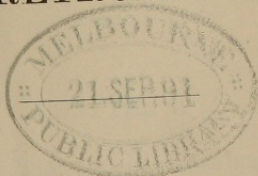


INDEPENDENCE;

231'

A RETROSPECT.



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INDEPENDENCE;

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CHAPTER I.

(BEING CHAPTER XIV OF THE "REMINISCENCES, &C.")

IN these memoirs, written expressly for the information and—as I hope—for the amusement of my children and grand-children, political affairs and public events have hitherto received only passing notice. It would be but a poor solace for the evening of a long life to devote hour after hour to penning accounts of the proceedings of politicians which hardly ever deserved a higher qualification than well-intentioned. There are some regrets which time fails to dissipate entirely. Such are those which owe their origin to proceedings of the kind just alluded to; and a hand that can now only feebly wield a pen may well be excused the task of describing them in detail. There was, however, a whole series of events of such vast importance that, even in a personal narrative, they cannot be passed over without some mention. I will therefore relate the history of the period in which they occurred.

The year 1895 had been noted generally as one of exceptional prosperity throughout the Australian colonies. There had not been even a partial drought for

three or four years. Great political disturbance and consequent protracted financial confusion in the River Plate States had blunted the keenness of the commercial competition of those countries, and, by restricting production, had helped to raise the price in European markets of several of the commodities which we Australians were accustomed to export. We consequently enjoyed that rare combination of advantages—abundant supply, a great demand, and high prices. The “loan policy,” which had been universally followed in our colonies for upwards of five and twenty years, was, notwithstanding some recent checks, still in high favour; and every colony had either just contrived to raise a loan on what, for the time, were held to be advantageous terms, or was still in possession of a large unexpended balance of borrowings drawn from the savings of the English investor. Public works were planned, and their execution begun in a multitude of places. Every inland village seemed about to have a railway brought to its doors, and every group of houses on the coast to have an artificial harbour constructed in front of it. Districts too arid to supply even the scanty pasture which will keep the Australian sheep from dying of starvation were to have irrigation works which would soon turn them into gardens and vineyards. In the slang of the day, the policy of “bridge across Gum-tree Creek” was in full swing.

Work was plentiful and wages high. The abundance of borrowed money in every treasury induced an active competition for labour, and the labourer's demands naturally rose. Though the commodities which the working classes most required became rather dearer, the amount of their wages was such that without any excessive thrift or prudence even unskilled labourers could soon save money enough to buy a plot of land—usually a town or suburban lot—which they could call their own, and on which, with the aid of the many building societies then existing, they hoped to build their homes. A speedy result was widespread speculation in land. Large tracts were bought origin-

ally at moderate prices, to be resold in small parcels at great profit. The gains of the earlier speculators were, or were reported to be, enormous; and they had many imitators, few of whom fared quite so well. The banks, at least some of them, were very complaisant: and a “syndicate,” the members of which held but an insignificant capital between them, found little difficulty in obtaining large credit. It was then a common practice to let banks take charge of considerable unexpended portions of the sums raised by loan, for which they had to pay merely the three and a half, or three and three-quarters per cent. due to the public creditors, whilst from their own clients, who borrowed the money again from them, they required six or seven. This, and the readiness with which they could discount bills whilst cash was so plentiful, caused the banking interest (at that time a great power in the Colonies), in general, to regard with favour the policy of public borrowing on a large scale. Cautious men, who looked ahead, ventured now and again to protest against the rapidity with which a great load of indebtedness had been piled up: but they were easily silenced by the imputation that they were trying to injure the credit of the Colonies.

It was whilst our affairs were in this seemingly most prosperous condition that we took the prodigiously important step which, with its consequences, I shall endeavour to describe. At this time I lived in a pretty and comfortable house, which is still in existence, on the Edgecliffe Road. I had purchased the place, to which I gave the name of “Step-aside,” shortly before my marriage, with the express purpose of giving to her whom I hoped to make my wife, a home in which she would find all the happiness and the comforts which her sweet nature deserved, and which it was a pleasure to me to think I could provide. Though, as my grandchildren know, our golden wedding was celebrated two years ago, she is still here to read these words, and she will be able to tell them whether, though having since shared with me a grander and more luxurious home,

any years of her life were happier than those spent at Step-aside.

It was my practice to go on foot to my business in the city every morning, and to return home in the same manner after business hours in the evening. On my homeward walk I was occasionally joined by a Mr. Finwood Harrison, whose road for some distance was the same as my own. Mr. Harrison was a native of Maitland, a member of the New South Wales bar, and representative of a country district in the House of Assembly. What his qualifications as a lawyer were I had no means of judging; but I discovered early in our acquaintance that he was a very eager politician. He was a prominent member of a body known as the Development Association, which had more influence, or at all events attracted more attention, in Victoria than in my own colony. Its full name was "*The Association for advancing the Moral and Material Development of Australia.*" Those who belonged to the Association were familiarly spoken of as the Developers, which was abbreviated into "Lopers," and not unfrequently jokingly corrupted to "Loafers." The Society was composed largely of young men whose main object appeared to be the assertion of the superiority of native-born Australians to all the other components of the British nation and to the world at large. Though the "Lopers'" proceedings had usually been received by the rest of the community with a certain amount of good-humoured ridicule, it was pretty evident at the time of which I write that their Association had expanded into a by no means insignificant party. Of party government in our colonial legislatures we had indeed the form; but we had nothing approaching to the reality, and we were even without distinguishing names. Parliamentary struggles were contests not for the furtherance of principles but for the capture of place. The few great questions that might have been settled or debated in our legislatures were merely touched lightly by the men who had contrived to secure the highest official positions. There was an evident inability

to handle such important matters seriously, and as a rule, our local politics had not reached even the provincial stage, but remained persistently parochial.

Whether sound or not, the projects of the Developers did undoubtedly embrace some real political principles. To the settlement of the land question, to free trade or protection, to financial, social, economic questions they appeared profoundly indifferent; but they unceasingly proclaimed the capacity of Australia for self-dependence. According to them, she need never have recourse to the advice or support of anyone outside her borders. Some of them were certainly aware, though perhaps the rank and file of the body did not clearly discern it, that the tendency of the measures which they advocated was towards separation from the rest of the British Empire and complete independence. It is not too much to say that of the real composition of that empire they were all profoundly ignorant. The remote situation of our colonial home, the necessary absence of all foreign relations, and the comparative lateness of the introduction of self-government into our political system, had each by itself and altogether checked the growth of statesmanship amongst us. Experienced European observers used to notice the superior political intelligence of our kinsmen in New Zealand, and explain it by recalling that in their case settlement, unlike the rule in Australia, had preceded government, and that for a long period the New Zealand colonists had had a relatively powerful foreign Maori population on their borders. The leading article of the Developers' creed was, that somewhere in London there was a malignant enemy of Australian progress called "The Colonial Office." If sugar planters in Queensland ran short of labourers, it was due to the machinations of the Colonial Office. If the English High Court would not order the investment of trust monies in Australian securities, it was because the Colonial Office stood in the way. To the ineptitude and presumably the hostility of that malign department was to be attributed the French or German occupation of some out-of-the-way Pacific Islands.

Of views of this kind Mr. Harrison was a profuse exponent. At first it was amusing to listen to his denunciations of the Colonial Office. Before very long he became rather tiresome. In time I began to regard his philippics with apprehension. One sultry evening towards the end of January, just as I was crossing the steam tramway line that ran along the side of Hyde Park, I caught sight of Harrison standing on the edge of the footpath. A "black north-easter" had been blowing for two days, and the moisture-laden atmosphere was more than usually oppressive. Only a person who was very convinced and very earnest would care to carry on a lively discussion in such weather. I knew from experience that no meteorological conditions were so unfavourable as to silence Mr. Harrison, or indeed any of the more active members of the Development Association, when he or they could manage to get an audience. My acquaintance had evidently been looking out for me, and his face showed that he was eager to address somebody. As he was not one of those conversationalists who are content if their companions will almost unheedingly let them run on, merely interposing a "yes," an "indeed," or an "exactly" at decent intervals; but as he always insisted upon being attended to, and now and again would put searching questions to make sure that he was, the prospect of a three-quarters of an hour walk with him was not, under the circumstances, a pleasant one.

As it happened, we had not met for a day or two; but without wasting time on a greeting, he began as soon as I had reached the sidewalk: "It's too bad, isn't it? I always told you that it would come to this. The state of things, as you will remember I have often asserted, could not last much longer. The Earl of Swallowdale"—his Lordship was the Colonial Minister of the day, and Mr. Harrison, *more Australiano*, always gave him his full title—"the Earl of Swallowdale has acted like an obstinate fool. He does not understand the Colonies. He does not know the spirit of

the people here. No one at the Colonial Office does."

My acquaintance was rather more vehement in manner than usual, even when denouncing the sinning department which he had named, and I suppose that I must have put on a look of real anxiety to learn his meaning, for before I had said anything he held a newspaper up so that I could read a telegram in its "latest news" column. The telegram afterwards became celebrated, and was pasted into many a book of cuttings. It ran as follows:—

London, 26th Jan.

"It is announced that the question of the Governorship of Albert-land has been discussed in the Cabinet, and that it has been decided to adhere to the appointment of Sir H. Thorndyke."

I confess that I felt that the intelligence conveyed by these few words was of grave importance. Though I do not intend to go minutely into the history of the time, which can be read in many contemporary pamphlets and speeches, or in books published since, a brief explanation of the situation to which the telegram referred cannot well be omitted.

For several years the Home Government, complying with what it believed to be the wishes of the Australian colonists, had been in the habit of appointing men of high social position, but little or no official experience or capacity, as Governors of the Colonies. It was generally understood that as a rule the noblemen appointed went to their posts with the greatest reluctance, and only after the application of much pressure and after many appeals to their patriotism or party spirit. Their reluctance was natural. To be suddenly transplanted to a distant land in which they had not a single acquaintance, and to break with the habits and associations of a lifetime must have been for them a rude ordeal. They had to resign for several years the society of their oldest friends, to hand over to hired agents the management of large private interests, and to move from the centre of affairs to a remote out-

skirt. For the sacrifice involved in all this, no commensurate return was offered. The position of a Governor in the great English Colonies was in fact an absurd one. As an eminent visitor once remarked, "He neither reigned nor governed." The cruel wrong inflicted by *doctrinaire* politicians on the more important dependencies of the Empire when they imposed on those new communities an exact copy of the curious form of government which had grown up during generations of struggles and progress in England, has since been thoroughly appreciated. At the time I am speaking of, we perceived neither its ludicrous nor its mischievous side. A pessimist commentator now and then pointed out unheeded that, when a colony obtained by accident a capable and experienced Governor, the Constitution was so framed as almost entirely to neutralise his good qualities. The spectacle of a mediocre county magistrate, or an official who had worked his way up in the service, trying to play the *rôle* of a constitutional sovereign amongst a few hundred thousand subjects with a social organization altogether uncongenial to the part would have excited laughter anywhere but amongst us as we then were. The characteristic of a "middle-class democracy"—utter deficiency of humour—completely blinded us to the greatest absurdities.

A Governor of the time had not even the advantage of being well paid. He received indeed a large salary; but he had to spend the whole of it in unnecessary ostentation and dreary festivities on pain of general contumely. It was discovered, but not till after most of the events which I wish to record had occurred, that the desire to have a merely ornamental Governor decorated with a title was really confined to a few hundreds of recently enriched families, the members of which hoped to be received by the Marchioness of A., or the Countess of B., during their periodical visits to the old country. The idea that the British Empire had been brought into existence for the exclusive benefit of a limited number of middle-class business

men and their wives and children, was very widespread just then, and was not confined to Australia.

Our prosperity and the facility with which every application emanating from the Colonies had been acceded to by the Home Government, stimulated our wealthy classes to make absurd demands. We had not a single real grievance; but the ingenuity of *parvenu* susceptibility contrived to manufacture some. When formally stated they were too ridiculous to be advanced except vicariously. Some distinguished English visitor was induced to write or publicly declare that the bestowal of a peerage on a wealthy Australian or two, the gift of a Bath ribbon here and there, and a regulation making the colonial title of "honourable" current throughout the Empire, were necessary to ensure the loyalty of some millions of colonists. The fact was that the enormous majority of our people knew nothing of these aspirations, and, when they learnt them, cordially despised those who professed them. Unhappily the aspirants, in their uneasy pursuit of social elevations stimulated a desire to carp at every proceeding of the Government in England. Thus, more than any other class of our community, they encouraged—little as they meant to—the schemes of the more extreme Developers, and fostered disaffection by working for their own petty ends. Anyhow, we got our noble Governors, and lost the one chance which, in spite of our ludicrous constitutional system, would otherwise have been ours of deriving any assistance from the Sovereign's representative. The raw politicians who ever and anon struggled on to Colonial Treasury Benches might have learned at all events orderly methods of official procedure from a Governor who had grown up in the Service, if we could have had him. I have dwelt at length upon this matter because from it the serious occurrences which I am about to recount directly sprang.

When I had read the telegram, Mr. Harrison began a fluent *resumé* of the history of the question to which it related. How he put matters I do not now exactly

remember ; but I can give briefly an idea of the case. Evidences of the disadvantages and even risks due to the employment of merely ornamental Governors had accumulated so largely that at length the Home Government became alarmed, and decided that the first vacancy should be filled by a man of experience who had given proof of capacity. Some pompous pranks of Lord Wychwood, then Governor of Albert-land, who was entirely under the influence of a conceited and wholly inexperienced private secretary, had attracted a good deal of attention. His lordship by a profuse expenditure had made himself rather popular with some ; but by his negligence and incapacity he had encouraged a more than usually unscrupulous Cabinet to take certain hardly constitutional measures. He had received from the Home Government a sharp reproof which, to do him justice, he would, if left alone, have had enough good sense to keep to himself. However, young Mr. Gassington, his private secretary, thought it would be a good idea to publish the condemnatory despatch, and—as it were—appeal from the Colonial Office to the colonial public. The hollowness of a popularity based on frequently inviting to the festivities of Government House the families of wealthy auctioneers and shipping agents, was quickly revealed. The newspapers of the colony, with few exceptions, unmercifully “chaffed” the Governor and his private secretary, whose influence was well known.

Mr. Gassington decided to resort to heroic measures, and ordered his master to send in his resignation, fully expecting that it would not be accepted. He was mistaken. No time was lost in letting this be known ; for within forty-eight hours after his letter had reached London, a telegram was sent to Lord Wychwood informing him that his resignation had been accepted, and that the appointment of a successor would be soon announced. A few days later the telegraph communicated the intelligence that Sir Henry Thorndyke, a colonial Governor of great experience and recognised ability, had been appointed to succeed his lordship.

Immediate efforts were made by influential colonists first to get Lord Wychwood reappointed and then to get a new Governor of the same ornamental kind. These efforts were supported by the cabinets of the neighbouring colonies. It was confidently anticipated that they would be successful. Our want of knowledge of public affairs outside our own small community had led us to over-estimate the force of party antagonism in the Mother Country. It had been an accepted article of faith amongst us that colonial secession would utterly destroy the English political party that happened to be in power when it might occur.

There were certainly good grounds for this belief ; and our own public men had often acted upon it with success. We were most of us persuaded that we might obtain anything we liked to ask for from the fears, though not from the statesmanship of the party in office at home. As far as we had any diplomacy it was all summed up in this. Accustomed only to the narrow issues which divided our own politicians in their petty contests, we did not perceive that in the Mother Country the leaders on both sides were still high-principled Englishmen, often no doubt of but mediocre ability, but honest and sincerely anxious for the welfare of the whole Empire ; and that one who in really critical times preferred the interests of his party to that of his country at large, but rarely attained to a prominent place amongst them. We forgot that the English House of Commons still cherished some noble traditions. Our belief in the pliability of the Home Government proved fallacious. The Ministers in England stood firm. The Colony declared through its Ministers that it would not accept Sir Henry Thorndyke. The Home Government replied, that no one else would be appointed. The dispute, if such it can be called, lasted for several weeks, long enough for London newspapers containing full accounts of the proceedings at home to reach us ; whilst the telegraph had been freely employed with the usual result of producing mutual ill-feeling and misunderstanding.

It was in time perceived that the Opposition in England—Parliament having been called together early for other reasons—had remained strangely quiescent. Here and there a parliamentary free-lance had denounced the Government for risking the dismemberment of the Empire; but the Opposition leaders said nothing. At last a batch of newspapers arrived containing a full account, of what had been merely indicated by the telegraph, viz., debates on the governorship of Albert-land in both Houses of Parliament. In these the leaders of the Opposition announced that they had been approached by the ministers of the Crown on the subject, and that, in view of the gravity of the state of affairs, they had fully concurred in the policy of H.M. Government, and engaged themselves to support it.

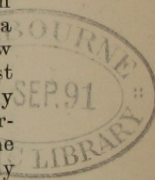
Had this been known sooner in the Colonies, things might not have turned out as they did. As it was, the news came too late. A prodigious ferment arose, or was got up, in Albert-land, and was diligently encouraged in the other colonies by members of the Development Association, so that it spread quickly. I thought at the time and am certain now, that an overwhelming majority of our population was perfectly ready to acquiesce in the decision of the Home Government, without even troubling to discuss it. Only a few interested toadies cared a straw about Lord Wychwood. Whatever the average colonist may have thought of the public men of the Mother Country he rated their knowledge and character considerably above those of the politicians of his own colony. There was a good deal of unlearned declamation in the newspapers; but, except in some obscure and violent prints, nothing hasty was proposed. It was clear that the editors and their owners had failed to grasp the situation, and would merely print expressions of oracular ambiguity which left them free to take sides in accordance with the event.

I must briefly state what happened. The legislative Council and House of Assembly of Albert-land met in

convention and passed joint resolutions to the following effect:—

That the resignation of the Governor having been accepted, and no successor or substitute having been sworn in, the gubernatorial position was vacant; that the good of the colony for the time required that no single person should be nominated to the vacant place; that, until the selection of a chief magistrate could be definitely settled, the functions appertaining to his office should be performed by a committee of members of the two Houses (this proved to be in reality the existing Cabinet, which was of a strongly Harrisonian cast); that any portions of the Constitution Act which conflicted with the foregoing were *ipso facto* repealed.

Albert-land had practically declared its independence, and I may sum up the story, which has been told in detail in many works, by saying that soon Tasmania and the other colonies in Australia did the same. New Zealand decided to maintain its connexion with the rest of the British Empire. What astonished everybody was the facility and quiet with which the thing, important as it was, had been done. There was some speechifying; but to that we were too completely resigned in the Colonies to notice it much. There were a few rather dispirited processions. There was a renaming of some streets and institutions, which still, however, continued in common talk to be called by their old appellations. There was a tendency in private to make a sheepish and shy admission that we had precipitately taken a grave step in consequence of an affair altogether insignificant in itself. Some one, however, opportunely quoted from Aristotle—at secondhand, for since the death of the great Dr. Badham, Greek scholarship was not a strong point of Australians—that contests arise out of small incidents but from great causes. On this some of us began to grow proud; we had furnished a practical commentary on the wisdom of one of the *maestri di color' chi sanno*. In truth even had we been populated exclusively by members of Mr. Harrison's Association, we should hardly have split off from the



parent stem for so small a cause as the choice between Lord Wychwood and Sir Henry Thorndyke. The real cause lay far deeper. It was the ignorance of the generation into whose hands the political power and the wealth of the Colonies had then passed.

If the act of separating ourselves from the rest of the Empire had been effected so quickly and quietly as fairly to surprise us, the first steps on the path of independence were not less tranquil and easy. I think that some of us were disappointed at finding that the excitement which undoubtedly had been prevalent at first, however successfully outward manifestations of it may have been suppressed, seemed to be so little justified. Things went on much as they used to go on before separation. There was much talk of starting a new coinage, but for the time we continued to use the old dies. The Queen's birthday was still universally kept as a public holiday. Its designation had indeed been officially changed to "Separation Day;" but in conversation we stuck to the old form, and even the newspapers after the official title used to print in brackets (*Queen's birthday*). The legislatures in all the Colonies remained in session: but after a little the general public treated their debates with the old inattention. Even at the first their proceedings excited less interest than had often been evinced by the inhabitants of certain constituencies when the allocation of monies arising from a new loan was being announced from the Government Bench. The truth is, the reports of the debates on constitutional points were unreadable. We still retained the characteristics of that English race which can devise a constitutional system, but is incapable of lucid constitutional argument.

We called our country the Republic of the Federated States of Australia, which will explain the letters F.S.A., still to be read on articles of federal property. Our federation was of the loosest kind, and of an earlier date than separation. There had been a political phantom called the Federal Council, which had gradually been accepted by all the Colonies; but it had no power.

An attempt had been made to create a real federation, and a scheme had in fact been drawn up and published. But no colony would accept it without amendments, to which the others could not be got to agree. So the States kept nearly every local institution which they had possessed as Colonies. We held our loans on State responsibility. The old Colonial Custom Houses and the old tariffs still remained; so did the Colonial Post Offices. The old stamps with the Sovereign's likeness on them were still valid; but new designs, usually running more even than before to emus, wallabies, black swans, and cockatoos, were also introduced. The several legislatures had passed acts constituting the old Federal Council the representative and supreme administrator of the Republic. The Council "Sitting in Judicial Session," superseded the Committee of the Privy Council as the Court of Ultimate Appeal. The Council also was divided for administrative work into several committees which supervised Foreign Affairs, Defence, Federal Finance, &c. The last was for some time confined to the payment of the salaries and expenses of the Councillors. Our small military force, though given a federal organization before separation, was still paid by each state according to its quota of troops.

One not unimportant, and as it has turned out beneficent, change was quickly introduced. In each state, of course, an elected governor took the place of the old Royal Nominee. In most cases he was elected by vote of the two houses of the Legislature in convention. In all he held office for a fixed term, varying according to the State, from three to six years. The Governor chose the members of his Cabinet, each selection requiring the confirmation of a joint Committee of the two houses; and the service of the ministers lasted till the expiration of the Governor's own term. Separation at least delivered us from the spectacle of nearly continuous struggles for offices of greedy politicians. These struggles could now only recur at regular and fairly long intervals. The Federated States as a whole

were represented in the personal sense by the President of the Old Federal Council, who was chosen annually by his colleagues. We were not able to agree upon a Capital, so when the Federal Council was not sitting in Tasmania the President resided in his own State. This was very inconvenient; but at first there was not much Federal work to do, and we hardly noticed the obvious objections to the plan.

Amongst one section of our people, Separation was decidedly unpopular. That section was the moneyed class. The rich men, who had done so much to make it inevitable, regretted separation when it came, because they feared that its financial effects might be unfavourable to their plans. Their families professed to look down upon the new occupants of the Government Houses. Their chances of becoming personally acquainted with a Countess or a Marchioness, or of being received by some such august personage during a future London season, had considerably diminished. They refused to be comforted by the predictions of those who assured them that as we were now in the same position as the Americans, we should like them receive equal attention in Europe. These cheerful prophets forgot that we were, so to speak, much more recent than the Americans, and that the latter were not very readily welcomed into the higher English Society a couple of generations back. Besides it was no use our pretending to think otherwise; but our wealthiest man was almost poor compared with many American citizens. At Government House there was now no young Aide-de-Camp from the Guards or the more select Cavalry Corps for our own young men to take as a model of deportment; and no Lady Violet or Lady Gwendolen for our girls to imitate in voice and manner.

When first it was known for certain that Separation would really follow there was a sharp fall in our public securities. This was at once declared by Mr. Harrison and his friends to be merely the result of Stock Exchange machinations. After a little the quotations began to rise and the Developers were jubilant. But

our stocks did not nearly reach the figure from which they had fallen; and though the jubilation continued on the part of some, a great deal of it was manifestly put on. There had been a fall also in the English funds, but they had speedily recovered. The expenses of Government increased, though there was a moderate reduction in the salaries of the Governors. The Federal Council evinced a keen appetite for grants from the various States, and the difficulty of discussing its action in Legislatures in which it was only indirectly represented quite prevented any effective check being put upon its expenditure. We should have been ashamed to refuse it supplies, for we dreaded the ridicule which beginning independent existence as a nation with such a step would, no doubt, have drawn upon us.

The declaration of Australian independence had been generally received with pleasure by foreign powers, most of which made haste to recognise the new States. France and Russia openly proclaimed their delight. Germany, though less frank in displaying it, was seen to be possessed by a similar feeling. In the United States opinion was divided, the more general sentiment being that we had been rather foolish. The Irish faction of course rapturously applauded the step: but since the rise of the Farmers' Alliance and cognate associations to the rank of a powerful political party, that faction counted for little.

We soon found that independence had brought with it certain conditions which were not entirely to our liking. A civilized nation must have diplomatic representatives in foreign countries, and consular officers to assist its citizens who transact business abroad. Now, though men living on the spot are often ready to undertake consular duty in consideration of the right to wear official costume and receive fees, it is not easy to find anyone who will remain steadily at a distant, perhaps dull, diplomatic post without a fair salary. Each of our States contained many persons who felt confident that nature had intended them for a diplo-

matic career, and who would have been greatly disgusted if they had not been thought equal at least to a well-paid secretaryship. In the end, we sent abroad a good many Diplomats and a good many Consuls all tolerably well remunerated. The salaries were fixed and paid out by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Federal Council, but each State had to find the money for its own citizens employed in the Diplomatic and Consular Services. The arrangement was extremely cumbersome, but provincial jealousies which perpetuated local financial arrangements, prevented the establishment of any real federal revenue.

In our own House of Assembly there sat an eccentric gentleman over whose history hung much mystery. It was believed that he had been a member of the English bar, that, after a bitter quarrel with a near relation, he had committed some act of passionate violence which led to his being disowned by his family, and that he had left England determined never to return. After several years of a roving unsettled life in Australia he had been called to the New South Wales Bar, at which however, he practised only just enough to gain a moderate income. One curious thing about him was that he had for several terms been elected with undeviating regularity as Member of the Assembly by a remote country constituency with which he had had some sort of connection during the earlier part of his Australian career. His constituents were implicit believers in his talents, whilst his honesty was even more generally recognized. He had married a young woman of high character and unusual good looks born in a humble sphere: but she had died not long after the birth of a daughter, who at the time I write of had grown into a remarkably lovely girl.

Mr. Askew—for that was his name—lived in very unpretending style at Burwood, dividing his time between his forensic business, his legislative duties, and the care and education of his daughter. The last indeed was the main object of his life. But for the tender interest which he took in everything that con-

cerned her he might have been set down as an uncompromising misanthrope. He never appeared in society; associated but little with his brother lawyers; and in the Assembly attached himself to no particular leader, but sat in sombre isolation apart from the other members. In marked contrast to Australian legislators, almost without exception, he never intervened in a debate unless he had something of real importance to say, spoke briefly and to the point, and occupied himself chiefly in useful but unostentatious committee-work. When a Minister proposed something more than ordinarily foolish, Mr. Askew was wont to ask pertinent and sarcastically shaped questions which made even our pachydermatous politicians wince. His generally saturnine humour relaxed in only one direction. Though he rarely lost an opportunity of pouring ridicule upon the schemes of the Developers, beneath the sarcasms which he levelled at them could be discerned a distinct element of good-natured tolerance.

In the few visits that I had paid to the House, my eye almost involuntarily wandered to the quarter in which Mr. Askew habitually found a seat. He was certainly the most attractive figure in the Assembly. His slight and even elegant form, his olive tint and clear cut features, all the more noticeable on his closely shaven face, the unstudied neatness of his dress, and the ease of his attitudes and gestures, marked him out distinctly from the little mob of over-tailored plutocrats and shaggy adventurers by whom he was surrounded. I had made acquaintance with him in the way of business. He had been counsel in a case in which I was interested, and in which an attempt—fortunately successful—had been made to prevent a great insurance company from dealing dishonestly with some of its clients. Mr. Askew was on our side and against the company, and it was evident that he put his whole heart into the work of stopping a great corporation from using its enormous money power for purposes of extortion.

Our acquaintance ripened into the nearest approach

to intimacy that Mr. Askew's habits rendered possible. I found out that he received by nearly every mail a package of books from Europe and the United States, and that he took in regularly a large number of reviews and magazines in English and other languages. Occasionally when a subject in which I happened to take an interest was discussed in one of these, he would lend it to me, not uncommonly bringing me the magazine or volume himself. Sometimes I carried it back to him in person. Thus it happened that mine was one of the few houses in Sydney which he ever entered, and I one of the few persons ever received in his. It was refreshing to observe the relations between him and his daughter Clara. The filial devotion of the beautiful girl, and the affectionate and ever-vigilant care of her father seemed to have no bounds. Askew was too kind a parent and too sensible a man not to perceive that as Clara grew up, the hermit life at Burwood, however congenial to him, would be unsuited and altogether unnatural to her. It could be seen that he wished her to have friends of her own age.

My wife was quick in discovering this. One Sunday afternoon Mr. Askew, who had brought me the new number of the *Deutsche Rundschau* in order that I might read a striking estimate of Ranke's position as a historian, had lingered longer than was his custom in our drawing room. With an abruptness very unusual in him he at length rose and turned to leave saying, "My daughter will have been wondering what has become of me." It was the first time that, except in her presence, I had ever known him allude to her. My wife said, "You must bring her with you the next time you come. I should like very much to know her." Askew hesitated; on which my wife appealed to him with a smile, "If only to gratify my woman's curiosity you should let me make your daughter's acquaintance. I have heard so much of her from my husband." A slight colour came into Askew's cheeks as, with more than his usual deliberation, he replied, "I will do so with pleasure. I know that in Mrs. Bland she will find

a real friend." There was a warmth in his farewell which neither my wife nor I had ever discerned before.

As he disappeared in the shrub-bordered approach, my wife said to me, "Do not ask the young Winningtons to luncheon next Sunday. Mr. Askew may not like his daughter at her first visit to find herself in a circle of young men whom he does not know." I concurred, and arranged that the friends mentioned should be invited for an earlier day. These young Winningtons were especial favourites of us both. A third brother, older by several years than the two of whom we spoke, had been my schoolfellow and great friend. We often spent part of our holidays together, and I had received many kindnesses at the hands of his father and grandfather, the latter a fine old Nottinghamshire squire, whose house, Carnaby Court, is one of the best known places in the county. Not long after I came out to Australia my friend's father succeeded to Carnaby; and a year or two before the time of which I am writing my old schoolfellow was accidentally drowned on the coast of Albania, when returning in a small boat to his yacht from a shooting expedition.

Herbert Winnington, the elder of the two surviving brothers, was a lieutenant on board the flag ship of the Admiral on the Australian station. Osmund, a year younger, was a subaltern in a Lancer regiment at the time stationed in India, and had obtained a few months' leave of absence to visit his brother and see something of Australia. Both brothers were always welcome visitors at Step-aside. Both were delightful companions; and Herbert not the less so because there was a gravity in his character which showed that, however gay on occasions, he took the serious things of life seriously. I had been almost surprised by the evident depth of the regret with which he took our act of separation. He disliked speaking of it, and he regarded it with apprehension; and he once closed one of our few conversations on the subject with the words, "I sincerely hope that it will not be so bad for Australia

as I cannot help fearing that it will be." The act, had, or course, made an important difference in our relations with the English Squadron. There had been a settling of accounts and a transfer of property, which processes, it is pleasant to record, had been conducted with courtesy and kindly feeling on both sides. The Naval Headquarters had been shifted to Auckland, whither the Admiral was on the point of proceeding with his ships.

If there was any difference in the regard in which I held the two brothers, Osmond Winnington perhaps came first. He was strikingly like my poor deceased friend. He was tall, and his handsome, manly face, embrowned by the Indian sun, often recalled that of my old schoolfellow. He had seen some active service in a frontier campaign in which he had distinguished himself by his courage, and even more by his discreet behaviour when in charge of an outlying post. Young as he was his name had got to be known in the Army; but so modest was he that no one could have divined from anything that he ever said or wrote that he himself had any high opinion of his own performances. He was in truth a fine specimen of the noble English lads, many of whom had cheerfully laid down their lives in campaigns waged for ignoble ends of which they knew nothing, in Burmah, in Afghanistan, in the Eastern Soudan, and in other countries.

On the afternoon of Monday I met Mr. Harrison in Hunter Street. His face wore a radiant expression, and as soon as he perceived me he hastened to communicate some of the pleasure which it was obvious that he felt. "I am just on my way to the House," he observed. "I am going to move the Diplomatic and Consular Service estimates immediately after questions." His manner of saying "Diplomatic and Consular" was worth hearing. It was almost solemn. He felt that this first voting of some £17,000 or £18,000 was a great occasion. We Australians were actually going to have real diplomatists and consuls, putting the public to expense and receiving pay like those of older countries.

We had indeed taken an independent place in the family of nations. Though much less interested in this portentous event than Mr. Harrison, I had to confess that I was not very busy and to consent to accompany him. Arrived at the legislative buildings Mr. Harrison got me a place behind the Speaker's chair, whilst he made his way to his seat.

The honourable member for Jerilderee or Bullamalong, I forget which, was insisting upon an answer from the Minister of Public Works to his question, whether that official could state to the House the grounds on which he had based his decision to purchase an imported iron roller for the Botanical Gardens instead of ordering one of local manufacture. The curiosity of legislators on this and some equally important matters having been satisfied, Mr. Harrison rose and made his proposals. He gave our share of the expenditure as rather less than £20,000 a year, honestly admitting that votes of the kind have a tendency to rise. Several honourable members improved the occasion by delivering speeches on the text of the magnificent destiny of Australia. After these flights of eloquence Mr. Askew inquired if he was correct in assuming that the voters of supplies would have the right of criticising foreign policy. Mr. Harrison started, looked surprised, and after but a brief hesitation replied with unwonted conciseness, "Of course." Mr. Askew observed that independent criticism of the conduct of foreign affairs in both Houses of half a dozen legislatures might be found to have some disadvantages. Neither Mr. Harrison nor his colleagues condescended to make any remark upon this, and Askew shortly after left the House and joined me, as I was myself going away, in the outer hall.

He spoke more fully than I had ever known him to speak before on the independence question. I found out why it was that in his sarcastic treatment of the Development Association and its doings there was always a *stratum* of good nature. The acts and declarations of the Developers were in his opinion merely

symptoms and ebullitions of youthful energy. They indicated a spirit which, if rightly guided might prove beneficent and lead us to glorious results. Politicians in the mother country were too cowardly to tell us, and politicians in the Colonies too ignorant to know the truth. Notwithstanding the lately fashionable denunciation of the London Colonial Office, at the bottom of every colonist's heart lay a conviction of the general superiority of the party leaders at home over the local article. There had been a certain restless suspicion that we had been undervalued, and this was encouraged by the timidity of prominent members of both English parties, who feared to say anything that we might think unpleasant. "They won't even blame us when we do wrong," was what we inwardly, perhaps unconsciously accepted as the exact formula to express extreme neglect. Notwithstanding high qualities which marked them out conspicuously from the herd of politicians all over the world, the leading public men of England were cursed with one shocking civic vice, moral cowardice. This, Askew considered, was the direct consequence of the later modes of party warfare. The art of success consisted of saying and doing nothing to which anyone could take serious objection. Political fencers almost perpetually stood on guard and rarely dared to make a thrust. Political strategy was passively defensive. "Should Great Britain ever be engaged in war," said Askew, "may the gods grant that her belligerent strategy shall not be of the same character." The old country had assumed the position of a parent who, when a lot of high-spirited lads are about to let their youthful energy carry them into danger, looks on and says not a word of warning for fear of giving momentary offence.

We had been walking along Castlereagh Street, as being quieter and more favourable to conversation than George Street, and so engrossed had I been in Mr. Askew's remarks that I was surprised at finding that we had almost reached the end of it. As I had to call at a bookseller's, I was compelled to part hastily with

my companion so as to reach the shop, which was in George Street, before closing time. When alone, I pondered much on what I had been listening to, of which I have only reported a small fragment. I now felt assured of that which I had for some time past been thinking: that Askew's eccentricity was of habit and demeanour, not of character. Like his voice, his thought had the good old-fashioned English ring in it.

Sunday came, bringing with it Askew and Clara to Step-aside. My wife was charmed with the daughter. "What a beautiful girl," she whispered, as it were involuntarily, too low for our guests to hear her, though I caught the remark. The heat of our southern summer had long been past, the effulgent autumn was waning, and it was a bright and cool afternoon. Clara Askew, whom I now for the first time saw in walking dress, never looked more lovely. A tightly-fitting jacket of some woollen stuff set off her light and graceful figure. Becomingly perched upon her head was a dainty little hat, which seemed to throw her delicately-fashioned features into plainer relief. The cool breeze and the long walk had brought a warmer flush to a cheek that already rivalled a faintly-tinted rose. Soon after she was seated she ungloved a hand, and, carrying it to her bosom, unclasped a fastening trinket and displayed a delicate and swan-like throat. My wife and I could hardly keep our eyes off this fair picture, and Askew, noticing us, was perceptibly not unmoved.

We soon paired off. The two ladies got deep in conversation on a sofa near the fire-place, and the father and I before a window from which we looked towards the harbour. We two men talked of many things, of books, of passing events. It was not easy just then to keep literature and politics asunder. The establishment of Australian independence had brought forth a host of books and pamphlets. Sir Charles Dilke was the first considerable personage to break ground with *The Shattering of Greater Britain*. The book was clever, and here and there sparkled with something of the

spirit that had shone in an earlier production. But something more than mere cleverness was wanted; and that something no one now hoped for from the author. There were, moreover, a want of heartiness in the volume, and evidence of insufficient care, both of which had been noticed in his later writings. J. R. Seeley brought out his *Contraction of England*, in which, with much learning and in a clear style, he proved his own inability to fathom the *arcanum* of our Empire. A more solid work was a new edition of James Bryce's *Colonial Commonwealths*. As a mercantile speculation this was highly successful. Everybody wanted to read about Legislative Councils and Houses of Assembly; so the book had a rapid sale. Its descriptive parts were as admirable as those of the writer's former account of the American Commonwealth; but unhappily there was the same reluctance as in that to formulate obvious inferences and to refrain from weakening conclusions by adding qualifications intended to placate the populations whose institutions and moral condition were described.

The most important contribution to the discussion, for such it had really become, was a little volume of less than two hundred pages by John Morley, which he entitled *On Agreements*. Even in Australia we could feel something of the stir created by the publication of this memorable book. For some years the author had descended but rarely into the literary arena, having been lured into the less pure atmosphere of parliamentary life. His new venture was worthy of his former fame. It disclosed the same urbane irony, the same almost French precision of diction, the same calmness of style as his earlier writings. Phrases from it, as had some from other works of his, hung in the memory and passed from mouth to mouth. The text was the failure of political systems, however broadly conceived, to secure the unity which resulted as a matter of course from concord of interests and sentiments. With the austere vigour, if not the impassioned fervour of a Hebrew prophet, the author rebuked those who had aimed a criminal blow at the British democracy by a needless

partition of it at a moment when it had especial need of closed ranks and a united front.

Askew spoke of the book almost with enthusiasm. That the Australian proletariat, for so miserably insignificant an incident as that which precipitated independence, should have been wheedled or coerced into deserting their brethren in the United Kingdom appeared to him as shameful as it was foolish. Of the author of the book he spoke less heartily. It was evident that he had no longer the full faith in him which once he had. That the John Morley of the *Fortnightly Review*, the John Morley of the *Pall Mall Gazette*,—"which," said Askew, "in his time offered the one opportunity yet given to Englishmen for the honest exposition of reasoned democratic principles"—that one who had done so much and from whom so much was hoped, should have been content to wade through the mire of politics amongst the leaders of a parliamentary army reinforced by auxiliaries whose moral armoury seemed equipped with the poisoned barb of the Melanesian and the scalping knife of the Sioux, was to him pitiable indeed. My visitor sympathised with the cause associated with the author's name but reprobated all covenants with such allies. The new book gave further hopes, hopes which my children, who have learned to honour the statesman as he afterwards shewed himself, will know were amply fulfilled.

Our discussion was broken off by my wife's inquiry if Mr. Askew would take a cup of tea, so we both drew nearer the little table by the side of which she and Clara were now sitting. A general talk followed, during which a promise was obtained from Askew that Clara—who had never been aboard a man-of-war—might be shown over the Admiral's ship under my wife's guardianship. This point had just been settled when the Winningtons were announced. A shade of regret, not unobserved by Askew, passed over my wife's face; but it was lost in her greeting of the two young men. We introduced our visitors to each other and—the excursion to the ship having been mentioned—Herbert Winnig-

ton proposed luncheon in the wardroom, and would take no refusal, except from Askew, who with courteous firmness excused himself. Much as we desired to avoid the subject it was not extraordinary that before long we found ourselves talking of the separation. The approaching departure of Herbert's ship, as one of its immediate consequences, made this inevitable. Clara, who had been listening rather than joining in the conversation, surprised me by unexpectedly remarking with much decision of tone, "Although I am Australian born, no separation artificially brought about will ever make me think myself other than an Englishwoman. I believe that there are tens of thousands in Australia who feel as I do." This strong expression of feeling was followed by a general silence, after which the conversation took another turn. Osmund, who it was easy to see had been much impressed by Miss Askew, appeared to drink in every word that she had uttered. His glance was ever and again wandering to her. They exchanged a few words, but as a rule he talked to my wife. The Askews were the first to leave, and the two young brothers soon followed them. When they were gone I remarked, "Our young Lancer seemed to be rather taken with Miss Clara."

My wife made no answer; but sat as if fully occupied with her own thoughts, thoughts which I fancied I could divine.

CHAPTER II.

(BEING CHAPTER XV OF THE "REMINISCENCES, &c.")

THE time for the ships of war to leave for New Zealand was near at hand. Indeed, the Admiral was in haste to get away, and only the final settlement of certain matters of official business delayed him. Osmund was to return to India by a steamer leaving on the day fixed for Herbert's departure. There was much gaiety in the interval. The young naval officers were generally liked, and few entertainments were considered complete without some of them being present. As for Osmund Winnington he was invited everywhere. My wife had constituted herself Clara's regular chaperon, and took her to many hospitable houses, with her father's sanction. Naturally she and Osmund met repeatedly. What his feelings were evident; but, as far as I could discern, Clara made no sign. Sometimes I fancied that I noticed some slight start or change of colour when he appeared; but I generally ended by believing that there had been no such thing, and that I had only seen what I had thought I ought to find.

The final festivity was to be a grand farewell dinner to the Admiral and his officers the evening before the sailing of the Squadron. The Admiral, a burly and rosy-faced veteran, was a general favourite. He had a fund of short, cheery sayings always at his command with which he generally managed to please his hearers. Besides, he was known to be a sincere friend to Australia, and one who had spared no trouble to give her, as far as the duty rested on him, the security

which she might some day require. The Governor was to take the chair at the dinner, which was to be given in the Town Hall. All the superior public officials were to be present; and to make the whole affair as ceremonious as possible, a special landing place for the disembarkation and return of the Admiral and his officers was arranged at the Circular Quay. From thence carriages conveyed them to the Hall. As there was a long list of speeches, the dinner hour was fixed at six; so that the procession of carriages passed through the streets in broad daylight. The quay and the neighbouring streets were crowded. Never since the memorable day on which the New South Wales contingent sailed to the help of their brethren in the Soudan had such an imposing demonstration been made. The Admiral's popularity, undoubted as it was, could by no means adequately account for it. The whole thing was altogether undesigned and spontaneous. It thoroughly astonished Mr. Harrison and his Developer friends, for it showed that the invisible ties which bound the Englishmen of Australia to the Englishmen of the old land had not been severed by an artificial separation. The same story came from every other colony, demonstrations varying in size according to the place, but all alike in fervour, having been made on the departure of each portion of the English Squadron.

The great difficulty of an Australian public dinner at the time of which I write, was how to limit the number of speeches, so many were the orators who would have been mortified if not asked to display their eloquence. This difficulty must have been experienced in this case, for the list of toasts was of portentous length. I was amused to find that young Osmund Winnington had to make a speech. As Herbert's brother it was considered a kindly and graceful act to invite him to the banquet, and as he happened to be the only English military officer present he was asked to return thanks for the English Army. Herbert and I sat together, and from our place we could see Osmund, who was nearer the

President's chair. He wore his Lancer uniform, and in few assemblies could have been found a manlier or a handsomer figure. After, according to a courteous arrangement, the English Royal Family had been duly honoured, the turn of the Navy came, the toast being proposed in a set speech of considerable length by Mr. Harrison. The senior English Captain returned thanks, it having been arranged that the Admiral should respond to the special farewell toast later on. With the toast of the Army, Osmund's name was coupled; and his brother and I watched for his rising with some little anxiety, as we knew it was to be his first attempt at public speaking.

The galleries were crowded with ladies, who had come in to hear the speeches. When Osmund rose there was a rustle above us as the fair occupants of the galleries bent forward to get a good view of him, and an audible whisper of admiration passed along them. My wife and Clara Askew were by chance so placed that the young soldier stood facing them. Soon after coming in my wife had distinguished him amongst the crowd of diners; but Clara's impassive look failed to show her whether or not she too had made him out. The young fellow, with a slight bow to the Governor and another to the Admiral, in a few simple well-turned sentences thanked the proposer of the toast and the company for their kind reception of it. He expressed his grateful recognition of the hospitable kindness with which he had been received everywhere in Australia, and though he attributed much of this to the well-known hospitality which we showed to every stranger worthy of it, and much to his belonging to a service which he knew we all admired, he yet attributed a great deal more to the fact that he was an Englishman. At the word "Englishman," a mighty shout arose, and hundreds of hands rapped out loud applause. Till this subsided Osmund, who had remained standing, kept looking towards the gallery in front of him till my wife believed that he had discovered her and her companion. The latter had been

intently watching him whilst he was speaking. On silence being restored, Osmund went on to say that he could hardly express his appreciation of all the kindness shown him better than by declaring that—even at that moment of festivity—his heart was filled with sadness at the thought that on the morrow he was to leave our hospitable country most probably never to return. His lips trembled as he uttered the last few words; but he finished the sentence clearly and sat down.

As his closing utterance reached the gallery a slight tremor passed over Clara's frame, and as though against her will, she raised a hand to her forehead, but quickly remembering herself, lowered it again. She then clutched convulsively at my wife's skirt, and turning, murmured something too faintly to be audible. Over her face had stolen an ashen pallor, and her lips were firmly pressed together.

"Clara, dearest, are you ill? do tell me what it is," my wife whispered to her, but no sound came from her bloodless lips. Taking her hand my wife sat silently by her side, hoping that a few minutes' quiet might restore her enough at least to be able to move away. She had not long to wait till Clara stood up saying—but with effort, "If you do not wish me to stay any longer, Mrs. Bland, I should like to go now. My father will have already come to take me home."

"Certainly, dearest, it is time for us both to go," was my wife's reply, as rising herself she led the way to the staircase. Leaning against a column on the spacious landing was Mr. Askew, waiting to relieve her of her charge. Seeing the two ladies approach he stepped forward and was about to utter some courteous greeting when he caught sight of Clara's marble face as she stood a little behind with trembling fingers trying to fasten the light cloak which her chaperon had hung around her shoulders before quitting the gallery. Darting an inquiring glance at my wife, he asked, "Has she been ill? what has ailed her? the heat? was the air inside too close?" In a low voice my wife

made him understand that neither heat nor closeness was the cause. He turned towards his daughter, as though to question her, on which my wife laid a hand upon his arm and whispered, "My friend, not now, do not ask her, at least not now. It was—it was—you ought to know of it. It is—well, it is—the old, old story." "Ah!" he said almost sharply, "Who?" The reply came in one low spoken word, "Osmund!" His anxious expression relaxed a little as he went to his daughter's side.

A burst of applause greeting the finish of the Admiral's speech came through the opened door as I passed out to join the party on the stairs. Askew with his daughter went down first, my wife and I following a step or two behind. I too had noticed the pallor of Clara's cheek, but I dared not ask the reason then. Outside the hall there was a blaze of light from a thousand flaring torches borne by an impatient crowd, eagerly expecting the moment when the Admiral might be escorted by an improvised procession to his boat. We found our carriages quickly, and as we parted with our friends, Askew pressed my hand in silence. When our carriage had got clear of the crowded street my wife murmured softly, "That poor girl! are they to be separated for ever?" I felt a tear fall upon my hand. I knew all now. There was no need to ask what had driven the colour from Clara's cheek.

The scene presented by the harbour on the next day was one not likely to be forgotten by any who witnessed it. The Admiral and his squadron were to leave before noon. The day was observed as a general holiday, not that people were gay, but because all wished to have one more look at the British ships before they went away. In this there was much more than mere personal regard for those on board them. The officers, it is true, had many friends; but their acquaintances and friendships were strictly limited to the small number of families which were supposed to constitute "Society." The sailors also had their own circle of friends, which large as it was, for they were general favourites, did not

comprise a tenth of the population of the city. All seemed to think that they were about to lose something, even though they could not tell what it was. From an early hour people streamed from all parts to the Domain, or to the many wharves from which steamers were to start to accompany the ships as far as the Heads. Lady Macquarrie's Chair was black with spectators. Innumerable steamers, steam launches, yachts, sailing boats, and rowing boats covered the waters of the harbour. As the ships began to move away, slowly at first, and then, as they approached Bradley's Head, faster, thousands of hats were waved, and thousands of handkerchiefs fluttered in the air. There was no shouting, no cheering, nothing but a hum of conversation, such as should come from forty thousand pairs of lips. Indeed, most people spoke in a low tone, for the demeanour of the enormous crowd was grave, strangely grave. The day was nearly calm, but now and then a light breath of wind ruffled the surface of the water. By one the strains of *Auld Lang Syne* were wafted to the shore. The crowd suddenly became silent. The next gentle breeze carried on its wings *God Save the Queen!* Someone on the rocks close to the Point began to sing the tune; those nearest him took it up. The singing soon spread, till thousands of voices were intoning with solemn fervour the English National Anthem—theirs no longer. Tears rolled down many cheeks, and when the song had ended, the sound of sobbing took its place.

Just as the last of the ships was disappearing, I turned to go homewards. My eye caught the flagstaff on Garden Island, and, for the first time, I noticed that St. George's Cross no longer waved from it. The flag had been replaced by the ensign of independent Australia. This banner had not been finally accepted without much debate. At first each state had a flag of its own, and hotly insisted that it would recognise no other. After protracted discussions in the legislatures, in the press, wherever indeed discussion could be carried on, a flag to some extent resembling that from under

the folds of which we had just withdrawn was adopted. Its principal recommendation in the eyes of most people was its likeness to the old ensign, around which gathered such glorious memories. The white field was retained, but on it was a cold-looking cross of blue, whilst an inartistic ring of stars, one for each state, with a large one in the middle for the whole federation, occupied the place of the Union Jack. The design, as Askew once remarked, gauged our capacity for being original. As for Mr. Harrison and some of his Developer friends, they sincerely thought it the very perfection of taste, which was natural, as they probably designed it.

Every important newspaper in Australia on the day after the departure of the Squadron contained a leading article on the subject. Almost without exception these were couched in friendly terms. The effect of the kindly feeling thus manifested was unhappily marred by the self-sufficient manner in which it was expressed. "No one was likely to attack Australia. Australia was only a young nation, but she would know how to defend herself if necessary. Young as Australia was, she was perfectly able to exact proper respect for her meanest citizen in any part of the world. Australia wanted the assistance of none, she could rely on herself, &c., &c." One manifestation of this self-reliance had taken the form of getting rid of all the Imperial officers and sergeants who had been instructing and disciplining our small local force of troops. Their posts did not long remain vacant, as there was a general scramble for them, and politicians found them useful in encouraging and rewarding friends.

For some time after independence the course of affairs was much the same as it had been before that great event. All, or at least, nearly all of those signs of prosperity which ministerial speakers are fond of displaying before their audience were declared to be visible. Official statisticians covered pages of reports with the most encouraging percentages. The shadows that occasionally fell on the bright prospect were declared to be only the effects of passing clouds, which

tended rather to heighten the general brilliancy. In certain districts the rainfall had not been quite up to the average, in spite of the fact that Colonial Office influence had ceased to exist; but that was fully compensated by a greater number of inches elsewhere. The Customs' revenue remained stationary, but then such and such a year used for comparison had been exceptionally prosperous; besides, it was after all a mere matter of book-keeping. A different system of computation would make it quite clear that everything was right. The railway returns came out less favourably than had been anticipated; but then a new method of compiling them had recently been introduced.

There was one shadow, however, which did not pass away so quickly as was hoped, but on the contrary showed signs of deepening. The price of our Government securities would not rise to its former level. Though no one dared to do so in public, we could not help privately contrasting the state of our own with that of the New Zealand funds. New Zealand, as I have already said, had maintained her connection with the mother country, and her stocks continued to rise. Indeed, so steady was their advance that the "Maoris," as we used to call our neighbours, were said to be contemplating a conversion. What we did not venture to do ourselves others did not hesitate to do for us. The London *Economist* published a brief series of calculations, which brought out the unpleasant result that at the prices of the day the return for investments in our public stocks was not very different from that derived from some South American securities. Our journalists and politicians did not waste time in contesting this. They confined themselves to reiterating that we were about to become the greatest nation upon earth. Compare our revenue so soon after our independence with that of the United States even a quarter of a century after theirs. America was all very well, but then look at our climate. There were no blizzards in Australia. We had no ice-bound rivers, no plains hidden by snow for nearly half the year. There was

California, to be sure: but then America was not all California. Besides, consider the advantages of our remote and insular position.

Our expenditure did not fall, indeed it rapidly increased. Mr. Harrison's confession of the tendency of diplomatic service votes to rise shewed that he understood the situation. We soon had an opportunity of testing the value received for the money voted. A Sydney firm with a branch under a different name at Auckland had opened a business in Ecuador. To carry it on two vessels were employed, one hailing from Sydney under Australian, the other from New Zealand under British colours. The trade proved to be highly remunerative, so remunerative that certain friends of the Ecuadorian President thought that they ought to be allowed to "come in." Their application was rejected with promptitude, on which they began to threaten. Under whichever flag they might trade, Australians were not the men to be forced into paying blackmail without a struggle; so the threats were ridiculed, and the threateners defied. The Ecuadorian Customs' laws seemed to have been made on purpose to meet such cases. For some alleged infraction of these laws, both steamers were seized. The British Minister and our own representative at once took steps to obtain their release. They were put off with unmeaning answers from day to day.

There was an English squadron lying at Panama, and the Minister probably communicated with the Admiral, for one morning three British ships quietly steamed into Quayaquil, and, as chance would have it, anchored by the side of the detained New Zealand vessel. A vigorous note was delivered to the Ecuadorian Foreign Minister, who at once consented to release the steamer. Our Minister framed an even more vigorous note, but, as he had only the moral force of his own epistolary style to back him, all the satisfaction he got was a reply couched in the strongest language known to South American diplomacy. The Australian steamer remained in Ecuadorian hands.

A most unpleasant feeling was aroused in certain quarters in Australia when news of this affair reached us. Angry questions and insufficient answers were put and given in every House of Assembly and nearly every Legislative Council in the Federation. Fortunately our intense provincialism and our distance from other countries, which had kept us profoundly ignorant of foreign affairs, which we found it hard to understand, prevented any great popular excitement. Certain of the Developers, with even less good sense than usual, and, it is to be feared, some malice, circulated a report that the retention by the Ecuadorians of the Australian vessel was largely due to the disloyalty of the British Minister. In our political circles conduct of this sort, if it annoyed a rival and gave a small temporary triumph to oneself, was so much a matter of course that the report was generally believed. Either undesignedly, or perhaps expressly in defence of their servant, the British Government published a blue-book on the subject. From this it appeared that, under instructions from home, the British Minister had urged his Australian colleague to act in concert with him, but had been bluntly told that the Federated States of Australia were quite able to look after their own business. The feeling then turned against our representative. He was a certain Sir Peter Noake, K.C.M.G., a Melbourne stock and station agent, who had been much mixed up with Victorian politics, and who, having recently suffered severely in an unusually bold land speculation, had received the Ecuadorian Mission as the price of former services. In Sydney it was believed, or at all events asserted, that Sir Peter had deliberately disregarded the rights of the steamer's owners because they were business competitors from a rival city.

This greatly inflamed the jealousy between New South Wales and Victoria, a jealousy which independence had not been able to allay, and which promised to be prolific of mischief. What those who thought much about the matter were really concerned to

discover was the opinion of England. We were as anxious to know what that was as any retired citizen freshly settled in a county could be to learn what the neighbouring gentry thought of his first appearance at the covert-side. The telegraph had mercifully spared us insufficient abbreviations; and the newspapers brought by the mail were eagerly scanned for full reports of speeches and for leading articles. These were almost without exception considerate and courteous, there being in them rarely even a word that could hurt the most sensitive amongst us. It was a remarkable proof of the high value which we set on the good opinion of the old country that almost immediately after the arrival of the batch of English journals the irritation began to subside. Some weeks afterwards the telegraph announced that the "Kiribili," that was the name of the steamer detained by the Ecuadorians, had been released. It was as well perhaps that mail communication between Ecuador and Australia was not rapid. When full accounts reached us we learnt that the "Kiribili's" release had been due not to our envoy's efforts, but to a decision on the part of the owners to waste no more time, but let the President's friends "come in" on their own terms. By the time we heard this we had begun to forget the "Kiribili."

Our foreign relations next assumed a troubled aspect in a different quarter. Before independence, the various colonies had passed laws, some more some less stringent, for the restraint of Chinese immigration. These continued in force, and their diversity was a source of confusion and trouble. Several Chinamen endeavoured to land from a steamer at Cook-town without complying with the formalities exacted by the Queensland laws. They were arrested by the police, and, chiefly owing to the stupidity of the Custom House officials, were lodged in gaol, and their property seized. Being kept prisoners for an unwarrantable time, they contrived to transmit an appeal to the authorities in their own country. The Tsungli-Yamen at once entered into communication with our Envoy at Peking.

This gentleman sadly bungled matters, and at length got us into a position from which it was extremely difficult to retreat with dignity. All this time the Chinese immigrants were tenants of Cook-town gaol, our Minister in Peking putting off all promise of satisfaction of the demands pressed upon him. The Government of China sent a special Envoy to Hobart where the Federal Council was in session; but, owing to the obstinacy of the local authorities in Queensland, his mission was so protracted that it was virtually a failure.

The Chinese threatened strong measures, and, the threat becoming public property, they were laughed at for their pains. It was known that China had a navy at least numerically strong, and also that under the guidance of English officers, this navy had been made fairly efficient. The English officers, however, had withdrawn some years before, and it was believed that the navy had become thoroughly disorganised. A report was spread that a Chinese fleet was to be despatched to Australia to exact reparation for our treatment of the immigrants. This was looked upon as an excellent joke, and some of the newspapers made especially merry over it; while the comic journals published some cleverly drawn cartoons in which a squadron of Chinese armour-clads was to be seen flying before an Australian second class torpedo boat steered by the Minister of Defence. The more serious journals, such as the *Melbourne Argus*, the leading paper in Australia, and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, published long accounts of what the Chinese fleet "used to be." The whole population one morning was astounded by the announcement that five ships of war under the dragon flag accompanied by a steam collier had anchored off Cook-town. The water is rather shallow off that place, and ships of considerable draught cannot get very close in; but the Chinese Admiral anchored his five ships in a crescent quite near enough for their guns to have reached any part of the town. The local government at Brisbane was distracted. After many

contradictory orders a message was telegraphed to let the imprisoned immigrants go. They were quietly received with their property, which was also given up, by the Chinese Admiral, who blandly observed that the question of compensation might stand over to be settled by negotiation.

These proceedings had set the whole country in a flame. It was impossible to impute to our representative in China jealousy of another state, for he himself was a Queenslander, a lawyer of Townsville. In truth it was not treachery in either his case or Sir P. Noake's, but ineptitude and bad manners. It came out that the Chinese Squadron had been really guided by German officers, whose countrymen just then were very influential at the Imperial Court. This accounted for the resuscitation of the Chinese Navy. In the first moments of excitement we seemed to have completely lost our heads. When the Chinese ships were reported at Cook-town the Volunteers were called out at Melbourne 2,000 miles away, and the forts at the entrance to Port Phillip manned. The same thing was done at Sydney and even in Western Australia. But for the Superintendent of Marine, a retired officer of the English Navy, who kept his head, we should have blocked our harbour with mines, and rendered entering it dangerous if not impossible. Every one felt that we had been humiliated in the eyes of the world. We had begun by doing wrong; we had not had the decency to confess it or the strength to brazen it out. Some of us in our hearts were ready to admit that something more than big words was required of an independent nation living by commerce.

I used to see Mr. Askew almost daily just then. It was plain that he keenly felt what had occurred. Though he had little respect for its politicians, he had sincere regard and admiration for the country and its people generally; and he lamented that they should have been made to cut so sorry a figure. We had begun our state of independence without counting the cost of maintaining it or providing for its obvious

responsibilities. One afternoon I overtook him walking along Macquarrie Street, having been driven from the House of Assembly by the more than ordinarily unseemly conduct of certain members. We talked, as just then everyone did, of the Cook-town incident. Askew spoke with approbation of the way in which the affair had been handled in a number of the *Times* just received by mail. The same genuine desire to mitigate our feeling of mortification, which the English press had displayed in the Ecuador case, and the same sympathy were manifest now. But we were not insulted by a pretence of hiding the truth. Australia, said the *Times* writer, had committed one of those mistakes to which youth and inexperience had invariably shewn themselves liable. The primary cause of this mistake was not a thing to be ashamed of. It was a greater belief in the forbearance of foreign states than the history of international relations justified. We had fancied that we could get on without those material supports of an independent position which had invariably been found necessary. Our geographical situation to a greater extent than in the case of any other country shielded us against attack, but it did not completely defend us, and it by no means safe-guarded those interests which a country having relations with others must expect to see grow up and must be prepared to defend. It might be deplorable that intercourse between nations should seem to necessitate the possession of armed force, but as the world then was there no immediate prospect of anyone being in a position to dispense with it.

"We shall soon discover," said Askew, "that we must have a navy, if we are to have foreign connections. Our politicians have never discerned that even the colossal reserve power of the United States has never permitted them to dispense with one." I expressed the belief that we should find this expensive. "No doubt," he rejoined, "we shall have to pay for an inexperienced and inefficient force many times the moderate, indeed almost trifling sum which we so grudgingly handed over for the ubiquitous protection of the greatest navy

in the world." A demand for a fleet arose all over the Federation, and had to be satisfied. When we recalled, as men here and there were now not afraid to do, the small contribution we had remitted to the English Government on account of naval services rendered, we were amazed at the comparatively gigantic cost of the new force, which for two or three years at least would not come into effective existence. Expenses of Government were mounting up quickly and enormously. In many ways our financial position was of a kind to make the prudent uneasy. The loans in all the States were nearly expended. Labourers were being discharged in ever-increasing numbers, and were flocking into the great cities. Private investors in England, who used to send their capital out to be placed in Australia, because of the higher return, had been withdrawing it on a large scale. A partial drought had caused a heavy mortality amongst the sheep in several districts. It was anticipated that the season's wool-clip would not be large; but it had not been apprehended that it would fall so much below the average as it actually did. Our coal export fell off considerably. The export was principally to California. A powerful American syndicate had bought up the Nanaimo mines, and had contrived to get so heavy a duty laid upon Australian coal that the American market was closed to us. In New South Wales we were not worse off than the neighbouring states, some of which indeed were suffering even more severely. As more and more people were thrown out of work it became evident that some decided step was necessary. A crowd of men eager for employment might be seen daily besieging the public offices. To this sight we had not been unaccustomed in the days before independence; but it made few people anxious, because in the then state of our credit we felt that another loan could be easily raised, and fresh public works started to give employment to those who wanted it.

It was different now. The question between the several State Governments was, which was to be the

first to raise a loan? Each was afraid to begin, but each was determined, if the first were to succeed, to be the second if possible. In the end it was we who tried. The result was calamitous. Barely half the sum asked for was covered, and bids were accepted which in former years would have been met with derision. An attempt to raise a loan in the United States failed utterly. There were further withdrawals of private capital. The general stringency that ensued led to a large number of failures.

No man in business could remember so disastrous a time. Never in Australia had affairs worn a more gloomy aspect.

My wife had taken our little ones to Hobart for a summer outing; and she had expressed a wish that Clara Askew might accompany her. I discouraged the idea at first, because it seemed hard to leave her father alone in Sydney. Having found out, however, that there was a likelihood of his being called to Melbourne on professional business, and that his stay there might last some time, I warmly supported the proposal. Clara seemed to need a change. With my wife as her chaperon she still occasionally went into society; but it was not difficult to see that she went because she believed that her father wished her to go. There was something about her which made her seem different from what she used to be. In her look there was a determination which would have given a hard expression to a face less beautiful. It was the outward sign of firm resolve, a resolve to bear without complaint and in silence the sorrow that was gnawing at her heart. The delicate carmine of her cheek had grown fainter, and the firmness that her lips displayed made them appear thinner. Her demeanour was as gentle as ever.

She had always been mindful of others; and now her kindly consideration was even more conspicuous. She moved with a queenly grace in the circles which under my wife's charge she frequented, unconscious of the admiration which she everywhere inspired. As far as men were concerned, the admiration was displayed

only at a distance. At the first sign of a too close approach Clara assumed an almost icy frigidity which chilled all attempts at sentiment.

When the little party came back from Hobart the general condition of affairs was still more gloomy. The trade depression continued, nay, grew worse. The frequent bankruptcies had emptied many of the pretentious villas which studded the roads at Darling Point or hung over the waters of Double Bay. Askew, who also had returned, told me that it was much the same at Melbourne, and that Toorak bore quite a deserted air. Amongst the enormous population which our vicious financial policy had encouraged to congregate in the city, there was much distress. With this the Government—cut off from recourse to its habitual expedient in like cases, viz., fresh loans—evinced no ability to cope. Private associations were formed for relieving the worst cases. In work of the kind, Clara Askew took an active part; and the discretion and address with which she ministered to the suffering and the needy were the subject of general and appreciative comment. She was so much at Step-aside that she could not help occasionally hearing us speak of the Winningtons; but her perfect self-control never relaxed, at least in our presence. In her solitary moments, we felt sure, not even her resolution could have been persistently maintained.

One afternoon I was reading to my wife a letter just received from Herbert Winnington, when Clara was announced. I made no apology for continuing the reading. Both the brothers had returned to Europe, and the letter contained an account of a fishing expedition which they had made together to Norway. "It was very jolly," said the writer, "to be with Osmund again; but the poor old fellow is not half so cheery as he used to be. He will not say so; but one can see that he is unable to forget all that happened when he was in Sydney." I had read into the passage so far that I could not break off without an awkward disclosure of our belief as to Clara's feelings. When I had finished

the last sentence I glanced at her and saw that she wore her usual impassive look. From that time forth, nevertheless, both my wife and I fancied that we could see that our sweet friend had a less hard struggle with mournful feelings.

An ugly symptom of the depressed condition of the Federation was a large emigration from Australia to the British Colony of New Zealand. As in former years it had been our custom to contrast the prosperity of our own country with that of New Zealand. It was now the turn of the people of the latter to invert the process. The failure of our last attempt at obtaining a loan had been followed by a vast financial operation on the part of our insular neighbours. They had gone into the London market and raised with ease a great sum which enabled them to consolidate their whole public debt, and convert it into a single loan at very moderate interest. The English capital which had been withdrawn from private undertakings in Australia, now flowed into those of New Zealand in an ample stream. With us the general state of inquietude had some deplorable consequences. The jealousy between Victoria and New South Wales rose to fever heat. Some of our factory owners declared that our market was being flooded with Victorian manufactures smuggled across the Murray. They were ready, they said, to put up with a non-protective tariff, but they could not compete with virtually state-aided monopolists, who evaded all contribution to the public expenses of our own province. As the river shrank more and more under the continuing drought, a cry arose from our Riverina citizens that the Murray was being drained to irrigate land on the Victorian side. There may have been some truth in this, for the land in question was in the hands of a powerful Melbourne syndicate, the members of which were not the men to stick at trifles. They wanted to give at least an appearance of abundant irrigation before putting on the market as many blocks as the prevailing depression gave any hope of selling to advantage. Mr. Harrison and his colleagues could think

of no better plan than sending a detachment of our permanent artillery force to Albury. This naturally aggravated the situation. The Victorians formed a large volunteer camp near Wodonga, and armed a couple of small river steamers. To what pitch matters might have reached, is now hard to say. A much more important series of events turned our attention in a different direction and checked the exasperation. "If," said Mr. Askew, "the recurrence of similar phenomena under similar conditions constitutes a natural law, then—as shown by the record of events from the quarrel between Corcyra and Epidamnus through the age of the Santa-Annas, Soulouques, and Jefferson Davises down to that of the Fonsecaas and Balmacedas—it is a historical law that emancipated colonists must fight amongst themselves."

The great events to which I have just alluded need no long mention from me. They have been related at length in many histories. They culminated in a war between Great Britain and France. The disturbance that impending war is sure to cause had more than ever unsettled our commercial affairs, so that it seemed that we had at last reached the lowest depths of depression, and that any change must be for the better. Those who thought so were in time undeceived. When hostilities actually began there was a general feeling of gratification throughout the Federation that we were not involved in them. We congratulated ourselves on at last reaping the advantages of separation from a mother country never free from risk of awkward entanglements. We were now going to obtain all the benefits which were supposed to accrue to honest neutrals when two great industrial nations fall out. Our proclamation of neutrality was promptly issued. Unfortunately owing to the necessity of reducing expenditure somehow or other we had dismantled our little navy, and had no power whatever of enforcing respect for our neutrality.

The beginning of the war found Great Britain rather better prepared than usual, and a fierce energy soon supplemented this novel readiness. Owing to the loss

of its stations in Australia and Tasmania—the ports of which were open equally to both belligerents—the British Navy was at first unable to protect adequately the Australian trade carried on in British ships. Great as we thought this trade and great as even in its then shrunken state it was to us, it was after all but a small fraction of that of the British Empire. The British naval authorities took the only wise course in the circumstances. They prepared to defend the great bulk of their country's trade and left the small fraction to shift for itself till more complete arrangements could be made. This was a great surprise to us. We had assumed because our ocean trade was vital to us that it must be of equal importance to Great Britain. The discussions in England, of which the naval policy of the government was the subject, opened our eyes to the significance of proportions. The New Zealand trade, especially that bound for Europe, was well secured against an enemy's attacks. Insurance rates to and from Australia rose high enough to make a continuance of the trade with us doubtful, and nearly all seemed likely to pass to New Zealand and South America. French cruisers soon found out in what quarter they had the best chance of carrying on their depredations undisturbed, and whilst frequenting our ports under the usual restrictions as belligerents, captured ships just outside them merely because they sailed under the British flag.

It was arranged to put the ships trading to Australia under the Australian flag. The French refused to acknowledge transfers under this arrangement as genuine, and the captures went on as before. We had no means of forcing respect to our flag, which indeed outside Australia was hardly known by sight. The condition of the country was becoming pitiable, and we began almost to fear that even a return to peace would not restore to us that trade which had been diverted to other countries. Repeated appeals to the French having one and all failed to obtain redress, it occurred to some of our politicians that an application to the

United States might result in some advantage to us. A special mission was sent to Washington to secure the aid, if necessary the alliance, of the sister republic. When asked to bring pressure to bear on the French to make them respect neutral rights, the American Secretary of State put some inconvenient questions as to the origin of the vessels the capture of which was complained of. Being pressed to help us on more general grounds he drily answered that he "guessed the Monroe doctrine did not run into east longitude." The answer got abroad, perhaps not without design, and effectually stopped further negotiations.

Australia offered a striking illustration of the pitiful position of a weak neutral in a contest between two great maritime powers. We suffered absolutely more, relatively enormously more than England. Losses which to her would have been comparatively slight were to us ruinous. The one thing necessary to our prosperity, unobstructed sea transport of the products of our country, was now denied to us. As the war went on, the great storehouses in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Brisbane became choked with bales of wool which could not be shipped because there were no ships to take them. At length, though the drought had passed, no more wool came in, for the squatters found that it was no good to pay men for shearing the fleeces which none would buy. The produce of the gold and silver mines had from the first ceased to be exported in the hope that the French cruisers, finding none afloat, would leave our neighbourhood. The long lines of wharves at Newcastle were almost tenantless, the whole activity of the place being reduced to supplying merely local wants. There were also signs that these misfortunes were not mere passing troubles. The English Squadron enjoying in New Zealand advantages which the enemy's cruisers were there denied, viz., secure coaling and refitting ports, kept the sea communications of that colony practically clear of obstruction. The trade of New Zealand was, in consequence, largely extended. So was that of South America. The

additions to the two together only about equalled that which we had lost, and we felt that even with the return of peace it would be difficult to recover it.

In the general curtailment of expenditure imposed by the circumstances of the time on every industry, and indeed, on every family, our newspapers published few telegrams, though the cables were uninjured. Mails came with fair frequency, but not regularly and not quickly. We received accounts, sometimes rather belated, of the events of the war. Mr. Winnington used to write to me every month or two, sending messages, and sometimes even brief letters from his sons. We thus learnt that Herbert had been doing good service afloat, and for participation in a dashing torpedo-boat exploit had been promoted. The English newspapers told us a great deal more than the father's letters of the brilliant services of Osmund. A detachment of his regiment had formed part of a force sent on one of those over-sea expeditions which have so often thrown lustre on the United Services of England. In this Osmund Winnington had greatly distinguished himself on two different occasions, on the second of which he was severely wounded. Later news informed us that he was recovering from his wound. Clara Askew read or listened to all accounts of the war with deep attention, but outwardly appeared to take no more interest in the case of Osmund than in that of his brother or of any young officer of her acquaintance. I made a remark to this effect to my wife, who looked at me for a moment with a grave smile, and then said, "It may appear so, my dear, but she reads the English newspaper containing the account of Osmund's brave exploits every time that she comes here. I have not cared to let her see that I know it, but so it is."

It would not be easy to give an adequate description of the demeanour of the wealthier classes of the Australian community during these troubled times. The anger which they felt in consequence of their pecuniary losses rose almost to the pitch of frenzy. They abused the French; they abused the English.

Now they reviled the English Navy for not at once by some overwhelming victory putting an end to the war. Now they hurled opprobrious epithets at the French for not fighting like men instead of preying on defenceless merchant ships. They found it convenient to forget, or were too angry to remember, how much by stupidly facilitating a separation from the greatest naval power in the world they had assisted the deprivations. I could not help contrasting their demeanour with the spirit and behaviour of the poorer classes. These had to undergo real privations and much suffering, which they bore for the most part uncomplainingly. The wealthy, or those who had been wealthy, abated none of their arrogance towards those less well off than themselves. This at length led to some far from unnatural exasperation. The masses began to ask, what gain had independence brought, and to whom its establishment was to be really imputed? It really seemed as though we were about to add to our miseries that of a conflict of classes.

One afternoon Mr. Askew was accompanying me towards Darling Point when we found ourselves stopped by a crowd near St. James' Church. The "Unemployed" used to assemble in great numbers around Prince Albert's statue, where they were frequently addressed by some one or other of their orators. That these men must have refrained from suggesting violence was conclusively shown by the fact that after hearing their speeches, the crowd, which certainly included many in actual want, invariably dissolved quietly. Nevertheless the "upper classes" hotly demanded that these meetings should be forcibly stopped. Fortunately our police authorities had sense enough to ignore these demands. Trying to make our way through the crowd we found our further progress arrested when we were near enough to the statue to hear what the orator of the moment was saying. "We may as well stay and listen," said Askew to me, "we shall probably meet with as much eloquence and more good sense than we should get over there," with a nod in the direction of

the House of Assembly. The orator was a middle-aged man, and by his accent most likely Australian born. He pointed out with a clearness and a force which surprised us both, the needlessness and folly of our separation from the rest of our fellow-countrymen. He did not allude to the present miserable state of the country to prove his argument, but merely to demonstrate that it, if nothing else could, would show those who clamoured for independence what a grievous mistake they had made. His point was the ignorance and blindness of men who, clambering into office by the use of arts he would not name, had wholly ignored the immense force of the sentiment of nationality or race, the most powerful political factor of modern times. Our politicians, he said, driven by the contemplation of the troubles into which they had plunged the country, were now reported to be endeavouring to arrange an alliance with England. At this time of day that would be even worse than useless. What we wanted was "not alliance, but reunion." The phrase, as the saying then ran, "caught on." It was shouted by hundreds of the bystanders, who with the same phrase frequently interrupted the speech. It became the watchword of the day. Throughout the Federation it was printed in a prominent place in the leading newspapers at every issue. Pamphlets advocating the policy which it expressed were published broadcast. The words found their way into nearly every speech and every sermon. They appeared in huge letters over a multitude of institutions and places of business. Even now at the present day if my grandchildren are looking over some drawing room nick-nacks dating from the time of which I write, they may perhaps still be able to trace on some the words, "Not alliance, but reunion."

The nameless orator of Prince Albert's statue had with a happy phrase shaped the policy of an Empire. I need not describe the brief negotiations which ended in our re-admission into that brotherhood from which we had been self-exiled. Nor need I mention the constitutional changes made when the readmission took

effect. My descendants will have read the history of the times, and they will see under what a wise and beneficent constitutional system they live now. They will know how Federation became a substantial fact, and not a shadow; how the artificial barriers of tariffs were removed; how honest finance replaced the scheming of the loan monger and the jobber; how nine-tenths of our population recovered the great territorial heritage of which they had been despoiled by the other tenth. In the widely diffused prosperity that ensued, they themselves are sharers; as they are too in that mighty name which now embraces the English-speaking nations of the world.

Our beautiful harbour was again the scene of an imposing and memorable demonstration. By the irony of fate we had with nearly complete unanimity requested that the Sir Henry Thorndyke whose appointment to the government of Albert-land had been made the pretext for separation, should be the first Governor-General of the now solid Federation. It was arranged that Sir Henry should come to Sydney with an escort of ships of war, and make his way by land to the Federal capital. The water was again crowded with steamers and boats, this time gay with many flags. The headlands were again thronged with thousands, whilst thousands again lined the streets. Amidst deafening cheers Sir Henry and his staff landed in front of the Custom House. Immediately opposite the landing place a Customs official of my acquaintance had placed a window at my disposal, and here my wife, Askew, Clara, and I grouped ourselves to witness the disembarkation. As His Excellency steps ashore he receives a roll of paper—his reply to the address of the Mayor and Corporation—from a member of his staff. Why does Clara Askew blush and grow pale by turns? and finally sink with marble face upon the chair at hand? We look at the tall officer in the bright uniform, whose breast is decorated with the reward of valour. Yes! it must be, it is Osmund Winnington; Osmund

Winnington, but slightly altered and scarcely disfigured by the long scar that traces a sombre line upon his cheek.

I have but one thing more to tell, another reunion to recount. One bright day a happy company is assembled in St. Mark's pretty church at Darling Point. By the altar rails stands Major Osmond Winnington. The doors are thrown open. From the organ bursts forth a peal of joyous music. Leaning on her father's arm, veiled in white, and wreathed with snowy flowers, Clara Askew passes up the aisle to plight her bridal troth to the man she loves, the man whose love for her distance could not change nor time impair.

4.

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