally in a professional capacity, in the hope that the fortune of war may turn up something in the way of a surgical operation; but an amusing exception to this rule occurred in Melbourne in 1845. The official leader of the then Port Philip Bar was Mr. James Croke, a sour-looking, rough-faced, irascible though well-meaning man, whose years had landed him in the stage of the "sere and yellow leaf." Amongst the secondary grade of the legal profession was an even sourer-faced Attorney, Mr. James Hunter Ross, as straight as a lamp-post, and as hard-visaged as if his figure-head had been carved out of a block of granite. Croke was Irish, and Ross was Scotch, and one day they were both retained on opposite sides in a Supreme Court suit before Mr. Justice Therry. In the progress of the cause some interjectional remark of the Attorney riled the easily disturbed temperament of the Barrister, who, turning furiously on the other, told him "that he had trumped up the case for his own benefit," which so irritated the usually unruffled Caledonian that for the moment he had some notion of bringing his affronter rather unceremoniously to the "floor of the Court." The good-tempered Judge was quick to note the brewing storm, and with his accustomed tact made some remark which had the effect of turning it off. Croke, as quick in forgetting as provoking, thought no more of the occurrence; but not so Ross, who quitted the place in terrible dudgeon, and resolving in his mind that Croke had not heard the last of it. The next day Dr. Thomas Black, who resided in Lonsdale Street, received a communication from Ross, conveying a wish to see him at his earliest convenience. Black lost no time in complying, and on arriving at Ross's found him in a state of intense excitement, pacing up and down the room. Without waiting to be questioned he roared out, "I have been grossly insulted by old Croke, and I wrote to him to say that I shall call him out if he does not apologize, and he won't do so. I wish you would see him, and say from me that unless he sends an ample apology he will have to do the other thing." Dr. Black accepted the commission of "a friend" with the intention of doing the peace-maker if he positively could, and for this purpose he betook himself to Mr. Croke's house in William Street. "Old Croke," who was making ready for dinner, met him in his shirt sleeves, and when informed of the object of the mission, stared with astonishment, and exclaimed, "Insult Ross, do you say? God bless my soul, my good fellow, such an idea was the furtherest from my thoughts. Why, man alive, the thing is preposterous!" After some further conversation Croke again vociferated, "Apologize! I apologize? Why, man, I never could think of apologizing for anything I do in the discharge of my official duty. If Ross thinks I meant to offend him, I am very sorry, for we have met in each other's houses. What I said was in a public capacity, and if it gave offence I regret it; but to think of sending an apology to Ross, I never could do anything of the sort." Dr. Black asked if Croke would authorize him to say to Ross that he (Croke) was sorry Ross should have taken offence at what had been said, but that he (Croke) declined to apologize for anything said or done by him in a public capacity. Whereupon the other responded, "Oh! most certainly, you may do so if you like," and here ended the interview. Black
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next sought the irate Ross, and with the oil of a persuasive tongue so salved the lawyer’s wounded dignity that he expressed himself as being “thoroughly satisfied.” On the day after, Judge Therry visited Black and thanked him cordially for the trouble he had taken in arranging the unpleasant difference that occurred in Court. He added that having learned something of an intended hostile meeting, he had recourse to measures that would have prevented such being carried into effect, but he was thankful to Dr. Black for having relieved him from what would have been, under the circumstances, an extremely disagreeable duty.

In March, 1845, a comical rumpus occurred between two gentlemen in the Commission of the Peace. A meeting of Territorial Magistrates was being held at the Police Office, to consider the propriety of a separation of the town and district business, which, up to that time, had been transacted in the Court-house, whereby detriment and inconvenience were entailed upon suitors. Amongst those in attendance were Mr. Edward Curr, the political Nestor of the province, and Dr. George Playne, a fashionable, youthful Club Physician. By the term “Club” it is not meant to convey that Playne was what is known as a “Club Doctor,” attending the invalid members of a Benefit Society, for a dole hardly sufficient to find the medical attendant in boots, but an habitue of the Melbourne Club, having plenty of money to spend, and knowing how to spend it. Whilst Curr was addressing the Chair, Playne contemptuously ejaculated the remark “paltry,” whereupon Curr turned round, and looking his interrupter sternly in the face, declared “it was time he was taught to use the language of a gentleman.” Playne boiled up with indignation, but with much difficulty kept his choler bottled until ten o’clock next morning, when he uncoiled it in the form of a challenge to the other, which was entrusted for delivery to Mr. John Carre Riddell, who waited upon Curr and presented a written mandate, requesting an apology or the alternative to name a friend. Curr declining point blank to do either, was, for his contumacy, posted at the Club. The following day he quietly repaired to the Police Court, and had Playne bound to the peace. Curr subsequently addressed a long letter to the newspapers, in which he elaborately vindicated himself from accepting the challenge, and certainly for reasons, the sound good sense and logic of which it would be difficult to controvert. He considered himself more than justified in not “going out” with his challenger, because Playne was simply “a Bachelor Justice,” and known only as the Secretary to the Club, whereas he (Curr) was “an ancient patriarch of the land,” with fourteen children under his roof, to be provided for; and furthermore, he was of such bodily bulk, that any person capable of drawing a trigger could hardly, by any possibility, miss him. The conditions, domestic and corporeal between himself and Playne were so different, that no cowardice could fairly be attributed to him for declining a battle so unequal. The good sense of the Curr manifesto was so irresistible, that its writer secured the sympathies of the public, and after the Doctor had passed through a lively ordeal of laughing and chaffing, all recollection of his unprovoked indiscretion quickly passed away.

A very amusing attempt to vindicate the offended dignity of wounded honour occurred, although I am unable to state the precise day or year, but it was probably in 1845, or thereabout. Mr. Synnott disposed of a station at the Anakies, near Geelong, to a Mr. Frederick Griffin, and amongst the chattels to be taken over, according to the Griffian notion of the bargain, were some poultry. This was disputed by the vendor, and the vendee, determining that he would not be victimized by what he considered rather “foul” play, incontinently challenged the other to mortal combat. Now, Griffin was as much of a fire-eater as the other was a fire-hater; the one vowed “he’d pepper the other,” and this other was thrown into an awful funk that more than half killed him. If there was a thing in the world he dreaded, it was a pistolling encounter, and what on earth he was to do he did not know. Of course, he could, if he wished, decline to meet the other, but to be publicly pilloried as a coward was only next to being shot, for he was not in heart a craven; though overwhelmed by a species of nervousness, almost indistinguishable from fear. The seconds were nominated, and in the course of the preparatory arrangements, from what they had ascertained of the perturbed state of the Synnott mind, they were led to believe that it would be an absolute impossibility to bring the second man to the scratch, if the meeting were to be a bond-fide one. Under such exceptional circumstances it occurred to them that a ruse would not only be excusable, but justifiable, and they consequently...
agreed that the pistols should be charged with powder only. An assurance to this effect was imparted to Synnott, and considerably pacified him, but Griffin was to be kept in the dark. The sham battle came off at the Little River, where Griffin put in an appearance, cool and determined, and confident, that for him, at all events, it should be no bloodless or barren victory. Synnott, though having the fullest confidence in the promise given by the seconds, was shaking with apprehension, in fact, almost unsustained by the most dreadful of apprehensions, the shadowy nature of which he could not bring himself to steadily look at. The men were placed, a bulletless pistol handed to each, and the ominous word "fire" sung out. Griffin did his part, as he thought, with unerring effect; but was perfectly astonished at what he saw before him, viz., his antagonist with his "unmentionables" on fire about his lower extremities. The fact was that the shooting signal so paralysed all muscular action in Synnott that his pistol hand, instead of extending, dropped to his thigh, the piece exploded, and the powder igniting his trousers, the whole affair was simply turned into one of blazes. No serious injury was, however, suffered, for by prompt aid, the conflagration, which had not time to make much head-way, was fortunately extinguished without trouble or danger. Griffin rubbed his eyes, and could scarcely credit what he beheld before him. There was his foe, not standing, but prancing about, and his own aim was taken at such an altitude that it could never have descended to such meanness as to shin the man whom he was bent on either killing or wounding. A light suddenly broke upon his mind and he became convinced that he had been in some way or other (how he did not yet guess) shabbily tricked, and he made up his mind to have the mystery quickly solved. Confronting the two seconds he declared he should forthwith challenge and shoot them both unless they told "the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and as there was nothing for it but an open confession, the circumstances attending the concoction of the humane, and in every sense, harmless hoax, were frankly detailed. Griffin was in an awful pelter for a while, and could not be mollified, but at length, whatever sense of the ludicrous was in him, broke out, and the whole affair was so irresistibly funny, that it could end in no other way than good humour, the effects of which swept all the bitterness of the poultry away, and the incident was only remembered to be heartily laughed at whenever mentioned, not only for many a year after, but even by old colonists in the present day.

About 10 a.m. on 27th June, 1846, two gentlemen, blankly known as A and C, rode up to the Pier Hotel at Sandridge, and asked for a cup of tea. The harmless beverage was given and drank, after which the strangers intimated that they were only out for an airing, and cantered away as if bound for St. Kilda. They were not long gone when a Mr. H appeared in a stanhope, and started off after the others, who joined him at a short distance in the bush. A suspicious-looking individual, name not known, next showed, and stated that he was on the look-out for one of Liardet's boats, and lounged up and down on the sand. The Hon. Gilbert Kennedy next galloped up, and passing on, the whole group assembled in the scrub near the head of the lagoon, where it became so evident to the few Sandridge-ites then in existence that mischief was brewing, that a courier was forthwith despatched to town to inform the police of the harm that was in the wind. Meanwhile a hostile meeting was hastily gone through at the lagoon, Kennedy and C • being the principals, and A and H the seconds. Shots were exchanged without any harm, an explanation ensued, all was over, and the ground was speedily cleared. The engagement originated in a quarrel over a game of cards at a Melbourne hotel, on the previous night. In an hour or so after Chief-Constable Sugden and Sergeant Rose of the Mounted Police came tearing down from town, but only in time to learn some exaggerated intelligence of the shindy they were in such a hurry to prevent.

In 1846, Messrs. Alexander Sprot and William Campbell (not the so long well-known "Honourable" of that ilk), two settlers in the Western District, had some verbal altercation, in the course of which Campbell accused Sprot of having slandered him, and Sprot challenged the other in return. Sprot's friend was a Captain Adams, Campbell's a Mr. R. Crawford, and it was arranged that the fight should take place in the neighbourhood of Belfast, but it got bruited abroad, and the authorities had initiated measures to prevent it. The parties then agreed to ouwit the police by going out of the colony, and cross the border into South Australia, and this was done without
delay. The meeting was to come off at a spot indicated at the river Glenelg, on the 27th June. It was previously understood that Adams, as the challenger's friend, should provide fire-arms, but through his inability to procure proper duelling pistols, he was forced to do with common pocket pistols of such an inferior description that the seconds experienced considerable difficulty in properly loading them. On Campbell being handed his he looked at it with contempt, and sneeringly observed "that it would be the merest farce to fight with such ridiculously miserable things." When the word was given, Campbell's piece merely snapped, and Sprot's with a struggling effort, barely managed to go off, but do nothing more. Campbell was then asked to withdraw the offensive expression which had provoked all the trouble; but he would do nothing of the sort, and preparations were being made for a second round, when Adams gravely declared that as there was no medical man in attendance, he should withdraw his principal from the field. In this determination he persisted, and the four companions re-crossed the boundary line, and returned home, after riding four hundred miles for the most miserable flash in the pan imaginable. A newspaper war followed, and columns of original correspondence were printed in acrimonious vindication of the circumstances under which such a ridiculous farce was brought about.

On the last day of October, 1849, there was a merry-making party at the Prince of Wales Hotel, then a fashionable rendezvous in the eastern quarter of Little Flinders Street; and in the course of the enjoyment, a Dr. F and a Dr. T got up an altercation which was "seen out" the following morning on the then unpopulated Collingwood Flat near to the present Abbotsford Convent. Shots were exchanged, and T received F's ball through his hat, and had a rather narrow shave of being brained, for some of a not over-luxuriant crop of hair was singed across the crown of his pate. This was considered quite a satisfactory result, and a thorough reconciliation ensued.

About 4 o'clock on the morning of 11th December, 1850, a duel was unexpectedly prevented at Emerald Hill. A Mr. John Allan, from the Pyrenees, was staying at the Prince of Wales, and another country settler, named Purcell, was quartered at the Port Phillip Club Hotel. Allan was examined as a witness in a trial in which the other was concerned, and his evidence was so displeasing to Purcell that it led to a dispute, and thence proceeded to a challenge. Arrangements were in train on the hill summit, but the fun was spoiled by the appearance of Chief-Constable Bloomfield, with a half a dozen subordinates, and warrants were issued for the arrest of the principals, who were confined in the magisterial retiring-room, when Purcell thrust an offensively-worded note at Allan's face, with an accompaniment of a coarse and opprobrious nature. Allan refusing the cartel, was struck by Purcell with a whip, and a scuffle followed, in the course of which Mr. Frank Stephen, as mediator, experienced a practical exemplification of the aphorism that "Those who in quarrels interpose
Will often wipe a bloody nose."

For though his nose remained intact, Purcell administered a header, which stove in the lawyer's hat, and momentarily astonished the wearer, who, however, lost no time in recovering himself and pitching into Purcell with a will, treating him to what is known as the "hand and foot trick," and levelling him. The Police Court idlers were now in their glory, a crowd had by this time collected, and a ring was being formed for a continuance of the exhibition, when the police interfered, and Purcell was secured. The intercepted duellists were subsequently bound in heavy bonds to keep the peace for six months. Stephen having repaid what he had allowed the squabble to remain where it was; but he took it into the Supreme Court, where the assault cause of Allan v. Purcell was tried on 16th March, 1851, when the jury awarded a farthing damages, in addition to £5 to paid into Court. Such was Judge A'Beckett's opinion of the transaction that he refused to certify for costs.

Here end my gleanings in the traditional stubble-field where the "Wild Oats" were sown, when Port Phillip little dreamed of the golden future which the Paroo had in reserve for her.
CHAPTER LVII.

THE AGE OF GOLD: ITS BIRTH, AND EARLY DEVELOPMENTS.

SYNOPSIS:—Early Prospectors and Prospecting.—Mirabilia Annos.—Gold in the Pyrenees.—The First Gold Buyer.—The First Gold Proclamation.—The First License Regulations.—The First Gold Exhibits.—The First Ballarat License.—Further Regulations.—The First Government Escort.—Its Arrival.—The First Melbourne Coach.—Ballarat in its Glory.—The Stampede from Melbourne.—A Busy Day.—The Straits of Trade.—The Doctors Procession to the Diggings.—The Mount Alexander Gold Field.—The First Melbourne Gold Circular.—Attempts to Set a Newspaper.—Finding of the Several Gold Fields.—Doubling the License Fee.—Doing the Doctor.—The State of Melbourne.

OLD, defined as "the purest and most ductile of all the metals," was in all ages deemed the most valuable. Its possible discovery was the dream of the ancient voyagers, and whether they adventured north or south, east or west, hope waved a golden symbol before their eyes, and all their perils by sea or land were illumined by an ardent expectation that the attainment of untold golden treasures would constitute not the least of their rewards.

In California, which was ultimately instrumental in precipitating the unearthing of the auriferous riches of Australia, gold was found by some Spanish officers in 1539, and forty years later (1579), after Sir Francis Drake took possession of the country in the name of Queen Elizabeth, in an account of his discovery, he declared "that there is no part of the earth here to be taken up wherein there is not some probable show of gold or silver." Two-hundred and seventy-two years later still, the first gold-seekers at Ballarat used the same words as to the abundance of the gold indications, but much more unqualified as to quantity. The first Australian gold "discoverer" was an impostor amongst the first batch of convicts arriving at Sydney. With two or three brass buckles and a guinea, he manufactured some specimens of gold ore, which he announced as having been found by him amongst the pebbles in a creek a few miles away, and on the strength of such good luck, endeavoured to obtain clothes and provisions from the Government store, as the reward of his enterprise. The allegation was investigated, the deceit detected, and the fellow was flogged for his fraud. A few years afterwards the same man was hanged for a graver offence.

In 1837, a convict assigned servant, employed as a shepherd at Bathurst, declared that he had found some gold specimens in the bush; but, as he was unable to produce them, and had no corroborative testimony, it was assumed he was not a truth-teller, and a twenty-five lash castigation was the reward of his temerity.

The likelihood of the Australian continent containing extensive gold deposits was known more than thirty years before they became a grand reality—Count Strelecki, who spent some time in Port Phillip, and made himself quite at home amongst all its mountain-ranges, its valleys, rivers and water-courses, prepared a very valuable Report upon the geology of the then most remote portions of the country. This document was presented to the House of Commons in March, 1841, and the following extracts possess a special interest as bearing on the subject of this chapter:

"The country between the Murray and Lake Onmeo" (he wrote) "shows on an extensive scale the primitive and secondary rocks; a gillite and quartz rock on one side, to the east; old red-sandstone, with conglomerates, on the other, to the west.

"Indications of simple minerals and ores appear, indicative of such being buried beneath, hardly however, worth the trouble of seeking for."
With reference to Gippsland, the Report proceeded—

"Economical mineralogists may derive from the examination of the rocks of the dividing ranges, traces of ores hidden by still unexplored chains from the eye of the traveller."

Further on there is this intimation:—

"An auriferous sulphuret of iron, yielding a small quantity of gold, sufficient to attest its presence, but insufficient to repay its extraction, as existing generally throughout New South Wales."

This Report was concurred in by Sir Roderick Murchison, the eminent geologist, who referred to it in a lecture delivered before the Royal Institute of Great Britain. In 1847, Sir Roderick, in a letter to Sir C. Lemon, printed in the Philosophical Magazine, expresses a belief "that auriferous alluvia would be found at the base of the Western flanks of the dividing ranges."

It appears, from the evidence given by the Rev. W. B. Clarke, before a Select Committee of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, that as far back as 1841, he discovered gold in the mountainous country to the west of the Vale of Clwyd; that in 1843, he spoke to many persons of the abundance of gold likely to be found in Australia; that in 1844, he exhibited a sample of gold in quartz to the then Governor, Sir George Gipps, and to several other persons; but, that the subject was not followed up, "as much from the considerations of the penal character of the colony, as from the general ignorance of the value of such an indication."

It is difficult to assign with certainty, anything like a precise date to the period when the Melbournians had the first intimation of the probability of the existence of the precious metal in Port Phillip. In 1851, Mr. Jackson, for years resident at St. Kilda, met in Hobart Town, William Buckley, the "Wild White Man," the runaway convict from the Collins' Convict Expedition of 1803, who consorted for over thirty years with the Aborigines, and it was asserted by Buckley that gold abounded in the Cape Otway Ranges, and he could point out where it was to be found; but little attention was paid to the statement, for at the time the air was darkened by rumours of the existence of gold in several places.

In 1841, two persons, named Armstrong and Sharp, were reported to have discovered small quantities of gold, both at the Plenty Ranges and the Pyrenees, which they had forwarded for testing and sale to Launceston, and receiving no return, they were discouraged from further searchings.

In 1842, it was communicated to Captain Lonsdale, the Sub-Treasurer, that an old fellow known as "Gum" was mysteriously engaged in supposed gold workings in a secluded nook of the Plenty Ranges. Some troopers were despatched to beat up his quarters, as gold-hunting without proper authorization was then an offence punishable both criminally and civilly. "Gum" was found at home, taking his ease, but no gold was found on him, though the hut contained an old pair of bellows and two dilapidated crucibles—strong circumstantial evidence in themselves, but of no account when uncorroborated by collateral testimony. "Gum" was rather surprised, but not much disconcerted by the visit. He quietly told the police he was an honest man, who earned a livelihood by doing odd jobs of fencing, and hunting for lyre birds and other saleable live stock to be procured in the adjacent forests. The recluse of the Plenty came to be known as "Gum, the Gold-hunter," though the manner in which he carried on his craft as a gold-worker could never be found out. His den was at the head of the river, primitive in construction and unique in design. A huge gum tree came to grief from the combined effects of bush fires and tempests. A portion of the trunk remained standing, and the burnt part was scooped out by the aid of adze and axe, the space between it and some boughs was covered in with bark, and two apartments were formed, one to serve as kitchen and residence, the second as cubiculum, store-room, and laboratory. Once a quarter the solitary inhabitant, with a small wallet slung on his back, journeyed into Melbourne, got rid of his burden, and returned with a stock of supplies. He had come to Port Phillip from Van Diemen's Land, was a quiet, steady-going, taciturn individual, who minded his business (whatever it was), and spoke little with anyone. His wallet was supposed to be a golden one, and whoever was the recipient of hisSmelled wares kept the secret well.
One day in March, 1847, a shepherd entered the shop of Mr. Forrester, a jeweller, in Collins Street, and exhibited some metal which he desired to have tested. It was a sample as big as an average apple, and the shepherd thought it was copper. He said he had found it amongst the roots of a tree blown down by the wind at a place some sixty miles from Melbourne, where there was plenty more of it; but the precise whereabouts he declined to disclose. Forrester applied some tests, when the specimen proved to be a veritable golden apple, inasmuch as it contained sixty-five per cent. of pure gold. Forrester became its possessor, and the shepherd left, promising to soon return with a larger quantity, but for some never-discoverable reason did not keep his word. There happened to be in Melbourne at the time a well-known Captain Clinch, master of the "Flying Fish," a popular craft which traded between Melbourne and Hobart Town, with whom Forrester was on terms of intimacy, and he presented Clinch with a slice of the "golden apple," but to newspapers only did he appear to have imparted any intelligence of his transaction with the shepherd. Upon Clinch returning to Hobart Town, he was more open-minded than the Melbourne jeweller, for he communicated the facts as I have detailed them to the Hobart Town Courier, and it was the receipt of that journal of the 19th May, 1847, which informed the Melbourne newspapers that gold was indigenous to Port Phillip, but the whole thing was treated as a hoax.

No further gold intelligence turned up for more than a year, when in July, 1848, another shepherd put in an appearance with a paper of what he declared to be gold dust, gathered as he protested under a tree only a few miles out of town, but the locality he would not name. On examination the sample did contain a small proportion of gold.

About the same time a shepherd boy called at the shop of Mr. Robe, a jeweller in Collins Street, and displayed some gold, which he alleged had been found by him at the Pyrenees, but it was a very poor specimen.

In the course of this same year a shepherd employed on the Station of Dr. William Barker, at Mount Alexander, found in a gully some particles of what was most probably gold, though they were thought to be iron or copper. He kept them for some days, when a man named Fryer (after whom the well known Fryer's Creek was subsequently named) in the course of a land-hunting excursion dropped into the finder's hut, and was shown the discovery. He so joked the man about his supposed treasure that the shepherd rushed out in a rage, and flung his specimens away.

In January, 1849, the startling intelligence of the golden wonders of California created an intense sensation in Melbourne, and there was a partial exodus to the El Dorado. Ships were laid on at once for San Francisco, industrious and well-to-do artizans broke up their homes, scattered their household goods, and hied away over the seas—many of them like people who make a hasty marriage, repenting in leisure the speed with which they jumped from certainty to uncertainty, and in some cases something much worse. The Melbourne journals remonstrated vainly against such imprudent expeditions, and one of them thus grandiloquently wound up a long and laboured stay-at-home exhortation—

"The golden fleece of our pastures, waving fields of golden grain, and the golden oil obtainable from our seas, are the true gold for us, bringing happiness and content to the producers; while an interminable thirst for the precious metal, which can only be assuaged by the sacrifices of all pastoral and agricultural pursuits, must render the people wretched and debased, and the country a desert."

It was during the same month of January that another shepherd boy, named Thomas Chapman, made his appearance at the shop of Mr. Charles Brentani, another Collins Street jeweller, and showed some samples of a metal, picked up by him in his wanderings through a ravine in the ranges of the Pyrenees, where he was employed shepherding. On examination it occurred to Brentani that the metal was gold; but as two heads were better than one he consulted with a Mr. Duchene, an assayer, and after due testing the specimens were pronounced to be unmistakably gold of the best quality. On a further consideration it was resolved that Duchene and the lad should return to the Pyrenees, when the latter was to point out where he had found the metal. He was to be liberally rewarded; Duchene and Brentani were then to take further steps to work the wealth believed to
be within easy reach, and henceforth everything was to prosper in the most agreeable manner.

From this starting-point of our early gold questings the current of events runs through an uneven and occasionally unreliable channel. Reticence, exaggeration, and not unfrequently falsehood, as it suited the whims or personal interest of the individual concerned, stamped the intelligence presented to the public; and even this, such as it was, leaped out in fits and starts through the local newspapers, and at times took a private trip to Sydney, through the Press of which city it made its way circuitously back to Melbourne. Anything like a lucidly consecutive narrative cannot be given, and this précis will present the several details in the order of time in which they were submitted to the public, who simply read and wondered, believed and disbelieved, but were almost unanimous in a firm conviction that sooner or later "something would turn up."

Duchene, and the lad Chapman, started for the Pyrenees, and returned after an absence of some days, when Duchene declared they had found auriferous indications in abundance, and extending over a large area of country. If he could be believed, he brought back with him about £100 worth of ore. Brentani, Forrester, and Duchene formed a second expedition, and after proceeding some miles they had a disagreement on the Keilor Plains, which led to Duchene's secession and return to Melbourne on the 30th January. He forthwith indulged in what is known as "drawing the long bow," and treated the newspapers to some dazzling revelations of his first trip, previously kept back. The gold he described as being in abundance, and of a quality superior to any he had ever before worked. The value of what he had seen was actually incalculable. There was one tract of country, five miles in extent, on every yard of which there were indications of gold. He picked up one nugget, weighing 2 lb. 3 oz., which yielded 90 per cent. of the precious metal. It was a lump interspersed with a few quartz pebbles.

On 1st February, a bush-hand—said to be an adult shepherd, interviewed Mr. Robert Cadden, the Clerk of the District Police Court, and offered to make affidavit that five weeks before in traversing the country he found some dust, and a few small specimens which he was sure were gold. These he was unable to produce or account for, and where he met with them he refused to say. He was a man of simple appearance, but his dress and manner caused his statement to be discredited. Brentani returned on the 2nd February, tired with what had turned out "a wild-goose chase." He penetrated to within seventeen miles of the Pyrenees, where nothing like what they were in quest of was to be found; and whilst the shepherd boy was undergoing a talking-to for misleading, he dashed into the bush and vanished. After waiting some time for his appearance, Melbourne was re-sought without him.

The next day, worked upon by the many Pyreneanean rumours flying about as numerous and disquieting as a swarm of mosquitoes, a well-equipped party of half-a-dozen amateurs started from town at an early hour, resolved to explore the whole Pyrenees or perish in the attempt. Unfortunately they overdid it in their desire to have things comfortable on the march, and with this intent were accompanied by a dray laden with supplies. The "supplies," however, included a six gallon measure of brandy, which was broached ere they were half-a-dozen miles away, and the result was that half of them returned heavily intoxicated to Melbourne, whilst the shepherd boy was undergoing a talking-to for misleading, he dashed into the bush and vanished. After waiting some time for his appearance, Melbourne was re-sought without him.

It soon oozed out that no one save the boy (Chapman) had any knowledge of the golden locality. He was believed to be in the service of Messrs. Hall and M'Neil, two settlers, squatted near Burnbank, and to have found the gold near or at a place known as the Doctor's Creek. He had disposed of 22 ozs. to Brentani, and 24 ozs. to Duchene. As to the supposed findings of the latter they were put down as spiteful "buncomb" to annoy Brentani and his friends. As to the boy no one could glean any tidings of him. Some were so uncharitable as to hint that he had met with foul play, and others that he had levanted from the province.

The greatest interest was now abroad in Melbourne, for nothing was talked about save Gold! Gold! Gold everywhere—in the family circle as at the street corner, in the Melbourne groggeries as
at the Melbourne Club. People were beginning to be affected by gold on the brain; and to calm public excitement the Superintendent (Mr. Latrobe) ordered Sergeant Rennie to take six black troopers with him and be off to explore the Pyrenees. Away they rode amidst a shower of good wishes for their success. During their absence another Pyrenean shepherd arrived in town. About gold he had no knowledge whatever; but as to the “vamoosed boy” he knew him well from the descriptions given; though all he knew of him was that he was called “Tommy,” and was a Pentonville “exile.”

Search parties now grew numerous, in twos, and threes, and more; but wherever they went they were dogged by the mounted police. On one occasion, towards the end of February, one of the parties fired some long grass to interrupt the police surveillance, and thereby caused an extensive bush conflagration. Now and then a wayfarer would exhibit in Melbourne a piece of quartz with just the smell of gold adhering to it, but by some strange singularity nothing tangible could ever be ascertained as to where these gold-smelling relics were found.

Sergeant Rennie and his black patrol returned as news-empty as they went, for they saw and found nothing of the substance so ardently longed for. For want of something to say they put in circulation absurd rumours about the parties who had professed to find gold being merely thieves who had stolen it in specie, then melted it, and taking it to the bush to avoid possible detection, brought it back to town, pretending to have found it. But gullible as the public mouth often is this canard was too big a bone to be swallowed.

In March some curious disclosures found their way into print anent the runaway “Tommy,” who was declared to have decamped to Sydney, where he was retained as a servant in an hotel. It was now asserted upon his authority that his disappearance from Port Phillip had been caused by Duchene and Brentani having threatened him with a criminal prosecution if he could not succeed in finding for them the place where he picked up the gold. This so frightened him as to make him cut their acquaintance. As to gold-finding, one day he came upon some samples, the appearance of which he much liked, and had planted them for safe keeping. The next day he was shifted to another part of the run, but carried his hidden valuables with him, and had thence come to Melbourne without revisiting the first place, but he knew its whereabouts well. It was about 120 miles from Melbourne. On reaching town he showed Brentani his find, and bartered 24 ozs., valued at £60, with him for five shirts, a coat, pair of braces, and £20. Duchene paid him £8 for about 14 ozs., and Brentani offered him £200 to point out the gold-bearing spot, but he refused.

Such is the version of the Chapman-Duchene-Brentani golden episode, as collated in piecemeal from the Melbourne newspapers. The Press at the time laboured under infinite difficulty in obtaining full and explicit information from the parties mainly interested, and as I would not unwittingly do an injustice to the memory of Mr. Brentani by the insertion of uncorrected possible inaccuracies, I append Mrs. Brentani’s version of the interesting event, extracted from a letter written by her in the controversy already referred to:

“My husband, the late Charles Brentani, and I settled in Melbourne in the year 1845. He carried on business as a jeweller in premises in Collins Street West, near Queen Street, and subsequently he removed to the premises now occupied by Messrs. Berghoff and Touzel, as tobacconists. In the month of May, 1849, a shepherd, then aged about twenty-two, entered our shop, and asked me to buy a lump of yellow metal weighing between 12 ozs. and 13 ozs. I did not then know the value of the article, but handed it to a Mr. Garrow, one of our employees, who tested it, assisted by a Mr. Forrester, who was a working-jeweller in our employ. They told me it was gold. My husband was away at Geelong at the time on business, and I did not know the metal’s worth, but pending his return I made him a small advance, and my husband afterwards paid him the balance. This shepherd was Thomas Chapman, a native of Whitechapel, London, and he told me that he found the gold under the following circumstances:—He was employed at the time on Messrs. Hall and M’Neil’s station, Daisy Hill. One Sunday morning in the month of May, while at a creek watering his sheep, he saw the sun shining on the nugget which was sticking out of the bank of the creek, and he later on in the day returned and took it away with him and brought it to Melbourne. On my husband’s
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return he questioned Chapman about the place where he found the gold, and he volunteered to show Mr. Brentani and some friends the place. A party was accordingly made up, consisting of some five or six friends. About three days after they had started, Thomas Chapman, to my surprise, returned alone, and gave as his reason that he was afraid of the foreigners, and had given them the slip. He said he wished to go to Sydney, where he had friends, and he proceeded there by a steamer, the “Shamrock,” I believe. A rumour got abroad that Chapman had been made away with, and met an untimely end. I never again heard of him until 1854. In that year, he having heard that my daughter, Mrs. Sabelberg, was living at St. Kilda, called at my son-in-law’s house, and my daughter sent for me to see him. Although time and privation had left their traces, I remembered him at once, and to make quite sure I asked him several questions relating to incidents of his early life, which he answered without hesitation. Although in Australia during its palmy days, fortune had not smiled upon him, as he was poor, feeble, and apparently in ill-health. I helped him in a small way, and he afterwards proceeded to a station owned by Mr. Buckley, of the firm of Buckley and Nunn, where he obtained employment, and very shortly afterwards I heard of his death.”

In May it was reported that a fencer named Nial had discovered auriferous indications in Gippsland, and had secured a piece of gold as big as a man’s hand. In November, some young men, hailing from the Pyrenees, were in Belfast, and exhibited some gold specimens, which, they said, had been found between some rocks on the banks of a creek.

Nothing noticeable transpired for several months, until the April of 1850, when another Pyrenean shepherd looked in at Brentani’s, and displayed a bag of dust containing a small admixture of gold. He gathered it at the Pyrenees, about seventy miles from the scene of “Tommy’s” good luck. Except an occasionally groundless rumour about some fabulous gold-finding, the yellow fever which prevailed so intermittently during the previous year, died out, and all thought of nuggets, samples and specimens passed away. To produce so much calmness in this respect a counter-excitement much contributed, for 1850 was the Separation year, and during its latter half Port Phillip reeled like a half-drunken man, filled with a delirium about the good things that were to come, and the political millennium to spring from the erection of a district into a self-governing colony, ravings resulting in vain but harmless delusions, dreams as far from being realized to-day as they were then.

MIRABILIS ANNUS.

Except old Father Time, who is seized of everything in the future as well as the past, no one in the colony could have the faintest notion, when the old year was rung out, of the wonders contained in the womb of the new year, that was rung in. There were no Spiritualists in Melbourne to invoke inspiration from the world of shadows, though there were two or three professional fortune-tellers, who pretended unerring powers of divination. There were also some astute “weather-wake” politicians, who assumed a faculty to prognosticate everything likely to happen; but no one was to be found capable of the roughest approximate guess of the extraordinary physical and social revolution which was close at hand, the crisis of which would have commenced just as the next new year would make its appearance. 1851 opened on the colony with a midsummer of unusual drought, parching hot winds, and a water-famine, only comparatively harmless, in consequence of the scattered nature of the squatting homesteads, the limited number of flocks and herds, and the total absence of that since well known and deserving class of the community known as selectors. January was arid and hungry, and the croakers sang out that the worst had not yet come. February appeared like some supernatural power bent on the destruction of the settlement, resolved to waste the length and breadth of the territory with fire and sword, leaving it a boundless desert of dust and ashes. The 6th of February, the baleful historic “Black Thursday,” clothed in fire and sheeted in burning forests whose wild, angry flames and smoke eclipsed the sun in several places, can never be forgotten. It fell upon the young colony as if likely to crush it; and the people were so awestruck that it required some time before the panic caused by the shock could be shaken off, and the ordinary avocations of
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every-day life resumed. But this was not for long, and people had soon some other evolvements from the laboratory of Nature to wonder at. Ere two weeks had passed the astounding intelligence was posted down from Sydney that, on the 12th February, Mr. E. H. Hargreaves, a returned Californian miner, had discovered what got to be known as the Bathurst Goldfield. This was a panacea of a very different kind, and the astonishing news, supplemented upon the arrival of every sea-going and overland mail from Sydney, so bewildered the people as to render them for a while incapable of action, almost of thought. Of course it was in everybody's mind that everyone should be off to the "diggings," as the treasure-ground was termed. Trade slackened, business depressed, and there was a general stand-still. Tenants gave up their holdings without observing the etiquette of a week's notice, and many of them flitted, forgetful to pay the rent. The coasting trade from Melbourne to Sydney was an exception to the general rule of dullness, and dozens, scores, and hundreds winged their way northward, resolved to return when they had made their fortunes. Many who had staked their all in Melbourne bravely held their ground, the sagacious and long-headed brought their heads together, and the only rational conclusion followed, viz., to use every effort to find out gold deposits in Victoria, which would in some degree, if not completely, counteract the attractive influences of New South Wales, and so keep the Victorians at home. There was an impression indelibly imprinted on the public mind, not only of the residents of Melbourne, but throughout the province, that hidden layers of golden store existed in several localities, if they could only be found; and to stimulate and prosecute researches towards this end, both hope and energy were directed. Small volunteer parties lost no time in instituting gold searches, and in a few months news of small findings dribbled into town. Early on a Sunday morning (1st June) a labouring man called upon Mr. Howie, a watchmaker, in Elizabeth Street, and, producing a small bag, rolled upon the counter thirty pieces of yellowish composition, which he pronounced to be gold. They were tested, and found to contain gold of the poorest description. Several of the pieces weighed ¼ oz., and others ½ oz.; and the man, leaving one of them with orders to have a ring manufactured, departed with a promise to return in a few days. Howie elicited in conversation with the stranger, that the latter, whilst engaged digging on the River Plenty, had accidentally turned up the treasure-trove. He would not give any further particulars, remarking "that he must have enough himself first, before others got possession of his secret." On this becoming known, hunting expeditions were hastily formed, and money was raised in various ways. In one instance, half-a-dozen carters clubbed and sold four of their drays to provide for the purchase of equipment, whilst the other two vehicles were laden with provisions and implements to be used in the future operations. On the 4th June, a bushman called at the Waterman's Arms, in Elizabeth Street, and showed to the landlord (Mr. W. Clarke) some splinters of quartz with a metallic substance attached. Clarke had them immediately examined by what he believed to be a competent judge, who pronounced the yellow stuff to be gold. The finder said he had got them within four miles of Melbourne; and Clarke, having wormed out the place, was off there without delay, only to have his trip for nothing. Rumours now came pouring into town that gold (as yet not even seen) abounded at the Pyrenees, the Goulburn, the Murray, and almost every other nameable place throughout the interior; and not only gold, but silver, copper, coal and other minerals. Brentani and Crate (another jeweller) declared that they had lately obtained some specimens found at the Pyrenees, and it was proclaimed as a certainty (but by whom could not be ascertained) that a rich vein of platina had been discovered at a place named (not inappropriately) Mount Disappointment. The public feeling was now worked up to a boiling-point of distraction; and to increase the general state of unsettlement, an insane reaction suddenly set in, in the form of a mad spirit of speculation, to check which the banks raised the rates of discount. Provisions grew scarce, and leaped to such a price as added to the general embarrassment. Alarmists predicted a coming famine, and to such an extent did this go, that on the 6th June a meeting of citizens was held to consider the propriety of starting a milling and baking company, so as to keep down the price of bread. After some discussion, it eventuated in the nomination of a Committee "to devise the best means of immediate relief to the industrious but overburdened portion of the community." The movement
went no further; but, the more effectually to allay the fermenting disquietude, a requisition was presented to the Mayor for the convening of a public meeting upon the subject. The gathering came off accordingly at the Mechanics' Institute, on the 9th June, "to take into consideration the propriety of offering a suitable reward to any person or persons who should be the means of making known the locality of a gold mine within 200 miles of Melbourne." The Mayor presided, and, after the conventional quantity of talking, the following resolutions were agreed to:

1. That this meeting is of opinion that gold in considerable quantities exists in close proximity to Melbourne, and that a subscription ought to be forthwith entered into, for affording a reward to any person or persons who shall disclose to a committee, to be appointed, a gold mine or deposit, capable of being profitably worked, within 200 miles of Melbourne.

2. That the Committee, hereafter appointed, be instructed to apply to the local Government to induce it to promise its influence in procuring a grant out of the Land Fund, to any person who may discover any gold mine capable of being profitably worked within this province.

3. That a Committee be appointed by this meeting for the purpose of receiving and disposing of the subscriptions; also for receiving all communications upon the subject, and instituting the necessary inquiries thereon; also for applying for the countenance and assistance of the local Government, and generally to carry out the immediate intention of the meeting.

4. That the following gentlemen be appointed a Committee for the above purpose:—The Mayor (Mr. W. Nicholson), Dr. A. F. Greeves, Messrs. Abel Thorpe, John O'Shanasy, Richard Heales, J. P. Fawkner, William Westgarth, Andrew Russell, J. A. Gumbinner, A. H. Han, Thos. M'Combie, Peter Davis, Germain Nicholson, John Hood, David Young, and Jno. Holpion, with power to add to their number. A sum of £30 was subscribed as the nucleus of a search fund.

About this time Mr. Frank Stephen, the well-known Solicitor, as expert in his powers of conveyancing on legs as on parchment, made one of a party of two to set out for the Plenty, with only a spade and small basket of provisions. In a few days they returned with 1½ oz. gold, found, as stated, about 45 miles from town. These specimens were submitted to Superintendent Latrobe, who requested Messrs. E. P. Sturt (the Superintendent of Police) and — White (a surveyor) to set forth on a tour of inquiry.

In a few days there appeared in the town William Aberdeen, a hawker, who reported that he had on the 5th of June camped in some ranges on the run of Dr. Ronald, at the Plenty, and next morning whilst walking along the banks of a creek he found two or three grains of a shining substance, which he took to be gold. He then set to work in earnest, and by next morning had secured many particles, thirty of which were each nearly as big as a pea, and the remainder something smaller than grains of rice. All of them he obtained by the side of two creeks, and travelled four or five miles in so doing. He had no pick or other instrument to help him. Whilst gold-hunting his dray was robbed of some £10 worth of stores; and he subsequently sold his treasure to a Mr. Johnstone for £17 18s. 1d. He refused to specify more particularly the topography of the place where he met his good fortune. He saw over 100 persons out gold-hunting about creeks and gullies. The soil in which he found the gold was of a reddish nature, and the country abounded in a flinty sort of stone, which, when broken, presented a yellowish hue. The place was about 30 miles from town.

The enchantment lent by distance to the view did not satisfy the sensation-mongers who mischievously amused themselves by circulating false alarms of the most absurd character, by which the "enchantment" was brought momentarily into Melbourne only to turn to disenchantment and disappointment. Indications of gold, it was confidently reported, had been found at Emerald Hill and the Flagstaff, Studley Park, and Collingwood Flat, and as a consequence hundreds of "flats," men, women, and children, armed with spades, shovels, pitchforks, pokers, and even knives and forks, invaded the localities named, and dug and prodded out and hacked away until they were tired, returning home after their exciting work only to be laughed at. There was a pottery in operation at Richmond. The clay used there was brought from a distance in the country, and by some means
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or other it got wind that the raw material was auriferous. One evening an old woman accidentally smashed a flower-pot recently bought at the manufactory, and on trying to glue it together she fancied she saw some signs of gold glittering in the cracks. Of course she could not retain such an important secret, and whispered it to her neighbours. On opening shop next morning the pottery-man was surprised to see a crowd outside the door. All the satisfaction his curiosity could obtain was that everyone there was disposed to invest in pottery, but particularly in flower-pottery. Such an inexplicable demand induced him to raise his price, notwithstanding which his shop was rushed like a run on a bank, and his stock-in-trade cleared out in no time. After all was over he was told the reason, and laughed heartily at the pack of fools, whilst he jingled the unusual takings so unexpectedly transferred to his pockets.

The Sturt-White expedition returned after being at the Plenty, where they made a thorough exploration, penetrating gullies, wading through creeks, and climbing ranges, even to the summit of Mount Disappointment. They had dug, picked, grubbed, and sifted amongst stones, earth and roots, washing the sand, and hammering away at every breakable solid they encountered, for two whole days, without so much as finding a speck of gold or anything else that could be taken for auriferous; they seemed disposed to think that there was not a trace of gold there at all, and never had been. The curiosity was even destitute of the auriferous indications said to be prevalent at Bathurst and California. They had traced the wheels of Mr. F. Stephen's vehicle, and they met with some hundred persons gold-seeking, not one of whom had found anything except plenty of mica. In consequence of the doubt thus cast by the official report upon the veracity of Stephen's previous statement, Mr. John Yewers, a confectioner, published a statutory declaration in effect that he had picked up by the side of a rivulet in the Plenty Ranges, opposite Kirk and Harlin's, a piece of gold and some quartz.

An interesting meeting of the Gold Committee was held on the 9th June, at the Town Clerk's office, with the Mayor as Chairman. Mr. Dent, from the Plenty, produced a specimen for examination, and after being handed round and scrutinized, some of the Committee doubted whether it was gold. It was decided to have it analysed. The Mayor, Messrs. John Hodgson and A. H. Hart, were appointed a deputation to interview the Superintendent, and ascertain from him what encouragement the Government would be prepared to give in promoting the common object in view. It was also resolved to offer a reward of 200 guineas, independent of what the Government may do, for the finding of a workable gold mine or deposit within 200 miles of Melbourne, capable of being wrought to advantage. The Committee was strengthened by the addition to its number of Dr. Webb-Richmond and Messrs. H. J. Hart. The last-named was appointed secretary, Mr. J. Hood, Treasurer.

Dr. Ronald and Mr. Henry Frencham arrived from the Plenty on the 13th June, with several specimens of "native gold," which Frencham asserted had been found by him and Mr. Walsh (a jeweller) in the ranges near Bear station, some five-and-twenty miles from town. The specimens, in weight about 3 lbs., were streaked with quartz, and contained a few ounces of gold. Where they had been found there were large veins of the same (supposed) auriferous surface; and if Frencham could be believed, a valuable gold-field had been discovered. He formally demanded the 200 guineas reward, and delivered the specimens to the Town Clerk, by whom they were sealed up and kept for analysis.

At 7 p.m. of the 14th the Gold Committee assembled at the Town Clerk's office to inspect the specimens. There were present the Mayor, Dr. Greeves, Messrs. J. O'Shanassy, R. Heales, D. Young, A. H. and H. J. Hart, W. K. Bull, P. Davis, J. Hood, John Crate, and J. A. Gumbinner. The samples of quartz and sandstone belonging to Frencham were produced, and the claimant was in attendance. He described the circumstances under which the find was effected. He felt sure that gold abounded to a large extent at the place, which was easy of access, and he was prepared to point it out. An analysis had been previously made by Mr. Crate, who was a jeweller, and Mr. Hood, a practical chemist, but the experts were divided in opinion. Crate declared that he had gilded a copper coin by a quicksilver process from some of the gold,
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and such he was convinced was an infallible token that the deposits contained gold. Hood stated that he had submitted several of the specimens to analysis without finding the smallest indication of gold in their composition. Others of them may contain gold, but those he had tested did not.

A particular specimen was handed round to be looked at, and an old Cornwall miner who had casually dropped in closely eyed it. He was a returned digger from California, and his opinion was waited for with breathless attention. It at length slowly oozed out and was not very reassuring, for he simply thought that the specimen might contain 1 per cent. of gold. Certain shiny particles were observable in this and in others; and the upshot was the prevalence of much doubt and distrust of the whole lot. Mr. A. H. Hart suggested that all the specimens be pulverized, and then tested by all the means of analysis known. Dr. Greeves was convinced that a certain portion of gold was present in their formation, and should not feel satisfied to the contrary until they were subjected to an analysis with a solution of muriate of tin, this test being allowed to be the most delicate of any known, and would discover the smallest particles of gold if such were present. In this state of perplexity it was agreed to request Messrs. John Wood (chemist), L. A. Bertram (dentist), W. S. Gibbons (analyst), and John Crate (jeweller), to undertake an examination of the specimens instanter, and report with the least delay, so as to determine the vexed question that evening. This Board of analysis accordingly retired with the specimens to Mr. Hood's laboratory. Mr. Martin, said to be an experienced miner, next submitted gold samples alleged to have been found in the same place as Frencham's, and an individual, who did not give his name, placed on the table for inspection a specimen of gold ore from a Brazilian mine. In this the gold was plainly discernible, and apparently combined with sulphuret of iron. After an hour's absence the testing Sub-Committee returned, when Mr. Gibbons stated two of the specimens having different aspects had been subjected to nitro-muriatic acid, and also to the proto-chloride of tin, without the slightest particle of gold being perceptible. But to make assurance doubly sure, he proposed to submit the specimens to the analyzation of quicksilver. Mr. Hood declared that nothing could be more decisive than the process adopted, the specimens having been subjected to one of the most delicate of tests, and if only one grain of gold were contained or even dissolved in a hogshead of the fluid, it could be traced. It was finally resolved that Mr. Gibbons' proposal of submitting the substances to mercurial action, should be had recourse to, the result to be communicated through the Mayor to the several newspapers.

On the 19th June some sensation was caused by the receipt of a sample of gold from Mr. Rea Clarke, found at the King Parrot Creek, and the sender applied for the public reward. Mr. Frank Stephen returned on the same day from a second excursion to the Plenty, and brought an armful of specimens. The Mayor accordingly convened an emergency meeting of the Gold Committee for 7 p.m. in the Town Clerk's office, when there attended the Mayor, Messrs. A. H. and H. J. Hart, J. O'Shanassy, D. Young, K. Heales, T. M. Combie, J. Hood, Webb-Richmond, P. Davis, W. K. Bull, J. W. Bell, G. Nicholson, and J. A. Gumbinner. Mr. Stephen exhibited three specimens, one being solid gold, which he stated had been smelted from some of the ore found by him. The Clarke specimens were also on view, and a Mr. Morrow, as the agent of the finder, made formal application for the reward. It was agreed to ask Mr. Hood to analyse portions of each parcel of specimens. Mr. Hood accordingly withdrew to do so, and returned in a quarter of an hour with news that Clarke's specimens were pure gold. Mr. Stephen's had been submitted to the test of muriate of tin, and nothing found but iron. He believed it to be sulphuret of iron. A shout of laughter followed, and Mr. Stephen, who was present, looking around indignantly, exclaimed, "That he could not see anything to laugh at," an announcement which brought on an uproarious encore. Mr. Crate declared that the test applied was of the most delicate kind; what Mr. Stephen had found was not gold, but an indication of the lode. Mr. Stephen disputed the accuracy of the analysis, and proposed that his specimens be put in a crucible and tried there, whereupon Messrs. A. H. Hart, Hood, Crate, Gibbons, and Webb-Richmond were constituted a crucible inquisition, and they retired to take action. In three-quarters of an hour they re-entered the room, when Hood reported that the Stephen specimens had been smelted and nothing found in them but sulphuret of iron. Stephen could hold out no further, and frankly declared that he was satisfied that
the question had been thus set at rest. He could, however, assure the Committee that the piece of
gold he held in his hand had been smelted from a lump of quartz found in the same place as the
specimens just tested. Mr. Morrow (Clarke's representative) was asked to favour the Committee with
a fuller explanation than previously given. He replied that he had received the gold from Clarke,
with an intimation that it had been found at King Parrot Creek, twenty miles beyond Kilmore, where
there was plenty more of it; that Clarke had been three days exploring, and might have obtained
much more than he did had not the Creek been up. So soon as the Creek should go down he was
to be on the hunt again. Clarke's searching had been stimulated by a letter from a brother in California,
describing the localities in which gold was found there, between which and King Parrot Creek there
was a resemblance. A resolution was passed to communicate with Mr. Clarke then resident at Kilmore,
and ascertain if he would place himself in further communication with the Committee, and supply
such fuller information as would entitle him to the reward. Several suggestions were offered as to the
best mode of testing the reliability and extent of the King Parrot Creek deposits, and it was resolved
to notify to the public the existence of such a probable goldfield, when such persons as may have
a notion of leaving for Bathurst and others, would be likely in preference to try nearer home, and so
probably test the workableness of King Parrot. Thanks were voted to Messrs. Stephen, Frencham, Walsh,
and others, who had sought to find gold at the Plenty, and it was proposed to open a special subscription
to reimburse any pecuniary outlay incurred in such endeavours. Messrs. Stephen and Frencham declined
to accept any such repayment, whilst Stephen assured the Committee he had acted in thorough good
faith. He was positive of the existence of gold at the Plenty, and when the floods went down, he should
try his luck again there. Mr. Hood stated that a properly equipped party was preparing to set out in a few
days to prospect the slope of the Pyrenees towards the Murray, and there was strong reason for believing in
its success. It may be remarked that the Clarke specimens were of the purest description, quite solid, and
not embedded in any other matter. They were picked up in the slate.

On the 27th June the following communication was received:—

"Pyrenees, 24th June, 1851.

"Dr. George W. Bruhn, geologist, has the honour to send for the inspection and analysis of the Committee
of the Mining Company at Melbourne, two samples of quartz-rock, containing gold, and another grey ore which also
seems to include some gold. The said quartz-rocks form large and extensive veins, the outside of which is richly covered
by particles and small veins of the gold.

"As Dr. Bruhn makes his geological excursions quite alone on horseback, and, of course, is not able to carry
with him the tools and implements for the digging, he could not yet examine the 'inside' of the said quartz-rock veins, but
according to the geological features of the same, he rather thinks that they may turn out a good gold mine. Dr. Bruhn
has the intention to return to Melbourne in the course of 10 or 14 days, and he will feel very happy to communicate to
the Committee his meaning about the above-mentioned gold.

"He has the honour to be the Committee's obedient servant.

"To the Committee of the Mining Company of Melbourne."

The Committee held a meeting next evening, when Dr. Bruhn's enclosures were submitted. They consisted of two whitish quartz specimens in which gold was plainly visible. Mr. Hood tested
one piece, and pronounced the unmistakable presence of gold therein. Dr. Webb-Richmond concurred,
and added that if the specimen produced were a fair sample of the quartzose rock, and that it was easy of
access, not being embedded in a harder rock, there could not be any doubt that the workings would be
profitable; but that these points must be ascertained, as if the auriferous rock were embedded in a
harder material, the gold would be so difficult to be got at as to be hardly worth working, except by
a company possessed of the necessary machinery. Mr. A. H. Hart suggested that a deputation of
the Committee should go to meet Dr. Bruhn. The Mayor was for letting those go that liked, and the
rest stay at home. Mr. A. H. Hart was very anxious that some decisive steps should be taken in the
matter, but, in accordance with the general opinion, it was determined to wait until Dr. Bruhn arrived
in town, which, by the terms of his letter, would be in about ten days, and the Mayor promised to
communicate with him on his arrival, to give notice to the Committee of the result, and, if need were,
to call a meeting. Mr. Hood roughly estimated that a drachm of the richest specimen contained
about 2½ grains of gold. This would yield a very large per centage to a company furnished with every requisite, such as stamping-mills, crushing-rollers, quicksilver-machine, &c, but it is not an attractive kind of mining to the generality of gold-seekers, who work generally singly or in small parties.

The 5th July was a remarkable day in the quest for gold in Port Phillip, as it was the date of the appearance in Geelong of Mr. James Esmonds, who had some two months previously returned from California. In company with three others named Pugh, Kelly, and Burns, he went gold-hunting at the Pyrenees, and obtained gold in some quartz rocks near the station of Mr. Donald Cameron. He now exhibited them (quartz and dust) at Geelong to a Mr. Patterson and the Geelong Advertiser, and the discovery was published by that journal on the 7th in the following announcement:-

**GOLD IN THE PYRENEES.**

"The long sought treasure is at length found! Victoria is a gold country, and from Geelong goes forth the first glad tidings of the discovery. ** ** ** We have been backward in publishing rumours of mineralogical discoveries, but we are satisfied now with the indubitable testimony before us. We announce that the existence of a goldfield in the Pyrenees is a great fact fraught with the greatest importance, and a preface to a glorious run of prosperity to Victoria."

The precise locale was not given until the 22nd, when it was made public with Esmonds' consent. It was afterwards known as the Clunes Diggings, and the precise spot where Esmonds made the discovery was on the banks of Creswick Creek, opposite where the Port Phillip Company's battery was working in 1884. On the same 5th the existence of gold in quartz rocks at the Yarra Range (Anderson's Creek) was announced by Mr. Louis J. Michel, on behalf of himself and a party consisting of W. Habberlin, James Furnival, James Melville, J. Heaton, and B. Greenig. They made their discovery on the last day of June, and the place was shown on the day first named to Dr. Webb-Richmond, as the representative of the Gold Committee. On the same 5th Mr. William Campbell (the well-known ex-member of the Legislative Council) wrote from Strath Loddon to Mr. (now the hon.) James Graham, of Melbourne, authorizing an announcement that Mr. Campbell had discovered gold at the Pyrenees, but through a recent family bereavement, Mr. Graham overlooked the matter until the 8th July, when he communicated the fact to the Committee, which met on the 16th to deal with several applications for rewards. Mr. Graham's letter claimed priority over Dr. Bruhn, on behalf of Mr. Campbell, of the discovery of gold at a place known as the Deep Creek, laid down in Han's map as "between Mount Cole and Mount Alexander." A second letter was enclosed from Mr. Campbell on the subject, in which the writer remarked—

"Could I have separated the merit of the discovery of the gold from the reward, I would never have claimed it; and as I do so only with the view of dividing it equally with those who assisted in the discovery, my share I will appropriate to public charitable purposes. I have no pretensions to be a geologist, though I knew that gold was generally found in quartz; and observing a large dyke of quartz at the Cragoir 'Diggings,' I was induced to look for it there, after having expressed an opinion that it would be found there to many persons before I went to look for it. Although I consider it unnecessary to send my samples, the reward being offered for the discovery of a mine that can be profitably worked, I send a few small samples enclosed, both of the gold and grey ore. There are a few men at work at Cragoir—the name I have given to the Pyrenees Diggings; they are washing the soil, procuring gold-dust in small quantities, and a very short time will test whether it will become profitable to work. The most satisfactory way would be for the Mining Committee to send a practical person to report progress."

A communication, accompanying specimens, was also read from the Michel party; also some others of little or no importance. Dr. Bruhn was in attendance, and opening a small package handed in several pieces of quartz and marl, some of which were declared to contain gold, and others not. One or two appeared to be very rich, and Mr. Hood estimated that a ton weight of such would realize £1000.
Dr. Bruhn advised that some of the samples, especially the grey ones, be tested, for he was sure they contained other metals besides gold. Where he had obtained them was ground of moderate elevation—a few hundred yards from Cameron's, on the Deep Creek. The spot bi-forked into distinct deposits, and the openings embedded in a kind of basaltic production, were evidently the result of some subterranean fire action. He was of opinion that the rocks went down to a considerable depth. All his specimens were superficial, for none were obtained at any depth. Of the grey metal he had formed sanguine expectations; there was an immense quantity of it, and he believed it to be argentiferous as well as auriferous. Dr. Webb-Richmond, with Messrs. Hood, Walsh, and F. Baird, were deputed an Examining Committee, and retired to get through their work. In half an hour it was reported that in the grey specimens iron only could be detected; but the milk white ones contained gold in abundance. After some discussion it was decided, as the best mode of adjudging to whom the reward should be paid, to intimate to the public where gold was to be found, by whom the question would be soon practically determined. It would never do to act upon the opinion or report of two or three individuals. On the motion of Mr. Hood, seconded by Mr. Walsh, it was agreed "that the Committee give notice to the public that gold had been found at the Deep Creek on the Yarra, and the Deep Creek at the Pyrenees." The following special announcement appeared accordingly in next morning's newspapers:—

GOLD.

The Committee appointed to promote the discovery of a Gold-field in the Colony of Victoria, have the satisfaction of announcing that unquestionable evidence has been adduced, showing the existence of gold in considerable quantity both at the Deep Creek, on the Yarra (near Major Newman's run), and also at the Deep Creek on the Pyrenees, near Mr. Donald Cameron's house.

WILLIAM NICHOLSON,
Melbourne, 16th July, 1851. Mayor, Chairman of the Committee.

After the lapse of a few days, a Mr. Pearson arrived in town, with the information of the existence of gold northward to Cameron's, on Deep Creek, and about 15 miles from Burnbank. It was to be found along the creek for more than half-a-mile, and consisted of fine dust, and particles not larger than the fourth of a pin's head. Some 300 or 400 persons had visited the place, but could not remain through want of provisions. The soil was very black, and the adjacent rocks were white flint. He saw pieces picked up, weight $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ of an oz. The few stores in the neighbourhood were wretchedly supplied. As the month progressed the gold news increased—in fact, the whole air was surcharged with accounts of some kind or other averaging five hundred fictions to one reality. On the 22nd the Melbourne Morning Herald printed the annexed extract from a letter to Messrs. Charles Williams and Co., Melbourne, from Mr. Thomas Clapperton, dated Burnbank, 19th July, 1851.

The "Diggings" are going ahead again; the diggers are in great spirits, our old cook has gathered an ounce. When they are provided with proper implements they expect ten times the present produce per man. In spite of the extreme severity of the weather, there are daily arrivals. There are forty to-day on the ground. Warren, a shoemaker, is so sanguine that he expects to realize two thousand pounds at Christmas; and "will not put an awl in leather again," such are his expressions. Eaton is to commence cradling to-day under the directions of Esmonds, who arrived to-day.

P.S.—Ten o'clock Sunday morning,—David Anderson has returned from the "Diggings," and says the cook has washed $2\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in a week.

The next day was issued the following bulletin with reference to some of the exhibits of the recently-held Committee meeting:—

Swanston Street, Melbourne, 22nd July, 1851.

Mr. H. J. Hart,
Hon. Sec., Gold Committee, etc.

I have carefully assayed the samples of gold you gave me, and find it virgin (that is 24 carat fine). It is the finest I ever saw, and worth in London 8s. 6d. per oz.

I am, Sir, Yours truly,
H. WALSH.
THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

On the 25th July it was reported that gold-washing had commenced at Strath Loddon (as it was termed), 60 persons were hard at work there, and a Mr. Davis, from Avoca, arrived via Geelong in Melbourne, bringing some samples of gold-dust found on Donald Cameron's station, now known as "The Clunes Diggings." About 16s. worth of gold was got in a dish out of a gallon of earth, hand-washed in the roughest manner by pouring in water, stirring with the fingers, and then pouring out. As much gold was lost as got. For four miles the country had been turned up at intervals, and every spadeful of earth showed indications and particles. Esmonds and his partner (Pugh) had got their cradles at work on the 24th. The place was within eight miles of the spot where the shepherd lad (Chapman) found the gold which created the sensation of 1849. During the last week of July Mr. Henry Frencham and Dr. Fleming had their attention called to a certain variety of rock in the eastern part of Bourke Street, near Spring Street. They went to the spot, and found some specimens, which Messrs. Cote and Lenick analysed. The veins in one were formed of oxide and sulphuret of iron; and from another a minute particle of gold was seen to project. Many deemed this a clumsy ruse, got up to secure notoriety; it caused the place to be thronged for a day, and was never more thought of.

On 26th July Michael and Habberlin revisited the scene of their previous success; and on the 4th August further discoveries were communicated to the Secretary of the Reward Committee. They were said to have, with only spade and tin dish, found amongst the alluvial deposits gold in minute particles, but tolerably abundant. The place was an agglomeration of quartz rock, and every spadeful of soil washed over the quartz by the rains and floods contained from 7 to 10 grains of gold. They did not go more than 24 inches below the surface. Some of their samples had been tested by Dr. Greeves, whose certificate was forwarded. The place was 16 miles from town on the Yarra, near Major Newman's station.

Consequent upon the information, official and otherwise, received by the Government, Mr. Latrobe, then a Lieutenant-Governor, with an Executive Council of his own, took measures to authenticate matters as they were really going on out of town; and by his directions Captain Dana was again despatched as an observation emissary. He proceeded accordingly to the Pyrenees, and on 3rd August a despatch was received from him stating amongst other facts "that there were about 60 men employed at the diggings, who on an average were making an ounce of gold per day." The implements used in washing were the ordinary tin pot and dish: and he thought gold abundant as at Bathurst would be obtained there when the primitive operating appurtenances were replaced by quicksilver and cradle apparatus.

Early on the morning of the 6th, Mr. N. A. Fenwick, Crown Land Commissioner, with Messrs. H. J. Hart, J. Hodgson, D. Young, J. Hood, — Reid, and H. Walsh, started from town for the Yarra, or Anderson's Creek diggings. After a 16-mile ride they arrived and began operations; but as they were not provided with proper implements, they could operate only with tin dishes. Every dishful of earth showed some particles of gold, in size about a pin's head. One dish yielded 10, another 6, some 4, and others less, of such encouraging atoms. The whole take was handed to Fenwick for the inspection of the Lieutenant-Governor.

On the 4th Mr. G. H. Wathen wrote from Mr. Callum's station, 5 miles west of the mines, to a Geelong paper, informing the public in effect that the Clunes diggings were on the Deep Creek, a tributary of the River Loddon, 500 yards from Cameron's—not at the Pyrenees, but 15 miles distant. The existence of gold there had been known for 18 months, Cameron declared that he had conducted Dr. Bruhn to the spot, and pointed out to him the gold imbedded in the quartz vein. There was no tract of auriferous alluvium; the gold was obtained from the quartz vein itself, and consequently it was more mining than digging.

Drays and tents and covered carts commenced to arrive at Clunes, until the valley took the appearance of an encampment. Fires blazed around a wooded spur on the opposite side of the valley, advancing towards the creek, which twisted like a silver ribbon through a grassy flat, where the horses were for the time provided with pastureage. By the 1st August a regular "diggings" was formed there, and a scene of busy animation set in. Cradles and tin dishes were piled by some, others used the pick and crowbar, whilst more, not the least useful, were providently seeing to the
erection of huts, fixing tents, and doing anything that was possible in the commissariat line. As new
comers arrived they marked a claim or area wherein to "dig," and their first essay was to open
the back of the vein rearward of the actual operation, and further from the banks of the creek, to
which all the supposed auriferous soil had to be taken for washing. Four cradles were working away,
and orders for a dozen more had been sent to Burnbank, little else than a nominal township, ten
miles off. The average gain of the dishmen was 5s. per day. Esmonds' party was the first to
commence work, and its leader estimated that a cradle in full operation with 4 men might obtain
2 ozs. in a day; but some thought this was too high. For the first two or three days the number of
diggers was variously put down at from 50 to 60 at work, and two women were there. One of these
ladies devised a profitable species of reefing for herself by setting up a laundry in a small enclosure
of gum-trees, where she, arms deep in work, reaped a rich, though not literally a golden, harvest. The
diggers mainly consisted of town artizans and station hands, who had abandoned their several handicrafts
and the leading of sheep and cattle. Every hour new faces were showing themselves—some
well-provided for the change of circumstances into which they had been plunged, and others
diametrically the reverse. Captain Dana and a contingent of his black troopers were up there,
scattered through the immediate neighbourhood.

In the course of some days Dana returned to Melbourne, and on his way back he passed
numbers of people tramping on to the Clunes. Through him it was ascertained that the average
earnings reckoned about 10s. per head; but provisions had grown very scarce, and many persons were
badly off. The "gold-field" then being worked did not extend beyond seven or eight acres in
area. He had found gold in three or four places in the neighbourhood. Two robberies had been
already perpetrated, but the people were, as a rule, peaceably and honestly disposed. He had
left fourteen troopers there to maintain order.

A cloud of golden rumours showered into Melbourne from all other quarters of the colony,
and if a tithe of the floating talk could be credited, one only had to walk a dozen miles out of town
in any direction to find more gold than he could carry, and the only exertion the stooping to pick
it up. Several specimens came to hand, the most unique being one in formation like a large button;
but where it was found no person could positively make out. The digging excitement was increasing
in intensity, and Melbourne seemed as if contemplating a general move out of town. Nothing was
talked of save specimens, picks, cradles, dishes, and every other known mode of up-turning the
surface or delving into the bowels of the earth. Several small groups started in company, and one
party of four, provided with what they designated a quicksilver machine, was an object of enviable
admiration as they trudged along the Flemington Road, accompanied by a considerable retinue, who
saw them to the town boundary. The Michel party returned from Anderson's Creek with flaming
reports about the fortunes to be secured there with no more trouble than the catching. About
80 persons were located there, where the auriferous area covered several miles. Mr. Bell, a jeweller,
who made a flying visit, took up a fistful of earth by chance, and found a gold pin head in it. What
was termed Murcutt's party was very successful, one dish of earth yielding 50, and another 40
particles of virgin gold.

Mr. Thomas Hiscock, who resided at Buninyong, induced by passing events, went gold-searching in
his neighbourhood, and without either much scientific or practical knowledge of the subject found a
valuable auriferous deposit in a gully of the Buninyong Ranges, which thenceforth assumed his name.
This happened on the 8th August, and some fine specimens in quartz matrix were forwarded to Patterson,
the Geelong jeweller. This finding occurred on a Saturday, and the next Sabbath was broken by wild
exclamations of surprise surcharged with expectation of what was to come next. Prayers, except for each
individual's good luck, were sadly disregarded on that solemn Sunday. The people in the neighbourhood
ran about as if they had lost their senses, and the public equilibrium was by no means restored by a man
appearing in the evening with 3 ozs. of gold, which he had obtained by walking into the bush after dinner
and amateuring a little with an old fryingpan for a washing dish. The relative distances between places
were then rather loosely defined, and topography was in a state of much inexactness, so that there was little
else than rough guessing as to how far such a place was from another place. The new field was
declared to be about thirty miles from Clunes, where the gold found was honeycombed or spongy, whilst
the Buninyong metal was solid, bright, and in some cases burnished.

The First Gold Buyer

Who advertised himself as such was Mr. John Hood, and on the 13th August he announced his readiness
to purchase gold, or "would make cash advances on the same consigned to Messrs. Langton Bros. and Scott, London." He had not the field long to himself, for the newspapers soon teemed with similar
business notices.

One day a child named Williams picked up a small gold specimen in Lonsdale street, opposite the
present Wesley Church, and on this becoming known there was a rush to the Lonsdale diggings, which
terminated as unprofitably as have many rushes since. No second "find" occurred, and it came to be
believed that the little nugget had been accidentally dropped or lost where found by some returned diggers,
probably some one of those who were beginning to drop into the new colony from California.

From what has been already stated it may be inferred that mineralogy as a science, theoretically and
practically, was not widely diffused amongst the public, who stood in much need to be educated on the
subject. To remedy this want in some degree a series of lectures was delivered at the Mechanics' Institute
by Dr. Bruhn and Dr. Webb-Richmond; whilst to aid in providing proper appliances for gold extraction
Mr. J. A. Manton, a Civil Engineer, designed an improved pattern of cradle for deposit washing—guaranteed
to produce three-fold the result of the ordinary cradle work, and a model was submitted for the inspection
of the Lieutenant-Governor.

On the 15th August gold was found on the property of Mr. Joseph Hawdon, of Heidelberg.
Hawdon had returned from Twofold Bay, where some gold indications were discovered; and whilst strolling
along the bank of the Yarra, observing geological formations similar to those of Twofold Bay, he dished
some of the earth, and obtained 3 grains, but a fourth never turned up. Bruhn paid a visit to
Anderson's Creek, and on the same day as the Hawdon find left 150 persons working there. He
entertained a strong opinion as to the auriferous quality of the Dandenong Ranges. Meanwhile
encouraging accounts continued to arrive from the Clunes, to which place the Burnbank storekeepers had
moved, and sold spades for 15s. each—cradles were now manufactured on the spot.

The First Gold Proclamation.

In consequence of the information from Buninyong, the Executive broke silence in the following
warning voice:

Proclamation.

Whereas, by law, all mines of gold and all gold in its natural place of deposit within the colony of Victoria, whether on
the lands of the Crown or of any of Her Majesty's subjects, belong to the Crown. And whereas information has been received
by the Government that gold exists upon and in the soil of the colony, and that certain persons have commenced, or are about to
commence, searching and digging for the same for their own use without leave or other authority from Her Majesty. Now I,
Charles Joseph Latrobe, Esquire, Lieutenant-Governor of the colony of Victoria, do hereby publicly notify and
declare that all persons who shall take from any lands within the said colony any gold, metal, or ore containing gold, or who
within any of the waste lands which have not yet been alienated by the Crown shall dig for and disturb the soil in search for
such gold, metal, or ore without having been duly authorized in that behalf by Her Majesty's Colonial Government, will be
prosecuted both criminally and civilly as the law allows. And I further notify and declare that such regulations as upon further
information may be found expedient, will be speedily prepared and published, setting forth the terms on which licenses will be
issued for this purpose on the payment of a reasonable fee.

Given under my hand and seal at the Government Office, Melbourne, this fifteenth day of August, in the year of our
Lord One thousand eight hundred and fifty-one, in the fifteenth year of Her Majesty's reign.

C. J. L.ATROBE.

By His Excellency's command,

God Save the Queen!
THE FIRST LICENSE REGULATIONS

Were issued without delay in a document, which, as a relic of the primitive goldfields' administration, is worthy of extraction, viz.:—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Melbourne, 18th August, 1851.

LICENSES TO DIG AND SEARCH FOR GOLD.

With reference to the Proclamation issued on the 16th inst., declaring the rights of the Crown in respect to gold found in its natural places of deposit within the colony of Victoria, His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has been pleased to establish the following Provisional Regulations under which licenses may be obtained to dig, search for, and remove the same:

1. From and after the first day of September next no person will be permitted to dig, search for, or remove gold on or from any land, whether public or private, without first taking out and paying for a license in the form annexed.

2. For the present, and pending further proof of the extent of the gold deposits, the license fee has been fixed at one pound ten shillings per month, to be paid in advance; but it is to be understood that the rate is subject to future adjustment as circumstances may render expedient.

3. The licenses can be obtained on the spot from the Commissioner who has been appointed by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to carry these Regulations into effect, and who is authorized to receive the fee payable thereon.

4. No person will be eligible to obtain a license, or the renewal of a license, unless he shall produce a certificate of discharge from his last service, or prove to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that he is not a person improperly absent from hired service.

5. Rules adjusting the extent and position of land to be covered by each licence for the prevention of confusion and the interference of one licence with another, will be regulated by the Commissioner of Crown Lands who may be appointed to each locality.

6. With reference to lands alienated by the Crown in fee-simple, the Commissioner will not be authorized for the present to issue licenses under these Regulations, to any person but the proprietor or persons authorized by them in writing to apply for the same.

By His Excellency's command,

W. LONSDALE.

On the 20th August it was reported that there were between one hundred and fifty and two hundred persons at Anderson's Creek, digging, smashing and washing. The ground was about three miles in extent, and in almost every instance something was found; one Tom Fletcher cleared £8 in a week. A quicksilver cradle was turned into two common cradles, and so answered better than before. Good order prevailed, and the diggers were so God-fearing that they religiously struck work on the Sunday. Persons going there were strongly advised to carry with them iron wedges and hammers, the more effectually to cut into the quartz. The public peace there was looked after by four policemen.

THE FIRST GOLD EXHIBITS.

Gold now began to make its appearance as an object of admiration in the shop windows, and the first regular display of this kind was on view on the 20th August, at the drapery establishment of Mr. Charles Williamson, Collins Street, afterwards the well known "Block" mart of Alston and Brown. It was an assortment weighing 21 ounces, received from Clunes. It was of a darkish colour, and had been transmitted to Melbourne for analysis and valuation.

The charging of a license fee occasioned much dissatisfaction, for it was believed to be both premature and excessive in amount; and furthermore, the wet weather had set in, and the gold-searching could not be prosecuted by reason of the floods. Public indignation was so unmistakably expressed through the Press, and an open demonstration being threatened, that the Government stayed its hand so far as to sanction some modification of the published Regulations. After about a week's consideration the Colonial Secretary wrote, under date 26th August, to Mr. F. C. Doveton, who had been appointed a Goldfields Commissioner, intimating that although gold is still being found, and though the number of people is still increasing in the several localities where gold is being obtained, it is doubtful whether the quantity procured is sufficient to remunerate the persons so employed. He is to act with great circumspection, in carrying out the Regulations.
previously issued; and though no person must be permitted to search for gold without permission the enforcement of the Regulations to their full extent, as regards the license fee, was to be guided by the circumstances of each particular case, and at the Commissioner's discretion. For his guidance, however, principal rules were laid down to the following effect:—Mere searchers for metal were to receive a card signed by the Commissioner, dated, inscribed with the names of the persons to whom issued, and the words "Permitted to Search." The permit was not to run for any specified period, and the recipients were to be made clearly to understand that unless they had paid for a license they were not entitled to anything of value they may find, nor have any claim to work any other particular spot of ground; and should any person take out a license for the locality occupied by those using permits, the former would be put in possession.

As to the issue of the license, the utmost discretion was enjoined, so as to guard against the payment of a fee by those whose gold finding may not afford it, through the inadequacy of their results, and be so deterred from further search; and on the other hand to protect the revenue in the case of those able to pay, but not doing so. Considerable difficulty was apprehended in acting as instructed, from the desire of people to conceal the real extent of their "takes;" but every possible means were to be used to ascertain the truth, and full report was to be made upon every particular, accompanied by the expression of an opinion respecting the license fee.

The most desirable mode of obtaining payment for licenses was cash, but if this could not be done, gold was to be accepted, and the quantity to be given for a license was to be calculated according to the rate at which discoveries dispose of it on the spot, or in the neighbourhood. All gold so received was to be transmitted to the Colonial Treasury.

This did not allay the ferment, for on the 30th a public meeting was held at the Mechanics' Institute, to consider the situation. The Mayor presided, and resolutions to the following purport were unanimously adopted:—

(a.) Affirming the inexpediency of imposing any charge for a monthly license, as no goldfield had as yet been profitably worked, or gold found to render profit probable.  
(b.) That the development of gold and other minerals existing in the colony was of vital importance, and that steps be taken to discover such.  
(c.) That the Government ought to appoint two officers (same as in Sydney), whose special duties should be to develop the mineral resources of Victoria.  
(d.) An expression of sympathy with the Buninyong miners.  
(e.) The presentation to the Lieutenant-Governor of a Memorial embodying the resolutions. The Mayor, Messrs. A. Thorpe, A. H. Hart, J. S. Johnston, Connor, J. Coate, J. A. Gumbinner, and James Montgomery were appointed a Committee to give effect to the wishes of the meeting.

The imposition of a fee and the inclemency of the weather caused a dispersion at Buninyong, and the gold-hunters struck out in search of "fresh fields" in the neighbouring ranges, which had the natural effect of leading to further discoveries. Rich finds were stumbled on at Yuille's station, near the Buninyong Gully. This watercourse took a serpentine direction to a place known as Greenhill, through dense stringy-bark ranges, alternating in flats, and gathering several tributaries to swell its current, until it assumed the form of a river at the new goldfield. Passing on through Yuille's and Winter's stations, it commingled with, or more correctly, became the Leigh; and here, at the bases of several undulating hills, were the evidences of the new diggings found. Fragments of quartz were scattered along the hills, which in some places looked like mounds of snow. The surface was black earth, the sub-surface yellow gravel mixed with clay and quartz, and occasionally huge conglomerates of both. Several parties fell in with immense good fortune here, and one of them was reported to have dug 2 1/2 lbs. of gold out of a claim just after marking it one Saturday evening. Another party netted 23 ounces in a short time, and the valuable deposits were supposed to run along the Leigh. Gold was purchased for from £3 18s. to £3 4s. per ounce.

**The Ballarat Goldfields.**

Warrenheip was next reached, and by the middle of September Ballarat was found, and the Clunes diggers were on the move there. Various finds were reported, such as four persons obtaining...
68 ounces in eight days, one 8 ounces in a week, and two persons 6 ounces 46 grains in five days.

By the 17th one thousand persons were declared to be at Buninyong and its neighbourhood. Mr. G. H. Wathen returned from a two months' tour northward of Buninyong, between Avoca and Mount Alexander, and everywhere he went he heard rumours of gold discoveries. A party of men had settled in a spot—a small secluded valley in the vicinity of Mount Alexander, only one mile west of the Melbourne and Swan Hill Road, where they found gold in quartz veins traversing primary clay and mica slate. These strata were nearly vertical, and running north and south. The quartz was more rotten, and therefore more easily worked than at Clunes, and was, if anything, richer. The range where this was found was a prolongation of that of which Buninyong formed part. The Buninyong field was set down as one of the heads of the Leigh, which rises in Warrenheip, and forms a junction with Buninyong Gully, about six miles from the township.

Towards the close of the month Ballarat burst forth in all its golden glories, and its diggings completely outshone all the others. The finds were abundant and general, and the diggers were so satisfied, and in such good humour with themselves and all the world, that they were willing to pay the obnoxious license fee, but they besought the Government to give them some police protection.

By the 24th September one hundred and sixty licenses were taken out, and annexed is a copy of the first issued there:

VICTORIA GOLD LICENSE, 21ST SEPTEMBER, 1851.

No.——
The bearer, , having paid to me the sum of fifteen shillings on account of the Territorial Revenue, I hereby license him to dig, search for, and remove gold on and from the district of Buninyong and Loddon, as I shall assign to him for that purpose, during the month of September, 1851. The quantity of ground allowed is eight feet square. The license to be produced when demanded by me, or any other person acting under the authority of Government.

F. C. DOVETON, Commissioner.

On 23rd September, Lieutenant Lydiard and twelve black troopers were despatched to the diggings.

FURTHER REGULATIONS.

Supplementary instructions were issued by the Executive on Michaelmas Day (29th September). This step was declared to be taken "consequent upon the recent undoubted discovery of gold in the vicinity of Buninyong to a considerable extent." It was ordered that the "Permission cards" were to be totally discontinued, and licenses must be issued to all persons employed in digging for gold, at the rate specified in the notice of the 18th August. Anything like the transfer of a license from one person to another was forbidden, and to be prevented as far as possible, for which purpose a personal description of the licensee, sufficient to enable detection, was to be inserted on the counterpart of the books from which the license forms were obtained. The licensee was to be instructed to have the license constantly with him, which he was to be frequently called on to produce, and reference made to the counterpart to ascertain if the appearance of the holder agreed with the recorded description. Certain licenses were to be issued at each person's workings instead of attendance at a stated place, and the fee, when not paid in money, was to consist of pure washed gold, at the rate of £3 per ounce, to be weighed in the scales furnished. A constant inspection of the workings was to be kept up to ascertain "that there are no new comers without licenses, and that order and regularity are preserved," in which duties the Commissioner's assistants were also to be employed. A conveyance for the gold, under escort to Melbourne and Geelong, was about to be established, and the Commissioner was to give security in the joint bond of himself, and two sureties for £2,000 each. Several other matters were to claim constant attention, viz., a description of persons who may not be permitted to work, particularly servants who have left their masters without a discharge, the extent of space to be allowed to each licensee upon an equitable principle according to the apparent richness of the soil, the suppression of any attempted gambling, drinking, or any other vices and irregularities, and maintaining good order and good feeling among the workers, upon which no especial directions could be given, as they were matters
for "discretion and judgment, combining promptitude with firmness, and conciliatory manner, and persuading to a right course before stronger measures are resorted to." For this purpose reliance was to be placed upon the cooperation of the workers, among whom regulations were to be established, and some of the most respectable and willing were appointed special constables. The desirableness was also impressed "of causing Sundays to be properly observed; to put down all attempts, should there be any, to labour on these days, and to encourage and promote by all possible means the attendance of the people at religious observances, if the clergy in the vicinity should find themselves in a position to afford means for public worship."

Favourable accounts poured in every hour to Melbourne, and one gentleman on his way down counted 400 persons and 70 drays on the route from town. On the 27th, two brothers, named Cavanagh, appeared in Geelong with 60 pounds' weight of gold (valued at £2,300) the produce of four weeks' work.

The First Government Escort.

The Government at length determined upon organizing a weekly armed escort for the safe conveyance of gold from Buninyong to Geelong, and thence per steamer to Melbourne. It was to leave Buninyong every Tuesday at 6 a.m., arriving in Geelong at 4 p.m., and the following morning start for Melbourne, where it was due at 3.30 p.m. All gold to be so sent was to be forwarded to Buninyong by 4 p.m. on the Monday, where an authorized officer would take charge of it. Previous to receiving it, he was to have it accurately weighed in the presence of the bringer, and then tie it up in a leather bag which was to be sealed and labelled with the weight, the name of sender, and consignee, and whether resident at Melbourne or Geelong. The depositor was to receive a receipt containing all the labelled particulars. There were to be two boxes in which the gold would be secured, viz., one for Geelong, and one for Melbourne. On reaching Geelong, both boxes were to be placed in charge of the Police Magistrate, who was next morning to deliver the Melbourne box to the officer in charge of the escort, who was to duly hand it over to the Colonial Treasurer. The consignees would receive their gold at Geelong and Melbourne upon producing their authority, signing a receipt, and paying an escort charge of one per cent., on washed gold, to be estimated at the rate of £5 per oz.; and on gold mixed with a larger portion of stone at the rate of £2 10s. per cent. Every precaution was to be taken for the safety of the escorted gold, but in the event of loss, the Government was not to be responsible for it.

On the 9th October special instructions were issued for the conduct of the escort. Instead of the sender fetching his gold to Buninyong, it was found more convenient that the Commissioner should collect and deliver it to the Police Magistrate, who was for such purpose to go guarded every Monday to the Commissioner's station, take over the gold, and bring it to Buninyong. The mounted men of the general police doing duty at Ballarat were to be withdrawn, and the Buninyong Police Magistrate was to have under his control 1 sergeant, 1 farrier, 29 troopers, with 1 non-commissioned officer, and 5 troopers of the native police, whose cost was to be paid from the Territorial Revenue. Two troopers were to be detached to Melbourne, to form the escort from the river Exe to Melbourne, whilst two more were to go to Geelong as an escort from Ritchie's to the Exe, 1 trooper to be stationed at each of those places to take charge of forage, and render assistance if required. The escort from Buninyong would be furnished from that place, proceeding as far as Ritchie's on Tuesday, and returning next day. The escort was to consist of two mounted men to be relieved at the different stations, and an armed trooper in the mail-cart who accompanied it the whole way, and returned with the cart, the entire party to be under the command of Mr. Lydiard. Mr. Commissioner Doveton was to have a trooper-orderly, and 1 sergeant with 10 troopers for protection, and to maintain the public peace.

On the 18th it was announced that arrangements were made for the substitution of Ballarat for Buninyong as the starting-point of the escort. The mail contractor would be permitted to bring one or two passengers with the gold, provided they were gentlemen well known to the Police.
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Magistrate, or that he could be certain of their respectability." The passengers were not to bring any golden luggage, unless they paid the 1 per cent on it.

From time to time fresh orders were issued, amending the original Regulations. The principal modifications enjoined are for the convenience of the reader here grouped, irrespective of date. Persons wishing to deposit their gold in a temporary place of safety might deliver it to the custody of the Colonial Treasurer, in which case duplicate statements of the contents of the deposited bag and name and description of owner, should be prepared, one of them for retention at the Treasury, and the other by the owner, to be presented by him when the gold was claimed. The officer in charge of the escort was never to lose sight of the treasure during transit, and his men were not under any pretence, to be allowed to leave the immediate vicinity of the horses bearing it, and at night it was to be deposited "in the room where the officer himself is," and a sufficient guard was to be kept constantly over it. During the night the whole of the escort should rest in the immediate vicinity of where the gold was, and on reaching Melbourne it was to be handed over to the Treasurer, for which purpose the escort should arrive in town not later than 2 p.m.

On the 25th November very precise injunctions were promulgated with reference to the Mount Alexander escort then established. The escort was to consist of four armed men, besides an armed man in the cart under the charge of Mr. A. Templeton. It was to leave the Mount every Tuesday morning, at six o'clock, and proceed that day, with a change of cart-horse at Carlisle, to the Mount Macedon Police Station. The boxes containing the gold were then to be placed in the watch-house, being still under the charge of the escort, who were invariably to remain there at night, having one man constantly on sentry. Next morning the journey to Melbourne was to be resumed, and, with another horse change at the Deep Creek, the destination was to be reached by 1.30 p.m. Resting for a day in Melbourne, the escort left for its return trip at an early hour on Friday. As it was evident, from the quantity of gold likely to be forwarded, that the arrangement then in operation of carrying it in saddle-bags would not answer, it was determined to procure a convenient cart with iron boxes fitted to it, which was to be sent up as soon as possible, and until this vehicle was available the saddle-bag system was to remain. The cart-driver was to be a trooper, and under any circumstance to be armed; whilst another armed trooper was to sit by him. Two of the escort were to ride at a convenient distance in the rear, whilst two others should be a short distance in advance of the cart as a precaution against sudden attack. The men were to be kept together day and night, and the leader was to be always on his guard to prevent the ill effects of a sudden attack. A full relay of horses was to be kept in a paddock at Mount Macedon, under charge of a constable; and no further relay was deemed necessary, except of a cart-horse at Carlsruhe; the change of the cart-horse between Mount Macedon and Melbourne being made by a horse to be sent from Melbourne to the Deep Creek early on Wednesday morning for the purpose. The men composing the escort need not be relieved on the road, and they were to return to Mount Alexander in precisely the same manner as directed for their route to Melbourne.

The first gold escort from Buninyong, or, as it was more generally termed, from Ballarat, arrived at Geelong on the 28th September, in charge of an officer of mounted police, two white and two black troopers, and accompanied by a Commissioner. It left the diggings on the morning of the 27th, and, though intimation of its departure was publicly given, but few of the miners availed themselves of it. The officer in charge brought a few parcels, most of it the property of the Government, and valued at £2000. At the time of having, great harmony prevailed on the gold-fields. The diggers, with few exceptions, were well disposed towards paying the license fee, and licenses were applied for almost as fast as they could be issued. Some extraordinary “finds” were reported, such as 16 lbs. by one party, and £50 worth of a morning, in a dishful of washing stuff. The Commissioner roughly estimated the takings at from £4 2s. to 2 oz. per man per diem, whilst the population was reckoned at between 1500 and 2000, not counting the prospecting or outlying parties, numbering some 500. The escort passed between 700 and 800 persons on the road, whilst three or four times as many were supposed to be moving from Melbourne. The population was streaming to the diggings from all quarters, and it was calculated that before a week the digging
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country would be in receipt of a thousand new faces every day. The road from Melbourne was so bad that stages could hardly get over portions of it.

The First Melbourne Coach

Was started by Mr. James Watt, the landlord of the Border Inn, at Bacchus Marsh. It was to ply twice a week between Melbourne and Ballarat, leaving the corner of Elizabeth and Lonsdale Streets every Monday and Thursday at 2 p.m., arriving at Ballarat at 3 p.m. on Tuesday and Friday; returning at 8 a.m. on Wednesday and Saturday, and arriving in Melbourne at 10 a.m. on Thursday and Monday. Fare, each way, 25s., with moderate charges for parcels, and all booked, if not exceeding 5 lbs., would be carefully conveyed. The coach commenced running on the 6th of October, and its bogeys and breakdowns would fill a volume, though no deaths, and hardly any broken bones, were to be laid to its charge. No doubt the slowness of pace and the softness of the road had a great deal to do in averting dangerous accidents.

Ballarat in Its Glory.

The accounts from Ballarat were so astounding as to unsettle the equanimity of the most unimpressionable Stoic; not mere rumour, but great golden facts of undoubted reliability. Mr. J. D. Hill, a gentleman of unquestioned veracity, thus wrote (30th September) to Messrs. Russell and Thomas, architects and surveyors, in Melbourne—"Every man here (at Ballarat) is doing well, and our party in four days took 80 lbs. weight of gold out of one hole, and Goodness knows how much more there may be left there." The Ballarat correspondent of the Geelong Advertiser forwarded the most glowing description of the place, and declared the general average yield to each man to be upwards of an ounce and a-quarter per day. His letters were not only gilded, but saturated with gold, and from one dated 29th September I extract a "specimen," viz.:—

"If Fortunatus had thrown the contents of his cap over the lands of Ballarat, the yield of riches would not have been increased. Here strata are delved into for riches, which repay a thousand-fold the labour expended upon them. The yield is immense, and seemingly inexhaustible. The gold lies in 'pockets' in the blue slatey clay, and may be picked out with a knife-point. So rich indeed is it that many have abandoned cradle workings for tin dishes, which have yielded from two to three ounces in the washing. Many will make fortunes, hundreds a competency, and the vast majority will do well. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . I little thought when I first started to Buninyong that it would fall to my lot to chronicle facts which, if embodied in romance, or made the elements of a fairy tale, would have excited a smile of incredulity. The month of September, 1851, is the most eventful epoch in the history of Victoria. It will stand in golden letters in our Kalend, and will be a datum line to start on our new career of prosperity."

On the Ballarat diggings there was a picturesque hill, which soon became a grand focus of attraction. From its riches it was known as "Golden Point"; but it was quickly burrowed into, spoiled of its beauty, and reft of its treasures. One man, in a delirium of rejoicing, wrote to a friend in Melbourne:— "I would not change my eight-feet square (the space allotted to a digger by his license) for a squatter's station on the Murray."

Geelong, ever prone to super-exultation, was almost beside itself, and anticipated wonders from the Ballarat developments. It regarded the Buninyong and Ballarat territory as a Geelongese dependency, all because these places happened to be a few miles nearer to it than to Melbourne. Indeed the Advertiser complacently designated them "Our Geelong Diggings," and endeavoured to screw much capital out of the circumstance that, though they were fifty miles from Geelong, they were eighty from Melbourne; and because the road from Melbourne was so gullied that the mail to Buninyong had for a time to travel circuitously via Geelong.
The Gold Fever was now regularly scattering the seeds of the epidemic far and wide. Every station was deserted of its helping hand, and sheep and bullocks were left to mind themselves. The few country townships were deserted, and Kyneton, the most important, was left without as much as a drink of water, for the few water-carriers there had sold their carts and horses and run away. To make matters worse the baker's loaf became a nonentity, and the townspeople were glad to fall back upon devouring the primitive "damper." On the 8th October Lieut.-Governor Latrobe set forth for the diggings, leaving Melbourne in a state of chaos behind him. The fever raged in highway and by-way; intense excitement ruled everywhere, and nothing was talked about but gold, and the universal question asked by everybody of every other body was, "When are you off to the diggings?" Almost every one was either gone, going, or preparing to go—rich and poor, high and low, gentle and simple. Labourers struck work, clerks deserted their desks, and "counter-jumpers" jumped away, all dreaming of nothing but the road to fortune, and the fortune that only awaited the picking up at the end of the journey. In two or three days hundreds had left, and those who remained were busily engaged in getting ready for the tramp. Every possible device was resorted to in the way of providing for the step about to be taken. Those who were not in funds and had anything vendible got rid of it, and every species of saleable commodity was converted into cash, for the purchase of supplies. Cradles, picks, shovels, and hammers were bought; drays, drags, and carts put in readiness, and it was seriously apprehended that if this state of things was, in any degree, intensified, both Melbourne and Geelong would be drained of all their male population, and garrisoned only by women and girls. Even the police had gone into the scare, and so many of them flung away their batons as to create a general uneasiness through a fear of the difficulty of procuring substitutes for the protection of life and property. Intimation was given to the Licensed Victuallers, that such of them as left the town, would be accounted as absentees, and their licenses forfeited for public-house desertion. There was even a run on the banks by persons desirous of withdrawing deposits, and one forenoon the Union Bank was blockaded in such a manner as to render it necessary to call in the police to preserve order amongst the angry intimated crowd. The clearing out of Government clerks and every other class of salary or wage earners was growing general. Mechanics, servants, labourers, etc., left with or without notice; and any who applied for leave and did not get it, very unceremoniously took "French leave." There was hardly a carter to be found in town, and horses and drays were, by some mysteriously rapid process, melted into "tin," to supply the travelling expenses. Sailors deserted their ships, striplings ten or eleven years old, with tin pannikins and bits of hoop iron, some of them barefooted and many in rags, darted off like so many wild animals, not knowing what they were doing unless they were on the road to the diggings; and in order to keep a few police and prison warders at their posts, their pay had to be raised to 6s. and 7s. per day respectively. But to one class (and the least deserving) of the community, an acceptable holiday had come; and they were "in clover," viz.:—the prisoners sentenced to hard labour, for they had nothing to do, as stone-breaking had to be abandoned, for the supply of stone had run out, and there were neither quarrymen nor draymen available. In the midst of all this turmoil, Mr. E. P. Sturt, the energetic Superintendent of Police, took it into his head, inopportunely, to get married, and during the honey-mooning, Mr. N. A. Fenwick was appointed his locum tenens, a change certainly not for the better. Then came a dearth and dearness of food in town, where provisions went up 25 and water 100 per cent, for nearly all the men were away, and the women took their turn at the pumps and became water suppliers. Richmond was so thoroughly deserted that a newspaper declares, that on one day only one old fellow was to be seen hobbling about, and with a phiz so shrouded in anxiety as to induce a belief that he had been left behind as the sole care-taker-general of all the women and children. As to Melbourne, its streets were as deserted as Collins Street on a Saturday afternoon is now, but at every second shop door heaps of cradles were to be seen for sale, so much so, that a humourist of the period pronounced the town to resemble a huge lying-in settlement, minus the babies.
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As a climax, the yellow fever burst upon the newspaper offices to such an extent as to explode some, and seriously threaten the existence of all. The Victoria Colonist, a Geelong daily, was extinguished; the Banner of Victoria, and the Victoria Family Herald (two small weeklies) collapsed, and Ham's Illustrated Magazine soon followed suit.

Serious apprehensions were entertained as to whether the three Melbourne journals could survive the shock, whilst the Geelong Advertiser declared its intention of starting a weekly paper, to be called the Prospector, at Ballarat. Up to the 6th October, all the gold brought down by the escorts (2) did not exceed the value of £3000, i.e., £2000 the first, and £1000 the second, although enormous finds were daily reported; and on the 1st, a man entered the Bank of Australasia with £500 worth of gold sealed up in a box, which he stated he had procured by four days' washing, but where he would not tell.

On the 6th October, the Colonial Secretary received a letter from Mr. E. Bell, the Private Secretary, who had gone to Ballarat, to the effect that in his presence two men had washed out one day before breakfast 10 lbs. 4 ozs. of pure gold from two tin dishes, but once filled. He stood by in amazement during the operation.

A BUSY DAY

Was the same 6th in parts of Melbourne. The first coach left Passmore's Hotel, Elizabeth and Lonsdale Streets, for the diggings, laden with passengers. There was also a considerable pedestrian migration of men, several of whom were accompanied by women and children, some of the last scarcely able to walk. Three stalwart fellows contrived a rude form of velocipede out of a piece of wood mounted on three wheels, one before and two astern. On the beam they strapped saddles, got on them, and set to propel with their feet. With this locomotion they managed to get out of town, but there was soon a smash, and the ordinary "shanks' mare" had to be substituted. Another turn-out was a drag drawn by four large bull-dogs, attended by three men as ferocious-looking as the dogs, leading two others as reliefs for the road. The vehicle was well weighted with supplies and "swags." The following day the Lieutenant-Governor returned from his country trip, and the day after an escort arrived, thus invoiced:—The Government for Licenses, 500 ozs.; for Melbourne, 343 ozs.; and Geelong, 394 ozs.—1237 ozs. Large quantities were reported as brought privately. Already it began to be ascertained that it was not all good luck, as there were numerous disappointments; and though the people were going by thousands, they were commencing to return in hundreds. It was estimated that there were over 7000 persons on the ground. Outrage in Melbourne was rare, for all the evil-blooded characters had "sloped" away to the richer harvest-field; but robberies soon set in at Ballarat. On the 9th the first tragedy occurred there in the person of a man, who, whilst undermining his neighbour, was half buried alive by a fall of earth, and had legs and several ribs broken. He died soon after. Already the ministers of religion were to the front, for officiating among the Ballaratians were the Rev. C. T. Perks (Episcopal), A. Morison (Independent), and P. Dunne (Roman Catholic).

THE STRAITS OF TRADE.

As could not well be otherwise in such a condition of utter unsettlement, every branch of business was damped for the time by a general depression, especially all retail traffic, not even excepting the publichouses, some of whose bars were empty from morning till night. This was owing to two causes, viz., the virtual vacation of the town by so many of its inhabitants, and the absence of those helps, without whom business, unless on the smallest scale, is not possible. Shop hands and journeymen were not to be found, and under this stress several places were virtually closed; whilst others, by a great effort and additional outlay, succeeded in keeping their establishments going until the human tide ebbed. The newspapers contain several curious advertisements bearing on the subject, and from them I transcribe three ex gr. ——
Mr. Francis M'Donnell, tailor, Collins Street, "begs to inform his customers, that in consequence of all his workmen leaving him to go to the gold 'diggings' he is obliged to shut up his shop and suspend business for a month from this date." (6th October).

Mr. William Hoffman, butcher, Elizabeth Street, "respectfully informs the public that he does not intend closing his establishment."

Mr. John Lush, tailor and draper, Collins Street, "has made arrangements with his men, and is thereby enabled to keep open his establishment, where business continues to be conducted, etc."

The Melbourne journals had difficulty enough to induce sufficient compositors to remain to enable issues, made as light as possible, to be brought out; but the proprietors were regularly driven into a corner to keep on a staff of three or four boys each, as runners; for papers then were delivered every morning direct from the offices to the subscribers, and no such convenient modern usages were known as paper-sellers in the streets, or agents. The regular boys had almost all decamped, and there were instances where principals turned their own sons into morning Mercuries, and borrowed juveniles from their friends for the same purpose. This difficulty continued for several weeks.

THE DOCTOR'S PROCESSION TO THE DIGGINGS.

Melbourne could at this time boast of possessing amongst its medicoes, Mr. D. J. Thomas, a surgeon of considerable eminence, and an individual occasionally prone to harmless eccentricities. He conceived a notion of organizing something like a State procession to the gold-fields, a mixed cavalcade, for it was to be both vehicular and equestrian, including both ladies and gentlemen. He carried out his project too, for on the morning of the 14th October, a large scrap of the human remnant remaining in town, paraded to see "the Doctor" and his cortege starting for their destination. The procession was thus formed:—Surgeon Thomas, in a four-horse drag, acting as whip and conductor-in-chief, surrounded by a bevy of ten lady passengers, the reverse of unattractive; then succeeded a barouche and pair similarly freighted, followed in turn by three ladies on horseback, attended by two equerries in the persons of Captain R. H. Bunbury, the Harbour Master and Mr. W. A. C. A'Beckett, then a rather good-looking harmless-faced young man. Though they had a perilous journey before them, they got through it well, for a newspaper of the time records "That they started on a Tuesday and arrived safe on Saturday, having only broken two poles, and camped out a night." They got into Ballarat, where there was then no township, in dashing style, and were vociferously cheered on their arrival by the congregated diggers.

One day during the past week, whilst enjoying a meditative stroll near the Hobson's Bay Railway Station, by a chance I met one of the two surviving gentlemen of this singular expedition, and on mentioning it to him, he was immensely amused by the awakening of an event which had gone to sleep in his memory, and had passed out of his recollection for years. He good-humouredly promised to supply me with a few particulars about it, and two days after I received the following communication from him:

"As to the precise day or month, or even year, I cannot tell you, but sure enough the excursion you spoke of came off. Dr. Thomas had been talking about arranging a holiday trip out of town, and on mentioning it to him, he was immensely amused by the awakening of an event which had gone to sleep in his memory, and had passed out of his recollection for years. He good-humouredly promised to supply me with a few particulars about it, and two days after I received the following communication from him:

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on to Ballarat. The ladies were conveyed, some in a four-horse waggon like a brake, driven by Thomas, who, not only being a good doctor, was an excellent whip; whilst others were piloted by Mr. Lloyd Jones, in a two-horse carriage. Mrs. B——r, another lady, Bunbury, and A'Beckett, travelled on horseback, and the first mentioned was thrown, but not hurt. In the evening we got to Staughton's, where we were hospitably entertained. The next day we went via Griffith and Green's Station to Labillieres, and on the way the pole of the principal vehicle broke several times, in consequence of the steep gullies to be got through, and the pole not yielding as Yankee poles do. The author of the well-known works on Australia, young Labilliere, was there, a precocious over-learned boy, with a strong Irish brogue. In the course of the next day's journey, rearward of the house we had to ascend a very steep hill to get to Ballan, and the ascent of this was the finest piece of driving I ever witnessed. All the ladies had to walk up the hill, and at the summit was a stiff pinch for about fifty yards, with a narrow track only wide enough for one vehicle, and on the other side was a steep precipice of some hundred feet. Dr. Thomas had to get his four horses up this, and then turn the leaders before the wheelers to avoid going down the precipice. He had taken the cross-country route, instead of the ordinary and present roadway, to escape the traffic and crowds which had cut up the thoroughfare; but at Ballan, I think, we must have joined the main track. On we went that night, until dark, and had to put up with the bush, where we had the enjoyment of good fires. When morning broke, we had the mortification to learn that some of the horses were lost, but found after some trouble and delay, when we started, and soon succeeded in making old Inglis's Station at Lal Lal; after this we went right into Ballarat, where the diggings had only recently broken out. For miles the place was nothing but holes and quartz pebbles, tents, tin pans, and cradles for gold washing—no such object to be seen as a house. We were cheered as we passed along, being, no doubt, the first pleasure party that had ever visited a gold-field in Victoria. We met with several Melbourne identities, who had temporarily abandoned their businesses and professions to try their luck there, such as Frank Stephen and his party, Alex. Hunter, J. B. Bennett, Solicitor, and others. We slept at the camp, the ladies, if I mistake not, being accommodated on flour bags. There can be doubt that, at the time, the diggers knew but very little of the gold they found. I saw one of them offer a nugget as large as a walnut for £5; it must have been worth at least £20. The camp was on Golden Point (a contrast now and then). We left there for Buninyong, and had it very rough all the way to Geelong. We stopped for the night at a public-house kept by a Mrs. Jamieson, sleeping on chairs in the bar, and a large table in a room. The next night we were more comfortably housed at Meredith, and finished off at Geelong about the tenth day out. Next morning we returned to Melbourne per steamer; but I cannot say whether Dr. Thomas despatched the traps and horses by road to Melbourne or not. This is all I can remember of the affair.

The "Red Rover" coach was now running between Ballarat and Geelong, and both it and the conveyance from Melbourne had rough times of it, in consequence of the manner in which the two main roads were ploughed up. Travelling by coach was then queer and ricketty work, from the frequent sticking in the "glue pots," the getting in and out of passengers up and down hill, the breaking of poles, snapping of harness, plunging, kicking, and stopping of horses, and other trifles too numerous to particularize. The following description of life at the diggings on 13th October is from the pen of Mr. Henry Lineham, once a proprietor of the well-known White Hart Hotel, Bourke Street:

"Picture to yourself a space of ground covered with tents! Thousands at work! Cradles, barrows, and pickaxes all going together! Shouting, laughing and singing! Such a confusion and a noise that you are bewildered! And then at night, all lighted up with about a thousand fires; and then old acquaintances, dressed in red shirts, and with long beards, tailors with moustachios, doctors, and tinkers, all working together. Picture to yourself Dr. Campbell carrying soil on his head in a tin dish, and Dal. Campbell rocking a cradle; next to him is Dykes working. But I have done. Do not come! Stay at home until I send for you; and when I do that, be sure that I have found a Golden Mountain."

A publican named Woodlock arrived in Melbourne on the 15th, from Ballarat, with a lump of gold weighing 8 lbs., the largest single nugget yet found. It was exhibited for a few days at the Horse and Jockey Taverns in Little Bourke Street East, and the landlord made a good thing
out of the sight-seeing, through the impetus it gave his nobbler-selling. Woodlock's good fortune did not thrive with him, for six years after (in 1857) he was executed for murder in the Melbourne Gaol.

Mr. T. T. A'Beckett published an extremely interesting pamphlet intituled The Gold and the Government, — a well-written, scholarly brochure, teeming with good advice, and indirectly advocating what was afterwards legalized— "An Export Duty on Gold." Mr. William Wengarth, who had visited Ballarat, gave it as his opinion that upwards of £10,000 worth of gold was the daily yield at and about "Golden Point," where some 7000 persons were at work, and would therefore average something like £1 8s. 6d. per diem. Silly-grog selling and drinking had not only commenced, but was in full swing there, and £800 worth of the contraband stuff had been seized by the police.

The average price of gold was now from £3 to £3 2s., and every day brought accounts of much success, but more failures. On the 22nd October a party of four men arrived in town from Ballarat with 93 lbs. of gold, procured, as they declared, in 14 days at "Golden Point." They offered their treasure for sale to Messrs. Symons and Perry, but could not agree upon terms. The men were their own escort, and came down heavily armed. Towards the close of the month a weekly mail was established between Melbourne and Ballarat.

Another false alarm was got up in Melbourne by some publicans in the suburbs procuring a quantity of gold leaf, old brass and copper filings and mica. A pseudo-auriferous amalgam was compounded from these ingredients, and with it the neighbourhood of certain hotels was "salted" and several gold misery started. One of the supposed new gold-fields was off West Lonsdale Street, near the Pagoda Hill; another, above all places in the world, at Sandridge; a third at Collingwood; and a fourth at Richmond. There were "rushes" to each of the "diggings," the publicans profited by the shabby hoaxes, the gold-hunters vowed vengeance, but still incontinently tippled, and a party of police had to be called out to prevent the Lonsdale thoroughfares being broken up with excavations.

THE MOUNT ALEXANDER GOLDFIELD.

Dr. William Barker was the occupier of what was known as the Mount Alexander Station, on part of which the Town of Castlemaine is built, and stretching northwards in the direction of Sandhurst. Employed here as a hut-keeper was a man named Christopher Thomas Peters. One day in July (1851) this person whilst pottering about a waterhole on Barker's Creek, which was subsequently known as "Specimen Gully," found some samples of gold. He communicated the discovery to three fellow-servants. They formed a party and worked the gully until the 1st September, when they desisted for fear of being prosecuted and punished for trespass, and one of them, named Warbey, communicated the discovery to a Melbourne newspaper.

Roving diggers from Ballarat, in quest of new revelations, were scouring the country in all directions, and as good news travels often as rapidly as bad, some of them were not long in hearing of Barker's Creek, where people quickly collected, and one of the first intimations received in town was that three men had got 73 ozs. there in a day. During the month of October occasional "finds" were reported, and ere the 1st November had arrived the Mount Alexander goldfield flamed forth in all its glory, Melbourne being dazzled by the intelligence received. A Mr. Leete made his appearance in town with 250 ozs. of gold as good in quality as that of Ballarat, obtained in a week by him and four others. It was found in the bed of a nearly dry creek at the foot of Mount Alexander, wending for miles towards Barker's Creek. They had been gold-hunting for a fortnight without success, and one day, opening a hole by chance, appearances were encouraging, and they persisted. One of the first spadefuls of earth showed golden indications, when they forthwith excavated an area of 12 feet by 8, and, washing the stuff, gold was obtained in abundance. By this time the diggers were in a considerable migration from Ballarat, and stirred by the news the Lieutenant-Governor had started for the new region. He returned on the 28th October, astounded by what he had seen of the success of the miners, and entertaining an opinion that the Mount Alexander gold district was more extensive than the Ballarat one.
In November intelligence was received in the colony that the Australian gold discoveries had created a widespread and profound sensation in England, and that thousands of persons were preparing to emigrate to the Antipodes.

The First Melbourne Gold Circular was issued by Messrs. Stubbs and Son, on 17th November, publishing the result of sales on the 11th and 15th, of Ballarat and Mount Alexander gold, at rates from £3 1s. 7d. to £3 2s. 11d. per oz. Specimens, i.e.—Gold nuggets brought (1) £3 10s., and (2) £3 17s. 6d. per oz.

It was now at length established beyond doubt that goldfields existed at Clunes, Buninyong, Ballarat, Mount Alexander, Mount Mercer on the Leigh, the Wandy Yallock Gullies, Anderson's Creek, and that there were unmistakable indications of the coveted metal at the sources of the Barwon, Moorabool, Werribee, and Devil's Rivers, an area of some 10,000 square miles.

On the 19th November, the Government escort from Mount Alexander brought 6,846 ozs. and £3,545 in cash; whilst one from Ballarat conveyed 2,117 ozs. to Melbourne, 619 ozs. to Geelong, making in one week in round numbers 10,000 ozs. gold, which at £3 per oz. represented £30,000. Of this quantity, 462 ozs. and £2,750 belonged to the Government as the proceeds of digging licenses. Three thousand persons had gone from Ballarat to Mount Alexander in a fortnight.

The shine was beginning to be taken out of Ballarat by the superior richness and larger extent of the Mount Alexander district, and on the 29th November the former place was cast into the shade by the arrival of the Mount escort, with 11,424 ozs., leaving behind (as was said) 6,000 ozs. to prevent the overloading of the conveyance. As it was, it broke down twice on the road. The quantity brought by the Ballarat escort was 1,745 ozs. or both 13,169 ozs. which at £3 would make £39,507. Such extraordinary yields induced a relapse of the yellow fever in Melbourne, and every one was again thinking of nothing else than a trip to the diggings, utterly regardless of previous disappointments. In fact the gold-bitten were so numerous that during the last five months of 1851, I may safely assert that not 50 males, between the ages of 15 and 65, remained in Melbourne and its neighbourhood without visiting either Ballarat or Mount Alexander. Happening to form one of the 50, the finger of scorn was often pointed after me in the streets, and I was put down as a poor, spiritless, unplucky sort of creature, without the courage or energy to do as almost everyone else did. I managed, however, to bear all the taunts with resignation, and lived to laugh at many a returned “digger” who also lived to regret not having done as I had done.

The Government was at its wits’ end how to keep the public employes at their posts, for there was a general inclination towards wholesale desertion; and after some shilly-shallying it was determined to raise the pay of several branches of the Public Service, to wit—the Customs Boatmen, from 3s. to 5s.; Constables, 3s. 3d. to 5s.; Messengers, 2s. 6d. to 4s.; Turnkeys or Prison Warders, 4s. to 5s.; Mounted Troopers, 3s. to 4s.; Letter-carriers, 4s. to 6s.; and Labourers, from 2s. per week to 4s. per diem. &c. The shipping of gold had commenced, and one of the first houses to do so was Dalgety and Co., who exported to England 6,000 ozs. by the “Himalaya.” O. Brown and Co. were the purchasers of £10,000 worth. As lucky diggers flocked into town, the publicans commenced their harvesting. The nugget men were seized as with a mania for extravagances of the most reckless andiacal character. One of them, who was spreeing at the Imperial Hotel, in Collins Street, ordered a pair of gold stirrups to be manufactured. A madman at Geelong had his horses treated to golden shoes; and instances were known where £5-note sandwiches were swallowed without disagreeing with the gourmands in whom such an abnormal and unpalatable appetite was engendered. I have heard it stated as a fact that once a bunch of merry-makers were having a night of it in a Bourke Street Tavern, when one of them, more fastidious in his longings than his mates, after mixing a jorum of strong rum punch, thrust in by way of a relish a £5 note, and after stirring it up with the sugar swallowed the jorum, protesting that nothing in the world agreed with him better than a costly drink. This was a clumsy, though no doubt an unconscious, travesty
of the oft-told Cleopatra diamond dissolving. Another fool, addicted to skittle-playing, took it into his sapient noddle to employ bottles of champagne for nine-pins, and when one of them would be knocked, the fizzing and waste gave him immense satisfaction. But time brought its revenges for such wantonness, as a remarkable instance of which I saw one man who actually lighted his pipe with a £5 note begging about the streets in less than three years after, and I am assured that the champagne skittler ended his days a pauper in the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum.

Blackwood was the next locality from which gold-findings were announced. The escort on the 3rd December brought 16,333 ozs. and three-fourths of a ton of gold was tendered to Mr. Commissioner Powlett, at Mount Alexander, but he declined receiving it until the next escort was ready.

Outrages were now growing rife on the two great goldfields, and the Government manifested much vacillation in grappling with the evil.

The following extract from a letter written by a solicitor's clerk at Mount Alexander, to his employer in Melbourne, was published in Melbourne on the 3rd December:

"I saw yesterday a singular sight. Going along the bank of the creek I noticed a crowd of people apparently scrambling together, and when I got to them I found several hundreds tumbling about and over each other, tearing up the soil with their hands, picking up the nuggets, and placing them in their pockets for safety. Upon enquiry I learned that a man was pitching his tent and saw the gold shining in the earth, and he began picking up the pieces, and others seeing what he was about rushed him as above."

On the 11th December, the Mount Alexander escort arrived with 23,650 ozs., and £4,385, Government money. The previous day the Ballarat escort fetched 222 ozs.; as to the Mount, only one-third of the yield was reported to have been sent, and the value of gold raised daily there was estimated at from £15,000 to £18,000.

The gold discoveries necessitated the appointment of a staff of Commissioners, and the following gentlemen were at various times between the 27th August and 28th November gazetted as such, viz., Messrs. F. C. Doveton, William Mair, John Fletcher, Benjamin Baxter, C. J. P. Lydiard, David Armstrong, and R. H. Horne; and on the 3rd October, the various Commissioners of Crown Lands were authorized to issue licenses to dig and search for gold in their respective districts generally.

Further Regulations also were made, and instructions issued to meet unexpected emergencies as they might arise, of the most important of which a brief general précis is subjoined. On the 14th October the Collector of Customs notified that as gold had been ascertained to be a natural product of the colony, the local Customs laws required on exportation that it should be entered Outwards the same as other Exports. During the same month the various Commissioners were directed to use every exertion to prevent seamen and other persons leaving hired service without their employers' permission, from obtaining gold-searching licenses; and any persons known or recognized to have been at a late date in the Public Service should not be allowed to hold a license, unless satisfactory proof was given that their leaving the Service had not only been authorized, but was unattended with embarrassment to the Government. Licenses were also not to be issued in any of the gold districts for the occupation of any ground, or disturbance of the soil in gold-searching within half a mile of every side of a homestead. The Commissioners of Crown Lands were instructed—14th October—in the event of finding any person working for gold on Crown lands without license, and ascertaining the quantity of gold (if any) so raised and sought to be removed, the unlicensed party should be required at once to pay a Royalty of ten pounds per centum upon such quantity; and in event of default the illegal occupier was to be removed, and steps were to be taken for the legal recovery of what was sought to be illegally appropriated. All trafficking in gold on the part of officers of every grade in Government employ on the goldfields was strictly prohibited.

On the 13th October an application was made to Mr. Commissioner Doveton to grant a license for the erection of a printing press at Ballarat with a view to the publication of a newspaper there, and on its reference to head-quarters it was refused as "His Excellency does not feel himself justified at the present time in sanctioning any occupancy of Crown lands in the locality in question, which
has not a direct reference either to the supply of the indispensable wants of the people congregated there, or their protection in the maintenance of good order." Sly-grog selling having spread at Ballarat, several of the offenders were convicted and fined by the Police Magistrate, whereupon an instruction was forwarded not to re-license any persons found directly or indirectly engaged in the sale or distribution of liquor, or in whose tent any scene of riot had occurred.

**THE FINDING OF THE SEVERAL FIELDS.**

To this day there is occasional controversy as to the particular period when the first great goldfields of Victoria were made known to the public, and it will consequently be not uninteresting to transcribe the following officially authorized statement of such remarkable facts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Date of Discovery</th>
<th>Distance from Melbourne</th>
<th>Date when first occupied under the sanction of the Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clunes</td>
<td>July 8, 1851</td>
<td>100 miles</td>
<td>September 20, 1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buninyong</td>
<td>August 9, 1851</td>
<td>75 miles</td>
<td>September 20, 1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>September 8, 1851</td>
<td>75 miles</td>
<td>September 20, 1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Alexander and its vicinity</td>
<td>September 9, 1851</td>
<td>80 miles</td>
<td>October 8, 1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson's Creek</td>
<td>August 11, 1851</td>
<td>70 miles</td>
<td>September 1, 1851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken River and its vicinity</td>
<td>September 20, 1851</td>
<td>94 miles</td>
<td>October 15, 1851</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DOUBLING THE LICENSE FEE.**

Hardly had the month of December put in its appearance, when an Executive bombshell fell amongst the digging communities with an explosion that scattered astonishment and indignation throughout the length and breadth of the auriferous regions. It assumed the form of an intimation that the month's license-fee for gold-digging would be doubled, i.e., increased from £1 10s. to £3.

The reasons which prompted the Government to take this rash step, will be gathered from the subjoined circular transmitted to the several Goldfields Commissioners:

> Colonial Secretary's Office, Melbourne, 2nd December, 1851.

Sir,—I have the honour, by direction of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, to draw your attention to the notice which will appear in the Government Gazette of this date, raising the fees upon licenses to dig and search for gold to three pounds, and I am to instruct you that this Regulation is to be strictly carried out from the first of next month; and it will be proper that sufficient notice be given of this charge within your district, in order that persons may be prepared to pay it on renewing their licenses.

His Excellency has deemed it expedient to direct this increase mainly upon two considerations: First, from the conviction that the existing fee is by no means consonant with justice to the revenue, when the large amount of gold collected by those actually engaged in the pursuit is considered; and, secondly, that it is desirable for the welfare of the colony generally to prevent, as far as practicable, the congregation of people at the goldfields who are not fully employed there.

His Excellency would again impress upon you the necessity of ensuring the assistance of as many licensed persons of character in the district as possible, in the event of a breach of the peace at any time, by swearing in a considerable number of special constables. You will also, from time to time, report to me whether you consider it necessary to make any alteration in the Police Force placed under your orders.—I have, etc.,

W. Lonsdale.

In the Gazette referred to, the "New Regulations" (of date the 1st) were promulgated in the following terms:

1. The licence-fee for one month, or the greater portion of a month, will be three pounds.
2. Any person who may arrive on the ground and apply for a licence on or after the 15th of any month will be charged half the above fee.

3. All persons at the goldfields who are in any manner connected with the search for gold, as tent-keepers, cooks, &c., will be required to take out a licence on the same terms as those who are engaged in digging for it.

They were to take effect on and after the 1st January, 1852, and continue in force until cancelled.

As was only to be expected, the most intense excitement was engendered, whose offspring was the disaffection which broke out in open rebellion at Ballarat in 1854. Indignation meetings were held, at one of which 14,000 persons were said to have attended, and after threats of not only defiance, but resistance, were uttered, without any reservation, they declared, on behalf of 30,000 diggers, that they would not pay the increased fee, no matter what might be the consequences.

The fierce agitation bursting forth in all directions seems to have so stunned the Government, that it was as if panic-stricken. It wavered and floundered and hesitated, until the 13th December, when it was decided to withdraw the obnoxious fee augmentation; yet this determination does not appear to have been officially published until the Gazette issue of the 24th, when it was at length formulated in the usual style, and in these terms:—

Measures being now under the consideration of Government, which have for their object the substitution, as soon as circumstances permit, of other Regulations in lieu of those now in force, based upon the principle of a royalty leviable upon the amount actually raised, under which gold may be lawfully removed from its natural place of deposit: His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, hereby causes it be notified that no alteration will for the present be made in the amount of the License Fee as levied under the Government notice of the 16th August, 1851, and that the Government notice of the 1st inst. is hereby rescinded.

Even this concession did not calm the storm, which continued to rage with much fury.

A deputation of miners arrived in town from Mount Alexander, to ask the co-operation of the sympathizers in town; and on the 29th December a mass meeting was held on the Flagstaff Hill, to receive and deal with a report of grievances from the miners of the Mount. Dr. Webb-Richmond was vociferously voted to the chair, which he promptly assumed by mounting a pile of wood close by, and from this he denounced with bitter indignation the uncalled-for tyranny of the Government. The principal other spokesmen were Messrs. J. A. Marsden, Henry Lineham, and Captain Harrison, who did not mince their words, but inveighed forcibly against the "monstrous" injustice about to be inflicted upon an enterprising and industrious body of colonists. Others with weaker lungs and of less note followed suit, and resolutions were passed:—(1) To pay no licence-fee or impost on gold until the licence question was finally adjusted; (2) Denouncing the arbitrary action of Commissioner Fletcher for seizing some gold belonging to diggers; and (3) The adoption of a Petition to the Legislative Council against a projected Vagrant Act, the voting of pay for additional soldiers, and the importation of Van Diemen's Land pensioners to do duty as constables.

It is essential to the intelligibility of this gathering that I should offer some explanation of certain facts not previously referred to. Every soldier, and everyone that could be obtained as a trooper or a constable was drafted off to the goldfields for the preservation of peace and property. The diggers, as a whole, were well affected and well behaved, but by this time there was necessarily a large admixture of the rascality of the period, worked up with the general population at the goldfields. Those soundsters looted and swindled and robbed whenever they found a chance—they were so many human beasts of prey, prowling and hungering about, flitting from place to place, and it required the exercise of much vigilance and activity to guard against their depredations. The diggers had often to look after themselves, and they frequently did so with salutary effect, and the application of a dose of lynching law. But the Commissioners and their myrmidons had other work to do, and this they often did with a harshness that could not be palliated. In hunting up unlicensed diggers, and in their official intercourse with those who were licensed, edifications of temper were often indulged in, and even illegalities committed which could in no fairness be excused; and when satisfaction was sought from the higher powers, the appeal was in
most instances treated with a contemptuous indifference. Sufficient allowance will never be made for the extraordinary and totally unexpected difficulties by which the Executive was confronted, in endeavouring, in a state of extreme unpreparedness, to cope with such a sudden economic revolution as was caused by the gold discoveries; but after according the utmost latitude in such circumstances, it cannot be denied that the early administration of the goldfields was characterized by an alternating tergiversation and impulsiveness which showed a marked absence of that coolness and steadied sagacity of which the colony stood so much in need in this daily augmenting crisis. After proclaiming the increased license-fee, the ruling powers hovered and halted, as if fearing to advance, and failing in the moral courage to decently retreat, such indecision only intensified the blaze of discontent raging in every quarter. In a moment of ill-advised precipitancy a Bill was introduced to the Legislative Council (which commenced its maiden session in November) vagabondizing as "idle and disorderly persons," (and as such punishing) all diggers found working without a license. This so capped the climax of the almost universal exasperation, that the Government, in a paroxysm of pusillanimous imbecility, withdrew the obnoxious measure. As to the proposition to increase the military forces, and subsidize Van Diemen's Land pensioners as temporary policemen, no person cognizant of the abnormal condition in which the community was placed, and fairly looking the difficulties in the face, could justly censure the adoption of such a course.

DOING THE DOCTOR.

As the "cure of diggers' souls" was provided for by the accession of clergymen to the goldfields, it was only reasonable to suppose that the cure of their bodies would not be neglected, and accordingly the corporeal, like the spiritual physicians, did not remain behind. The lancet, tourniquet, and stomach pump were accordingly efficiently represented, and amongst the Esculapians who established themselves at Mount Alexander, were two popular surgeons trading, or rather practising, under the style and title of "Thomas and Barker," the latter being the well-known Dr. Edward Barker, still resident in Melbourne. Their surgery was a comfortable canvas tent, with its doorway surmounted by an orthodox sign-board, and hither flocked both patients and nuggets, as to amply reward the skill of the proprietors. Dr. Barker was one day summoned by a sick call to some neighbouring gully, and as it was an urgent case, away he went, locking up the tent in the care of itself. On his round he looked in, in a friendly way, upon the Commissioner ("Jack Fletcher"), and whilst so engaged, some unauthorized individuals were fraternizing in a very different manner in another place; for on the doctor returning to his homestead, he found it in a state of topsy-turvy, the place gutted of everything convertible, and not only £200 worth of gold abstracted, but his instruments, drugs, and wearing apparel gone too. In fact the concern had been regularly phlebotomized, and to add insult to injury, the sign-board was reversed, and chalked with the ominous legend "Barker's Occupation is Gone." The doctor did not swallow his drastic dose kindly, for he cut up wrathfully, and by instruction to his Melbourne solicitor (Mr. Clarke) offered £100 reward for information concerning the marauders, but no effectual response was ever vouchsafed.

THE STATE OF MELBOURNE.

The outlook in town was not of the pleasantest kind, though Christmas-tide was coming. Out of fifty men composing the police force only eleven remained staunch, though Police Superintendent Sturt had returned from his "orange-blossom" excursion, and was busily engaged in endeavouring to secure new hands for ordinary town duty, and the constitution of a special mounted patrol for street and suburban service. Almost all the Government employes had given "notice to quit," and salaries, where not exceeding £150 per annum, were increased fifty per cent. The state of affairs induced much alarm, for there were no adequate means for the conservation of life and property. On the 15th December a private meeting of the City Council was held to consider the situation, when it was decided that the several Aldermen should convene Ward-motes, with a view of ascertaining how far the male adult citizens were disposed to co-operate
by doing duty pro aris et foenis as a volunteer protective force. Some of the gatherings came off, whereas prevailed a consensus of opinion that it was the bounden duty of the Government to provide sufficient protection for the community.

The diggers, glutted with gold, came rolling into town, their number considerably swelled by a dearth of water on the goldfields. Nuggets were in abundance, and cash was consequently not scarce, so far as the public-house traffic was concerned. Little Bourke Street was in a perfect state of jubilation, and the dens of immorality there and in other parts reaped a golden harvest. Drunken diggers staggering about in all directions both in daylight and dark, were picked up by the harpy harlotry of the period, not knocked down or garroted, but coaxed off to haunts of infamy, plundered during the night, and sent forth penniless in the morning. Singular, too, so far as open nocturnal street outrages were concerned, there were never fewer at any Christmas times for years, and this was accounted for by the fact that the most practised thieves were away on circuit, doing such good business at the several goldfields, or on the main roads leading thereto, as to be unwilling to abandon their lucrative pillagery for what they considered might be a more precarious chance in town. But here they miscalculated, and the grave error was not repeated at any Christmas ever after.

The last escort for the year arrived from Mount Alexander on 31st December with 10,598 ozs, and only 28 ozs. were received in town from Ballarat, the escort from which place was to be discontinued.

It is difficult, from the desultory and round-about manner in which the various discoveries of the early goldfields were communicated to the Melbourne newspapers, to trace with absolute certainty, from their perusal, the precise dates of such remarkable events. However, on the 12th October, 1853, the Legislative Council of Victoria appointed a Select Committee consisting of the following members, viz.:—Dr. Greeves (Chairman), Messrs. William and Mark Nicholson, J. E. Strachan, John Hodgson, H. E. Childers, and James Graham "to consider the propriety of requesting His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to take such steps as may enable the Council to mark in a substantial manner their high appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. E. H. Hargreaves to this colony by the discovery of goldfields in the continent of Australia; and also what other persons are entitled to reward for the discovery of the Victorian goldfields." Several witnesses were examined, and much light was shed upon the subject. The report of the Committee was ordered to be printed—10th March, 1854, and from it are compressed these facts:—In March, 1850, Mr. William Campbell, of Strath Loddon, discovered, on the station of Mr. Donald Cameron, of Clunes, in company with that gentleman and two other friends, several minute pieces of native gold in quartz. The circumstance was avowedly concealed at the time, from an apprehension that its announcement would prove injurious to Cameron's run. Observing, however, the migration of the population to New South Wales, and the panic created throughout the whole colony, and especially in Melbourne, on the 10th June, 1851, Mr. Campbell addressed a letter to Mr. James Graham, of Melbourne, stating "that within a radius of fifteen miles of Burnbank, on another party's station, he had procured specimens of gold." Mr. L. J. Michel, with Messrs. Wm. Habberlin, James Furnival, James Melville, James Headon and B. Greeneig, discovered the existence of gold in the quartz rocks of the Yarra Ranges, at Anderson's Creek, in the latter part of June, and showed it on the spot to Dr. Webb-Richmond, on behalf of the Gold Discovery Committee, on the 8th, and on the 16th a sample of gold, procured by washing the alluvial soil in the same neighbourhood, was exhibited to the Gold Discovery Committee.

About the same time Mr. James Eamsnds, with Messrs. Pugh, Burn and Kelly, obtained gold in the quartz rocks of the Pyrenees, near Mr. Cameron's station. This was exhibited by Eamsnds at Geelong on the 5th July, and the precise locality indicated on the 22nd.

In June, 1852, an interesting discussion was maintained in the correspondence columns of the Argus, upon the early gold discoveries in Port Phillip, and to some of the contributors I am indebted for several of the facts now detailed. Mr. J. T. Osmond, of St. Kilda, who, many years ago, kept a grocery establishment in Little Pinders Street, at the rear of the present Union Bank, stated that he knew "Gum, the Gold-finder," who, in 1847, called at his shop and purchased £20 worth of goods there, paid for, as was believed, from the proceeds of gold-finding. Mr. Osmond also averred that
the same year two settlers named M'Nab and O'Niel, from Burnbank, customers of his, called and settled an overdue account, when M'Nab said that one of his men had picked up a gold nugget in a gully. The man so referred to, looked in some time after, and informed Osmond that M'Nab had left for England, and carried away a quantity of gold. Mr. George Wharton, an old Melbourne architect of unimpeachable testimony, declared that he was well acquainted with Mr. T. J. Thomas, who in days of yore, kept a jeweller's shop where the Commercial Bank now stands in Collins Street, and that bushmen occasionally called there with exhibits of mica, and samples of gold, in which but little interest was taken beyond regarding them as curiosities. An individual known as "Old Yorky," used to say that he was positive there was gold to be got at the Plenty, but no account was taken of his sayings. From a lengthy and interesting communication supplied by Mr. J. Wood Beilby, an old and enterprising colonist, I extract the following with reference to an alleged early gold discovery:

"The discoverer's name was William Rickfould, a shepherd or hut-keeper in the employ of the late W. J. T. Clarke, at Heifer Station Creek, north of the Pyrenees. I found him on the site of his discovery there early in 1845, but some years elapsed before circumstances induced him, while subsequently in my employment, to confide his discovery to me. He then reminded me of our first meeting, described the locality of his discovery minutely, and referred me to Mr. Stephen Henry and Messrs. Parbrick and Tulloh, all of Portland, as having sold gold for him in Tasmania. Mr. Henry, on my inquiry afterwards, fully bore out Rickfould's statement, but he understood the gold to be the produce of Africa, and brought here by a sailor. Had he known the gold to be Victorian I do not believe he would have bought or sold it. Even to date of 22nd May, 1851, persons digging in search of gold or removing it were declared 'liable to be prosecuted civilly and criminally' by special proclamation of His Excellency Sir Charles Fitzroy. The discoverer (William Rickfould) bound me to secrecy until his death, which he then shortly expected, and which I understood took place before I divulged the fact. I arrived in the colony in 1841, continuously resided in Melbourne, joined the Press in February, 1845, and never heard anything of the facts as stated, though for obvious reasons there was no doubt a strong motive for the concealment of any bonâ-fide gold-finding.

The first intimation on the subject that I can discover in the old newspapers is a false alarm, when in August, 1845, Mr. David Howie, a resident on King's Island, picked up amongst the rocks there a few metallic lumps the size of a pigeon's egg. Thinking they were gold he hastened with his treasure to Melbourne, where the 'eggs' were ascertained to be iron ore, and the finder was laughed at, and returned home sadly disappointed."

Dr. George H. Bruhn, a German physician, previously mentioned, in January, 1851 (before Hargreaves' discovery at Summer Hill), started from Melbourne to explore the mineral resources of this colony; and in April he found indications of gold in quartz near Mr. Parker's station, and, on arriving at Cameron's station, was shown specimens of gold found at what were subsequently known as the "Chines" diggings. This information he promulgated through the country, and mentioned to Esmonds, at the time engaged in erecting a building at Mr. James Hodgkinson's station. Dr. Bruhn forwarded specimens, which were received by the Gold Discovery Committee on the 30th June, 1851. The localities of Campbell and Michel's discoveries were divulged on the 5th, and of Esmonds' not until the 22nd July. Michel and party were adjudged to have "clearly established their claim as the first publishers of the discovery of a goldfield in Victoria." Licenses to dig for gold there were issued on the 1st September, previous to their issue upon any other goldfield, and about 300 persons were at work when Ballarat was discovered.

Mr. Thomas Hiscock found gold at Buninyong on the 8th August, a fact publicly notified on the 10th. This discovery of Hiscock, by attracting large numbers of diggers to the neighbourhood, was the cause of the discovery of Ballarat diggings, which are upon the same range as Buninyong, at six or seven miles distance.

The discovery of the "Golden Point" at Ballarat was claimed by two parties, both of whom went first to Hiscock's diggings, and then extended their searches, one on one side, the other on the other side of that grand focus of attraction. Where so many rich deposits were discovered, almost simultaneously, within a radius of little more than half-a-mile, it was difficult to decide to whom was
due the actual commencement of the Ballarat diggings. It was, however, clear that Brown and his party were working, during the first days of September, on one side, and Mesers. Regan and Denstop on the other side of the range forming "Golden Point." But it must be observed that these and the numerous other parties, who by this time were searching the whole country for gold, had been attracted there by the discoveries of Esmonds and Hiscock. In fact, in the language of one of the witnesses (Mr. Alfred Clarke, of Geelong), "the discovery of Ballarat was but a natural consequence of the discovery of Buninyong." The honour of first finding gold at Mount Alexander is assigned to Christopher Thomas Peters, then a hut-keeper at Barker's Creek, in the service of Mr. William Barker, on the 20th July, at Specimen Gully. He had associated with him John Worley, George Robinson, and Robert Keen, fellow-servants, and they worked in secret until the 14th September, when, becoming alarmed at their unauthorized doings, Worley, "to prevent them getting into trouble," published in one of the Melbourne journals, The Argus, an announcement of the precise situation of their workings. With this obscure notice, rendered still more so by the locality being described as at "Western Port," were ushered to the world the inexhaustible treasures of Mount Alexander.

The Committee recommended that the sum of £5000 should be presented to Mr. Hargreaves, and £1000 awarded to the Rev. W. Clarke, of Sydney; and proceeded thus:—"It will be seen that on the 20th June, Mr. Campbell communicated the general fact of his having discovered gold in the Pyrenees district to Mr. Graham, but, that it was not till the 5th July, that this fact, together with the exact locality, was made known by the former, in a letter of that date addressed to the latter. On the same day (5th July) Mr. Michel actually showed the locality of his discovery to Dr. Webb-Richmond, as a member of the Gold Discovery Committee. The Clunes discovery was also made known at Geelong, by Mr. Esmonds on the same day; and the information of it was generally diffused by Dr. Bruhn in his tour through the interior. Mr. Hiscock's discovery, though later in date, was of so superior a value, since it at once led to revealing the treasures of Ballarat, and the turning the tide of popular migration to our own borders, that your Committee consider him entitled to be placed in the foremost rank of our gold discoverers."

The Committee agreed to recommend, "That to Mr. Michel and his party as having, at considerable expense, succeeded in discovering and publishing an available goldfield, the sum of £1000 should be given; to Mr. Hiscock, as the substantial discoverer of the Ballarat deposits, a like sum of £1000; to Mr. Esmonds, as the first actual producer of alluvial gold for the market, a like sum of £1000; and to Dr. Bruhn, as an acknowledgment of his services in exploring the country, and diffusing the information of the discovery of gold, the sum of £500."

The Report concludes by recording an opinion which has been amply verified by the progress of events from 1854 to 1885, viz. —"The discovery of the Victorian Goldfields has converted a remote dependency into a country of world-wide fame; it has attracted a population, extraordinary in number, with unprecedented rapidity; it has enhanced the value of property to an enormous extent; it has made this the richest country in the world; and, in less than three years, it has done for this colony the work of an age, and made its impulses felt in the most distant regions of the earth."

At the end of 1851 the population had increased to 97,489 souls, a number swelled during 1852 to 108,321, and in 1853, to 222,436.

In 1851 the quantity of gold raised was 145,137 ozs.; in 1852, 2,738,484 ozs.; and in 1853, 3,150,021 ozs. On the 31st December, 1884, the population of Victoria numbered 959,836 persons, and the total gold extracted from Victorian soil from 1851 to same date realized, so far as can be ascertained, the enormous yield of fifty-two millions, nine hundred and eight-eight thousand, four hundred and eighty (52,988,480) ounces, which, at £4 per ounce, represents the almost incredible sum of two hundred and eleven millions, nine hundred and fifty-three thousand, nine hundred and twenty (£211,953,920) pounds sterling!
CHAPTER LVIII.

THE NATIVITY AND NON-AGE OF MELBOURNE JOURNALISM.

The
Melbourne
Advertiser
Port Phillip. Australia.

No motion is and Published by John P. Larkman


John Moore Larkman & Co. Dec 2nd.

It appears that Melbourne can not, for the moment, reasonably expect any increase in the number of its inhabitants in the present year. The principal cause of this is the difficulty of procuring provisions at the present time. The want of provisions is now felt, and the prices have greatly increased. The population of the present year is much greater than that of the year 1837, but the present supplies of provisions are not sufficient to meet the demands of the population. The future prospects of the town are not encouraging. The inhabitants will be much distressed by the depression of prices, and the present condition of trade is not promising. The
To the 17 Down each between Boston and the rest of the North.

2000 - fifth sugar for Quebec.

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2000 - fifth sugar for Quebec.
Mr. London direct
The first reports from Major
Sautical Pallinor were some
days in arriving. Another
Mariner wrote the greatest part
of his letter, being engaged in
the cannon with very great effect.
This event suggested very limited
accommodations.

The Wright'saleigh
Appell to Mr. Alden
Queen Anne Albermarle

In Dunneston
The first London letter shows
with how the Marine rest on
the 20th January past

Appell to Mr. W. Allen
Geeling Simulator
The wine known Selection

September 21st signing
Warrant the three Port and
Instructions being told away
item of local news about a "Cock and Bull" story of one Cummerford murdering two constables and a soldier—and Fawknerism glimmers through the rest of the advertisements.

The "leader" is a most unique specimen of bombast and bumptiousness overlaying a thin stratum of truth and prophecy, and as the oldest "Literary (?) Curiosity" in the colony, it is well worth reproducing in these pages.

Though generously promised to be "given away to householders" a charge of sixpence per copy was made, but in consequence of the manual labour involved in working it off, the circulation was limited to about a dozen copies, and the public, instead of indulging in a free read, as at present outside the newspaper offices, were obliged to go inside Fawkner's Hotel to ascertain the "latest intelligence," where they had the Advertiser as a counter-lunch, washed down by a shilling's worth of tipple.

A few numbers only of this "weekly" were issued, and I believe there is only one set of it in existence. Though not easy of access, I was fortunate enough to secure a perusal, and a cursory review of a periodical so rare and exceptional cannot be devoid of interest.

No. 1 (at least the copy before me) is wholly in Fawkner's handwriting, a legible scroll enough, but with a character that to a close inspection evidences a certain nervousness on the part of the quill-driver. It is a sheet of paper bi-sected with red lines, and consists of one leaf (two pages) and half a leaf, or one column, on the third page, the fourth being blank.

Some Assistant-Editor appears to have attempted a revision of several of the Fawknerian expressions, but only to render them mostly undecipherable. No. 2 (8th January) shows some improvements in get-up, appearance, and penmanship. The foolscap is of better quality. The whole is in Fawkner's writing, and very legible, evincing no sign of the sub-editing disfigurement of the first number. There is an increase in advertisements, including a lengthy catalogue of commodities on sale at Batman's store. Some of those in No. 1 reappear, and of course had to be re-written, as there could be no "lifting of type." A Mr. Weatherly intimates that "he sells the best wheaten bread at the lowest possible price, and, to those who wish it, he allows one month's credit," an agreeable bit of intelligence, no doubt. A blacksmith and farrier (name not given) had his forge in full blast adjoining Fawkner's Hotel, south side of Collins Street, between Queen and Market Streets, and his advertisement tersely announces, "All work of the above branches performed quickly and neatly." The veterinary surgical fees are not stated, probably through professional delicacy; but some of the avail prices are unmistakably specified, as "Horses shod, cash, 7s. 6d.; credit, 9s. 6d.; all other work in proportion."

The Fawkner Library, previously noticed, appears to have assumed a circulating character, for the proprietor thus appeals to his constituents to roll up and wipe out the arrears scored against them:—"Those of the Subscribers who took Credit when they favoured the establishment [the library] with their Support, are most Respectfully informed that it is usual to Pay up all arrears at the beginning of a new year." Amongst the shipping items, the "Tamar" is reported as having, on the 7th January, arrived with sheep from Launceston, and by her came a Hobart Town paper. There is no "leader," to make up for which is a "Poet's Corner," embellished with an original effusion of two verses commencing:

"Oh! what a pure and sacred thing
Is beauty curtained from the sight.—"

and they are simply eight lines plagiarized verbatim from "The Fire-Worshippers," in Moore's Lalla Rookh!

The only local news consists of an unintelligible narrative of a murder committed by a convict named Cummerford, who is thus described:—"A light well-made youth about nineteen he has rather a prepossessing look and a very Mild Vice, small fine Neck and remarkably large Upper Head the lower part is very small and the chin recedes towards the Neck so as to make a very strange appearance when looked closely into." This "small fine Neck" was afterwards stretched by the hangman, for Cummerford was arrested by two bush-hands in the employment of Mr. Wedge—one of the earliest settlers—shipped off to Sydney, and tried and executed there.

No. 3 (15th January) is of same size and appearance as its predecessor, but written by an amanuensis. Some of the advertisements are repeated, others are new, and there is a "Poet's Corner,"
THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

consisting of some commonplace unacknowledged stanza in a moralizing and abstract style. The news items consist of a notice of the first overland mail to Sydney, a meteorological memo, and some shipping records. The following "Maxims" are given for general information:—"The triumph of woman lies, not in the admiration of her lover, but in the respect of her husband; and that can only be gained by a constant cultivation of those qualities which she knows he must value."

"Few faculties more deserve or better repay cultivation than that of the imagination—it is the soil whence flowers and fruits equally spring." To provide some light reading, and to exercise the ingenuity of the readers, an agreeable diversion is effected by the insertion of "riddles," viz.:—

1. What letter of the alphabet goes all round Great Britain?
2. What manufacture has an old hat had?
3. When is a boat not a boat?
4. When is a man's face like a Jewish priest?

It is intimated that "any answers pertinent to the above will be gratefully received up to the 21st;" but it does not appear that any had ever been sent in. The following excerpta are copied verbatim et literatim:—

No. 4, 22nd January.—The specimen before me is inscribed "Office Copy," and there is on it the clerk's marking of the advertisements for re-insertion or withdrawal. This evidently belonged to the filed set. After the first number, the leading matter seems to have dropped. This is a very poor affair, the most striking feature in it being a Fawknerian notice in this strain:—"To let A substantial Weatherboarded house, 27ft by 14, divided into Two rooms below and one upper Room the whole length it is well floured Bricknogged and plastered enquire of the proprietor." It also contains a sporting notice of an intended race-meeting to come off on the 27th at Fawkner's Hotel, and a couple of small shipping matters.

No. 5 is mis-dated January 1st instead of 29th, and shows no improvement. It has its "Maxims" and "Poet's Corner," and announces the arrival of the Sydney mail on the 28th, with newspapers to the 19th. There is also published portion of a notice from the Sydney Government Gazette (22nd November, 1837), relative to Immigration and the discontinuance of the Assignment of Convicts. It mentions that the Melbourne Races (the first) were to be run on the 7th and 8th March.

No. 6 (5th February) is more of a newspaper, for it records two or three occurrences, the most sensational being the perpetration of an outrage thus described:—"Sunday night or early this morning six prisoners of the Crown absconded from their respective Masters Taking with them a large Boat belonging to J. P. Fawkner and a Mariner's Compass." Amongst the advertisements is one of "£2 reward offered for black painted Boat with a red Streak Square Stern—Stolen from bank of river. Apply to Thomas Field." Doubtless both refer to the one transaction.

No. 7 (12th February) is bordered with a ruling of red ink, and the writing is Fawkner's own. The following, from the advertisements, deserve re-publication:—"Derwent Bank Agency.—The undersigned hereby gives notice that from Thursday next, the 8th inst., he will receive deposits, and discount bills and orders for account; and under the responsibility of the Derwent Bank Company at Hobart Town, V.D. Land. W. F. A. RUCKER, Melbourne, 6th February, 1838."

"Intercourse with Williamstown.—The undersigned begs to inform the public that he keeps a boat and two men in readiness for the purpose of crossing and re-crossing passengers between Williamstown and the opposite beach. Parties from Melbourne are requested to raise a smoke, and the boat will be at their service as soon as practicable. The least charge is 5s. and 2s. each when the number exceeds two. H. M'LEAN, Williamstown, 9th February, 1838."
THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE.

No. 9 (26th February) contains some corrigenda of the Racing Prospectus issued in its predecessor, and revised schedules of articles for sale at the stores of Batman and Rucker. The only item of intelligence is the following, which is an average sample of Fawkner's composition:

"On Friday last the 6 Bushrangers who some time past stole a Boat from this Town entered the Hut of Mr O'Connor's Station near Western Port and took 3 Guns one Pistol a quantity of Gunpowder and Shot Pr of Boots Some Flour, Tea, Sugar, &c upon Mr O. C. urging the danger of being left without firearms they promised to return two of the Guns and Pistol, they behaved very quietly and avoided all that Brutal conduct which so frequently Attends such exploits."

The "Poet's Corner" is garnished with a lay of "The Lover to his Intended," the first verse of which is so amorous or rather erotic in its phrasing as to render its production here undesirable. The last verse thus reads literally:

"Sing me to sleep Thy Cadences
Shall be the music of the breeze
To fill my sail and waft me on
Until some halcyon Shore be Won
While Love and Hope and Pleasure beam
The guiding Stars throughout my Dream."

No. 10, 5th March, has a fair show of advertisements and nothing more. The boat notice of the McLean who ferried passengers from Williamstown to the beach is written one and a-half times. On the third page appears the following extraordinary "postscript," evidently scribbled in hurry and rage, by Fawkner, for it is in his handwriting, and in appearance very much as if his hand shook considerably while he was inditing it:

"This number was not fully Written out when press and Type arrived, and No. 10 was printed, but unfortunately was lost or stolen, and so lost to

JOHN P. FAWKNER,
May 4th, 1838."

The commas were put in by some other person. And so end the MSS. productions. All the foregoing numbers are inscribed under the title in Fawkner's writing as "John Pascoe Fawkner's Gift."

THE FIRST PRINTED NEWSPAPER.

Whilst Fawkner was working away with his pen-and-ink sketcher, a rare stroke of good fortune placed him in possession of some used-up type and an old press, which had been superannuated in Launceston, and he was in ecstacies over the valuable "find." But though the "pica" was there, no regular "picanier" or compositor was to be found. After much hunting up a very "grassy" hand, in the person of a Van Diemonian youth, who, seven years before, had worked for a twelvemonth at "case" was ferreted out, and how he and Fawkner contrived to get the paper "set-up" is one of those mysteries which time has never unravelled. The Advertiser did, however, appear in all the battered glory of half-defaced type, and its first issue contains an agglomeration of news almost as seedy as the letter-press. The leader thus concludes:—"We earnestly beg the public to excuse this our first appearance, in the absence of the compositor, who was engaged. We were under the necessity of trusting our first number (in print) to a Van Diemonian youth of eighteen, and this lad only worked at his business about a year, from his tenth to his eleventh, 1830 to 1831. Next the honest printer, from whom the type was bought, has swept up all his old waste letter and called it type, and we at present labour under many wants; we even have not as much as Pearl Ash to clean the Dirty Type."
I have met with but two numbers of the Advertiser in its altered guise. One is dated 9th April, 1838, as No. 15, vol. 1, and is printed in very abominable letter on some material resembling old half-baked coarse tea-paper. It is a small 'single sheet, not much larger than its first parent, but altogether a marked improvement in style. Its "get-up" could not be compared with any newspaper now in existence, but large allowance must be made for the circumstances and exigencies of the times in which it lived. It is all very well for the denizens of the present day, the readers of our morning and evening journals to laugh scornfully at the Fawknerian efforts, but the probability is that they would have done no better, possibly not so well, were they contemporaries of the plucky and redoubted "Johnny." The motto of the rehabilitated journal was "We Aim to Lead, not Drive," and a "leader" regularly appeared but it was in reality little more than a paragraph. In the present instance the subject was a castigation of the Government for wharfage neglect. Amongst the advertisements are three, which as the first of the kind in the country deserve special mention. Mr. A. J. Eyre, of Collins Street, intimates his being about to leave the colony, and all claims against the firm of Wilson and Eyre, and himself personally, are to be rendered for adjustment, and all accounts owing settled forthwith. Christopher Poining had "commenced as Town Herdsman, and is ready to take charge of milking cows or other cattle by the day or week. Terms 1s. per head." The first auction sale is thus launched upon public attention. "G. Lilly, Collins Street, offers for public competition some dairy cows, perfectly suitable for the use of private families—are perfectly quiet and gentle, having been broken-in at a large town dairy in Sydney;" also, "gentlemen's, ladies', and children's wearing apparel, after the cattle sale on 24th April." There is, likewise, a short summary of English news, and extracts from the Sydney journals. The paper now has a regular imprint of—"Printed and published by J. P. Fawkner, at the Melbourne Advertiser Office, Melbourne." The terms were 10s. per quarter if paid quarterly; if paid yearly 50s.; single paper is. Advertising: 4s. for every advertisement not exceeding eight lines, and 3d. per line after. It is announced that the "columns of the Melbourne Advertiser are much wider than any other colonial newspaper."

No. 17, 23rd April, is enlarged to a double-sheet or eight pages, and gives a rather lengthy précis of English intelligence. The "leader" advocates an increase to the Government Survey staff; and a "leaderette" sets forth the wants of Melbourne, from a resident Governor to clearing the streets of tree-stumps. Both seem to have been written by Fawkner, but are revised by some mending hand, and the first is tolerably well done. Various items of colonial and local news are given, and there is an excerpt describing the "outbreak of Civil War in Canada." The Protestant Bishop of Sydney was then on a visit here, and some of his movements are chronicled. A ship of war, the "Conway," arrived from Sydney. There is a good show of advertisements, including a notification, the first of its kind, viz., H. Kettle, Painter and Glazier, who "commenced business in Elizabeth Street, and hoped by strict attention to gain the support of the public." A reward of £2 is offered for the recovery of a lost gold ring engraved with a heart and cross; and H. Cooper had for sale claret and bottled sherry in three dozen cases, and Malaga sherry in casks. The imprint is transferred from the tail to the head of the paper, under the title; and the place of publishing is given as in Flinders Street. An elaborate scale of charges with conditions is put forward as a postscript in diamond type, viz.—The paper was to be published every Monday; single copies, 1s.; quarterly (if paid when called for) 10s.; credit, 12s. 6d.—only two quarters' credit given. Advertisements: Subscribers, 4s. for first eight lines, every additional line, 3d.; non-subscribers, 5s. for first eight lines, every additional line, 4d. Advertisements received till Saturday evening at 6 p.m., but persons wishing to do so could, on paying an extra charge of 2s. 6d., have the privilege to "insert a short advertisement on a Monday morning before 8 o'clock p.m."

Mr. Bonwick, to whose interesting work I am indebted for some items of information about the Press up to 1840, supplies a few amusing details of the first three newspapers, the Advertiser, Gazette, and Patriot. The Advertiser no sooner appeared in an imprinted form than legal obstacles interposed, and led to its suppression. By the Colonial law, a printed newspaper required to be licensed, and the Advertiser was not licensed. The Press Laws of New South Wales were then
Melbourne Advertiser.
PORT PHILLIP, AUSTRALIA.

VOLUME 1  SUNDAY APRIL 9, 1836  NUMBER 12

FOR PASSENGER OR PASSAGE

The Steamer "Kangaroo" arrives this week from Port Jackson, with about 400 passengers, and 400 tons of cargo, including a quantity of wool and other produce. The passage from Melbourne to Sydney is now only 12 days.

The Enterprise

Will continue to trade between the ports of Humboldt and Port Jackson. The ship is well armed and manned, and is expected to arrive at Port Jackson in the next fortnight. The voyage has been uneventful, and the ship is expected to arrive in good condition.

The Melbourne, J. P. Pawney

NOTICE

The undersigned being about to leave the Colony by the 5th of this month, requests that all claims against him, unpaid, and in dispute, be brought to his notice, and that notices of intention to sue be sent to his address.

ALFRED J. Yule.

March 13, 1836.

WIVES

Gentlemen and Farmers,

The Ladies at Hempstead, Melbourne, March 19th, 1836, request the attention of gentlemen and farmers to the following goods:

STOLEN OR STRAYED

A bay horse, 14 hands high, is claimed as the property of J. S., Esq., on the 2nd of this month. Any information will be rewarded.

April 9, 1836.

CH. SCOTT.

SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 1836

IN SALE AT THE MERCURY

Superior Black Cure Rumps...

Elaborate Black Cure Rumps...

Coloured with Black Cure Rumps...

Smoking Cigars...

Home-made Biscuits...

Flannel and Fine Goods...

Musk...}

Chinaman's leather boots and shoes...

Flannel and other woolens...

Chinaman's leather boots and shoes...

Ready to sell...

Christopher Pons.}

Hog and Sheep.

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MELBOURNE ADVERTISER.

WE AIM TO LEAD NOT DRIVE.

We have seen and had some conversation with a gentleman lately arrived from South Australia. He reports that the Government there has not yet a plan for local taxation and a system of rates. He says that the charge on produce is too high, and that the charge on produce is too high, and that the charge on produce is too high, and that the charge on produce is too high, and that the charge on produce is too high, and that the charge on produce is too high, and that the charge on produce is too high.

We respectfully call the attention of the Government to this fact, particularly as Wentworth Town, where all persons who are not on the bar, and where the people are not on the bar, and where the people are not on the bar, and where the people are not on the bar, and where the people are not on the bar, and where the people are not on the bar, and where the people are not on the bar.

Twenty or more merchants, properly interested, would affect the very desirable end. These men would be prepared to work for the Government, and would be prepared to work for the Government, and would be prepared to work for the Government, and would be prepared to work for the Government, and would be prepared to work for the Government, and would be prepared to work for the Government, and would be prepared to work for the Government.

ARRIVALS.

April 26th.

ARRIVALS.

April 26th.

DEPARTURES.

April 26th.

ARRIVALS.

April 26th.

ARRIVALS.

March 18th.

DEPARTURES.

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DEPARTURES.
Mr. Alexander Miers, of Maitland, has undertaken to run a mail once a week from Sydney to Maitland, to the Queensland Post Office, the expenses being defrayed by a subscription raised among some of the settlers in that part of the Colony. The first mail was despatched on Tuesday last.

A surgeon from the Hunter was committed to Sydney gaol on Wednesday last, by Mr. Justice Burton, but appearing in the witness box in a state of intoxication.

Mr. Moore, whose committees from Maitland to take his trial for the wilful murder of his master, the late Mr. John Hocking, was recorded in one of our recent numbers, with the full particulars of his barbarous act, was yesterday convicted before Mr. Justice Burton upon the evidence taken at the trial, and sentenced to death.

We find in the Sydney Colonist, the following remarks:—"Everything," says the most learned Judge, "is to be considered, and sentence of death passed upon him in a most impetuous manner, but which he intended to apparently with the most hardened indifference. Edward Taylor, who assisted in the murder of his master, the late Mr. John Jones, at Turramurra, during a fit of phrenzy, following into intoxication, and sound evidence of death from the same learned Judge. He has already remarked that the whole situation of the prisoner at the bar was entirely attributable to the intoxication as to his manner, in suffering the disappeared scene of intoxication break among the convicts of the Hunter."—(E. R.)

Australasian Memoirs.—The first number of the Melbourne Advertiser, the most important communications from the Colony; yet the style, though by all competent judges supposed to be the most important, has been in the same paper condemned in the most invidious manner. A nostrum is recommended for the late, which is represented to be the most approved, but which has hitherto been published, and a few months since.

To be sold in the Sydney Colonist, the following appears in a letter addressed by a friend to another, My dear Light, no acquaintance.

One paragraph runs thus:—"The city of Adelaide has become the capital of Australia, the commercial metropolis of all the vast regions of the Southern Continent. The Duke, the Marquis, and the others discovered by Major Mitchel in that part of the Territory to which he has pronounced Australia Felix, 'The Editor of the Colonist truly remarks,' That South Australia promises to be the capital of the Southern Continent, but is certainly discovered by Major Mitchel. A large portion of the letter is to the poor, Phillips, which will be, and has been, a most distressing period, he being the capital of the Southern Colony, whereas in S. W. Wales, etc., etc., etc.

Extracts of a letter from Sydney:—"There is a large party of as coming together to P. Phillips amongst which is Mr. B. B. a crew coming in from the coast of Mr. D Arce, 'You can have no idea of the number of passengers who are coming out to see Mr. D Arce.' It will be in my opinion the most wealthy town."

But of a. article in The Banks has occasioned a sensation to give way to per cent interest on all as usual of the dividend, and the result will be good days.

For the sale of a large property at the time of sale, and at ten days after notice, and an installment will be allowed nine times more notice."

The Archduke Obadiah of Austria has reached the Turkish capital. Considerable activity is said to prevail at the British Embassy, imminent events in Persia have attracted much attention. All the nations from Italy speak of the decline of the cholera and anticipate its early disappearance. The theatricality of New Haven, in Connecticut, seems to be destroyed by intoxication. Not a week passes without a large or large party, particularly, a large or large party, a large or large party, and by whom, the inhabitants have as yet been unable to discern. Only one individual has been apprehended, and he is only charged with bringing his own goods. The regular intoxication continues to be as bad as ever. This order, apparently without motives, unless it be revenge against an entire city and university, is without a precedent in the United States.

SALES BY AUCTION.

CHIOCE DAIRY COWS.

TO BE SOLD BY PUBLIC AUCTION.

BY G. LILY.

On Tuesday the 26th April, at 12, at which time, there will be several prime young calves in their feet, and ten months, and the remainder of 1822, and upwards, appeared on the market, a large and fine lot of dairy cows, also a few prime working bullocks, a few, and two excellent, which, either for people of New South Wales, or for people of New South Wales, and are all of a superior kind, in a superior kind, in a superior kind.
EXPLANATION OF OFFICE.—Deputy Registrar—Can return, on the arrival of a man named Edward Perry, of Wellington, who has been absent since the 10th December, and Monday, when he was last seen in the usual employment of his head, as also from the dreams he had reported to the Bath powder mills of Brown, that he acquainted the deceased's family with the fact that he was present at the murder, and shortly after he arose from his bed, and bowed for a short time after the deceased was murdered, that he appeared to him and told him to be quiet. He had been asked on the advice of the deceased’s wife, her mother, and that his body was near the fire, as also from the dreams he had reported to the Bath powder mills of Brown.

The former, then, was in his having dreams frequently. Coroner, on the body of a man united, was in his dreams, and shortly after he arose from his bed, and bowed for a short time after the deceased was murdered, that he appeared to him and told him to be quiet. He had been asked on the advice of the deceased’s wife, her mother, and that his body was near the fire, as also from the dreams he had reported to the Bath powder mills of Brown.

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very stringent. There could be little difficulty in obtaining the license from Sydney, providing certain essentials were forthcoming, which were rather inconvenient. The Editor, Proprietor, and Printer had to enter into bonds for their good behaviour in the management of the concern, and two sureties of solvency and repute to the amount of £300 each should become collateral security; and should there be any change as to the locale of printing and publishing, a renewal of the bonds was also imperative. In addition to penalties no charge could be legally made for either newspaper or advertisements without the license; and Fawkner, much as he was attached to his bantling, bottle-fed with such difficulty, did not care to incur any further risk, and the "Eve" of our newspaper press was suffered to die out a victim to the mandate of the Commandant—the first Executive prohibition in the Colony. Melbourne was, however, destined not to remain long without a successor in every way superior to the deceased journal.

"THE PORT PHILLIP GAZETTE."

When the year was entering its fourth quarter, the first journal legalized in Port Phillip made its appearance.

Mr. George Arden had arrived in Sydney from England. He was young, well educated, possessed of considerable ability, and a fluent, though florid, writer. He and Mr. Thomas Strode, who had been connected with the Sydney Herald, determined upon trying their fortunes in the new Colony. They had not very much capital to start with, but managed to secure a used-up wooden press and a heap of old type, thrown aside by the Sydney Herald as utterly unserviceable; and with this valuable "plant" they arrived in the Bay on the 19th October, 1838. Strode repaired at once to Melbourne, but a sight of the stumpy, muddy, struggling, miserable township, so discouraged him, that he was on the point of returning the way he came, until two of the merchants, Messrs. John Hodgson and W. F. A. Rucker, made him such offers of encouragement as induced him to remain. And so he stayed and lived on amongst us during the lifetime of the Gazette, and for many a year after. It was so recently as May, 1880, that he died at a very advanced age at Richmond. The new firm of Arden and Strode had taken the precaution of obtaining the necessary newspaper license before leaving Sydney, but formidable and unlooked-for troubles awaited the inauguration of their new undertaking. Upon Strode's shoulders, as the printer, the most of them fell, and as an instance of the starting of a newspaper under difficulties, nothing can be more conclusive than the subjoined extract from Bonwick:—

"The glorious mountain of disordered type was deposited on the floor of a newly-finished house in Queen Street, between Bourke Street and the present Wesleyan Chapel (now the Bank of Australasia), Collins Street. No friendly compositor was near to help our adventurer; not even a 'printer's devil.' His worthy lady, like a good genius, came to the rescue. She could at least pick out a lot of 'bs' and 'ds.' But the type had to be cleaned, and where was the lye? After trying the ashes of various woods, the she-oak was found to be the best for the purpose, and pronounced a stronger alkali than soda, which was then 6d. a pound. The whole was sorted in the cases, the press was fixed, the stone was smoothed. Now for the rollers; the composition on these was so hard that the very axe failed to make an impression. With a bold heart Mr. Strode set about making new ones. But what was he to do for a cylinder, and not a tinsmith in the place?

"While at this harassing employment, his friend was preparing his articles, sorting type, procuring advertisements, and obtaining subscribers. With 80 names they had in Sydney, they soon showed a list of 300 copies secured. The eventful day came. Notice had been given that on Saturday, 27th October, 1838, at nine o'clock, the door would open, and the light pour forth upon the colonists. The little temple of the Muses was soon surrounded, and, in true English style, a battering attack began, because the Gazette was not quite ready. Doors and windows had to be securely barricaded. At noon the leaden images of thought had done their work; the crowd retired to read, and the poor unaided printer, exhausted with his wonderful fortnight's labour, retired to rest.
"Mr. Strode must have been an enterprising printer. Among other shifts and experiments he contrived to make a roller of India-rubber, but the small quantity in town prevented him making one large enough for use. Eight years after, a London gentleman took out a patent for this discovery. Mr. Strode was the first colonial illuminating printer. At a loss for large letters in the early days, he had to cut all above four-line letters; and, after many trials, he found seasoned New Zealand pine to stand the sun and water best for his cutting. Beset with difficulties in 1839, when contending against Mr. Fawkner's weekly *Patriot*, and the drunkenness and insubordination of his two workmen, he performed a very miracle of labour. For six weeks he contrived, single-handed, to bring out his bi-weekly issue, without dummies, and without delay. The first finger was so inflamed with incessant picking up of type, that he had to employ the next finger. He allowed himself but two hours' sleep each night."

The first number of the *Gazette* was, under existing circumstances, a creditable production. Its motto was, "To Assist the Enquiring, Animate the Struggling, and Sympathize with All." It was a small four-paged publication, each page of four columns; had a show of advertisements, a very limited supply of news, English and colonial summaries of the latest intelligence, and a commercial corner. The "leader" was well written, but in it Mr. Arden hoisted a neutral flag, which, after no very long time, he found it necessary to strike. In this maiden manifesto he thus announces the course he then meant to steer:—"Politics, elsewhere the great theme of contention, particularly wherever the Press has room to exert its influence, will, in this instance, be held in abeyance; the yet comparatively infant state of our settlement affords us fair reason to withhold our direct interference or comments upon a subject so rife with disquietude; with those of other and distant territories, what have we in our industrious, painstaking, and money-making town to do?"

The first advertisement was about the "Firefly," a little steamer laid on between Melbourne and Williamstown. Mr. Lamb, the first barber, intimated his readiness to hair cut, and a Mrs. Lilly was as obliging towards the public in the sale of baby clothes. The merits of two stallions, "Romeo" and "Young Clydesdale," were paraded by their respective owners, two "Johns," viz., M'Nall and Hodgson, and there were two Auctioneers, named Lilly and Hill, in the field. The principal store advertisers were W. F. A. Rucker, John Hodgson, J. M. Chisholm, and P. W. Welsh. The *Gazette* appeared uni-weekly until April, 1839, when it was made a bi-weekly, and its charges were 10s. per quarter, or 1s. per number. Advertisements, six lines and under, 3s., and 3d. every additional line, each insertion. All "ads" were to be prepaid. Births, marriages, and deaths were inserted gratuitously for subscribers; otherwise to pay 2s. 6d. each. The first office was in Queen, and in December, 1839, it was transferred to Collins Street, next westward to the present Union Bank site, whence it shifted in a few years more westerly, and abode there until its demise. Occasionally it would issue a supplement, and on the 20th November, 1839, the following apology appeared in print:—"In consequence of some of our compositors being absent—DRUNK—the supplement will not be published until noon to-day."

"The Port Phillip Patriot."

The indefatigable Fawkner was not to be beat; a newspaper he could, should, and would have; but delays of one kind or other supervened, and it was not until the 16th February, 1839, that his anxious dream was re-realised. For six months previously he had a compositor engaged at £2 10s. per week, and was at length able to set the man to work. *Advertiser* was too tame a name, and the rechristened journal appeared under the more attractive and inspiring designation of the *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser*, with the following motto surmounting the leader column:—"This is true liberty, when free born men Having to advise the public, may speak free, Which he who can and will, deserves high praise; Who neither can, nor will, may hold his peace; What can be juster in a State than this?"
This epigram was soon cancelled, and the magic verbal triumvirate "Vincit Amor Patrice" flaunted in its place. The subscription was 8s. per quarter if paid in advance, 10s. if paid on the day it fell due, and 12s. 6d. on further credit; 3s. for a six-line advertisement.

The locus of the Printing and Publishing Office of the Patriot having become a matter of some doubt, an amusing controversy on the subject was carried on in the Correspondence Columns of the Argus in November, 1884, and to this I am indebted for the following particulars:

Mr. William Beaver, who was apprenticed to Mr. Fawkner in June, 1839 (and the first trade apprentice in Victoria), declares that the paper "was first printed in the top storey of Fawkner's Hotel (now the Union Club Hotel, corner of Collins and Market Streets). Mr. Fawkner having let the hotel to the Melbourne Club, the paper was shifted to a new two-storey brick building alongside (where the Colonial Mutual Insurance Society is now). A Mr. Rowe had a chemist's shop in the front room below. Some time afterwards the Patriot was shifted to an old range of wooden and wattle-and-daub buildings at the rear, formerly used as stables, and the entrance to which was from what we used to call the Market Square, or what is now called the Market Buildings. The paper was published for many years in the before-mentioned building facing Collins Street.

"I was at work on the Argus when it was first published, and well remember the difficulties we experienced in turning out the paper. As an illustration of the difference between that period and now in printing papers, I may mention that when I first went to Mr. Fawkner's office we used to get out the Patriot with the assistance of Mr. Watkins, another compositor, facetiously called 'Tar-box,' and myself. Mr. Fawkner used to assist a little by setting up type. The press was a wooden two-pull one, and we used ink-balls for rollers. The old press can still be seen in the Museum attached to the Public Library, and I think it used to take us all day to print two or three hundred copies."

Mr. R. T. Clarke, who still plies the typo business in Moor Street, Fitzroy, writes thus:

"I arrived in Melbourne on the 1st September, 1839, under an agreement with Mr. J. P. Fawkner. I remained with him seven years, and am therefore in a position to give some information upon the subject. When the back weather-board premises were built I and my wife resided there. At that time Mr. Fawkner had only a wooden pot press, with two pulls. Mr. Dowling, of Launceston, sent him a double-demy press, with a plant of new type. That was the reason the premises were built."

During the year the two journals had the field all to themselves. It was Arden's intention to conduct the Gazette in a gentlemanly, high-toned style, but Fawkner's "Billingsgate" now and then forced him off his stilts into the mud, for he was compelled to resort to the same armoury for offensive and defensive weapons as his antagonist. If a man pelts you with puddle-balls it is folly to retaliate with flowers, either rhetorical or botanical. However, as between the two journals no literary comparison could be instituted, for there were at times in the Gazette leading articles, or rather essays, that would do credit to any publication, but as a newspaper the Patriot presented more variety of facts. As records of the events of the then small community neither journal was equal to the occasion.

I have now before me a copy of each journal issued in November, 1839. Neither can be accounted broadsheets, for the Gazette measured 17 in. by 11 in. and the Patriot only 13 in. by 8 in., but the former is a four-columned sheet, and the latter a double three-columned one. On submitting them for the opinion of a specialist, a printer of many years' experience, he returned them with the following memo:—"It appears to me that both papers, viz., the Port Phillip Gazette and the Patriot, must have presented a very creditable appearance when published forty-six years ago, as times then went, considering the great difficulty there must then have been towards all due and proper appliances for the purpose of producing a paper; as also the difficulty in those early days of securing the skilled labour to produce anything properly readable. The Patriot appears to be printed in some parts of its pages with already very old and much-worn type, with mixed fonts, and with a bad ink, which makes it look worse still; but in those days this was not so much accounted of as now. The Gazette is printed from a better and newer type, and generally has a more printer-like style, and slightly more modern appearance in its general get-up than the Patriot, though both papers are of the same month and same year, and both produced in Melbourne in November, 1839. I cannot but think that, for those times and under all the circumstances, they were excellent productions."
A third competitor for public favour, made its début on the 3rd January, 1840, and this caused quite a gust of dissatisfaction in the minds of the two others already in possession, who gnashed their typographical teeth, and vowed to make it hot for the intruder. The projector of the new journal was Mr. George Cavenagh, who had some managerial connection with the Sydney Gazette, and not only brought with him from Sydney all the mechanical means and appliances for newspaper "running," but a ready cut-and-dry Editor in the person of the Mr. William Kerr, already frequently alluded to in this work, and who soon took up a very prominent position in the early agitations of the settlement. In appearance the new journal was superior to the others, somewhat of same size—a single five-columned demy-folio sheet. It was well got up, well printed, and, like the others, hoisted a cognizance in the three English words, "Impartial, not Neutral," a motto above all others in the Anglo-Saxon tongue, perhaps the most difficult to work up to. Its first "leader" embodied a profession of the journalistic faith, of which it was to be the expounder and missionary; but in this, as in other similar cases before and since, preaching and practice have been found to be very different things. "Being altogether independent of parties and partisans [so it prefaced]—in fact ignorant of any cause for division, we purpose pursuing the even tenor of our way, the only ends we aim at being 'Our Country's, our God's, and Truth's.'" Measures, not men, were to be dealt with, and should this rule be unavoidably departed from, there should be no descending to personal abuse. If reproof were necessary, the strictures to be administered were to be tempered with courtesy. There are two "sub-leaders," one of which indicated the probable early discovery of coal at Western Port. The Herald appeared for a short time as a weekly, but the trio soon were all bi-weekly, and their rates of subscription and other charges were much alike.

Melbourne had now its three newspapers, and for the first three months, their conductors observed the amenities of journalism though under evident restraint. This good behaviour was doomed to be shortlived, for the 1st of April had hardly set in when the three gauntlets were thrown down, and they pitched into each other with a will and in a way utterly disgraceful. It would be difficult to record who was the first transgressor, though I am disposed to debit it to the gentlemanly Arden; but it little matters, for they were all soon up to the ears in the muck; pounding and pelting and abusing each other mercilessly. The hostilities waged by the "Eat-and-swill" Editors so inimitably Pickwicked by Dickens showed decent warfare by the side of the Melbourne feud; and it would be a gross libel upon the memorable Daniel O'Connell and the Dublin fisherwoman episode to place it in the same category, for one of the talkers was grandiloquently verbose, and Biddy the "Lady" was choice, though not super-polite in her repartee. An anthological garland might be woven from the language indulged in, but its perfume would savour more of the stews than the conservatory, for it reeked with the aroma of the Little Flinders and Bourke Streets iniquities, the Vinge's Lane of ancient, and the Bilking Square of modern times. They might be likened to an unwholesome group of street Arabs, quarrelling in the gutter, and scooping out filth from the channel-ways, with which they bedaubed each other. For the astonishment more than the entertainment of my readers, I present a few unculled samples. The Gazette stigmatizes the Herald as a "truly despicable journal," and adds, "We thank our friend for having shown us the hole of the hypocrite, that we may thus drag out the unclean viper, and crush it with the armed heel of justice." The Herald declares that "deplorable spirit of personality and scurrility had displayed itself in the management of the Melbourne Press," whereupon Fawkner, over his name in the Patriot, denounces the Herald as "the most intolerant, bigoted, and base an ingrate as ever lived," whereon the Patriot classifies the Herald as a "dung-hill cock." The Gazette is gibbetted by the Herald as a "consummate ass," and the Herald is written of by the Patriot as "a mean-souled..."
and malicious recreant," to which the Herald responds that the Patriot is a "regular whelp of the genuine cur breed." And so on ad nauseam for several years. The first of the three papers to get into legal trouble was the Gazette, the Editor of which was convicted of libel, before the Court of Quarter Sessions, on 15th May, 1839, and sentenced to 24 hours' imprisonment with a £50 fine. In this prosecution the complainant was the Mr. Rucker previously noted as one of the two individuals who were instrumental in deciding the wavering mind of Strode, the Gazette co-proprietor, when he pondered on the Melbourne Wharf whether he should remain here or return to Sydney. The casus belli was a rent dispute between Arden and Rucker, and a caustic plaster by the newspaper man, which acted as the reverse of a receipt in full. The Gazette was embroiled in another kindred difficulty in 1840, for accusing the Chief Constable ("Tulip" Wright) with having had bricks made for his own use by convicts in Government service, and further insinuating that the "Tulip" had appropriated a quantity of the same material from a Government kiln. On the 4th April Mr. H. N. Carrington, Wright's Attorney, applied to the Police Court to issue a warrant against Arden and Strode, the Gazette proprietors, for the publication of a libel. This was granted, and on the police proceeding to execute it on Arden they were obstructed by a Mr. Jamieson, the result being that both Arden and his friend were transferred to the lock-up, but enlarged on bail. The matter was afterwards amicably arranged.

Early in 1840 Mr. Fawkner retired from the editorship of the Patriot, and was succeeded by Mr. J. P. Smith, an attorney. Fawkner remained as proprietor, and was a frequent contributor to its columns, sometimes signing his full name, but oftener as "J.P.F." His father, who lived in Melbourne for a few years, was credited with the authorship of some wild, incoherent, though often pithy effusions, to which used to be suffixed the nom de plume of "Bob Short." Kerr and Cavenagh did not long continue in amicable relations at the Herald, and Kerr passed over to the Patriot in the beginning of 1841, the Smith, who betook himself to the more congenial role of Police Court practitioner. There had arrived in Melbourne a Rev. Thomas Hamilton Osborne, a Presbyterian minister from Belfast, the North of Ireland capital, who abandoned the pulpit and joined the "Fourth Estate" as Assistant Editor of the Gazette, from which he seceded after some time, and was succeeded by Mr. John Stephen, an early Secretary of the Mechanics' Institute, and in the future a Melbourne Alderman. Osborne's services were secured by Cavenagh for the Herald, which he joined towards the close of 1840, and so remained for a couple of years. In December, 1840, an effort was made to establish a comic publication, which was thus announced:—

FIGARO! FIGARO! FIGARO!

On Saturday week will appear No. 1, to be continued weekly (with a wood-cut illustrating a certain character), FIGARO IN MELBOURNE.

"Satie's my weapon."

Those who desire to laugh amidst the gloom of Melbourne will become readers of this publication, and those who desire to cry will shun the paper as they do the devil.

Subscription—Seven Shillings and Sixpence a Quarter; single number, Eightpence.

Office—Mr. Dick's, Tun., Collins Street; orders from William's Town to be left for the Editor at the Albion Hotel, opposite the Queen's Wharf.

Vivant Regius et La Trobe.

The first number of this embryotic Punch was to make its appearance positively on the 26th December, but the services of the literary accoucheur were never required. As it was never born, it could not have been said to have ever died.

In May, 1841, the Gazette announced its enlarged form thus:—"The proprietors confidently anticipate that its (the Gazette's) political principles, its material construction, and its elaborate management will place it above competition, and that as a literary, political, and domestic, commercial, scientific, nautical, pastoral, agricultural oracle it will be at once unrivalled and incomparable."

The next casus belli was the question of circulation, each contending that it had the largest, and sub leaders and paragraphs, letters from printing overseers, and even statutory declarations, were put forth in support of the numerical superiority of each newspaper. A few years after I had personally special facilities for obtaining reliable information upon this point; and so formed the impression
that in 1841, the three Melbourne newspapers were not far apart, as the Herald circulated about 700 copies, the Gazette, 650; and the Patriot, 600. This was then deemed quite a paying state of business, as the expense of bringing out a paper was small from the fewness of hands and moderate rate of pay. A considerable proportion of the incomings resulted from advertisements, especially the auctioneers, who were then masters of the situation, and were, on the whole, liberal and impartial enough to the three so-called organs of public opinion. I may state that until the era of the goldfields there was no such thing as a street-hawking of papers, nor bellowing boys running about like roaring demons through the streets, yelling out the latest edition of so-and-so; and even no town agents. Each office had attached to it a staff of urchins paid by the week, who attended every morning, and took out their rounds, delivering the papers only at subscribers' houses, and doing it with the taciturnity, but not the speed, of our modern letter-carriers. Papers were also hardly ever sold over the office counter, certainly never in any number worth mentioning.

In July, 1841, Arden and Strode dissolved partnership, the former becoming sole proprietor, and he contrived to keep abroad until 1842, in the September of which year he was wrecked amidst a squall of writs and executions, too potent to be withstood. There was first a composition with creditors, and next an absolute sequestration of estate. The creditors appointed Dr. Greeves as Editor, but the back of the paper was broken, and though it continued to live, it lost all its animated smartness, and was not of much account. Mr. Thomas M'Combie afterwards acquired some share in the shaky concern, and in October, 1844, he purchased the sole copyright for £50. It is to be regretted that there are no complete files of the three old Melbourne newspapers in existence. Three volumes of the Gazette (from 27th October, 1838, to December, 1841), were sold for £50 by Mr. Strode, in 1874, to the British Museum, whither they were transmitted. They were previously offered to Sir Redmond Barry for the Melbourne Public Library, but declined for the price, which was a mistake. So far as Victoria is concerned, there is no such thing as regards Gazette, Patriot, or Herald. In the Public and Parliamentary Libraries there are files of the Herald, commencing with the first number, but at every few numbers there is a hiatus, either the nip-out of a paragraph or an advertisement, or a half-column or column, and so going on to a whole issue, and sometimes more. Considering the present status of our colonial Press, it is to be regretted that the humble, but not unpretentious pioneers from which it has sprung, should in their entirety, have no resting place on the shelves of any of our literary institutions.

In addition to the papers before enumerated, there were others, small, uninfluential weaklings, mere ephemerals. The first of this fry was the Weekly Free Press, a professedly Roman Catholic organ, a puny hebdomadal, started 1st July, 1841, by a Mr. James Shanley. It was supposed to be edited by Dr. Greeves, and subsequently by a Mr. Adam Murray, but after a miserable existence of three months it died, and its remains, consisting of the smallest of plants and a nominal copyright, were bought by Mr. Thomas M'Combie for £50. In April, 1842, the Times was started by Mr. Byron J. Howard, the ex-publisher of the Herald, and, published every Saturday, ran for two years, expiring in 1844. Its motto was "The Welfare of the People is the First Great Law." It was a well-conducted paper, in consequence no doubt of its management having for a time fallen into the hands of Mr. Osborne after he broke with the Herald.

The Standard, a bi-weekly journal, was started in 1844 by Mr. George D. Boursiquot and amalgamated with the Patriot, 1st October, 1845. It was clever, pungent, and sparkling during its brief existence.

On 6th January, 1845, Mr. Samuel Goode started the bi-weekly Courier, and in June, Mr. W. Kerr assumed the Editorship, and promised to achieve wonderful results. It was the most libellous publication ever issued in the colony and was never out of trouble. Kerr was twice publicly pummelled in the streets for the insertion of scurrilous personal paragraphs. It managed to survive little more than a year, when Kerr was driven into the Insolvent Court.

In December, 1847, Goode was again taken with a newspaper mania, which ended more disastrously than his Courier venture. He established the Albion, a filthy weekly rag. It was supposed to be written by Kerr and Curtis, the Editor and Reporter of the Argus, and in
March, 1848, Goode was prosecuted for an outrageous slander upon Mr. Sidney Stephen, a Barrister, and sentenced to two months’ imprisonment. The *Albion*, as a consequence burst up.

In 1848, Mr. Colin Campbell started a weekly newspaper known as the *Observer*. It was an extreme “Squatting” organ, and its “leaders” were so lengthy, laboured and flatulent that the Editor acquired the equivocal distinction of being dubbed the “creature of large discourse.” Considerable literary ability was shown in its composition, but the paper did not take as expected, and was discontinued after the issue of several numbers.

The religious journals made a commencement in 1846, when the Rev. James Forbes initiated the *Port Phillip Christian Herald*, to which several clerics contributed, and it was very ably conducted, contrasting favourably by its moderation with the infuriated bigotry of other Christian periodicals afterwards published. In January, 1850, through the exertions of Bishop Perry, and the Rev. D. Newham, the *Church of England Messenger*, was floated, and received considerable support from the denomination whose spiritual interests it represented. It was printed by Mr. Benjamin Lucas at his shop in Collins Street, near the *Argus Hotel*, and issued monthly.

During the first decade that elapsed in the newspaper life of Port Phillip, all things considered, it cannot be denied that much progress was made, for at the commencement of 1849, the following journals were in existence in the district, viz., Melbourne, the *Patriot* re-named the *Daily News*, and the *Herald* (dailies), the *Argus* (bi-weekly), the *Church of England Messenger* (weekly), and the *Christian Herald* (fortnightly). In Geelong were the *Advertiser*, established, November, 1840, by Mr. J. P. Fawkner, first as a weekly, and now a tri-weekly; the *Corio Chronicle* (a bi-weekly), and the *Victoria Courier* (a weekly); and Portland, with its *Guardian*, as a bi-weekly, and *Gazette*, once a week. Subsequently the *Corio Chronicle*, originally established by Messrs. W. Beaver, and W. Clarke, was transformed into the *Victoria Colonist*, and published bi-weekly for Dr. Thomson, of Geelong, where also Mr. Thomas Coomb issued the *Omnibus*; whilst Portland substituted a *Herald* for a *Gazette*, and Belfast secured its *Gazette*, edited and published by Mr. T. H. Osborne. In June, 1850, the Melbourne *Family Herald*, a weekly journal, price 3d., was commenced by Mr. Henry Hayden, and continued for some time by Mr. Craig whilst about the same time Mr. Graham Finlayson initiated a *Temperance Advocate*, a short-lived well-meaning print, which was succeeded in August by the *Victoria Temperance Pioneer*, of almost equally brief duration.

The *Telegraph*, a spitefully-written weekly, teeming with scandalous innuendo, and filtered filth, made its appearance, but was as short-lived as it deserved. In April, 1851, Mr. Goode, undeterred by previous reverses, started the *Melbourne Weekly Despatch*, only to witness another failure.

After this unavoidable chronological digression, I shall return to the three primary journals, and briefly recapitulate what the future had in store for them.

**The “Gazette.”**

After getting into the hands of the Philistines, through the indiscretions of Arden, was secured as a bargain from Arden’s creditors by Mr. Thomas M’Combie, who long had a hankering to become a newspaper proprietor. He worked away at it assiduously and economically, and though it never commanded much political or other influence, a number of the colonists who had become acclimatized to its dullness continued their support; and as the advertising community was generous of its patronage, the *Gazette* contrived to eke out a precarious existence for several years. From a bi-weekly it advanced to a tri-weekly, and on the Fool’s Day of 1831 it was expanded into a daily, with its name...
transmuted into that of the *Times*, having Mr. William Kerr as Editor-in-Chief, and M'Combie as Assistant. After officiating in his new capacity for two and a half months Kerr abdicated the editorial chair for the Town Clerkship of Melbourne. M'Combie took his place, but on the 30th June the *Times*, *nec the Gazette*, gave up the ghost, and its goodwill with subscription-list was purchased by the *Daily News*, *nec the Patriot*.

The "Patriot"

Continued for some years under the editorial fostering of Mr. W. Kerr, who knocked out the Fawknerian epigraph "Vincit Amor Patris," and displayed as his literary legend the John Knoxian quotation which still lives in Melbourne as *The Argus* motto, "I am in the place where I am demanded of conscience to speak the truth, and, therefore, the truth I speak, impugn it whoso list." In 1845 Fawkner was driven, by stress of weather, into the Insolvency Court, when his father, known as "John Fawkner, senior," purchased the paper, and Kerr's services were dispensed with. Prior to this time it had become a tri-weekly, and it now fell back to a bi-weekly. "Johnny" Fawkner was the editor, and queer work he made of it. Of his "leaders," it must be admitted that if they neither instructed nor edified, they most intensely amused, and as even this was a consideration, the good-natured people read, laughed, and affected to be satisfied. Fawkner was also a sort of spoiled child with the old colonists, and even those who thoroughly disliked him, and often repelled his ill-bred arrogance, were ever ready to concede a large latitude to the man who by common repute shared with Batman the honours surrounding the foundation of the Settlement. Batman was dead, and "Johnny" was not only alive, but poking his nose into every public movement, from Anti-transportation to Separation. The prestige that would have to be divided between him and Batman had he lived, was not unnaturally claimed by Fawkner, and as he had a finger in every pie, and was jumping about like a squirrel wherever there was anything astir, either at a fire or a public meeting, an election or a street row, a public dinner or a charity sermon, he was accorded a certain toleration which clothed him in a privilege that fell to the lot of no other man. His illiterate vapourings and ungrammatical jargon, his disconnected rhodomontade and unpunctuated rubbish, was consequently swallowed, until a special editor was secured from Sydney, in the person of Mr. James M'Eachern, a New South Wales journalist, and a writer of considerable power.

Kerr having received his conge from the *Patriot*, vowed vengeance, and started off to Sydney for the special purpose, as his friends gave out, of raising the wind for the establishment of a new daily paper. When he should come back and do so, the Melbourne journals might look out. Rumours to this effect so frightened the Fawkners (pere et fils) that in order to forestall Kerr, they brought out their journal as the first morning newspaper in Melbourne on the 15th May, 1845. June Kerr returned, but whether from a failure in levying sufficient supplies, or for some other reason known only to himself, his so much vaunted "daily" was to be curtailed to a tri-weekly, which he set about launching without much delay.

The *Patriot* continued under the Fawknerian regime until the 1st October, when Mr. G. D. Boursiquot became its proprietor, incorporated the *Standard* with it, and changed its designation to the *Daily News*. Under the new management it was worked at the least possible expense, and, as a vehicle of passing events, was insufficiently reported, and not unfrequently a rather lame sheet. Its assumed motto was the quotation, "To show the very age and body of the time, its form and pressure." Boursiquot, however, could write flashy, superficial, readable articles, at which he wrought hard, and so managed to keep the paper going, and wrung handsome profits out of it. In 1850 the newspaper proprietors and compositors in Melbourne had a large "bone" to pick together, the difficulty—no unusual one—being the question of wages: 8d. per thousand was then the rate of remuneration, and a competent "stab" hand received £1 15s. per week. A rise in both rates was demanded, and Boursiquot not only resisted, but retaliated by organizing a kind of cadet establishment, where "young gentlemen of education" would be instructed in the art of printing. This thing was managed rather privately until such time as the 'prentice boys were able to work, when the regulars would be summarily cashiered. A secluded cottage was rented in Fitzroy, where some type was mounted,
a private tutor named Ford was appointed, when some recruits put in an appearance, but the enterprise finally fell through. Incidentally it may be mentioned that Cavenagh, the proprietor of the Herald, struck with admiration of the Boursiquot economizing fit, was disposed to follow suit, and consulted his overseer, Mr. John Ferres (the recent Government printer) on the subject. Such an innovation seemed to Ferres as unworthy and dishonourable to the trade, and he point-blank refused to be an accomplice. He further warned Cavenagh that if he persisted, and the proposition became a reality, it would eventually bring disaster upon his establishment. Cavenagh, who had a pertinacity of manner bordering on offensiveness towards his subordinates, gave his deputy a fortnight's notice to quit, a mandate which, on further consideration, he saw fit to withdraw before a week passed over. The Daily News was afterwards in the market at an upset price of £3,000, and overtures were made to Ferres to take it, but he did not. The stock of working material was increased, and what is known as a "Beper" machine was procured, which offered special facilities at the time for expeditious printing. Boursiquot continued to make the concern remunerative until towards the close of 1851, when the Argus, then a fixture in the newspaper world, purchased the Daily News, and all its surroundings for £4,200, and rolled both journals into one, so that just at the period when the astounding gold revolution was in its incipient eruptions, Melbourne was left under the protection of only two daily newspapers, the Herald and the Argus.

The Herald's first office of issue was a one-storey, one-room brick tenement in Elizabeth Street, now built on at the northern end of the Colonial Bank, whilst the printing was done in a weather-boarded structure situated at the Little Collins Street entrance to the Royal Arcade. The publishing branch was subsequently shifted to an adjoining cottage, and the whole concern was thence transferred further westward up the same street to a spot recently occupied by a rear division of the extensive emporium of Alston and Brown, where it continued until 1853, when it once more migrated, but this time to Brooke Street, part of the establishment of Robertson and Moffatt. In the vicinity its name is perpetuated as The Herald Passage—a thoroughfare which, though half-flagged, is certainly not the wholesomest in the inter-street communications of Melbourne. As a newspaper, it maintained a respectable position from the start, and as Cavenagh went on the aristocratic ticket, and was hand-in-glove with the Melbourne Club, it obtained a fair share of support. Furthermore, its proprietor, though in reality caring little for the Roman Catholics, ingratiated himself, to a certain extent, with them, and secured their patronage. He had for many years on his staff a Mr. Finn, who held high office in the St. Patrick Society, and this was another source of strength. Whilst Osborne continued as editor, the leading matter was good and readable, though the "leaders" were often inclined to drift into a lengthy verbose dullness which bored people. When Osborne left, Dr. Greeves was taken on as a job hand at so much an article, and though his writing was neat, smooth, and often telling, there was so much twisting and turning and trimming that much of its effect was spoiled. Mr. John Stephen would occasionally lend a hand; but he was idle, never properly thought out what he was writing of, and his contributions were often the standard measure of verbiage and nothing more. Instances occurred where Stephen would write half an article, strike work, and go away for the day. In such cases Finn would have to do the finishing, and then Cavenagh's overhauling would so disfigure the work of the other two that the triple production when read in type would be simply incomprehensible. The Herald, however, compensated as far as it was possible for such defects by the extent and general scope of its news, for it picked up everything that was going, had occasionally important exclusive intelligence, and its summaries of English and colonial news were the best in Melbourne.

There were then no such conveniences as "Home" and "Colonial" correspondents to ship or telegraph cut-and-dry abstracts of the events passing elsewhere. The mail arrivals were extremely irregular, considerable intervals at times happening in the receipt of English news, and a good summarist had to exercise the scissors and pen with both skill and judgment. The compilation of an English summary at midnight from a dozen numbers of the London Times, the journal mostly brought out by skippers of vessels (then the latest news-mongers) was, in reality, an unenviable recreation after all the ordinary day's work was done; and such an event was the reverse of unusual.
Cavenagh, fussy and in appearance energetic, had not much backbone, though on one or two occasions he put on a spirt by which he obtained a small reputation for pluck. He was the first to obtain intelligence of a race-meeting in Geelong on the night of the day on which it came off. This was effected on horseback by a shipping reporter named M’Grath, hereafter to be referred to. Cavenagh entered upon a more spirited though not very large undertaking in 1846. The bi-weekly overland mail from Sydney arrived at Kinlochewe, about twenty miles from Melbourne, late in the evening, staying there that night, and starting the following morning in time to have the mail delivered in Melbourne by nine o’clock. Cavenagh was so irritated that he very smartly organized a mounted express to leave Kinlochewe on the arrival of the Sydney mail, and by obtaining a loose bag from the Sydney Post Office, had his letters and papers between 3 and 4 a.m., and so far forestalled the others that he could print the news in his regular Tuesday’s issue, and had his Friday’s “Extraordinary” out before the other papers. The Argus was soon obliged to get an express of its own. The Herald contractor was a Mr. R. H. Budd, a Kinlochewe publican, whilst the Argus express was ridden by a Mr. E. M. L. Smith, an ex-shipping reporter. Budd and Smith had rough journeying of it, but the former was the better bushman, and never came to grief. One wet boisterous night the two equestrians had a miserable trip, and on the way Budd’s companion was suddenly pulled out of his saddle, and on Budd looking round to ascertain the cause of the unexpected disappearance, found the other very uncomfortably “up a tree,” and, bidding him good morning, left him to follow as best and when he could. The night was dark. Budd was more accustomed to the road or thoroughfare than Smith, who got entangled in an overhanging bough, and was so placed “horse de combat.” When Budd arrived at the Herald, and recounted the occurrence, there was much rejoicing thereat, for the Argus would be for the nonce minus its “Express” news. This arrangement, unwelcome and inconvenient to all the newspaper employees, continued in force for several months, when some post-office alterations were effected by which, instead of the 9 a.m. arrival, the Sydney mail was due at the Melbourne Post Office at 4.30 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays. The Kinlochewe “Expressions” were consequently discontinued.

At the beginning of 1849 the Port Phillip Herald changed its name so as to be the “Melbourne Morning” instead of the “Port Phillip,” and was published as a daily. Towards the close of the following year it procured the first steam-printing press introduced to the Australian Colonies. This was a “Napier Improved,” which was imported per the “Brilliant,” from London, on the 5th October, 1850. It was adapted either for manual or steam propulsion, working off by hand, within an hour, eighteen hundred copies of a paper twelve columns larger than the size of the then Melbourne journals, and by steam it could do three thousand. Cavenagh remained sole proprietor until the colony had got well into the astounding and unexpected anomalies emanating from the goldfield discoveries. The position at length grew too much for him, and in a couple of years infusions of new blood and money were wanted, and the paper lost the position it had for many years held. Fortune at length deserted it, and passed over to the Argus, which, in the end, had an easy victory in the championship. In its financial adversity, Cavenagh was compelled to abandon the old ship, and he died near Melbourne some fifteen years ago. Amongst all the early newspapers, the Herald had the advantage of being the most amply equipped office, and for ordinary journalists and jobbing purposes it was decidedly superior to any of the then existing Colonial establishments.

"The Melbourne Argus."

Mr. William Kerr, who was connected with the defunct Courier, was a man who had had some grand opportunities thrown in his way, but he abused them. The ball was more than once at his foot, and he kicked it so unskilfully, that he tumbled head foremost over it. His
position in the City Council, the clannishness of the old Scotch party, and the Orange sympathies of the North of Irelanders, added to the political influence he undoubtedly commanded, might have made him a power in the land, if employed sagaciously and within reasonably prudential limitations. But this was not to be. For a Scotchman, Kerr's rashness was unaccountable. He was merciless to his foes, and as for quarter, there was no such word in his vocabulary. Still, he could cringe at times, when it suited his purposes, and once, whilst Town Clerk, accepted a free gift of £100 from Mr. J. T. Smith, the Mayor, whom he heartily detested, and libelled a hundred times in his newspapers. His friends now resolved to give him a fresh start, by sending round the hat to raise money to enable him to establish a new journal, and amongst the subscribers was Mr. Henry Moor, the old well-known Mayor — yet he was one of the first against whom Kerr turned, viper-like; but the eleemosynary paper was afterwards smashed up by verdicts obtained by Moor in libel actions. The new project was a bi-weekly newspaper known as the *Melbourne Argus*, and garnished with the "Conscience to Speak the Truth" motto, the copyright of which Kerr brought away with him when he left the *Patriot*. It made its first appearance on the 1st June, 1846. There never was a more personal paper in Melbourne, for Kerr could not exist as a journalist without offensive personalities, and during his two years' editorship of it, he was never out of trouble. Moor was vilely assailed, and the particulars of the two libel actions brought by him are given in a previous chapter. On the 8th May, 1848, there was a Sheriff's sale of the paper to satisfy the verdict and costs of action No. 1, and the property was bought in for £350, by Mr. John Duerdin, one of the old Attornies. Kerr was given another chance by his too-trusting friends; but, instead of his first rebuff bringing him to reason, it only made him worse. The Moor libel racket was recommenced with increased bitterness. Another action followed, and the satisfaction of another verdict led to another knocking down. On the 26th August, 1848, the press and types were again in the clutches of the Sheriff, who was to sell off again in a few days. It is stated in a Melbourne paper that, prior to the second levy, the property had been transferred to Mr. Edward Wilson. An interpleader was taken out, and the question argued in the Supreme Court, when judgment was given affirming that, in the then existing state of the law, the press and types by which a libel was sent out on the world were liable to be disposed of to cover the verdict. The Sheriff's sale was held on the 2nd November, 1848, by Mr. David Lyons, late of Brighton Road, officiating as auctioneer, and the lot was knocked down to Mr. Wilson for £300. And so died the *Melbourne Argus* in Collins Street East, where it was born, and in the place occupied by its successor to the present day.

"The Argus"

The *Argus* made its first appearance under Wilsonian auspices on 15th September, 1848. From its figurehead the word "Melbourne" was effaced; it was simply *The Argus*, with the John Knoxian declaration about truth-speaking, beneath the fabled hundred eyes. It was at first a bi-weekly, and Kerr's name continued on the imprint for the first twelve numbers (six weeks). Edward Wilson's name was imprinted for the first time in No. 13 (27th October, 1848.)

Previously there was little known of Mr. Wilson, except that he was an estimable English gentleman, settled near Dandenong, on a small station, which he held with Mr. J. S. Johnston, a Melbourne innkeeper, who, by smartness of tongue, and a happiness of repartee, had made a position for himself in the City Council, and as an effective speaker at public meetings. Wilson's first essays in print were some lengthy, well-written letters to the *Melbourne Argus*, under the pseudonym of "Iota," which attracted considerable attention; and now that he had assumed the editorial mantle, his friends predicted of him a future which was fully verified. His station partner joined him in the new speculation, and the newspaper firm was known as that of Wilson and Johnston. Mr. Kerr continued some literary connection with it, but Wilson was the animating spirit as well as principal writer. It was worked very much upon the same lines as the original *Argus*, but broader in its political views, more decently conducted, yet often as personal, though much less slanderous, for the new proprietary had taken over some of Kerr's sympathies and antipathies. But it was far
more cautious in the libel business, and steered clear of the breakers of the law until early in the following year, when on the 4th April Mr. Wilson was committed by the Police Court for trial, as the publisher of a libel on the Resident Judge (A'Beckett). The article complained of was not an ordinary newspaper attack, but a speech delivered by Alderman Johnston in the City Council on the 1st December, 1848, in which a judgment of the Supreme Court, in a Corporation mandamus case, was virulently assailed in a manner very uncomplimentary to the esteemed gentleman who then filled the invidious and highly responsible office of sole Judge. The defendant was admitted to bail in a personal bond of £200, with two sureties of £100 each. The prosecution was not persisted in, as no bill was ever filed, most probably in consequence of the peculiarly embarrassing position in which Justice A'Beckett would be placed by presiding at a trial in which he should figure as judge and virtual prosecutor, i.e., supposing it to be competent for him to legally do so, of which, however, the Crown lawyers of the time appeared to entertain no doubt.

The Argus was now fairly in the race, and as it had two dailies, the Daily News and Herald, to compete with, to have any chance of holding ground it should appear before the public on the same terms, and it was accordingly changed from a tri-weekly, which it had been for some time, into a daily paper on the Waterloo Day (18th June) of 1849. As a mouth-piece of public opinion it was by far the most outspoken and uncompromising of its contemporaries, and no one conversant with the conditions of those early times, and capable of forming an unbiassed opinion, can honestly refuse to Mr. Wilson the meed due to one who served his country with a sincere zeal for its true welfare, and an enterprising energy rarely equalled. 1850 was an eventful year as the harbinger of the emancipation of Port Phillip from New South Wales, the birth of the new colony, and the discovery of the gold-fields.

On the 1st April, 1851, the Gazette became a daily, so that Melbourne then had its four morning journals; but a three months' trial was more than enough for Mr. M'Combie, who succumbed before the force of competition, and the last was seen of the second eldest Port Phillipian newspaper. Towards the termination of the year, and in the glare of the early splendours of Ballarat and Mount Alexander, The Argus bought up the Daily News, and in so doing improved upon the mythological monster who fed on his children by devouring generations of its journalistic ancestors. It had already swallowed the old Argus and Courier, and now rolled up in the Daily News, it had the Patriot, the Gazette, the Standard, and the Weekly Register, yet compared with The Argus of to-day, it was a slim, delicate-looking customer. 1852 opened with only the Herald and Argus as Melbourne daily newspapers, and there was never in the colony a period when an organ of public opinion stood more in need of talent and sagacity to enable it to do its duty to the Commonwealth. The Herald exercised considerable influence, but between the two principal motors, Cavenagh and Wilson, there was a world of difference. Cavenagh, though possessed of managerial aptitude of a secondary kind, was devoid of literary ability. He was also defective in the faculty of enterprise of the continuous sort, for spasmodic fits of energy would not now suffice. He had no financial resources to speak of at command, and the handicap of a large family to provide for, made him reluctant to incur liabilities, which might, or might not, recoup themselves. In fact, he had not the pluck to cope with the extraordinary changes which every advancing week brought about, and like a timid mariner in an uncertain and troubled sea, he carried as little canvas as he could, trembled at the helm, and often wished to be well rid of the ship. Wilson, on the other hand, had dash and enthusiasm, and launched out on the ocean with as much sail as his craft could possibly carry. He was unhindered by some of the obstacles surrounding the other, and though the difficulties through which he had to force his way were numerous and formidable, a brave heart and strong unsunning will ultimately waited him to victory. 1852-3 was the maddest of the mad years in Melbourne, and it was no easy task to work a newspaper through the shoals and quicksands of the times. Though the incomings were considerable, the outlay was enormous. The wind, if it did not blow favourably, had to be "raised" in some way, or else the ship would be stranded. The Wilson-Johnston station speculation was not a paying one, and Johnston, apprehensive that the same fate awaited The Argus, into which he was believed to be instrumental in involving Wilson,
withdrew from the partnership, to be succeeded by Mr. James Gill, who, in a short time, also backed out, when Mr. M'Lachlin McKinnon, another ex-squatter, went in, and remained there. Wilson spared neither trouble nor expense in running the journal, which might be said to have grown into the dream of his life. For some time it was the reverse of remunerative, and it was generally understood to be heavily in with some of the banks, but, like a gallant bark, it weathered every storm, and is now (1888) reputedly the best newspaper property at the Antipodes. Edward Wilson had a creed peculiar to himself, the three cardinal points in which were—(1) His belief in himself; (2) His belief in The Argus; and (3) A belief in the Colony of Victoria, that it possessed all the inherent qualities, which, if properly applied, would constitute it one of the most flourishing of the Colonial dominions over which the flag of Britain floats. As a true disciple of this creed, he work with a constancy, an untiring fervour, and a determination given to few men of his generation, and he obtained his well-earned reward. When the political history of this country comes to be written The Argus and its founder will stand forth as prominent figures, for whatever may be the public shortcomings of the one, its influence on the destinies of Victoria cannot be overrated; while the other, in his own way served the land of his adoption with the fealty of a true knight, and when dying in the land of his nativity, a few years ago, still held her in remembrance by liberal bequests.