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Herbert Gibson**

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Illustrator: Alfred Clint

Illustrator: Montagu Scott

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SOUTHERLY BUSTERS ***

SOUTHERLY BUSTERS,

By G. H. Gibson (AKA Ironbark)

Illustrated By Alfred Clint

With Additional Illustrations by Montagu Scott.

Many of these Scraps were originally contributed by the Author to "The Town and Country Journal," "Sydney Punch," "The Illustrated Sydney News," and other Australian newspapers and magazines.

John Sands, Printer

1878



Original

Gibson, G. H.

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BY

IRONBARK,

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED BY ALFRED CLINT,
WITH
ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY MONTAGU SCOTT.

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NOTES.

a. "Billy," a tin pot for making tea in.

b. Young gentlemen getting their "colonial experience" in the bush are called "jackeroos" by the station-hands. The term is seldom heard except in the remote "back-blocks" of the interior.

c. It was formerly the practice of squatters to give a ration of flour, mutton, and, occasionally, tea and sugar, to all persons travelling ostensibly in search of work. The custom, however, as might have been expected, became frightfully abused by loafers, and has of late fallen into disuse, to the intense disgust of the tramping fraternity in general.

d. The Yanko is a noted sheep-station in the Murrumbidge district (the Paradise of loafers), where travellers were, and, I believe, still are, feasted at the expense of the owners, on a scale of great magnificence, and somewhat mistaken liberality.

e. The utterly refined and unsophisticated reader is informed that to "whip the cat" signifies, in nautical parlance, to weep or lament.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I AM assured that something in the way of an apologetic preface is always expected from a "new-chum" author who has had the hardihood to jump his Pegasus over the paddock fence (so to speak), and drop, uninvited, into the field of letters; and so, having induced a publisher, in a moment of weakness, to bring me before the public, it behoves me to conciliate that long-suffering body by conforming to all established rules. I am aware that my excuse for inflicting this work on mankind is somewhat "thin" but, such as it is, I will proceed to state it, as a "plea in bar" against all active and offensive expressions of indignation on the part of outraged humanity.

Having "got me some ideas," as Mr Emmett says in the character of "Fritz," and feeling the necessity for inflicting them on somebody imminent, I tried their effect on my own immediate circle of friends. It was not satisfactory. They listened, indeed, for a while, thinking that I was suffering from a slight mental derangement which would be best treated by judicious humouring. Some even affected to be entertained, and laughed (what a hollow mockery of merriment it was!) at atrocious puns; but I could see the look of hate steal over countenances which had hitherto beamed on me with interest and affection, and was not deceived.

I saw that friendship would not long survive such a test and desisted; but it was too late. They perceived I had what Artemus Ward calls the "poetry disease;" feared that it might be infectious; knew that it was an insufferable bore to the afflicted party's circle of acquaintances; and—forgot to visit me.

When their familiar knocks no longer resounded on the door of my lodging in ——— street, and their familiar footsteps ceased to crush the cockroaches on the dark and winding staircase leading to my apartment, I bethought me of that institution which I had always heard alluded to as the "kind and generous public." Here, I thought (for I was unsophisticated), is the very friend I am in need of, which will receive me with its thousand arms, laugh with me with its thousand mouths, weep with me with its thousand eyes, and whose thousand hearts will beat in unison with mine whether my mood be one of sadness or of joy; behave itself, in fact, like a species of benevolent and sympathetic Hydra, shorn of its terrors, and fit to take part in the innocent and arcadian recreations of the millenium, when the (literary) lion shall lie down with the critic, and newspapers shall not lie any more—even for money.

During my hunt for that all essential auxiliary, a publisher, without whom the first step on the road to literary distinction (or extinction) cannot be taken, I learnt a few plain truths about my hydra-headed friend; amongst others that he was not to be hoodwinked, and would neither laugh, weep, nor sympathise unless he saw good and sufficient cause. I am in consequence not quite so sanguine as I was. However, I have gone too far to recede, and have concluded to throw myself on the bosom or bosoms of that animal and take my chances of annihilation.

One of my unsympathising friends assured me the other day that my book would certainly send anyone to sleep who should attempt its perusal. I gave him a ballad to read, and watched him anxiously while he skimmed a page or two. *He* did not sleep—not he, but a raging thirst overcame him at the fourteenth verse, and he begged me to send for a jug of "half-and-half" with such earnestness that a new and dreadful apprehension filled my breast. If this was to be the effect of my work on the Public at large, I should empty the Temperance Hall, and fill the Inebriate Asylum in six months! As I had hitherto prided myself that my work was entirely free from any immoral tendency, I earnestly hoped that his organization was a peculiar one, and that its effect on him was exceptional, and not; likely to happen again.

Sleep, indeed! Would that these pages might be found to possess the subtle power of inducing "tired Nature's sweet restorer" to visit the weary eyelids of knocked-up humanity; that they might become a domestic necessity, like Winslows "soothing-syrup," and "a blessing to mothers;" that the critic—pausing midway in a burst of scathing invective against their literary and metrical deficiencies—overcome by their drowsy influence—might sink in dreamless slumber, and wake to sing in praise of their narcotic properties, and chaunt their merits as a soporific.

In conclusion, I would fain ask thee, gentlest of gentle readers, to look with leniency on the many defects and shortcomings of this volume, and to remember that the writer was long, if not an outcast, a homeless wanderer among the saltbush plains and sandhills of Australia, and the kauri and pouriri forests of New Zealand; that, for seven years, the prototypes of "Ancient Bill," hereinafter mentioned, were his associates; and that, if these experiences have enabled him to touch with some degree of accuracy on matters relating to the Bush, they have at the same time militated against the cultivation of those refinements of style and language which commend the modern author to his reader, and which are Only to be acquired in the civilized atmosphere of a city.

N.B.—I desire here to thank my friend, Mr. Henry Wise, of Sydney, to whom I am indebted for the design which adorns the cover of the book.

I beheld a shadow dodging, on the pavement 'neath my
lodging,
'Neath my unpretending lodging—opposite the very door:
"Tis that prodigal," I muttered, "who enjoys the second
floor—

He it is, and nothing more."

Answering my thoughts, I stated, "'Tis the artist that's located
Here, returning home belated, seeking entrance at the door—
Coming back from where he's revelled, and, like me, with locks
dishevelled,
Wits besotted and bedevilled, oft I've seen him so before;
'Tis no rare unknown occurrence, but a custom'd thing of
yore—
Jones it is, and nothing more."

Certain then 'twas no illusion, "Sir," I said, in some
confusion,
"Pardon my abrupt intrusion—Mr. Jones, we've met before;
Potent drinks have o'er me bubbled, and the fact is I was
troubled,
For your form seemed strangely doubled, and my brain is sick
and sore—
Let us seek my room and cupboard, and its mystery explore—
There is gin, if nothing more."

Deep into the darkness glaring, I beheld a radiance flaring,
And a pair of eyes were staring—eyes I'd never seen before—
And, my fear and dread enhancing, towards me came a form
advancing,
And the rays of light were dancing from a lantern which it
bore—
'Twas a regulation bull's-eye—" 'Tis a (something) Trap," I
swore —
" 'Tis a Trap, and nothing more."

Glittering with the P. C. button, redolent of recent mutton,
(Fitting raiment for a glutton) was the garment which he
wore;
And his vast colossal figure, in the pride of manly vigour,
Looming larger, looming bigger, came betwixt me and the
door—
Cutting off my hopes of entrance to my home at number four—
Stood, and stared, and nothing more.

And his features, grimly smiling, calm, unmoved, (intensely
riling)
I betake me to reviling, and a stream of chaff outpour—
"Say, thou grim and stately brother, has thy fond and doting
mother
Got at home like thee another? Art thou really one of four?
Did she, did she sell the mangle? Tell me truly, I implore!"
Quoth the Peeler, "Hold your jawr!"

Long I stood there fiercely glaring, most profanely cursing,
swearing—
And my right arm I was baring, meaning thus the Trap to
floor—



Original

Straight he grabbed me by the collar, said 'twas worse than
vain to holler,
That his person I must foller to the gloomy prison door;
"Tell me, Robert," said I sadly, "must I go the Bench
before?"

Quoth the Peeler, "'Tis the lawr!"

"Shall I be with felons banded, by the 'beak' be reprimanded,
And with infamy be branded?—thou art versed in prison
lore—

Say not, Robert, that my bread will 'ere be earned upon the
tread-mill,

That a filthy prison bed will echo to my fevered snore—
Ever echo to the music of my wild unearthly snore!"

Quoth the Peeler, "'Tis the lawr!"

Thought on thought of bitter sadness, dissipating hope and
gladness,

Goading me to worse than madness, crowded on me by the
score;

Ne'er before incarcerated, how that Peeler's form I hated,
Cries for freedom, unabated—'wrenched from out my bosom's
core'—

Broke upon the midnight stillness, "Robert, set me free
once more!"

Quoth the Peeler, "Never more!"

Never since the days of Julian was there such a mass
herculean

Clad in garments so cerulean, with so little brains in store;
And I cursed his name, and number, and his form as useless
lumber

Only fit to snore and slumber on a greasy kitchen floor—
On the slime bespattered boarding of a greasy kitchen floor—
Fit for this and nothing more!

And my heart was heavy loaded with a sorrow which

corroded,
And my expletives exploded with a deep and muffled roar;
But a sudden inspiration checked the clammy perspiration
That 'till now, without cessation, streaming ran from every pore,
And what checked the perspiration that ran streaming from
each pore
Was a thought, and nothing more.

In my pocket was a shilling! Could that giant form be
willing,
Tempted by the hope of swilling beer, to set me free once
more?
Tempted by the lust of riches, and the silver shilling
which is
In the pocket in my breeches, and my liberty restore?
Hastily that garment searching, from its depths I fiercely tore
But a 'Bob,' and nothing more.

Wrenched it from my trousers' pocket,
While his eye within the socket gleamed and sparkled like a
rocket,
Grimly rolled, and gloated o'er,
Glared upon me—vainly mining in my pockets' depths—
repinning
That its worn and threadbare lining
IT should press, ah! never more.



Original

Said I, while the coin revealing, "Robert, I've a tender
feeling
For the Force there's no concealing, and thy manly form
adore;
Thee I ne'er to hurt or slay meant; take, oh! take this
humble payment—

Take thy grasp from off my raiment, and thy person from
my door;

Though I like thee past expression, though I venerate the
corps,

Fain I'd bid thee '*Au revoir!*'

And I view with approbation that official's hesitation,
For his carnal inclination with his duty was at war;
But that Peeler, though he muttered, knew which side his
bread was buttered,

But a word or two he uttered, and his choking grasp fore-
bore—

And he, when his clutching fingers from their choking grasp
forebore,

Vanished, and was seen no more.

Oft at night when I'm returning, and the foot-path scarce
discerning—

Whiskey-fumes within me burning like a molten reservoir—

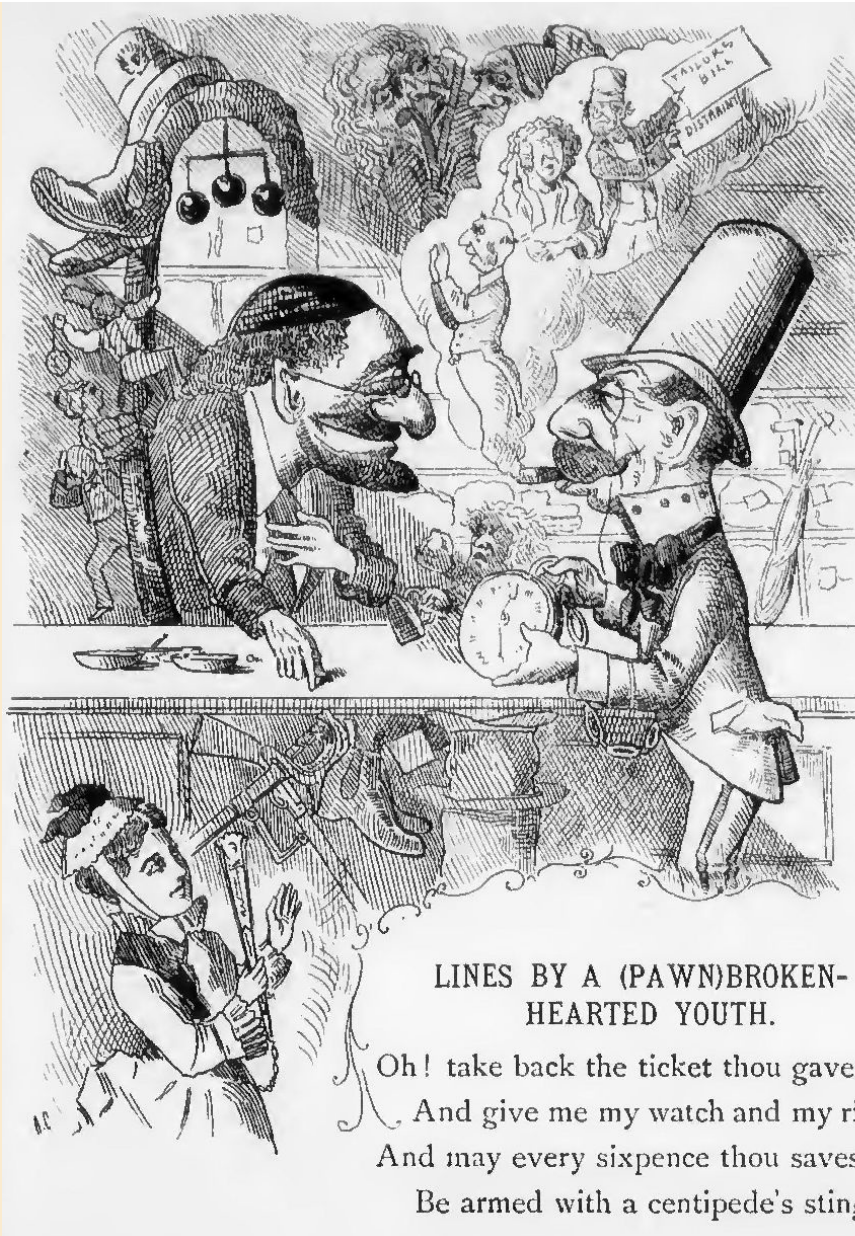
In imagination kneeling, oft in fancy I'm appealing

To the kind and manly feeling of that giant Trap once more—

To the tender kindly feeling of the Trap I saw before—

Vanished now for ever more!

**LINES BY A (PAWN)BROKEN-HEARTED
YOUTH.**



LINES BY A (PAWN)BROKEN-
HEARTED YOUTH.

Oh! take back the ticket thou gavest,
And give me my watch and my ring,
And may every sixpence thou savest
Be armed with a centipede's sting!

Original

Oh! take back the ticket thou gavest,
And give me my watch and my ring,
And may every sixpence thou savest
Be armed with a centipede's sting!
O ! uncle, I never expected
Such grief would result from my calls,
When, hard-up, depressed, and dejected,
I came to the Three Golden Balls.

I noticed thy free invitation—
Enticing (though brief)—"Money Lent
I came to thee, oh, my relation,
For succour, for mine was all spent.

Thine int'rest in me was affecting—
I noticed a tear in thine eye,
Without for a moment suspecting
How *int'rest* would tell by and bye.

It's true I'd been doing the heavy,
And going a trifle too fast;
I've been a most dutiful 'nevy,'—
But, uncle, I know thee at last;

I brought thee a gun, and a pistol,
And borrowed a couple of pound,
Then exit, and cheerfully whistle
In time to my heart's happy bound.

I thought thee a regular "trimmer,"
I thought thee a generous man;
I drank to thy health in a brimmer,
And pretty nigh emptied the can.

I went with a mob "to do evil,"
I laughed, and I danced, and I sang;
Bid sorrow fly off to the Devil,
And care and depression go hang.

I looked on the vintage that's ruby,
I "looked on the wine" that "is red,"
But 'twasn't mere looking o'erthrew me,
Or made it get into my head.

In spite of the Israelite's warning,
In spite of what Solomon said,
You may *look* from the dusk to the dawning,
And still toddle sober to bed.

Away with such hollow pretences!
It wasn't from *watching* the cup
I lost the control of my senses,
Or, falling, I couldn't get up.

Destruction again was before me,
And empty once more was my purse,
But thoughts of mine uncle came o'er me,
And withered my half-uttered curse.

I thought that the mines of Australia
I'd found in the meanest of men,
And, smoking a fearful "regalia,"
I sought thine iniquitous den.

My walk, though a little unsteady,
Was dignity tempered with grace;
I playfully asked for the "ready,"
And smiled in thy villainous face.

I brought thee my best Sunday beaver,
And gorgeous habiliments new;
My watch—such a fine English lever!—
I left, un*believer*, with you.

I brought thee a coat—such a vestment!
'Twas newly constructed by Poole;
I've found it a losing *investment*—
Oh! how could I be such a fool?

I told thee I hadn't a "stiver;"
I said I'd been "cutting it fat,"
And coolly demanded a "fiver,"—
How thou must have chuckled at that!

Thou wee can'st remember the morning
Succeeding thy Sabbath, thou Jew!

When cursing the year I was born in,
I felt the first turn of the screw.

And, hope from my bosom departing,
Like dew from the rays of the sun,
My wits the sad news were imparting
How I'd been deluded and done.

And, borne on the telegraph wire,
A message came swiftly to me;
It said that my grey-headed sire
Was pining his offspring to see.

How face my infuriate father—
My property mortgaged and gone?
For darkly his anger will gather;
I've hardly a rag to put on.

Thine int'rest I cannot repay thee,
And gone are my coat and my hat;
Thou hast all my duds—I could slay thee!
Oh! how could I be such a flat?

I brought thee each gift of my mother,
Each gift of my generous aunt;
The pistol belonged to my brother—
I'd like to restore it, but can't:

For, uncle, thy fingers are sticky,
And, if the sad truth be confessed,
Thy heart is as false as the "dicky,"
Which covers my sorrowful breast.

I've managed the needful to borrow,
My watch and my ring to redeem;
I hope that the sight of my sorrow
May cause thee a horrible dream.



Original

'Twere joy should I hear that the pistol
Had burst in thy villainous hand—
While smoking the "bird's eye" of Bristol,
My breast would dilate and expand.

I leave thee, for vain is resistance,
And little thou heedest my slang,
But I'd barter ten years of existence
For power to cause thee a pang.

O! had I the wand of a wizard,
A Nemesis cruel I'd bribe
To torture that Israelite's gizzard,
And caution the rest of his tribe.

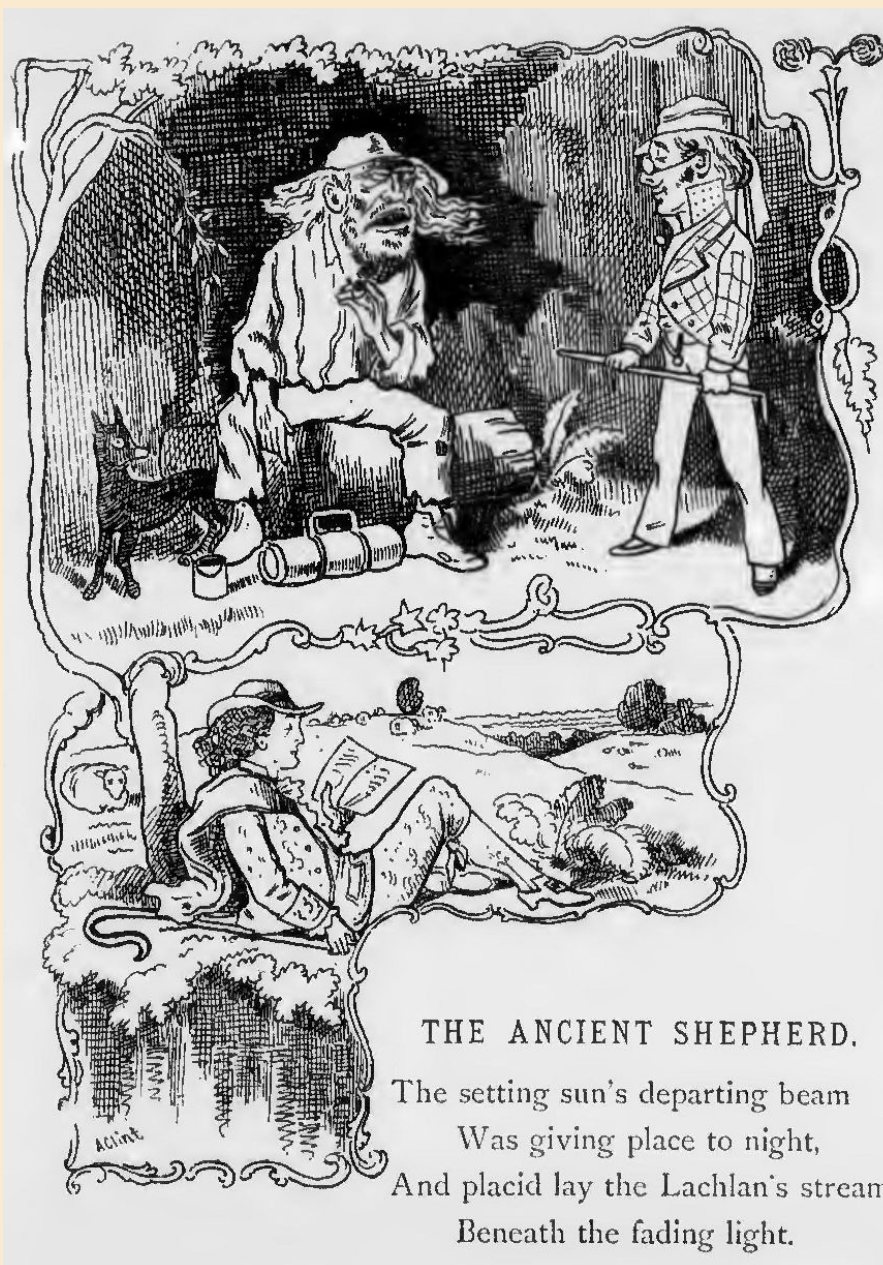
O! ye who are fond of excitement,
Ye students of Med'cine and Law,
Be warned by this awful indictment,
And never give Moses your paw!

From Moses who spoiled the Egyptian,
To Moses who buys your old clo',
They're all of the self-same description—
They take, but they never let go.

Ye sons of the Man on the Barrel
(That's Bacchus)—ye "Monks of the Screw!"
Don't mortgage your wearing apparel,
Or have any truck with a Jew;

But take to cold water and virtue,
And never, whatever befalls,
Let any false logic convert you

THE ANCIENT SHEPHERD



THE ANCIENT SHEPHERD.

The setting sun's departing beam
Was giving place to night,
And placid lay the Lachlan's stream
Beneath the fading light.

Original

The shadows of the River Gums
Were stretching long and black,
As, far from Sydney's busy hum,
I trod the narrow track.

I watched the coming twilight spread,
And thought on many a plan;
I saw an object on ahead—
It seemed to be a man.

A venerable party sat

Upon a fallen log;
Upon him was a battered hat,
And near him was a dog.

The look that o'er his features hung
Was anything but sweet;
His swag and "billy" lay among
The grass beneath his feet.

And white and withered was his hair,
And white and wan his face;
I'd rather not have ipet the pair
In such a lonely place.

I thought misfortune's heavy hand
Had done what it could do;
Despair seemed branded on the man,
And on the dingo too.

A hungry look that dingo wore—
He must have wanted prog—
I think I never saw before
So lean and lank a dog.

I said—"Old man, I fear that you
Are down upon your luck;
You very much resemble, too,
A pig that has been stuck."

His answer wasn't quite distinct—
(I'm sure it wasn't true):
He said I was (at least, I think,)
"A"—something—"jackeroo!"

He said he didn't want my chaff,
And (with an angry stamp)
Declared I made too free by half
"A-rushing of his camp."

I begged him to be calm, and not
Apologise to me;
He told me I might "go to pot"
(Wherever that may be);

And growled a muttered curse or two
Expressive of his views
Of men and things, and squatters too,
New chums and jackeroos.

But economical he was
With his melodious voice;
I think the reason was because
His epithets were choice.

I said—"Old man, I fain would know
The cause of thy distress;
What sorrows cloud thine aged brow
I cannot even guess.

"There's anguish on thy wrinkled face,
And passion in thine eye,
Expressing anything but grace,

But why, old man, oh! why?

"A sympathising friend you'll find
In me, old man, d'ye see?
So if you've aught upon your mind
Just pour it into me."

He gravely shook his grizzled head
I rather touched him there—
And something indistinct he said
(I think he meant to swear).

He made a gesture with his hand,
He saw I meant him well;
He said he was a shepherd, and
"A takin' of a spell."

He said he was an ill-used bird,
And squatters they might be ———
(He used a very naughty word
Commencing with a D.)

I'd read of shepherds in the lore
Of Thessaly and Greece,
And had a china one at home
Upon the mantelpiece.

I'd read about their loves and hates,
As hot as Yankee stoves,
And how they broke each other's pates
In fair Arcadian groves;

But nothing in my ancient friend
Was like Arcadian types:
No fleecy flocks had he to tend,
No crook or shepherds' pipes.

No shepherdess was near at hand,
And, if there were, I guessed
She'd never suffer that old man
To take her to his breast!

No raven locks had he to fall,
And didn't seem to me
To be the sort of thing at all
A shepherd ought to be.

I thought of all the history.
I'd studied when a boy—
Of Paris and Ænone, and
The siege of ancient Troy.

I thought, could Helen contemplate
This party on the log,
She would the race of shepherds' hate
Like Brahmins hate a dog.

It seemed a very certain thing
That, since the world began,
No shepherd ever was like him,
From Paris down to Pan.

I said—"Old man, you've settled now
Another dream of youth;
I always understood, I vow,
Mythology was truth

"Until I saw thy bandy legs
And sorrow-laden brow,
But, sure as ever eggs is eggs,
I cannot think so now.

"For, an a shepherd thou should'st be,
Then very sure am I
The man who wrote mythology
Was guilty of a lie.

"But never mind, old man," I said,
"To sorrow we are born,
So tell us why thine aged head
Is bended and forlorn?"

With face as hard as Silas Wegg's
He said, "Young man, here goes."
He lit his pipe, and crossed his legs,
And told me all his woes.

He said he'd just been "lammin'-down"
A flock of maiden-ewes,
And then he'd had a trip to town
To gather up the news;

But while in Bathurst's busy streets
He got upon the spree,
And publicans was awful cheats
For soon "lamm'd down" was he.

He said he'd "busted up his cheque"
(What's that, I'd like to know?)
And now his happiness was wrecked,
To work he'd got to go.

He'd known the time, not long ago,
When half the year he'd spend
In idleness, and comfort too,
A-camping in a "bend."

No need to tread the weary track,
Or work his strength away;
He lay extended on his back
Each happy summer day.

When sun-set comes and day-light flags,
And dusky looms the scrub,
He'd bundle up his ration-bags
And toddle for his grub,

And to some station-store he'd go
And get the traveller's dower—
"A pint o' dust"—that was his low
Expression meaning flour;

But now he couldn't cadge about,
For squatters wasn't game

To give their tea and sugar out
To every tramp that came.

The country's strength, he thought, was gone,
Or going very fast,
And feeding tramps now ranked among
The glories of the past.

He'd seen the "Yanko" in its pride,
When every night a host
Of hungry tramps at supper tried
For who could eat the most.

A squatter then had feelin's strong
And tender in his breast,
And if a trav'ller came along
He'd ask him in to rest.

"But squatters now!"—he stamped the soil,
And muttered in his beard,
He wished they'd got a whopping boil
For every sheep they sheared!

His language got so very bad—
It couldn't well be worse,
For every second word he had
Now seemed to be a curse.

And shaking was his withered hand
With passion, not with age—
I never thought so old a man
Could get in such a rage.

His eyes seemed starting from his head,
They glared in such a way;
And half the wicked words he said
I shouldn't like to say;

But from his language I inferred
There wasn't one in three,
Of squatters worth that little word
Commencing with a "D."

Alas! for my poetic lore,
I fear it was astray,
It never said that shepherds swore,
Or talked in such a way.

The knotted cordage of his brow
Was tightened in a frown—
He seemed the sort of party, now,
To burn a wool-shed down.

He told me, further, and his voice
Grew very plaintive here,
That now he'd got to make the choice
And *work*, or give up beer!

From heavy toil he'd always found
'Twas healthiest to keep,
And mostly stuck to cadgin' round,
And lookin' after sheep.

But shepherdin' was nearly "cooked"—
I think he meant to say
That shepherds' prospects didn't look
In quite a hopeful way.

A new career he must begin,
(And fresh it roused his ire)
For squatters they was fencin' in
With that infernal wire;

And sheep was paddocked everywhere—
'Twas like them squatters' cheek!—
And shepherds now, for all they'd care,
Might go to Cooper's Creek.

He said he couldn't use an axe,
And wouldn't if he could;
He'd see 'em blistered on their backs
'Fore he'd go choppin' wood;

That nappin' stones, or shovellin',
Warn't good enough for he,
And work it was a cussed thing
As didn't ought to be.

He'd known the Lachlan, man and boy,
For close on forty year,
But now they'd pisoned every joy,
He thought it time to clear.

They gave him sorrow's bitter cup,
And filled his heart with woe,
And now at last his back was up,
He felt he ought to go.

He'd heard of regions far away
Across the barren plains,
Where shepherds might be blythe and gay
And bust the squatters' chains.

To reach that land he meant to try,
He didn't care a cuss,
If 'twasn't any better, why,
It couldn't be much wuss.

Amongst the blacks, though old and grey,
Existence he'd begin,
And give his ancient hand away
In marriage to a "gin."



Original

He really was so old and grim,
The thought was in my mind,
That any gin to marry him
Would have to be stone blind.

'Twould make an undertaker smile:
What tickled me was this,
The thought of such an ancient file
Indulging in a kiss!

And, if it's true, as Shakespeare said,
That equal justice whirls,
He ought to think of Nick instead
Of thinking of the girls.

Then drooped his grim and aged head,
And closed that glaring eye,
And not another word he said
.Except a grunt or sigh.

More lean he looks and still more lank
Such changes o'er him pass,
And down his ancient body sank
In slumber on the grass.

I thought, old chap, you're wearing out,
And not the sort of coon
To lead a blushing bride about,
Or spend a honeymoon;

Or if, indeed, there were a bride
For such a withered stick,
With such a tough and wrinkled hide,

That bride should be old Nick.

As streaks of faintish light began
To mark the coming day,
I left that grim and aged man
And slowly stole away.

And when the winter nights are rough,
And shrieking is the wind,
Or when I've eaten too much duff
And dreams afflict my mind,

I see that lean and withered hand,
And, 'mid the gloom of night,
I see the face of that old man,
And horrid is the sight:



Original

While on my head in agony
Up rises every hair,
I see again his glaring eye—
In fancy hear him swear.

At breakfast time, when I come down
To take that pleasant meal,
With pallid face, and haggard frown,
Into my place I steal;

And when they say I'm far from bright,
The truth I dare not tell:
I say I've passed a sleepless night,
And don't feel very well.



Original

WHERE IS FREEDOM?

Oh! Mother, say, for I long to know,
Where doth the tree of Freedom grow,
And strike its roots in the heart of man
As deep and far as the famed banyan?
Is it 'mid those groups in the Southern Seas,
In the Coral Isles, or the far Fijis,
Where the restless billows seeth and toss
'Neath the gleaming light of the Southern Cross?
"Not there—not there, my child."

Then tell me, mother, can it be where
The cry of "Liberty" rends the air?
Where grow the maize and the maple tree,
In the fertile "bottoms" of Tennessee?
Or is it up where the north winds roar,
Away by the fair Canadian shore,
Where the Indians shriek with insane halloos—
As drunk as owls in their bark canoes?

"Not there—not there, my child."

Or is it back in the Western States,
Where Colt's revolver rules the fates,
And Judges lounge in a liquor shop
While Dean and Adams's pistols pop?
Where Justice is but a shrivelled ghost
As deaf and blind as a stockyard post,
And License sits upon Freedom's chair—
Oh, say, dear mother, can it be there?

"Not there—not there, my child."

Is it on the banks of the wild Paroo,

Where the emu stalks, and the kangaroo
Bounds o'er the sand-hills free and light,
And the dingo howls through the sultry night;
Where the native gathers the nardoo-seed
For his frugal meal; and the centipede—
While the worn-out traveller lies inert,
Invades the folds of his flannel shirt?

"Not there—not there, my child."

Is it where yon death-like stillness reigns
O'er the vast expanse of the salt-bush plains,
Where the shepherd leaveth his Leicester ewes
For the firm embrace of his noon-tide snooze,
And the most enchanting visions come
To his thirsty spirit of Queensland rum,
While the sun rays strike through his garments scant—
Is it there, dear mother, this wond'rous plant?

"Not there—not there, my child."

Or Southward, down where our brethren hold
Those keys of power, rich mines of gold—
That land of rumour and vague reports,
Alluvial diggings, and reefs of quartz—
Where brokers give you the straightest "tip,"
And let in in the way of "scrip;"
Where all men vapour, and vaunt, and boast,
And manhood suffrage rules the roast?

"Not there—not there, my child."

Is it where the blasts of the simoom fan,
The blazing valleys of Hindustan;
Where the Dervish howls, and their dupes are fleeced
By the swarth Parsee, and the Brahmin priest;
Where men believe in their toddy-bowls,
And the transmigration of human souls,
And the monkeys battle with countless fleas
On the twisted boughs of the tamarind trees?

"Not there—not there, my child."



Original

Or is it more to the northward, more
Toward the ice-bound rivers of Labrador,
Where the glittering curtain of gleaming snow
Enshrouds the home of the Esquimaux;
Or further still to the north, away
Where the bones of the Artic heroes lay
Long, long on the icy surface bare,
To bleach and dry in the frosty air?

"Not there—not there, my child."

Then is it, mother, among the trees
That shade the paths in the Tuilleries,
Where the students walk with the pale grisettes,
And scent the air with their cigarettes?
Or doth it bloom in that atmosphere
Of mild tobacco and lager beer,
Where gutteral curses mingle too
With the croupiers patter of "*faites votre jeu?*"

"Not there—not there, my child."

"Boy, 'tis a plant that loves to blow
Where the fading rays of the sunset go;
Up where the sun-light never sets,
And angels tootle their flageolets;
Up through the fleecy clouds, and far
Beyond the track of the farthest star,
Where the silvery echoes catch no tone
Of a simmering sinner's stifling groan:
'Tis there—'tis there, my child!"



Original



Original

Countless sheep and countless cattle
O'er his vast enclosures roam;
But you heard no children prattle
'Round that squatter's hearth and home.

Older grew that squatter, older,
Solitary and alone,
And they said his heart was colder
Than a granite pavin'-stone.

Other squatters livin handy,
Wot had daughters in their prime.
For that squatter "shouted" brandy
In the Township many a time;

And those gals kept introdoocin'
In their toilets every art
With the object of sedoocin'
That old sinner's stony heart.

Thus they often made exposures
Of their ankles, I'll be bound,
When they, in his vast enclosures,

Met that squatter ridin' round.

Their advances he rejected,
Scornin' both their hands and hearts,
'Till one day a cove selected
Forty acres in those parts.

And that stalwart free-selector
Had the handsomest of gals;
Conduct couldn't be correcter
Than his youngest daughter Sal's.

Prettily her head she tosses—
Loves a thing she don't regard;
Rides the most owdacious hosses
Wot was ever in a yard.

She was lithe and she was limber—
Farmers daughter every inch—
Not averse to sawin' timber
With her father at a pinch.

In remotest dells and dingles,
Where most gals would be afraid,
There she went a-splittin shingles,
Pretty tidy work she made.



Original

And that free selector's daughter,
Driving of her father's cart,
Made the very wildest slaughter
In that wealthy squatter's heart.

He proposed, and wasn't blighted,

Took her to his residence,
With his bride he was delighted
For she saved him much expense.

Older grew that aged squatter,
White and grizzly grew his pate,
'Till his weak rheumatic trotters
Couldn't bear their owner's weight.

Then he grew more helpless, 'till he
Couldn't wash and couldn't shave,
And one evening cold and chilly
He was carried to his grave.

Then that free selector's daughter
Came right slap "out of her shell;"
Calm and grave as folks had thought her,
She becomes a howling swell.

To the neighb'ring township drove she
In her chariot and pair,
Splendid dreams and visions wove she
While she braided up her hair.

She peruses Sydney papers,
Sees a paragraph which tells
Her benighted soul the capers
Cut down there by nobs and swells;

Then she couldn't stop contented
In a region such as this,
While the atmosphere she scented
Of the great metropolis.

Her intention she imparted
To the neighbours round about;
Packed her duds, farewell'd, and started,
And for Sydney she set out.

Now her pantin' bosom hankers
Spicily her form to deck,
So she sought her husband's bankers
And she drew a heavy cheque.

She, of course, in dress a part spent,
Satins, sables, silk and grebe,
And she took some swell apartments
Situated near the Glebe.

With the very highest classes
In her heart she longed to jine—
Her opinion placed the masses
Lower in the scale than swine.

But she found it wasn't easy
Climbin' up ambition's slope;
Slippy was the road, and greasy,
To the summit of her hope.

If into a "set" she wriggled,
She'd capsize some social rule,
Then those parties mostly giggled,

Loadin' her with ridicule.

Many an awkward solecism—

Many a breach of etiquette,
(Though she knew her catechism)
Often made her eyelids wet.

Her plebeian early trainin'

Was a precious pull-back then,
Which prevented her from gainin'
Footin' with the "upper ten."

Strugglin' after social fame was

Simply killin' her out-right,
So she settled that the game was
Hardly worth the candle-light.

Things got worse and things got worser,

'Till she had a vision strange,
The forerunner and precursor
Of a most decided change.

In a dream she saw the station

Where her father now was boss,
And his usual occupation
Was to ride a spavined hoss.

Round inspectin' every shepherd

With his penetratin' sight,
And those underlings got peppered
If he found things wasn't right.

When she saw her grey-haired sire

"Knockin' round" among the sheep,
For her home a strong desire
Made her yell out in her sleep.

Then she saw herself in fancy

In her strange fantastic dream,
With her elder sister Nancy,
Yokin up the bullock team.

Up out of her sleep she started,

And the tears came to her eyes;
She was almost broken-hearted,
To her waitin' maid's surprise.

She was sad and penitential,

Like the Prodigal of old,
So she got a piece of pencil
And her state of mind she told

To her grey and aged father

In that far outlandish place;
And she told him that she'd rather
Like to see his wrinkled face.

Then that quondam free-selector

Shed the biggest tears of joy;
When he knew he might expect her
His was bliss without alloy.

Home came Sarah, just as one fine
Day in May was near its close,
And the fadin' rays of sunshine
Glinted oil her father's nose.

She beheld it glowing brightly;
Filial yearning was intense;
So she made a rush and lightly
Cleared the four-foot paddock fence.



Original

Hugged he her in fond embraces;
Kissed she him with many a kiss;
And she busted her stay-laces
In an ecstasy of bliss.

Then she wept with sorrow, thinkin',
From the colour of his face,
That her parent had been drinkin',
Which was probably the case.

But he, when he found his coat all
Wet with many a filial tear,
Took a solemn pledge tee-total
To abstain from rum and beer.

Then she went and sought her sisters,
Judy, Nancy, and the rest;
On their faces she raised blisters
With the kisses she impressed.

And she once more *con amore*
"Cottoned " to the calves and sheep,
Likewise for her parent hoary
She professed affection deep.

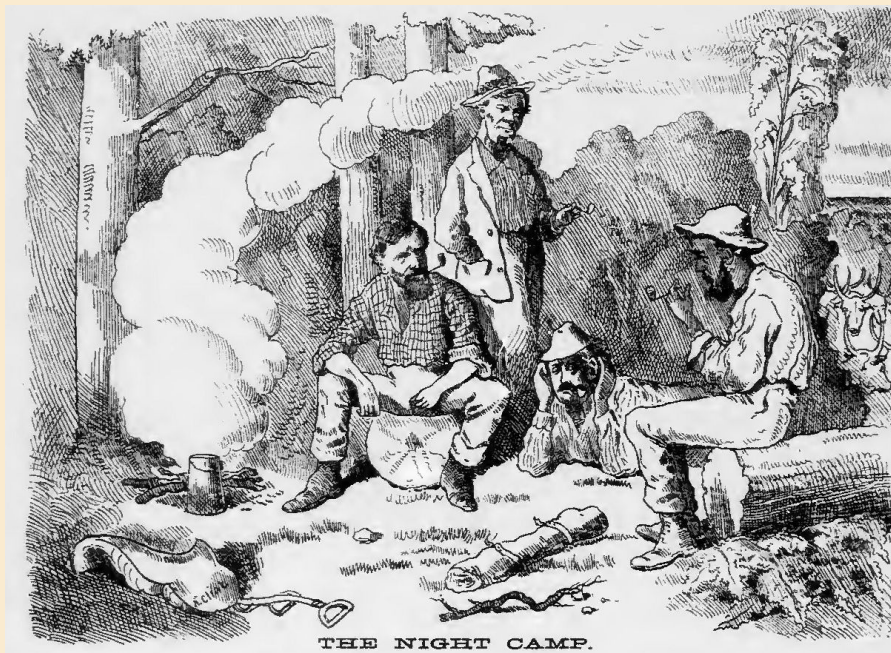
Lavished on him fond caresses,
 Stuck to him like cobbler's-wax,
Cut up all her stylish dresses
 Into garments for the blacks.

All her talents were befitted
 To a rough-and-tumble life,
And from sheep to sheep she flitted
 When the "scab" and "fluke" were rife.

Sarah's heart was soft and tender,
 Her repentance was complete,
Never sighed she more for splendour,
 For the "Block" or George's-street.

Many a "back-block" lady-killer,
 Many a wealthy squatter's son,
Wanted her to "douse the wilier,"
 But she wasn't to be won.

For that free-selector's daughter
 Said, when settled in her home,
She'd be (somethinged) if they caught Her
 Venturin' again to roam.



Original

THE CATTLE MUSTER.

THE NIGHT CAMP.

The song goes round, we yarn and chaff,
And cheerily the bushman's laugh
Rolls through the forest glade.
The hobbled horses feed around,
We hear the horse-bell's tinkling sound;
The sand beneath their feet is ground,
As in the creek they wade.
We hear them crunch the juicy grass—
The water gleams like polished glass,
Beneath the moon's bright ray.
Mosquitos form in solid cloud—
They sting and sing, both sharp and loud;
Around the prostrate forms they crowd,
And keep repose at bay.
We watch the stars shine over head,
And lounge upon the bushman's bed—
A blanket on the ground.
Each feels himself Dame Nature's guest,
Our heads upon our saddles rest;
At length, with weariness oppressed,
We sink in sleep profound.
We sleep as only weary ones
Among hard-handed labour's sons,
With minds at rest from debts and duns—
As only these can do—
Until the daylight's first faint streak
Has lightly touched the distant peak,
And o'er us where the branches creak,
Is slowly creeping through.
Reluctantly with sleep we strive,
And hear the call to "look alive"!
We soon desert the camp.
The horses caught and blankets rolled,
The "Super's" brief instructions told—
We mount, and scarce our steeds can hold,
Impatiently they stamp.

THE MUSTER.

We ford the creek and need no bridge,
And climb a steep and scrubby ridge,
And then, boys, there's a sight!—
The "gully," by the sun unkist,
Beneath lies rolled in gleaming mist
And flowing waves of light;
As yet untouched by noon-tide heat,
Like rocks where broken waters meet,
'Tis wrapped as by a winding sheet
In billows fleecy white.
Onward, and soon the sun's fierce rays
Will dissipate the morning haze—
He soars in fiery pomp.
We skirt the shallow "clay-pan's" marge,
Force "lignum" thickets, dense and large,
And often-times we briskly charge
Some dark "Yapunya-swamp."
We gather first a quiet lot,
Then off again with hurried trot
Upon our toilsome tramp.
Each gully, range, and hill we beat,
Charge every horned thing we meet—

With ringing shout and gallop fleet—
And "run" then "on the camp."
The shaggy herd increases fast;
We know by lengthened shadows cast
Time too has galloped hard;
'Twill try our powers, howe'er we strive,
This most rebellious mob to drive,
E're night-fall, to the yard.

THE RUN HOME.

The order comes,—"Each to his place!"
And homeward now at length we face.
The frightened monsters roar;
Some tear the unresisting ground,
And some with frantic rush and bound
(Half maddened by the stockwhip's sound)
Each other fiercely gore!
We spread along the scattered line,
Some on the "wings," and some behind,
And steer them as we can.
There's but one pass through yonder hill;
To guide them there will need some skill,
And try both horse and man.
Some hidden object checks them there;
The leaders snuff the wind, and glare,
Then bellowing with their tails in air,
Swerve madly to the right.
A stockman hears our voices ring;
With easy stretch and supple spring,
His horse bears down along their wing,
The living mass he wheels:
Too close he presses; at the sight
One "breaks" and bellows with affright;
Dick swoops upon him, like a kite;
The cutting thong he deals;
It falls with heavy sounding thwack—
Such din those mountain gullies black
Have scarce or never heard.
He knows his work, that well-trained hack,
Nor heeds the stockwhip's echoing crack,
And sullenly the bull turns back,
To join the hurrying herd.
"Look out!" a warning voice has said,
"There's 'Mulga,' boys, and right ahead!"
And now begins the rub;
From some their garments will be stripped,
And saddle-flaps and "knee-pads" ripped,
And horses' feet in holes be tripped,
Before they clear the scrub.
You, stockmen from the Murray's side,
Who through the "Mallee" boldly ride,
Beware the "mulga-stake!"
'Tis strong and tough as bullock-hide,
Nor will, like "mallee," turn aside;
But, in its savage, sylvan pride,
Will neither *bend* nor *break*!
Once through the scrub, we don't care how
Things go; we've got them steadied now
And haven't lost a beast—
And, far as ranges human eye,

The plains are level as a die—
Our toil has nearly ceased.
The Sun goes down, the day-light fails,
But now we near the Stockyard rails—
We've one sharp struggle more.
One half the mob have never been
(Forced from those gullies cool and green)
In "branding-yard" before!
We jam them at the open space;
They ring around, and fear to face
The widely open gate.
Whips crack, and voices shout in vain;
The cattle "ring," and strive again
To force a passage to the plain.
Impatiently we wait,
Till one old charger glares around,
And snuffing cautiously the ground
Stalks through between the posts.
With lowered heads the others "bore"
And jam, and squeeze, and blindly gore;
And with a hollow muttered roar
Pour in those horned hosts!
Those posts are fourteen inches through—
They creak, and groan, and tremble too,
Before that pouring rush!
They're in at last, the gates are shut;
And falls o'er paddock, yard, and hut,
A calm nocturnal hush.



A WAIL O'ER A WHALE-MAN.

PART I.

Bill Blubber was a whale-man tight,
 And supple as a cord,
 And William first beheld the light
 Within a work-house ward.

Original

In youth he met with sad rebuffs,
 Hard, hard was William's lot,
 And most unnecessary cuffs
 And kicks he often got.

At length one night both dark and black
 A window he got through,
 And with fresh *weals* upon his back
 He joined a whaler's crew.

He learnt to "hand," and "reef," and steer,
 And knew the compass pat;
 He learnt to honour and revere
 The boatswain and his "cat."

He went to every coral isle
 Down in the Southern seas,
 Where dark-eyed beauties beam and smile
 Beneath the bread-fruit trees.

His foot was firm upon the deck
 As Norval's on his heath;
 He dared the tempest and the wreck
 For whale and walrus teeth.

He braved Pacific foam and spray,
For oil and bêche-le-mer,
Till he grew ugly, old, and grey,
An ancient mariner.

His face got red, and blue, and pink
With grog and weather stains;
He looked much like the *missin* link
When in the *mizen* chains.



Original

II.

Bill Blubber's gone, and he'll be missed
By all on British soil;
Be aisy now and hold your *whist*,
He'll go no more for *Hoyle!*

No more he'll see the billows curl
In north Atlantic gales;
No more the keen harpoon he'll hurl
At spermaceti whales.

Ah! never more he'll heave the log—
A harsh decree was Fate's;
He took an over-dose of grog
When up in *Be(e)hring* Straits.

Death blew a bitter blast and chill
Which struck his sails aback,
And round the corse of Workhouse Bill
They wound a *Union* Jack.

A "longing, lingering look" they cast,
Then sewed him in a bag,

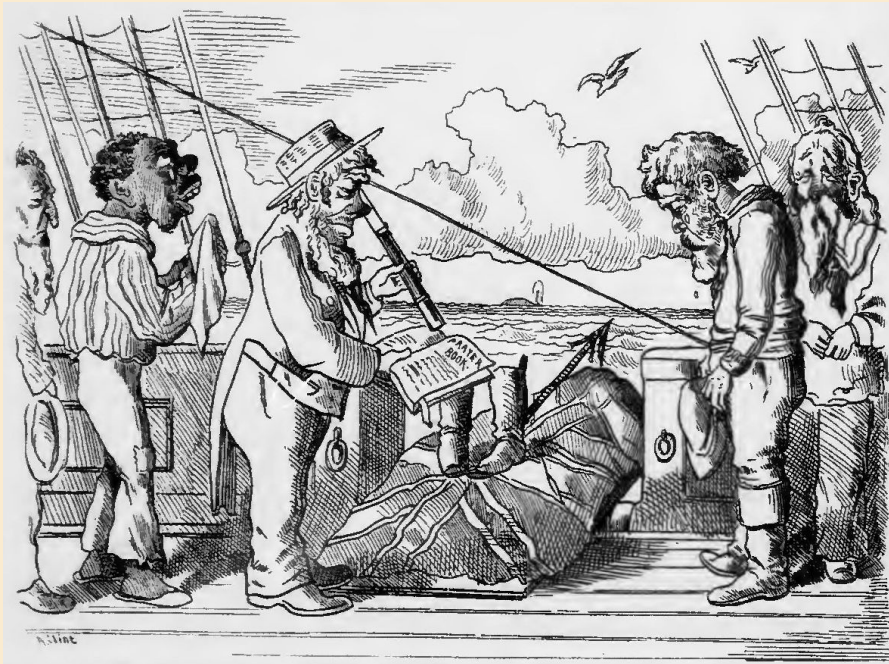
And half way up the lofty mast
They hoist the drooping flag.

His mess-mates crossways tossed the yards,
Askew they hung the sails,
Eschewed tobacco, rum, and cards,
And filled the ship with wails

The grief-struck skipper drank some grog,
Of solace he had need,
And made an entry in the log
No livin' soul could read.

And then a ghastly laugh he laughed
His spirits to exhalt,
And then he called the boatswain aft
And *mustered* every salt

The whalers gave one final howl,
And cursed their hard, hard lucks;
They came, and though the wind was *foul*,
They wore their whitest *ducks*.



Original

The captain—kindest, best of men—
Strove hard his breath to catch;
(Crouched like an incubating hen,
Upon the after-*hatch*).

He said as how the time was come
To Bill to say good-bye;
And tears of water and of rum,
Stood in each manly eye.

Said he, "My lads, dispel this gloom,
"Bid grief and sorrow halt;
"For if the sea must be his tomb,
"D'ye see it aint his *f(v)ault*.

" 'Tis true we'll never see his like
"At 'cutting in' a whale—
"At usin knife an' marlin-spike,
"But *blubber* won't *avail*.

"Soh! steady lads, belay all that!
"Vast heaving sobs and sighs;
"Don't never go to 'whip the cat'
"For William, bless his eyes!

"I knew him lads when first he shipped,
"And this is certain, that
"Though William by the 'cat ' was whipped,
"He never '*whipped the cat!*'"

The skipper read the service through,
And snivelled in his sleeve,
While calm and still, old work'us Bill
Awaits the final heave.

He had no spiky hearse and three,
No gay funereal car;
But, at the word, souse in the sea
They *pitch* that luckless *tar*.

Short-handed then those whalemens toil
Upon their oily cruise,
And many and many a *cruse* of oil
For want of Bill they lose.

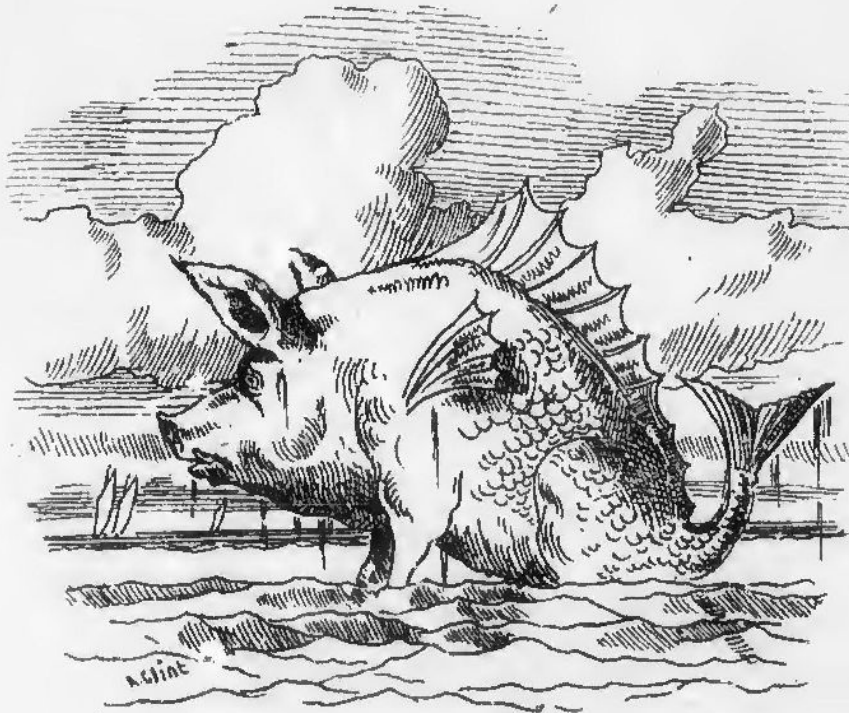
The mate and captain in despair
His cruel fate deplore;
His mess-mates swore they never were
In such a *mess* before.

The crew, who had a bitter cup
To drink with their salt-horse,
When next they hauled the mainsel up,
Bewailed his *missin corse*. *

* *Mizen-course o' course*.

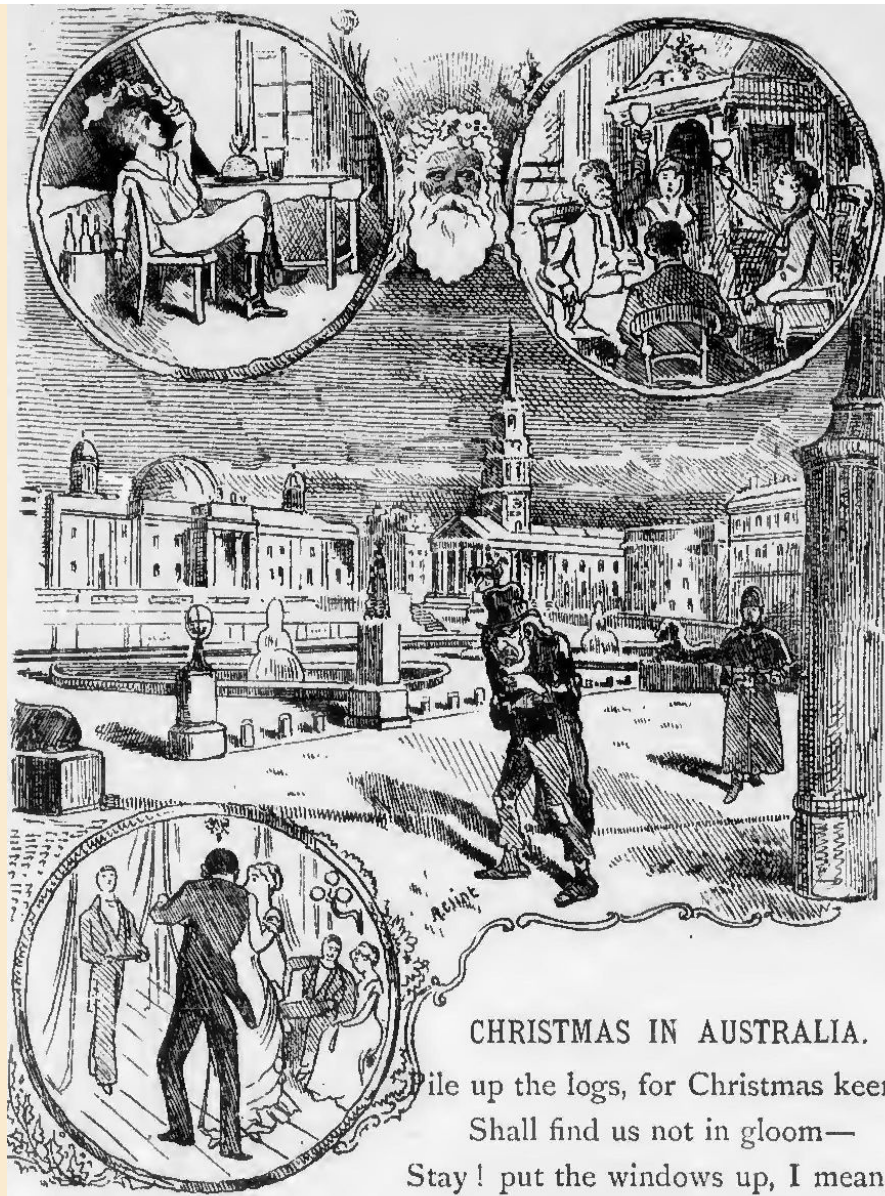
Alas! his corpse had downward sunk,
His soul hath upward sped,
And Will hath left a sailor's 'bunk'
To share an oyster's bed.

We hope his resting place will suit—
We trust he's happy now—
Laid where the pigs can never root,
Lulled by the ocean's sough.



THE SOUGH OF THE OCEAN.

Original



Original

This Christmas-eve? This stifling night?
 The leaves upon the trees?
 The temperature by Farenheit
 Some ninety odd degrees?

Ah me! my thoughts were off at score
 To Christmases I've passed,
 Before upon this Southern shore
 My weary lot was cast.

To Christmases of ice and snow,
 And stormy nights and dark;
 To holly-boughs and mistletoe,
 And skating in the Park

To vast yule-logs and yellow fogs
 Of the vanished days of yore—
 To the keen white frost, and the home that's lost,
 The home that's mine no more.

'Twas passing nice through snow and ice
 To drive to distant "hops,"
 But here, alas! the only ice

Is in the bars and shops!

I've Christmased since those palmy days
In many a varied spot,
And suffered many a weary phase
Of Christmas cold and hot.

When cherished hopes were stricken down—
Hopes born but to be lost—
And when the world's chill blighting frown
Seemed colder than the frost.

'Tis hard to watch—when from within
The heart all hope has flown—
The old year out, the new year in,
Unfriended and alone

When whispers seem to rise and tell
Of scenes you used to know—
You almost hear the very bells
You heard so long ago.

I've Christmased in a leaky tub
Where briny billows roll,
And Christmased in the Mulga scrub
Beside a water-hole.

With ague in my aching joints,
And in my quivering bones;
My bed, the rough uneven points
Of sharp and jagged stones.

Where life a weary burden was
With all the varied breeds
Of creeping things with pointed stings,
And snakes, and centipedes.

'Twas not a happy Christmas that:
How can one happy be
With bull-dog ants inside your hat,
And black ants in your tea?

Australian child, what can'st thou know
Of Christmas in its prime?
Not flower-wreathed, but wreathed in snow,
As in yon northern clime.

Thou hast not seen the vales and dells
Arrayed in gleaming white,
Nor heard the sledge's silver bells
Go tinkling through the night.

For thee no glittering snow-storm whirls;
Thou hast instead of this
Only the dust-storm's eddying swirls—
The hot-wind's scalding kiss!

What can'st thou know of frozen lakes,
Or Hyde—that Park divine?
For, though by no means lacking *snakes*,
Thou hast no "*Serpentine*."

Thou hast not panted, yearned to cut
 Strange figures out with skates,
Nor practised in the water-butt,
 Nor heard those dismal "waits."

For thee no "waits" lugubrious voice
 Breaks forth in plaintive wail;
Rejoice, Australian child, rejoice!
 That balances the scale.

I see in fancy once again
 The London streets at night—
Trafalgar square, St. Martin's Lane—
 Each well remembered sight.

Past twelve! and Nature's winding-sheet
 Is over street and square,
And silently now fall the feet,
 Of those who linger there.

I see a wretch with hunger bold
 (An Ishmaelite 'mong men)
Crawl from some hovel dark and cold—
 Some foul polluted den—

A wretch who never learnt to pray,
 And wearily he drags
His life along from day to day
 In wretchedness and rags.

I see a wandering carriage lamp
 Glide silently and slow;
The night-policeman's heavy tramp
 Is muffled by the snow.

I hear the mournful chaunt ascend
 ('Tis meaningless to you)
"We're frozen out, hard-working men,
 We've got no work to do!"

All, all the many sounds and sights
 Come trooping through my brain
Of London streets, and winter nights,
 And pleasure mixed with pain.

Be happy you who have a home,
 Be happy while you may,
For sorrow's ever quick to come,
 And slow to pass away.

Your churches and your dwellings deck
 With ferns and flowers fair;
I would not breathe a word to check
 The mirth I cannot share.

For, though my barque's a shattered hull,
 And I could be at best
But like the famed Egyptian skull,

A mirth-destroying guest,

I would not play the cynic's part,
Nor at *thy* pleasure sneer—
I wish thee, Reader, from my heart,
A happy, glad New year.

ECHO VERSES.

Some years ago I chanced upon a magazine article containing a dissertation upon a now almost obsolete kind of versification, much affected by Ben Jonson and some of the last century poets, in which the first two or three lines of each verse ask a question, and the echo of the concluding words gives an answer more or less appropriate. An amusing example was given in the article above mentioned, which was equally rough on the great violinist of the past and his audience, thus:

"What are they who pay six guineas
To hear a string of Paganini's?"
(Echo) "*Pack 'o ninnies!*"

I read this and a few other examples, and was straightway stricken with a desire to emulate this eccentric and somewhat difficult species of versification, and now with considerable diffidence, and a choking prayer for mercy at the hands of the critic, I lay my attempt before the reader. The following echo-verses are not on any account whatever to be understood as reflecting on the present or any past Government of this Colony. They are merely to be taken as shadowing forth a state of things possible in the remote future.

WHAT AN ECHO TOLD THE AUTHOR.

Author, musing:

Our land hath peace, prosperity, and rhino,
And Legislators true, and staunch, and tried—
What trait have they, that is not pure—divine oh?
(Echo interposing) "*I know!*"

What is it, if thus closely thou hast pried?
"*Pride!*"

If thus into their hearts thou hast been prying,
Thy version of the matter prithee paint;
Tell us, I pray, on what are they relying?
"*Lying!*"

I thought their honour was without a taint—
"*Taint!*"

Have they forgotten all their former glories?
Their virtue—what hath chanced its growth to stunt?
Oh! wherefore should they change their ancient mores?
"*More ease!*"

What weapon makes the sword of Justice blunt?
"*Blunt!*" *
* *Coin*

Thou would'st not speak thus, wert thou now before 'em:
Why do I heed, why listen to thy tale?
Can'st purchase, then, the honour of the Forum?
"*For Rum!*"

And what would blind Dame Justice with her scale?

"Ale!"

Beware! the fame of Senators thou'rt crushing!

Too flippantly thou givest each retort.

What are they doing while for their shame I'm blushing?

"Lushing!"

And drinking?—pray continue thy report—

Port

Curse on these seeds of death, and those who sow them

But there's another thing I'd fain be told—

What of the masses, the canaille below them?

"B-low them!"

Thou flippant one! how is the mob consoled?

"Sold!"

Now, by stout Alexander's sword, or

Rather by his Holiness the Pope!

By what means keep they matters in this order?

"Sawder!"

With what do they sustain the people's hope?

"Soap!"

Take they indeed no passing thought, no care or

Heed of what for safety should be done?

What brought about this modern Reign of Terror?

"Error!"

Is there no hope for thee, my land, mine own?

"None!"

Base love of liquor, ease, and lucre, this it

Is which coilith round her, link on link;

Dark is her hope, e'en as the grave we visit!

"Is it?"

Of what black illustration can I think?

"Ink!"

Alas my country! shall I not undeceive her?

Shall I not strike one patriotic blow?

I'd help her had I but the means, the lever—

"Leave her!"

May we not hope? speak Echo, thou must know—

"No!"

Then shall be heard—when, round us slowly creeping,

Shall come this adverse blast to fill our sails—

Instead of mirth, while hope aside 'tis sweeping—

"Weeping!"

Instead of songs of praise in New South Wales—

"Wails!"



Original

THE following ballad suggested itself to the Author while in the remote interior and suffering from a severe attack of indigestion, he having rashly partaken of some damper made by a remorseless and inexperienced new-chum. Those who do not know what ponderous fare this particular species of bush-luxury is when ill-made may possibly think the sub-joined incidents a little over-drawn. If a somewhat gloomy atmosphere be found pervading the narrative, it is to be attributed to the fact that all the horrors of dyspepsia shadowed the Author's soul at the time it was written, and, if further extenuation be required, it may be stated that he had previously been going through a course of gloomy and marrow-freezing literature, commencing with Edgar Poe's "Raven," and winding up with the crowning atrocity (or *albatrossity*) which saddened the declining years of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner.

THE SHEPHERD'S VENGEANCE,

Fytte the First.

THE squatter kings of New South Wales—
The squatter kings who reign
O'er rocky hill, and scrubby ridge,
O'er swamp, and salt-bush plain—
Fenced in their runs, and coves applied
For shepherding in vain.

The squatters said that closed should be
To tramps each station-store;
That parties on the "cadging suit"
Should ne'er have succour more;
And when Bill the shepherd heard the same
He bowed his neck and swore.

Now, though that ancient shepherd felt
So mad he couldn't speak,
No sighs escape his breast, no tears
From out his eyelids leak,
But he swore upon the human race
A black revenge to wreak.

He brooded long, and a fiendish light
Lit up the face of Bill;
He saw the way to work on men
A dark and grievous ill,
And place them far beyond the aid
Of senna, salts, or pill.

He hied him to his lonely hut
By a deep dark, lakelet's shore;
He passed beneath its lowly roof—
He shut and locked the door;
And he emptied out his flour bag
Upon the hard clay floor.

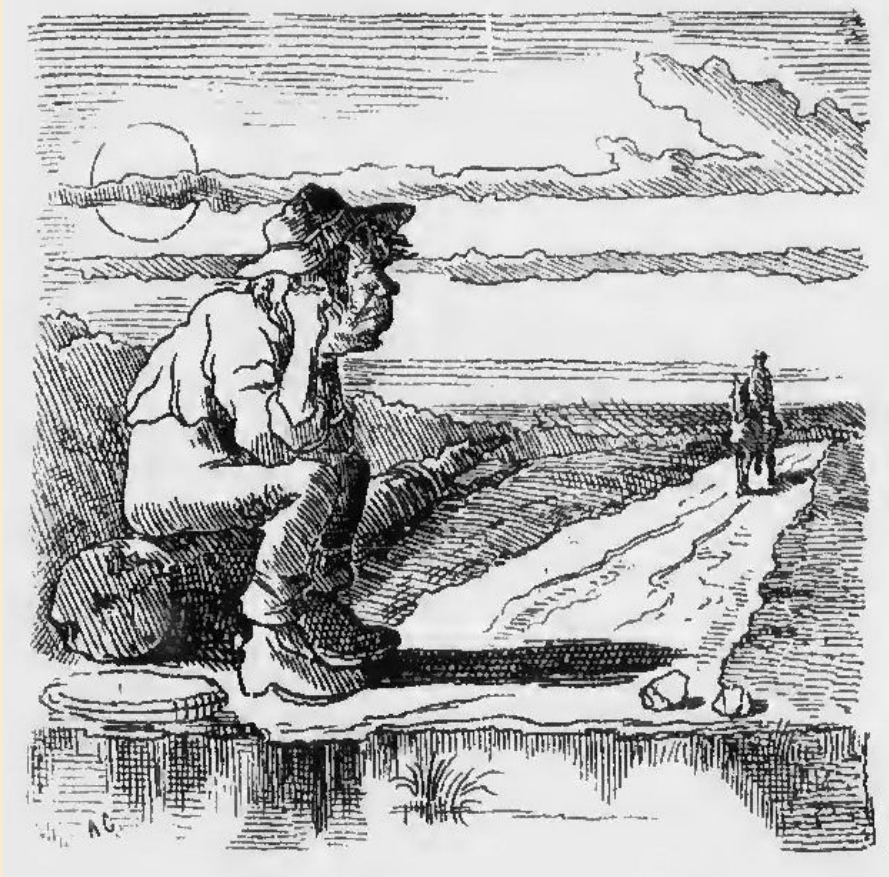
Awhile he eyed the mighty mound
With dark, malignant zeal,
And then, a shovel having found,
"Their fates," said he, "I'll seal";
And he made a "damper" broad and round
As a Roman chariot-wheel.

He soddened it with water drawn
From out that black lagoon,
And he smiled to think that those who ate
A piece of it would soon
Be where they'd neither see the light
Of sun, nor stars, nor moon.

For when that damper came to be
Dug from its glowing bed,
Its fell specific gravity
Was far o'er gold or lead,
And a look of satisfaction o'er
That shepherd's features spread.

Fytte the Second.

The shepherd sat by the gloomy shore
Of the black and dark lagoon;
His face was lit, and his elf-locks hoar
By the rays of the rising moon.



Original

His hand was clenched, and his visage wore
A deadly frown and black,
And his eye-balls glare, for a stranger fair
Is wending down the track.

The shepherd hath bidden the stranger halt
With courtesy and zeal,
And hath welcomed him to his low roof-tree,
And a share of his evening meal.

As the fare he pressed on his hungry guest,
And thought of its deadly weight,
With savage glee he smiled for he
Imagined his after fate.

The stranger hath eaten his fill I ween
Of that fell and gruesome cake,
And hath hied him away in the moon-light's sheen
For a stroll by the deep, dark lake;

For he thought he'd lave each stalwart limb
In the wavelet's curling crest,
And take a dive and a pleasant swim
'Ere he laid him down to rest.

The coat that covered his ample chest
On the lakelet's marge he threw;
His hat, his boots, and his flannel-vest,
And his moleskin trowsers too.

He hummed a tune, and he paused awhile
To hear the night-owl sing;
His ears were cocked, and his palms were locked,
Prepared for the final spring.

An unsuspecting look he cast
At the objects on the shore—
A splash! a thud! and beneath the flood
He sank to rise no more!

The shepherd saw from his lonely hut
The dread catastrophé;
A notch on a withered stick he cut—
"That's number one," said he,

"But, if I live 'till to-morrow's sun
"Shall gild the blue-gum tree,
"With more, I'll stake my soul, that cake
"Of mine will disagree."

Then down he sat by his lonely hut
That stood by the lonely track,
To the lakelet nigh, and a horse came by
With a horse-man on his back.

And lean and lank was the traveller's frame
That sat on that horse's crup:
'Twas long I ween since the wight had seen
The ghost of a bite or sup.

"Oh! give me food!" to the shepherd old
With plaintive cry he cried;
A mildewed crust or a pint o'dust *
Or a mutton cutlet fried.

"In sooth in evil case am I,
Fatigue and hunger too
Have played the deuce with my gastric juice,
It's 'got no work to do.'

"I've come o'er ridges of burning sand
That gasp for the cooling rain,
Where the orb of day with his blinding ray
Glares down on the salt-bush plain

** Flour.*

"O'er steaming valley, lagoon, and marsh
Where the Sun strikes down 'till, phew!
The very eels in the water feels
A foretaste of a stew.

"I hungered long 'till my wasting form
Was a hideous sight to view;
But fit on a settler's fence to sit
To scare the cockatoo.

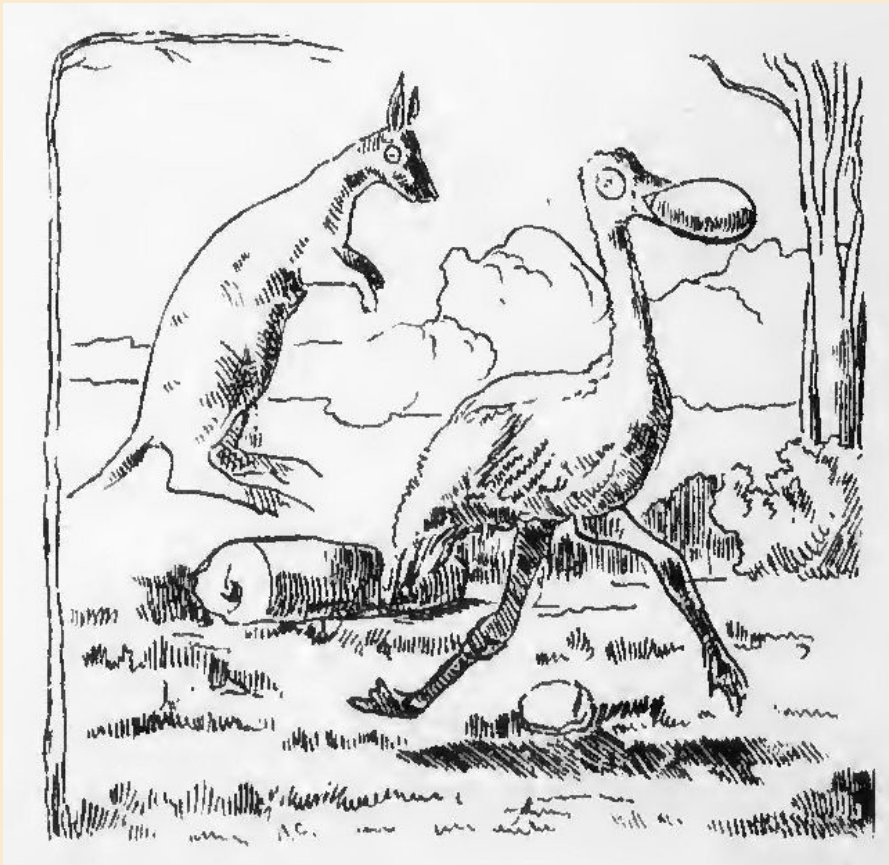
"My hair grew rank, and my eyeballs sank
'Till—wasted, withered, and thin—
The ends and points of my jarring joints
Stuck out through my parched up skin.

"Shrunk limb and thigh, 'till at length I grew
As thin as a gum-tree rail;
At the horrid sight of my hideous plight
Each settler's face turned pale:

"And as I travelled the mulga scrubs,
And forced a passage through
I scared the soul of the native black
A gathering his 'nardoo.'

"On snake or lizard I'd fain have fed,
But piteous was my plight,
And the whole of the brute creation fled
In horror at the sight.

"Scrub turkeys, emus, I appall;
Their eggs I longed to poach,
But they *collared their eggs, their nests and all,*
And fled at my approach!



Original

"And the possums 'streaked' it up the trees,
And frightened the young gallârs,
And all the hairs on the native-bears
Stood stiff as iron bars!"

The shepherd came from his low roof-tree
And gazed at the shrunken wight;
He gave him welcome courteously,
And jested at his plight.

He led the traveller 'neath his roof,
And gazed in his wan, worn face,
Where want was writ, and he bid him sit
On an empty 'three-star' case.

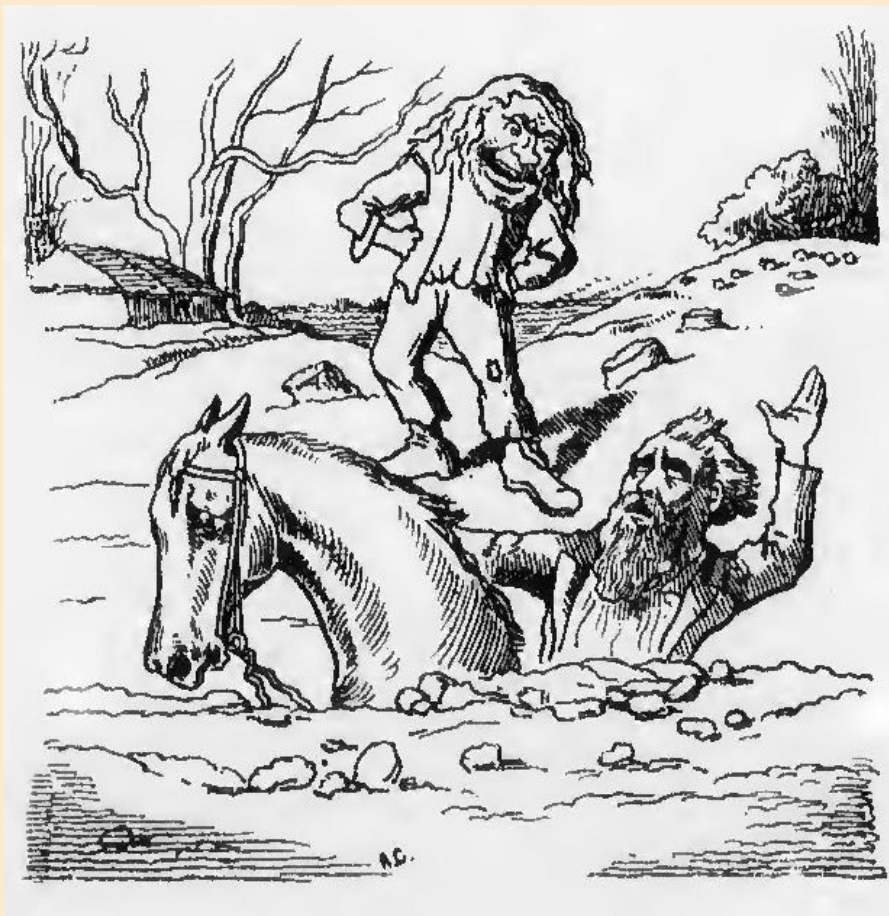
And a smile of evil import played
On the face of ancient Bill

As some of the damper down he laid,
And bid him take his fill.

With mute thanksgiving in his breast
The food the stranger tore;
Piece after piece he closely pressed
Down on the piece before.

And then—his heart fresh buoyed with hope—
Essayed to mount his steed,
But the horse shut flat as an opera-hat
With the weight of his master's feed;

And horse and man sunk through the sod
Some sixty feet or less!
No crust, I swear, of the Earth could bear
The weight of the gruesome mess!



Original

Then the shepherd grinned with a grizzly grin
As he notched his stick again;
The night passed by and the sun rose high
And glared on the salt-bush plain.

Two "gins" set forth in a bark canoe
To traverse the gloomy lake,
And he bid them take enough for two,
For lunch, of the deadly cake.



GIN AND WATER.

Original

Enough for two! 'twas enough I ween
 To settle the hash of four,
For the barque o'er-flowed with the crushing load—
 They sank to rise no more.

And ever his fiendish lust for blood—
 His thirst for vengeance grows;
In sport he threw a crumb or two
 To the hawks and carrion crows;

And as they helpless, fluttering lay,
 His eldrich laughter rings;
One crumb to bear through the lambent air
 Was past the power of wings.

Beside his door he sat 'till noon
 When a bullock-team came by;
The echoes 'round with the whips resound,
 And the drivers' cheery cry.

Upon the dray a piece he threw
 No bigger than your hand,
Of the cursed thing, 'twas enough to bring
 The bullocks to a stand.

And, though they bend their sinewy necks
 'Till red with their crimson gore,
And fiercely strain yoke, pole, and chain
 With savage, muttering roar,

The wheels sank down to the axle-tree—

Through the hard baked clay they tore,
And a single jot from out that spot
They shifted never more.

Then the shepherd called to the drivers, "Ho!
My frugal meal partake."
And, though they ate but a crumb or two
Of the fell, unholy cake,

Down, down they sank on the scorching track,
Immovable and prone,
And *steel blue ants crawled up their pants*
And ate them to the bone!

For days by his lonely hut sat Bill,
The hut to the lakelet nigh,
And he wrought his dark revengeful will
On each traveller that came by.

And he eats nor drinks meat, bread, nor gruel,
Nor washes, nor combs, nor shaves,
But he yelled, and he danced a wild pas seul
O'er each of his victims' graves.



Original

Three weeks passed by, but his end was nigh—
His day was near its close,
For rumour whispered his horrid deeds,
And in arms the settlers rose.

They came, hinds, shepherds, and shearers too,
And squatters of high degree;
His hands they tied, and his case they tried
'Neath the shade of a blue gum tree.

They sentence passed, and they gripped him fast,
Though to tear their flesh he tried;
His teeth he ground, but his limbs they bound
With thongs of a wild bull's hide.

They laid him down on a "bull-dog's" nest,
For the bull-dog ants to sting;
On his withered chest they pile the rest
Of the damnèd cursèd thing.

They gather round and they stir the ground
'Till the insects swarm again,
And the echoes wake by the gloomy lake
With his cry of rage and pain.

O'er his writhing form the insects swarm—
O'er arm, o'er foot, and leg;
The damper pressed on his heaving chest,
And he couldn't move a peg.

'Till eve he lay in the scorching heat,
And the rays of the blinding sun,
Then the black-ants came and they soon complete
What the bull-dogs have begun.



[Original](#)

'Tis o'er at last, and his spirit passed
With a yell of fiendish hate,

And down by the shore of that black lagoon,
Where his victims met their fate—

Where the "bunyip" glides, and the inky tides
Lip, lap on the gloomy shore,
And the loathsome snake of the swamp abides,
He wanders ever more.

And when the shadows of darkness fall
(As hinds and stock-men tell)
The plains around with his howls resound,
And his fierce, blood-curdling yell.

The kangaroos come forth at night
To feed o'er his lonely grave,
And above his bones with disma' tones
The dingos shriek and rave.

And when drovers camp with a wild-mob there
They shiver with affright,
And quake with dread if they hear his tread
In the gloom of the ebon night!

SOCIAL EVILS.

I feel that any reader who has been long-suffering enough to accompany me thus far must be craving earnestly for a change of some sort, even though it but take the form of an oasis of indifferent prose in a monotonous Sahara of verse; I want it myself, and I know that the reader must yearn for it, even as the bushman who has sojourned long among the flesh-pots of remote sheep and cattle stations yearneth after the pumpkins and cabbages of the Mongolian market gardener. I am, therefore, going to write about social evils; not because I think I can say anything particularly original or striking about them, but because I must have a subject, and I know the craving of the Colonial mind after practical ones. I commence diffidently, however; not on account of the barrenness of the theme—oh! dear no—it is its very fruitfulness which baffles me; its magnitude that appals me; its comprehensiveness which gets over me; and my inability to deal with it in such limited space which "knocks me into a cocked-hat".

Even as I write, things which may be legitimately called social evils rise up before me in spectral array, like Banquo's issue, in sufficient numbers to stretch not only to the "crack of doom,"—wherever that mysterious fissure may be—but a considerable distance beyond it.

Unfortunately, too, each one, like the progeny of that philoprogenitive Scotchman, "bears a glass which shows me many more," until I am as much flabbergasted as Macbeth himself, and am compelled to take a glass of something myself to soothe my disordered nerves.

If every one were permitted to give his notion of what constitutes a social evil my difficulties would be still more augmented, and the schedule swelled considerably. I know men who would put their wives down in the list as a matter of course; and others, fathers of families, who would include children. Few married men would omit mothers-in-law; most domestics would include work and masters and mistresses; and hardly anybody would exclude tax-gatherers. Fortunately, however, these well-meaning, but mistaken reformers, will have to take back seats on the present occasion, and leave me to touch on a few, at least, of what are legitimate and undeniable social evils.

Look at them, as they drag their mis-shapen forms past us in hideous review! Adulteration of food, political dishonesty, "larrikinism," barbarism on the part of the police, lemonade and gingerbeerism in the stalls of theatres, peppermintlozengism in the dress circle, flunkeyism, itinerant preacherism in the parks—what a subject this last is, by the way, and how beautifully mixed up one's faith becomes after listening to half a dozen park preachers, of different denominations, in succession! After hearing the different views propounded by these self-constituted apostles, an intelligent islander from the Pacific would receive the impression that the white man worshipped about seventy or eighty different and distinct gods (a theological complication with which his simple mind would be unable to grapple), and he would probably retire to enjoy the society of his graven image with an increased respect for that bit of carving, and any half-formed inclinations to dissent from the religion of his forefathers quenched for ever.

I have neither space, ability, nor desire to tackle such stupendous subjects as political dishonesty or adulteration. They are so firmly grafted on our social system that nothing short of a literary torpedo could affect them in the slightest degree, but I *do* feel equal to crushing the boy who sells oranges and lemonade in the pit—who when, in imagination, I am on the "blasted heath" enjoying the society of the weird sisters, or at

a Slave Auction in the Southern States, sympathising with the sufferings of the Octoroon, ruthlessly drags me back to nineteenth century common places with his thrice damnable war-cry of "applesorangeslemonadeanabill!" a string of syllables which are in themselves death to romance, and annihilation to sentiment, irrespective of the tone and key in which they are uttered. If for one happy moment I have forgotten that Hamlet is in very truth "a king of shreds and patches," or that Ophelia is a complicated combination of rouge, paste, springs, padding, and pectoral improvers, I maintain that it is playing it particularly rough on me if I am to be recalled to a remembrance of all this by the bloodcurdling shibboleth of these soulless fruit merchants. Can lemonade compensate me for the destruction of the airy castles I have been building? Can ginger-beer steep my senses again in the elysium of romance and sentiment from which they have been thus ruthlessly awakened? Or can an ocean of orange-juice wash away or obliterate the disagreeable consciousness that I am a clerk in a Government office, or a reporter on the staff of a weekly paper, and am neither Claud Melnotte nor "a person of consequence in the 13th century?"—unhesitatingly no! And if, in addition, there be wafted towards me a whiff or two of a highly-flavoured peppermint lozenge from some antique female—on whose head be shame! and on whose false front rest eternal obliquy—my cup of sorrow is full, my enjoyment of the drama is destroyed, the Recording angel has a lively time of it for an hour or so registering execrations, and I am plunged in an abyss of melancholy from which the arm of a Hennessy (the one that holds the battle axe) or a Kinahan can alone rescue me. And here, reader, I must conclude, for your patience is in all probability exhausted, and my washerwoman has called: she is a social evil of the most malignant type.

JL.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY FOR LITTLE FOLKS.

Little grains of rhubarb,
Spatula'd with skill,
Make the mighty bolus
And the little pill.

Little pence and half-pence,
Hoarded up by stealth,
Make the mighty total
Of the miser's wealth

Little trips to Randwick,
Taking six to three,
Make the out-at-elbows
Seedy swells we see.

Little sprees on oysters,
Bottled stout and ale,
Lead but to the cloisters
Of the gloomy gaol.

Little tracts and tractlets,
Scattered here and there,
Lead the sinner's footsteps
To the house of prayer.

Little bits of paper,
Headed I.O.U.,
Ever draw the Christian
Closer to the Jew.

Little chords and octaves,
Little flats and sharps,
Make the tunes the angels
Play on golden harps.

Little bouts with broom-sticks,
Carving forks and knives,
Make the stirring drama
Of our married lives.

Little flakes of soap-suds,
Glenfield starch, and blue,
Make the saint's white shirt-fronts
And the sinner's too.

Little tiny insects,
Smaller than a flea,
Make the coral inlands
In the southern sea.

Little social falsehoods,
Such as "Not at home,"
Lead to realms of darkness
Where the wicked roam.

Likewise little cuss words
Such as "blast," and "blow,"
Quite as much as wuss words
Fill the place below.



AN AMBITIOUS DREAM.

|I walked about in Wynyard Square

At four one afternoon;
I saw a stately peeler there,
He softly hummed a tune.

The sun-rays lit his buttons bright;
He stalked with stately stride;
It was a fair and goodly sight—
The peeler in his pride

And padded was his manly breast,
Such kingly mien had he,
And such a chest, I thought how blest
That peeler's lot must be.

I noted well his martial air,
And settled that of course
He was the idol of the fair,
The angel of the Force.

No cook or house-maid could resist,
I felt, by any chance,
That dark moustache with cork-screw twist,
That marrow-searching glance.

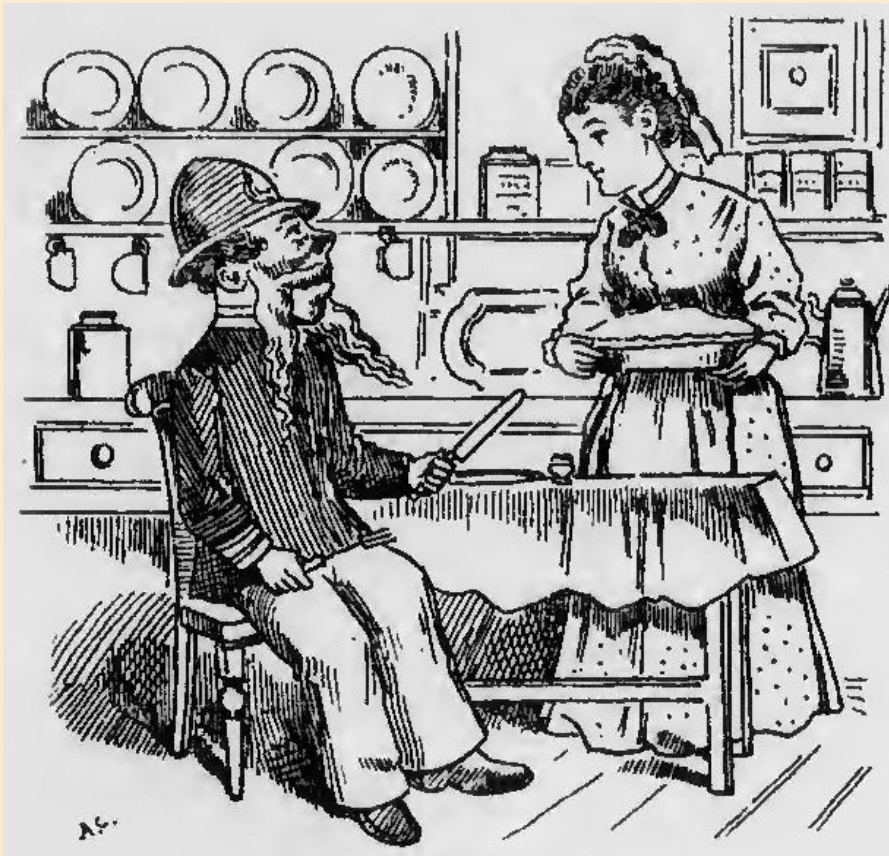
And o'er each little news-boy's head
He towered like a mast;
His voice, to match that stately tread,
Should shame a trumpet-blast!

I pondered on the matter much
And thought I'd like to be
Escorted to the "dock" by such
A demi-god as he.

I gazed upon his form entranced—
He never noticed me,
For visions through his fancy danced
Of mutton cold for tea.

He knew he hadn't long to stand
'Till—Mary's labours o'er—
She'd lead him gently by the hand
Inside the kitchen door.

Ensnconced in some snug vantage-coign
At ease he'd stretch each limb,
And feast on cutlet and sirloin,
Purloined for love of him.



Original

I leant against a scaffold-beam—
 I must have had a nap
I think, because I had a dream—
 I dreamt I was a 'trap'!

I thought I had allegiance sworn
 And that there was for *me*
The regulation tile that's worn
 By every trap you see;

The coat and thingumbobs as well,
 What joy could equal this?
No Gillott's patent pens could tell
 My wild ecstatic bliss!

I thought they portioned out my beat—
 A foot I'm sure I grew,
And as I walked up Hunter Street
 I felt a match for two.

I felt my bosom throb behind
 My coat of azure blue,
And trembled for the peace of mind
 Of every girl I knew.

I saw myself in future fights
 The populace enthral,
While brightly blaze the city lights
 I cry "come one, come all!"

To grab their leader see me try
 (Though rent my lovely coat)
The light of battle in my eye,

My hand upon his throat!

The truncheon used with practised skill
Requites him for his sin,
In such a hand as mine it will
Abraise his rebel skin.

I thought of each bush-ranging chap,
And for a moment sighed
That I was not a mounted trap
Through tea-tree scrub to ride.

But soon the notion I dismiss,
For I can plainly see
That such a line of life as this
Much harder lines would be.

Beneath a bushel in the bush
My shining light to hide,
I felt would be a gross misuse
Of Sydney's hope and pride.

My look alone would petrify
A breaker of the peace,
And where I turned my searching eye
Dishonesty would cease.

Police reports my name should state,
Each deed of mine should be
A deed for traps to emulate,
And try to be like me.

My blushing honours should be worn
With unobtrusive grace,
And energy and zeal adorn
My calm heroic face.

My beat was not in nasty slums
Where vulgar rowdies meet;
But see! the conquering hero comes—
The pride of George's Street!

I thought he'd be a hardy boy
Who'd shout in accents coarse
"Who stole the mutton-pie, ahoy!"
Now I was in the force.

Or should a cabby ere presume
To overcharge a fare,
My eagle glance it would consume
That cabby then and there.

Now mercy light on yonder boy
Who blows the sportive pea!
His visage lit with fiendish joy—
For he'll get none from me.

Some power save him from my care,
Preserve him from my clutch,
Or mutilated past repair
He 'll have to use a crutch.

His form, though supple as an eel,
His mother wouldn't know
Again if I'd a chance to deal
One stiffening truncheon blow!

No more his little idle hands
Will scatter orange peel
When fast enclosed in iron bands,
Or brightly polished steel.

I'd marked a nice secluded seat,
'Twas somewhere in the park,
Where I could slumber long and sweet
As soon as it got dark.

I spotted out each servant gal
I'd let make love to me,
The houses where I'd take a "spell,"
And call and have my tea.

I took the bearings of the doors,
And windows front and back
Where I, unseen, by vulgar boors,
Could go and have a "snack."

Fond, foolish women, at my feet
In yearning worship fell,
And one, she was uncommon sweet,
Her name I'll never tell.

I thought I'd never lived 'till now,
Or that I'd lived in vain;
It was a hardish rub, I vow,
That I should wake again.

Fulfilment of a nobler plan
Ambition couldn't crave—
I was a trap!—each common man
Seemed born to be my slave!

But stay—whose hand is on me now?
Who dares to clutch my cape?
What light is this, and who art thou,
Thou shadowy, ghastly shape?

A fearful light is shed around,
I quake and dare not stir—
A voice! and husky is its sound—
It says,—"Ullo! you, Sir!"

Before me was the man I'd praised,
And my illusion fled
When his infernal truncheon raised
A blister on my head.

Sometimes at midnight's solemn hour
I dream this dream again,
And, thinking its *her* form once more,

The pillow tightly strain;

Or fiercely to the door I spring,
And firmly grip the hasp,
And smile to think I've got again
The truncheon in my grasp.

The beads of sweat they gather fast,
And from my nose they fall,
I wake, and find, alas! alas!
I'm not a trap at all!



Original

** Originally contributed to Sydney Punch.*

SUPERNATURAL REVELATIONS OF A FANCY- GOODS MAN,

OR THE DIABOLICAL DEMON OF THE DEADLY DRAIN.

There lived in Parramatta Street
A cove—his name was Joe—
Who nightly sniffed its odours sweet
(Not very long ago.)

Its every scent right well he knew,
They often made him frown,

And he was fancy-goods-man to
A big firm here in town.



Original

As Joe lay down one night—he slept
In summer far from from well—
A nameless horror o'er him crept,
Of what he couldn't tell;
His hair was rising up he knew,
He felt his blood grow cold;
He felt a little frightened, too,
For Joseph wasn't bold.



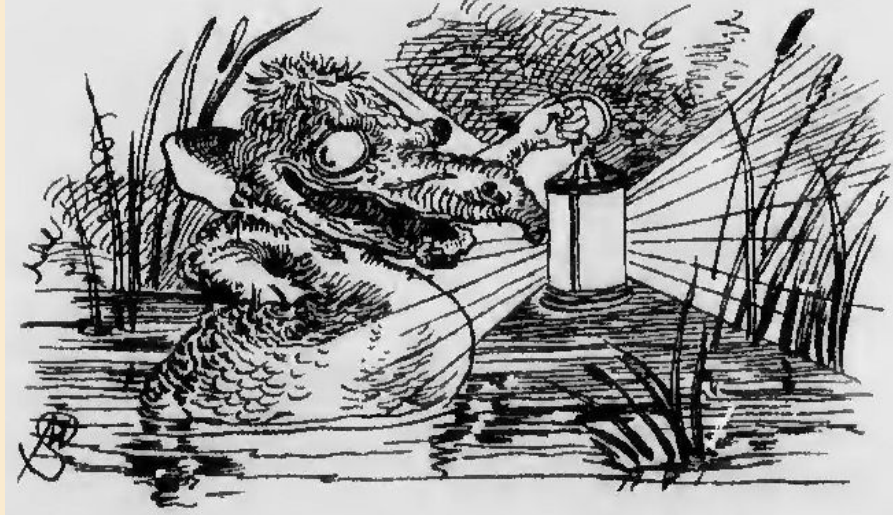
Original

And while he vainly seeking rest,
Lay tossing to and fro,
By name he heard himself addressed—
The unknown voice said, "Joe!"

"Arise, Oh Joseph! from thy bed—
Arise, and follow me!"

Hush! not a word," the spirit said,
"For I'm a ghost, d'ye see?"

"Bring kerosene, and bring thy lamp,
And arm thee to the teeth,
For thou in yonder gloomy swamp
Shalt win a laurel wreath."



Original

"Now follow me," the spirit said,
"For well I know the track,
And thou shall slay the demon dread
Of Wattle Swamp the Black."

Then toward the demon's dread abode
The ghastly goblin flits—
The spirit was to show the road,
And Joe to give him "fits."

And silently they followed all
The windings of the creek;
At times they heard a night-bird call—
At times a tom-cat shriek.



Original

But of the voices of the night
They took no heed as yet;
The ghost said, "Joseph, are you right?"
And Joseph said, "You bet!"

And thus began the demon-hunt:
The road was dark and drear;
The ghost was mostly on in front,
And Joseph in the rear.

At times they crawled along a trench
That held Joe's feet like glue;
And there was many a stifling stench,
And many a cast off shoe.



Original

And oft they waded deep in slime
Where rotting herbage grew;
The ghost said, "Joseph, take your time,"
And Joseph murmured, "ph—ew!"

At length a dark and gloomy pond
Appeared to block the track;
The spirit was for goin' on,
And Joe for goin' back.

Before the breeze his shirt-tails blow,
And though he's sore distressed,
The spirit said he had to go,
And Joseph gave him best.

"Young man!" the spirit said, "'tis vain
To bandy words with me;
Just stretch those *bandy* legs again,
For I'm a ghost, d'ye see?"

And Joseph, making answer soft,
They thus resumed the track—
The spirit bore the lamp aloft,
And Joseph on his back.



Original

"Yon demon dread," the spirit said,
"Has reaped his human crops,
And feasted, batted on the dead
Too long—we'll give him slops!"

he ghost explained the shrieks which rose
From out the inky tides
Were made by disembodied coves
With pains in their insides.

E'en while he spoke a horrid smoke
Belched forth upon the air,
And forth fresh yells and shriekings broke,
And up went Joseph's hair.

The spirit slid him from his back,
But Joseph trembled so,

And wished devoutly he was back
With Messrs. Blank & Co.

"Stand firm!" the spirit said, "drink this
'Tis strength and courage too;
We'll awe this great metropolis
With deeds of 'derring-do."



Original

Then straightway rose before their sight
The demon's war-like crest;
He's green and blue, and black and white,
With plague-spots on his breast.

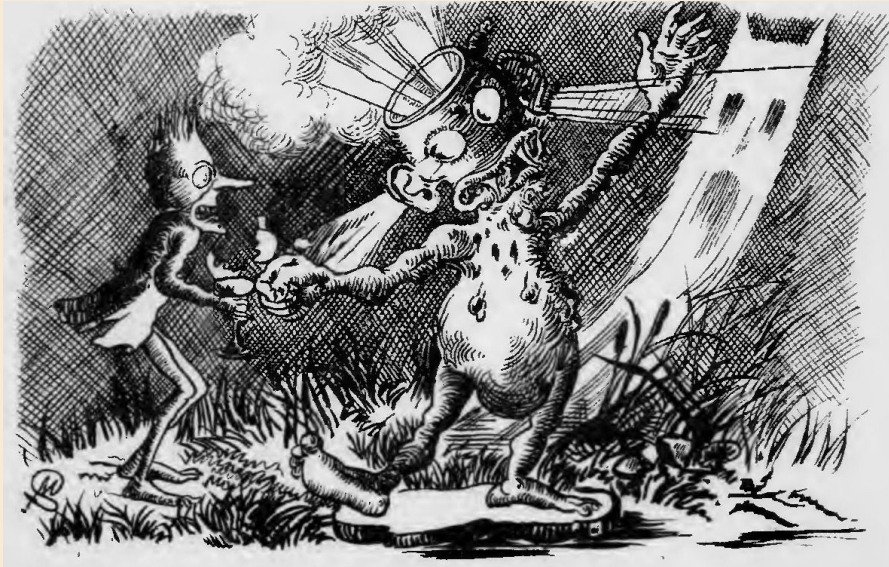
I could not paint the demon's form—
Distraught, convulsed with ire—
His voice was like the thunder-storm,
His eyes like lakes of fire.

He breathed forth typhoid, boils and croup
With every breath he drew;
His touch meant measles, whooping-cough
And scarlatina too.

He comes with measured steps and slow—
Earth groaned beneath his tramp—
And with one grinding, crashing blow,
He shivered Joseph's—lamp!

He glared around him, and his eyes
Shone with a baleful light:
"Who, who are ye," the demon cries,

That wander through the night?



Original

"Who, who are ye, that dare to come
My fair domain to haunt?
Go, seek some more congenial slum,
Avaunt! d'ye hear? Avaunt!"

Now Joseph felt his courage rise
From out his blucher boots,
And while the cautious curlew cries,
And while the swamp-owl hoots—

Despite a lingering touch of cramp—
His muscles he did brace,
And hurled the fragments of the lamp
Slap in the demon's face!

"Who's this?" the demon said, said he,
"A stalwart knight, I ween!
My eyes are blind, I cannot see,
They're full of keroseen"

Then Joseph's heart within him leapt—
The demon being blind—
Right gingerly he crawled and crept,
And gave him one behind.

The spirit used a two-edged sword
(He used it like an axe)
And while that outraged giant roared,
His right leg he attacks.
Thus, thu close, that warlike pair,
Upon the slimy beach,
And Joseph poked him here and there,
Wherever he could reach.

And while the giant squirmeth from
The toasting-fork of Joe,
The ghost (clean peeled) came grimly on
To strike the final blow.



Original

Then, Joe, when he his tactics knew,
 Attacked his other calf,
And swamp-owls' echoed as they flew
 The spirit's ghastly laugh.

And soon, beneath those stalwart knocks
 Which echo and resound,
The demon's severed person rocks
 And topples to the ground

"Go in and win," the spirit said—
 "Go in and win, old son!"
The demon he was nearly dead.
 So Joe went in and won.

That ghost full many a 'spotted-gum'
 Had felled in life, you see,
And so they felled that spotted one,
 For foul and fell was he.

"Now fetch me wedges," quoth the ghost,
 "For here, I guess, we'll camp;
We'll blast his trunk, split rails and posts,
 And fence Blackwattle Swamp!"

But stay! what means that sounding thwack?
 That agonizing roar?
And how comes Joseph on his back—
 Upon his bedroom floor?

Where's now the elevated head,
 The majesty and pomp
Of him who slew the demon dread
 That lived in Wattle Swamp?

Mephitic odours filled the room,
 And, acting on his brain,

These made him dream of blackest gloom,
And deadly demons slain.

'Till, rolling from his couch, he broke
The silence with a scream,
He bumped upon the floor—then woke, *
And found it all a dream!

Next morning, so tradition tells,
His way to church Joe took,
To curse the Corporation swells
With candle, bell, and book.

** Justice compels me to state that the condition of the
swamp referred to has been materially improved of late, and
it is no longer the all-powerful and putrifying nuisance it
was.*

He prayed that they might cursèd be
Within the Council hall,
At evening parties, breakfast, tea,—
At dinner most of all.

That they might feast in woe and grief,
On chicken with the croup;
That pleuro might infect their beef,
And flies invade their soup;



Original

That turtles, though so often "turned,"
Might some day turn on them,
And that at last they might be burned,
And fricasseed in-hem!

And ne'er this curse shall lifted be
From Aldermanic back,
Until from odours foul set free
Is Wattle Swamp the Black.

CHRISTMAS.

By a New Chum.

What means that merry clanging chime
Which fills the air with melody?
They tell me that 'tis Christmas time,
But that I think can scarcely be.

This explanation is, I say,
A little bit too thin for me,
While fiercely strikes the solar ray
Through hat of straw and puggaree.

The centigrade, I grieve to see,
Stands up at figures past belief,
And naught but frequent S and B
Gives my perspiring soul relief.

No veil of snow enwraps the lea,
And as for skating in the Park,
Or sledging, one as well might be
On Ararat in Noahs ark.

Where is the icy blast, and where
The white hoar frost, and driving sleet?
At night I suffocate and swear
With nothing on me but a sheet.

Mosquitoes hum the whole night through,
And flies salute me when I wake
In numbers anything but few,
And yesterday I saw a snake.

No leaf decays; no flower dies;
All nature seems as fair and bright
As, when beneath Judean skies,
The shepherds watched their flocks by night.

[In fair Judea's sunny clime,
Among its mountain gorges lone,
Those shepherds had a rosy time,
For wire-fencing wasn't known.

They were not prone to "knocking-down"
Of cheques or going on the spree,
For "pubs" and "shanties" were not found
Beside the Lake of Galilee.

They groaned not 'neath the squatters yoke;
A life of pure arcadian ease
Was theirs-ah! happy, happy blokes!
For this digression, pardon, please.]

Those Christmas chimes, indeed! their notes
Awake no passing thought in me,
Of flannel vests, and Ulster coats,
So Christmas chimes they cannot be.

A drowsy hum is in the air—
There's perspiration on my skin;
The locusts eat the grass-plots bare,
And deafen with their noisy din.

The folks were drinking summer drinks
When first I landed here last "fall
Tis summer still, alas! methinks
They have no Christmas here at all.

But stay! that paper pile sublime—
Of I O.U. and unpaid bill—
Breathes somewhat of the festive time
Of "peace on earth—to man good-will."

There's Starkey's bill for lemonade,
And Peape's and Shaw's for summer suits,
A host of others, all unpaid,
For ice, and cubas, and cheroots.

Enough! 'tis proof enough for me—
Proof stronger far than Christmas chime;
Your pardon, friend, for doubting thee,
Beyond a doubt 'tis Christmas time.

"THE CATARACT." *

I stood by the trunk of a giant box
And watched the Cataract down the rocks
With ceaseless thunder go.
The boiling waters seethed and hissed,
And glittering clouds of gleaming mist
Ascended from below.

The fading glow of the sunlight slants
O'er the frowning cliff which the creeping plants,
And moss, and lichens drape.
The mist spread forth on the sultry air—
'Twas wreathed in figures, some foul, some fair;
I traced the form of a spectre there
Of weird and ghastly shape.

There was silence, save for the summer breeze
Which swayed the tops of the mess-mate trees,
And the torrent's noisy flow.
Awhile the figure seemed to stand,
Then waved a shadowy, spectral hand,
And pointed down below.

** Written for the Town and Country Journal, March 25th,
1876, with reference to the well-known Cataract near Berrima.*

With wild vague thoughts my fancy strove
Of hidden riches, and treasure trove,
 And gems and jewels bright;
And what, thought I, if the omen's true?
And thick and fast such fancies grew
Till rock, and torrent, and spectre too
 All faded from my sight

I saw the crust of the earth removed—
Each wild conjecture fairly proved—
 I saw, 'twas even so,
Peerless gems of price untold,
Piles on piles of glittering gold,
And the moon-beams glinted clear and cold
 On the wealth that lay below.

Ere long men came to that valley "fair;
They sought for coal-black diamonds there,
 And they dragged them from below:
And the furnace fires, the hiss of steam,
And the whirr of fly-wheel, belt, and beam
Fulfilled that shadowy, golden dream
 I dreamt so long ago.

THE STOCKMAN'S GRAVE.

Tom the stockman's gone—he'll never
 Use again his supple thong,
Or, dashing madly through the mulga,
 Urge the scattered herd along.

O'er for Tom is life's hard battle!
 Well he rode, and nothing feared;
Never more among the cattle
 Shall his cheery voice be heard.

Liked he was with' all his failings;
 Let no idle hand efface.
That rude ring of rough split palings,
 Marking out his resting place.

Sadly have his comrades left him
 Where the cane-grass, gently stirred
By the north wind, bends and quivers—
 Where the bell-bird's note is heard;

Where the tangled "boree" blossoms,
 Where the "gidya" thickets wave,
And the tall yapunyah's * shadow
 Rests upon the stockman's grave.

** A species of Eucalyptus which flourishes on the Paroo and in the west of Queensland.*

EPITAPH ON A CONVIVIAL SHEARER.

Here Thompson lies—good worthy man—
Come, gentle reader, nearer;
He's now as quiet as a lamb
Though once he was a shearer.

Though many sheep in life he shore,
He's now beyond retrieving!
He's *sheered* off to that other *shore*
Which surely there's no leaving.

Though he o'er ewes and wethers too
Was often bent, I'm thinking
Rough *weather* o'er him bends the *yew*—
He killed himself with drinking.

No more in shed, or yard, or hut
Will Thompson be appearing!
On wings of *down* his soul flew *up*—
He's gone where there's no shearing.

He often handled "Ward and Payne's,"*
For he was often shearing!
Alas! the pains of death reward
His everlasting beering.

And from his fingers dropped the shears,
For nature's debt was pressing;
Death nailed his body for arrears—
His spirit effervescing.

Though at his jokes we often roared,
He's now a soundish sleeper!
His crop of chaff at length is floored
By Death, that mighty reaper.

* Note.—Ward and Payne's sheep shears are or were most in use in the Australian Colonies when the above was written.

A CANDIDATE FOR AN EARLY GRAVE.

What makes me wear my boots so tight,
And much pomatum buy,
Toss restless on my bed at night,
And like an earthquake sigh?

I 've seen a maid, I'd fain persuade
That girl to fancy me;
Thrice happy fate with such a mate
For life as Polly C———!

But then I can't without her aunt
That damsel ever see;

Why must there always be a "but"
Between my hopes and me?

And Polly C—— has got to be
Between me and my peace,
For though I can't endure the aunt,
I idolize the neice.

The aunt is forty-three at least,
The neice but seventeen;
For her I pine, for her so greased
My hair of late has been.

For her my feet are close compressed
In boots a deal too tight;
For her I sacrifice my rest,
And get no sleep at night;

For her I run that tailor's bill
That makes my father swear,
And to the grave I fear it will
Bring down his grizzled hair.

We met, but 'twas not in a crowd,
It was not at a ball,
Nor where cascades with thunder loud
From precipices fall;

Nor where the mountain torrents rush,
Or ocean billows heave;
Nor at the railway terminus
'Mid cries of "by'r leave;"

It was not in the forest wild,
Nor on the silent sea—
Romantic reader don't be riled—
'Twas at a "spelling-bee."



Original

'Twas there I marked the jetty coil
That crowned her classic head—
The perfumes of macassar oil
Were all around her shed.

And o'er the meaner spirits there
Her mighty soul arose;
Her intellect and genius were
Aspiring—like her nose.

And Polly was the fairest there—
'The goddess of the class—
Among the *polysyllables*
Unscathed I saw her pass.

Examiners with piercing eye,
And terror-striking frown
In vain to trip her up might try—
In vain to take her down.

She triumphs, and the loud applause
From roof to basement rings—
Each other girl with envy gnaws
Her hat and bonnet strings.

Sometimes (regardless of expense)
I dressed and went to church;
One glimpse of her would recompense
My eager longing search.

And, while the swelling organ rent
The air with solemn tunes,
On spelling-bees my thoughts were bent
And happy honeymoons.

And where I brooding sat alone
The wildest dreams I dreamt,
And swore to win her for my own
Or "bust" in the attempt.

We met at parties, and our toes
Whirl in the dreamy waltz,
And if at times a thought arose—
Could hair like that be false?

I sniffed the reassuring coil
That shamed the damask rose,
And could not breathe a thought disloyal
While that was near my nose.



Original

At length her aunt—the summer gone—
The influenza got;
To see my Polly to her home
It oft became my lot.

And if I took the longest way
The fraud was never known,
For organ of "locality"
My darling she had none.

One night, about the supper hour,
Thanks to some kindly fate,
We reached the entrance to her bower—
I mean the garden gate.

It was a gloomy night and wet
With rain and driving sleet,
And more than common risk beset
Pedestrians in the street.

From harm from wheel of cab or cart
I'd kept my darling free,
And in the fulness of her heart
She asked me in to tea.

Her aunt, that stately dame and grand,
Looked knives and forks at me;
She'd "Butter's Spelling" in her hand,
And "Webster" on her knee.

Her bead-like eyes gleamed bright behind
The spectacles she wore;
Of intellect and strength of mind
She had enough for four.

And tall her figure was, and spare,
And bony were her joints;
Orthography and grammar were
The strongest of her points.

A morbid taste this virgin chaste
For dictionaries had;
Though Polly C. might perfect be,
Her aunt was spelling mad.

I felt that if an angel bright
To earth from Oether fell,
She'd either give that Son of Light
Some heavy word to spell,

Or else she'd get him on to parse,
'Till sick of earthly things,
He'd work his passage to the stars
Upon his downy wings.



Original

At Dr. Blank's academy,
I never took the lead;
My grammar and orthography
Were very weak indeed,

And oft those academic walls
Have echoed to my howls,
Responsive to the Doctor's calls
For consonants and vow'ls.

His rules respecting "Q's" and "P's"
Were graven on our backs,
And though we had no spelling-bees,
I got my share of *whacks*.

For what the Doctor failed to see
Impressed upon the mind,
Was certain very soon to be
Impressed in full *behind*.

But still, despite the scathing look,
And cane of Dr. Blank.
My spelling powers never took
An elevated rank.

And if my hopes of Polly hung
Upon so frail a thread,
My life was blighted 'ere begun—
My hopes, scarce born, were dead.

All silent through that evening meal
I sat with bended head,
And now and then a glance I steal
At Polly while she fed;

But though her eyes I often seek,
I only look at most;
My heart's too full of love to speak,
My mouth too full of toast.

Oh! sweet love-feast!—too sweet to last—
Oh! bitter after-cud!
Oh! spinster grim why didst thou blast
Love's blossom in the bud?

For, ere one happy hour could pass,
That virgin grim and fell
Invited me to join the class
Where Polly went to spell;

And though I trembled in my shoes,
In hopeless agony,
Could I the aunt of her refuse
Whose *spell* was over me?

At length arrived the dreaded hour,
And primed with *eau de vie*,
I sought that orthographic bower
Where met the spelling-bee.

No hope of prizes lured me toward
Those hundred gleaming eyes,
For me there was but one reward,
And Polly was the prize.

For her my dull ambition leapt,
In literary lists
To cope with lunatics who slept
With "Webster" in their fists.

Vague dread forebodings cloud my brow,
And make my cheek grow pale,
Oh! Dr. Johnson help me now—
My hopes are in the scale!

My frame with apprehension shook;
To nerve me for the task,
With tender, longing, yearning look
I eyed my pocket-flask,

And tempted by the spirit bright
That dwelt within its lips,
I put the contents out of sight
In two convulsive sips.

A stony-eyed examiner
Came in and took the chair;
I knew a place that's spelt with "H,"
And wished that he was there.

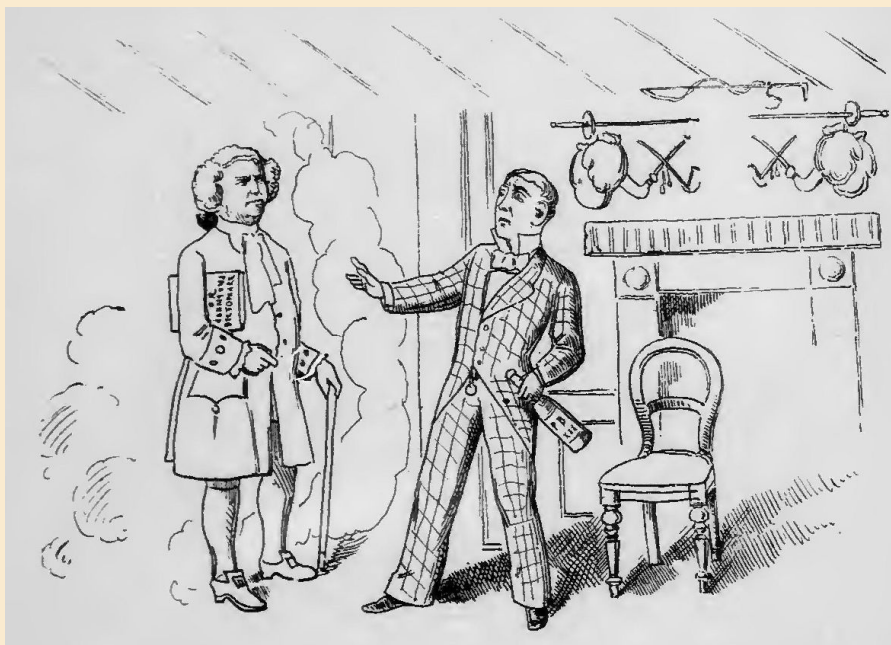
I softly cursed his form erect,
His "specs" with golden rim,
And prayed that doctors might dissect
His body limb from limb.

But soon the spirit's subtle fume

Obfuscates my view;
The common objects of the room
Seem multiplied by two.

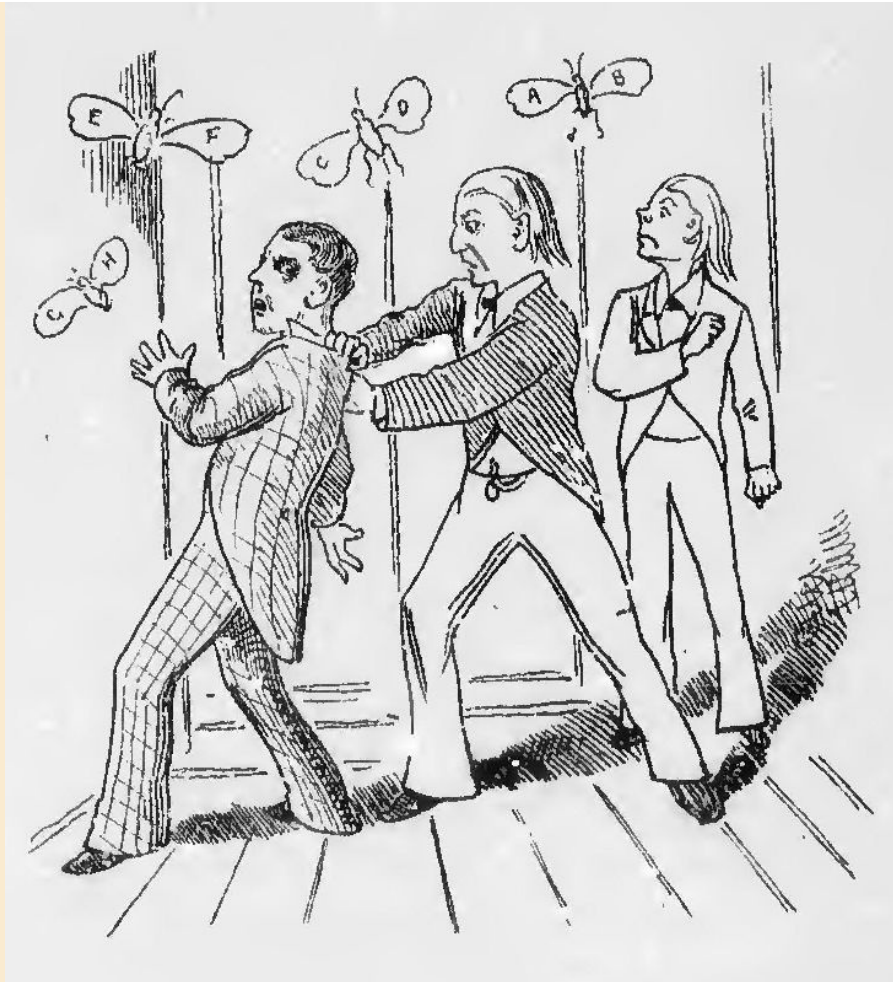
My breast, the late abode of funk,
With courage was embued;
I was a little less than drunk,
And something more than screwed.

And while my heart beat loud and fast
With wild convulsive pants,
I saw *two* Pollys, and alas!
A *pair* of Polly's Aunts!
I fail to solve the mystery
Which Polly I prefer,
But thought I'd like *Polygamy*
With duplicates of her.
Involved in intellectual gloom,
I found the A. B. C.
Had vanished, vanquished by the fumes
Of Hennessey's P. B.
And when that stony-looking one
Applied at length to me,
I spelt "consumption" with a "K,"
And "kangaroo" with "C"!
I will not paint these harrowing scenes,
Nor keep thee, reader, long,
Nor tell thee how I shocked the "Bee"
By breaking forth in song.



Original

Two orthographic youths arose,
And dragged me from the room,
Despite my wild and aimless blows,
Into the outer gloom.



Original

With force, and tender soothing tones
They led me from the hall,
And laid me on the cold, cold stones
Beneath the bare brick wall.

They spread for me no blanket warm.
No cloak or 'possum-rug,
And peelers bore my helpless form
In triumph to the "Jug."

Next day I found the "summons-sheet"
A *blanket* cold indeed;
I felt that liberty was sweet,
I wanted to be freed:

But peelers' hearts are solid rock,
They wouldn't hear me speak,
They dragged me to the felon's dock
Before a hook-nosed "beak."

He offered me—that hook-nosed "beak"—
The option of a fine,
In place of many a weary week
Of punishment condign.

I mutely pointed to my Sire,
The fount of my supplies,
And then bereft of joy I left
The court with tearful eyes.

I could not read again and live

The note I got 'ere long,
From Polly's single relative
Anent my goings on.

She told me it would be as well
Our intercourse should cease—
That one who drank, and couldn't spell
Should never have her niece.

She recommended frugal fare,
And lexicons, and pumps,
But when I think of Polly's hair
My own comes out in lumps!

Oh! tell me not a "spelling-bee's"
A sweet and pleasant thing;
I've drunk of sorrow's bitter lees—
I've felt that insect's sting.

My hopes are dead, despair hath spread
O'er me its blackest pall;
The honey and the wine of life.
Are turned to bitter gall.

Although I'm barely twenty-one
My crop of care is ripe!
No joy have I in moon or sun,
Or in my meerchaum pipe.

Oh! where are now the happy days,
When first I learnt to smoke?
When life seemed one long holiday—
Existence but a joke?

When I'd no other thought or care
Except my cane to gnaw,
And train the soft incipient hair
That grew upon my jaw?

They've passed away those happy day
And now I only crave
A brief, brief life—an early death,
A requiem, and a grave.

And billiards now I never play;
Not long my father will
Be troubled by me to defray
That tailor's lengthened bill.

I never wink at bar-maids now,
But soberly I tread
As walketh one whose home's among
The cold and silent dead.

One debt lies heavy on my breast
I'd like to pay but can't;
I'd like, before I go to rest,
To settle Polly's aunt.

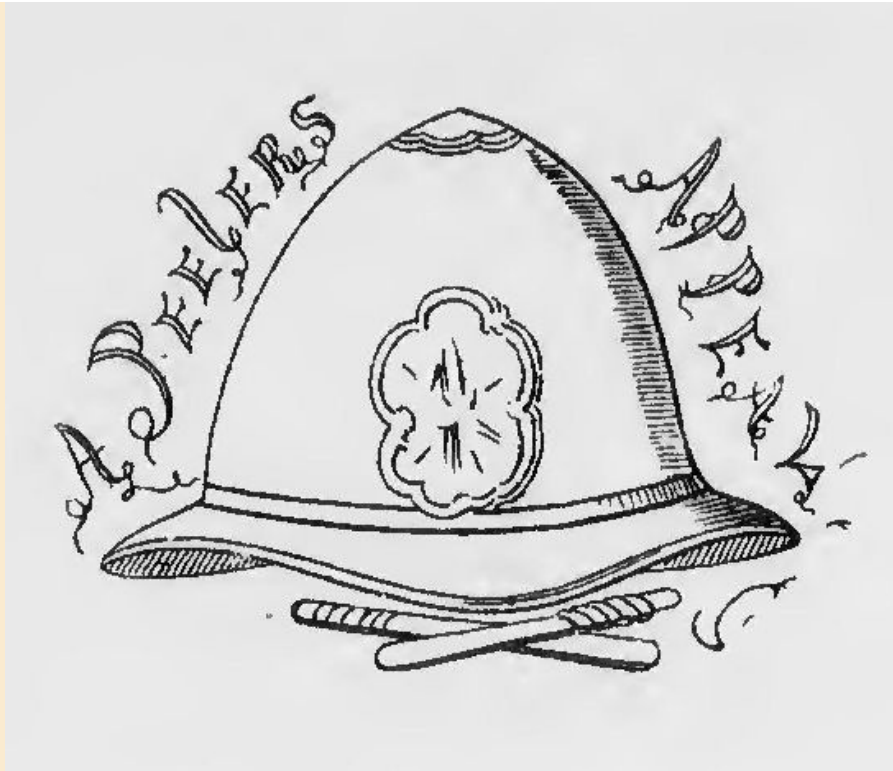
I hope they'll take her where the time
Counts not by days and weeks—
The place of which 'tis wrong to rhyme,

And no one ever speaks!

'Tis where the letters that she loves—
The consonants and vow'ls—
Are *melted down in patent stoves*,
And moulded into howls!



Original



Original

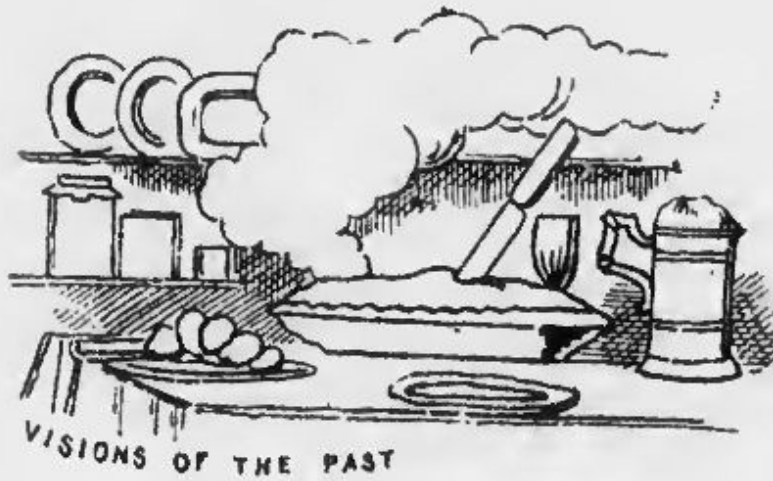
A PEELER'S APPEAL

Against the Helmet of Modern Times.

I was a peeler of a kind
That's seldom met with now;
I used to part my hair behind,
It clustered o'er my brow

In glossy ringlets, crisp and dark;
I had a massive chest,
And oft I lit love's fatal spark
Within the female breast.

The buttons on my coat of blue
Shone with effulgent light,
And cooks with eyes of dazzling hue
Fell prostrate at the sight.

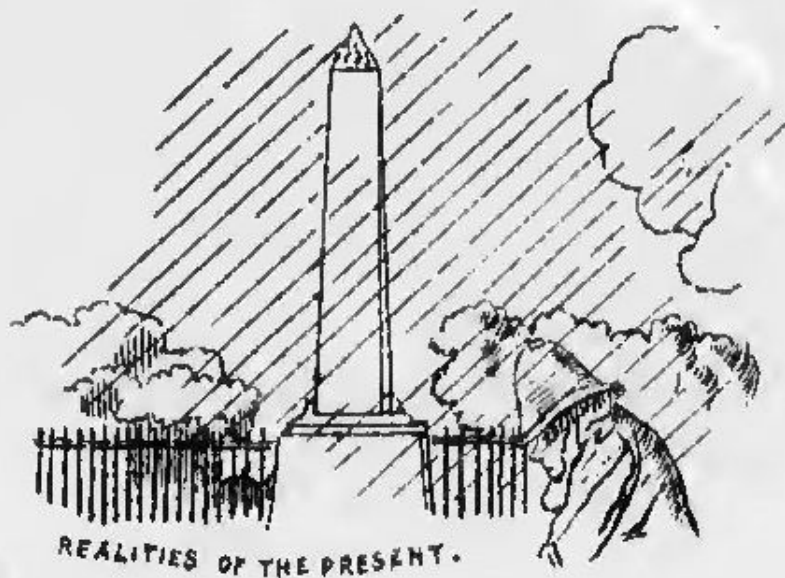


Original

At almost every kitchen door
They met me with a smile;
But then in modest pride I wore
The regulation tile.

No more they come with outstretched arms
My person to enwrap;
No more they hold the mutton cold
As sacred to the trap.

They never asks me into sup;
No smoking joints they bile;
They hates this cursed new-come-up—
This 'elmet mean and vile.



Original

The boys what vends the "Evenin' News,"
When I comes stalkin' by,

Awakes each alley, lane and mews,
With, "Crikey! 'ere's a guy!"

The cabbies stare so hard at me,
No wonder I gets huffed;
They grins, and axes who I be,
And if I'm "real or stuffed"



Original

And when I walks about my beat
The hosses dreads the sight;
They stands up endways in the street
A snortin' with affright.

The 'bus-conductors winks and leers,
And holds their sides and splits;
And kids of very tender years
I frightens into fits.

I once was right at forty-four
For supper, lunch, and tea;
Upon this bosom Susan swore
She'd never love but me.

Alas! for that inconstant cook
The 'elmet 'ad no charms;
A most sanguineous butcher took
My Susan to his arms.

My Susan's cheeks were fair and sleek—
So were the chops she cooked;
But on her chops, and on her cheek,
My last I fear I've looked.



Original

That butcher said as how 'twas *meat*
That me and she should part,
And never more for me will beat
That culinary 'eart.

Now listen you who've got to fix
What bobbies is to wear,
And if your 'earts aim 'ard as bricks,
Oh! 'ear a peelers prayer.



Original

Oh! take the elmet from my brow—
The curse from off my 'ed;
You aint no sort o' notion ow
I wishes I was dead.

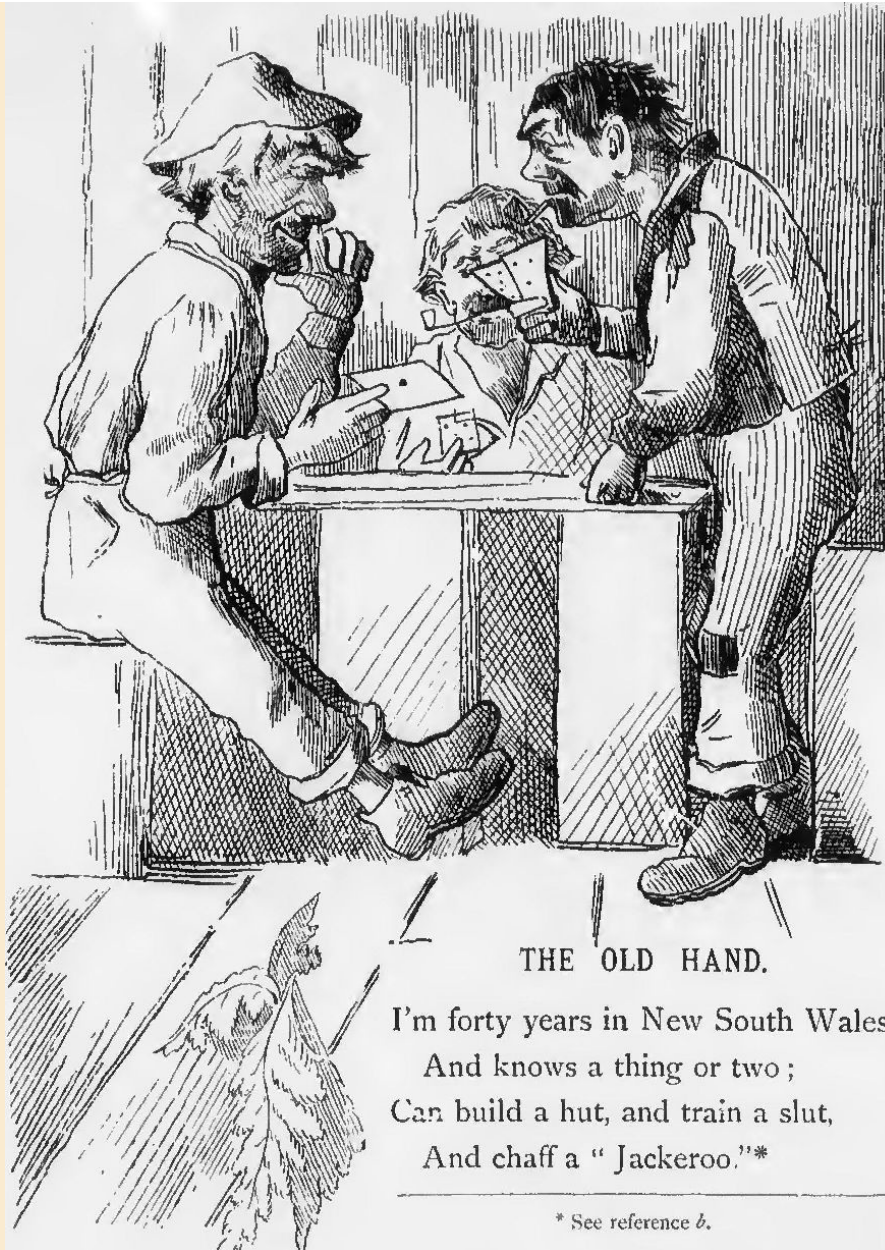
There's nothing calculated more
A cove's good looks to spile;
Oh! if you've 'carts, restore, restore,
The regulation tile!

You can't give back that cook's fond 'eart—
Her chops, her cheek, her smile;
But if you'd make amends in part,
Restore, restore my tile!



Original

THE following verses will probably be more intelligible to the bush reader than the metropolitan one. The latter is at liberty to "pass":—



THE OLD HAND.

I'm forty years in New South Wales,
And knows a thing or two;
Can build a hut, and train a slut,
And chaff a "Jackeroo."*

** See reference b.*

Original

THE OLD HAND.

I 'm forty years in New South Wales,
And knows a thing or two;
Can build a hut, and train a slut,
And chaff a "Jackeroo." *

** See reference b.*

I chiefly sticks to splittin' rails—
It's contract work, d'ye see;
I hates to ave a station-boss
A-overlookin' me.

I left my country for its good,
But not my own, I fear;
I makes big cheques a splittin' wood,
And knocks 'em down in beer.

I knows the Murrumbidgee's bends,
 Though not a "whaler" * now,
And many a score of sheep I've shore
 For good old Jacky Dow.

I used to knock about on farms,
 And plough a "land" or two;
But now for me that has no charms—
 I hates a "Cockatoo." **

** Murrumbidgee whalers are a class of loafers who work for about six months in the year—i.e. during shearing and harvest, and camp the rest of the time in bends of rivers, and live by fishing and begging.*

*** A small farmer.*

I'm splittin' for a squatter now
 Down here upon the creek;
He often says as how I've got
 A sight too much o' cheek.

They've got a new-chum over there—
 I hates new-chums, I do;
I often tries to take a rise
 Out of that Jackeroo.

One day when we was in the yard
 A draftin' out some ewes,
We axed him for to lend a hand,
 He couldn't well refuse.

I watched 'un for a minute just
 To see what he would do;
Bless'd if he warn't a chuckin' out
 A lot o' wethers too!

He keeps the store and sarves the "dust"—*
 I only wish he'd slope;
I knows he often books to me
 Too many bars o' soap.

In them it ain't no sort o' use
 Instruction to infuse;
There ain t a gleam o' intellect
 In new-chum Jackeroos.

As soon as July fogs is gone
 I chucks my axe up there,
And gets a stock of Ward and Payne's*
 At six and six a pair.

I've been a shearin' off an' on
 For such a precious while,
I knows most every shearin' shed,
 And each partickler style.

I'm able for to shear 'em clean,
 And level as a die;
But I prefers to 'tommy-hawk,"
 And make the "daggers" fly.

They mostly says that to the skin
 They means to have 'em shore;

I alius knocks off skin an' all
When they begins to jawr.

** Ward and Payne's sheep-shears.*

My tally's eighty-five a day—
A hundred I could go,
If coves would let me "open out"
And take a bigger "blow."

I allus roughs 'em when the boss
Ain't on the shearin' floor;
It wouldn't pay to shear 'em clean
For three and six a score.

But when I see the super come
Paradin' down the "board,"
I looks as meek as any lamb
That ever yet was shored.
For, though by knockin' sheep about
You're causin' him a loss,
It's 'ard to have a squatter come
And mark 'em with a cross. *

They say us shearers sulks and growls—
I'm swearing half the day,
Because them blasted "pickers-up"
Won't take the wool away.

** Sheep badly shorn are marked with a cross in red chalk,
and are not paid for*

At sundown to the hut we goes;
The young 'uns lark and fun;
The cook and I exchanges blows
If supper isn't done.

And when the tea and mutton's gone,
And each has had enough,
We shoves the plates and pints away,
And has a game o' "bluff." *

I works a little "on the cross,"
I never trusts to luck;
I hates to have to "ante-up,"
And likes to "pass the buck."

I've got a way of dealin' cards
As ain't exactly square;
I does some things with jacks and kings
As makes the young 'uns stare.

I've mostly got four aces though,
Or else a "routine flush
I wins their cash and 'bacca, and
They pays for all my lush.

** "Poker."*

I likes to get 'em in my debt
For what their cheque '11 clear;
I've got a sort o' interest then
In every sheep they shear.

I'm cunnin', and my little games
They never does detect;
But I never was partickler green
As I can recollect.

PREFACE TO THE PIC-NIC PAPERS,

IF I were asked to state the most noticeable feature of the social economy of Sydney—the thing which pre-eminently distinguishes her from other metropolises—I should, unhesitatingly, say pic-nics. I once held the proud position of occasional reporter to a weekly paper, and my mental calibre not being considered heavy enough, or my temperament sufficiently stolid to do justice to parliamentary debates, I was sent to report the pic-nics. In Sydney every trade gives one, and every private family about six in the course of the summer. Carpenters, butchers, barbers, blacksmiths, undertakers, even grave-diggers, all give their pic-nic during the season; and why should they not? Is it for me to ridicule the practice? Shall I, who have been received as an honoured guest at all (and retired to make three half-pence a line out of an account of the proceedings), splinter my puny lance of satire against a firmly-rooted and meritorious custom? I who have hobnobbed with the publicans, waltzed with the wheelwrights, done the *lard i da* with the pork-butchers' wives and daughters, danced *coa*illions with the tailors, and indulged in *sootable* amusements with the sweeps? Never!

I have retired from the pic-nic business now, and though my reports were not masterpieces of descriptive writing, and never wrung even the smallest tribute of gratitude from those they were intended to immortalize, I give a specimen or two to serve as models to those who hereafter may be called upon to report pic-nics for journals, religious or otherwise.

THE BUTCHER'S PIC-NIC.

THIS event came off with an unusual amount of eclat; merchants, members of parliament, and people of all kinds, were present; and if they were not all butchers, they all became squatters when the grassy plateaux of Correy's Gardens were reached. The pic-nic took place appropriately under a *ewe*-tree, and fortunately the *wether* was remarkably fine. Saws (wise ones excepted), axes, steels, and all other implements used in the trade, were, by common consent, left behind, and the only killing done was that accomplished by several fascinating young slaughter-men, whose hair and accents were oily not to say greasy in the extreme. One of these, who went in heavily for euphuism, told his inamorata that her heart was harder than his father's block, and the satire of her tongue keener than the edge of a certain cleaver in his parent's possession.

Sir Loin Oxborough, Fifth Baron (of beef), estates strictly *entailed*, was unanimously voted to a deserted "bull-dog's" nest, which did duty for a chair. He occupied this position with dignity, and made a speech, *interlarding* his discourse with several choice *cuts* from *Steel* and other poets; e.g.,

"*Reveal, reveal* the light of truth to me!"

"*Steak* not thine all upon the die!" &c.

He said they were met to enjoy themselves, and by their *joint* exertions to banish dull care; adversity might come, but what of that? He had always found that a round of afflictions, or a dark cloud had a silver lining, or rather a "silver-side," like a round of beef. He had often been in trouble himself—cut down, as it were, by the cleaver of adversity; reduced, he might say, to mince-meat by the sausage-machine of ill-luck; and he and his family had been once or twice regularly salted down in the harness-cask of fate; but, thanks to his natural buoyancy, or (*butcher*)-boy-ancy of spirits, he had risen like a bladder to the surface of the sea of despondency, and lived to pluck the skewers of affliction from his heart.

He advocated morality and sobriety. He might say he had lived a moral and sober life, for though he had been a free and generous *liver*, he had always done his duty to his fellow-men according to his *lights*. His motto was "live and let live," except where dumb animals were concerned—those he killed on principle, as a matter of business; and he respected all religious sects, except vegetarians. He had been cut up by sorrow, and cast down by depression of trade as often as most men. He had seen beef at tuppence a pound, hides at 2s. 6d. each, and tallow at nothing at all (warm weather, and no colds in the head prevalent), but he had never lost heart; from a boy, hopefulness had always been a meat-tray (he begged pardon, he meant a *sweet* trait) in his character; he had persevered, worked hard, and had eventually carved his way to wealth, fame, and fortune, through bone, gristle, flesh, skin, sinew and all. He was prosperous, but he owed his rise more to shoulders of mutton than the shoulders of his friends. He had been self-reliant, just, and generous; and though he had flayed many a beast, he had never yet attempted to *skin a flint*. (Cheers.) He was not democratic, and he believed more in the horny-headed monsters than the horny-handed masses; still he liked to see a man rise by his own exertions; and, inasmuch as a king—Charles the First to wit—had shewn how easy was the transition from the throne to the block, he did not see why an ascent from the block to the throne might not be equally possible.

In conclusion, he recommended his friends to take the fat with the lean through life, and not to grumble because some one else appeared to have all the prime-cuts of fortune, and all the rich fat of prosperity, and

they only the fag-end and the bone. He sat down (on the deserted ant's nest) amid loud and reiterated applause.

Festivities then commenced. The guests sat on their haunches and drank the blood of the grape out of hogs' heads.

The toasts drunk were the "Gallus"—not the gallows; the block and cleaver, &c. The juniors played "*rounders*," and (*raw*) "*hide and seek*." Dancing was kept up with animation until a late hour. Old Tommy Hawk danced a *porka*, and his peculiar *shambling* gait called forth rounds of applause. Several games of chance were played for beef *stakes*.

A butcher who dealt largely in *goat's* flesh sang the touching Scotch ballad, "Oh, Nanny, wilt thou gang wi me," and old Pork Chops sang "Those evening *chines*" in a most affecting manner. The festivities continued until they could not very well continue any longer, and every body returned home perfectly satisfied.

THE OYSTERMEN'S AND FISHMONGERS' PIC-NIC.

MON DAY was a great day. Though the bosom of the ocean was apparently unruffled by a zephyr, terror and excitement raged beneath its surface. Influential members of the finny tribe darted hither and thither in a manner which indicated that something unusual was afloat, and the piscatorial republic was shaken to its very centre. The military (that is, the sword-fish) were under arms, or rather fins, at an early hour, and formed a roe in martial array. The less warlike betrayed their agitation in a variety of ways. Sawfish from the Gulf of Carpentaria left their usual occupation of cutting the water, rose to the surface, and sawed the air in an agony of intense excitement; mercantile fish abandoned their scales and took their weigh to places of security; limpets, becoming enervated, relaxed their hold upon the rock; oysters tossed restlessly on their beds, and even the jelly-fish trembled. Nor was this surprising; for were not the fishmongers and oystermen about to hold carnival—to celebrate the rites and ceremonies of their order? and, knowing this, could any member of the finny tribe remain unmoved, or even a mollusc be calm?

In spite, perhaps unconscious, of all this, the jubilant fishmongers proceeded to the enjoyment of their picnic with light hearts. The oystermen, most of whom were natives, were appropriately clothed in shell-jackets, and wore barnacles. Miss Annet Snapperton, resplendent in a sea-green fishu, with cochineel trimmings, and a sea-anemone in her hair, proved an irresistible bait to young Codlington, a susceptible periwinkler and oysterman. He swore by the beard of the sacred oyster that she was an angel—called her his turtle and his pet (limpet, in fact)—and, while he besought her to fly with him and share a "grotter of hyster shells," he stated his intention of adhering to her heart like a limpet to its native rock, or the teeth of a skate to the finger of a too-confiding fisherman. At the conclusion of the banquet a speech was called for, and old Grampus rose. He said:—"Fishmongers and Fellow-oystermen (hear, hear), to meat you here on this ausfishous occasion" [he lisped a bit after eating salmon] "eels the wounded spirit and warms the cockles of this heart. Star-fish and stingarees! May I be scoloped if this aint the proudest moment of my life!" (Cheers.) He proceeded to state his views on things in general—regretted that a more able speaker had not been chosen to offishiate—hoped they wouldn't expect along speech from him, as he wasn't a parson—in fact he understood more about the curing of herrings, than the cure of soles—and the only school he ever attended was a "school" of mackerel which appeared off the coast one Sunday morning when he was a boy at home. His father had on that occasion taken him by the hand, and together they attended that Sunday-school. Subsequent proceedings made such an impression on his mind that he henceforth resolved to become a fish-dealer, and became one accordingly. He had read his Bible, and had heard about the "miraculous draught of fishes"—thought it must have been a brandy-p(r)awnee—always thought fish were something to eat before, though he had known fishermen drink their whole week's catch on Saturday night—was a sober man himself, and didn't go in for mackareulous "draughts" of that kind. If not a religious man, he always strove to do his duty! Though he had been a fisherman in his time, he had never been a plaice hunter, and, Ecod! he thought few M.P's. could say that. What were his religious principles? Well, he wasn't a mussle-man, and though he dealt, in shell-fish, he abhorred shellfishness. He had heard about some all-fired heathens who worshipped Zorooster (? Zoroaster); he couldn't say as he was acquainted with that mollusc, and wouldn't worship him if he were. Oysters was good things if you didn't put brandy a top of 'em, and he believed in cockles (the molluscs, not the pills), but worship a hoyster! Thank'eaven, he wasn't so far gone as that! Such ideas was incongerous.

He sat down amid applause, and musical and terpsichorean festivities commenced. Somebody danced the fishmongers' hornpipe. "Sets" were formed, and the (s)caly-donians gone through with great spirit. A gloomy-looking fish-dealer, with a bass voice, sang "My sole is dark and a blighted-looking young oyster-opener gave them, "Shells of the Ocean," and "Oh, shell we never part," alluding to the monotony of his occupation. Young Codlington sang "(T)winkle, (t)winkle, little Star-fish" with great taste and feeling. Fun and frolic became general, and it was late ere the (r)oysterers returned home, thoroughly wearied, but happy.

THE WHEELWRIGHTS' PIC-NIC.

THE man who cannot sympathize with a wheelwright in his joys and sorrows ought to be treated to a taste of lynch (or lynch-pin) law. No one with a properly regulated mind can fail to admire their round-about way of doing things, and their untiring energy; and no rightly thinking person could be otherwise than rejoiced on hearing the other day that these jolly good felleys had made up their minds to have a trundle down the harbour, and an afternoon's enjoyment. Of course the party started from the Circular Quay, and took with them a plentiful supply of weal and ham pies and roly-poly puddings. They reached their destination in safety, and after a short walk along the beach, the order was given to "right-wheel," and they found themselves in a delightful glade, where the blue gum waved its giant branches in the summer air, and the luxuriant axel-tree cast a grateful shade over the holiday-keepers.

The ladies—with complexions of a smoothness only to be attained by sand-paper in experienced hands—looked as fresh as paint, and shone like varnish. They were at tired, in elegant and becoming costumes. Spokes was nearly missing the affair altogether, as he woke late, and then had to dress, wash, and (spoke)-shave himself in a hurry. Old Wheels—and a wideawake old fly-wheel he was—drove down in his buggy with Mrs. Wheels and the four Miss Wheels, and, what with the front and hind wheels of the trap, the wheals inflicted by the avenging hand of Old Wheels on the horse's behind, and the young Wheels—segments of the parent Wheels—clinging on wherever they could get hand or foot-hold, it was estimated that there couldn't have been less than sixty or seventy wheels to the turn-out. Talking of traps, the four Miss Wheels constituted a four-wheeled trap for the hearts of men of a most dangerous description; and, after they had all partaken plentifully of the weal pies, there was weal within Wheels, and a complicated state of things which set mathematical and digestive theories at defiance.

Old Wheels delivered an address, in which he stated that a bond of unity was the best tire for the public weal, and that if the felleys in the House wern't such a lot of (k)naves, they'd run truer, stick closer together, and endeavour to axelerate public business more than they did. He was proceeding to demonstrate that ——— was no more use in the House than the "fifth wheel of a coach," when one of the younger Wheels began to squeak in an agonizing manner. It was immediately greased with some strawberrys and cream, and its (s)creams subsided into chuckles of gratification. Dancing, of the "turnabout, and wheel-about, and jump Jim Crow" order, then commenced, and kiss-in-the-ring, rounders, and other circular amusements, became general. A musical young wheelwright, on being called on for a song, suspended his occupation of picking his teeth with a lynch-pin, and gave them "Weel may the keel row," and Axelcior." Spokes proved himself a capital speaker, and made the speech of the day, full of beautifully rounded sentences and quotations from Spokeshave. But all things must have an end unfortunately, and when at length the whistle of the steam-boat sounded for departure, the wheelwrights took their way homeward, happy, but thoroughly tired.

THE UNDERTAKER'S PIC-NIC.

WE have a special regard for undertakers. Watching funerals was the first species of dissipation we indulged in in early youth. We have witnessed Shakesperian tragedies since with less satisfaction, and have respected undertakers proportionately in consequence. But for them we should never have known how much of the latent spirit of tragedy there is in horses' tails and feathers, and we especially admire the dramatic style in which they proclaim to the world the fact that another saint has gone to occupy his reserved seat in the celestial dress circle, or another sinner sneaked into his place in that "pit" which is notoriously bottomless, and where the free-list is by no means "confined to gentlemen of the Press."

Holding these views, we were naturally pleased to hear that our friends meditated a pic-nic, and we are still more gratified to be able to lay before the public the only reliable report of the proceedings in existence. The day was everything that could be desired. Huge masses of black cloud lay piled away to the south'ard, imparting a sombre and funereal aspect to everything, and the spirits of the excursionists rose in proportion. The picturesque cemetery of Haslem's Creek was the spot chosen for the celebration of the festivities, and the cheerful recesses of its cypress-shaded labyrinths that day re-echoed outbursts of merriment which must have been particularly trying to misanthropic ghosts. Every available hearse and mourning-coach was pressed into the service to convey the holiday-keepers to the mortuary railway station, from which a special train was to start at nine sharp, and the party in full gala costume—hat-bands, gloves, plumes and feathers—presented quite a lively appearance as the cortège moved down Brickfield Hill, the band playing "The dead march in Saul."

Arrived at the scene of the intended festivities, a luxurious *al fresco* banquet was set forth, the numerous marble slabs in the vicinity making the most delightful substitutes for tables imaginable, and the epitaphs and inscriptions forming an agreeable mental repast after the grosser bodily appetites had been subdued.

Messrs. Compagnoni, on this occasion, surpassed themselves, and the black-puddings, and other funereal delicacies—served on (brass)-plates—were decorated with "In memory of," "Requiescat in pace," and other appropriate mottoes calculated to raise the spirits of the party, and promote hilarity in the highest degree. Old Elmplank said he hadn't had such a lively time, or felt in such good spirits, since the measles were around that time three years. Meanwhile the young folks were: enjoying themselves, and fun and flirtation wore carried on in a decorous manner, out of respect to the emblems of mortality by which they were surrounded.

An amiable young coffin-maker, with the most fascinating hearse-suit appendages, made great inroads on the heart of Miss Grace Bugles. He requested her to enter his heart, which he compared to an unoccupied tomb, and reside there rent free. Should love like his, he asked, be "coffined, cribbed, confined" within the narrow limits of a flannel waistcoat? No; he invited her to come to his arms, shroud herself in his bosom, and stop the process of cremation which was going on in his heart.

Songs and recitations were in the programme. Miss Bugles sang "Those funeral bells," and "The old elm tree," and her admirer gave them a Bacchanalian, or rather a coffin-nailian ditty, with a chorus of "Bier, bier, beautiful bier," and a skull and thigh-bones accompaniment, which provoked thunders of applause; and when old Tassels, of the mourning livery-stables sang,

"But one golden tress of her hair I'll twine
In my hearse's sable plume,"

there was scarcely a dry eye in the assembly.

There were no healths drunk, such a custom being considered out of character with the proceedings, and not conducive to the prosperity of business generally. Undertakers who were sociably disposed took each other's measures, composed epitaphs, and talked about cremation. Old Elmplank, in his speech, said that any allusion to such a mode of disposing of the dead wounded him to the quick. "Introduce that process," he said, "and the whole romance of a funeral was done away with. The invention," he added, "was worthy of a cove as was mean enough to drink another cove's ealth." But even undertakers cannot keep up at the high-pressure pitch of hilarity for ever, and as evening drew on, the rain having been falling heavily for several hours, the cemetery was by common consent voted damp, and a general move was made for the railway station. The party returned to Sydney, well satisfied with their outing, and the number of colds caught must have made business lively for the next six months.

THE HAIRDRESSERS' PIC-NIC.

EVEN barbers require change of (h)air occasionally; consequently there were no dissentient voices when Potts proposed an excursion, and suggested the Gap, where the "yesty waves" seem never to tire of their monotonous occupation of shampooing the South Head. The pic-nic took place eventually among the romantic glades in the immediate vicinity of Pearl (-powder) Bay, where the "maidenhair" (capillis veneris) grew luxuriantly—having been neither cut by the north-east wind, nor brushed by machinery—while the rabbit and false-hare frisked fearlessly among solitudes seldom disturbed by the presence of man, and that beautiful bird the antimacassowary flew with well-oiled pinions from branch to branch of the Eucalipsalve.

It might be imagined by ignorant people that hairdressers, who pay so much attention to the adornment of the outward man, would be apt to forget the requirements of the inner entirely; this, however, was not the case, jugged hairs and barbercues being among the least of the delicacies provided.

Of course there were speeches. That old demagogue—Bearsgrease, shampooed, no, pooh! poohed everything, everybody else. Being a wig-maker, it was natural that in politics he should be a Whig; and though, as he said, he had never appeared as a candidate for Parliamentary honors, or been at the head of an electioneering poll, he knew as much about heads and polls as some who had.

But why enlarge on all this? Can we not imagine how young Potts led Miss Glycerina Crimpington for a stroll by the sounding sea, and directed her attention to the magnificent crests of the billows, fresh from the curling-tongs of Nature, tumbling over one another, and doubling themselves into such exquisite "frizettes" and "waterfalls" that they were enough to excite envy in the breast of any young lady, especially if she happened to be a hair-dresser's daughter.

Can we not picture to ourselves the thousand and one incidents which go to make up what is called a picnic? How some were stricken hungry, and others sentimental; how some satisfied their cravings with kisses, others with pie; how Potts charmed the ear of his adored Crimpington with recitations from "Locksley Hall," and the "Hair of Redcliffe;" how the young folks danced the Kalydorians (arranged by Rowlands); and last, not least, how the old folks got maudlin on limejuice and glycerine, and talked of the days when their feet were as light, and their chevleures as heavy as those of any young scalp-lock trimmer present. We can, I think, imagine all this so it will not be necessary to say more than that the whole thing was a thorough success, especially Potts's song of "(H)airy spirits round us hover," with a comb accompaniment, after which a general stampede was made for the boats.

THE GREAT CRICKET MATCH.

BREWERS v. PUBLICANS.

The day was wet, down poured the rain
In torrents from the sky;
Great coats, umbrellas, were in vain,
But every lip was dry.

The clouds seemed disinclined to part,
The wind was from the *West*,
Yet worked each brewer's manly heart
Like (y) *east* within his breast.

Along the road each brewer spent
His coin in frequent drains,
For mere external moisture went
Against those brewers' *grains*.

And with a bright triumphant flush,
Their Captain, Mr. Staves,
Swore they should crush those sons of lush
Who dealt in "tidal-waves"

** Tidal-wave—a large glass of colonial beer.*

For, speaking of the L. V. A.,*
The brewers said, and laughed,
"A most efficient team were they
For purposes of draught."
'Twas thus they talked upon the way
Until they reached the ground;
But in their friends the L. V. A.,
Rum customers they found.

I havn't space to speak of all
The glories of the match—
Of every well-delivered ball,
And every well-caught catch.

I fain would tell of Mr. Keggs
(They spiled and bunged his eye)
Of Barley-corn, and how his legs
Got twisted all a rye;

How Stoups, the umpire, stood too near,
And came to grief and harm;
How, when he fell they gave him beer,
Which acted like a barm;

** Licensed Victuallers' Association.*

Of Hope, who keeps the Anchor bar
And vendeth flowing bowls
(My feet have often been that far
And anchored fast their soles)

Mark how he bustles, snorts, and spits—
His brow he mops and wipes,
And though I couldn't praise his hits,
I'll gladly praise his "swipes;"

Of Corks, who funk'd the second ball,
And by a sudden turn
Received the straightest one of all
Upon his ample stern.

He raised a loud and fearful roar—
With fury he was blind,
And, though they called it "leg-before"
He felt it most behind!

Of Marks, the scorer—best of men!
Sure everybody talks;
He chalked the runs correctly when
He couldn't walk his chinks.

Despite the flasks of monstrous size
He'd emptied to the dregs,
He scored "wides," "overthrows," "leg-byes,"
And runs attained by legs.

For all the ceaseless rain which flows,
The rival teams care naught;
Though runs were made by many a nose,
And many a cold was caught.

Inside and out they all got wet—
Each drank what he could hold;
I'm sure a bowl was upset
For every over bowled.

The daylight fails; at length 'tis gone:
There's little left to tell;
For as the shades of eve drew on
The stumps were drawn as well.

Then to the tent each man resorts:
On food intent were they.
Who won the sports? the pints and quarts—
The gallant L. V. A.

Beneath the canvas let us pass—
Old Bottle-brush was there,
And well he filled his empty glass,
And well he filled the "chair."

At length the Maltsters cleared the tent,
And several hops ensued;
But stay! Both time and space are spent—
In truth, I must conclude.

A vict'ler rose amid the host—
A burly man was he—
"My lads," he said, "I'll give a toast,
And here's my toast d'ye see:

"John Barley-corn, the king of seeds!"
And round the glasses go,
"For that's a corn that ne'er impedes
The light fantastic toe!"

IF any reader has conscientiously borne with me even unto the end, he may be ready to exclaim—"But where are the 'Southerly Busters?' No allusion to them except in the title and frontispiece. It's been a dead calm all the way."

Gentlest of a proverbially gentle class, what you say is perfectly true; but I have excellent precedent for this inconsistency. No one, not even an evangelical parson, sticks to his text now-a-days; and the gentleman who objected to being told "in mournful numbers" that "things are not what they seem," was a self-deceiving visionary who wanted to close his eyes to what everyone else knows to be an established fact. An M.P.'s speech on free trade seldom alludes to the subject; the daring feats and marvellous situations depicted

outside a circus are never seen inside; light literature, advertised as such, is proverbially heavy; ———'s "Vermin Destroyer" has rather a nutritious and invigorating effect on vermin than otherwise, according to my experience; Young's "Night Thoughts" were written in broad day-light; and few can have failed to remark the absence of pork and the presence of cat in a restaurant pork-sausage.

The author of the most confused piece of literary mechanism that ever was printed, calls it "Bradshaw's Guide."



Original

Did it ever guide anyone anywhere except to outer darkness? Did it ever awaken any other feeling in the bosom of a deluded traveller than a thirst for revenge? Bradshaw merely followed the universal rule of contraries when he christened his mystifying treatise a "guide," for none knew better than he that "throwing a light on a subject" means involving it in gloom and obscurity, as surely as that "just one glass more, and then straight home," means twenty, and the most circuitous route the neighbourhood will admit of. I trust I have said enough to vindicate the somewhat obscure and deceptive title of this book; or, at any rate, to avert the worst catastrophe an author can dread—that of being blown to atoms by a Southerly Buster of Public Opinion.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SOUTHERLY BUSTERS ***

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