

**D 7310(L) Letter from John Fogg Taylor of Tundemunga, near Adelaide, 1840,
to “John” in Wigan, Lancashire, England.**

Transcribed by Fiona Hemstock, Volunteer at the State Library of South Australia, 1999

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Tundemunga n^r Adelaide South Australia
commenced Sept^r 1840

Dear John

It is now some fifteen months ago & when I considered myself on my death bed that I requested M^r Beck of this place to remit you on my a/c thro Captain Abbot of the good ship Fairfield the £100 (with the Int &c say £110) which you were so kind as to lend me previous to my leaving England. I also requested him to remit in the same way the £100 which M^r Geo Holt of L^{pool} was kind enough to advance me. M^r Beck states that when he remitted the monies according to my request he desired that one or both of you w^d write me a line to say you had received the needfull. Now not having proved himself as great a swindler as was ever sent out to the neighbouring colonies @ the expense of his country I begin to hear that possibly he may not have remitted the money at all — if it is all right — do have the kindness at your earliest convenience either to drop me a line or send word of some or friend who may happen to be writing & make me easy on this score. So much for business — I must now try to give you some idea of the strange place in which I find myself. I have written since I came here to M^r Banks my sister my uncle & my mother some of which you may possibly have seen, but as I was very unwell at the time I wrote I don't exactly recollect the contents & therefore in attempting a description of this Land of Promise this must be my excuse if I happen to repeat what you may have read before — however, previous to the “long yarn” I intend to bore you with respecting the Colony I must first tell you the fate of “my notions”

You may perhaps have heard that we had a very windy voyage out here — upwards of six months — we lost so much time in buffetting with the winds & waves in “Biscays sleepless Bay” & the head winds we encountered soon after that our Captain was resolved to make an attempt at recovering this by a bold stroke, in crossing the Line & instead of steering towards the coast of South America which tho' the longer way is the regular course on account of catching the Trade Winds to keep near the coast of Africa & trust his luck for catching the winds — but we were doomed to be disappointed, & were becalmed for several weeks in the neighbourhood of the line under the most scorching sun (here began my new series of misfortunes) for as our vessel sail'd very high out of the water the hot sun caused her seams to open very much & when we again got into rough weather she leaked tremendously so much so that most of the goods in

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hold proved to be seriously damaged. All my own goods some as rusty as if they had been for a considerable time at the bottom of the sea & they came to a market & they had been all right — You will recollect the cooking stove I took out with me, this cost including freight insurance Land carriage & sundry o^r Expenses upwards of £20. You will scarcely credit that all it fetched here was two pound (£2.) with 7½ per cent off for further charges. My nails were sold for 1d & my furniture did not realise the amount I paid for the freight alone of it. English furniture drops all to pieces here in the hot weather, the fate of these few articles you may judge of the rest. The whole of my goods had to be sold by auction during my illness to reuse the money I had to remit to England. Selling by auction is the only way of obtaining cash for goods here & parties are obliged to remit to this and if acquiring ready money must make up their mind to a tremendous “sacrifice”. Cash being awfully scarce here. I must now tell you all about the place. But enough of this.

The country has altogether a most strange appearance, especially to new comers. So arid, desolate & inhospitable looking — so different to what they had been led to expect, very different to anything they have ever seen before. So much so that some of our Colonial Philosophers have come to the conclusion that the country is not in a finished state, it is still in the hands of nature! Who has not yet completed her work if she ever intended it as a residence for civilized inhabitants! For my part I rather incline to think it was upon this “Ultima Thule” this great “Island Continent” that nature first tried her “prentice hand” as Burns sings that seeing the blundering she had made here she was afterwards enabled to create the rest of her works more perfectly!

Every thing here seems left in so unfinish'd so slovenly so unworkable a state — The country altogether is either or neither a Continent or an island. The rivers during 8 months of the year are either too fully ... up or become a mere chain of stagnant pools or lagoons & / or between full of animalcules & very injurious to the health of persons who are obliged to drink the water — the Rivers do flow — instead of running into the sea as in other countries they either loose themselves in the sand, or terminate in a kind of Bay or morass, or in a mangrove swamp so flat there is no water course & ... between the ... of the country and the sea. The trees, principally Casuarina, Eucalypti, & the Banksia are all evergreen, of a dirty dark brown, some are ... an attempt at ... some particular ... be so ... called

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instead shedding their leaves at some particular season, and their bark periodically which ... about ... metres tall, white trunks ... in rags and tatters in a most unusual way. A great part of the country is covered with a ... scrub. Frequently as much as 20 to 30 miles across & occasionally upwards of 100 miles across, this scrub is of no earthly use but is a country for reptiles. The land is free from scrub the grass instead of forming a sward grows in small tufts called “kangaroo grass” which are about two feet asunder & between the tufts you see the red sandy clay causing the general appearance of the land to be similar to that of a burnt up brick field.

The Birds tho' they are generally of the most beautiful plumage, and “make the forests echo to their screams discordant” & yet do not any of them sing — the harsh loud shrieks & cawing noise made by the cockatoos Parrots is all made when they are on the wing — singing birds it is said could not exist here for any length of time on account of the great number of snakes we have & which the sound of their voices would attract to the little songsters to their certain destruction. One of our birds a species of Parrot commonly called the “laughing Jackass” makes a most ridiculous noise, a kind of mixture between a Horse laugh & the bray of a Donkey! When I was on a visit — my 2nd visit — you will learn how I was wakened during my 1st visit further on — at Mr Bigby's a short time ago one of these fellows used to wake me about 5 o'clock every morning @ which time he regularly came to get his morning glass at the water-hole close by the tent in which I slept.

Our Flowers which for the short time we have them are many of them very beautiful & would be considered curious in an English green house yet have none of them any smell — so that you are quite disappointed after you have collected a large & beautiful nosegay to find that as far as the smell was concerned you might just as well have so many artificials in your hand & in fact most of them have altogether the dry lifeless appearance of artificials — where did Tom Moore learn that

“In climes full of sunshine, tho' splendid their dyes,

“Yet faint is the odour that flowers shed about:

“Tis the clouds & the mists of our own weeping skies

“That call the full spirit of fragrancy out”!?

He is quite right however, as far as this place is concerned — only that here we have so much sunshine that instead of a faint odour our flowers have no smell at all!

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except the mushroom which grows in large quantity here for a few weeks during the rainy season & to an enormous size, very frequently as large as a common sized plate, there is nothing else in the vegetable world or in the way of fruit that is food for man — to be sure — the natives eat the root of the grass & the bulbous roots of some of the flowers when they can get something better — but I do not suppose a white man could possibly exist upon them.

The native animals such as the Kangaroo Wallaby, Bandicoot Opossum Kangaroo Rat &c are all marsupial — if nature had not thus provided for the safety of the young the species w^d inevitably have become extinct as during the long droughts which frequently last here upwards of 6 months & occasionally much longer the animals have to traverse immense distances in search of water, which the young without the assistance of the parental Pouch w^d not be able to accomplish.

The only Beast of Prey we have is a small wolf called here “the wild dog” this is of a yellow colour & is very like the wolf we saw in Africa only not so large nor are they very dangerous as they seldom venture to attack a man unless they catch him asleep, but they are very destructive to sheep which require watching in the pens all night & even then they frequently succeed in carrying off the Lambs in the most daring manner, & in the very teeth of the Shepherd & his loaded double barreled gun. The only bird of prey we have is the Australian Eagle or bulture as it is more commonly call’d, this is tolerably harmless as it is not strong enough to fly away with a child or a lamb but it is very destructive amongst Poultry &c when it has a chance.

The most troublesome things we have to contend with are Reptiles & insects — “fairy forms & many coloured things” — which are exceedingly numerous — the most insignificant of them individually being in the greatest numbers & these overpowering numbers causing them to be the most annoying as a body —

The Scorpion many eq’d with sting of fire, bred there

The legions fair of creeping things terribly beautiful the Serpent lair

Wreathed like a Coronet of Gold & Jewels fit for a Tyrant’s brow.

Of snakes we have a tolerable (and intolerable) variety — first the feared snake of a beautiful bronze colour & about ... in. long, this is the most poisonous of them all.

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Next the garter snake, about 6 feet long & a kind of greeny brown colour, dangerous to travellers on account of their appearing to be a stick or the root of a tree, & being nearly the same colour as the ground, are frequently trodden upon without being seen and tho’

“Worm-like there trampled

Adder like aveng’d”

Next the diamond snake very malignant — about 6 feet in length & beautifully ... over in green and golden yellow. The yellow snake

[pattern drawn]

also poisonous & from 6 to 8 feet in length but their size & bright yellow colour renders it easy to avoid these fellows (I ought to observe that all the snakes appear more studious of peace than war & will not attack you unless accidentally or otherwise you tread upon or in any way hurt them or if you happen to get between them & their holes when they are making their retreat) besides the above we have also a very pretty small snake striped all over with the brightest yellow black & red belts — but he is not to be joked with!! We have also several kinds of black & brown snakes which tho’ innocuous are almost as troublesome as the others as people have no faith in them. There are many dogs here kept to hunt the snakes some of them are very good hands at finding & killing them, but generally speaking a dog which is a snake hunter is very short lived as sooner or later they get a bite which settles them. But the most dangerous to the dogs is the deaf adder whose bite is almost immediate death — deaf not quari they cannot hear but “because they will not listen to the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so sweetly”. A/K Wisely. [?] they are sharp enough

believe me at hearing & wide awake enough in every aspect. More trouble even than the snakes but not so dangerous are the Centipedes Scorpions Tarantulas Guiana Lizards Sandflies Musquitos Fleas Flies & Ants with numberless other tormenting little wretches which are creeping, running, flying & jumping about you in all directions, names we know not, but

“Whose shape would make them, had they bulk & size,
More hideous foes than fancy can divine;
With helmet heads & dragon scales adorn’d,
The mighty myriads now securely scorned
Would mock the majesty of man’s high birth,
Despise his bulwarks, & unpeople earth”.

Tarantula

[Sketch of a
tarantula
spider]

Added [?] to the snakes the bites of the Centipedes Scorpions & Tarantulas are the most poisonous but tho’ they cause a great swelling accompanied with a good deal of pain yet I never knew any real authenticated instances of their causing loss of either life or limb. The Tarantula is a kind of crab like spider about the size of a pigeon’s egg — his legs expand when he walks to 5 to 6 in. & both body & legs are covered with curly [?] long hair, they are about 6 Inches long with a hundred legs for what I know — The Scorpion is very ugly but the Musketoos like troops of Lancers are perpetually

The Centipede

[Sketch of a centipede]

[Sketch of 4 mosquitoes]

[Sketch of a scorpion]
about 4 In. long with a sting of fire in its tail.

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day & night fly in all directions, but there is satisfaction to be had of these brave fellows for so soon as they have once sent their lances into you they will march to be killed — spot without the slightest attempt at flinching until they have their fill. You won’t wonder such slight long legged ... looking things could inflict so much pain! When they light upon you they are of straw colour & quite transparent — [as] you watch them they gradually distend to a much larger bulk [&] become blood red. We have lots of Musketoe tales and the last I heard was of a Cooper, who while at his work was dreadfully annoyed by a swarm of these Pests that he capsized the Cask at which he was working & got inside of it — his first emotions ... for his happy deliverance & secure asylum were hardly over however when the Musketoos having found him out began to draw their Proboscis right thro’ the Cask, fortunately he had his hammer in his pocket with which he clinched them down as fast as they penetrated thro’ until at last such a host of them was fastened to the Cask that they rose up into the air carrying Cask & all with them! Mind you I don’t vouch for the truth of this! It savours too much of one of brother Jonathan’s jaips — [?] all I can say is you have it as I had it! The little devils are bad enough without telling lies about them!! But the cowardly, rascally fleas are a tite more troublesome than the Musketoos — these fellows attack you fore & aft in a score of places at the same time — Now you feel they have boarded you on your starboard quarter therefore you have well “rousted” them on that side, you have very decided proofs that they have effected a lodgement on your larboard quarter & then bad luck to them they are so ... -sighted even in the dark so decidedly nimble withall that only by the greatest possible chance that you can ever have the question of having some revenge out of them.

And then again the Ants which are quite as bad as the fleas — they & the fleas together from their immense numbers ... perseverance, are perhaps the most annoying things we have — When speaking of fleas & ants mind you I am not speaking of the poor diminutive harmless half starved creatures in our cold climate — no, these are regular tropical productions, whopping fellows, some half inch in length & most determined blood

suckers! - Some measured ants from 1½ to 2 In. long — these are also arm'd with a sting in the tail like a wasp. Besides these fellows there is not a house in Adelaide but — to a degree you scarcely imagine possible — absolutely swarms with those filthy creatures which are the horror of all good housewives at home & which by any name cannot be mentioned to say polite!

We have also a small white ant here which is exceedingly destructive to timber, I have seen whole trees hollowed out — they penetrate ... Boxes & make short work with the contents especially Books, They are very fond of... regular literary characters — the only Book-worms I should say in the Colony! There is also another small black ant the sickly nasty taste of which I have in my mouth now for these proliferate by myriads of your Sugar, Rice flower, Pork petre about in all directions over the floor, over the tables, up your Trousers & even up the Ladies' — legs.

[Newspaper cutting excerpt from the South Australian Register [?]]

Note Page 6 *[Underlining by John Fogg Taylor]*

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE COLONY No. 12

ENTOMOLOGY, No. XI – DIPTERA

THIS order, presenting such a vast variety of genera, which have from time to time been added on account of the great variety of forms which the different families contain, is of less extent with us than perhaps any other — our known species being at present extremely limited. In England [?] these insects form a very numerous class, preying on or infesting almost every substance animate and inanimate. Of these, and the last-described order, Neuroptera, about the same number of species are known — though the former are slowly increasing in this respect. In two or three particular species, they swarm in such abundance nearly all the year round, that they can only be equalled by the Formicidæ tribes — hardly a single spot of ground, except when free from trees, being unoccupied by the multitudes of neuters or working classes of the latter. These and myriads of Muscidæ of various sizes and colors which family contains in species perhaps more than half our Dipterous insects — seem to divide between them the removing of any putrid or decaying substance; the flies giving the preference to the animal, and the ants to the vegetable matter — each, however, taking to the other in case of any temporary scarcity of the favorite food.

The Culcidæ (gnats) are generally placed at the head of this order, from the greater development of the apparatus they employ for their sanguinary purposes; an organ of many divisions, more wonderfully and powerfully formed than can be conceived, without the aid of artificial means to bring its perfections to light, as displayed by the microscope. The release from their submarine condition in the larva state, to commence a new existence as a winged and perfect insect, is now well known to every observer of nature. These tormenting insects, which are sometimes rather numerous, and make their appearance in the summer months, are principally confined to a few genera; their numbers are only made known by the state of irritation to which they reduce the object of their molestation, approaching silently and singly. Their presence is soon, however, very evident; being by no means, as some assert, unfelt till they are departed — for no sooner do they insert their six-pointed sucker for their intended banquet, into any part of the body, than it is immediately perceived.

Having effected their purpose, either so firmly is this curious instrument fixed for a time, or so intent are they on appeasing their sanguinary appetites, that they may be easily killed with a sudden stroke; unlike the allied, watchful, and less blood-thirsty tribes. When once anchored by the proboscia, they always leave a minute wound — causing great irritation for hours and sometimes days. This is, however, imperceptible except from the slight swelling, and the puncture is never followed by blood, as are the more severe wounds of the myriads that infest most of the warmer regions of the earth.

From twilight to about midnight, at the close of a warm summer's day, these Culicidæ are most numerous; and at this time a single covering on the hands or feet is often no protection against their attacks, as they can easily insert their formidable instrument between the interstices of almost any thin substance. Then are seldom they rise in great numbers from the reeds and long grass, never letting the pedestrian rest till they have driven him (though unwillingly on their part) from the field. [End of Newspaper cutting excerpt]

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and then again "the common fly" which tho' last is by no means least in persevering annoyance, in the dry hot weather every thing in the way of drinkables is full of them and they are perpetually in your eyes — & they seize upon you at daylight in the morning just about the time that the fleas having gorged themselves to satiety, & well knowing that their bloodthirsty deeds will not bear exposure to the daylight, are making their retreat leaving you curiously & beautifully tattooed all over. Now is the time you might calculate upon having an hour's quiet & undisturbed Repose after tossing & tumbling about all night — but no — the Sun rises! & up jump the flies! You may beat your head & your face till you knock your brains out but you cannot rid yourself of the nuisance. You may kill them by hundreds but it is all to no purpose — as fast as you kill them others in endless succession follow to the attack fully determined upon extracting all the little moisture they can find in the neighbourhood of your eyes to cool their parch'd up throats. You will see them regularly matted round the eyes of the beastly natives, who either from long suffering have become perfectly callous to their operations or finding it impossible to drive them away have altogether given up the attempt.

When you are walking out in the open air, especially if you happen to be talking, one or more of these thirsty little devils will introduce himself, without any ceremony, into your throat, & will give you a tremendous fit of coughing — ere you have well recovered from the choking sensation occasioned by this, you will probably be attacked with a violent fit of sneezing, caused by one of your persevering tormentors having established himself in your nostrils while you have been busily engaged all the while in driving the main body of the enemy out of you Eyes which are always the favourite places of attack. It's almost impossible to exaggerate in describing this nuisance notwithstanding that I am writing with one hand over my eyes I cannot possibly keep the little devils out of them.

Our Birds are all very different to any you have — chiefly Parrots, Cockatoos & Parraqueets — some of the Parrots are very beautiful. The Parraqueets which are almost as plentiful in the woods as our hedge sparrows with you, in particular are most gaudily painted generally of the brightest green orange & scarlet, others of a beautifully glossy blue with orange & scarlet — some of them again green, blue, orange, scarlet & black, white in fact almost as many colours as the Rainbow — great numbers of beautiful white Cockatoos with yellow topknots, others with red topknots & the points of the wings tipp'd with red, jet black cockatoos, & Maccaws are also common — but they are all so dry & insipid as are also our native animals such as Kangaroos, Opossums &c, that very few people eat them, except the natives who are very expert at killing them with their Paddies & spears — some people however are very fond of the Soup made from the Kangaroo Tail it is

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certainly very gameish but for my own part I should most decidedly prefer a plate of ox tail soup at "The Thatcher House Tavern" in Market St Manchester to all the soup that could be made from all the Kangaroo Tails in all New Holland! — Perhaps the locality might have something to do with the matter!

We have also a kind of large black goose or swan "Rura avis in terres ingroque simillima cygnio". This is jet black except at the points of the wings which are tip'd with white & has a red bill — it is good eating but scarce — as are also our Bustards or wild

Turkeys & the quails very similar to a Partridge only smaller. We also now & then see out in the bush the Pelican of the wilderness which grows to a very large size here. But the strangest bird we have is the Emu this does not fly but runs along the ground at a great speed — in appearance & habits they are not unlike the ostrich , several of which we saw at

Stand at ease

[Sketch of an emu]

the Cape of Good Hope — to eat them they are very strong & oily but the Emus as well as the Kangaroos afford, in the absence of hares & foxes, tolerably good sport to hunt them. The Emu is the most difficult to catch, it generally outstrips the fleetest Kangaroo dogs (a kind of large strong greyhound) it is really an astonishing sight to watch the Emu run. They always remind

Attention!

[Sketch of an emu, alerted]

me of the man in the song — I mean the Dutchman with the Steam Reg that “curious compound of clockwork & steam”! When the Emu suspects that a stranger is approaching she immediately stretches herself up to her natural height frequently upwards of 7 feet — looking steadily for an instant or two on the approaching object ... as we read of the Ostrich “what time she lifest herself on high she scorneth the horse & his rider”. Job after she has satisfied herself that it will be most prudent to be missing she walks away in grand style — laying herself down to work almost close to the ground — here she goes

“He threw himself down but all in vain
The leg jump’d up & was off again”

Quick march!

Emu pas^t. curr^t.

[Sketch of an emu running with legs stretched]

When following on a swift horse, Old Bet could not go the pace, Jimmy! — you may hear her feet every time they strike the ground, give a thump, like the stroke of a Steam Engine, and as to the Speed — “fancy a fast clap Train on the grand Junction Line with the Mail on board which by some accident has been detained some ½ hour past its time & is trying to fetch it up & fancy something twice as fast as Jonathan w^d say — that is the Emu. I think Jonathan w^d have prefer’d a “flash of lightening” for his

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simile!!

I have learned since I wrote this that the thumping noise is made by something peculiar in the throat not the feet.

I think I gave some description of the natives in my former letters since then however I have had opportunities of seeing a great deal more of them. They are certainly at the very foot of civilization & appear in fact only one shade removed from Monkeys which they very much resemble in their way of eating &c. They ramble about without any fixed place of residence & entirely naked they construct nothing in the shape of house or hut to live in except a mere break wind of branches which they call a “burley” where they make their fire for the night generally having to construct a fresh one every night , but sometimes during the very wet weather they manage to roof their burley over with the Bark of the Gum tree — their fires which they make every night serve not only to keep them warm (as the nights here are almost always cold however hot the day may have been) but they also serve to fry a Snake or Opossum or whatever they may chance to have picked up in their days ramble, & likewise to scare away the wild dogs, while the smoke helps to drive away the Muskatoes. They live upon almost everything & anything that comes in their way including all sorts of Reptiles & Insects but they prefer Kangaroos Opossums Birds &c. when they can catch them — a most equitable arrangem^t seems to have been come to between our “Aborigines” & the wild dogs which is to eat each other in turns & if they mutually suit each other’s taste I don’t see that any one has a right to interfere with them! — but I think the dogs get the worst of the Bargain, as tho’ I have frequently seen the black fellows eating the dogs I never yet had an opportunity of seeing the dogs return the compliment.

The Tribes in the neighbourhood of Adelaide have been tolerably harmless lately especially since a few of them have been hung for murder, committed on the whites, but they still occasionally spear the shepherds, when pressed by hunger, if they catch them unarm'd & desirous of protecting their sheep which the blacks fancy (with which I think your Uncle would consider some show of reasoning) that they have quite as much right to as the white man to their Kangaroos &c they agree "When white man come Kangaroo go".
 "No white man toura/plenty/Kangaroo — toura Emu — toura Possumy.
 "White fellow come far away England
 "Bring a Horsey (horse)
 "Bring Sheepy bring bullocky — bring muskety"! (muskets)
 Kangaroo go

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Emu go! Possumy go! & then they eaten

"Bye & bye Toura black man come drive white fellow into the sea — Spear run middle him" all the while grinning like so many fiends, & brandishing their Spears & waddies after the fashion they use them at their Corroborees.

A Party of them came down to our Tent about 8 miles from Adelaide, where I was sitting alone, begging for biskety (sea biscuits) & bullocky (Beef) if encouraged they become very troublesome & there is no keeping them away, while they have a strong Propensity to appropriating a stray Tomahawk or any thing else they fancy to their own use. I however gave them some Damper but they still wanted "bullocky" & finding I was alone appeared inclined to be troublesome. I was obliged at last to go inside the Tent & fetch out a Brace of Pistols — the sight of the pistols was enough tho' there were 7 of them in number men & women together, off they scampered, "leave gunpoint" exclaiming, "wodwod (little) Muckety (sun)", "nogood" wodwod Muckety!" "nogood" — & jabbering & chattering like so many monkeys. No-one fears them here when well armed, tho' many of them, it is said, can throw a spear almost as far as a Rifle will carry & they are exceedingly clever at hitting the objects they aim at. There have been numerous instances of their sending a Spear right thro' a Bullock. I have seen horses come into town with the Spears sticking in them which had been thrown by the natives at the riders soon after I first came out. They dare not do this now.

I once saw Captain Jack one of the chiefs of the Adelaide Tribe throw his Spear at a sheet of Letter Paper posted on a door @ 80 yards distance & not only hit the mark 3 times together but send his Spear such time right thro' both Paper & door. The spear is light & is

[Sketch of a straight spear]

made of very hard wood which grows something like an Honeysuckle it has no Iron or other hard substance at the head being merely straitened & the pointed end hardened in the hot wood ashes — these are the spears they use in hunting; their war spears are much more dangerous as from being jagged at the front with Sharks Teeth or Pieces of Flint

[Sketch of a barbed spear]

ingeniously cemented on with gum. They are not as hastie without great difficulty. They now substitute pieces of black Bottles for jaggung. A fine young man

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about 18 years old a son of Captain Thompson of Port Lincoln was speared a short time ago with one of their war spears & he died before it could be retracted.

The Waddie which they both throw & use as a club, is made of very hard & heavy wood, thick at one end & pointed at the other. The Boomerang is a very curious weapon used by the neighbouring tribes but not

[Sketch of a waddie]

[Sketch of a boomerang]

by the Adelaide Tribe, this weapon is thrown & when it lights on the ground rebounds back to the Party who threw it — provided he understands the way to throw it.

When our fellows wish to throw the Spear with great force or to a great distance this is done by means of awful weapon called a Wammara with a Kangaroo tooth at the end of it which goes into the end of the Spear nearest the hand & makes a kind of lever by which means they can send their Spears a very great deal farther than without it.

[Sketch of a Wammara]

They have as yet learned little or no good from themselves, the principal of their new acquirements are smoking & drinking added to which they are dreadfully afflicted with diseases to which they were entire strangers previous to the whites settling in their country. The Government here "make pretence" to give them Rations as a kind of compensation for taking their land from them; but it is precious little they get & it is all done to gammon the good folks at home. Their lives are protected in the neighbourhood of Adelaide but the overland parties, as they are called, who bring cattle from Sydney across the country to our settlement think no more of shooting the "darkies" than a party of Country Squires in England w^d think of knocking down some score braces of Partridges on a Grand Battu day & boast as much of their exploits at their journey's end.

King John as he is called is the head Chief of the Adelaide Tribe (his proper name is "Mullaworra Burca" — he also answers to the name of "Hoky Poky Thinkey Man" which some of our chaps call him) he is a very powerful fellow "with Atlantean shoulders fit to bear the weight of Mightiest Monarchies" and has a chest like a Lion, a fierce glaring black Eye like a Tiger's & a head as thick as a Bull's no small matter this, as a head which is not waddie proof stands a poor chance during the fights with the neighboring tribes. King John is quite the Terror of the Tribes with whom they are at enmity & having had two brothers slain in battle he has sacrificed a whole human Lecatomb to his revenge. The natives have all

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thick skulls, many of them exceedingly thick, the thin skulled breeds having, I suppose, in process of time become extinct by the unceasing operation of the waddies — has this think you, anything to do with the low state of intellect in which they are sunk? Generally speaking the women are frightfully ugly. Their colour is rather a deep chocolate then a full black but the filth with which their skins are uniformly covered prevents the true colour from appearing.

"O never talk again to me of Northern climes and English Bells

"It has not been your fate to see like me

"the wild Australian Gells!"

The men tho' perhaps not better featured than the women yet are for the most part tolerably well shaped, more agile & slender however than muscular, more fitted for the chase than for labour. They have not the thick lips of the African negroes but have long black braids which the Hottentots & the o^r African blacks have not. Neither here nor in any of the o^r Colonies in New Holland except in a very few instances & that only when they have been bro^t up from their wild rambling habits & settle to work, & even in the few instances where they have been trained up from their youth, they generally sooner or later are induced to join their savage countrymen. I was told by one of the overland Gents a short time ago an anecdote of a native child which had lost its parents was bro^t up at a govern^t establishment at Sydney some years ago exactly as if it had been a white child & when 18 years of age was placed in the service of a Gentleman in the interior, after living here upwards of 12 months, a large body of natives having come onto the neighbourhood on one of their usual great hunting excursions, he got into their company after which nothing could prevent him from joining them & in a few weeks after his employer saw him as they were on their return — he had entirely divested himself of every particle of clothing & was rouged & painted up to the

Ears for the first time in his life of which he appeared not a little proud, he had also managed to get 2 gins (wives) to his own cheek, & ever afterwards lived a wild & rambling life. A similar instance occurred in Van Dieman's Land but attended with rather worse consequences, in this Instance the civilized savage joined his countrymen at a time when they were at war with the settlers & the knowledge he had gained when among the whites rendered him by far the most formidable leader the Savages had ever had.

A Gentleman in Adelaide with whom I am acquainted rescued a black girl about 14 years old from a party of the natives who were beating her dreadfully — he took her to his house & had her cleaned & dressed and after some time she was beginning to talk English tolerably well & to make herself a little useful in the house — she was rather intelligent for a native & amongst

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her other acquirements had learned to dance & sing "Jim Crow" in almost as good style as the real original Yankey Jim Crow himself. I have witnessed her Performance & a more laughable exhibition I never saw — M^r and M^{rs} Calton took considerable pains with her & she was daily becoming more civilized. She slept in an unfurnished room at the back of the house which had not yet got the windows in. One night M^{rs} Calton fancying she heard an musical noise in the room was induced to go in — the first thing she saw on entering the room was a number of waddies & spears in a corner this rather alarmed her & she immediately ran back to her husband who on hastening to the spot was surprised to see in addition to the usual black Mop three other similar looking objects cheek by jowl with it — on advancing to take a nearer view, up jump^d three black fellows, who seizing their arms without a single "what namy" (their usual salutation) "How do you do" or "good bye" made their exit in quick sticks, by the same means they had entered viz. thru' the vacant window — of course the interesting young lady was sent to finish her education among her old friends — M^{rs} C. giving her to understand that as she had scarcely had time to learn better she might perhaps have overlooked one visitor for once — but three beaus she considered too bad! Even for an unsophisticated Savage!

Their Corroborees which take place in the middle of the night for two or three nights together at every full & change of the moon — Upon these occasions their heads are plastered all over with red Paint & grease & their faces rouged up to their Ears — their ribs are all painted with white streaks over their appearance of dancing Skeletons or so rites. The flesh on their foreheads — their parts of their bodies is generally raised up in done with a shark's tooth while they are a Kangaroo bone about 4 Inches long thrust (which divides the nostrils) these bones having the appearance of large white Mustacheos on their black lips. While the men are dancing their war Danse the women all the while are beating a kind of drums made with the Skins of Kangaroos & howling at the top of their voices their most wild unearthly dirges which they each corroboree the men every now & then chiming in; they keep tolerably good time & may be heard to a great distance.



black skins giving them the many demons @ their unholy noses — shoulders, & other large wales [weals?] this is young & the young men have thro' the cartilage of the nose

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I had left this blank intending to draw you a Sketch of the natives @ their 'Corroborees' &c &c. But having sketched my Ideas on another piece of paper first & shown the sketch to old Jacob asking him what it meant he told me he could not tell unless I intended it for the Sailors after they had been paid off at the end of the whaling season. I told him I intended it for the natives at their 'Corroborees'. Says Jacob "It is not a bit like" so I must give up the Idea. I wish I could just sketch the scene so as to make you understand it but I cannot. Having the wildest native Savages (assembled round their fires on the sea beach where I saw the last Coroboree I witnessed) painted & armed up to the ears while

“On the smooth shore, the night fires brightly blazed”
 “And he that unawares had there of gazed”
 “With gaping wonderment had stood aghast,”
 “For ere Night’s midmost, stillest, hour was past”
 “The native revels of the Troop begun”
 “Yelling their uncouth dirge”,
 “Orient pearls at random strung”.

[Sketch of women and children sitting around a camp-fire, and a row of men brandishing spears and waddies]

[Sketch of two men brandishing spears and waddies]

“Jimbuck Jimmy” & “Go the Pig”

Note to Page 20 below.

You may fancy what a comfortable pleasant place a Mangrove swamp must be to live in from the following pictorial description -

Its Hydra boughs stretch’d unwieldly their enormous arms
 Clad with luxuriant foliage, from the trunk
 “Like the old Eagle feathered to the heel” -
 “a hundred heads on one stupendous Trunk
 “such the Mangrove which at full-noon flood
 “Appears itself a “wood upon the waters”
 “But when the Tide leaves bare its upright roots”
 “A Wood on Piles”, suspended in the air!

Fancy having to live in such a place with a Price set upon our head! & the finest cover in the world for Musketoos/Mosquitos.

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It is upon these occasions, the Corroborees, I have seen King John to the best advantage talk to him when he has all his warriors & his Lubras (wives) about him — talk to him then about the “Murray River blacks” then you see the glare of the Tiger in his fierce countenance! There you see the Spirit that would say among the Trumpets ha! ha! flashing from his dark fiery savage looking black Eyes!

When I have been at one of their Coroborees @ dead of night or when I am watching a Party of them “camping” for the night; one or two of them up the trees with their Tomahawks cutting branches, others making their Wigwam (these Wigwams are made in a half circle with the bend to the wind & the fire in the opening in front & they generally make a fresh one every night) others again lighting their fire, (they procure a light by the friction of two pieces of stick. These they take care to

[Sketch of a
‘Wigwam’]

[Sketch of sticks
being rubbed to
make a spark]

have very dry. The upright piece is worked very rapidly round between the palms of their hands the end of it working in a hole in the other’s piece which lies flat on the ground, this is done untill the dry withered grass which is placed round the bottom stick bursts into a blaze). While all this is going on the women are busy emptying their “Boukas” a kind of Bag ingeniously netted out of the sinews of the Kangaroo Tails which said Bag is a regular “omnium gatherum” being the recepticle for all the eatables they can pick up during the day. On the top of these Boukas, which they carry on their backs, are perched their “wocwocs” (little ones). The last time I saw a lot of these Bags turned out was about three weeks ago on this occasion I was curious enough to take an Inventory of the contents as under (having never seen them with such a large variety before)
 Viz. — 2 black Snakes/Parrott/Guiana — 2 sleeping Lizards — 1 green Lizard — 1 Dew Lizard — 2 Opossoms — a quantity of broken meal collected from the Settlers — a quantity

of grass roots & the juicy leaves of the wild fig — they had also a great number of large white grubs about 3 Inches long which they find in the Gum Trees — these grubs are as

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white as milk & many of the white people who have tried them say they are very good particularly when fried with a little butter pepper & salt. I have not yet tried them but I do not see why they should not be quite as good as John Chinaman's delicious bird nests which I have heard Sailors who have tasted them say are excellent. I was very much disgusted on the occasion I am speaking of to see one of the women suckling a whelp which someone had given them, just as she would her own infant, there it was sticking to her like a great leach — this I am informed is by no means an uncommon sight when any of the whites have given them a young whelp — but I was going to observe — that when I have witnessed all their preparations with their cooking &c (merely placing their food on the hot ashes or covering it up in them, they have no sort of cooking Utensils at all) — & then to watch them like so many monkeys devouring their miscellaneous repast on a fine moonlight night, I find myself as it were alone in the midst of these Savages, with no white man near & generally unarm'd or when I am witnessing one of their midnight corroborees and

"In sooth, it was no vulgar sight to see

"Their barbarous, yet their not indecent glee;

"And as the flames along their faces gleam'd

"Their gestures nimble, dark eyes flashing free,

"Their long wild locks that to their girdles stream'd

"While "their corroboree" they half sang, half scream'd"

*[Sketch of men
at a corroboree,
brandishing
spears and
waddies]*

When I have been witnessing all this I almost fancy I must be in a dream & can hardly persuade myself it is real, & I generally find myself exclaiming "What in the name of all that is mysterious can I be doing among such wild scenes & in the midst of such Savage Creatures?"

This is the sort of feeling almost anyone would have at first, among such strange scenes, but it wears off a little as you get used to seeing them.

While the men are out hunting you frequently see Parties of some ½ dozen of their women skirmishing about for what they can pick up. A Party of them who called the other day with their "wocwocs" perched on their backs consisted of King John's "Maria" two of the Captain Jack's Lubra and three others. I had the honour of giving them a Tuck into

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Tea & Damper. King John has 2 Marias — 1 Jane & 1 Mary — The Maria who called upon us is the favourite & is the handsomer (in fact I may almost say the only good looking) woman in among them. She was one of the Murray River Tribe.

"He wooed her as the Lion woos his bride"

King John in one of his excursions with his warriors knocked her on the head & then carried her away senseless to be his own Lubra. Queer sort of courtship this you will think, but customs suffer in different countries — I recollect reading somewhere that William the Conqueror gave his sweetheart, to whom he was afterwards married, a most tremendous thrashing in the streets of the city of Bruges because she would not listen to his addresses which made such an impression upon her that he afterwards had very little difficulty in his courtship! While these women were on their visit I invited one of Captain Jack's lubras to stay with me & be my Lubra! She says "You no white Lubra John?" "No." "Poor man!" says she. She then gave me to understand that if she did the o' women would tell "and then (says she) "bye & bye Captain Jack come & give me (herself) toura coco (good thrashing)!"

The women in addition to covering their heads with grease & red paint fasten into their hair great numbers of white Kangaroo Teeth with Gum as also in their children's hair. Their language seems very simple tho' the natives of one Tribe cannot understand those of

another tribe at a very short distance from themselves — our natives call their own wives “Lubra” (women in general they call Yangarra) The natives @ Encounter Bay call their wives “Shela” a native of a tribe farther on calls his wife “Mala” (very good name this!) the Sydney blacks call their wives Gins.

Tho’ they are in general excellent mimics yet many of the words in

“Our Lank northern, whistling, grunting, gutterall,

“Which we’re oblig’d to hiss, & spit, & sputter all”,

they cannot pronounce at all. Some of our wags occasionally take advantage of this to tease them. Their usual salutation on meeting a white man is “what namie” if you answer for Instance “John” they say “very good Johnny” but if you answer “split sixpence” “Rustic simplicity” or other similar words used to plague them after trying once or twice, they shake their heads in despair & then burst into a loud laugh.

As I before stated they are generally slender with thin, blue, Shanklike looking legs & no Corporation, a fat white man seems rather to puzzle them. There is a Captain Walker here who in this respect would shine prominent in a company of Turtle fed Aldermen, a Party of the “darkies” gathered round him soon after his arrival in the Colony and caused a good deal of amusement at the poor Captain’s expense by the curious manner in which they scrutiniz’d his capacious Corpus,

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one of them at length exclaiming to his fellows, & pointing at the same time (as if he had made some grand discovery) to the neighbourhood of the Captain’s prominent Paunch, “bye & bye wocwoc (little one), bye & bye wocwoc”.

Note to P 18 [*Excerpts from 4 newspaper articles that come at end of page 18*]

Brock thought it time to make his exit into the hut. The shepherd followed his master’s example, and had almost gained the entrance when he was assailed by a shower of spears, one of which struck and severely wounded him. The ruffians then set upon Mr Codd, who was still endeavouring to persuade them to desist, and brutally butchered him with their spears and waddies. The ruffians then attacked the hut, but finding they could not obtain admission they soon after dispersed. The mangled remains of Mr Codd were interred on the following day, and intelligence of the bloody catastrophe conveyed to the police authorities at Geelong. Two troopers of the Mounted Police have been despatched to apprehend the murderers, whom we learn can be identified.

AFFRAY WITH THE NATIVES – On Wednesday the 16th instant, between the hours of four and five o’clock, pm., as the shepherd of E B Gleeson, Esq., on the river Hutt, was herding his flock (consisting of about eleven hundred ewes and lambs) homewards, he observed that the sheep had been rushed, and immediately afterwards he discovered two natives in the act of separating between two and three hundred from the flock; he then fired a blank shot for the purpose of intimidating them; at this time he observed several other natives in his rear in the act of spearing the sheep; one had been speared through the heart, and another through the thigh, and the man being in dread of his life, fired at them, whereby he killed one and wounded another; he also shot a dog belonging to the natives, used by them for the purpose of separating the flock. The sheep were now widely scattered, and much difficulty was experienced in collecting them, but when in sight of the Hutt the shepherd received the assistance of his comrade, in collecting and bringing in the remainder of them. The number of natives now surrounding the station is stated to be about 200, and very few women with them.

[...] continue probably to be cultivated to supply wheat and corn, and potatoes, to the adjacent stockmen, but till the stockmen can produce a large quantity of wool for

exportation, no merchant will venture to send any imports to a country where there are neither goods nor money to be obtained in return. To the labouring classes, so near this colony, the evil will be but temporary; to the moneyed capitalists it cannot fail to prove a ruinous blow, whether they be individuals or concerned extensively in joint-stock companies.

THE FATE OF SWAN RIVER

When 500,000 acres were granted to Sir Robert Peel's cousin in the new but unlucky colony, great was the national outcry of unfairness and self-aggrandizement. But what has been the result? Other settlers have been obliged to go beyond Mr Peel's grant to get acres for themselves. The consequence was that the dispersion of settlers was even greater than that of native savages, and these neither knew where the Governor was, nor did the Governor know where they were. Mr Peel carried out 300 persons at his own expense, men, women, and children. Six months after his arrival he had no one to make his bed or fetch his water. He made his own bed, fetched his own water, and lighted his own fire. This imaginary sovereign, and sole proprietor of a territory larger than Westmoreland, with 300 contract vassals was obliged to make his own bed. His labourers laughed at their contracts, and wandered off to remote parts, perhaps enticed by other speculators, perhaps to acquire a few acres of their own. His capital, which was principally stock, soon perished, being killed by the natives or worried by the wild dogs; his wooden houses in frame rotted on the beach; there was no one to put them together. The labourers too obtained their land very readily, and ran about fixing for their parks and manorial mansions. "I'm as great a lady as Squire Smuggin's wife, said every married scullion, and held up her head accordingly. Every one having obtained a comparatively large tract of land, had consequently no neighbours. Then these magnificent freehold estates were found worthless for every body being a landholder, and there being no labourers, there was no produce and no market.

Their dreams of independence were soon over: falling into distress they returned to their master and insisted on their fulfilling the agreements on which they had gone out. 'No' said Mr Peel, 'all my capital is gone: you have ruined me by breaking your engagements; you cannot insist on my observing mine.' They then wanted to hang him and he was obliged to take to the bush, till they were carried off to Van Dieman's Land, where they were able at least to live, though they could not boast of their territorial possessions.

Such was the fate of the first years of the Swan River settlement. Subsequently the affairs of the colony have mended a little, and under proper management it will undoubtedly thrive.

[A note on the latter article:]

Swan River is a miserable place to this day. I have seen many parties who have been there — they all agree in this all accounts published in England respecting the Colonies *[are]* written by interested Parties — this you find out when you get here.

King John has "4 wives by law & concubines @ libitum" & is quite as great a Philosopher in his own way as "Cato the sentritious" who lent his wife unto his friend Hortensius" or as the great Græcian Philosopher Socrates of both whom we read, at School — "O Sapisutia Atticæ & Romance gravitatis exemplum! Leno est Philosopha & Censor!!"

The sailors in the Whale fishery who to say the least, of them are not at all particular in these matters: a whale's a whale to them & not being troubled with any foolish overdefined squeamishness, make a common practice when on shore of "borrowing the loan" of King John's Lubras or those of some of his subjects for a handful of Tobacco & Tuck out of Whales blubber of which they are exceedingly fond to which arrangement it is said the sable Ladies are quite passive. After the black gents have feasted away at the blubber till they can eat no longer they commence daubing themselves with the oil all over;

which done they again fall to at the blubber & finish their feed. The sailors say they rub themselves with the oil to stretch their hides out that they may be enabled to eat more!!

A dead Horse or Bullock is a regular Godsend to them. I once saw a large Party of them devour a whole horse at a meal; it is quite a curious sight to watch their cooking operations in a grand occasion of this sort. They make a hole in the ground 2 or 3 ft. deep & several feet square. They then burn sufficient wood to make a large quantity of hot ashes which they throw into the bottom of the hole on the Top of the ashes they place a number of stones to keep the meat from touching & smothering the ashes. The carcass is then placed on the stones & is carefully covered over with a quantity of green leaves after which they plaster the whole well over with earth by which means the heat is kept in & the joints are soon cooked & in good Style. I wont venture to give you a description of the feasting scene — you have doubtless in your younger days paid 6d extra @ Wigan fair “to see the wild beasts @ feeding time. Your recollection of this must suffice to give you an Idea!!! The darkies annoy our old maids & cut ... very much as they take every opportunity of stealing the Cuts which they immediately ... eat! I have often remarked it would be an excellent speculation (“the best sown projects very often reassile”) to take King John (who would be glad to go) & some dozen of his subjects to England & to have a series of Grand Corroborees @ the Italian opera house!! At Drury Lane Theater I am sure her

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Majesty, his Royal Highness who appear very fond of this w^d acknowledge they had never experienced anything in the way of a musical treat half so wonderfull as to hear our darkies yelling their uncouth Eldritch Dirges & I am quite satisfied their Corroborees & War Dances w^d draw good houses in every town in Her Majesty’s Dominions. So much for the natives. Some of them get strange names given them by the white people; two of them who called the o^r day told me their names were “Jumbuck Jimmy” & “Go the rig”

Much more dangerous than these are the runaway Convicts from the penal settlements “The Sydney Coves” & “Vandemonians”, as they are here called; these are our “Bushrangers” & Thieves they generally profess to work in the Tiers (out on the mountains cutting Timber) but they employ most of their time in their o^r Capacities — a clever bold bushranger is much esteemed amongst them being considered a kind of Rob Roy or Robin Hood

“For why, because the good old rule sufficeth them, the simple plan

“That they may take, who have the Power, & they may keep who can”. Every now & then they rally out among the different Stations in the interior, like so many highwaymen always mounted on stolen horses, & levy contributions at their own will & pleasure frequently only helping themselves to meat & drink. They profess not to rob any but the “Swell Coves” as they call them, meaning those who, they consider, can afford to be robbed. Generally speaking they appear entirely reckless of their own or other peoples’ lives

“They fear not death, if with them die their foes,

“Save that it seems e’en duller than repose”.

By an experienced Eye these fellows may be generally detected by a kind of martial strut in their walk acquired by working in the chain gangs in the other colonies. As the country is almost altogether without fences the cattle which are exceedingly wild are always straying & there are several old stock keepers from New South Wales & Van Diemens Land who make an honest living by hunting after, & driving in, stray cattle for which they get from £1 to £2 a head according to the rewards advertized, but the “bushrangers” manage the matter by first driving away cattle which they find unwatched to some secluded spot in the Bush - this they call “planting” — & when they consider a sufficient Reward has been offered they bring them in to their owners. A Gang of these fellows who had been carrying on their Malpractises for some time in a very daring manner was broken up some time ago — four of them had made a secret

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yard in the "Black Forest". One of them following the business of butcher in the town & selling the meat. The cattle were stolen, were regularly killed @ the stock yard — the hides, which tell tales being immediately burn'd (all the cattle in the colony being always branded with the owner's Initials in letters with a red hot Iron). The Police at last got word of the business & managed to catch the whole four of them at their place in the black forest very busy at work. They were all taken to prison out of which three of them managed to escape the remaining one stood his trial & was transported to that "Hell upon earth", Norfolk Island, where the vilest of vile, the thrice transported, are sent to. They had a considerable sum of money "planted" when they were taken which the three who later made their escape into the bush agreed to divide between them — some time after this one of them, who had taken refuge with an old bushranger in a wretched hut he had built in a "Mangrove Swamp" (see Page 14) near the Coast, becoming weary of the miserable skulking life he was obliged to lead in the bush with a price set upon his head had packed up his blanket & a few things including his illgotten wealth intending to make his escape from the colony which his companion finding out & being determined he sh^d not take the Cash with him he shot him thro' the head as he was in the act of making his escape. The police with the assistance of the natives immediately after this came upon their "tracks" & found the dead body. The murderer was discovered in Adelaide where he had repaired to spend all the money which he had committed murder & risked his own life to become possessed of — in drink!

He has since suffered the Penalty of his numerous Crimes. One of this sort of fellows a most desperate character who was hung for a murder committed @ a bush Station a short time ago came upon the scaffold smoking his pipe with the greatest nonchalance making faces at the Clergyman telling him he was no sniveller! & managed in spite of the chains with which he was heavily loaded to kick the Hangman's shins to pieces cursing him for a coward & daring him to pull off his "bloody mask". Jack Ketch wore a mask & rode off at fast Gallop immediately after he had performed his office. The Sufferer was greatly applauded by his comrades who ... he was game & died like a "pebble" — his friends had mustered strong with the Intention of rescuing him

Note to Page 20.

[Newspaper article from "The Southern Australian", published by Archibald Macdougall in Rundle Street, July 31 1840, page 212. The article is called "Coroner's Inquest on the Body of John Gafton", and describes the witnesses and their evidence relating to the case, and the jury's verdict of "Wilful murder against Joseph Stagg".]

[The newspaper extract also records current prices of food and wine in Adelaide and some prices in Launceston, Hobart and Port Phillip.

On the reverse are several articles about services such as the coroner, the law and the mounted police, including one titled, Agricultural Resources of South Australia, referring to Captain Sturt's claim that South Australia could produce enough grain to feed six million people (or, by the Register's estimate, two million), over which J.F. Taylor has written,]

All this is totally ridiculous - Lies! Lies! Lies! It is merely written to entrap Gulls in England.

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[continued from page 20]

if a chance opened, but the mounted foot Police in great numbers & all arm'd prevented them.

There was a most horrid scene acted here on a former similar occasion. The prisoner (a murderer) heavily ironed was bro^t up in cart which was placed under the scaffold merely two uprights & a cross piece to which the rope was attached. The executioner in his mask having adjusted the rope & pulled the bolt out of the Cart in which the man was standing, upsetting it as he would an ordinary load, the prisoner's legs dragging along the bottom of the cart. After which the Hangman immediately galloped off — however the poor wretch in his struggles (he was a remarkably powerful strong man) managed to rest himself occasionally on the Cart & working his hands loose he succeeded in getting hold of the rope over his head. You cannot imagine a more horrid scene. The Women screaming! The Policemen keeping off the crowd who were making desperate struggles to get at him and shouting out, "Cut him down, Murder! Murder! Murder! Cut him down! Cut him down!" In the mean time the Sheriff had dispatched two of the best mounted Police after the executioner whom with great difficulty they overtook & after a considerable time during the whole of which the wretch was struggling horribly the executioner completed his diabolical Job by jumping up @ the Legs of his victim & hanging by them untill life was at length extinct! Such a disgusting scene as this would have made some noise in England - here I did not hear that any body was even censored for it. Who the Executioner is on these occasions is kept quite secret all that is known is that he has "five Pounds" for his work. The King of the Town Thieves is almost as well known as the Governor King John he is a "Sydney Cove & is called "Con Donovan" with several alias attached to his name - all these sort of gentry find it convenient to have an alias or two. While he & his gang are in town scarcely a night passes but people are knocked down & robbed, & deprivations of all sorts committed. Persons having to go out at night in the town generally carry loaded Pistols. In robbing a house the o^r night at Hindmarsh the depredators fired off three Guns. The company go armed. I assure you this is no Exaggeration. Four of these fellows rode out on horseback to a house in Islington the o^r night representing themselves to be horse Police being dressed & armed similarly they got permission to sit down[?] & after the family went to bed they carried off everything in the ... the house Old Con places the

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robberies, selects the places for planting (burying the stolen property) divides the spoil & preaches up "Honour among thieves" to prevent them from splitting on each other & always continues to keep out of harm's way himself.

You may fancy what a nuisance this species of Banditte must be when you learn that tho' we have had a pretty good sprinkling of bad characters out here from England yet out of forty six prisoners at a late Gaol Delivery only nine were Immigrants direct from England the remaining thirty seven being either escaped convicts, ticket of leave men, or Emancipists from Sydney or Van Dieman's Land and it is quite notorious that many of the very worst desperadoes have contrived to escape from the neighbouring Colonies here. They hate the labouring emigrants who come out from England free & tell them they are "bloody fools" for not coming out in the "regular way".

Many a strange & wild tale have I heard from these fellows when a party of them have gathered round one of our "Gypsey fires" of Deeds done in the old Country & in the o^r Colonies - they generally commence in some such fashion as this — "Come Bill give us a yarn - tell us what you were lagg'd for?" & then for a detail of adventures worthy of the annals of Jack Shepperd or Jonathan Wild or fit to adorn the Pages of the Newgate Calendar — but which I am not going to inflict upon you — so don't be alarm'd! One of their most usual affirmations in backing their stories (which occasionally you find it rather difficult to credit) is quite colonial — as follows — "If it's a word of a bloody lie may I perish like a Possum" To understand this you must be informed that the natives kill the opossums by giving them a click behind the head with their waddies which break their necks. I suppose it is a slang way of saying "may I be hung" But enough of this. I would not have entered into

these disgusting details at all but it is quite impossible to give you a slight Idea of the State of Society (save the mark!!) here! Without prominently introducing these fellows.

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Now for the Colony as respects business matters etc., etc.

This Colony was originally founded principally by a joint stock Company in London who got an Act passed & Commissioners appointed under the Crown Ministers acceding to the King upon the understanding that the speculation was to be at no expense to the mother country. The Commissioners had authority to borrow £200,000 on the security of the future resources of the Colony. Col^l. Light was sent out to discover a Tract of Country on the South Coast of New Holland suitable for the purpose & to find the site of the first town. This being done. The Company & Commissioners then took up all the best Town acres themselves @ 12s./acre & the most available country land at the same price. Now commenced perhaps the grandest System of humbug & puffing that ever was practised on the proverbial gullability of John Bull. For well knowing their land was entirely worthless without Inhabitants they left no means untried to seduce parties to come out here from England. They sent out agents here to write home puffing & lying statements respecting the Capabilities &c. of the Colony. They established a Paper in London called the “South Australian Record” (“the filthy rag” it is called here) which was filled with the most impudent & bare faced lies respecting the Colony & with garbled extracts from Letters written here, out of which all the little good was extracted & all the bad left out. The great distance of the Colony from England & no one knowing any thing of the place except from the Statements of themselves & their agents added to the great sums of money they spent in puffing & advertizing & in employing agents to lecture on the subject, in several of the large towns, soon succeeded in sending out thousands of Dupes. When the thing began to take they immediately raised the price of all unpurchased land from 12s./ to £1 per acre & their own selected Land to from £2 to 4 per acre & the town land to an enormous price.

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The Company then opened a Bank & a large general Store & commenced building houses for which (as people wanted somewhere to put their heads into after coming so far) they have been enabled hitherto to extort very large rents — who have been instigated I have no doubt by the Commissioners & the Company at home such as Geo Fife Angus who has 30,000 acres of Land and others who have land purchased in large quantities here @ 12/s per acre — 12/- & £1 per acre. I hope to God Lord John Russell will see thro’ the schemes of these swindling Rascals & not save the Colony at the Expense of the mother Country.

The present Governor is one of the Commissioners & has managed to involve the colony in debt — to an almost incredible extent to parties who cannot see though it even as £15,000 is to £200,000 !!!! — (even to considerably greater extent than the amount the Commissioners had publicly authorized to draw Bills to). This has been spent in building a large Gaol, Hospital & Lunatic Asylum, (three necessary things here) a Governor’s house & other Government buildings in surveying, &c, &c. The Governor, himself a Commissioner & Landowner & the agent sub rosa of the Commissioners, the Company & other large land owners in England, drawing Bills upon the Commissioners to enable him to carry on the scam. Mind you this money is laid out to improve the Property of the Commiss^{ers} & Co. who own most of the Colony. This for the time gave a kind of superficial appearance of prosperity to the place, especially to parties who looked no deeper than the surface, as it kept the labourers employed @ high wages, the a/c’s of which have induced great numbers to come out from England, but settling day had to come when the bills drawn by the Governor on the Commissioners could not be met & the Colony w^d inevitably have been swamped, as all the funds arising from the Sale of Land w^d have had to go towards paying of the Debts & their being no funds to bring out labouring Emigrants, Capitalists would be deterred from coming out. Government @ home seeing this — have been obliged to take

the concerns into their own hands & have sent the “South Australian Commissioners” to the right a.... This large expenditure of Money upwards of £2,000 per week has tended very naturally to improve the private property (of the Commissioners & Company in London) in this Colony & they now expect Jno Bull to pay the Piper — viz. to take up the Bills which have been extended in improving their property here.

The Colony was founded on erroneous Principles & has hitherto been upheld by the force of “Humbug” alone; it now depends mainly on the support of the Government @ home & many large Capitalists there who have unwittingly been drawn into the Snare & cannot without immense sacrifice allow it entirely to go down. The swindling part of the business is the attempt to persuade Jno Bull to pay the debts contracted in improving their property! See below*

The place where I am now existing is about 7 miles from Adelaide & close to the Sea Coast where I have been living some time for the benefit of my health. I am sojourning with a Cornish man, one Jacob Prowse, who has a kind of Market Garden in which he grows Cabbages, Melons & the few other things the Colony will produce. Our Winter (the rainy season) is the only time any thing will grow here on account of the drought the rest of the year but during this short Period, some 6 or 8 weeks, things grow as if in a hot bed — the Market is glutted with them & no one gets paid for the trouble of cultivating , while during the remainder of the year there are no vegetables of any description to be had at any price. Old Jacob, I believe, has an Eye as much to smuggling as gardening down here but has not been able to manage much in this way yet. We live in a Tent some 10 feet in diameter which is not only our “Dormitory” but serves us also for Kitchen for Parlour & Hall.

* Their argument now is there are 15,000 British Subjects isolated on a barren, desolate part of New Holland who will be starved to death if Jno Bull don't pay their Bills.

[There follows a cutting from The South Australian Register. An article headed “Crisis of South Australia”, quotes the Spectator of Nov 1st, describing the mismanagement of South Australia by the Governor, Colonel Gawler, corroborating Taylor's claims, above. Over the article he has written..]

I have just met with this some months after my account is written.

To Mr. John Bull we have mortgaged our freehold Property to the account of several hundred thousand Pounds and all we wish from you honest John is that you will pay off our Debts & we will give you Security not on our own selected Land but on the miserable worthless land comprising the great bulk of the colony & when you can sell this you may repay yourself!! This is all that is required by the Rascals who founded the Colony.

[Another newspaper article, not dated]

To the Editor of the Times

Sir - A letter appeared in your columns last week, signed, “One who has been there, and expects to go again,” praising South Australia.

To prevent the mischief that such a document might do to small capitalists, for it cannot now injure poor emigrants (there being no funds left to send them out), would it not be well to publish extensively the fact, that £200,000 worth of bills, drawn on the Home Government, have been dishonored and returned on the Colonial Governor; so that not a shilling is left to pay the surveying staff, the police, nor the civil officers for many years to come. Compare this state of things with the flourishing colony of New South Wales, in which we find, from the Governor's speech on opening the Legislative Assembly at

Sydney in July last, that after paying all the expenses of the colony, he had in hand the sum of £150,000, to be dedicated to the purposes of free immigration. As a further proof of the wretchedness of the settlement of South Australia, it appears that no fewer than fifty criminals were capitally convicted at the last quarter sessions held at Adelaide, six of whom were sentenced to be executed, and the sentence carried into effect on two, and twenty-four were transported for life, and these out of a population of little more than 15,000. Let your correspondent, and others enamoured of this colony, chew the cud on these facts, and disprove them if they can.

ONE WHO NEVER WAS THERE, AND HAS CERTAINLY NO WISH TO GO.

[J.F.T. remarks..] I say 12,000+?

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The rain pours down in Torrents in our short wet season & appears indeed much more calculated to wash away the soil than to refresh it. During this season a Tent is a very poor Protection from the weather especially in the night.

E'en as I write, the dripping room descends,

Not in a gentle sentimental Shower:

But one that drenches to the finger Ends!

Old Jacob says "I used to think it rained hardish like betimes @ Penzance but here it comes down in Bucketfulls, but I suppose we are to have our share of rain here as well as at home & it only comes down in this fashion to make up for doing nothing at all during all the rest of the year"! We have frequently had to put our clothes on wet thro' in the morning, but people don't seem at all likely to take cold here & we get used to these little things — a long voyage at sea helps not a little to harden one. We think nothing of throwing ourselves down when the night comes at the bottom of the Tent merely lapped up in our blankets & a Kangaroo Rug & if the "varmint" will only be moderately peaceable we never mind either wind or weather.

"Ours the fresh Turf & not the feverish Bed

"Our lullaby is the roar of the "Great Southern Ocean,"

"The ever sounding & mysterious sea sings us to sleep

" And for a time we forget we are Exiles!!" (There's a flourish for you!)

We have a Well of the best water in the Colony & which stands the long drought of the Summer. No small matter this. Our Fare is for breakfast — Damper, Salt Pork & Tea, for Dinner Salt Pork, Damper & Tea, & for Supper Tea, Damper & Salt Pork! & by way of a little further variety as the greatest luxuries will cloy from too constant repetition, we occasionally substitute a piece of "salt Junk" or Mehogany as we generally call it. It is difficult to cut up plants with anything but a hatchet or handsaw. In place of the Pork I have Salt Junk, Damper & Tea! Dampers are large, unleavened cakes made of coarse flour & baked without either oven or anything else — being merely buried overhead in the hot wood ashes, in the open air, outside the Tent where we have our fire always burning — sometimes the Dough is made into a round ball & instead of being baked it is boiled & is then called a "Doboy"! The Pork & Beef are managed in this fashion — sufficient for the days use is taken out of the "Harness Cask" the previous night & is left soaking in water all night to extract a little of the Salt & on the following morning this is boiled after which it is again placed in cold water until it is hard & firm & is eaten cold, or occasionally devilled on the hot ashes & smother'd in Cayenne Pepper which we get very good & cheap here. Not very sumptuous fare you will say, but fresh meat is not to be thought of in the bush.

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On account of the Sun & the Flies, when in town I have seen [*flies on*] meat before it has been taken off the dinner Table, [*& after*] dinner, all alive [*with flies*], which meat has been killed that same morning or during the night — this is a very common occurrence in the hot weather, & in fact the butchers (let them be as careful as possible) all lose money (from the immense quantity of meat which spoil on their hands) at this time of the year & only kill just to keep their customers together. Cheese & Butter & even Potatoes (which we get from Van Dieman's Land & have them selling as high as £60 per ton!!) are expensive Luxuries here — (The Hay consumed by the horses in town nearly all comes from Van Dieman's Land & is generally some £20 per ton & Oats 10/s to 15/s per bushel.) The only luxuries we indulge in are a Pipe of negrohead Tobacco or a Manilla or Chincorro Cigar — real Manillas are very fine! Everybody smokes here — even the women if they have been old Lags are always seen with a little black Pipe stuck in the corner of their mouths & it is very common here for people to get up in the middle of the night to smoke, or otherwise to smoke in bed. The large Iron Tea Kettle is in perpetual requisition all the day thro' & is always hanging up over the fire ready for use — while every now & then it is replenished with a handful of Sugar a handful of Tea & a quart or two of water — Here you have a rough sketch of our Tent & Talk of "Robinson Crusoe" — pooh!

Sketch of the tent, the kettle boiling on the fire and old Jacob, smoking a pipe under a broad-brimmed hat..

Fire with the Tea Kettle. Old J. in one of the straw "Manilla" hats worn here

When the Arts were in their Infancy the old Painters used to write over their Productions this is a "horse" this is a "Cow" &c. I have adopted the hint.

In trying my hand at damper baking the o' day for the first time I was so unfortunate (my thoughts having rambled some thousand of miles from my work) as to burn it almost to a cinder, however, I consoled myself with the reflection that Alfred the Great managed very little better under similar circumstances!!

Tea, Sugar & Tobacco are the most reasonable things we have here & well for most is that they are so, as here they are not luxuries only but absolute necessities.

I am quite satisfied that I have drunk more Tea since I came here than during my whole life before — a person must live in a dry hot climate like this & live upon salt Provisions to know the real value of Tea, which "cheers but not inebriates" we find it much more cooling & refreshing than anything else. Coffee drunk by the quart as we drink here is found

[A newspaper cutting, dated 1841 on the reverse...]

IMPORTANT TO THE PUBLIC

DANIEL NICHOLSON & SON respectfully inform the inhabitants of Adelaide and the colony that they can get all kinds of spirits, wines, porter, ale, beer, &c., at their stores, corner of Hindley and Rosina streets at least 60 to 70 per cent under the current prices, for cash. They will upon no account sell less than a gallon of spirits, a dozen of wine porter, ale, and beer; but they sell any quantity of vinegar, lemon juice, lemon syrup, &c. Their teas are giving great satisfaction.

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too heating. Our other most useful article of consumption is Salt Pork! I have since I came here eaten so much Salt Pork! bah! — that I don't suppose I shall ever again have the conscience to look a Pig in the face without blushing!!

The young country Lad who declared that his utmost ambition would be gratified if he could only swing on a gate all his Life eating fat Bacon — would enjoy present life down here. The Place we live at is called Brighton (tho' the name ... our Tent & Garden, dignified with the name of Brighton Villa are the only occupations @ Brighton — our next door neighbour is upwards of three miles off. We are often weeks together without seeing a single human being. We literally take no note of time, not having either watch or clock & on several occasions have so far lost our reckoning as to suppose on the Tuesday it was either Friday or Saturday. We can rely upon it being Sunday if we happen to see a party from Town — shooting! This is to be alone, this, this is Solitude!!

“Ours is no lightsome land of social mirth
“but He that is lonely, hither let him roam
“and gaze complacent on congenial Earth.
“Here he whom sadness sootheth may abide,
“and scarce regret the region of his birth”.

There are lots of towns & villages here without a single house, hut, or tent, on them — many persons who have come out from England bringing land orders with them purchased there, find when they get here that their 80 acre Sections are no good, in the way of farming — set their wits to work & give the Section a fine name — such as Brighton — Bath — Hindmarsh (the name of the first Governor) Gawler Town (the name of the present Governor), Walkerville (after Captain Walker who was the largest merchant in the place some time ago) & so on. The next thing is to divide the Section into acre allotments as Adelaide was originally, which said allotments are then put up by auction along with Ironmongery, Gown Pieces, Hops Ploughs & Harrows & poor Emigrants clothes & Tools &c &c, and are knocked off at from £2 to £4 per acre, deeds included. These lots have been for the most part bought by labouring men who had managed to save a few pounds & have been gammoned into the belief that their land will form part of a town some time or other — but of what use the Pieces of land really are nobody can tell! However all this has ceased for some time past, and it was high time; for while this sort of gambling land jobbing was going on people have been attending to nothing else. To give you an Idea of the ridiculous extent to which puffing was carried on during this “land mania” our colonial Geo. Robins advertized an 80 acre Section for Sale by auction (in the above way) which he called “Clifton” & amongst other

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great advantages pointed out he particularly calls attention to the “Lion like roar” of the Water which rushing like a Torrent from the rocks runs thro' the centre of the beautiful & picturesque town of Clifton. This Clifton we had great difficulty in finding when we were in the middle of it! The “Lion like Roar” alludes to a very small run of water “A little Rill of scanty stream & bed” which we had walked over once or twice without perceiving it & which would run easily thro' a pipe of from 2 to 3 In. bore & which after running some 400 yards (& this is only for a few months in the year) looses itself in the sand — However, this Rill, small as it is, is the only thing I have seen or heard of, having the slightest pretensions to be called a Brook in all the Colony. I ought to mention that in returning from Clifton we lost our way & on arriving at length at a habitation we called to enquire the way & beg a drink of water. After knocking some time at the door, a lady presented herself at the window with a brace of Pistols in her hands! & demanded our business — stating she was alone & was afraid of Darkies or Bushrangers!

My health has improved very much since I came down to the Sea-side, owing I believe in a great measure to bathing every Evening in the Sea. Most people are afraid to bathe here on account of the Sharks, but I have met with none yet, while bathing, large enough to be dangerous & what there are appear much more afraid of me than I am of them. However I have seen one lately which some fishermen caught a few miles off, out at Sea which has rather bother'd me. This was a large Tiger Shark about 10 feet long

different to any I had ever seen before; being barred or streaked all over, he looked as if he would be rather an ugly customer to meet in his own Element, & I must confess that “tho’ there is something of pride in the perilous hour” yet I don’t feel quite so much inclined to bathing as I “was used to do” nor do I find myself going quite so far from the Shore! After bathing I generally take a long & solitary ramble on our wild beach which I enjoy very much

“There is a rapture on the lonely shore

“There is Society where none intrudes

“By the deep Sea & Music in its roar”

The “Sunsets” here are often very beautiful, especially when

“...the departing day

“Dies like the Dolphin, whom each pang imbues

“With a new colour as it gasps away,

“The last still lovelier, till ‘tis gone and all is grey”.

You have no pleasure in walking out here, except it is on the Sea beach, where you can get the benefit of the Sea breezes, which are very refreshing, especially towards evening, & after a sultry day — then

“How dear to me the hour when daylight dies,

“And sunbeams melt along the silent sea,

“For then sweet dreams of other days arise”.

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In the middle of the day, however, the horrid glare of the Sun on the white sand makes it quite painful to your eyes to walk on the shore.

I like to gaze on the Sea because it is the great highway by which I expect sooner or later to make my escape from this miserable place — I like the Sea because the only real Enjoyment I have had since leaving England was at sea (having our short & pleasant Stay at the Cape of Good Hope) — while we were tossed about on the wide ocean we had some pleasure, then “blow high, blow low”

“Tho’ the strain’d mast should quiver as a reed

“ And the rent Canvass fluttering ... the gale”

still, so long as we could forget the past & think only of the future we were all full of life & Spirits

“Our hearts were like the bounding waves

“As cheery and as free

“The world of waters was our home

“And merry men were we

“and among the gayest of the gay was poor Pilgarlick, but

“The heart has that is soonest awake to the flowers,

“is always the first to be touched by the Thorns”

Our new fledged hopes had not then been blighted. What an alternation now!! Our Cabin Passengers, 16 in number, have all, except three, left the Colony and are scattered N. S. E. & W. Two of our intermediate Passengers lost their lives almost immediately after landing in the colony — Mr. I have already quite forgotten his name! Who was decidedly the most healthy-looking amongst us was carried off by an attack of Dysentery in a few days after he landed & poor Bickerstaff the Son of a Clergyman in or near Liverpool lost his life by the boat upsetting in which he was going on shipboard to make his escape from the Colony with all possible dispatch.

When I am rambling on the Shore I try to fancy myself at my old favourite place Southport, but I could more easily fancy myself “Robinson Crusoe” on his desolate Island — as I never by any possible chance see a single human being on the shore & not even a “solitary naked foot mark” but it is seldom I can ramble far & cast my eyes towards the sea without seeing a large Shoal of Porpoises at their unweildy gambols or occasionally an immense Whale rolling about in the offing, now just showing his fin above the water, now

exposing the whole of his large black side to view, & now sending the Brine spouting thro' his spiracles up to the very clouds!! No! that won't do! We have no clouds! here. I have (on one occasion) counted as many as 8 Whales at once spouting away. Tell M^r. Banks his Southport cottage w^d be considered a grand mansion here, the Governor himself has lived till lately

Sketch of a spouting whale.

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in a reed-hut built by the sailors of the Ship Buffaloe which bro^t out the first Governor, who tho^t they could rig up a house as well as a Jury mast & built it ship-fashion without "even a Chimney". Tell him also (M^r. B.) that I have seen our old friend "Piper" (who came here with an overland party from Sydney with Cattle,) & that he is "out of the way" more intelligent than any of the natives I have conversed with before — he is gone back to Sydney — he says very truly "Adelaide no good".

The only parties in the Colony known to any of our Passengers when we came here were a M^r. Forrester, a M^r. Malcolm & a M^r. Mc Ivor of course we were very anxious to hear what they had to say of the place; & it added not a little to the disappointment we all felt, seeing the Country, to find that M^r. Forrester had left the Colony for Port Philip, that M^r. Malcolm, was lying dangerously ill from the effects of "Coup de Soleil", a Stroke of the Sun, & was only waiting to gain a little strength previous to returning to Scotland, & that M^r. McIvor was dead & buried; he had brought out a large quantity of goods with him & was so dreadfully disappointed with the state in which he found things that in a fit of desperation he had shot himself thro' the Heart. We were also informed that it was next to impossible to convert goods of any description into Cash except indeed eatables & drinkables which were exceedingly scarce & in great demand, & what added not a little to my own particular disappointment was to be informed that as respected distilling, which I consider'd my sheet anchor. The Governor has just made it publicly known that they are intending to have a law passed withall possible dispatch to prohibit distilling altogether in the Colony, & likewise that there was neither Barley or Malt to be had @ any Price; however I could have substituted "sugar" which was to be purchased reasonable enough — for a makeshift but the Governor's notice had spoiled all. I was as much disappointed at this as anything because I had relied very confidently on being able to do something in this way if I saw nothing better. I had also bro^t out with me 2 servants whose passages I had paid, they signing written agreements to serve me for 12 months after landing in the Colony @ certain wages — they learned immediately on landing here that all agreements made in England were null & void in the Colony & could not be enforced.

My principle object in coming out was if possible to get a flock of Sheep. This was Rigby's Idea also but we both found

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that Sheep farming was altogether out of our reach & had avail'd myself of the opportunity afforded one when at the Cape of Good Hope of seeing the Processes of Distilling &c. at the Constantin Vineyards & by the Kindness of the Proprietor Mr. Joh van Renen had possessed myself of every necessary Information on the Subject. This M^r. Van Renen is a Dutchman & a very pleasant, hospitable, gentlemanly, sort of a fellow. I had also some of the best notes I could pick up on the Subject, but it was all to no purpose! The fact is a great proportion of the miserable revenue of the Colony is derived from the duty on imported spirits & this it is well known is the real Governor's motive (whatever other he may append for prohibiting distillers in the Colony.

Your military Governors make sad work occasionally when they begin to legislate on commercial matters — at the time flour was selling here @ £100 Guineas per Ton — Solomons a Jew Merchant here & a large holder of flour had given it out that he intended to ship a quantity of it to Sydney to enable him to get a better Price for the remainder. The Governor, in his wisdom, immediately passes an act imposing a heavy duty on all flour &c

exported from the Colony. This was exactly what Solomons (cunning Isaac!) wanted for when this was made known in the neighbouring Colonies the merchants there durst not send us any more flour fearing that in case our Market sh^d get glutted they would have to pay the heavy duty before they could remove it. Another of our sapient Governor's short sighted Laws has just passed — Labourers are very much wanted in Van Dieman's Land & a ship has visited us from there to fetch a cargo of Labourers from this place — some 200 Labourers have sail'd in the vessel engaged at certain wages in Van Dieman's Land & their passage there paid. The Govern^t. in Council has just passed a law to stop this sort of work — all labourers are now to be prohibited from leaving the Colony until they have repaid

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the Expenses incurred by the Commisioners in sending them out : upwards of £20 per head. This makes them into regular Transports; apparently as the law intends to take from them their Liberty & it will have the effect most decidedly when known in England of deterring labourers from coming out. Tho' in reality as far as the Labourers here are concerned I think it is quite futile as there is also a law to prevent parties who are in debt in the Colony from leaving it untill they have satisfied their creditors — but "where there's a will there's always a way" — & these sort of Gents are making their escape by every Ship in spite of the Law!

Young men who come out here with small capitals (a few Landed) & who have not been used to outdoor labouring work are dreadfully disappointed when they find what they have to expect, after coming so far. They cannot at all understand things for some time at first, after the fine statements they have heard & read in England, generally speaking however, they very soon find out that farming (growing grain) will not answer a man's Funds, tho' he has got an Estate! Of 80 acres (about 40 Cheshire acres) for £80 — yet the Price of the land is a mere nothing — the bare fencing it will cost nearly £400 — & untill it is fenced it is no more the owners (for any beneficial purpose) than his neighbour's, then there is a house & c. to be built & cattle to be purchas'd & after all he cannot calculate on making a Profit out of farming. The Seasons here are not to be depended on at all. You cannot calculate upon Summer & Winter, Spring-time & Harvest as at home — while frequently the hot winds or the long Droughts entirely destroy the whole of the Crops, not to mention the Fires which sometimes devastate the Country for miles together. Some, seeing at once that they can do no good here, with hope replenished & rebouyed, return to whence they came with like intent and weave their web again, others have no hearts after coming so far & being so dreadfully disappointed either to return home or to try any where else, but spend all their money (an operation which takes very little time to perform here) before they can make up their minds what to do, after which they are glad to accept of situations as Surveyors, Labourers or Drivers of Bullock Drays or some other equally pleasant employment. Some of them again go onto their Sections but in most cases the first season sickens them & many of these have cut away from the Colony without even waiting to sell their sections for what they could obtain for them by having a little patience & catching "a new Comer" —

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while others, knowing that all places may not be alike pack up their traps without loss of time (& tho' they have "all the world before them where to choose") yet they frequently jump on board the very first Ship that sails , no matter where bound to (careless what land it takes them to)

"and e'en for change of scene
would seek the Shades below!"
so new again to this, bound to
"up sticks & away".

Others again having a taste for business commence "Storekeeping".

It is a very small place they can get for £3 per week, in a front situation while there are so very many of these Stores opened that there is not business enough for one half of them nearly the whole of these storekeepers came out with the Intention of farming; & have been driven to try this line from despairing of doing any thing with their land. They endeavour to pay their high rents & to make up for lack of business by charging enormously for what little they can sell & by trying to job in almost every thing: but all wont do. You are stuck up in all Directions in large white letters "General Store", "Provision Store", "Ironmongery & Drapery Store", "Hop & Grocery store" &c. &c. the large white Letters are generally stationary, but the names of the Proprietors which are in modester Letters are perpetually changing — in fact you would fancy if you were to visit the Town @ Intervals that the Inhabitants were altogether "migratory". 12 Months generally tries a Storekeeper. By that time they mostly begin to feel the place too hot for them & then without the least notice,

One after one, they go — over the Sea!

Back to the green Isles, like rejoicing Birds!!

It is not an uncommon occurrence here for a Man when he intends bolting to go round to his principle D^{ts} [debtors] & give them receipts in full for perhaps one half of their a/c's & occasionally considerably less if paid in hard Cash! forgetting @ the same time to call upon his C^{ts}. [creditors]. Adelaide for some time has been in a regular panic — almost all the merchants & larger Storekeepers have failed! Money there is none (Sovereigns are literally Curiosities). Credit is at a "stand still", "flying Kites" & "going ahead" has

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been "all the go" for some time past & has been carried on to a great extent but it was very evident that there was no bottom to any thing; that the whole affair was rotten, & could not possibly last; and as I have all along expected, the bubble has at length burst, & all now seems rushing headlong to everlasting Smash!!!!

"On ne loge, céansu crédit — Car il est mort;

"Les mauvais payeurs l'ont tué!"

is the motto at all our Inns & lodging houses now!

During the great Pressure for Money here, an unprincipled Swindler, of the name of Richardson, (who had accumulated a good deal of money by fleecing newcomers in the Capacity of an Auctioneer) has been doing a large business here in discounting Bills on terms you will have the greatest difficulty in crediting, but I pledge you my word that the Statem^t is perfectly correct, monstrous as it seems. The fact is he has been discounting Bills to a very large amount & at dates varying from 1 to 12 Months @ 5 percent per month in many Instances getting deposits of deeds as collateral security (this was the regular business; "odd Jobs" were very considerably higher — I know Instances where thrice this amount has been paid) — which said Bills (after of course endorsing them himself) he has got discounted at the Bank of South Australia where he was in good credit @ the rate of £10 at 10 per cent per annum. Captain Walker considered when I came here as the largest Merchant & storekeeper in the place was an extensive Customer of his upon these terms. The gallant Captain has been obliged to strike his Colours!!

Jno. Rigby used to say, "Tom Morris would be crazy to be amongst this sort of work with some of his ready Cash if he knew what was going on".

I always replied that I was sure M^t. Thomas would not have faith enough in the security to embark in the business & in fact though Richardson is supposed to have cleared a deal of money up to a certain time — yet he has at length fastened himself! — a great numbers of his customers having either failed, got into Jail, or "cut their sticks! & it is very much doubted whether the auctioneer himself is not "going, going, must go, gone!" Our Jail is quite full of Merchants, StoreKeepers, Bushrangers, old runaway Lags, Thieves, & Vagabonds of all Sorts & descriptions and all mixed up together!!

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If farming had been worth following, Storekeeping would have answered well here but it is totally spoiled as all who sh^d be purchasers are converted into sellers. General Store is the general thing they aim at & these general Stores are generally the most annoying places in the world; for you invariably find at these general Stores that they always sell every article but the very thing you may happen to want! The trade of the Publican w^d be an excellent trade also if not overdone, as they get good profits & ready Cash — but then “Thou base Gongarian Slave, wouldst thou a Spiggot weild?!”

However, the publicans appear to be the only people who have the ready cash, what little there is.

Since this was written things have gradually got worse — there are 94 licensed public houses in Adelaide (licence: £25 per annum) not one half of which have been able to pay their licences — labourers are not half employed now.

One great drawback to the Colony & in fact I may say the great drawback is the awful Scarcity of Cash! Cash cannot be had for any thing now! A Man may have for Instance a good rental arising from houses in the Town but on wishing to leave the Colony he finds it almost impossible to get quit of his property at any Sacrifice except by way of barter for Stock (Sheep & Cattle). The only currency we have is the South Australian Co. Bank Notes — these are made payable here in Cash on Demand but take a Lot to the bank & demand Cash: they tell you they cannot give you Gold, Silver is a legal Tender & they have even gone so far I have been informed in several Instances as to offer to pay the amount in 4 Pieces if the party persist in having Cash. See note above.

I saw myself £60 — sixty Pounds — paid (& Deeds deposited as security) to discount a Bill @ 3 m^s. for £130, not by the Bank — a private Individual.

Our City of Adelaide is at all seasons a most beastly place — being built in a regular clay pit — in the hot weather, more especially when the hot winds prevail, it is absolutely a perfect misery to exist in the place; everything is Sand & Dust! Your Clothes, your bedding, your eatables, your drinkables, in fact all! all! all! totally covered & coloured with the pounded red clay & fine sand. The very atmosphere itself is a regular cloud of hot dust, which penetrates every where. Your Eyes, your Mouth & your Nostrils get filled with it. The Town seen from a distance at this time, appears all in a Blaze — while to mend the matter so soon as the wet weather sets in, this is all converted by means of the

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Bullock Drays &c. into a very interesting quagmire, & instead of having it in your Eyes & mouth you probably get up to the knees in it, at all events you cannot possibly wade thro' the streets without being ankle deep in it & if on any account you are necessitated to traverse the streets in the night during this season you may fully make up your mind, to return home minus a shoe or two; besides having been pitched occasionally neck over heels into the mud, caused by your having stumbled over the stumps of Trees, which said Stumps appear to have been left in the streets for no other earthly purpose that I can imagine except for People to break their necks over. (see printed note below). And then the Society! you meet in the Town. We read that Romulus, after he had laid the foundations of the City of Rome in order to increase the number of its Inhabitants, opened it as a Sanctuary for all Malefactors, Slaves & such as were desirous of Novelty, & that these Gentry flocked in such great numbers to the new City as in a very short time considerably to increase the number of his subjects. Our modern City of Adelaide has increased precisely in the same way. It's contiguity to the penal Settlements making it a convenient place of escape for the Convicts, & its great distance from England rendering it a tolerably secure retreat for parties there having occasion to seek a City of Refuge, have caused a great influx of all sorts of desperate characters into the place. I have frequently been amused by

hearing the old runaway Lags from Sydney & Van Dieman's Land swear they will leave the Colony as it is impossible to live among such a Lot of Rogues & Swindlers!!!! These sorts of Characters have given a "tone" to Society any thing but pleasant to parties who have been used to things a little bit decent. I can very safely say with the Poet,

"Myself & th' Sun

"Have now, two years of rambling run;

"And he before his Wheels has driven

"The grand Menagerie of Heaven

"While I have met on Earth, I'll swear

"As many Brutes as he has there!"

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Another great nuisance in our great City is the unceasing noise all night. While the fleas "et hoc genus omnie" have kept you awake by dancing Quadrilles upon you all night, you are also regularly serenaded during the greater part of it with a Concert of the most discordant noises. There are great numbers of Poultry kept in & about the town, & about 11 o'clock every night all the Cocks far & near commence crowing with all their might & main & continue crowing for two or three hours as if they were contending for a wager which could crow the loudest & keep it up the longest. This crowing business in the middle of the night used to puzzle me amazingly & I still cannot account for it, but such is the fact!! Many people again bring out Greyhounds to catch the Kangaroos! & sheep dogs to Guard their Sheep! &c. but very few of them ever find any use for their Dogs when they get here. However, be this as it may, the Town swarms with them and every night hundreds of these Pests spend the greater part of the night in howling, barking, & baying the moon, while to fill up the melody fitfully at intervals, the wild unearthly howl of the Savages who are busy at their Corroborees is borne on the midnight breeze! Take it all together, the town is certainly of all the places I ever saw or could possibly imagine the most filthy, blackguard, beastly & accursed!! — I was "going to say" — but

I won't Anathematize

my present place of Rest

There may be worse, tho' where,

God knows I don't!!

The newspaper articles here are all penn'd with an eye to England & the Governor distributes the government printing &c. amongst them in proportion to their Skill & Zeal in puffing the Colony & himself — every thing injurious to the place is carefully kept back & all sorts of puffs, some of which appear absolutely ridiculous here, are inserted to seduce parties to come.

[Newspaper articles...] Note to page 37

FEROCIOUS DOGS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REGISTER

GENTLEMEN — I beg leave, through the medium of your columns, to call the attention of the authorities to the fact that numbers of these animals are still allowed to infest our streets, frequently to the serious annoyance and danger of the inhabitants when engaged about their lawful business. As a proof of this, I had occasion, a few evenings ago, to walk down Grenfell-street, and having passed Hindmarsh-square, several large dogs rushed furiously towards me, three of which I could with difficulty beat off, and not until I had nearly disabled two of them with a stick which I fortunately had with me at the time.

Now, this is truly a disgraceful state of things, and one which has been allowed to remain too long unrectified, but as the Press has already alluded to this matter, I trust a hint is all that is necessary, in order to have the evil removed.

By giving publicity to the above, you will oblige,
Your grateful servant,

...

... The summit of this mountain is calculated to be about eighteen miles from Holdfast Bay, though it proves, of course, much more to the pedestrian, as in approaching it direct from Adelaide, many smaller hills must be passed over, the principal object in view seeming almost equally distant on attaining every succeeding elevation. From this spot, 106 peaks may be counted. It is here generally cold, and always windy, even when the woods below are in perfect repose. The common fly and musquito, which are found in all countries and in all situations, alone follow the traveller here, the other winged diurnal insects keeping to their usual shady haunts in the wooded plains, though beneath the bark of the trees, the same small species of beetles, spiders, &c, are found.

[Article from the South Australian Register on bush fires]

The People again who are compelled to remain in the Country are well aware that almost their very existence depends upon fresh dupes coming out, & having generally been plundered themselves they wish to have an opportunity of doing the same

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kind office to others. Jno Rigby told me that in writing home he had avoided saying much against the Colony lest it should prevent Tom. Morris from sending him out some Consignments he had promised him!! I now venture to mention this circumstance because I feel assured that if M^r. M. had any Intention of sending the said Consignments to M^r. John, he would have done so long ere this!

I am not aware whether we have any Sangredo D^{ts} here or whether our medical men even prescribe Phlebotomy in any cases tho' I have had an opportunity of witnessing a good deal of Practice among these Gents & queer sort of Practice it is, some of it, I can tell you — but I was going to say that from my own experience I should consider bleeding both by the leech & Lancet as entirely works of supererogation here, or worse than useless, as there is always a regular drain going on upon the system — bloodsuckers of one sort or another being perpetually @ work day & night.

As a specimen of medical Colonial practise I have known Dr Litchfield of Adelaide, who is considered the most respectable practitioner in the place, in several instances where he knew the parties could pay, to salivate & very severely too, for the usual Illness occasioned by hard drinking & to pay regular visits @ 1 Guinea per visit every day during the working of his Prescription — Lawyers & doctors are not considered very scrupulous in old England tho' for my own part I must say that I consider them very much belied there, but here God help the poor Devil who gets into their clutches — they consider them patients & clients as here to-day & gone tomorrow, & their system is to make hay while the sun shines & in fact like almost all other parties in the Colony to make as much as they possibly can in as short a time as possible, & then to quit the place & having but this one object in view, if they can only succeed in accomplishing this — they appear to have come to the conclusion that no matter how or by what means this is done — "The End sanctifies the means"!

I think I have said quite enough about the beastly

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Town & all belonging to it to satisfy you it is not the most desirable place in the World to live in. You may sum it up as sand, dust, & mud, Fleas Flies Ants Bugs & Humbugs! The Country is certainly not so bad as the Town but we have only about two months of really enjoyable weather even in the Country but during this short time (to give the devil his due!) every body must acknowledge that the weather is truly delightful — this takes place immed'ly after our wet season & before the excessively hot weather sets in, accompanied

by the hot winds & the fierce tormenting glare of the Sun, with hosts of flies &c. The Country does at this Season make an attempt at looking green and the plains are all enamell'd with curious beautiful flowers in great profusion & variety - "and all looks flow'ry wild and sweet" — but this is only for a very short time. A Walk @ Night, however, during this short period is perhaps as great a luxury as you can well imagine. The atmosphere is deliciously soft & balmy, with gentle fanning breezes, just warm enough to be pleasant,

"And mellow'd to that tender light"

"Which Heaven to gaudy Day denies"

While the clear, cloudless, azure, canopy above appears beyond comparison more brilliantly illuminated than on the finest frosty Xmas night @ home. These are the nights of "cloudless climes & starry skies". These are the nights & these are the climes

"Where the Sun loves to pause with so fond a delay

"That the night only draws a thin veil o'er the day:

"Where simply to feel that we breathe that we live

"Is worth the best Joy that life elsewhere can give!"

However dreamy the description may appear to those not conversant with these latitudes I assure you it portrays but faintly the emotions I have often felt on these lovely Nights. And these are the Nights to enjoy "Possum or Wallaby shooting", or to go out with a party of natives (they never go out at night except with the whites) & watch them ascend the tallest Trees perhaps 80 feet & upwards (there are Trees twice this height in the Colony) to the first branch & some 30 ft in girth after these nimble creatures, which they accomplish with the greatest ease making holes as they go along with the pointed ends of their Waddies in the thick soft bark of the Trees to put their toes into, & so very sure is their sense of seeing that they can tell to a certainty by examining the bark whether an Opossum has ascended the tree & also whether it has returned — something like a sportsman at home pricks a hare on the ground. But "all that's bright must fade the brightest still the fleetest" & our pleasant weather is soon over to be followed by a Season

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too bright or too hot to be anything like agreeable to an unseasoned Englishman.

The Climate seldom agrees with New Comers. Adelaide in particular, especially in the hot weather, is a most unhealthy place. There being no common Sewers, the large quantity of animals & vegetable matter in a state of decomposition lying about in all directions completely impregnates the atmosphere with "miasm" in addition to which the water is for the most part very unwholesome. The water from the Torrens (the "river" as it is called which "sometimes" runs past the Town) being full of animalcules, & the water from the wells having in solution either Lime, chalk, magnesia, or allum & being frequently quite brackish. Diarrhoea & Dysentery are the prevailing complaints & make sad havoc with the fresh arrivals who (as the common expression here is) "die like rotten sheep" — this, tho' not a very elegant, I consider a very expressive simile — for it is just the fact!!

The "Buckinghamshire" which reached here a short time before us (an old East India man of 1,200 Tons burthen) left England with 800 Passengers & in less than 4 Months after they landed in the Colony some 300 of them were in their Graves. The man who made the rough dead boxes (called Coffins) in which they were put underground (barely out of reach of the wild dogs) told me the other day that the average deaths among them for sometime was six per Day, & they were never allowed to be more than 24 hours above ground after they were pronounced to be dead. Cases of Coup de Soleil : also are not infrequent here during the extreme heat of the summer especially when you have no better protection than a Tent, as the heat for some months is excessively oppressive. The Thermometer frequently ranging to 130 in the Shade, while "Punkalis" & all the o' Inventions made use of in India as Protectors against the heat are unknown here. The sudden alteration from heat to cold is also very injurious — frequently after the hottest day you are obliged to have blankets @ night, and then again the tormenting ophthalmia afforded by the Glare of the Sun

with the Dust & Flies &c. &c. One way or an oth^r people "pop off" very fast here and for my own part I cannot conscientiously say that I pity them much (for "living" in this place I only consider another word for dying a lingering death) and "many deaths do they escape by this".

"They have been spar'd the Exiles' weariness of soul
"That deepens as life passes — the sad days
"That onward with unwarying dullness scroll
"Each heavier than the last, and they would praise

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"If they knew all, the mercy of the doom
"Which takes a few dark years & gives a tomb! —
"Spared from that lingering here & ah! Still more
"Spared from that desolate & sad return
"Unto the half forgotten native shore,
"Where while few greet them, they alas must mourn
"Mourn for the chang'd, the selfish, & the dead,
"Whom once they loved, ere life's first sunshine fled.

The climate & the total absence of everything like comfort commit sad Ravages upon the Women, in particular, who generally speaking are not able to "rough it" like the men, Let them be ever so young & blooming when they land in these Colonies they soon become faded & haggard. Low spirits no doubt in addition to the o^r Causes helping inevitably to "drive the red rose from the cheek" while the too ardent embraces of the Sun play equal havoc with the white roses. I never knew a woman seriously say she was happy here! The Country altogether seems unsuitable to the sex — in our own favoured country (favoured eminently in this respect at all events) there is a period in a Women's life which may be called the Stage of beauty where nature, having developed the fullness of female grace, pauses, to admire her handy work; ere gradually & with reluctant hand She dissipates the mellow'd charms — here this is not the case — in this "Land of the Sun" there is no resting place. You see only the growing young Girl & the withered old Woman!

Man & Wife seldom agree here & very frequently separate — the nuisances of all sorts make them both cross & ill tempered with each other — but these sorts of matters are easily arranged here, & without any fuss or fizzig!! (this is a Colonial word). When a man parts with his wife — he takes "another or another's" & the lady also, as "nobody knows her here" does not scruple with all possible dispatch to follow her husbands example. "Damages & Divorces" & "all that sort of thing" are not Colonial. People just do exactly what they like here; without studying appearances or calculating Consequences! I suppose the Sun has something to do with the matter. "The Devil's in the (Sun) for Mischief".

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So much for the married folks. As for the Maids, but there are so very few if any Maids, unless they are very "piece canaille", ever cross the Line!! & you, too, I recollect, are a sober benedict now; so we'll say nothing about them! — generally speaking however, the young men are such as could not get on at home & the young Lasses such as could not get off!

(see Page 42)

Note to Page 42

I want to give you an Idea of this Sheepfarming business.

As respects to Sheep farming which is the most legitimate Employment of Capital in this Country & without which these Colonies could not exist — except as a mere Recepticle for Convicts — I send you principally the information of M^r Banks who used to talk this matter over with me occasionally. The real state of the matter I could never thoroughly & properly

understand the Subject from the published Statements — in fact I now find that all the publish'd accounts in the way of Books & pamphlets respecting these Colonies have been written by interested Parties — with one Motive, viz. to draw the Tide of Emigration in this Direction, instead of towards Canada & the United States! — However a person with a little Capital say 2 to £3,000 may do much better with his money here than he could in England with the same Amount, provided he can dispense with every Luxury & Comfort he has been used to for a few years & make up his Mind to rough it out in the bush manfully. I will suppose a man with the needful to have made up his mind to this, & I will take Port Philip for his Destination which as I have said before is incomparably

the best place for Sheep farming. He may on landing @ Melbourne & making the necessary Enquiries as to the localities of the unoccupied Lands either go out onto the far Bush as a Squatter in which case he will have his land free gratis for nothing so long as he can keep possession of it, — but he will have to live in a Tent through it as he cannot erect any buildings on account of the land being liable to be taken over his head, when anyone takes a fancy to it, who is able to purchase it; & he is always liable to be turned off his runs @ a Moments notice. Or otherwise which is the better plan, if his funds will allow it he may purchase Land at from 5d to 10d per acre, the upper Price being 5/- ..

By a late regulation all the land is now sold at one uniform price viz. at £1 per acre. ...& in purchasing a few hundred acres of good land he may generally select it, so as to command a back run, to a greater extent than his Purchase, of inferior land — which it will — I was going to say — never — be worth any one's while to purchase — at all events if he is in any danger of losing it, it will be better worth his money at any time than that of other People. Here he may have his homestead & e'en his flock increase & become too numerous for his Run. He may send Shepherds out with swarms from his hive further into the bush to squat with the different flocks & in this way he may have several blacks.

At Port Philip you may purchase good Sheep at lambing time @ 25/- per head. These will almost immediately increase in number 80 to 100 per Cent by lambing. The Amount of the Profits will of course depend upon the Amount of Capital invested. A large flock or flocks are managed cheaper

& more profitably than a small one. The Profits rise out of the Sale of the wool & wether Lambs & the increase of the flocks by the Ewes. The whole increase in number from lambing may be safely reckoned @ 86 per Cent per annum, one half of these however are Wethers & are sold at say 4 Months old @ 8/- per head & the Wool say 4/- per fleece. The fleeces weigh from 3lbs to 5lbs each & the present price for wool is 12d per lb for unwashed & 15d for washed Wool. So that the Account will stand thus —

	£	s	
1000 Sheep @ 25/-	1250	0	0
250 Acres of Land @ 20/-	250	0	0
Buildings Stock Yards &c.	500	0	0
	<u>£2000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

This is for Capital for the Interest & Profits upon this, the first year's a/c will stand —

	£	s	d
1000 Fleeces @ 4/-	200	0	0
430 Wethers @ 8/-	172	0	0
430 Ewes @ £1 -	430	0	0
	<u>£802</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

There is also the wool from the lambs	}	
which have shorn the first year, but	}	
I should only	}	
have to add it to take it off again as below.	}	
From this you must deduct the	}	
amount received for the Wool which	}	200 - 0 - 0
in all well managed Concerns about	}	
pays the expenses of different sorts,	}	
perhaps the first year it might not be sufficient	}	
but it is amply sufficient as the flocks increase.	}	
Leaving for the full Profits the first	}	
Year - in Round numbers & without	}	
entering into minutiae.	}	<u>£602 - 0 - 0</u>

The next year he will have the Increase &c. on 1430 Ewes instead of 1000 & so on from year to year — increasing with greater strides every year.

It is the regular progressing increasing Ratio at which the flocks multiply from year to year, after the way of compound interest, without having to invest more Capital & then machinery, having a self-renovating Power in them itself which prevents it from deteriorating in value & from requiring a set off against your Profits for wear & tear mechanical Improvements & new Inventions &c.. I say it is this Sort of thing which has made so many fortunes in New South Wales assisted no doubt, very materially, by the mere nominal Price at which the old Settlers got Possession of large Tracts of the best land and Convict labour as much as they required at No Wages — merely giving the men Rations! But still, Sheep farming is yet a profitable Investment for Capital tho' not so much so as formerly. And a man now must have £2 to £3000 to enable him to commence fairly or he looses much time the first few years — in doing nothing.

Much as I hate this Country, as I have very good Cause to do, yet I still think if I was in England with 2 to £3000-0-0 & only that, I should be tempted to come out to this Country again & rough it for a few years with the almost absolute certainty, barring accidents, of returning at the end of these few years with a comfortable Independence, realized by Sheep farming, or if I preferred a more active business like life I could open a Store in Sydney & with my ready Cash could attend all the auctions, where Goods — Ships Cargoes & Merchandise of all sorts — are frequently sold for ready money at extremely low Prices & which said Goods may very often, by waiting a little & by retailing them in smaller lots, be resold at 50 per cent Profit! Large fortunes have been made in this way & are still to be made with Activity, Caution, and Capital! But "war" Sharks! Sharks! Sharks!, land Sharks!! Sydney land Sharks!

The Fortunes made in New South Wales & Van Dieman's Land out of small Capitals & which have been the lures held out to entice people here were made under very different circumstances to any which are to be met with in this Colony or even in those places now. If a man formerly went out to either of those colonies with some five hundred Pounds in his pocket he had no difficulty in procuring a Grant of 1000 or 1500 Acres of Land (the land absolutely given to him by the Governor) and as many convict labourers "assigned" to him as he could find supplement for to whom he paid no wages merely giving them certain stipulated rations &c. & thus relieving Government of the Expense of their keep, & he had then the whole of his money left to purchase Stock &c while during harvest time or sheep shearing &c. all the Convicts — employed by the government in the government works such as cutting roads &c. &c. were lent out to the different settlers who had occasion for their services on these busy occasions — under these circumstances fortunes were accumulated & without any very great difficulty but things are quite altered now

“For all the golden hues that shine in this age
“Shine less upon the Pocket than the visage!

A man coming out here with the intention of being a Stock farmer & only bringing with him a few hundred Pounds finds things very different. Cattle are almost double the price they are in New South Wales, Land is £1 per acre, & all the money the land is sold for “leaves the Colony” & goes to England while Wages are 20 (to 25) per week versus keeping the men and the expense of their keep owing to the high price of Provisions here has all along been almost double to what it is in the other Colonies. Of course this acts very much to the disadvantage of the Sheep farmer here who has only his Wool to export & which he had to send to the same market as the others have. In fact with a less Sum than from £2500 to £3000 it is folly to attempt Sheep farming in this Colony, but with that Sum a man who can make up his mind to go out into the bush & rough it & who has courage to face a Bushranger now & then may with proper management very soon materially increase his Capital even here, but from the best Information I have been able to procure

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on the Subject I should most decidedly recommend the Settlement at Port Philip to a Person wishing to establish himself as a Sheep farmer before any of the o^r Colonies in this Part of the World — He may commence there with less Capital & get better land for less money while food & labour (qr now?) are both cheaper than with us. Port Philip has risen solely by its own merits — the land is comparatively good, it is only half the distance from Sydney that this place is & indirectly opposite Van Dieman’s Land, it is also the most Southern part of New Holland & consequently the coolest. However no-one there ever thinks of growing grain, they are all Settlers with flocks of Sheep &c. & generally have “swarmed” from New South Wales & Van Dieman’s Land as the Land in those Colonies gets too much taken up for them & for the most part are merely “squatters” put on the unsold Lands up the Country. (See note [*previous note on page 42*])

Some time ago I was on a visit for a few weeks @ John Rigby’s — He lives in a Tent about 10 miles from Adelaide & rents the place he occupies. He has to pay £50 per annum for an 80 acre section of almost as barren land as you can imagine — without either buildings, fences or any sort of Improvements upon it — merely because it is near the Town & has water on it all the year thro’. You would have smiled to see Rigby & me turning out like two Backwoodsmen in America with each an hatchet & carrying a crosscut Saw — fancy us pulling away at the Saw under a broiling sun almost hot enough to fry a beefsteak without a fire.

“Damn the Saw”,

“Curse the Timber”, !

“It won’t cut”,

“Pull”, “Pull”, “Pull”, &c., &c.

We did not make much out I can assure you & after all what few trees we did fall were exceedingly hard he could never do anything with them — not even split them for fencing! He had about fifteen to twenty Cows when I was stopping with him & never got more than some 12 quarts of milk @ a meal from the whole of them. — To be sure it was before the rainy season commenced & his Cows were not in good note — but a Cow that will give two to three quarts of milk at a milking or 1 lb of Butter — 3/- per lb — per week with a continuance is considered a good cow here. I ought to mention that the Cattle increase fast & the young are reared at little or no expense. Rigby was fortunate in bringing out Timber deals with him when he came here

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which paid him very well, for not seeing any chance of commencing farming to any advantage he built three Cottages (2 Rooms in each & 1 story high as are almost all the houses here) at an expence of about £350 as he used his own horse & cart himself & also

his own timber. These Cottages he let for £1 per week each, himself & family living in a Tent, but finding that from the high price of Provisions he could not possibly support his family on the Rents & what he could make by his Cart & horse, which he drove himself, jobbing about in a smock frock, he exchanged the houses for Cattle & is now trying a dairy farm. But I fear it will be very uphill work tho' he makes a good Settler, is very steady & works hard — in fact here are no temptations here to be otherwise than steady — unless it is drinking — which in the hot weather soon kills those who follow this practice to excess. Rigby declares he would not remain a day in the Colony, only for the Expence of removing a Family which is no joke, as to his family none of them like the place. One great reason of his leaving the Town was that his family were dangerously ill there — he lost the youngest — the others are all well enough now since they have got into the Bush. He has often told me he is quite frightened when he awakes in the middle of the night & begins to think of the strange place he has brought his family to.

It will probably help you to form some Idea of the Land when I tell you that Rigby, in answer to my saying that I wondered he would take a 7 year lease of such a barren Place, stated that he had seen as bad or worse land in England & in confirmation of this mentioned some place he called "Hoscough Moss" — this (not happening to know Hoscough Moss) I could not contradict, but fancy a Man bringing a family 16,000 miles over the wide Ocean to rent some 80 sterile acres of Chat Moss or Martin Meer (which I have seen & which I suppose are something similar to Hoscough Moss) @ [£]50 per annum & in such a Climate & with labour at such a Price! (Rigby's place was purchased at 12/- per acre when the Colony was first established).

One great curse to the Land here is the fact that instead of improving by being pastured as in England, here it invariably deteriorates, especially if pastured by Sheep which bite close & leave the roots of the grass exposed to the powerful rays of the Sun & to the blasting hot winds, which prevail here in the Summer months & which completely burn up the roots when not protected by the herbage.

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Rigby has the benefit of a back run to his place at present but which is liable to be taken from him at any time — in which case the Section would not half keep his present Stock of Cattle. Rigby has thoughts of going to New Zealand but has given it up.

I receiv'd a Letter a short time ago from an old Shipmate of mine who left this for New Zealand some months ago. He does not speak very favourably of the place but likes it better than South Australia — he describes the Country as consisting almost altogether of high rocky hills & deep gullies & ravines quite destitute of grass of any description, instead of which what few plains there are are covered with Fern Trees, some of which grow to a very large size. There are plenty of wild hogs in the Country which increase fast & get fat on the Fern Trees. The Climate he considers much superior to ours as respects vegetation. They have more rain even than what falls in England. They have also lots of Brooks & rivulets, the sight of which he describes as quite refreshing after a Residence in sandy droughts, New Holland.

The Natives appear more dangerous than our darkies — they frequently, he says, cut off the ears of Parties who infringe their Solemn Customs. He mentions two affairs which had first taken place there to give me some Idea of the natives. A Son of one [of] the Chiefs had been drinking in a Grog Shop & while excited by the Liquor, became very insolent & a scuffle taking place — the window was smashed. The Warrior got cut in the face with a piece of the glass; on seeing the blood, he rushed out to his hut & returned almost immed'ly with a loaded Musket, shot one of the Party dead. He was with some difficulty at length overpowered & lodged in prison, shortly after which by some means or another a loaded Musket was handed to him & while unobserved by his guard he ordered his wife to sit behind him presenting the muzzle of the piece to his breast pulled the Trigger & the contents of the Gun passed thro' both bodies.

There is also another long yarn (the Sailor fellow's dreadfully long yarns) respecting a chief of the name of Robulla, finishing with their eating a white man, but I have yarns enough by my own without boring you with Tales of the New Zealand Cannibals.

John Rigby has given up the Idea of New Zealand in as great measure owing to the fact of there being no Grass there. He says Kangaroo Grass is better than no Grass at all & I tell him this is about the most he can truly & conscientiously say in its favour.

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The Settlers out at the Sheep stations very seldom visit Adelaide. The bullock dray is sent to town once per month, perhaps, or what few necessaries are wanted in the Bush. Generally speaking a Chest of Tea, (China), a Cask of Pork (fresh or Van Dieman's Land), a Bag of Sugar (E. In.), a Barrel of flour (American), a Bag of rice (E. In.) & a few lbs of Tobacco (E. In.) comprise all that is required in a bush life.

"Man wants but little here below"

& yet you will observe all his wants have to be supplied by o^r countries!

Parties out in the bush @ the distant sheep stations are frequently put upon short commons & sometimes almost reduced to Starvation in consequence of the bullock dray breaking down when going for Provisions, and instead of returning in 3 or 4 days the Dray will be stuck fast in one of the deep Gullies (we have no bridges) for perhaps 2 or 3 weeks.

There has not been as much grain grown in the Colony in any one year as would support the Colony one week, besides which all the wheat which is imported has to be sent to Van Dieman's Land some 700 miles to be ground & of course the flour has to come back the same distance, while freights & Insurance are very high here. But we have no corn mills in all the Colony, except indeed few hand mills @ some of the larger Stations. £3000 per week has left the Colony for flour alone while the Exports were nil.

I went over with a friend of mine to his sheep station about 50 miles up the country a short time ago and spent a week with him. We were both mounted on Timor Ponies (little hardy brutes but very wild as they are generally several years old when they are captured in the Island of Timor, & are always "just as God made them" like the lady's Pigs). We never get any but the horses – the mares are all kept for breeding. They can never be said to be perfectly tamed or broken in. We had three good Kangaroo dogs with us & had two runs after Kangaroos but missed them both – the ground was hard & rather on the descent: when this is the case it is almost impossible to catch the Kangaroos. They bound (under these favourable circumstances) from six to eight yards every spring they make – they spring off their long, strong tails.

[Sketch of a bounding kangaroo]

Kangaroo bounding &
Kangaroo Grass growing!

The first we came upon was a "regular flying Doe", which after a good chase fairly onto tripp'd all the dogs; which came back to us panting with their tongues out & their Tales

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between their legs & skulking as if quite asham'd of themselves. The second, "a great old man", we should certainly have caught & he would have fought the dogs a good battle (I have seen dogs torn dreadfully by the claws of the Kangaroos' hind legs with which they strike desperate blows when they are at bay. I have also heard of them drowning a dog when they have managed to get into a pool of water (scarce thing, here) by seizing him with their fore legs & holding him under water while they are standing bolt upright). But in our present chase we happened unfortunately to be too near the Scrub which the old rascal managed to reach just as the Dogs were about closing in upon him, & as the dogs hunt by

the Sight alone, & not at all by the nose, they generally give the chase up if the game reaches the scrub & gets out of sight.

In returning home some days after this, the case was entirely altered, we left the dogs behind us at the Station & instead of hunting (like poor Acteon) we were ourselves hunted, or something very like it, for my friend's horse falling lame, we were rather amazed by a troop of wild dogs which perseveringly followed us for miles. As usual they did not offer to attack us, but whenever we rode fast, to endeavour to shake them off, they came galloping after. When we pulled up, they stopp'd too, staring us in the face, & appearing determin'd to dodge us, do what we would. We stood still several times & fired our Pistols at them, but they kept out of the reach of them, & still came trotting after when we again started. It is not altogether a pleasant sensation (tho' there is little or no danger to be apprehended) to hear these brutes "rustling" after you, knowing at the same that they are only waiting for a favourable opportunity to make a Meal of yourself or your poney. You recollect the Lines in "Mazeppa"

By night I heard[?] them on the track,
Their troop came hard upon our back,
With their long gallop, which can tire
The hounds' deep hate, & hunter's fire;
Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
At daybreak winding thro' the wood,
And thro' the night had heard their feet,
Their stealing, rustling step repeat.

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We attributed their following us so perseveringly to my friend's poney being lame — if we had brought the dogs with us we should have seen nothing of them. They are hunted like foxes but they are very cunning & keep out of sight of our Dogs as much as possible.

We wished to stop for a little refreshment but were determined if possible to shake off our travelling-companions first, but M^r M's Poney became so lame we could not do this, & consequently having come to a "native water hole", we alighted & tied our Ponies to the bushes. We then struck a fire, put on our Tin Pannickin & boil'd some Tea to our Beef & damper. At the spot where we had our "Gypsy repast", Nature in one of her freaks,

"Had shed o'er the scene
"Her finest of Crystal & brightest of green".

And it looked very pretty after having traversed the surrounding arid Tract & burst upon us like a scene of enchantment. The Soil being sappy and boggy for some distance round the water-hole, the water oozed thro' it & the Grass was beautifully green & when contrasted with the Sterility of the surrounding Scenery gave it the appearance of a complete "Oasis" in the desert.

After we again started on our Journey we saw no more of our troublesome companions, tho' they had watched all our proceedings very patiently during our Repast, keeping all the time at a respectable distance. We concluded they had contented themselves with the Beef Bone we left them as a compensation for the pleasure their agreeable company had afforded us! However our adventures were not yet over. We were still many miles from Adelaide tho' we did not know how many, having left the regular beaten bullock track to make, as we intended, a shorter cut. I began to have misgivings after we had ridden a few miles that we were in the wrong direction & on mentioning my suspicions to M^r M. he said he was just thinking the same. However we could not agree which was the right course to steer & as the night was coming on when it would be quite dark (we have no twilight here) we tho'^t it best rather than get perhaps farther out of our way, to wait for Daylight in the morning & in the meantime to make up our minds to "bushing it" all night. We therefore got together a quantity of brush wood & making a break-wind in the Shape of a half moon, native fashioned, after again making a good fire (having

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no water this time we could not make any more tea) but (after smoking a couple of Cigars, by way of bivouac) being rather fatigued, we threw ourselves down on the ground & managed to sleep pretty soundly all night thro' "with nothing but the Sky for a great coat". And in the morning we found ourselves within a few Miles of Adelaide.

It is a very difficult matter to find your way if you once get lost in the bush; I have frequently, some ½ dozen times, had to sleep in the bush all night when lost, without any fire or anything else "astra castra". Once in coming from Rigby's across the plain, to our Place, which is only a few Miles & Rigby lost me half the way. I generally found my way from his place @ night by steering by a particular star over our place & to go to his place I steer by a Peak on the mountains at the back of his Station, but some how or other I took the wrong Star on this occasion & after rambling about till quite wearied, I lay down on the ground, & tho' a very cold night managed to sleep an hour or two within ½ a mile, as I afterwards found, of our Tent. Fatg'd & worn out I reached our well the first place I made to (after thinking about it all night) by 5 o'clock in the morning. Never till then did I really enjoy a drink of Water — it was Nectar, Ambrosia.

Rigby & I on another occasion both lost ourselves in trying to make my place in the dark, & after rambling about a long time (we were both on horseback on this occasion) I asked Rigby if he tho^t he could find the way to his own place — as my horse would not go before his. After he had left & gone towards home, my horse then took me home on my throwing the reins loose on his neck tho' I had not the least Idea of the road we ought to steer.

Some time ago Rigby & Patterson, a neighbour of his had a flock of Sheep "upon thirds" (which they have since given up as they did not pay). One very wet, windy night Rigby & Patterson had to stay up all night to watch the Sheep Pens, while the Shepherd was resting, & not having loaded Guns on account of the rain, a wild dog [interloped] before their faces & in spite of their loath, seized & carried off a lamb away with him over the hills to his Den. While the dog had hold of the Lamb, Patterson had hold of it also & Rigby gave him several hard kicks in the ribs — but he succeeded in carrying off his prize, & very soon after either the same fellow or one very like him seized hold of another lamb while Rigby had gone to his tent to fetch his Sword.

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However, this time, on Rigby rushing to the rescue, Sword in hand, they succeeded in making him relinquish the lamb & look after his own safety by speedy retreat.

This said M^r Patterson had a horse killed by falling down a deep Ravine which runs past Rigby's down to near the Coast. The horse had broken its neck by the fall & Rigby & myself went down with him to the place the day after the accident happened. When we got near the Place we saw three wild dogs very busy at work "gorging & growling o'er Carcass & Limb" while on a blue Gum Tree which overhung the Precipice a large Eagle Hawk was perched watching & waiting for his turn. We were within Shot of them all, but unfortunately we had no Guns with us. I mention this adventure because it reminded me so forcibly of the Lines in Byron's "Siege of Corinth" beginning

"And he saw the lean Dogs beneath the wall

"Hold o'er the dead their Carnival" &c and ending

"But close by the shore on the edge of the Gulf

"There sat a vulture flapping a Wolf, &c &c."

During my long Illness down here I have been glad to listen to old Jacoby's Yarns of old Cornish Wreckers, Wrestlers, Smugglers, & Miners, to drive away the "Demon of Ennuï", & have had no other amusement except reading some old Volumes of Voyages & Travels containing amongst others "My Grandad's Narrative", several of the incidents in which

Byron has evidently interwoven into his beautiful description of the Shipwreck in “our Ancient Friend”, “Don Juan”, Poor “old foulweather Jack” as the Sailors emphatically christened him. I have a kind of fellow-feeling for him.

“He was ever a day too late, or a day too soon, or he sprung his Mast in a chase, or he lost his prize in a fog, or he fell in with a wane of wind which his Enemy had passed, or some disaster or other always befell him”, but I have great difficulty with all these resources; to drive away “Tedium Vitae”, the prevailing malady of the unoccupied all the world over! And thus I am absorbed! And this is Life!

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“Getting Money” may be said, in one respect, to be like Charity, “It covereth a multitude of sins”, & provided a man found himself a Position to get riches here faster than he could elsewhere with a prospect at the same time of accumulating sufficient in a few years to enable him to spend the remainder of his days comfortably in a civilized Country, he might perhaps under these circumstances (knowing it was either a Gold lac'd hat or a peg leg) manage to bear, without refining all the numberless nuisances & annoyances of all sorts which are unavoidable here in any situation, & might even possibly get used to them, something I suppose after the same fashion as “the old Woman's Eels got used to being flayed alive”. But for a man who has seen anything at all of the world or has been used to anything in the least approaching to Xtian like Society, to be doomed to spend the remainder of his days in a place like this, without a chance or hope of mending this Condition, such a man, with such prospects, must indeed be strangely enamoured of life not to consider any Death preferable to dragging out a miserable existence, in this wide Den of Thieves, this vile Nest of all that is bad! Without a single redeeming quality. No Money! No business! No Amusement! No Comfort! No Reading! No Society! Almost in fact as Jonathan w^d say, No Nothing!! All! All! All! Flat stale & unprofitable.

[A newspaper cutting:]

... portentous announcements of the bankruptcy and beggary of our unfortunate province! Take an example from one of the most widely circulated papers of New South Wales – *The Sydney Herald*, of the 10th of March last:–

One thing is certain, that Wakefield's vision of a self-supporting colony is now dissipated like a morning dream; and we hope and trust that Adelaide will be a prominent buoy to warn emigrants in future to steer clear of the quicksands of visionary theorists. Our Home Government are about to shipwreck our own Colony of New South Wales, on another of those absurd and impracticable theories, of the same visionary schemer, by the system of special surveys, the fixed price of lands, and by centralization*, and no forewarning is likely to stop the destructive career, till Sydney be plunged into a similar state of ruin, as Adelaide is now, without a penny in the treasury to pay even the salaries of the officials, including the Governor himself. Destruction, ruin, starvation, are already begun at Adelaide and this mushroom town miraculous as it seemed to be, has every chance to be altogether speedily abandoned, at least by the great bulk of the present population.

[to which the author added underlining and notes:]

*The best land will.

Centralization is all very well in an agricultural Country; but nothing can tend to repine [?] a Pastoral Country, especially where it requires 2 acres to keep one Sheep, more than a System which compels the Stock-owners to keep close together, “they want elbow Room” they want extensive track Runs away from their neighbours.

[Another article on the reverse:]

...the amazing number of ... convictions, sentences, and executions,... of a population of fifteen thousand! Here again is a decided bad bargain for us. At Sydney executions are never heard of — although indeed they do now and then hang delinquents at the rate of thirteen per week, and six bushrangers, we observe, suffered capitally at the same time a few mornings ago. Since South Australia existed six individuals have been capitally punished, namely, Maghee, an escaped convict, in 1837, for shooting, with intent to kill; Curran and Hughes, also escaped convicts, for bushranging; Stagg, an escaped convict, for murdering his companion, and two natives, for spearing a shepherd! The whole number of capital* convictions in this province have been twelve! So much for our wretchedness and crime.

[The author adds these notes:]

*This is one of the attempts @ disguising the real state of matters by a confound ... words & Terms. We had absolutely 50 Capital Convictions ... Sessions — tho' in point of fact only 2 were executed, the other ... transported. They are not hung unless for Murder ... for ... Natives — say — 200 kill'd in one war & another and lots of Bushrangers sent to Norfolk Island.

For my own part I intend as soon as possible, now to leave the accursed place never to think of it again, but with loathing & Disgust,

“As on a place of Agony & Strife,
“Where for some Sins to Sorrow I was cast
“I act do & suffer.”

& you may fancy how pleasant it must be to exist in such a place, an isolated being without any o^r object than desire to escape from it as soon as possible. I think of trying what I can do @ Sydney as my health is very nearly restored now & if I do not like Sydney, Intend going to Calcutta or Bombay.

“Thro' many a Clime 'tis mine to roam
“With many a retrospection curs'd;
“And all my solace is to know
“Whate'er betides I've known the worst”.

Sydney is 1500 Miles from this by Sea & about 1000 overland.

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I never saw any place I admired so much as I did the Cape of Good Hope during our short visit there & I have been half inclined to return to Cape Town but upon further reflection I have reluctantly given up the Idea. I have a very grateful recollection of Cape Town with its comfortable old-fashioned Dutch houses with the boab trees planted in front of them, affording not only a pleasant shade, but giving quite an air of novelty to the streets, and the houses reminding one altogether of the Descriptions of the old fashioned Dutch Houses in “Kinckerboehors New York” & other of Washington Irving's Books.

While the great numbers of Foreigners of all Shades & Complexions — with the fanciful & Picturesque Costumes you meet with in all Directions — the great numbers of Chinese & Hindoos, some with white Turbans, others in the gayest & gaudiest many-coloured Turbans — all of them in their light flowing Drapery, gliding about with noiseless step in all directions. The numerous Drays with 18 to 20 Bullocks each with the great number & variety of the Equipages, numerous Carriages & Six &c., gave to the scene altogether (especially to a new Traveller) more the appearance of a lively, fanciful Eastern Painting than of sober reality.

To visit such a lively Sea Port which may be considered a kind of Hotel, a half-way house, or resting place (for the shipping of all nations) between the Old Europe &c & the East Indies with all the other vast Countries in their part of the world, & in which certainly appears to a casual Visitor to be –

“Of Joy the Sojourn & of Wealth the Mart

“While mingled in their many-hued array

“Here Men of every Clime appear to make resort.”

Table Bay was full of Shipping when we were there (more so than usual). To visit such a place after a long & tedious voyage & to arrive there in the very midst of the fruit Season when the Grapes & the Pomegranates &c. &c. are plentiful and as cheap as black berries, not to mention the “fresh grub & soft tack” (fresh meat & soft bread) which have always charms for Sailors, & then again the Wine 6d per bottle with a few other little &c. &c.’s. And to be there, as it were, on a party of pleasure, with nothing to think of but enjoying oneself,

“Then all went merry as a Marriage bell”

To visit the Cape under these Circumstances, after being released from the Monotony of Shipboard, one beheld the Scene around us with the greatest delight. (I saw an Hottentot Venus at the Cape throw her breast over her Shoulder to suckle her child, which was perched in a standing position on a natural projection a posteriori – I should recommend this plan to the consideration of the English Ladies, the Bustle a little enlarged would supply the natural deficiency, and they then always have both hands at liberty!!)

To visit the Cape under these Circumstances, & to go there again now with the Idea of making & saving money in the place are quite two different things & I do not know how it would be under these altered Circumstances. And I think it is rather too far to return to, after having come all this way, merely for the sake of “living” without being able to save any thing & consequently without the hope of ever returning home again, and I fancy very few Englishmen ever get thoroughly reconciled to the Idea of never again seeing Old England when they are once out of it, tho’ doubtless thousands of them live on in hope, year after year

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untill every now & then old King Death, on a fine sun-shiny Day, calls upon them, one after another & puts a stop to their farther terrestrial wanderings, while they are all the while thinking of any thing but him & are cherishing the fond hope of spending a few quiet days, & finally reposing, in their own native Land!

Of one thing I am quite sure — that I should never under any Circumstances reconcile myself to the Idea of never again returning to Old England. I could certainly reconcile myself to remaining away for years without repining; with the chance of realizing a something to return home upon, eventually knowing it was either “Death or Glory”, a “Gold lac’d Hat or a Peg Leg”. I should not hesitate to go either to Sierra Leone, Bombay, Batavia, New Orleans, or any other unhealthy Climate. In saying this you must not suppose I am ambitious of getting great riches. My views are all sober’d down now — to securing just enough to have a room or a small Cot. to myself near enough to a good library to enable me to get plenty of reading & when I can have an opportunity of having a Peep now & then just for “old sake’s Sake” @

“The glad Waters of the deep blue Sea”!!

Bread & Cheese (luxuries here) & a Room in which, when seated in the middle of it, I could poke the fire & shut the door without leaving my chair, with the Books &c., there I could spend the remainder of my days, “sans craindre ni souhaiter la mort.”

The height of my ambition hath “this extent, no farther”, & believe me after a long Sojourn in a new Colony & such a Colony, with the living in a Tent &c. & after being “cabin’d, cribb’d, confin’d” @ Sea, this sort of thing would be considered vastly comfortable! Ay! — that’s the word — I don’t think any other language but the English has a word, which means exactly the same thing as “Comfort”, & I am almost sure that not one of them but old

England has the very thing itself. There is one thing to be said, respecting this travelling about seeking one's fortune, that the next thing to getting riches (& failing this) is the learning to be content without them, & learning to live contented without the luxuries that wealth only will procure, & this is a lesson I shall have learn'd very well at all events!!

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With this feeling, I have now made up my mind that as soon as I can find a place where, I think, I can accomplish my moderate views I shall there bring myself to an Anchor & shall cheerfully work like a "Nigger" for a few years in the hope of once more seeing the white cliffs of old England again. But I have been so often disappointed that I frequently think all my ramblings will end in my proving the truth of the old adage — "The flitting Stone gathers no Moss" — & I cannot help thinking also that some poor devils are doom'd to be unfortunate! I quite tho^t I had, had my share of Misfortunes before I left home. My Cup was as near full as possible then, it only wanted this one drop more to make it overflow!!

"How selfish sorrow ponders on the past,

"And clings to thoughts now better far remov'd!"

But I must really talk less wildly or you'll begin to make up your mind that I am certainly "gone off it", & to tell you the truth my head (as well as my heart) has had such a tremendous shake since I came here, almost as bad as my Uncle Toby's Wallson Officer at the Battle of Luidon, that I almost fancy myself that I carry more sail than ballast at times, especially when I awake in a morning & find myself as I occasionally do (& which I am sure I have no business to do) quite light-hearted even here! — much more so, than I used to do when I awoke in England & when the first thing that used to flash across my mind, was my old rumbling, worn out Machinery which hung like a Millstone round my neck, and was pressing me down to the Earth, like the old Man on the back of Cinbad the Sailor. I can assure you the almost ceaseless roar of Ten thousand Braves ever since I left England & all the Screams & Chattering of our Parrots & Cockatoos have scarcely succeeded in driving the horrid, jingling, rumbling buz of those old "Throttles" out of my Ears!!!,

"And ever and anon of grief subdued,

"There comes a token like a Scorpion's Sting,

"Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued."

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I have always, however, the satisfaction of reflecting that I gave the place up so soon as I was quite satisfied I could not possibly carry it on without losing more money & that I did this of my own accord, without being pressed by any party, & when I might have carried on for Years; & also that I gave up, literally every farthing I had, without favouring in the least any one, not even my own Relations; I did what I considered honest & just under the Circumstances, & I did as I w^d be done by — and moreover than this I may venture to say to you that perhaps few people would give me Credit for the operation, that my almost sole object in coming out here was the Idea of returning (when I had accumulated sufficient) to pay every one what the Estate fell short of paying. And in proportion to my Desire to do this was my disappointment when I found after coming so far that my object was totally impracticable.

My intention at present is to remain at least 12 Months in Sydney to give it a fair Trial, & if things take a turn for the better I may probably send you "a few more Cantos of my Pilgrimage". But I think you will have had quite enough of the Dismals! It gives one an Idea of not being quite lost, when opining a Yarn to an "Old Chummy" now & then.

If the picture I have sketch'd you, or rather am sketching, for I have not done with it yet, of any present place of sojourn is slightly overcoloured in any place (which however I am not aware of) there are other places where it is almost

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impossible to daub it on thick enough & take it altogether. You may rely upon its being rather under- than over-coloured.

I could spin you such a yarn out of some horrid scenes (which I have witnessed in this English Colony, “quorum pars magna fui”, (& which I have not even hinted at) as would make your very hair stand on end & would throw into the shade all the accounts you may have read of the Scenes acted in the Old Paris Bastile, the Spanish Inquisition or the Black-Hole @ Calcutta!!! But I must reserve this until I see you (if indeed I ever see you again) as I fear, a bare recital of the facts, unless I was with you, to explain them, you would find it difficult to credit.

I recollect Canning, in one of his Speeches, where he was speaking of some expenditure in South America, saying it was difficult for Gentlemen to understand the subject in a Country where you may buy a horse for a couple of Dollars & it takes four Dollars to shoe him — so it is with this place: it is difficult to understand things unless you see them on the spot & have the Context along with the Text. However, I hope in criticising my Statements you will bear in mind the tale of the old woman & her son Jack who had just return'd from Sea after a long absence. She gave full Credit to one of his yarns respecting pulling up one of Pharoah's Chariot Wheels when they were weighing anchor in the red Sea & considered it as confirming the truth of Holy-Writ; but when he began to describe the Flights of the “flying fish” which they had seen after crossing the Line “Nay, Nay, Jacky, now thou'st telling thy poor old Mother lees thou'lt ne'er gar make me believe thou's seen Fishes fleeing”.

The few first months after I landed in the Colony I received Newspapers & frequently Letters by almost every English Ship that visited us, but for a long time past I have heard nothing at all from home. I attribute this in a great measure to my having been prevented, by long & serious Illness, from writing home myself until a few months ago.

“And really if a man won't let us know

“That he's alive, he's dead, or should be so”.

So argued Laura, poor old Beppo's graceless Spouse & so also have th^{ot} my friends I suppose; or perhaps as Mr Rigby says of Tom Morris, “out of sight out of Memory”, or I am sure some of you might put an old Newspaper or two into the Post Office now & then “if merely for the sake” of writing a direction to the Antipodes, by way of a change.

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Our Port here is called “Port Misery” & when any fresh arrivals are announced, the common cry is “more victims”, but bad as the place is, it is still better than the o^r Port belonging to the Colony — “Port Lincoln” in Boston Bay which more commonly rejoices in the pleasant name of “Starvation Bay”. M^r Porter from Liverpool, settled at Port Lincoln, & after laying out a considerable sum in building a House, Store &c., has at length left the place in disgust, having shipped himself & family on board a Brig he brought out with him from England & is gone to try his luck in Van Dieman's Land. By the last accounts I saw from Port Lincoln, some 3 months ago, Bread was 1s/8d per loaf & Beef & Mutton 1s/3d per lb.. Talk of your Corn Laws!

By the bye, do you know of any grumbling, discontented radical who is totally tired of the Taxes & Impositions of Old England, & the restraints of civilized Life & who indulges in Utopian Ideas of liberty & Independence? — this is the very place for him

He may trudge to the wild bush & there, pitch his Tent

Without Church, or poor, Rates, Tithes, Taxes, or Rent.

And if he happens to be fortunate enough to escape being knocked on the head by the bushrangers or being speared by the Savages, he may manage to live peaceably & quietly enough in the bush, barring the “Varmint” & a touch of Ophthalmia now & then, just to remind him that in the midst of all his savage Independence he is still mortal. In other respects, I say, he may live peaceably & quietly enough until he is carried off by Diarrhoea or Dysentery, “coup de Soleil” or ennui, after which he will cause no further trouble to any one

as the wild dogs will undertake to look after the rest of the business!! For my own part, I must confess, that I am so far a convert to Conservation, from the little Experience I have had in my travels, that I am quite sure I should never object (whenever I had an opportunity in the old Country) to drink what I now consider the good old conservative Truth "The land we live in & those who don't like it let them leave it", always provided, that I could do this without mortally offending "A Durhamite".

(Talking of drinking,) Old Jacoby & I have the entire range of the Shore here, for many Miles

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to ourselves with full Rights of "Flotsome Jetsome" as the old Lawyers would say, but this has been almost altogether a barren Right, so far until the o^r day when to our no small Satisfaction we found washed up on the beach & lying high & dry a "Case", curiously covered over with Seaweed & Sand (when I say we found, I mean old Jacoby, for I should never have notic'd it). However I assisted to open it & we found the Contents to be four dozen bottles of what I supposed from the shape of the bottles to be Claret or some other kind of French-Wine, but old Jacoby who had lost no time in knocking the neck off one of the bottles pronounced it after taking a good swig to be real genuine Cognac & no mistake. (Jacoby "had had to do" with similar Stuff in Cornwall, & soon recognized an old friend). Without loss of time we lugged the "Treasure trove" off to our Tent & transplanted it deep in the Land after taking out a few bottles. As old Jacoby fancied he heard a noise in the dead of the night (as if a boat was landing some thing on the beach), it is not at all unlikely some smugglers had been at work & that more cases might have been found somewhere in the neighbourhood. There has been a good deal of this sort of work carried on farther up the Shore & having been disturbed there, they had probably come down our way, & most likely it had been landed from a French Whaler which has been lying opposite to us for some days. However old Jacoby said it was best to consider it as a Sea Gift & to ask no questions, Cornish fashion, I suppose. But after all, the main point is the beauty of the Spirit. A Wine Glass filled with it – we never profane it with water — has some ½ dozen distinct Rows of beads round it which look so pretty it almost appears a pity to disturb them, but they won't go away! And I assure you it slips down y^r throat just like so much Oil only rather better flavoured, & the very glass itself after the Spirit has departed out of it! seems quite alive & oily.

It is famous stuff I assure you & could not have found a more welcome Port, tho' I cannot exactly reconcile myself to old Jacoby's Logic as to the way we became possessors of it. It is under the cheering Influence of a Glass of this delicious cordial that I am now scribbling

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to you & I only wish I could just pass the bottle to you. Just perhaps, knowing our secret, you might probably scruple to partake of the contents — however I cannot at all events do this, I'll just drink one more glass for you & to the health, long life & Prosperity of you & yours & all far distant friends. "Many's the good time & often" that I have passed the bottle at your own hospitable Table and believe me D^r. John not a single Sunday passes (if I know it is Sunday) but I think of the many pleasant Sunday Afternoons I have spent in your snug little parlour — of the of the feast of reason & the flow of Soul, as somebody feelingly & originally observed of M^{rs}. Leo Hunter's breakfasts.

But Joy's recollection is no longer Joy!

Though Sorrow's Memory is Sorrow still!

Heigh ho! Well, when things get to the worst they sometimes mend & if brighter days should come, how I shall enjoy them after all this sort of thing! "Sweet are the Uses of Adversity", &c., &c., but this is when it is all over! But you will begin to think me either "cranky" or "groggy" if I rattle on at this rate so now for a bit of rationale about this Colony of ours.

After all I have said I don't wish you to understand that the place has no merits at all peculiar to itself along with all its numerous faults & that no one, under any circumstances, can by any possibility do any good at all here. No — far from that, what I principally wish to maintain is this — that a man with a few hundred Pounds only in his Pocket (& such are the great majority of the men who have come out on spec) cannot possibly get to a worse place than this. Every thing in the way of Storekeeping is overdone — farming (growing grain) will not pay. Government Situations, what few there are, are all given to military men, more particularly Irishmen, the governor himself being an Irishman, a Col. in the Army, & the very best of them are certainly not worth coming so far for, as not one of the holders of them, not even the Governor is able to keep himself out of his Salary, at least this is what many of them have told me.

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While to commence as a Stockholder is entirely out of the question without considerably more Capital than I have mentioned, and at the same time living is perhaps more expensive here than almost any where in the world, considering the small degree of comfort you can get for your money. But a man who has been bro^t up as an agricultural labourer can get considerably more wages than one given to farm servants in England, Carpenters & Blacksmiths very considerably more than they have been used to get. Yet for all this, even this class are generally very much dissatisfied & repent coming, for with all their wages they invariably tell you that they are dissatisfied with the place & repent coming. They all say they cannot procure as much & as good meat, drink & Clothes as they could in England (with their English wages) and the Comforts they have been used to all gone. While @ the same time they have to pay £1 per week for a miserable hovel in which you would not think of keeping a good horse. Many of the unfit only fit for pig sties! Many who have been hard working, sober & industrious in England find themselves weary & languid after working an hour or two here & declare they must either have brandy or Porter before they can do any more work.

Added to which the Englishman is always thirsty here. The water is unwholesome, Beer & Porter are 3/- per bottle or 6d per Glass, out of the Cask, such stuff as you could hardly give away at home The Proprietors of the Club-house in Adelaide have a Well on the Premises which some months ago turned quite brackish after having been sweet & fresh up to that time from the time it was sunk some 2 Years ago. Since this has taken place they have had to pay from 4 to 5 Guineas per Week for water alone. This is fetched from the Torrens — they never use less than 4 Loads per day @ 3/- per load & all that is used for drinking has first to be filtered. See printed note: Water (I durst not write what I extract from one of our Papers lest you sh. doubt it)

WATER — this essential article, obtained in its pure unadulterated state, is vending at the rate of eight shillings per load, whilst that procured in the vicinity of the dam being perfect poison is sold at three shillings, and still nothing is done to counteract the evil. Dysentery consequently prevails, temperance is at a discount, and teetotalism is transported altogether. The tears almost start in the eyes of the Magistrates when convicting an unfortunate victim to the involuntary system, in these most parching days, who has unhappily attracted the attention of a Policeman by his unsteady gait. But what terms of reprobation are sufficiently strong against a government that thus neglects the universal outcry of the public for the supply of wholesome water?

The Scotchman grumbles that in addition to all the Grievances, he can get no Oatmeal to make the "healsome Porritch, chief of Scotias food" — tho' for the most part Lawny makes the best Emigrant he is exceedingly hardy & the breed has, generally speaking, been used to Emigration for Generations!! While poor unlucky Paddy never ceases to regret the green Isle

"Great glorious & free, First flower of the Earth first Gem of the Sea..."

& swears by the holy poteen, he w^d. give his ears and almost his head for only just one more mess of old Ireland's beautiful buttermilk & mealy Potatoes —

The Man, who ought to be the best satisfied out here is he who can bring with him some £3000 - 0 - 0 for which not being in business he has a difficulty in getting from £4 to £5 per Cent in England.

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This man may very considerably increase his Income (& improve his fortune in a few Years) either by Sheep-farming tho' as I said before I sh^d prefer Port Philip for Sheep-farming, or by laying out his money in building or on Mortgage or by discounting Bills or lending his Money @ Usury — for this Sort of business a man with the needful & of first rate Jewish talents could not possibly get to a better field to carry on his Operations but he must be exceedingly shrewd & cautious for as well as keen, for the old hands are all wide awake & scruple at no means to rob a man, if they can only once catch him napping! Many people are making some £50 to £70 per cent out of money laid out on building small houses in Adelaide (and I know parties have built in the principal street where one Year's rent has paid for the building without the ground) — that is 'provided they get their rents, which is by no means a matter of course here — for people use so very little furniture that a man, when he finds it inconvenient to pay his rent, has no difficulty in bolting (this is an evil which is daily increasing), and such independent republican notions have these gentry that one saucy word from a landlord they consider a sufficient excuse for packing up all their Traps & away; without paying any rent & without even waiting for a moonlight night — the buildings are all built so slight & generally so badly that they are only calculated to stand the wear & tear of few years & are always requiring repairs &c., which of course reduces the apparently great Interest as far as it goes — Though the Trees here grow to such an immense size, some of them so very lofty that compared to them "the tallest pines Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast of some great Admiral were but a ...", yet generally speaking the Timber is of no earthly use except for fire wood for which solitary purpose indeed it could not be better — it is generally full of gum & being very dry it burns like Carmel, but it is so exceedingly hard, tools have no chance with it. The only tree we have which is used for any o^r purpose except burning is the Stringy bark tree & this is only fit to split for fencing & making shingles for roofing, & tho' only rough split stuff, it is four times the price of deals in England — All the Timber used in the Colony for o^r building purposes, flooring &c. comes either from England or New Zealand. Fire wood costs £1 per load in the town & will be much more soon as they will have farther to fetch it. There are some very fine Cedars far up the Country, which are very graceful & ornamental Trees & would be very useful, but they

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are too far to pay for Land Carriage which is very expensive here — If you sink a Well here the probability is that you prick upon a Spring either impregnated with Alum or Salt, or very commonly Magnesia, in fresh water in an under dug all round it to the afterwards filled up & price of labour &c. the outside ring has probably to be sunk 20 to 30 feet & puddled all the way up — & sometimes after all this expense the lower spring turns out brackish, and not seldom people have incurred all this expense & have found after all that after sinking as far as they could get they could find no other spring but the brackish one which they had split out. In England a Curb Chance, or drum of Cast Iron or Wood would be used instead of this trench.

Sketch of a
bore and
trench

this Case the expense is very great, to get at the spring, as the Well is obliged to have a Trench depth of the salt Spring which has to be puddled with clay — this sort of work, with the here, makes the expense for a Well very great;

Even the surface Water in most of the native water holes is more or less brackish.

But

“Springs in Deserts found seem sweet
“All brackish tho’ they be.”

And I assure you I have on more than one occasion when almost Choking with thirst been very thankful to reach such — I cannot say much however for their sweetness — I have no doubt one of your thirsty Mechanics would prefer a Pot of Porter.

From recent exploring excursions it now turns out that there is not nearly so much available land even for Sheep runs in the Colony as was calculated upon, & most of what there is has already been taken up either by parties in the Colony or speculators in England. The available land in the colony is only about 80 miles by 15 miles in extent — this is not one 10th part of the whole Colony — but the remaining 9/10ths are totally worthless for any purpose.

In a late exploring expedition from the Spencer’s Gulf North in search of available Land in a distance of nearly 150 Miles the Party only found 2 Pools (small water holes a few feet wide & a few feet deep) of fresh Water in the whole route & very little land that was worth surveying even if it had been watered - The Interior of the Country is very little known, it is so inhospitable & barren no one has been enabled to ... farther into the country than a

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few hundred miles on different Parts of the Coast so that the Interior of this immense Island continent is still as the old Geographers called it — “Terra Australis Incognita”. In a similar excursion to the one I first mentioned & at the head of which was the Governor, the whole party were in the greatest danger of perishing in the bush for want of water. M^r Bryan, a particular friend of the Governor’s & a resident in Government house volunteered to join the expedition — The weather was extremely hot, all their water was consumed & they had searched far & near for water until both themselves & horses were so completely knocked up that they were despairing of ever again reaching the place where they had left the Bullock Drays. The Governor’s horse was the most distressed; & kept the whole party back, as the Governor was Pilot.

M^r Bryan, seeing this proposed to change horses with him; this arrangement being acceded to, the party pushed on leaving M^r Bryan with a Compass to follow as he best could & promising to send out Parties with fresh horses to meet him — but poor Bryan was never seen more!! the tracks of himself & horse were found & in one place all his clothes which he had taken off to enable him to walk the better leading his horse. If he had killed the horse & drank some of his blood he might have lived, it is supposed, until the Parties reached him instead of which both himself & horse perished miserably! Both of them no doubt falling a Prey to the wild Dogs. The most we can hope is, that life, or sense at least, had left him before the Dogs found them. All the Parties describe the interior of the Country as barren, desolate & inhospitable in the extreme. The Plains, over which they travelled, forming a bare, arid, white sandy Desert, interspersed occasionally with small patches of stunted scrub, which have to struggle hard to exist at all, while stretching North as far as the Eye could reach, “Immense Horizon bounded plains extend”, and stretching from East to West, was a Range of Mountains consisting of Tier upon Tier of naked Granite Rocks, from one of the loftiest of these which they managed to ascend could be seen to an immense distance but not the

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slightest sign of water or Grass could be discovered in any direction all arid, barren sand & everlasting Drought.

The whole unexplored & unexplorable interior of this mysterious Island Continent seems to be a dreary, sandy desert; arid, sterile, & desolate to the utmost extent (in the very centre of which some boundless, all blasting Upus Tree might be supposed eternally to

flourish poisoning the atmosphere & rendering it fatal to every thing living); & (while a deep & dismal silence reigns over the heavy Landscape) no beast, no bird, no insect, is met with, to diversify the sad Monotony of the scene!!

We have had a most dreadful business lately with the natives of a neighbouring Tribe. A Vessel left our Port a short time ago with Passengers for Van Dieman's Land, two of whom I was acquainted with, & who were returning to England via Van Dieman's Land. A few days after the vessel sailed two of the Darkies belonging to the Encounter Bay Tribe who are friendly with us, called "Encounter Bay Bob" & "Charlie", brought word to Town that a "vessel had gone to Pieces on the Coast three days Journey" as they expressed it, from Adelaide. The Police (who were sent down to the spot immediately) sent word to town that the vessel was a complete wreck, that the Passengers had attempted to make their escape in the boats, one of which, the jolly boat, had swamped, and all on board had perished. While the Passengers in the long boat, 17 in number, men, women, & children had only escaped a comparatively mild death, to fall into the hands of the armed Savages who attacked them while they were quite defenseless, and had murdered the whole of them in the most inhuman manner, and not content with murder alone, committed the most revolting atrocities upon them, both alive and dead — and a very pleasant Coast this to be wrecked on.

Captain O'Halloran, the head of the Police force was sent over with a strong reinforcement & with full Powers & Instructions to take or kill the Perpetrators of these cruel outrages & if necessary to consider the Country under martial law. The Captain & his Party (after shooting a few of the Darkies whom they could not capture & who were making their escape with Parts of the Clothes of their victims about them) succeeded in securing two of the ringleaders who were hung in the presence of their assembled Tribe & over the graves of the mangled remains of their victims.

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"A Change came o'er the Spirit of my dream". Since writing the foregoing Pages of my long rambling unconnected Yarn, I have got into a different part of the Country. All the land for 20 Miles up the Coast & in the neighbourhood where I was squatting with old Prowse has been in Flames. The Plains are now as black as your hat & look exactly as if they had been covered all over with Soot or Ink while the surrounding hills in the distance, Mount Barker, Mount Lofty & Mount Terrible appear like immense hills of Coal. Old Prowse's Garden Fences &c are all swept away, but owing to there not being any Grass or scrub in the immediate neighbourhood of the Tent, this was saved by beating out the Flames @ a distance all round the tent. The fire was no great loss as far as old Jacoby was concerned as he was about leaving the place, having made up his mind to abandon Gardening, as he had not been able to make half Wages by his Garden & nothing worth while had offered in his other object. The Country in all directions does indeed look most dismal now — there have been a great many other fires in the interior of the country besides this along the Coast. The Sand hills between the place where we were squatting & the shore (are all covered over with large quantities of wild Myrtles, with a Tree very like the Box Tree & with great numbers of Geraniums and other Shrubs in great variety forming a thick scrubby underwood. We had to force our way thro' this, when it was all in a blaze to make our escape to the shore, where we lay down close by the waves panting & nearly exhausted. The light breeze which came off the Sea was very refreshing & soon revived us, tho' we had been almost suffocated by the hot air &c. When night came on & the breeze freshened a little it was a most grand but awful sight from the top of the Sand hills to see the fire at a distance & on all sides of you, barring the Sea side, blazing away with the utmost fury & having at intervals the appearance

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of immense burning brick kilns, each apparently a mile & upwards in length. There were the belts of trees in different directions all on fire at once & the timber here being very dry, even when growing & full of Gum, the trees blaze away like so many gigantic Tar Barrels. These fires are common here @ this season of the year, but never since the Colony was established have they been so extensive or done so much damage as on this occasion. Sometimes the fires cannot be accounted for, but very frequently they are occasioned by the natives setting the scrub on fire, to enable them to catch the Snakes, Guianas, & Lizards, while sometimes in making their fires for the night they set the plains on fire accidentally; it is a very easy matter to do this & when the Grass is once ignited, the fire runs along the ground, especially if there happens to be a strong wind, just like a train of Gunpowder. Fences Crops &c are swept away almost in a moment if parties are not at hand to beat out the approaching fire all round with bushes. On the present occasion the wheat crops had for the most part been got in, generally either full of smut or blighted by the hot Winds. The Crops of Oats & barley, such as they were in a many Instances, fell prey to the flames, but both these crops have been almost an entire failure in the Colony. Rigby tried two acres of Oats. I told him they would never come to anything — he replied “in that case I will mow them & take them to town green”, but the last time I was at his place I saw his Cattle among them; he then told me they were not worth mowing & that he should never again attempt to grow grain in the Colony. Many of the Settlers have had to retire back many miles into the interior with flocks & herds in search of food & water. It will be several months, it is supposed, before they can expect any more where the fires have been, as nothing will grow untill the rainy season commences, but a few days rain would make all land, after being burned, quite green — almost as if by Magic. Every body who knew him was sorry for one poor industrious fellow (tho’ it is not colonial to care for any but self). This Man

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had purchased half a section of Land about six miles from our place, 2 acres of which he had fenced in & sown with Barley. He had also fenced in & cultivated a large Garden & built himself a reed hut & had purchased a Stock of Pigs & Poultry, all of which he had done by working very hard up in the Tiers ever since the Colony was established, & laying out his savings upon this place. He was at his regular Employment up in the tiers when he heard of the fire on the plains. I saw him as he came past our place hurrying to the Spot where all he was possessed of in the world was at the very moment exposed to the remorseless fury of the devouring Flames. He clasped his hands together as he stood still for a Moment to gaze upon the scene and look’d perfectly horrified.

“E’en such a man, so woe-begone,
“Woke Priam @ the dead of night,
“And told him half his Troy was burnt”.

You must excuse my quotations I like to tack a bit of Rhyme or something of the sort to my tales as a kind of trimming & to give a bit of a finish to them as the ladies do by their bonnets.

The day after the fire old Jacoby join’d a party of fishermen & intends trying what he can do by fishing instead of gardening, for which purpose he has removed several miles farther up the Coast. He took his house & all his Traps off in the fishing boat, and I am now living in a Pisé house still near the Coast, beyond the place where the fire commenced & belonging to a friend of mine in Adelaide. This I have Rent free, having been unoccupied ever since it was built “as a Seaside house” for my friend to take his family to out of the dirt of the town occasionally.

My farming stock consists of a spirited little black Timor Pony, who takes precious good care to be always missing when he is wanted, & when I have a journey of a few miles to take upon him, I generally have to hunt the rascal twice as far on foot, before I can catch

him, if indeed I manage to catch him at all, which is not often the case — the little beggar has also got me into trouble several times by a nasty trick

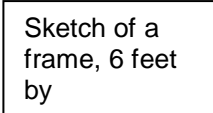
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which all these little devils have of biting all the horses they come near, & absolutely pulling pieces out of them. I have also three Nanny Goats — two of them with two kids each and a fine old Jet black Billy Goat with a long black beard, reaching to the ground, & remarkable for the striking likeness he bears to his namesake, "King John"!! These Goats are of the Cape breed & are very beautiful Creatures, almost like Antelopes. The Nannies are mottled red and white all over & are much larger than any goats I ever saw before. They are more hardy than Cows in the hot weather & will give almost as much Milk. The Old Billy will draw a four wheel'd pony carriage in good Style & looks remarkably well in Harness! I have hens & chickens without count & a few Turkeys & Ducks. So that I now get lots of Eggs & plenty of Goats Milk. Hens are worth here 10/- & eggs sell for 5d each in Adelaide. The keeping of such stock is no Expense, they fend for themselves over Miles of unenclosed land, all wild.

I have also large quantities of Melons in the Garden (but nothing else) both Rock, Pine & Water Melons. The Melons are very beautiful; I am very fond of them & in fact almost live upon them. Melons seem to suit the Country better than any other description of fruit or vegetable & are now plentiful & very cheap. During the whole of the Season from 2 to 3 Months, you may purchase either Rock or Water Melons as large as your head for 1/- each in Adelaide & occasionally for half the price.

There are plenty of Parroquets near my present Residence & some Quails. I very often shoot sufficient for a Parroquet Pie or Pudding, they are small & require a Mutton chop or two to make a really good Pie.

The Cockatoos use wide awake calls. They chatter away in grand Style when you walk past them as if they were making fun of you, but fetch your gun - & presto — you neither hear nor see one.

I have been living entirely alone for several weeks, but at present a young Lady from London, (an acquaintance of my friend's who came out on 'spec', I suppose, tho' she says she scorns the Idea!) & my friend's two children are down here. You would call our Pisé house a mud hut — it is built of Soil & Grass. These Materials are chopped up together and rammed into a kind of frame with one side the Contents of this frame are piled one upon a wall & are left for the sun to harden when places. The hut is thatched over with reeds & partition in the middle made of Indian matting.  made to slide in & out; another into the shape of fixed in their proper has a clay floor & a It is whitewashed inside &

out & has a Green veranda all round it, which makes it look pretty well for a bush hut. My eldest Companion is rather a lady-like sort of a girl — says she is 22, hates the Colony as much as I do, & wishes she was in London, is very good tempered, very pretty, very witty & very chatty, & what makes her a great acquisition in the Australian bush, where you never hear even the warble of a bird, she sings very prettily & has a very pretty collection of songs, including all my old favourites — among others —

"When thro' this life unbless'd we rove, Losing all that made life dear,

"Should some notes we used to love, In days of boyhood, meet our Ear,

"Oh how welcome breathes the strain! Wakening thoughts that long have slept,

"Kindling former smiles again, In faded eyes that long have wept!

"Like the gale, that sighs along Beds of Oriental flowers,

"Is the grateful breath of song, That once was heard in happier hours" &c, &c

But I must give you a full length likeness. Her figure rather tall, & graceful as a Cedar, dark hair & coal black eyes - regular black diamonds! - neat foot & ankle, with a foot more light & a "Step more true", never flew Emu nor bounded Kangaroo, expressive features & her

cheek — “Oh! Call it fair, not pale”, & tho’ perhaps for some tastes there would be too much of a pensive cast, at times, in her countenance — yet I consider this only makes her more interesting. She also talks French “and all that sort of thing”, & take her altogether, is far from being a despiseable sort of Companion in the bush — she cut the wood! — draw the water!, boil the Pot! & bake the Dampers!! among us. And my Conversations to now, no longer about Cornwall with its “Wreckers, Wrestlers, Smugglers & Miners. We had now the London Stars, with Drury Lane, Covent Garden, the Opera House, the Mirrors; and a Game of ‘Cribbage”, which I have been learning, on “all fours” every Evening.

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“Honi soit qui mal y pense”. A little variety is charming & I don’t consider so far that I have in all a bad exchange in getting the lively Miss L. & the Piccaninnies (but they don’t count) in the place of old Jacoby & his long tiresome yarns, & after having lived the Life of a hermit for so long a time and “With no-one to put on a sleeve or neck button”. Besides which I value Miss L’s agreeable society the more, because I fancy it will tend to prevent one from degenerating entirely into a Savage or an Ourang Outang out in the wild bush, & then she has such a sweet voice!! — with a little touch of melancholy in it to be sure at times, but when you notice her melancholy she smiles so sweetly, &

“... it is in vain that we coldly gaze

“On such a smile upon us, the heart must

“Leap blindly back to kindness”

and now she sings again!

List! Oh! List!

“Oh! ‘tis sweet to think, that where’er we rove,

“We are sure to find something blissful & dear;

“And that, when we’re far from the Lips we love,

“We have but to make Love to the lips we are near!

“The heart like a tendril accustomed to cling,

“Let it grow where it will cannot flourish alone.

“But will lean to the nearest & loveliest thing

“It can twine with itself & make closely its own”.

In mentioning my ‘chere amie’, do not misunderstand me. I shall never be any thing, now, but an old Bachelor, our friendship is, I assure you, all platonic.

I should not perhaps have touch’d upon this subject only that John Rigby, when down here a short time ago, happened to go with me on to the sand hills where we have a kind of ‘Observatory’ overlooking Holdfast Bay, out of which we can see all the vessels as the arrive which visit our Port from England. We also take Tea in this place occasionally. Rigby who is a mischievous sort of a fellow, especially in these matters, told me since that he had written to Tom Morris & had spun I do not know what Sort of a Yarn out of our Exotic Bower (as he called it) & our young housekeeper &c

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I therefore tho’ it best to state the real facts of the case. I believe I have not mended the matter much by my explanation unless you give me credit for all I have said. Miss L. is one of those who have had a very rough Lesson out in these Colonies. She came here as a Companion & lady’s maid to the Colonial Secretary’s Wife having been schoolfellows together. Out here they did not agree — if they had been two Angels from Heaven they could not possibly have agreed long in this “Temper-trying” place. There are few Women in fact none, whose tempers are not more or less soured, after a short residence here; some of them I understand improve a little after undergoing a casehardening Process! The father of the young lady I am speaking of was Steward to Lady Bates & Miss L. was bro^t up &

educated along with Lady Bates' Children. At Lady Bates' death the establishment was broken up & Miss L. left almost unprovided for; and after having been all her life mixed up with all the luxuries, gayeties, & refinements of 'high' Life in London, here she is, buried alive, in the Australian Bush, superintending the "washing & combing departments" of the little Ch. & with no-one but an old broken down squire to protect her, who has almost enough to do to take care of himself!! I fancy you'll think me in the Poet's Paradise! Oh that the Desert were my dwelling place, with one fair spirit for my Minister, specially if you recollect Byron's lines!!

"That might all forget the human race,
"And hating as one, Love but only her". Byron.

Miss L. has suggested to me that in speaking of the sickness &c in the Colony, I ought to mention that tho' parties who live in the bush & live entirely upon salt Provisions are very liable to be troubled with the Scurvy, yet the cases of Gout or Apoplexy are never heard of!! As far as this goes I must certainly acknowledge that this place is superior even to London itself!!

I have stated that our house is divided into apartments. We are none of us troubled with much superfluous furniture in the bush. My "soft voluptuous Couch" now is the Top of the Drawers in the larger apartment, where I sleep every night with a brace of Pistols under my Pillow, "bush fashion", and which is our Kitchen, parlour & Hall. These said Drawers, besides being used as a bed, besides doing their own paper office, have to supply the place of Cupboards & shelves & have to serve us also for a Table at Mealtime &c, &c and are a much more extensively useful article than the celebrated Nest of Drawers in Goldsmith's deserted village which if I recollect right, were merely

"Contriv'd a double debt to pay
"A Bed by night, a nest of drawers by day".

While our solitary Drawers have to serve some ½ doz Purposes independent of these.

I used to think living in a Tent very miserable sort of work at first, & so it certainly is, but a kind that is properly constituted will accommodate itself to whatever sort of Pillows.

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The vicissitudes of fortune & travel may place under it and rely upon it a Man as well as a worm and may almost get so "casehardened" by long suffering as to keep never minding under afflictions which you (comfortable tarry at home folks) would almost fancy would drive him mad. But

"Mute, the Camel labours with the heaviest load
"And the Wolf does in silence (not bestow'd);
"In vain should such example be".

If you had seen us at Rigby's the first time I was on a visit there & while his family were living in his tent in the Town — you would certainly have tho^t we had almost made as bad a bargain as poor Paddy when he felt the Bayonet stuck right thro' him in the field of battle — "By the Holy Poker", says Paddy, "this is nice sort of work & all for 13d per day". Rigby's Place is in a narrow Valley between very high hills. At the foot of the Range of hills on one side runs the deep river Sturt which is dry for 9 Months in the year, except a deep water hole here & there in the bed of the River, which said water holes are like angels' visits—few & far between. On the banks of the river close to one of these water holes (after driving two Miles up the narrow valley) we found Rigby's Encampment as lonely & secluded a Situation as you can well imagine — to have seen us here you would certainly have tho^t we had come 15,000 Miles over the wide seas to fare worse than any poor Man's Pig in England. Here was Rigby & Pattersons small Bell Tent some 8 feet in diam^t, in which they both pigged for the night, & in which we all dined &c in the day time. Under a Gum Tree at a short distance off was erected the substitute for a Tent in which an old Arab called Mammazelli & myself slept. This bush Dormitory of ours was merely a piece of Canvass

thrown over a long pole, supported by an upright at one end & the other end stuck into a hole in the Gum Tree & formed all together a kind of roof-like shap'd Tent under which Mammazelli & myself crept on all fours every Night. At a short distance in front of the bell tent was another lofty Gum Tree, perhaps 100 feet to the first branch & quite hollow inside. Close to this tree was the fire where was carried on all our cooking operations &c. The Apology for a Tent in which old Mammy & myself slept (mind you we had each our own Blankets & Kangaroo Rug) was also our Pantry where we kept our dampers &c. "Hicilla Lacrime"!

Rigby had three infernal Pigs which almost every morning roused us with the rows they were kicking up as if the very devil was in them, dancing Irish Jigs & grunting, growling & fighting right at the Top of old Maammy & myself. These tormenting Brutes which were almost as savage as wild Bores, & ten times more cunning, used to creep in as quiet as Lambs without wakening us until they

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had seized upon our dampers or whatever else they could find in our Larder, but they had no sooner seized their Booty, than (instead of walking away quietly with the spoil & dividing it amicably amongst them outside) they commenced inside the Tent the grandest Corroboree, as old Mammy used to call it, the most horrid scene of fighting & grunting you can imagine, galloping & trampling over all Mammy & myself as if we were so much Dirt under their feet. Oh! Those infernal Pigs! I shall never forget them! — I was quite an invalid at the time & I really tho^t after fighting with the Varmint of one Sort or another all the night, that these cursed Pigs would be the death of me at least!! I verily believe these were the identical Pigs into which the devils were cast. But I must try to sketch you the Scene as it is vividly painted on my Imagination at this moment. You must recollect the Scene is in a narrow valley between two very high ranges of Hills, with a range of Lofty Mountains in the background. The foot of the range at the right hand side is washed by the deep river Sturt, between the high perpendicular banks of the river on the left hand side of it (the River) & the Range of Mountains on that (the left hand) side is the narrow Strip of Land below, & which occupies the whole of the Sketch — I studied perspective in China!!!

[Sketch of Rigby's Place: tall gum trees, hills and birds, tents, fire and cooking-pots, the stock pen for cattle, wagon and barrow, animals and poultry.]

River Sturt below

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This rough sketch will give you an Idea of settling in a new Country if you can make any thing out of it; I could have done it ...even a little better if I had been with a lead Pencil. The black fellows would walk up these Trees say 100 ft to the first branch almost as easily as you would walk up stairs to bed! One of old Joe Miller's Jokes has been practically illustrated here by one of our simple natives. A white man sent him up a Tree to saw off a branch & he absolutely sawed it off between the place where he was perched upon the branch & the Trunk of the Tree. Of course down both branch & he came together & the poor fellow is walking about a sad object with his arm broken which he would not allow any Doctor to touch.

But I am rambling from my Story. When I went with Rigby to his place, the first time, I was much surprised on reaching the lonely secluded Spot, to hear Rigby shout out Maamy? & to hear someone in a foreign accent answer, "Saab!" & immediately after to see come gliding towards us a tall, slender, dark, Hindoo-looking fellow with a red Turban on his head, who putting the back of his hand to his forehead & almost prostrating himself on the ground

again answered, “Saab!” After receiving his Orders, I learned from Rigby that he was an Arab, & was our Cook & servant of all work—& my Bedfellow—not exactly as said before we had each our own Blanket & Rug! However old Maammy was a very amusing

[More of the sketch on the opposite page, showing the steepness of the valley, and the gum trees on the top of the hill.]

Companion at night as he was always willing to sing me to sleep with his Turkish Songs & I always made him commence so soon as we were rolled up in our Rugs — & sometimes when I got a little grog for the old fellow he would sing nearly all night for me. He had a good voice & Rigby & myself used to consider he sung his native Songs very well. Old Maammy had been a Ship’s Cook, in which Capacity he had been all round the world & in almost every part of it. I used to ask him sometimes about the different

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places he had visited, after talking the different Ports over & lauding those most where the Grog was cheapest & best! He would generally finish, “London good place—plenty money!” —“Rio good place—plenty money—New York—good place—plenty money!—Calcutta good place—plenty money”. “Plenty good place” “Plenty good money”. No money! no good—nowhere! I believe old Maamy’s right “Money makes the more to go all the world over” but dash my Wig if a man could be comfortable here if he had all the Money that Jew Rothschild & his fellow Xtian Baring turned over during the whole of their Lives all in a Lump!

I was saying I thought living in a Tent very miserable sort of work at first but I have got so used to a Tent at Old Jacoby’s that I now prefer sleeping in a tent to sleeping in a house. Tho’ the Midday Sun is almost overpowering in a Tent & prevents you from having a comfortable Siesta which is almost absolutely necessary in our hottest weather, while the Winter’s heavy Rain again is anything but agreeable, “with its drip, drip, dripping, all is dripping!!!” as Sheridan said of the Cave in the Rock, & it is totally impossible at this season to keep dry either day or night. However there are some things which almost recompense you for all this, & which almost cause you to like a Tent, as the man after a long confinement in the Bastille at Paris began even to like it & regretted being set at liberty. During the hot weather I certainly prefer sleeping in a Tent. There is a kind of sweet delicious freshness in the Air in this Country when you awake in a morning after having slept in a Tent and feel that

“The morn is up again, the dewy morn;

“With breath all incense & with cheek all bloom;

“And laughing as if earth contain’d no tomb”

which is the greatest luxury I ever experienced & which makes you feel as light-hearted for the time as if there were no cares in the world. This is a sort of feeling which you do not experience to anything like the same degree after sleeping in a closed up house. I do not pretend exactly to understand how this is, but there most certainly is something in the light balmy atmosphere in these climates which tho’ every body feels it, it is difficult to describe & which most assuredly has the effect more or less of driving away care, Tom Moore sings,

“’tis The Glow of the Sunshine, the balm of the Air

“Thus steals to our hearts & makes all Summer there” —

This it is, which enables one to bear up against evils, which would be totally insufferable in your moist heavy atmosphere! I experienced this sort of thing first on the shipboard after sleeping at the Top of the Cuddy all night in the open air as I did after we got inside the Tropics in a ... at the Cape of Good Hope. There tho’ I did not sleep exactly in the open air, yet I had a large airy Dutch bedroom with the windows wide open all night & the bed surrounded with Musquitoe Curtains which admit a free circulation of the air while at the

same time they keep out all vexatious Intruders. I could not at first at all account for this feeling of bouyant lightheartedness whether the atmosphere had really anything at all to do with the Matter or whether it was solely owing to the reflection that I had no longer a large and daily increasing Stock of unsaleable stuff for which it was totally impossible to get cost price, with at the same time a rapidly falling Market staring me in the face. This of all disagreeable things I have ever, even yet, experienced, is the "ne plus ultra"! This—this is Misery.

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Excuse any aerial flights of this sort — I am aware they are too fanciful for you sober, tarry @ home, utilitarian sort of Folks who think about nothing at all but £. s. d., whose thoughts are altogether of the Earth Earthly — & whose God is Mammon!! — but "I who am of lighter Mood" will sing with honest Tom Bowling

"Then why should we quarrel for riches, Or any such troublesome toys

"A light heart & a thin pair of breeches, will go thro' the world my brave boys".

I mentioned in a former part of my Letter that the Trees in this Country especially the Stringy-bark & Gum trees grow to an almost incredible size. There are Stringy-bark Trees up in the mountains 200 ft to the 1st branch. One near the town a white man, his wife and three Children have lived in for some time, thus realizing the tales the ancient Poets tell us of the Fauns & Satyrs — this is a Gum Tree & is quite hollow as are all our Trees more or less. One of these @ Unkaparinga 15 persons once dined in together off a Table. There is another immense Tree either Gum or Stringy bark on Doctor Knots Station which he uses for a Gig House. There is also one @ Mr Mengy's with which I saw him tack his horse cart & another @ Crayfords Public house in the tiers in which 10 Persons dined a few weeks ago — a kind of Pic nic Party got up for the purpose & to make the affair more Colonial nearly all the dishes were peculiar to the country. The Dinner consisted of three courses — First Kangaroo Soup — then for Fish — Snappers, Stingrays & Barracootas removed for Roasted Quails — A Bustard a la Alderman in Chains — 2 Black Swans — Parrot Pies — Cockatoos stew'd — & Emu Stakes, with Joints of "Sheepy & Bullocky" Would not poor Sam Hopwood have been in his Glory at a feast of this Sort. You would have been amused at seeing the party start on their expedition — 8 of them in a Bullock Dray & six, & two of the Gents mounted on Timor Ponies which they had great difficulty in subduing to the sober pace of the horned Cattle. The ladies flaring up in their best bibs & tuckers — their flashy bonnets decked with a profusion of the gayest ribbons, & with their bright green veils hanging like streamers from the mast heads of so many Frigates & each of them sporting a flaming Parasol evidently new for the occasion, & our colonial Ladies all appear to study show more than neatness whenever they have an opportunity of displaying their charms, in fact coarse, tawdry & vulgar are the prevailing characteristics of every thing colonial, and on this occasion the ladies appeared for

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all the world like so many of our gaudiest Parroquets perched at the Top of the heavy lumbering Vehicle & chattered away much in the same style as so many Parroquets w^d have done while the creaking noise of the ponderous machine, the apparently slow & solemn movement of the Procession to one who had been accustomed to flying about on your neck or nothing Railways, & the whole affair altogether, could not fail to remind one very forcibly of being far, far removed from all the Luxuries & refinements of the old Country, without having acquired any thing to recompense one, in the least, for the Loss of them.

Give me an old Country, where Comforts & Conveniences of all sorts have been accumulating from Generation to Generation; & the Savages may keep undisturbed Possession of their wilds for me, after I once get from amongst them again. I used to fancy

there would be a kind of pleasing excitement which I should enjoy very much in rambling thro' the pathless, primitive Forests —

“Where things that own not man's dominion dwell;

“And Mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been”

and awakening with your gun the Echoes which had lain dormant ever since the Creation. But after being lost once or twice in these sort of excursions, & having had to sleep in the open air all night, supperless & without being able to find a drop of water to cool your parch'd Lips you begin to think you sh^d prefer lodging in the neighbourhood of a “Grove of fine Chimneys”, & the solid Comforts of a bed & supper, to reposing under those romantic circumstances under the umbragious Shade of one our Lofty Gum Trees, with your head upon your double barrell'd Gun, prepared to jump upon your legs ready for the wild dogs in case they sh^d take a fancy to disturb your repose.

You never need have any fears of the natives @ night — they never leave their fires after Sunset, untill he rises again in the morning — unless they go in company of the Whites. I suppose they are the only race in the World who have not some Idea of Religion or who do not worship something either in the Heavens above or in the Earth beneath, or in the waters under the Earth or perform religious ceremonies in some way or other. The only trace of any thing of this sort amongst our natives is a kind of dread they have of rambling about after Sunset. Their Corroborees, tho' they take place @ the full Moon, have no reference to the Moon except to take advantage of the

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light nights to dance their war-dances. In these dances they go thro' a kind of Warlike Performance, or Sham fight, representing them as defending their Women & Children, who are posted in the werleys close around the fires, from an hostile tribe who are endeavouring to take or kill them; and in their Songs the Women merely ridicule & defy their enemies & encourage their own Warriors and there does not appear to be any thing at all in these Corroborees which has the slightest reference to anything in the least approaching to a religious Ceremony.

Well, this is certainly a strange Country, & one gets mix'd up with strange people, & strange adventures! I mentioned that the Cottage I am living in belongs to a friend of mine in Adelaide, who is a Surgeon & came out from Nottingham as Surgeon of an Emigrant Ship. He came out with the Intention of commencing a Distillery here, but like myself was disappointed in this object. He therefore commenced practising as he found there was a good deal of sickness in the place, but he used to tell me his patients were in the habit of spending all their ready money at the Grog Shops to make themselves ill & afterwards came to him to get cured upon credit, & finding that the publicans got all the ready Cash & it was impossible to get paid for Physic, he has himself opened a public house & now deals out both the poison & the Antidote, & tho' he says he never gets paid for Physicⁿ Advice, which he is still obliged to sell upon credit, yet he never trusts grog & manages to make the profits of the one more than pay for the losses of the other. I do not think he's at much expense in Drugs, as I know he never prescribes anything in cases of Diarrhea & Dysentery but the native Gums which exude in great abundance from our Gum & other Trees and the astringent bark of the Mimosa or Wattle Tree which are the remedies used by the natives and are to be had in any Quantity for the trouble of collecting. But I am rambling from my story.

Some months ago Mr. Fisher of the firm of Garratt & Fisher, almost the largest Merchants in the colony, went to South America, taking with him a large amount in Cash ostensibly to purchase a Cargo of flour which at that time was a very scarce article here & was fetching upwards of 100 guineas per Ton. Since

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which the “Royal Admiral” from England has arrived here bringing emigrants & a cargo of Porter & Brandy, consigned to Garrett & Fisher. It appears that Garratt has for some time been collecting together all the Cash he could muster & has settled his real Property, bringing in some £200 per annum (& what he would have had a difficulty in selling) on his Wife. The Owner of the house where I am now living came down the other day bringing this said Mr Garratt & the Captain of the Royal Admiral with him.. He told me he had arranged to take the remainder of M^r Garratts Brandy at 6/- per Gallon for Cash which was much below the Market Price, & the Captain had arranged to lie off opposite our place & to send the boat on shore during the night to avoid the duty!! The Captain then went on board in his Gig to get every thing ready & when night came on I volunteered to join them, to watch their operations. The night was very dark, & not a sound was heard.

“The Night winds sigh,

“The breakers soar & shrieks the wild sea curlew”,

untill about 11 o'clock when we kindled a beacon light on a hill close to the Shore & opposite to where the vessel lay & made a large fire in the Shore also. The vessel, which lay about 2 miles out at Sea, immediately she saw our Fires, hoisted a Lantern at the mast head to let us know they saw the lights, & some time after the people on board also hung out a blue light to inform us that the boat had put off. We kept up a bright fire, blazing away for them to steer to, and about 12 o'clock we heard the oars in the Water & had soon the satisfaction of seeing the long boat come up with the full tide & having on board the Captain & a large compliment of Sailors with for Cargo — 10 Pieces of brandy.

The indistinct Shadow of the ship out in the offing with the Lantern burning at the Mast head & the blue light blazing aft. The bright fire large enough to roast a dozen bullocks blazing away on the Shore & showing distinctly thro the darkness, the boat at the Water's edge — the casks of smuggled Spirits lying about on the beach — The Sailors, some busy engaged in rolling

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the Casks towards the Sandhills, some unloading the boat &c. M^r Garratt, The Captain (a regular Dirk Hatteraick looking fellow) and friend C — each armed with a brace of Pistols, a double barrell'd Gun, & a Cigar, in his Mouth, standing by the fire — formed altogether as wild a midnight scene as I ever expected to witness — and it struck me at the time that it would have formed an excellent subject for one of the old Dutch Painters and not unworthy a place beside the “Flying Mercury” in friend James' Collection. The whole affair was rather exciting & not unaccompanied with a little danger to add to the dignity! of it — as, in case the Custom House Officers had made their appearance, the whole Party were prepared to fight, rather than wait with the Stuff — & in fact had resolved to take it on board again, if they were disturbed in spite of all the Custom House Officers at the Station & had made arrangements to another boat to put off in case of need with reinforcements from the Ship @ a given signal.

However the Casks were all quietly & snugly secreted in the sand hills. Garratt was paid in Cash for his Spirits & afterwards rowed off, along with the Captain, in the long boats to the ship again. The Vessel was on her Way the following morning & Garratt has been heard nothing of since!

In a day or two after, 6 mounted Police rode up to our door, armed like so many Dragoons — & made enquiries respecting Garratt. I told them he had been down here & had gone on board with the Captain. They said they had been scouring the Country up the Coast for Miles supposing him to have been put on Shore by the ship's boats before she sailed & that he had lost himself in the bush or had got into the hands of the Natives or the wild Dogs —but

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however, it is now ascertained beyond a doubt that he has bolted — it turns out that he has been collecting together all the Cash &c he could muster & has left the Colony deeply in debt. The whole affair appears to have been a deep laid scheme of long standing & both Partners appear to be equally implicated & to have arranged things previous to Fisher sailing to Rio de Janeiro. But the loss in the Colony is trifling compared with the Robberies committed on their English Correspondents. It now appears that out of 18 Ships consigned to them from England they have only made returns for two. The “Louisa” from Sydney also consigned to them had a Cargo valued @ £5,000, the whole of which was sold & the Proceeds pocketed without any return having been made! Among other things they have had large quantities of “Soap” consigned to them from England; this article was exceedingly scarce some 12 Months ago in the Colony, & was selling at the extravagant price of 2/6d per lb., since when, owing to Garratt & Fisher pushing their Consignments on the Market by auction & in every other Way by which they could convert the Goods into Cash, it has fallen to 4d per lb. Garratt has been selling London Porter privately for Cash @ £5 per hogshead at the time the other merchants were all charging £9 @ 3 x 3 p.h.

I had not the least Idea myself that he intended to bolt; he told me when we were smoking our Cigars together by the fire, that some years ago he had lost all he was possessed of in the world at New York — that he now considered himself worth a many thousands, & that if any thing should happen to him by any unforeseen circumstances he had settled his real Property £200 per annum on his wife, & even said he should be glad to assist me in any way in his power at any time. This not many minutes before he left the Colony to bid it good bye for ever. What do you think of this for Impudence?!

This is colonial & nothing but Colonial! He promised to send for me the very letter I am writing to you without any Expense by the Captain of some vessel consigned to them on its return to England! The Spirits were all landed safely in town a few days after under loads of Hay & after they are once in the Premises they are quite safe here! Mind you I have nothing to do with this sort of work! Don't make me into a Smuggler!

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It is a common remark in England that a man is “going to the dogs” when he is merely getting into difficulties, but here it is not a figurative expression, it is too often literally the case with us. I have just heard of the melancholy fate of another shipmate of mine, W. Alex^r Smith who came out as a Cabin Passenger in our Ship & was brother to Captain Hall's wife (Captⁿ Hall, after trying his hand at Colonial farming & losing the greater part of his Property has gone to plough the wide Ocean once more, finding it a more profitable employment than ploughing our drought-plains) Smith's father is a Brewer in Edingburgh & Alec had just completed his arrangements to return home—he had been to Adelaide for this purpose from his Station about 50 Miles out & on his return is supposed to have lost his way. His horse arrived at the Station without a rider 2 days after he left Adelaide, but nothing was heard of Smith until a few weeks after when a party who were out hunting after cattle found a Quantity of bones & rags evidently the remains of some poor fellow who dead or alive had fallen a prey to the wild dogs, a short distance off were also found a hat & pair of shoes which were recognized as having been worn by poor Smith the last time he was seen alive. The rest of his Clothes were so much torn by the Jaws of the wild dogs that they could not have been recognized. He is supposed either to have died from exhaustion after losing his way or else to have been attack'd by the dogs whilst asleep. He must have died from thirst—people who have been lost in the bush never complain of hunger, it is always Water, Water, Water they crave. Poor Alec seldom drank Water! But I have no doubt all he wanted in this world was a drink of water, before death ended his “Sufferings”.

I have mentioned before what a tormenting place this is from the great numbers of reptiles & Insects—New Comers, especially of the women kind, are frequently obliged to rub themselves all over with vinegar before going to bed; some are liable to be annoyed much

more than others & are absolutely blistered from head to foot between lying down & getting up. We are not quite so much tormented with the Insects in the Country as in town, but we are much more annoyed by reptiles. I am just recovering from the effects of a bite or sting which was inflicted upon me by some reptile or other just under my eye when asleep during the night. My eyes were both affected & one of them entirely closed up! This is the fourth time I have been bitten in the face during the night by either Scorpion

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Centipedes or Tarantulas, the doctors in these cases cut the wounds and apply Caustic. My head and face were swollen very much—accompanied with a violent throbbing headache. We caught both a Scorpion & Centipede in the house the following morning, the former of which from the slightness of the wound we supposed had done the mischief, & after two or three “applications” of bread poultice to the wound, which was so slight as to be scarcely perceptible, the pain & swelling all went away in the course of a few days, but left my Eye as yellow as I once saw those of a friend of mine, if he will allow one to call him so, who managed to drive away a violent attack of Jaundice by taking a “wee draft of Mountain Dew”, (his own Prescription), which said attack had baffled all the Skill of all the faculty in the good old Town!!

I speared both the reptiles which we caught & stuck them on the door with such a large needle thro’ him. They were no sooner dead than myriads of ants commenced active operations upon them & in a short time succeeded in carrying the whole of them away piecemeal. Great numbers of the ants, after visiting the centipede fell down dead, poisoned I suppose, but others regardless of their fate boldly followed to the attack & in the course of two days there was not a vestige of either of them left.

I have the Skeletons of a large deaf adder, of an unicorn fish, & of a curious species of horned swordfish which the ants cleaned very beautifully for me, I have also a very handsome walking stick made out of the back-bone of a Shark, which the cockroaches on board the Ship cleaned for me.

[Sketch of a centipede and a scorpion.]

Centipede 6½ In long, a kind of dirty yellow green.
Scorpion 3½ In, a brown red colour.

Since I recovered from the sting of the Scorpion, our household has been thrown into a state of alarm & confusion by a large Snake, which came marching into the house, as impudent as a bushranger, just as it was getting dark & before we had lighted the lamp. We were all as still as death—Miss L was standing in the doorway enjoying the refreshing evening breeze, apparently in a brown study, being engaged as she afterwards told me, in contrasting the Silence & Solitude of the Australian bush with the noise & Bustle of the Great Metropolis. I was sitting in a Corner of the room quietly smoking a fragrant Manilla Cigar & puffing away care. When all at once the Silence was broken by an alarming cry from all hands of, “A Snake”, “A Snake”, & a rush into the

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corner of the house where I was posted, like the Guests in Macbeth, they “stood not on the order of their coming, but came at once”.

[Sketch of a writhing snake]

Length 6ft 8 In, with burnish’d neck of verdant gold all enamell’d in green & golden yellow, in diamonds on the back decorated with yellow stripes on the belly.

It was so dark I could only just distinguish the great brute crawling his winding Course along the floor & over the very spot where our housekeeper had the instant before been standing, lapp'd up in meditation. When I first cast my eyes upon him he appeared to be making towards me tacking along like a Ship against the wind,

“as when a Ship, by skilful steersman wrought

“Nigh Rivers mouth or foreland,

“& where the Wind veers oft,

“as oft so steers, and shifts her sail,

“So varied he & of his tortuous train;

“Curl'd many a wanton way”

I immediately jumped up, & getting behind him, closed the door. I then struck a Light with all possible dispatch &, arming myself with the Spade in one hand & the lamp in the other, I proceeded in search of the gentleman, but for some time I could see nothing at all of him; he appeared to have vanished into the earth.

At length, after a long search, we removed the Drawers under which we had repeatedly looked without being able to see anything, but after removing the Drawers from the Wall, the first thing we saw was the Tail of the brute, sticking out about 6 Inches from a hole in the Wall, close to the ground. With one determined dig of the Spade I cut off all I could see of the Beast. This only seemed to irritate him; for he immediately turned out of his hole quite enraged & gave battle open mouthed! I again struck at him with the Spade, but missed him. He was still as lively as ever, malgré the loss of his Tail, & was bent apparently upon the most deadly mischief. For a moment he obliged us to retreat a little, & I assure you there are very few things in the shape of personal danger that I fear now. I however soon rallied, & managed to get another opportunity of giving him a dig, & this time I pinned him to the floor by the middle, tho' without cutting him thro'. When he found he was fast he immediately turned with the greatest fierceness upon the Spade & continued in his impotent rage to bite the cold Iron most furiously, untill his strength was at length quite exhausted. He was a long time in dying even after he had been beaten severely on the head with a Waddie, & the severed Tail was in motion a full hour after it was cut off. On measuring the brute after death we found him

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upwards of 6 feet 3 in. without the remaining 6 or 8 inches of Tail which he had lost in the Combat. He was a very handsome diamond snake & I should have been glad to have had him perfect & cured but he was totally spoiled for this purpose.

A married lady of my acquaintance, who with her husband & two daughters has been living in a Tent ever since they came to the Colony, got up in the middle of the night a few nights ago to strike a light & trod upon a snake with her bare foot. The Snake instantly turned round & bit her in the leg. However, one of her daughters immediately applied her mouth to the wound & sucked it so effectually that her mother experienced no inconvenience except a slight swelling from the bite. I did not learn what description of snake it was—most probably not a very malignant one.

Note to Page 84

Since writing this, I have had great destruction among my farming Stock! Another bushranging thief of a Snake has destroyed in two days: a very handsome Cape Goat in kid, which I had only just purchased, a pretty little Bantam Hen, which came from the East Indies & which was sitting; and three tame Rabbits, the whole of my Stock. Rabbits are very scarce here; these came from England & were given to me by a friend who was leaving the Colony. The wild dogs have carried away upwards of 20 of my hens in less than a fortnight & the Bandicoots & Kangaroo rats lots of my chickens.

I am also going to lose our housekeeper. A Son of Col^l Torrens who knew Jane's friends in London has just arrived in the Colony as Harbour Master & Collector of Customs & has promised to send Jane back to England by the next vessel which leaves this for London. ...

She tells me if she ever thinks of me in after Life it will always be in company with Tea, Damper and Salt Pork, & with

"drawing of water & hewing of wood,

"In the days when we were gypsyng a long time ago",

as one of her favourite songs has it.

I forgot to mention that I had the Satisfaction of saluting M^r Snake [*a sketch of a coiled and hissing snake illuminates the capital 'S'*] with 4 fingers of swan Shot which gave him his quietus, & the next day I did the same kind office to a mate of his who appeared to be in search of his departed Friend. Snakes, Lizards, Guianas & almost all descriptions of animals & Reptiles appear to fall back from the Settlements of the whites — they are not near so numerous as they were when the Country was first colonized, that is in the immediate neighbourhood of Adelaide &c. Kangaroos & Emus are never seen now within some Miles of the City.

Many of the Settlers out in the bush look almost as wild as the very Natives themselves, especially if they happen to be dark complexioned. It is the fashion with bushmen to allow their beards, whiskers, &c to luxuriate in the wildest profusion, native fashion, and the warmth of the climate appears to add very considerably to the length & strength of these natural productions — or perhaps the salt Pork may act like Bear's Grease!!! Whatever may be the cause, however, people do alter very much in this respect. The first time I saw Rigby I had some difficulty in recognising his Physiognomy thro' the long, bushy, fiery, whiskers in which it was enveloped, & could not resist telling him, that I could think of nothing but "Moses & the burning bush" when I saw his Eyes peeping & twinkling thro' the dense scrub behind which they were almost concealed. But the wildest & wildest-looking men, surely ever were seen, are the old Lags who are employed to bring Cattle over from Sydney to our Settlement. The Overlanders, as they are called, these fellows who travel with large flocks of herds from 1000 to 1200 Miles thro' the barren, unoccupied—except by the wild rambling Savages—almost desert Country lying between South Australia & New South Wales are generally from 5 to 6 Months on

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their Journey, during which time they do not see a single Human being, except the Savages who are hanging about them occasionally for what they can spear, or pick up by stealing when they are encamped for the night — & during the whole of their Journey they are generally speaking "unkempt, unwash'd, unshorn", & look even wilder than the Savages themselves when they reach Adelaide! And having all their Wages to receive in a lump when they arrive, and being for the most part runaway convicts, they make up for their privations during their long journey, and during their "time of Bondage"; by plunging at their Journey's end into the wildest & most reckless dissipation as long as their money lasts. During this time they are quite drunk from morning till night, & Port Wine & Brandy are the meanest thing they will condescend to drink. Of course this sort of career cannot last very long, and when it is at an end, viz. when their last shilling is spent, they are then let loose upon us!—like so many wild beasts!!—to raise the ways & means in whatever way they think proper & they generally manage to select what other people consider very improper ways! The Colony swarms with them, and as they are practised in all sorts of iniquity, and are skilled in every device to escape the hands of Justice, they make complete fools of our raw police, whom they call "a Parcel of Muffs" & almost consider them beneath their notice!! In a former part of my Letter I did myself the honour of introducing to your especial notice—"Old Con"—"The Treasurer" as he is called by all these fellows, who as I before mention'd, deposit all their plunder in his hands for Division &c. Since then Old Con has had a narrow

escape, but with his usual Devils own luck he is again at liberty and “King of the Thieves”.
Some time

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ago a Scotchman who had just arrived in the Colony was so unScotchmanlike & so imprudent as to exhibit in Company 30 Sovereigns, which he had bro^t with him. I assure you it is no joke to say they are curiosities here. I declare to you I never saw so many since I came into the Colony altogether as 30—no, not half of the number—however the man, after dazzling the Eyes of the company with the sight of his shining curiosities, deposited them in the pocket of his “Oh no! we never mention man’s” and walked off towards his lodgings. He had not proceeded far, however, before he was knocked down & robbed in the open Street where numbers of people were walking, being only about 8 o’clock in the evening and as light almost as at Midday. All was done in an instant, & the poor fellow was left with a Gag in his mouth, to lament his folly, which he did most bitterly so soon as he was ungagged, declaring it was all the money he had in the world!

A Person the same Night who lives in the outskirts of the Town saw & heard Old Con & some of his Gang at the back of his house in the middle of the night, arguing the matter over & dividing the “shiners” amongst them. Two of them including The Treasurer were taken up the next day & lodged in Jail, out of which Old Con, in a short time, contrived to make his escape. The o^r fellow stood his Trial & was acquitted for want of sufficient evidence. So soon as the man was acquitted, Old Con, who had kept himself concealed up in the Tiers, walked up to the Jail with all the assurance imaginable, & throwing the Irons, ‘with which I was loaded’ when he made his escape, into the Jailyard, swore a great Oath at the Keeper, telling him not to accuse him with stealing his “bloody Irons”—everything is “bloody” with these wretches—and after he had done this he marched up to the Court house & deliberately walked arm-in-arm out of the place with his old Comrade. I do not know how it is that no notice was taken of this. Things are carried on very curiously in some of Her Majesty’s distant Possessions, & in a very unaccountable way, to a looker on, here, occasionally. It is well known that many of the Custom-House officers are the greatest Smugglers we have and it is shrewdly suspected that many of the Police, if not themselves actually thieves, yet are to a considerable extent

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conscious receivers — in fact this is the very hotbed of Bribery & Corruption which flourish in almost every department of Government. The head Officer of the horse Police & Captain Lipson the HarbourMaster have just been detected in having been for some time in the practices of charging Government some £20% over & above certain Payments which they have been in the habit of making on Government a/c in the purchase of Hay &c., and delinquencies of one sort or another are constantly taking place in one or other department.

We have also just had a curious exposure rather at the Expence of our Colonial Secretary, who ranks next to the Governor, Robert Gouger, Esq — this M^r Gouger sold three Goats some time ago to a Person near Adelaide for £13-0-0. Some time after he had sold them, & pocketed the Cash, he called upon the party who purchased them from him to request he would cut off the Goats Ears! stating that the Company claimed the Goats which were marked in the ears with their Mark & also stating that he merely called in a friendly way as he had nothing to do with the Goats now, having sold them & received the Cash! Since this the Company’s Agent has actually seized the Goats—Gouger tho’ he sticks to the money, refuses to have any thing at all to do with the business, & there for the present the matter rests.

Powers of Attorney, coming out from England every now & then make sad work with parties who have been flaring up in the Colony, & the most curious exposures of all Sorts all daily taking place in the “City of Refuge”!

A fellow who was in good credit here & has been doing a very considerable business, got married a short time ago to a very respectable young Girl, & the other day in his

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absence a letter from England arrived addressed to him, which his Wife, Womanlike, had the curiosity to open. You may guess her utter horror & amazement when she read,

“Dear Husband,

“Another fine piccannini soon after you left England.

“— surprised you had not written”,

“— coming out with the Babes by the next ship” &c, &c. & ending,

“Y^r affec. Wife”.

The poor Girl, who was almost heart-broken, packed up her Kit & went to her brother's, & the fellow on his return home finding that a Storm was brewing on land, flew for Safety to the Sea, & without bidding goodbye to his new Wife or waiting to welcome his old one & her picanninies & forgetting in his hurry to arrange a few trifling debts of 6 or £9,000 with his C^{ts}, jumped on board a Ship which happened to be on the point of sailing to Port Philip, & made his escape.

This is one of a very great variety of similar occurrences which are regularly taking place and are merely looked upon as a good joke here by all but the actual sufferers!! I verily believe there are some Scoundrels who have got married in this place who have not only a Wife each in England, but in almost every English Colony. I heard one fellow boast he had been in every Colony belonging to the British Crown, except Swan River & Port Philip, which two places he intended visiting next, & that he had married a Woman in every Colony he had been in! What I consider a still worse feature in our Community is the fact that when a scoundrel of any sort gets into the hands of Justice, be he a desperate Bushranger of the worst description, or the greatest villain possible, & the greater the villain, the more does the remark apply, viz. that the victims of these wretches are never pitied— while the Malefactors themselves invariably appear the objects of the greatest Sympathy— & people appear quite rejoiced when a daring, clever Bushranger manages to escape the punishment he so richly deserves.

This feeling I consider nothing but a modification of Socialism & I think the Socialists would do well to leave England & come out here, where they would find a Community ready formed exactly to their hearts' content, & what ought to be another pleasing reflection to them is the fact that they could “leave their Country for their Country's good”!

Neighbours in the bush are not very desirable in some respects. Our nearest neighbours in different directions are 2½ to 4 Miles off & yet as there are no shops to pop in nearer than Adelaide, we are perpetually troubled by the occupants of the surrounding huts, houses, & Tents for either eatables, Tools, or household Conveniences of one sort or another & things which are in daily use are frequently three or four Miles off when you want them; while to have these things, & not to be willing to share them with

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your neighbours is considered an unpardonable offence out in the bush, but the cream of the Joke lies in the manner of doing the thing, it is so straightforward & honest, none of your hypocritical Civility & servile gratitude.

A young Urchin comes marching in the o^r day. “M^r. Bradshaw has sent me for 2 Pieces of Pork—belly part—& some Tea & Sugar, & if you are going to town you must call (2 Miles out of your way) he wants you to do something.” He had not been gone many minutes before he returned. “Bother the things, I forgot the flour”! Soon after in pops another unwelcome visitor. “Can you lend M^r. Sargeant your Adze & Augur?” Ans^r, “You did not bring the Spade nor the Gimblet or the nails back I lent you”. “No. We ant done with um, & we ant got no nails.” “Your Pen & Ink & a sheet of paper & a wafer” are not an uncommon request. I received the other day about 20 lbs of a villainous mixture of ground

rice, maize, sand, dust & dirt which you would scarcely give to pigs, in place of some 40 lbs of decent Flour I lent 2 months ago. Another kind neighbour—3 Miles off—call'd yesterday. "Can you lend us this Tin-full of flour & 2 figs of Tobacco?" Another & another. "Father says you must send him your cross cut Saw". M^r. Cook has sent back your whitewash brush (only the almost worthless remains of it) & "wants to know, can you lend him your packing needle & thread to mend the Sheppard's Tent & send him a Box of Lucifers". Bad luck to ruck neighbours, they make you almost wish Lucifer had the whole of them!!

Here you have a Community of Goods, Wives, & Chattels. Socialism again. M^{rs}. Garratt, the poor disconsolate Wife of our runaway Merchant, has sold off every thing by auction in the Store, & in the house a M^r. Isaacs purchased 105 Barrels Porter @ the Sale @ 17d per barrel for Cash, which he is selling at £6-10-0 per barrel @ 3 & 3 Months to London publicans! M^{rs}. Garratt has already found a Protector in Osmond Gilles, Esq^{te}., a C^r of her husbands, & perhaps the only monied man in the place. I suppose he has taken M^{rs}. G. in, full of all demands. The Great O.G., as he is called, is a Bachelor; he is great in every way and as respects money matters, is a "Triton among Minnows" and as "Women like Moths are ever caught by glare", he had no difficulty in walking into all M^r. Garratt's matrimonial Privileges in a very few hours after he was known to have vacated them. M^{rs}. Garratt & O.G. are living openly together as man & wife & will visit among

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their mutual acquaintances just as usual. Since this was written M^{rs}. G & O.G. have agreed to separate & the Lady is now living with Captain Parker!

Note to Page 89 — M^{rs}. Garratt.

[A newspaper article dated Thursday, April 2, [1841] about M^{rs}. Garrett, under the title, Resident Magistrates Court. It concerns the charge laid against M^{rs}. Garrett and her two brothers of 'conspiracy with intent to defraud', brought by creditors, A & S. Lyons of Sydney.]...

People have quite enough to do, to look after their own affairs in these Colonies without troubling their heads with those of other people. And Men, ay, & Women too, may do whatever they think proper here, & without any remarks if they do not injure their neighbour, & without considering what other people will think about them; well knowing that even their nearest neighbours will not take the trouble either to care or think anything at all about the matter!! It would not be colonial! Nobody here ever considers "What will Mrs. Grundy say?" That Mrs. Grundy of the play [*would say*] 'e's why, and "He don't lodge here!"

"Fires again" is the general cry every Evening & in fact scarcely a night passes but we see one or more large fires up in the mountains, whether these fires blaze away more @ night, when the breeze freshens a little, than in the day, or whether the darkness makes them more visible or probably both, I cannot say. But we do not see near so much of them in the day time. The grandest Sight, however, of this sort I have yet witnessed (barring perhaps the large fire I spoke of before) took place the o^r night. I really do not know how to give you an Idea of the horribly beautiful sight we all witnessed for some hours. Some 10 Miles from our place, crossing over a dead level plain, you reach the Mountains which extend across the Country for a great many Miles & which rise precipitately, Tier upon Tier, from the level plain. Piled one upon another, to a great height, "Alps upon Alps arise", deep Gullies intervening between their summits, and the whole covered all over with lofty Gum & Stringy bark Trees.

[Sketch of a vista of hills covered in trees, with smoke ascending]

When these mountain forests are on fire the Blaze may be seen a long way out at Sea.

Fancy yourself on a dark windy night, gazing at an immense Cotton Mill, perhaps 100 feet & upwards in height, & some 2 Miles in length, & which said Mill appeared to be climbing broadside & with gigantic Strides up the side of a very high steep hill & blazing away all the while with the utmost fury in every part

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of it! Such, I assure you without the slightest exaggeration is the nearest description I can give you of the splendid scene we witnessed. A much finer sight than any Illumination or artificial fire works. Now we watched it climb to the very summit of the 1st steep hill and after pausing there some time and giving an extra flare up when at the Top, it appeared gradually to busy itself in the deep Gully behind, & for some time we could only see the reflection of it, which however served to illuminate the whole country for Miles, till after an Interval of some time we again saw the immense mass of Fire, & apparently with renewed vigour, stalking up the precipitous side of the next still higher Elevation, on the very Summit of which it was blazing away with the greatest fury & looking awfully grand when we at length retired to bed. It was a most splendid sight even thro' our windows as we lay in bed & it required very little Stretch of the Imagination to fancy it an Eruption of an immense Volcano, with the Crater in full operation vomiting out fire & flames!

In the Morning we could see nothing but a little Smoke rising from the mountains. Parties who were at the Theatre in the Town 6 Miles from the fire say they could have witnessed the Performance without any lights; the town was almost as light as in the day!

Since writing this I have ascertained that very few of the lofty trees were at all damaged by the fire. It has ... [*incinerated*] the underwood & Scrub, & the smaller Trees made all alaze. On the Plains the larger Trees, however, are frequently burnt down, as they were in the fire. I spoke of it before.

These fires are often exceedingly alarming to new comers. They tell a tale here of a man falling into fits, the first time he saw one of these fires, supposing, as he afterwards declared, that he had actually witnessed the arrival of the Day of Judgment, & in fact they occasionally do a great deal of Mischief. A Settler out in the bush with whom I am slightly acquainted whose station is on the Para River, has lately lost a Rick of Hay consisting of 20 Tons, another Rick, the Proceeds of 6 acres of Wheat, & nearly all his fences. This fire originated from the pipe of a deaf & dumb man who was looking after some cattle; and commenced at a place called the 1 Tree Hill, 7 Miles from the Para River

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& the fire spread, I am told, over the whole distance between the hill & the Para in less than three quarters of an hour. The people at the station I am speaking of saw the fire coming, but had not time to make the least Preparation and all they were able to save were the house & outhouses & their other Stack of Wheat. The Para stopped the fire from proceeding any farther in that direction; but the river being narrow and totally dried up lower down, the fire crossed there &, the wind changing, they were not a little surprised, as the Owner told me, to see the fire come blazing along up the other side of the river where he had 8 more acres of fencing, & which he had considered entirely out of danger, but which was partially destroyed along with his Stock Yard & a few rough outbuildings!! The Hot Winds, long Droughts & Fires afford pleasant prospects for our farmers!! "O fortunate rumium, sui si bona norint agricolæ"!!

Since writing this I have been much surprised by the Sea weed on the Sea beach all taking fire. The weed was lying all along the Coast at the foot of the sand hills in large quantities, high & dry & sent the smoke in volumes rolling over the Sand hills as the fire smouldered away.

Clothes are by no means an expensive article in the bush — a few striped Cotton Shirts, (no stockings are worn) A Jacket & Trousers of Cotton or Linen, a belt round the Waist in place of braces — a broad-brimmed straw Hat and a pair of Kangaroo skin shoes, & a change of these articles are all that are required, or that are generally worn, in the bush. We manage the Kangaroo Skins ourselves — they are merely thrown into a Cask filled with water & the bark of the Wattle tree, which grows plentifully here, (my brother Tho^s. will know this as the Mimosa of commerce). The Skins are tanned with the hair on & in the hot weather a few weeks immersion completes all the little tanning that is required. A kind of boots made of these skins managed in this fashion are much better adapted to the bush than English shoes. With Shoes you are obliged to wear leather Gaiters, the grass is full of prickly burrs, which cut your ankles to pieces. The light grass cloth Jacket & Trousers which are commonly worn & which come to us ready made from the East Indies are a very pleasant garb & are to be bought here reasonably enough. In the hottest weather a still pleasanter wear are the Chinese

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Penjammies, a kind of trouser made exceedingly wide with a drawing & String round the waist. The Cloth is very fantastically printed in a variety of colours & the material is very light — in the very hot weather when even the nights are oppressive, these are frequently worn to sleep in without any other covering. I had the mortification to have nearly the whole of my Clothes stolen soon after landing in the colony, but under these Circumstances I did not experience such a great loss in them as I should have done in a cold climate.

A friend from Adelaide called upon me a few days ago, dressed in an ordinary English Dress Coat, when I happened to be gone a few Miles from home. We had an old Lag at work fencing for us. He told me on my return — I had been wanted — Who was it? “I didn’t know the bloody ---. He was a swell Cove with a long Coat!” was the characteristic Answer I got from the fellow. My Pen refuses to write the whole of his Reply. These old Lags make decidedly the best farm servants @ colonial work, which is so very different to English farming, but they are not to be trusted a yard — the best of them, for bad is the best. One of them told me the o^r day that he could no more resist stealing if he saw half a chance “than he could refrain from drinking as long as he could get at it”. Many of the wealthiest Men in these Colonies have been old Lags & in fact it is a common remark among them that “no one can do any good in these colonies untill he has “served his lagging”.

When my friend from Adelaide called the other day I had gone over to Klempzig, the German village here, where I had an opportunity of having a long Confab with an old Native, & one of the German Missionaries who understands the native Language better than anyone I have yet met with. This old black I was informed was considered a kind of learned man

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amongst them, & what is very unusual among these people, he was very communicative on a subject respecting which it is very difficult in general to get any Information from them, as they almost invariably appear exceedingly reluctant to converse at all upon the subject. From what I could now gather from this learned Doctor, who I could have almost fancied had been studying Ovid’s Metamorphoses, it appears that tho’ they have no kind of worship, yet that they have a creed respecting the soul or spirit something similar to that taught by one of the ancient Philosophers, viz. “Transmigration of Souls”.

They appear to have no Idea of a beginning or creation of the Earth or of the whole world. Of the Celestial bodies, they say, they were formerly living upon our Earth, partly as animals & part of them as human beings. The Moon, which they consider a male, first began to ascend to the Sky; taking with him his favourite Lubra, the Sun, who followed after him. He also persuaded all the o^r Stars to follow him that he might have Kangaroos to hunt & Companions in his hunting excursions. And as they themselves spend their time upon

this earth in hunting &c &c so do they consider the celestial beings are employed in the other Hemispheres.

They also distinguish particular Stars and have particular Yarns respecting them, and so also did this learned Divine give us a strange History of the Creation, or Transmigration & habits of the animal world here. For Instance, he told us the Kangaroo & Whale, when men belonged to different Tribes, & in one of the fights the Kangaroo twice speared the Whale in the neck, wounding him very desperately. The Whale feeling himself so painfully wounded metamorphosed himself into the huge Monster he now is, blowing to this moment, Water thro' the two holes in his neck which never heal.

When an Adult dies, they hold a kind of Inquest, or perhaps more like an Irish Wakes over him, asking him, Why he died? & whether someone in the night had speared him with an invisible Spear leaving no visible wound? They also frequently carry about the dead body round their former encampments during this Ceremony; after which they deposit the body in the Earth, making a kind of mausoleum, which they watch for some time, of Wood

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Earth over the Grave.

Their own Origin they ascribe to a kind of Lizard which separated the sexes but made the female sex inferior — therefore the slavish state in which their women are kept. We enquired from the old black what they thought of the whites when they first came amongst them? He said they had come to the conclusion that the “pale faces” were their ancestors risen from the dead, hence the name they first gave us “pin de meyer”—“Man from the Grave”. They also supposed, if ancestors had risen from the dead with superior Knowledge & acquirements, they thought, however, they only wished to see their native country and their old hunting grounds once more & would after a certain time return! The women frequently kill their own children. They generally say, when they have killed a child, that it was too weak & sickly to live & prepare food for itself when grown up & they merely kill them to put them out of their misery. The women also have a most horrid Custom which I can only just barely allude to, viz. carrying the dead bodies of their children on their backs for several weeks—3 weeks, I believe, is the usual time—after they have been dead.

When the Missionaries are endeavouring to convert them they are exceedingly impatient ... to change the subject. “Yetti, Yetti, Yetti! (Yes, yes, yes) Me toura (very) bad—me go hell! What you say all ...good!! but give me bickety (biscuits), give me bullocky, me very hungry”. You may send the whole Tribe to the Deel for a handful of mouldy Ship Biscuits & thank you too!!

They appear to have no wishes for any thing but a bare existence, & if they can only get food enough & toura come (plenty water) they want nothing else, barring a few about Adelaide such as King John, Captain Jack, &c., who have acquired a liking for Tea, Grog & Tobacco. If you ask the other fellows to alter their habits, to work as the white people do, so that they may live in houses & have a few Comforts &c., they give you to understand they would not part with their Liberty, their wild rambling habits, for all the white man's boasted comforts. “So & so, Our fathers did, as we do, & lived”. All they appear to desire is—to live—& this, they say, they can get the means of accomplishing, without forsaking the Customs of their fathers for those of the pale faces.

They also frequently tell you

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the white fellow “too much toura ...”, meaning he does not practice what he preaches—“Black fellow get black Lubras—toura gurra!! (plenty, satisfied) White fellow have white Lubra—nor lamra garra (not satisfied) take black man lubra too—no good o' white fellow!!” You would think the Looks of these Ladies, respecting whom they are occasionally jealous, would be quite sufficient protection to them—but “there is no accounting for Taste”!

There are several old Lags and runaway Sailors, principally Whalers & Sealers, living on Kangaroo Island, who have each of them 3 or 4 black women living with them as wives — it is said they behave very badly to these poor creatures whom they have stolen from the mainland of New Holland. There are no natives resident on Kangaroo Island born there & it is only inhabited by a few of these fellows who get a living by fishing & hunting & selling Wallaby Skins either to Ships which call for Water or occasionally to the Storekeepers in Adelaide. I know one of these fellows who comes over occasionally. He has 4 black women. He says he would rather have one native woman than 6 white women. They work hard both in hunting & gardening, while their Lords & Masters have comparatively an easy life of it. It is said the descendants of the natives & whites of the mixed breed are frequently very handsome in the second Generation & I understand there are many very "passable" young women in New South Wales, even of the "Lag-Savage" breed, as they are called.

Some half dozen of the natives walked into the Methodist Chapel the other Sunday at the time the singing was in "full chorus". Old Westly [Wesley?] himself w^d have been delighted to have heard his Hymns roared out in such good earnest (by these canting, psalm singing, hypocritical Rascals — "Who compound for sins they are inclin'd to, By jamming [?] those they have no mind to") at this Antipodean Paradise which a few years ago was nothing but a waste & howling wilderness. And even the very natives appeared quite delighted with the Performance as long as the singing was kept up, making motions & jabbering & laughing at each other & apparently criticizing the singing as if the performance was carrying on for their

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special amusement — but so soon as the singing ceased they appeared to think there was nothing else worth staying for, and while all was as still you might have heard a pin drop & the whole congregation had settled to their devotions & the parson just commencing a Prayer — off they all bolted!! All shouting out as they made their exit, "bary good o' white man Corroboree", "bay good o' white man Corroboree". They call all "white man corroboree", both Methodist Chapel & Theatre. They might almost be supposed to have the sense to see — that there is not uncommonly as much acting at the one place as the other!

Note to page 96

[*Newspaper articles*]

THE STREETS

To the Editors of the South Australian Register.

GENTLEMEN — In consequence of the long continuance of rain, the four leading streets are at many points almost impassable, to the great inconvenience of the inhabitants, and the serious obtrusion of trade. Allow me to suggest that some better improvement might be effected by the Town Surveyor leaving the North Terrace till finer weather, and directing the party employed there to such spots in Hindley-street as the foot of Rosina and Leigh Streets, and from thence to the market in Rundle-street, also in Grenfell-street, from the Commercial Inn to Fordham's Hotel. As the wretched state of all these portions of the town arises chiefly from parties excavating having been permitted to spread the sub-soil on the streets, it appears to me to be the duty of that officer to remedy the evil, and that the party could "do the ornamental" on the Government domain and North-terrace then the season improves.

Yours, &c.

A. CITIZEN.

[It is certainly disgraceful to see the principal streets in such a beastly condition — next to impassable either for man or horse, while large parties of labourers, paid from the funds of the colony, are uselessly employed in raking the sand off North-terrace, where there is not

one-tenth of the traffic there is in Hindley, Rundle, and Grenfell streets. We trust a number of the labourers will be immediately put upon Hindley street, to put it into such a state of repair that carriages may at least pass along without being in danger of being overturned in the gullies which at every few yards cross the street. – Eds. Register.]

MINEROLOGY. — Last night, Mr Menge delivered a most interesting lecture to the Mechanics' Institute, on the geology and mineralogy of South Australia. The unfavorable state of the weather, and the next to impassable state of the streets, prevented many, who would otherwise have been present, from hearing Mr Menge. The lateness of the hour at which the lecture was delivered, and the great length to which the reports and remarks regarding the natives have gone, preclude the possibility of laying Mr Menge's lecture before our readers to-day. We shall, therefore, reserve it for our next publication.

I ramble on from one thing to another — In speaking of the business in the beastly Town I mentioned among the thousand & one annoyances of all sorts the immense clouds of red dust & Sand which are perpetually blowing about & which penetrate every where & cover & colour everything. “Oh! The dust, the dust, the dust, the tormenting dust” is the cry from morning till night of our poor distressed & almost heartbroken women & which very frequently almost drives the whole of them mad together. All their furniture, floors, windows &c. &c. all their bed & other Linen, all their finery of all sorts, and of all the colours of the rainbow, all sobered down, to one uniform dirty clay colour as if they had been dyed and daubed all over with a mixture of yellow ochre & mud. It is a common remark here that no one can possibly form the slightest Idea of the misery occasioned by this tormenting Plague without having had painful experience of its Inflictions I will however endeavour to “incense” you respecting the out door part of the business; no one but a woman could possibly describe the indoor Scenes of Misery and destruction!! Fancy yourself having to grope & feel your way in the very middle of the day, in total darkness, while the perpendicular rays of the sun are pouring down upon you in all their fury, without a single beam of Light being enabled to penetrate thro' the thick & palpable darking [?] in which you are enveloped. Fancy yourself groping your way

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over the numerous little hills & dales, “Distinct as the billows, but one as the Sea”, which compose our undulating Streets ~~~~~ which are just as God made them for the Kangaroos to bound over, barring the little accidental Improvements in the Shape of numberless ruts & holes worn into them by the Bullock Drays, and the pretty little picturesque hills of clay lying about here & there in the immediate neighbourhood of where a Cellar has been excavated or a foundation taken out; & which said excavations are very frequently left gaping wide open & without the slightest protection, just as if they were intended for so many traps for people to tumble into! Fancy yourself fighting your way among these—with the hot wind, sand, & dust blowing full in your face—your Eyes full of the fine sharp Sand, well rubbed in, & smarting till the tears flow from them. Your Nostrils plugged up with the dust, a kind of limy, clayey magnesium, compound, & pungent as the best real “Irish Blackguard” and your mouth & throat choacked up almost to suffocation with the most villainous compound of sand, dust, Street sweepings, & filth of all Sorts, & which is any thing but agreeable either to the Taste or smell. This is our Dust!! ,

How do you like it? It is an absolute fact that during the hot winds you cannot see a yard before you, nay, not even your hand held up before your Eyes! While all the Stores &c. in the main Street are closed up in the vain attempt to keep out the Enemy. They might just as well attempt to shut out the Atmosphere; I verily believe a Regiment of soldiers, the 43rd itself, with fixed Bayonets, would have no more chance of impeding its progress than old Mother Partington had of driving back the Waves of the Atlantic Ocean by brandishing

her mop at them! From our present place of residence tho', we cannot see anything at all of the buildings &c. in the Town, yet we generally see the dense overhanging Cloud, which points out the Locality of it as distinctly as if we saw the Church Steeple itself. And tho' we have all experienced the blasts of hot winds, heated as from a Furnace, "The Brick kilners", as they are called, carrying about with them loads of dust &c. I say tho' we have all witnessed this in the Town, yet down here we have frequently

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great difficulty in satisfying ourselves that the Town is not absolutely all in a blaze, the overhanging cloud of red dust has so much the appearance of fire & smoke at a distance & knowing as we do that the town is for the most part built of such combustible Materials & that all the roofs of the houses &c. are either of thatch or timber & dry and inflammable as Tinder itself. The other day in particular we quite concluded that there really was a large fire at last, and it turned out that there had been a building or two burnt down, but this could not have assisted much in producing the extraordinary Phenomenon we witnessed. While we were gazing in the direction of the Town we saw a sight which would have puzzled anyone very much who had witnessed nothing of this Sort before. I have frequently seen similar Sights but none upon so grand a scale as this, which was nothing more or less than what is called here a Whirlwind, & which (after dancing thro' our beautiful City and receiving the curses not loud but deep of all her Majesty's beige Subjects there quartered, while it was busily engaged during the whole of its Progress in collecting together the oceans of sand & Dust, of which it was composed after leaving the town) it made its appearance on the level plain, where we saw it, moving bodily along, an immense Spiral Pyramid, upwards of 5000 feet high, whirling round & round, a complete solid revolving Mass of sand & Dust. In this

Sketch of a Whirlwind with two birds caught inside.

Vortex two poor unfortunate Birds could be occasionally discerned struggling for their Lives & apparently quite bewildered with the novelty of their situation from which they were totally unable to extricate themselves.

Many parties who witnessed this Whirlwind declare it was a finer Sight than a Waterspout at Sea. For my own part I considered it very similar in appearance to a Waterspout making allowance for the difference in the Materials — Sand & Dust in place of Water, & a wide sandy Plain for the Stage, instead of the broad, heaving, Surface of the fathomless Ocean. You may fancy the rough sketch either a Waterspout or a Whirlwind, waltzing round & round about, either on Land or Sea with a regular progressive Motion!!

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If you consider the foregoing description as rather inflated, you must please to recollect that it is a windy subject!

I must now copy the description of our beautiful Province written by an American Gentⁿ, late from New York to his Yankey friends there.

"This same "Southy Straley" is likely to grow into a pretty considerably thriving State, if its rapid growth don't thro' it into a still more rapid Consumption, for it is progressing at such a 40 horse power—go along—speed, that it is like a flash of Powder. Nobody can see how it goes, nor what it comes to! There is a grand River near the City, I guess, something like what our Hudson is to New York, which is so plaguy deep, that in dry weather no soundings can be got.

"There is a great navigable Lake here too with a long tailed Gyptian Name Lake Alexandrina it is a splendid muddy bottom for Anchorage. I calculate such capital holding ground that if you get stuck in it you cannot no how get out. Howsoever, there's no particular danger of ships' losing their Anchors, for it is so finely land-locked & sheltered that there's no such thing as getting into it! Everything is done here on a swinging great scale,

same as up our Mississippi & every thing is carried on to outrageous perfection. The Grass is so tarnation green, that it is not at all like what we call green in the States! The Water is so fresh that it requires to be pickled in a Rum Cask before it is at all drinkable! — The Cattle too are so "beastly fat" that the people melt the Lean to fry the fat with!

"A rather curious Case of absence of Mind came off here a bit ago. A Citizen Farmer, going into the interior actually crossed four Rivers, without seeing anything of the sort, altho' (of course) he must have been half drowned in each of them! He must have been a stupider sort of chap than usual for most of the South Stralians are wide awake ones, and have got a clever knack of turning their eyes so as to see into their brains where I calculate they see what nobody else can! Most folks

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say it cannot stand & that we shall all have to cut & run—don't believe them—these South Straly chaps have got too much Yankey Nowse about um, not to "go ahead" like the chap that was always lucky at Tossing."

We have had another very strange scene here which could not have happened anywhere but here, I fancy. Some time ago a M^r Shepperd came out from England, bringing with him an Order upon the Company's bank for £7,000—0—0 having deposited Cash to that amount in the hands of the Company in London. He intended investing this Money in the Colony but, not liking the place, after being here some time he took his Passage to Calcutta & a few days before the ship sailed he called upon the Bank for his Money or Bills upon Calcutta. They told him their charge for Bills upon Calcutta w^d be 3½ per cent. M^r S said he would not consent to this charge, especially as they had had the use of his money for upwards of 6 Months without allowing him any Int^t for it & that should they persist in making this extortionate charge, he sh^d insist upon having his Cash. They told him they had not so much Gold & could not part with what they had & that if he insisted on having Cash, they sh^d pay him in Silver. M^r S immediately walked away & presented himself at the Bank again on the following morning with a Bullock Dray & six Bullocks. The Cashier at the bank then told him they had not had time to get the amount counted out but he should have it the next day. On the following morning, so soon as the Bank opened, up again drives M^r Shepperd in his Bullock Dray & six, & not without a very considerable retinue, many of them no doubt prepared for a scramble if a chance offered. Seeing him so determined & finding the affair was making a great noise, the manager at the bank was now anxious to compromise the affair, but nothing would satisfy M^r Shepperd now, who was stupid in his turn, but either Bills @ Sight on Calcutta @ par or else his Cash, and at length they were glad to furnish him with the bills on his own Terms.

You will be aware that this long Letter has not been thrown off at a heat, but has been written at different periods & for the most part

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as the events have happen'd, a kind of Journal or Log.

"Such as the records are, which wandering Sailors keep

"Led by their hidden star, o'er the cold deep.

"So may the words I write, Tell thro' what storms I stray,"

And I hope you will consider my sketches, what they really are,

"... a harmless wile!

"The colouring of the Scenes which fleet along,

"Which I would seize on passing to beguile

"My breast or that of others for a while."

When I commenced writing these Pages I was very unwell & very low spirited. At the present time my health is as good as ever it was, and if I am not making, or saving, much money; I am not only keeping out of debt, but have managed to pay off all the heavy charges heaped upon me during my long illness. However, rolling about has not had the

same effect upon me as it has upon a snow-ball, for whatever else I may have acquired in my Peregrination by land & sea, I am so far from having increased either in size or weight that I am absolutely worn down to a mere Shadow of my former self, & you might now very easily mistake me for anybody, but your former chummy or the "fat Boy" in Pickwick. I assure you I have been shorn of fully one half my ancient dimensions & the few English Clothes I have hang about me now just for all the world "like a Skipper's shirt on a Marling Spike". This, however, I do not by any means regret, I am just as slender as I should always wish to be & with my improved Strength & the little weight I now carry I can bound away like a—Kangaroo—& having bounded round one half of the world, I don't care how soon I leave this half-way house to bound round the remaining half of the Circle via Cape Horn. However, I stated before, I shall try Sydney first & shall remain there at least 12 months to enable me to hear from home, before I leave it, or perhaps I may remain there for some years if I find I can do, & shall make arrangements at the Post Office here for any Letters which

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may be sent to me here to be forwarded to Sydney. My Address at Sydney will be — Post Office untill call'd for.

As my Yarns have been spun at different times, they may occasionally have been coloured, more or less perhaps, by light or dark Shades as I myself may have been more or less melancholy or light hearted at different periods, tho' I assure you I have endeavoured to give you as faithful a Picture for the Colony as if I had been writing to you in answer to enquiries respecting the place, which answer was to decide the question of your coming out here or staying at home. Having little or nothing to loose, I am as lighthearted here at times, in spite of the thousand & one Torments of this tormenting place, as if I had secured for Life the Bachelor's Paradise, a Guinea a day & a clean Shirt, for

"Let fate do her worst, there are relics of Joy,
"Bright dreams of the past which she cannot destroy,
"Which come in the night-time of Sorrow & Care,
"And bring back the features that Joy us'd to wear"

But this is only as long as I can stave off "the blight of life, the demon thought". At other times I am sombre & melancholy enough, god knows, & even in my happiest hours there is always a kind of overhanging cloud which soon damps one's spirits —

"A flashing pang of which the weary breast
"Would still albeit in vain, the heavy heart divest
"One fatal remembrance, one Sorrow that throws
"Its bleak shade alike o'er our Joy, our woes,
"To which life nothing darker or brighter can bring,
"For which Joy has no balm & affliction no Sting!"

But enough of this — I made two attempts at sending you a kind of rhyming Letter respecting this romantic Country. The first in Imitation of Tom Moore's Letter from America to his friend Jeremy in England.

"Can you spit on the Carpet & smoke a Cigar?
"If not, my dear Jeremy, stay where you are
"&c, &c."

The second, a still humbler attempt at imitating Byron's beautiful Lines on Greece! — but finding I could only give you a vague Idea of the place in this way, I gave up the attempt. However, I send you the few lines I did write, as they contain a Summary of almost all the peculiarities of this strange place. The only answer you get here, when complaining of any thing being execrably bad, is that it is Colonial. This is all I have to say in defence of my Rhyming nonsense! It is Colonial! It is bad enough, but the Subject of it is little better!

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An Invitation to South Australia, à la Tom Moore!!!!

Can you face our wild Savages' Waddies & Spears?
And wilder Bushrangers arm'd up to the Ears?
Can you brush thro' our dense Scrub, without fears or quakes
Midst Centipedes, Scorpions, Guianas, Snakes,
Tarantulas, & Wild dogs?—which last, if asleep
They catch you, will eat you up, just like Sheep!
Can you ride Timor ponies & hunt Kangaroos?
Shoot Bustards, Quails, Black Swans, & catch fleet Emus?
Can you quit Albion's bright Scenes & Prospects to view
Sterile Plains, dried up Gullies & Mountains deep blue?
Can the "taste of the Lotus*" mid Deserts & Droughts
From streamlets, green hills & dales wean all your Thoughts?
Can you leave your own sweet flowers & Warblers to dwell
Where the birds do not sing! The Flowers have no smell!?
Our Birds shriek & cawcaw tho' of gaudiest hues
Are the Parrots, Maccaws, & gay Cockatoos!
Can you mix with the vilest of runaway Rogues
"Vandemonian Lags & Old Sydney Coves"?
Can you dwell in a tent quite regardless of Death!
From Winter's cold Rain, or Simoom's hot breath?
Can you brave Diarrhœa & Dysentery too?
Now "Coup de Soleil", now Ophthalmia rue?
Can you roll yourself up in a Kangaroo Rug,
And spite of Fleas, Ants, & Mosquitoes, lie snug?
Can you learn to make Dampers & Doboys — so good?
Be "Drawer of Water & Hewer of Wood"
Can you feast upon Salt Pork & get lushy on Tea?
Then come o'er the wide Waves, and "bush it" with me!
Or if all these "great Comforts" wont tempt you so far —
Why then, my dear John, You may stay where you are!!

*The Taste of the Lotus is said—by the Poets—to cause oblivion of one's native Country, when in Exile.

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New Holland — à la Byron!!!!!!!

Know ye the Land where the Gigantic gum Trees
Graceful Cedars & Stringy-bark Forests abound?
And thro' Summers hot blasts & Winters rude breeze
With evergreen foliage always are crown'd?
Know ye the Land — where the deep Lagoon Rivers
For Ages have flowed without reaching the Sea,
In whose summer dried beds, quick ey'd Green Lizards,
Deaf Adders, & Snakes are the strange Fish you see?
Know ye the Land — of the fleet footed Emus?
Where Opossums climb Gum Trees, & Kangaroos bound?
Where bright Flowers than Iris more varied in hues
Yet no perfum'd odours are scatter'd around?
Know ye the Land — of Gay Parrots & Maccaws?

Where no sweet warbling Songsters make tuneful the Groves?
Where Echo repeats harsh, wild, Shrieks & Cawcaws;
And Cockatoos strut, deck'd in lilly white Robes?
Know ye the Land — where the wild natives have prowld
Thro' tall primeval Forests for thousands of Years?
Have danc'd their War dance theie Corroborees howl'd
Arm'd with Bommerangs, Wam'ras, Waddies & Spears?
Know ye the Land — the Great Modern Gomorah
Where Albion's vile Outcasts, thro' wearisome years
Toil on in bondage, in chains & in sorrow,
While bright in the distance their lost home appears?
Know ye the Land — of Banditti Bushrangers
Where "wild as the accents of lovers' farewell"
(Quite reckless of death & scorning all dangers!)
Are the deeds which they do, the Tales which they tell?

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'Tis the Land of fierce Droughts, 'tis the land of the Sun!
"Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done"?
'Tis the Ocean-girt Cont'nent, mysterious & vast
Whose Deserts send forth the Simoom's hot blast!
'Tis the land whose interior no white man has seen!
Where the foot of the Savage has never yet been!
'Tis the largest of Isles! The Great Southern Ocean
E'er views in his wild & perpetual motion!

A quandam friend of mine, a relation of your own & now a married lady in your Town, used to say to me, quoting one of the American Poets,

"Guineas to Poets are Curiosities"

and tho' I am well aware I have no other poetical qualification yet I think in this one respect I am pretty nearly as well qualified for the Rhyming Trade as ever was any poor lodger up three pair of Stairs in Grub Street, & tho' I should have been sorry to put my name to this sort of nonsense before leaving England, yet I am become, now, so far colonial, so far a citizen of the world, as to say & do whatever I think proper on all occasions without in the least considering what other people may say or think about the matter. Every body acquires kinds of republican Independence out in these wild places, where all seem on an Equality & people appear to throw off all the Curbs & restraints of the old Country to indemnify themselves in some measures for the privations & ... they are obliged to endure in these new countries! This sort of thing is carried to very great lengths sometimes. I was amused the other day to hear a servant Girl give notice to her Master because he happened to call her "the Maid". She would not be called out of her proper name, "Susan", 'pon honor, [?] in fact.

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Among all the other strange events which have happened in this strangest of all strange Places, may be noticed the strange succession of fires, which at particular times & in the strangest & most mysterious manner have visited all our public offices one after another since the Establishment of the Colony. The resident Commissioner before the present Governor arrived here was Hurtle Fisher Esq^{re}, his a/cs were all balanced & wound up by a fire! which visited his Office & burnt it to the ground along with all his papers just as he was about winding up & settling his books. Co^l Light was the Surveyor General at this time. The Survey Department had been the heaviest Item in the Colonial expenditure. The Commissioners @ home sent for the accounts & vouchers. Just as these were getting

ready to go to England, the Surveyor's Offices took fire & were burnt to the ground & all the documents connected with this Department perished in the flames. Not long after this, M^r Brown being the Immigration agent here, his Office took fire & as in the other instances, all the books & accounts were consumed. Fire is the grand Agent here in compelling the authorities at home to be content with what Joe Hume used to call the "Tottle of the Whole", instead of prying into the different Items of expenditure which might perhaps cause some unpleasant Settlings, whereas as things are managed now, when enquiries are made respecting different heavy amounts & Vouchers required for the Items, The fire! The fire! is the answer & staves off the questions just as well as the celebrated "Non miu ricordo" the Italian answer to all the awkward questions at the Queen's Trial.

But all our former fires are Trifles compared with the large fire we have had lately. The governor is now established in the new government house & the old Government buildings have been converted into Offices for the different departments of the Government Business & have been used for these purposes for some time past. These "rubbishy" Buildings were constructed entirely of Wood & Reeds & a fire happened to break out in one of the offices the other day. The entire Premises,

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all they contained, including almost all the public Documents, Books & Papers of all Sorts, met with the usual fate of our public Papers. Every thing was so dry about the buildings & the contents of so inflammable & combustibile a Nature that the whole concern went off, like wild fire! Without there being the slightest chance of saving anything. This fire is considered a very fortunate affair for the Governor. "Non miu ricordo" will now be the answer to troublesome questions as usual & the fire!! the fire!! will have to answer for all the Vouchers & Documents which will be wanted by the Authorities at home to throw a light on the very heavy Government Expenditure & the immense Debt contrasted. But "Brutus is an honourable man" N.B. You must not mistake me in speaking of these fires — nobody suspects or even hints at the Governor being in any way blamable respecting the fire — the governor is an old Waterloo officer & a perfect Gentleman, "Sans p..., sans reproche".

To make the matter still worse & to throw the commercial affairs of the Colony into still greater confusion, News has just arrived from England that the Governor's Bills drawn on the Commissioners there have been dishonoured by the Commissioners who state they have no funds in hand, & cannot borrow Money on the Security of the unsold Land or of the future Revenue of the Colony. While to make the Matter more & more awkward and complicated still, the Bank here have made a practice (before discounting the Bills of the Governor) of insisting upon having the Bills endorsed by the principal Merchants in the Colony. So that as respects money matters things are even worse than ever in our poor ... Colony, & will doubtless continue to grow worse if that is possible unless accounts arrive soon that the Government at home have arranged to take up these Bills & find funds to carry on the Government works, many of which Bills have been paid to the Merchants in Van Dieman's Land, for flour &c for the Supply of the Government Stores, who will not be very anxious to do more Business with us for Government Bills. All Government men here are paid in part Money & part Rations!

Don't you begin to think that take it altogether this Colony of ours is a queer sort of place? I went up to town about 3 Months ago to have my hair cropped when I arrived at the Quarters of my hairdresser (an old Bond Street Practitioner) I

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found he had shouldered his Comb & Scissors & had "cut his lucky" as the new Occupant told me, in other words he had bolted off to Port Philip, taking every thing he could muster along with him excepting—his Wife!—he had no children—however the new Operator, who I found busy stopping away in the old Shop, managed to do my business as well as his Predecessor could have done, at whose expence he entertained me with a description of

the “cutting away” during the time he was cutting away @ my locks. Having occasion for another Cast of his Office I called upon my new Artiste when in town the other day, & you may guess my surprise to find that he also had just bolted to Port Philip, leaving behind him also his Wife & a few Piccanninies. The Rent of the small Shop I found was Three Pounds per week! & the Wife of the last Occupant was keeping possession in spite of the Landlord & without paying any Rent, supporting herself & Children by shaving & cropping such of her husbands Customers as chose to patronize her. Being anxious to support her in her laudible endeavours to be “colonial”, & not knowing any other Artiste in this line I was undecided to put myself into her hands, & had a clean shave & crop, from a woman for the first time in my life. When I go to Adelaide, I scarcely even see a single face out of the many which used to be familiar to me when living in the Town; they have all either migrated or emmigrated. These sort of anecdotes cannot be very amusing to you, but I fancy you may form a better Idea of Life in a New Colony from a detail of these sort of every day occurrences than from reading all the Books that ever were written or published on the Subject, & you will perhaps be aware that I have introduced many of these sort of anecdotes to support ill [?] Statements made in the former Pages.

Some time ago I broke one of the glasses in my Spectacles & have been obliged ever since to make shift with one Glass only when I have had occasion to use Spectacles, but at length the other Eye has gone the way of all Glasses and I have been under the necessity of sending to Sydney for the needful as there is not an Optician in all the Colony.

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Fancy having to send 1500 Miles to have a Glass put into your Barnacles. You can have no Idea of the strange Shifts people are occasionally put to for the most common & necessary Articles in an isolated Situation like this.

Parties sometimes are surprised to find that no one in the Colony has some certain article of necessary consumption, but themselves. In these Cases they have no Mercy, & they know that unless you can wait until a supply comes into the Colony, you have no alternative, you must pay them their price whatever it is!

A Surgeon in the Town who brought out a few hundred Pounds with him with the Intention of farming in the Colony was telling me the o^r day the history of his 18 months adventures in this place. The first 3 Months he spent in searching out a Spot to commence farming, but before he had made up his mind where to commence operations, he found out that the probability would be that before he well knew what he was doing & without being a long time about it, that he should loose all he had if he attempted to make his fortune by growing Grain. He therefore resolved not to risk the few hundreds he had left, until he saw something more promising offer itself & in the mean time to endeavour to raise the current Expences by commencing his old Profession. His practice however did not keep him; & his Money had gradually dwindled down to less than £200. He now resolved to risk something in the Endeavour to make his Income meet his Expences. He lent £50 of his Money to a Tradesman in the Town on a promisory Note @ £3 per week Int^t, & £100—0—0 to another party in the same way @ £5 per week Int. He has already received

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in Interest £65, & if the Parties are able to keep on their Legs & dont bolt, he is all right. But as he said it is all a Lottery & he should not be at all surprised at the parties bolting before he had received the amount of the Money advanced in Interest! But fancy for a moment £400 per annum as Interest on £150!. This will seem incredible to you! But nobody here would wonder at all at stranger statements than this!

[Newspaper articles on Entomology and the Governor's seizure of a French vessel.]

I have been busily engaged for some time past in getting together a large Collection of Botanical and Entomological Specimens for want of a more profitable Employment. For this purpose I could not possibly be in a better field. The two little Boys I have had living with me down here for some time past are always bringing me in curious Insects "fairy form'd & many colour'd things", which they amuse themselves with hunting after & catching in the Scrub & they are quite delighted with the Progress my Collection makes. As the season advances the Insects which appear short lived make way for others & every month we have a change in our tiny visitors, my descriptions only altering in the Colour — green this Month, red & yellow stripes the next month &c &c. We have 2 large Picture frames with the backs & Glass to them. Inside these we have the Gentlemen all arranged with a Pin thro' each. Among others we have a great variety of Grasshoppers and beautiful Dragon flies, of all Colours & some of them 3 to 4 Inches long, with numerous large Butterflies & Moths, some of which are exceedingly beautiful & curious. A Shipmate of mine who is in the survey department, & who is generally quartered out in the Bush, & has been over a great Part of the Interior of the Colony, brings me numerous Specimens of curious flowers &c every time he comes to Town during the Season. These flowers are for the most Part quite different to any we see in the neighbourhood of the Coast. The flowers are dried in the Sun & pasted with Gum inside large brown paper books of which I am now filling a 3rd Volume. I know nothing of the Sciences of Botany & Entomology of the scientific names or the classifications

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of the Specimens &c, but I do not think any one in the Colony has so large a Collection of either sort as I have. I am also commencing a collection of Birds & Reptiles. I have already several of our most beautiful Birds. I have 1 Parrot, 3 Paraquets of different Sorts & 2 Cockatoos, quite tame, flying about the house; they never attempt to go away tho' at perfect liberty. I have also several different descriptions of Guianas, & some very pretty Lizards. Some of these Lizards are grass green, the Skin of others appears exactly like shot silk figured in bright yellow & red on a light brown ground. We have a very great variety of Lizards, and Specimens of most of which I have procured, some of these are very elegant little creatures. I have also a few small white Bottles filled with spirits in which I have numerous specimens of our most ugly & curious crawling Reptiles, of these sufficient to ornament a Quack Doctor's shop! Besides these I am also getting together all the curious shells &c I can meet with. I have already several curious Specimens of Coral, 2 pairs of the Nautilus & other beautiful marine Curiosities.

So that you see, barring accidents by Land & Sea, I shall always have something to remind me of this place, when I am far away from it, if indeed the Impressions of it be not too deeply seared on the memory for either change of Scene or Time ever to obliterate, there are always in a chequered Life such as mine has been so far,

Points of existence on which thought & feeling
Have left impressions of themselves so deep,
That memory in her backward Journey meets
Them & them ever on her way.

This Country of New Holland, with the manner of living here, the Climate, the Customs & habits, with the Penal settlements &c, altogether remind me very often of Passages in the old Testament, for Instance, the pastoral life. The living in Tents, the bound servants & the fire. The unleavened bread. The Wells & the value put on them. The "drawing of Water & the hewing of wood". The Wealth of the settlers consisting in their flocks & herds. "The cattle upon a thousand hills". The long Droughts & the sandy Deserts. The seasons of famine & the seasons of plenty. The wives & Concubines, the latter by no means confined to the blacks. Even the names of the Inhabitants. Solomon is one of our largest Merchants, & has built the handsomest Store in the City, most of the timber being of Cedar (not the Cedars of Lebanon however). This building is commonly called Solomon's Temple.

While Moses, Aaron, Levi & Lazarus are all well known Characters here. The whole of them from Solomon to Lazarus having been old Sydney Convicts. Again, the interior of the Country, “ a waste & howling Wilderness, a land of drought & of the Shadow of Death”. The hot blasts of the Desert. The bricks of Clay & Straw dried in the Sun. The Mustard Trees which I have

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seen grow so tall, each from a single grain of mustard seed, that the Parroquets have perched in them. I was noticing this at a M^r Sargeants, one of our neighbours, some time ago. Then again the deaf adders which will not listen to the voice of the Charmer &c. The Scorpion & Serpent. The Quails &c &c. The Emu “What time she lifteth herself on high, She cometh the Horse & his Rider by”. While as we read some remove landmarks, they violently take away flocks & feed therof. Job. The Leviathan of the deep. Our Merchants all join at the whale-fishing in shares; they cannot undertake it single handed. “Shall thy Companions divide him for a Spoil amongst them?” “Canst thou fill his Skin with barbed Irons or his head with fish Spears” “He maketh the deep boil like a Pot &c. Job. “And Isaac had possession of flocks & Possession of herds & great store of servants. And Isaac departed thence & pitched his Tent in the valley of Gaza, and Isaacs servants digg’d a Well” &c. “And there came a great plague of flies into all the Land & the Land was corrupted by reason of the flies”. “You shall eat no leavened bread. In all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.” Exo. “For there is no bread neither is their any water. It is no place of Seed or of figs, or of Vines, or of pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink” “And ye shall dispossess the Inhabitants of the Land & dwell therein. But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants from before you, then it shall come to pass, that those that remain shall be pricks in y^r Eyes & thorns in your sides & shall vex you in the land in which you dwell!” “The great & terrible wilderness wherein are fiery Serpents & Scorpions & drought where there is no water.” Then again the 7 Years transportation. “At the end of every seven Years thou shalt make a release. If he serve thee 6 years then in the 7th year thou shalt lett him go free from thee” “And the Priest stood still on dry ground in the middle of the River Jordan & all the Israelites passed over on dry ground” “Cum multisalutis quid nune pers cobere [?] longium est, but which you will find by diligently searching the Scriptures which I recommend to you!

I dont know when this long yarn of mine would have come to an End (You’ll say its high time now I have commenced quoting Scripture) but I began to think it would be interminable, as Materials for scribbling about, were dailly offering themselves; & I was resolved not to trouble you with my lugubrations, untill I had an opportunity of sending you a Parcel without putting you to any Expence, & I did not see much chance of meeting with an opportunity of this sort where I am now living; however M^r Long, a friend of mine

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has been down here to see me & bid me goodbye, having taken his Passage to England in the Cygnet, which sails in a few days, & he has kindly offered to take charge of any Letters or Parcels I may wish to send to the old Country. The Vessel sails to London but M^r. Long will have to pass thro’ Liverpool, where he has friends, on his way to his home in Westmoreland, so that he says he shall be able to put my Parcel into your hands without any Expence at all. I must therefore prepare for him & some to a conclusion.

So! At last, like an old Wife’s Tale — it ends!

I don’t know whether you will have met with any thing in my long Yarns to amuse you — however, I think you will admit that I have managed to stuff my Budget with almost as miscellaneous a compound of Facts, Fancies, Recollections & Retrospections as the subject would admit of & with as heterogenous a Collection of materials of one sort and another as could be met with in any of our natives’ Bonkas — I have also endeavoured to say as little as possible on the subject upon which all are said to be fluent & few agreeable

—Self—instead of which I have endeavoured to give you as many particulars respecting this Colonial life as I could stuff into my Bonka, & I hope that when you recollect that my scribbling has served to beguile a few weary hours your usual kindness will induce you to consider this a sufficient recompence for your trouble in wading thro' it. I don't expect, however, that you will be able to read it all; I write such a crabb's hand it would puzzle a Philadelphia Lawyer, or a decipherer of Hieroglyphics. In fact I can make nothing of it myself occasionally, but if you stick fast in the mud anywhere, don't give it up — pass on, to where I have mended my Pen. You cannot hit on the wrong place, as there is neither beginning, middle nor end to my Yarn, & one place is as good another to grope your Way in! — Bye the bye, this advise should have been given before you reached this —

In conclusion, I must request of you to give my best respects to your good Uncle (I have not forgotten his parting advise, tell him, tho' it had slipped my memory untill the warning it contained was impressed upon me by Disappointment). He will understand me if he recollects what he said to me in the News Room, when I last saw him. Remember me also to M^r. Bevan, D^r. Stewart, & my kind & disinterested friend in need, M^r. Banks, & all other enquiring friends. And now, my dear John, with a grateful remembrance of all your kindness & wishing you all Prosperity & domestic happiness & all that sort of thing, & hoping that you "read your Bible ... & mind your Purse"

Believe me 'all the world over'

Your obliged & faithful Friend

John Fogg Taylor

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I send along with this a few Newspapers & extracts from others — confirming many of the Statements in my Log, tho' the newspapers are exceedingly shy at stating any thing in the least injurious to the Colony. If we were in an absolute state of famine, of which there is every prospect staring us in the face, as we have neighter money or Credit & not a month's supply of Provisions in the Colony (except live stock) yet I say if we were absolutely starving, the Newspapers here would conceal the fact as much as possible — all the parties having land in the Colony are endeavouring as much as possible to disguise the real state of things — as not only the value of their property, but almost their very existence depends on new Arrivals, Imports ... coming into the Colony. For my part ... in daily expectation of being enable ... of the accursed place when I first came here I ... appeared to be going mad, drinking, land jobbing & gambling, they are quiet enough now. The ... death is upon our city — which looks as if a ... few, I may say none, stay in the Colony, who can ... they have families & Property to some Amount as ... I shall ... Arrangements at the Post Offic ... papers to follow me ... April 25 ... & Protect ...

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The Governor has just intimated that he intends issuing out Government £1 notes, to enable him to carry on the year, as we have absolutely no circulation. All that people are doing is running after one another for Money and if it is known that a poor devil intends leaving the Colony, he is hunted in all directions, the people are after him like so many Boys after a Butterfly!! I am out of the Mess this time — things have just turned up as I expected.

JFT

[Note]

Signed

Your obliged & faithful Friend

John Fogg Taylor

date

Tundemunga N^r. Adelaide

South Australia

commenced Sep 1840

Dear John/

It is now some fifteen months &c &c
date at the finish of journal April 25. 1841.