

F15068

CHEAP EDITION.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

OLIVER SPENCE,

THE
AUSTRALIAN CÆSAR.

By S. A. ROSA.

Sydney :
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR,
302 PARRAMATTA ROAD,
PETERSHAM,
1895.

John McNally, Printer, 173 Sussex St., Sydney.



Portrait of the Author.

S. A. Ross

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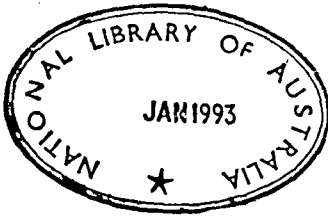
OLIVER SPENCE,

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OR
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M3335/F15068

14.1.93

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THE COMING TERROR.

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CHAPTER I.

THE ATTACK ON THE BANK.

CRASH! Crash!! Crash!!! went the falling timbers of the Austral Bank, while a furious and ferocious mob, drunken with wine and victory, shrieked, fought, and swore in front of the burning edifice. The features of the men and women who composed this mob, rendered savage by want, suffering, and oppression, were distorted by hate, the desire for vengeance, and lust for destruction, while they were lit up by the huge fierce flames which issued from the rapidly perishing but once magnificent building.

A golden shower of sovereigns fell upon the heads of the raging crowd. A safe containing sovereigns had been thrown from a window, and opening as it fell, scattered its contents in all directions. A brutal, frantic struggle then took place; women and children were trampled to death, and men were disabled by kicks and blows from their rivals, while a perfect Babel of yells and curses from the injured and injuring rent the air.

Who were these people who for the time had apparently ceased to be human, and had become as wild beasts? They were "les misérables" of Sydney; the expropriated, the destitute, the unemployed. The Great Problem of how to provide with suitable occupations those who, though perfectly willing to labor, were by unjust social conditions precluded from earning bread for themselves and those dependent on them, had reached the acute phase where the proverbial worm is said to turn—and it had turned with a vengeance! The men who previously had been distinguished by their spiritless, cowed demeanor, had become desperate demons, whose fierce bloodthirstiness and ruthless destructiveness had filled the rich with terror and panic, and handed over the control of the city to King Mob. A Sydney mob were now doing in Australia what a Parisian mob had done in France in 1789. Just as the French mob had demolished the Bastille, which they considered the type and corner-stone of their oppression, so an Australian mob was now inaugurating a vast social rebellion by the demolition of the great and famous Austral Bank, which for generations had reigned supreme over the financial institutions of Australia, and had gathered within its octopus-like grip half the great industries of the country.

To return to the mob. Among the men who particularly distinguished themselves in the attack on the bank, was a gigantic navy who, brandishing a large new axe, marched in the forefront of the rioters, and—the bank having been now successfully looted—called upon his followers to hasten to destroy the “den of thieves,” by which term he meant the Parliament. The crowd, with many vociferations and execrations, followed their leader along King Street, looting and wrecking the luxuriously furnished shops as they passed along that fashionable afternoon promenade. The attempts of shopkeepers to defend their wares were of course unsuccessful, the mob having armed itself by the looting of the gunshops, and making short work of those who attempted any resistance. One man who attempted to defend the jewellery of which he was the nominal owner, by pointing a revolver at the crowd, was promptly disarmed, and thrown crashing through the plate glass window of the shop in which he acted as the agent of a financial syndicate. Cries of “Bread or lead!” “Down with the bank swindlers!” “Work or blood!” “Give us back our savings!” “To hell with the financiers!” resounded on all sides, while the flames from the houses fired by those in the rear of the mob, and the reports from firearms, gave the street the sounds and appearance of the mythical Pandemonium.

On arriving at Parliament House the mob found a small detachment of the Permanent Artillery, armed with a machine gun, guarding the entrances to that building. The men in charge of the gun were soon disposed of by some insurgent marksmen, who, firing from the crowd, or the adjoining housetops, picked them off with a skill which showed them to be no novices in the use of the deadly Giffard gun. The insurgents then by a strategic move captured the gun, and the artillerymen surrendered.

The crowd then poured into the House, while a number of pale, panic-stricken legislators tumbled over each other in their anxiety to avoid the inrush of the avengers. Several of the most unpopular members were killed on the spot, among them being the members of the Government, the other members being allowed to escape with more or less severe injuries. Spence, the gigantic navy, then took possession of the Speaker's Chair, and in a few firmly-uttered words announced that henceforth the House would be used as the meeting place of the Revolutionary Committee.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAUSES OF THE INSURRECTION.

After the statesmen of Australia had succeeded in bringing about the federation of the Australian states, the natural result was the formation of a large standing army, which, as our readers are aware, the Federal Government, from its headquarters at Albury, made ample use of as a valuable auxiliary in their determined maintenance of "law and order," "freedom of contract," and the right of the syndicates to employ men at as low a wage and as long hours as the necessities of the laboring people might compel them to accept. Boycotting, or any attempts on the part of strikers to interfere, even in the most peaceful way, with "free" or non-union laborers, were treated as overt acts of rebellion, and the strikers were promptly dragged into submission. The result was that the various unions had been gradually broken up, and were succeeded by branches of a vast secret organization known as "The Brotherhood of the Poor." The ramifications of this association included all sections of workers, and even criminals and social outcasts were admitted to membership, it being a maxim of the Brotherhood that, the outcast being himself a victim of unjust and corrupt institutions and laws, his aid would, on occasion, be of greater value than that of those who had not been strengthened and sharpened by the Ishmael-like life of the outcast.

This formidable body, which scorned any definite reconstructive platform, and appeared to aim only at the destruction of what they considered a corrupt and festering civilisation, was very skilfully and powerfully organized, and had become so strong and far-reaching in its membership, and had been in existence for so long, that the ruling classes despaired of suppressing it, and had at last decided to affect to ignore its existence. The career of the Brotherhood had been distinguished by acts of heroism, fortitude, audacity and fidelity which far surpassed anything recorded of previous secret bands of conspirators. Monopolists who had rendered themselves particularly odious to the populace by the ostentatious display of their possessions, or by open and cynical disregard of the feelings of those who were forced by necessity to minister to their desires, were frequently killed in their own houses by men or women who, prior to making their escape, stamped upon the bodies of their victims the seal of the Brotherhood. It was only by the exercise of the utmost caution and the expenditure of large sums of money in the payment of faithful bodyguards, that the leading members of the syndicates and corporations which controlled the government and industries of the country saved themselves from assassination. The members of the Brotherhood were also possessed of an amount of knowledge

of military tactics, and the use of explosives, which was very surprising when one considers the small amount of leisure left them by the nature of their daily avocations; and eventually this remarkable conspiracy became still more potent and terrible by the fact that Bourdoin, a French chemist who was one of the members of the Brotherhood's Directing Council, had discovered a very powerful destructive agent. It was called Panmort, and was in the form of a gas, which, when liberated from the strong glass envelope in which it was inclosed, completely and terrifically destroyed everything with which it came in contact. Panmort balls, which were a little larger than ordinary revolver bullets, were used as ammunition for small ingeniously constructed air-guns, which would throw the balls to a considerable distance, where they would spread death and devastation all around.

Among the most deep-seated causes of the outbreak, although not its actual occasion, was the annihilation of the small-property-owning middle class by the operations of the Sydney financial rings. The middle class had been a decided safeguard against revolution, and a powerful conservative force. To members of that class, "everything that was, was right," so long as it did not interfere with their possession, or possible possession, of small properties. They had served as a sort of buffer between the hungry proletarian poor and the surfeited, sybaritical rich. But the financiers, finding their opportunities for the greater acquisition of wealth and consequent power immensely increased by the additional facilities secured to them by their creatures, the members of the Federal Parliament, hastened to extend their operations and ramifications throughout the length and breadth of Australia, until so irresistible became their unfair competition, so gigantic their operations, and so immense their monopolies, that there scarcely remained a squatter, farmer, manufacturer, "small business man," or "thrifty" workman, who was not hopelessly and helplessly in the hands of the usurers.

Such was the condition of things, when a great and terrible drought, which, being unlooked for, had also been unprepared for, played huge havoc with the securities of the banks and other financial institutions. The most terrible financial crisis ever experienced in Australia immediately followed. Millions of sovereigns were rapidly withdrawn from the banks by "those in the know," and lodged for safety in the Sydney Money Stronghold, and the immediate and complete collapse of all the banks was only prevented by the action of the Federal Government in, legislatively compelling the acceptance of the Banks' notes as a "legal tender." For a time the Government's action succeeded in "restoring confidence," but when it became quite apparent that the banks were unable to liquidate their liabilities in anything but their own discredited paper "promises to pay," the notes rapidly depreciated, and finally were treated as mere waste paper. A fierce cry then went up from the note holders, depositors, and shareholders who, it now became clear, had been remorselessly swindled and utterly ruined.

by the secret rings who formed the "inner circle" of bank directors and shareholders, while the great number of cruel and brutal evictions of those who were in the clutches of the banks, and whose homes were sold up to pay the banks' debts, excited the indignation of the people to the pitch of frenzy. This indignation became still greater when it was seen that the rings (whose gold in the Money Stronghold was protected from their creditors by legal chicanery) were "rigging" the market, and were thus enabled through their agents to invariably obtain possession of the sold-up properties at phenomenally low figures. Then it was that the ruined middle class became formidable revolutionists, and in their deeds of desperate daring and even heroic revolutionary enterprise, surpassed anything that had been done by the habitually half-starved poor.

But at last the Federal Government took a step in an individualistic direction which had for its members and the class to which they belonged the most disastrous consequences. The various branches of the public service, though very corrupt, and used as a means of rewarding political and personal friends, or finding positions for the friends or relatives of women who secretly prostituted themselves to men in power, were yet regarded with hope by reformers, as stepping-stones which they thought would lead to the democratic State ownership of all means of production and exchange. But shortly after the financial crash which has just been referred to, the Government decided to dispose of the Australian Railways to the highest bidders. The financial "Inner Circle" at once formed a syndicate and purchased the railways. They then discharged large numbers of railway employes, and proceeded to work the railways on what they termed "commercial principles." The discharged men, who previously had considered themselves a sort of "aristocracy of labor," and were noted for their comparative conservatism and contempt for those shut out of the sphere of Government employment, now became furious in their denunciation of the ruling classes, and one of them one day observing the chief of the railway syndicate driving along the "block," seated between his two mistresses (seduced workmen's wives), shot him dead. The assassin was publicly executed, but received an ovation from the assembled populace, and only the presence of a very strong military guard, and the restraining influence of the Brotherhood chiefs, prevented his rescue. The whole of the ex-railway employes became energetic members of the Brotherhood.

The people were now thoroughly ripe for insurrection, but awaited a leader. Such a person was found in Oliver Spence, a powerfully built and determined man, who had been of what was termed "good family," was well read, and a keen observer of men and things. The ruthless competition of the great syndicates had ruined his father, a small capitalist, and forced Oliver to turn his abnormal physical strength to account by earning his living as a navy. This man's self-acquired military knowledge and inherent military genius at once marked him out to his comrades; and he speedily became the Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Brotherhood of the Poor.

On a certain day of the year in which our story opens, a mass meeting of the unemployed was announced to be held in the Sydney Domain. In this meeting the Brotherhood determined to take part. The Government, unsuspecting nothing, had taken no precautions against a possible outbreak, and the revolutionists consequently had everything their own way. Violent speeches were made, and ultimately the crowd, forming themselves with the aid of the drilled members of the Brotherhood into marching order, marched to the sack of the wealthy portion of the city. It was this crowd whose operations have been described in the first chapter.

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CHAPTER III.

THE GENERAL STRIKE.

At the conclusion of the first chapter, Oliver Spence was left master of the situation in Parliament House, declaring that that House would henceforth be used as a revolutionary headquarters. This declaration seemed to be taken as a matter of course by his followers, and, calling for the keys, Oliver, having obtained them, locked up the House, and—first placing a strong guard at the various entrances—proceeded, accompanied by a number of his adherents, to the old headquarters of the Council of the Brotherhood, the rest of the insurgent multitude having in the meantime, under the skilful direction of members of the Brotherhood, taken possession of the principal Government buildings and other places of importance in the city.

To the great joy and exultation of those members of the Council who were not absent superintending the operations of the mob, Spence related what had occurred; and, after some slight discussion, the following manifesto was drawn up and ordered to be printed:—

TO THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE.

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FELLOW SUFFERERS!

The organised toiling and poverty-cursed inhabitants of Australia have at last achieved a great and glorious victory over the wealthy oligarchy which has so long compelled the men and women of the poor to prostitute their intellect, their beauty, or their strength for the purpose of keeping in luxurious power a class which is without conscience, compassion, or sense of justice. A class which has considered and treated the laboring poor as of far less importance than were the chattel slaves of ancient times.

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE OF THE PEOPLE'S WILL has now by force and right of conquest taken possession of the Sydney Parliament House and many other buildings of strategical or political importance, and henceforth the Committee will sit at Parliament House for the purposes of a Revolutionary Administration, which are:—

- 1st. To safeguard the interests of the suffering and the poor against possible reactionary monopolistic conspirators.
- 2nd. To freely and impartially administer justice to all.

In order to effectually paralyse the resources of our enemies, the Committee deem it necessary that the workers in every industry or occupation shall at once cease work. The Brotherhood of the Poor is charged with the duty of seeing that this order is promptly and effectively obeyed.

THE COMING TERROR.

The Revolutionary Committee is certain that in all its present onerous work it will receive the active support of all those who have suffered from plutocratic tyranny, for the poor have nothing to lose by a revolution but sordid misery and odious slavery.

They have a world to gain!

To ARMS! To ARMS!!

SIGNED on behalf of the }
 REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE, }

OLIVER SPENCE,

Commander-in-Chief of the
 Revolutionary Forces.

This manifesto having been posted up in all places of public resort, was at once acted upon. The newspapers, telegraphs, and railways, which hitherto had been always at the disposal of the plutocracy, were, if used at all, used only by the strikers to facilitate their own operations.

The Revolutionary Committee also strengthened its hands tremendously at this period by the institution of National Workshops and Stores, which supplied the strikers and other revolutionists with the necessaries of life and the sinews of war.

CHAPTER IV.

OLIVER SPENCE, DICTATOR.

“On the first Monday after the issue of the General Strike manifesto, a National Convention of delegates from all parts of Australia was held in the Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney. The delegates had been elected by meetings convened by local sections of the Brotherhood of the Poor, which had now ceased to be a secret organisation. Each delegate having solemnly declared his fidelity to the cause of the People, the Convention was declared open by Oliver Spence, who then addressed it as follows:—

“Fellow Men!

“We are assembled here to-day as the delegates to a Convention which is probably the most important gathering which has ever taken place on Australian soil. We are the bearers of the mandates of an indignant and wrathful people who have chosen us to consider and devise for them a Constitution which shall be, for the first time in our history, a just one. Let us devote ourselves to that task with zeal yet discretion.

“We are, it is true, the appointed of a minority, and with that fact our enemies already taunt us, but, I would ask you, has it not always been minorities who have achieved anything worth achieving? who have brought about any unmistakably radical political or economic changes? And more, was it not a minority which plundered and oppressed us?

“If, then, we, being determined men who would not be obedient slaves, have preferred to risk death rather than endure enslavement, who DARES to question our right to rebel?

“We have disregarded the apathy of the majority, have attacked the ruling MINORITY, and overthrown it.

“I again say, who DARES to question our right?

“An old English aristocratic writer has said,

‘Treason never conquers—

What’s the reason?

If it conquers,

None dare call it Treason!’

And, although we do not wish to ill-treat those whom it might please to call us traitors, yet the quotation substantially expresses our position.

“If we had waited for the majority to rebel, then we might have waited an eternity, for they were so brutalised by excessive toil, and dispirited by the evidences of the enormous power of wealth, that they had become ox-like in their lives, and suffered to continue that oppression which it had become well-nigh impossible to remove by pacific methods.

“If the majority has been apathetic, however, it cannot long remain so, but must soon range itself on our side, for, without speaking of the justice of our cause, we are the victorious party, and ‘nothing succeeds like success.’”

"Having therefore successfully rebelled against a most ignoble, degrading, and brutal tyranny, we now find ourselves in the position of men who will have to contend against the desperate energy of those who were formerly our rulers. If they again get the upper hand, they will be merciless and inexorably cruel in their revenge; the history of the past teaches us that.

"We must therefore be wary, yet swift and bold.

"We must hesitate at nothing which will render our triumph unquestionably complete and lasting.

"Let all our sympathisers carry arms, and as many as possible enrol themselves in companies of military volunteers.

"I recommend further that the resources of the new Government be used for the purpose of giving employment to all who are in need of it, and further, that it be made a criminal offence to employ men more than eight hours daily, except in case of special unforeseen emergency.

"It should be decreed by law that a minimum wage of not less than two pounds sterling weekly should be paid to adult workers in all industries.

"A Board should be selected to fix a maximum price for all the necessaries of life.

"All civil law must be abrogated, and the criminal law entirely remodelled.

"Only by the measures I have proposed, can we maintain the revolutionary enthusiasm, and guard against the possibility of reaction or counter-revolution.

"When we have taken these steps, we can then proceed to gradually, but as speedily as possible, bring into existence that peaceful, harmonious social state, that Co-operative Commonwealth, which has been for generations the dream of poets, the ideal of philosophers, and the demand of revolutionists.

"I conclude with the words of the French 'man of action,' Danton—
"We must have boldness, boldness, and always boldness!"

Oliver Spence resumed his seat amidst a perfect hurricane of applause and exclamations of undying fidelity to the revolutionary cause. The old building fairly shook with the vociferations of the delegates, and so great was the excitement that the air seemed as though charged with electricity.

Spence had been listened to amidst a silence which seemed almost death-like in its stillness, but when he pointed out to the delegates the necessary steps to be taken in order to give practical effect to the aims of the revolutionists and to prevent the possibility of a return to the old order of things, all gave him their enthusiastic support, and a resolution to the effect that he should be appointed, for a period of one year, Dictator with plenary powers, was carried unanimously.

The speaker who proposed the resolution said that for centuries the people had been swindled, plundered, and oppressed by corrupt ruling gangs called Parliaments. They would now see what could be done by the rule of one good, wise, and capable man.

After the Convention had appointed committees for the purpose of remodelling the criminal code and fixing a maximum price for foods and other necessaries of life, the delegates adjourned.

CHAPTER V.

SAVED BY LOVE.

It was moonlight. In the garret of a house apparently inhabited by poor people, there might have been discovered a young woman, poorly dressed, but with a sweetness of face and beauty of form which it was impossible for the poverty of her dress to entirely hide. She was weeping silently, and her finely moulded bosom heaved convulsively as she thought of the possible dreadful fate of her lover. For she loved an insurgent, and with an intense and passionate devotion of which she had hitherto believed herself incapable. The hour was late, and though her lover had promised, if alive, send her a message assuring her of his safety, the appointed hour had passed, but no word had been received from him whom she loved.

What should she do? She would go to him.

So thinking, the young woman, hastily fastening a cloak around her superb form, and placing upon her head a tasteful but inexpensive bonnet, went forth into the streets. They were deserted.

The sombre beauty of the charred and desolated ruins of the portion of Sydney through which she passed was heightened by the wondrous pale splendor of the full moon, whose beams bathed in liquid silver the courts and alleys of Sydney's poor. But the locality which once thronged with cringing, toil-distorted, haggard men, women, and children, was now deserted save by the one solitary wanderer whom the reader has just been introduced to. The insurgents had literally carried out their demand—"The people to the mansions, and the torches to the slums!" and the unhealthy disease-breeding hovels of the poor had been burnt to the ground, while their former inhabitants were now housed in the huge magnificent mansions—yet one time owned by the rich although frequently not occupied by them. Walking hurriedly along, our heroine at last found herself in King St. and was within a hundred yards of Macquarie St. when suddenly her naturally elegant carriage and remarkable beauty attracted the attention of a band of nocturnal revellers who emboldened by her apparent timidity insisted on detaining her while she was made the recipient of a string of extravagant compliments. Not satisfied with this, one of the rowdies, disregarding her remonstrances and entreaties, would have snatched a kiss from her ripe ruby lips, when suddenly a tall stoutly built young man, evidently not one of the revellers, rushed forward and pushed her would-be assailant violently aside, addressing at the same time words of stern rebuke to the half drunken rioters who, recognising him, slunk silently away.

The new comer was no other than Oliver—and on the young woman perceiving that it was indeed he, she fell, in a half-fainting condition, into his arms—for he was her lover. Our hero looked every inch a

hero, the fire of genius flashed from his eyes, while his broad massive brow stamped him as a thinker, and his well-defined nose indicated that he possessed sufficient force of character to enable him to carry his thoughts into execution.

With the aid of a little water from a neighboring fountain, our heroin was quickly restored to consciousness, and on seeing that the roysterers had actually taken their departure, she looked languishingly at her lover and said:

“Are you then safe, my own dear Oliver?”

“Yes, safe, and what is more, victorious, my darling Mary: Take heart, dear love, for to-day our oppressors have received a terrible blow, and I have been placed in a position whereby I am entrusted with power, great power, power to carve out for Australia a great place among the nations of the world, and to render my name illustrious as a wise lawgiver and beneficent ruler!”

On hearing these words from her loved one, Mary's bright hazel eyes looked the pride which she felt. As the lovers stood there in the moonlight they looked a well-matched pair, he with his determined eagle eyes and noble bearing, she with her fine form's graceful poise, which, with the sweetness of her face with its finely chiselled nose and dazzling white teeth, and her well-shaped head with its glorious crown of luxuriant brown hair, seemed to obtain added beauty and regal dignity from the pleasure with which she was filled by Oliver's words.

Mary pressed the hand of her lover, and walked slowly by his side, conversing with him in the language of lovers; and so absorbed in each other did Oliver and Mary become, that they failed to observe the actions of two ruffianly-looking men, who, keeping in the shadow of the houses, crept silently nearer and nearer to the amorous couple. They were armed with long sharp knives, and they carried them unsheathed in their hands.

Suddenly, with an oath, the bravos sprang upon the couple, and, falling Mary to the ground with a crushing blow, they turned their attention to Oliver, who, having been taken entirely by surprise, might have been there and then deprived of his life, had it not been for his great natural agility and enormous physical strength. Seizing the dagger of one of his would-be assassins, he wrenched it from his hand, and stabbed him to the heart. The bravo fell weltering in his gore and expired without a groan. Oliver then turned his attention to his other assailant, who, though somewhat unnerved by the fate of his companion, showed himself no mean antagonist, and proved himself a master of the art of wrestling, and a match for the man whose life he had determined to take. Oliver gripped the wrist of the hand which held his opponent's dagger, but found his own hand also held in a vice-like grip. The two powerful men swayed to and fro in each other's grasp, each thirsting for the blood of the other. Their veins stood out like whip-cord, and their breaths came hot, short and quick. Every trick known to the professional wrestler was in vain tried by Oliver, and he had almost begun to despair of success and to resign himself to his fate when Mary, who had recovered from the blow she had received, picked up

from the ground where it had fallen, the loaded stick habitually carried by Spence, and struck his antagonist a violent blow at the back of the head.

He dropped like a log.

It was evident that the blood of the Amazons flowed in Mary's veins. Of such material were made those heroic women who, during the French Revolution, led the revolutionists against the palace of King Louis XVI at Versailles, of such material were made Joan of Arc, Sophie Perovskaya, and Louise Michel. As she stood over the prostrate form of the man she had struck down, her face flushed and her eyes flashing with unwonted excitement, Oliver could not repress his feelings of admiration.

"You are indeed fit to be the mother of the Gracchi," said he?

"Do not speak of me dear Oliver, tell me if you are injured."

"Not at all Mary, thanks chiefly to your courage and presence of mind. It would seem that the enemies of the people are adopting the same tactics now, as the same class did in the days of the ancient Roman civilization. Just as they then, hired assassins who murdered the Gracchi, the great reformers of that period, so our monopolists, hire creatures who for pay, would murder me, but they shall not find me as easily frightened as Cromwell was. I defy their vile machinations."

"I know, my darling, that you are not afraid," said Mary "but recollect that your enemies still possess gold, and there is scarcely anyone and anything but you, and I, and love, which gold cannot buy. Let us go home."

So saying she placed her hand in Oliver's arm, and the lovers hastened away in the direction of Mary's residence.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GREAT BATTLE.

AFTER the collapse of the British Empire, which, as all students of history are aware, was chiefly occasioned by the Anglo-Russian war, in which the "Tsar of all the Russias" was completely victorious, and by the annexation of India extended his territory to the Indian Ocean, the Australian Colonies were formed into an independent Federal Republic. The method of government was still in theory democratic, although in practice plutocratic. There was a Federal Parliament, consisting of a House of Representatives and a Senate. Each Representative had a constituency of not less than thirty thousand electors, which no one but a rich man or a tool of the financial rings ever attempted to "represent," for not only did it require considerable money to contest such a large electorate, but it was generally believed that the ballot had ceased to be secret and there was so much fraud exercised at elections by the agents of the financial rings that it was regarded as quite impossible to return pure democrats to power. Of the two branches of the legislature, however, the more oligarchic was the Senate, which consisted of eight men from each of the State Parliaments. These men were, of course, actually appointed by the rings, and in the Senate were, after the rings, the most powerful in Australia. They retired from office by rotation, so that there was never a general election, nor had the President of the so-called Republic, power to dissolve the Senate. It had a veto over all bills passed by the "Representatives," was secure by the nature of its constitution from any possibility of its being influenced by the masses (termed by the Senators "the swinish multitude"), and was defended by a powerful army and well-equipped navy. The army and navy had been originally formed for the ostensible purpose of protecting life and property from a possible Russian or Chinese invasion, but it was soon evident that the greatest danger to the Australian plutocracy was "from within, not from without," and consequently for the purpose of stamping out anything like incipient revolt, the army and navy became very useful to their employers.

The seat of the Federal Government was at first Hobart, which had become but a trifling distance from the continent, owing to the great ease and speed of the newly-invented boats, driven by compressed air; but when it became manifest that even in conservative Tasmania the Government was not quite secure from "popular clamour," it was decided that Albury, once celebrated as a border town, but which, after the enlargement of Victoria and the consequent shifting of the border, had degenerated into a mere Sleepy Hollow, should be the new Federal city. The change answered admirably and the Government, now enormously powerful, ruled Australia, in the interest of the rings, with a rod of iron.

As soon as the news of the New South Wales outbreak (which had rapidly spread to the other colonies) reached the Federal Government, extensive preparations were at once made for its suppression. Many of the military had joined the insurgents, but there still remained a very large number who were willing to fight to maintain the old order of things. Most of these were massed in Victoria, where the outbreak had been, after severe fighting, temporarily quelled.

The defeat of the Victorian insurgents was, however, more owing to the smallness of their numbers and their want of sufficient arms and ammunition than to any other cause, for they fought with great courage, pertinacity and skill. The Brotherhood marksmen particularly distinguished themselves by the ease and accuracy with which, firing from the roofs and windows of houses, they picked off the various officers, and the men told off to work the machine-guns. The authorities had, with their troops, a number of machine-guns, termed "mob-quellers," an improvement on the old Gatling gun. The simple, yet delicate machinery of these guns was, however, soon put out of gear by well-directed shots from the insurgent sharpshooters.

Eventually, however, the insurgents had no alternative but to abandon the fight, and by a piece of highly creditable strategy they succeeded in making good their retreat.

After the Victorian flight both sides drew together their forces with the view to a decisive battle, which finally took place in the interior of the continent.

Prior to the federation of Australia a large portion of the interior of the country was unknown. Many attempts had been made by explorers to penetrate to the heart of this *terra incognita*, but apparently with but small success, as few of the explorers had ever returned to the coastal settlements to relate their experiences. After the Federation, however, it was determined by the Government that a large party should be fitted out for the purpose of thoroughly exploring the whole of the hitherto unexplored portion of Australia. The Government was rewarded by the discovery, in the north-western portion of the interior of a large settlement of *white* people, of whom further information will be given in another chapter. It was in that portion of Australia that the celebrated "Battle of Leichhardt" took place.

The Governments of Victoria, West Australia and Tasmania sided with the Plutocracy, while New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and the newly-discovered State of Leichhardt were in the hands of the revolutionists. North Australia (formerly the Northern Territory) was considered doubtful, as that State was chiefly populated by Chinamen, who, though bitter against the white workers in the South, because of the large number of Chinamen who had been killed or maltreated by them, were yet strongly suspected by the Plutocracy of sympathy with Communistic principles.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary forces was, of course, Oliver Spence. The Honorable Israel Smith led the forces of the Plutocratic Oligarchy. Israel Smith was said to be a descendant of Bruce Smith, who, it is believed, was in the ante-federation days a member of the Government of New South Wales.

In numbers the insurgent forces were but seventy thousand men, while those of the Plutocracy numbered one hundred thousand. The Insurgents, however, made up in enthusiasm what they lacked in numerical strength, while their opponents were held together chiefly by the promises of plunder, position and pay, made to them by the Oligarchy; and it was strongly suspected that many would desert to the insurgents if there appeared any reasonable probability of the Revolution being ultimately successful.

A number of skirmishes occurred between the combatants, but the decisive battle did not take place until some days after the marshalling of the forces on both sides.

The battle will now be described, necessarily from the insurgent side, as that side has handed down to us the most reliable accounts of the great event.

On the morning of the battle, about eight o'clock, orders were received from the Commander-in-Chief to retain in some secure place as many of the explosive bullets, gas-balls (described in the second chapter) and other ammunition as possible; it was also ordered that the air-ships used to convey baggage should be sent to the rear. It became evident that Oliver Spence intended to disregard the Fabian tactics of the enemy and to give battle at once. It also became known that a force of men from the capital city of Leichhardt was marching to the support of the rebels.

An hour after, it was seen from the excitement among the staff-officers that the battle was momentarily expected to begin. The insurgents received orders to stand to their arms, and shortly afterwards Spence ordered them to take up a very advantageous position on a gently rising ground, where they awaited the enemy's onslaught; for Marshall Israel Smith had, it appeared, from the movements in his army, observed by the insurgent officers, decided to pick up the gage of battle thrown down by Spence.

Shortly after the insurgents had taken up their position, their right was attacked by a portion of the enemy and warmly engaged by them, but the insurgents beat them off, and by the orders of the Commander a long line of portable steel barricades was erected between them and the enemy. These, by the peculiar nature of their construction resisted all the ammunition of the enemy, so that it became evident that Israel Smith's forces must attack the insurgents in the rear. This they at last succeeded in doing, and soon the groans of the wounded and dying filled the air.

Owing to the fact that on both sides where powder was used, it was of the smokeless, noiseless variety, the evils of war could be both seen and heard in all their horror.

The fight continued for some hours with varying fortunes on both sides, until Oliver Spence, who had hoped to win without resorting to the more terrible means at his disposal, finding it impossible, ordered out the Electric Bomb Throwers. These terrible engines of war were loaded with large Panmort bombs and discharged their death-dealing contents by means of a simple electrical appliance, which had then but recently been invented. This action of the Revolutionary Commander practically decided the battle, and the arrival at that time of the Leichhardt contingent was taken as a signal, and excuse for the immediate surrender of the Oligarchy's army. The Oligarchy was completely and disastrously defeated. Marshall Israel Smith and several officers shot themselves, rather than become prisoners, while nearly all the soldiers who surrendered joined the revolution. Over half the Oligarchy's forces had been killed and the Revolutionists had also suffered severely. Spence had conducted the battle with great skill and personal valor. Four horses had been killed under him, and at one time he had been temporarily blinded by the blood which gushed in his face from a comrade whose skull had been shot away.

War is a dreadful thing, but is sometimes as necessary to save and secure the lives and liberties of peoples, as on occasion a surgical operation may be, to preserve the life of an individual.



CHAPTER VII.

FREE LAND, CHEAP MONEY, AND "CONFISCATION."

Oliver returned to Sydney, the undisputed and supreme ruler of all Australia. The people regarded him as a hero, and he was treated as one. Vast triumphal arches covered with laudatory mottoes and inscriptions of welcome decorated the principal streets. Everyone smiled on him, everyone rushed to shake him by the hand. It was even proposed to offer him a throne and crown him king of Australia. But for such gee-gaws Oliver had no mind, and so in no unhesitating fashion, he informed his admirers. Until the expiration of his term of office he was the uncrowned "Tsar of all the Australias," and with that dignity he would rest content until the time came for him to resign his office into the hands of those who had elected him.

His sweetheart Mary was the first to meet him when he set foot in Sydney. When she saw him, the tears in her eyes seemed to vanish and to be replaced with a smile like a sunbeam. Her lover, her hero, her god, was back in Sydney again, safe and sound, with the old winning smile, the old manly bearing, free to stroll with her, to talk with her. Her happiness was ecstatic, she walked on air, feeling so elastic, so buoyant, as she walked by his side that she half-wondered why she did not fly off with him into cloudland, there to wander until they reached the realms of the blest.

Oliver, too, was happy in the company of his comrade-sweetheart, and was busy considering how, when, and where their marriage should take place, for needless to say he had long ago "popped the question," and had received her consent, but he was compelled to leave the problem unsolved for the time, and to give his attention to weighty matters of State.

The Convention had appointed for Spence's assistance and guidance a Board of Advice, consisting of forty trusted and tried members of the Brotherhood of the Poor, and after consulting with them, he determined to issue a proclamation declaring that in future all unoccupied and unused land should be treated as unowned, and the first-comer be lawfully entitled to take possession of it. This proclamation at once swept away the monopolists, who for speculative purposes, had "locked-up" some of the richest land in Australia, and it threw open to the people an immense quantity of "free land."

His next step was the creation of a National Bank of Issue, such a bank having been imperatively necessary, even before the collapse of the private banks. The syndicates had introduced the system of farming upon a large scale, with all kinds of elaborate and expensive machinery, driven by steam, compressed air, or electricity. The consequence was that the agricultural population had become so accustomed to these large farms, which by their competition had reduced most of the farmers to the position

of hired labourers for the syndicates, that it appeared to most of them impossible to farm successfully upon a small scale. Such of them as were inclined to try, however, were at once advanced in the notes of the National Bank, sufficient sums of money at very low rates of interest, to enable them to earn their living from Mother Earth without crowding into the already over-populated cities. Others were encouraged by the same means to form co-operative agricultural companies; and the rest of them, those who appeared to require some person or persons whom they might look upon as employers, were placed upon huge State farms, where they were employed under the direction of competent State officials.

In the meantime it became quite evident to the Dictator that to successfully carry on a National Bank at such a time of popular disturbance as that following a terrible civil war, required a very considerable gold basis for the Bank's note issue. To secure this gold basis, he, therefore, took possession of the whole of the coin and bullion remaining in the vaults of the Federal Money Stronghold. This amounted to several hundred millions sterling, for although some members of the ring—forseeing the triumph of the Revolutionists—had escaped from Australia in their private yachts, most of the financiers had remained, and believing that their army would overthrow the Revolutionists, had lodged their valuables for safety in the Money Stronghold.

There were, of course, a few men who still had sufficient hardihood to shriek "confiscation" and "robbery" at the Dictator's action, but he heeded them not, for he did not forget that the reason why the Paris Commune of 1871 was overthrown was that the Commune refused to touch the money in the Banks of Paris, and was thus bereft of the most necessary "sinews of war." The Dictator also called to mind the frightful vengeance of the plutocratic conquerors of the Commune, and he resolved to put it out of the power of the financiers to accomplish in Australia such a hideous butchery as their class had perpetrated in France.

To meet the necessary expenses of Government the Dictator imposed a tax upon land values, which was heavy where the demand for certain land was great, and light where the demand was small, thus the most productive or otherwise most desirable land paid the heaviest tax, which, however, was not oppressively felt, as the amount required for the cost of maintaining what was decidedly the least expensive Government ever seen in Australia was very small.

The Dictator crowned his acts of "confiscation" by declaring private property in land a crime against the people of Australia. All land should in future, he proclaimed, be leased from the State, and should return to the State at the death of the leaseholder. The leaseholder, could, however, possess property in his own improvements, which he might dispose of, as it pleased him. It was also proclaimed that every man of the age of 21 or over should be entitled to lease land from the State free of all charges, except the ordinary tax on land values. To encourage young men to marry and make a home, a loan from the funds of the National Bank of Issue was made to every young married man leasing a homestead.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WEDDING.

The time now rapidly approached for the marriage of Oliver and Mary. Their lives, had been in the past, of a by no means monotonously happy character. Both of them had suffered, and suffered poignantly. Mary herself had been a member of the ruling class. She had been reared in luxury, and supplied with everything which wealth could provide for her. But although supplied with every possible luxury, she was not happy, for she craved for someone upon whom she could lavish the wealth of affection which constituted so great and important a part of her healthy, passionate nature. Possessed of the perfect and splendid form of a fully-developed beautiful woman, she was also the possessor of the intense emotionalism and perfect capacity for love, which is always the characteristic of the natural woman whose ardent feminality has not been diminished or destroyed by the indigence, or excessive luxury, which is a usual concomitant of high civilization.

At last Mary met her complement in Oliver Spence, and as the steel flies to the magnet, so she flew to, and clung to him. To her he was perfection, the sound of his voice was to her ears the sweetest, entrancing music, his utterances appeared the quintessence of wisdom, and his appearance that of a Greek god. For him she threw up her position in society, and her excellent opportunities of marrying some rich man for whom she could have no love. Her friends condemned, because they could not understand this "infatuation," as they termed it, for this poor, and obscure, suspected conspirator.

Her parents cast her off, and she was compelled to earn her living in domestic service. Oliver, who reciprocated her affection, would have married her, but although she was so passionately devoted to him that she often felt willing to abandon everything to him, although every fibre of her being ached and hungered for him, yet, so strangely are women constituted that she indefinitely postponed the acceptance of his offer, persuading herself that it was for his welfare; that she would avoid the possibility of impeding his progress, or fettering him in his great work.

Oliver's triumph, however, altered matters. She saw that in his new station she could be of considerable assistance to him, more particularly as the people were beginning to marvel at, and unfavorably comment upon, the celibacy of their Dictator.

The marriage took place in the Sydney Town Hall, in the presence of the members of the National Board of Advice, and a large concourse of men and women. The bride looked very happy as she walked into the Town Hall, accompanied by her new friends, the wives of some of the most distinguished of the Revolutionists. She was attired in a white

satin dress, her face was veiled with point lace, her neck encircled with pearls, and her head wreathed and crowned with orange blossoms.

The marriage ceremony was performed by the Registrar-General, Oliver, although not an Atheist, had no belief in any of the current religions, nor had his wife. The Dictator also desired a secular marriage, in order that he might avoid the possibility of stirring up sectarian strife, as, had he been married by the priest or minister of any Church, he might have reasonably been supposed to be a member of that Church.

They left the Town Hall arm-in-arm, amid the admiring plaudits of the multitude, who were charmed and transported by the extraordinary beauty and grace of the Dictator's wife. Arrived at Spence's house, they sat down, with a large number of guests, to the wedding breakfast.

Mary Lovelace had exchanged her name for that of her lover, and her fondest wish, her highest ambition was gratified. Was she happy? Yes; supremely, ineffably happy. She would not have exchanged her new position for all the treasures in the world. She fondly followed her husband's every movement, and impatiently longed for the time when they would be alone together, that she might throw her arms around his neck and devour him with her burning kisses.

At last all the guests had departed, and the newly-married couple retired together to their private apartments, where we will leave them, for it is not our business to pry into the sacred and esoteric mysteries and pleasures of the nuptial chamber.



CHAPTER IX.

A NEW GOVERNMENT AND A DIALOGUE ON GOVERNMENT.

Our hero and heroine seemed to both become younger by their experience of the unalloyed happiness which followed their marriage. Their faces seemed softer and their eyes even kinder and gentler in expression. The honeymoon was, owing to Oliver Spence's position, necessarily a very short one, so that in a few weeks Oliver was again giving close personal attention to the State affairs of Australia. Mary was of great service to him by her advice and assistance. She particularly interested herself in the welfare of the weaker sex, and personally saw that the wish of the Dictator, that all women who desired employment, should, on receipt of their application be given suitable work, and *paid the same wages as men* should be effectively carried out, and the fact that all women in need of employment could at once go to the National Workshops, and, like the men, receive the employment for which their physical or mental organization best fitted them, did more in a few months to abolish the compulsory unchastity of prostitution than all the canting or prurient members of Social Purity societies, could, by their methods, have accomplished in some centuries. It also obviated the necessity of mercenary marriages, a most vile form of life-long prostitution, which the disciples of Social Purity, had quite ignored.

So invaluable did Mary's help in governing, become to Oliver, that towards the period when his term of office was to expire, Australia was in fact governed by Oliver and Mary conjointly. Nor did the people object to this dual Dictatorship; on the contrary, they valued and esteemed the benign influence and actions of the Dictator's beautiful wife, so that when the Dictatorship expired, the National Electoral Convention elected them both the Joint-Rulers of Australia. It was thought that the female half of Australian humanity had rights to conserve quite as much as the male half, and those rights could best be conserved by endowing Oliver's amiable wife, with administrative and legislative powers equal to his own.

The Joint-Rulers frequently had long conversations together about the affairs of State and the principles of government, which, had they been reported, would not have been without interest to the reader. The following condensed abstract of one of these dialogues may serve to illustrate the principles of government upon which the new order of things was founded:—

MARY: "Although, my dear Oliver, we are the supreme rulers of Australia, I cannot conceal from you that I still have some lingering belief in Democracy or government by the people. We, as you know, are after all, the appointed of a minority."

OLIVER: "Government by the people might be right enough, my dear, when they have for some considerable time enjoyed the advantages

of leisure, education, independence, and comfort. Pure Democracy is, I believe, the only form of Government which is theoretically sound, and were the people possessed of the advantages I have just mentioned, and were there no wealthy class, but only a wealthy people, pure Democracy would be possible and beneficial. But, hitherto, wealth has been the monopoly of a class. Wealth is power, great power, whoever possesses the wealth of a people, will rule that people, consequently, we have had in Australia, what was in name a Democratic Government, but, in fact, an Oligarchy, composed of the few men who owned Australia's wealth. Though the masses had the vote, there was no real Democracy, only Plutocracy, or Government by the wealthy. The masses could read, but they were not educated, they had neither means, nor leisure, to obtain a knowledge of economics, and of the processes by which they were robbed and degraded. Indeed, their knowledge of how to read actually had, under the circumstances, a pernicious effect, for by its means they were enabled to read the class-owned newspapers, which, having an enormous circulation, drugged with lies, their gullible, ill-informed, toiling readers."

MARY: "What you have said about the former condition of the working-people, I know to be absolute truth, my dear Oliver, but why would it not have been better to wait until, by oral propaganda, and the use of an independent Democratic press, we had converted the majority, and thus changed things peacefully?"

OLIVER: "Because, even if possible, a peaceful radical change would have taken many generations, and we preferred to have the change in our own time. Posterity can take care of itself. I am, besides, very doubtful if the change could ever have been brought about by peaceful means. Everything worth doing in the past, has been done by the sword in the hands of a determined minority. Majorities may crucify a Christ, poison a Socrates, and hang innocent men, like the so-called Anarchists, who, many years ago were judicially murdered in Chicago, but they do not reform abuses, or radically change systems. Majorities are always too much occupied with their own private and domestic affairs, to interest themselves in anything but the doing to death of some unpopular poor man. As to the *peaceful* reformation of society, men have been trying that, ever since the commencement of the Christian Era. Here is a valuable work by C. Osborne Ward, who was in the days of the existence of the United States of America, a Librarian and Translator to their Department of Labour, his book is entitled "The Ancient Lowly," and he shows that there were not only labour unions, more than two thousand years ago, but that that the unions tried by peaceful political action and co-operation to reconstruct society. Workers have been trying, by the same means, ever since, but, as you know, without success. Listen to some of the Labourer's electioneering inscriptions, found among the ruins of Pompeii overwhelmed A.D. 79:—

(1.) 'The members of the Fishermen's Union, nominate Pompeius Rufus for member of the Board of Public Works.'

(2.) 'The International Goldworkers' Association of the City of Pompeii demand for Member of the Board of Public Works, Cuspis Pansa.'

(3.) 'Verna, the home-born, with her pupils, in all right, put Mrs. Capella to the front for a seat on the Board of Magistrates.'

The workers failed then because the men of the sword were against them, and they have failed since for the same reason."

MARY: "But I have read, dear Oliver, that the workers in England enjoyed great prosperity, ease, and plenty during the fifteenth century. Surely, that was not brought about by the sword?"

OLIVER: "You are in error, my dear, Professor Thorold Rogers, and other historians clearly show that it was chiefly brought about by the temporary success of the partial "Revolt of the Peasants," under the leadership of Wat Tyler."

MARY: "It does seem sad that justice cannot be obtained without the sacrifice of human life."

OLIVER: "It is sad enough, my dear, but true, and what is more, the higher the civilization the greater seems the need of political surgery. If a tree shows signs of disease, we lop off the infected branches to prevent the spread of the disease, in the same way, when society becomes corrupt, it is necessary to cut out that corruption in order to save society from complete rottenness, and ultimate disintegration. The history of mankind shows that the more highly civilized a society becomes, the greater is its corruption, and, consequently the greater its need of a surgical operation or judicious pruning."

MARY: "To change the subject, somewhat, Oliver. Do you not think that the old system of Parliamentary Government was in harmony with Democratic principles?"

OLIVER: "No, my dear; Parliamentary Government was a huge farce. In the first place, it was not representative, partly because no man can represent another, he can only 'represent' himself, so that, if sent to Parliament with vague instructions to 'represent' his constituents, he simply managed matters in his own interest; and partly because of fraudulent practices at the elections, and the influence of the rich man over those who were employed by him; or who were under obligations to him; or who, strangely enough, admired and respected him, because of the wealth he had legally cheated them out of. In the second place, it being difficult to fix responsibility upon a whole Parliament, its members were almost invariably venal and corrupt and, they were animated by plutocratic class bias. In the third place, it is reasonable to assume that it is easier to pick out one or two good and great men in a nation than to discover a Parliament of such men. You and I, Mary, are entrusted with power for a period of three years, and the eyes of the whole nation are upon us, we two, and we only, are held directly responsible by the nation, who could, if they so desired, depose

us and appoint others in our stead ; but in a Parliament, the responsibility is scattered over such a number that it cannot be definitely fixed, so that the majority of members always remain the instruments of plutocratic cliques. It is true that we have been elected by a National Electoral Convention, consisting only of the delegates of the Revolutionary minority, but the nation knows definitely who its rulers are, and can rise and overthrow us if it does not approve of our rule."

MARY : "Do you think, my dear Oliver, that there is any possibility of the people rising against us?"

OLIVER : "None, my dear. Without laying too much stress on the apathy, not to say cowardice of the average man of the majority, their remain the facts that the people are now far better off than they were in the days of the Plutocracy, and that we have not left our enemies the money to pay for a counter-revolution."

This concluded the conversation, and after transacting some business, our hero and heroine quitted the Treasury Buildings, where the conversation had taken place, and returned to their private house.



CHAPTER X.

MORE CHANGES.

Among the laws made by Oliver and Mary, was one absolutely prohibiting the taking of interest upon money, by any person outside the officials of the National Bank, who were empowered to collect, for State purposes, and none other, 2 per cent.; being the interest upon the loans advanced by the National Bank. This interest was, of course, paid only by the Bank's debtors. The operations of the National Bank, which had already been of enormous service to the poor of both country and town, were extended, and its functions were made to include the payment (in National notes) of Government employees, who now constituted an immense multitude, as all government work was done by the State, instead of by private contractors. The taxes were also received by the Bank, as were deposits. In short, the Bank, together with the other departments of government, became such formidable competitors against "private enterprise," that the private capitalist was rapidly being improved off the face of the earth.

The members of the legal profession were replaced by skilled arbitrators in each State, who decided all matters brought before them. No charge was made to the litigants, but vexatious or malicious prosecutions were severely punished. There existed the right of appeal against the Arbitrators' decision, to the Rulers, Oliver and Mary, but this right was seldom exercised.

The members of the medical profession were appointed and regulated by a State Medical Board. The services of medical men were given free of charge to the patients, all expenses being met by the State.

Religion was left entirely to the various religious sects. Nothing in the nature of State assistance, for any purpose whatever, was granted any church. It was generally felt that in the past, religion had been used for the purpose of chloroforming the intelligence of the poor, and that the ministers of religion had acted as a sort of spiritual police, maintained (chiefly by the rich) for the purpose of enjoining the poor to be content with their poverty, and not to lay violent hands on the ill-gotten possessions of the wealthy. The people could also not avoid remarking how much the practice, and even precept of the so-called Christian ministry, contrasted with the life and teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. It was mentioned that bishops and other ecclesiastics in receipt of large incomes from their churches, had been among the most prominent of the extortionate financial syndicates, which had paid themselves enormous dividends out of the toil, tears, and disasters of the unfortunate poor.

The Railways, which had been sold to the financiers, were resumed; of course, without compensation, and run free of all charge to passengers

or those transmitting freight. It was considered by the Rulers that charging those who used the "iron roads" of the country was as unreasonable and short-sighted a system, as that which formerly prevailed in some countries of charging tolls for the use of stone roads and bridges. The country derived great benefit from the increased settlement of the people on the soil, which resulted from the abolition of freight-charges, and as these charges were, of course, not added to the prices of the articles produced, the consumer was benefited as much as the producer. In order to utilise the vast mineral and other natural resources of the interior, a Central City was created in the heart of Australia, having direct railway communication with all the coastal cities of the great island-continent.

The Rulers recognised that Australia had in the past, suffered severely from the want of sufficient facilities for the irrigation of the soil, and the conservation of the waters of the country. They, therefore, ordered the construction of artesian wells, which obtained immense supplies of water from the subterranean riverine system of the interior; and the waters were stored in gigantic reservoirs, whence, when required, they were conveyed by means of aqueducts and canals to the lands which needed them. It was also found possible to construct canals for purposes of navigation, which was done, the people finding that, unlike railways, they were not destructive of natural beauties, and were sometimes preferable to railways in many other respects.

Any person who, after the payment of the tax on land values, and the interest on money borrowed from the National Bank, was found to have an annual nett income of more than three hundred pounds sterling was cumulatively taxed on that income, as it was considered that the possession and enjoyment of a larger income than the sum named tended to foster the excessive luxury in one class, and resultant poverty in another class, which had already destroyed the world's greatest civilizations.

The right of inheritance was limited to articles which could not be used to enable people to live in idleness by the private employment, exploitation and consequent robbery of the workers.

The abrogation during the Dictatorship, of all Civil law, had, of course, included all laws for the collection of debts. The holders of Australian Debentures and Treasury Bills, were very angry at this, and most of them, being Englishmen, called upon the English Government to enforce payment. But Russia had so seriously crippled the power of England, that she made no attempt to do so.

Oliver and Mary proclaimed that in future no Australian Government or municipal council should be empowered to borrow money from any person, or from any institution, other than the National Bank. The debts of the National Bank were the only debts which, together with the taxes, were compulsorily paid. In enforcing their payment, however, the greatest care was taken to avoid the infliction of undue hardship, and in no

case was a debtor reduced to the condition of destitution and abject poverty which was so prevalent during the reign of the financial rings.

The Rulers, believing with John Ruskin, a Nineteenth Century writer, that "the use of substances of intrinsic value as the materials of a currency is a barbarism," forbade any further production of gold and silver money, and decreed that as soon as the coin then in circulation should have become light or defaced, it should be replaced by notes of the National Bank. It gave the Rulers particular pleasure to issue this decree, as it appeared to them folly, and even worse, to waste such a vast amount of labour in dangerously seeking and mining for metals which were not actually necessary as money. The Rulers regarded with particular horror the hardships of the silverminer's life, and the diseases to which he was peculiarly subject. It was decided that the reserves of the National Bank should be kept in ingots of gold, until the increased confidence of the people in the new order of things should render gold reserves no longer necessary.

The Rulers thus having done all that it appeared to them possible to do by legislation, to bring about the abolition of that private ownership of great wealth, which results in the degradation of the many by the combined, cunning few, determined to rest upon their laurels and await the beneficent influence upon the people, of just, and ennobling laws and institutions.



CHAPTER XI.

THE NEW GARDEN OF EDEN.

Upon the map of North America there for many years appeared the words, "Great American Desert," until there arose, in what was then the United States, but as our readers are aware is now a portion of the great American Empire, a man of singular proselytizing power, whose name was Joseph Smith. He asserted that the text of a book which he termed the "Book of Mormon," had been revealed to him by supernatural agency. Many thousands of people believed him and a new sect was formed called "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints." The new church increased and multiplied, notwithstanding its uncomfortably long name. but its members, though many, were not popular, and in a few years the assassination of Joseph Smith, and other persecutions, caused these "Saints" to pack up their household gods and journey into the "Great American Desert," which they discovered to be not a desert, but a land of promise, which by their industry they shortly made to flow with milk and honey.

History repeats itself. A scientific theory is propounded, discussed, later on accepted as irrefragable truth; suddenly some *savant* detects a fallacy in the theory, the theory shrinks, crumbles, and fades away. Years after, the *same* theory is again propounded, accepted, exploded, rejected. Science, as well as superstition has its exploded dogmas, but although those dogmas may be slain, they are capable of a cursed resurrection. Geography, in particular, has its unsound theories and fetishes. Let us see how a geographical fetish demolished in America re-appeared in Australia.

If the reader will go to the National Australian Museum and take a look at the old maps of Australia, which were current before the Federation of the Australian States, he will observe a large space marked "Great Sandy Desert." The tract of land so named was believed to be an immense wilderness of sand, salt and stone. Lion-hearted men had sallied out to explore the mysterious interior of Australia, and some of them had never more been heard of. It was conjectured that they had met their death among the burning stones and glistening patches of salt, of the "Great Sandy Desert."

The Federal Exploring Party determined to explore every rood of this terrible desert. Perchance they would stumble upon some deposit of gold or precious stones, which would add more wealth to the possessions of the Plutocracy. They found wealth, but it was of a different kind. It was a priceless treasure. A community of simple, honest, truthful, unsophisticated white people!

For some distance through the Desert the explorers travelled without

meeting with anything but the traditional burning sand and blistering stones, until, almost without warning, they found themselves in a hilly country, and green growths began to show between the interstices of the stones. As the explorers ascended, the air grew cooler, and the glare of the sun on the soil less painful to the eyes. Soon the travellers were astonished and delighted to observe what appeared to be human habitations in the far distance. The explorers proceeded, and could hardly believe their eyes when they found themselves walking along a rustic road, with smiling fields, and picturesque houses and cottages, the invitingly open doors of which, seemed to offer lavish hospitality to the hungry and weary travellers. The houses and fields appeared to be deserted, however, and although the travellers called a halt, and cooeed, no answer was received. Exhausted nature could hold out no longer, and the travellers marched into one of the largest of the houses. There was no one within. The first chamber in which they found themselves was apparently a sort of reception-room, although there were none to receive them. It was furnished in a quaint, comfortable style, which, to the travellers, seemed vaguely familiar. They threw themselves into the roomy arm-chairs, and rested and waited. Still no host. There were several open doors leading to other chambers, so at last they determined to explore the house still further. They passed into another chamber and found themselves in a large dining-hall, containing several tables covered with fruit, bread, and what looked like wine; they soon found that it *was* wine, light, but good. The fruits were luscious, the bread sweet and milk-flavoured. Having made sad havoc with the edibles, and eaten their fill, our burglars passed out into the road again. They had been walking about fifteen minutes when they heard, O joy of joys! the plashing of water and voices speaking in what seemed to be the English language. They rushed hastily in the direction of the sound, and who shall paint their astonishment when they beheld a fine blue lake, in which were a number of young men and women bathing, chatting and laughing together, apparently supremely unconscious of any possible impropriety in their conduct.

The strangers soon attracted the attention of the bathers, and at once an old man, who had been sitting smiling at the sportive gambols of the young people, came forward, and with an expression of astonishment, not unmixed with alarm, upon his honest, aged face, inquired of the strangers, in very excellent, courteous English, whence they had come. In a few words the strangers informed their interrogator that they formed a party fitted out by the Australian Government for the purpose of exploring the Great Sandy Desert. The old man listened attentively, but not without some apparent uneasiness.

Meantime the arrival of the intruders had abruptly put an end to the aquatic sports of the swimmers. They left the water and first drying their bodies with some pieces of a white, soft material, which were strewn about the bank, leisurely proceeded to clothe themselves in loose, scanty garments of the same material. That work completed, they stood around in graceful attitudes, awaiting the attention of the Elder, as he was called.

The Elder led the way to a large bath-house, where the strangers refreshed themselves with baths, were conducted back to the dining-hall, and invited to partake of further refreshment, which invitation they sparingly availed themselves of. They informed the Elder that they had already taken the liberty of breakfasting in that house; but he seemed to take it as a matter of course, and spoke laughingly of the surprised exclamations of the young folks on beholding their breakfasts partially demolished.

Refreshments over, the travellers entered into a long discussion with the Elder as to the people and nature of this strange region.

The part of the country in which the travellers found themselves, was, it appeared from the Elder's account, one of the valleys which existed in that district. The travellers were told that the country which was there mountainous, was well watered by the springs and streams which abound there. The origin of his people the Elder could not tell. They appeared to have been there for many generations. He could only tell them that he did not believe they had always been as white as the explorers now saw them. Many generations ago, a party of white explorers, under the leadership of Dr. Leichhardt had come among them in a famishing, fevered, half-delirious condition, and the good people of the valley, had nursed them back to health again. Dr. Leichhardt and his company were so delighted with their kindness, and enchanted by their manners and customs, that he married and settled down among the residents of the valley, at the same time enjoining them never to seek the land from whence Dr. Leichhardt had come, as it was evil, corrupt, and the abode of all forms of cruelty and fraud. They had taken his advice and avoided communication with the coastal settlements, living in consequence, a life of tranquility, harmony and comfort, which was entirely unknown to the human beasts of burden of "civilization."

These dwellers in the valleys formed a number of purely Democratic, self-governing communities. There were no police, no military, no parliaments, no "governments," in the ordinary sense. The inhabitants looked respectfully to the old, and, consequently, experienced men of the community for advice, but when anything had to be done, the people met together in public meetings, discussed the matter, and did it.

There was no enforcement of private property, but, generally speaking, private property scarcely existed. Only when an individual manifested, for sentimental, or other valid reason, an attachment for some particular article, was he allowed to retain it as his; and then, chiefly because some similar articles were easily to be obtained by any who wished for them.

In an easy-going fashion, each did what he or she could to supply the needs of the community, yet, although there was no compulsion to labour, there was always plenty produced. "Thrift" was unknown, but so was wanton waste. Nearly all the necessary duties of life, such as working, eating, bathing, and so forth, were performed in companies. Harmonious co-operation pervaded the lives of these unsophisticated people.

Strict monogamy prevailed, yet there were no marriage ceremonies, other than the public kiss, bestowed by the man upon the woman, who had consented to be his wife, and which kiss she also publicly returned.

Bananas, pine-apples, oranges, guavas, grapes, mangoes, bread-fruit, cocoa-nuts and many other tropical and semi-tropical fruits grew and still grow in great profusion there.

Both men and women wore a sort of silken, flimsy drapery, manufactured by a simple process, from the inner bark of a tree. The natives were handsome, and the manner in which they draped their stately forms harmonised well with their classic regularity of features.

Such, our Federal Explorers gathered from the Elder, were the character, resources and customs of this strange, primitive and amiable people. They were charmed, and felt inclined to follow the example of Dr. Leichhardt, and marry and settle down among them. But in a few months ambition gained its victory over them and they returned to civilization, their return being hastened by the discovery in the valley, of immense natural deposits of jasper and other precious stones.

On the return of the explorers a great sensation was created by their report. A syndicate was at once formed for the purchase of the jasper fields, and missionaries were sent under the protection of military for the purpose of converting these benighted heathen.

The natives refused to sell any part of their country, or to have anything to do with the missionaries, upon which the military gave them a lesson in Plutocratic Christianity and brotherly love, by promptly shooting a great number of them. The new-comers then seized the land, annexed the fields of precious stones and settled down to spread "Christianity," loathsome diseases, sweating, prostitution and other "blessings of civilization." A great tide of emigration from the coast to the interior set in and the newly-discovered country became a part of the Federation, under the title of the State of Leichhardt. But when the Revolution came, Leichhardt was among the first to declare in its favor, and to promise military assistance. The Federal Government deciding to chastise Leichhardt for its "insolence," sent its forces there, where they were met by the Revolutionary army, and in the Great Battle (described in a previous chapter), completely defeated.

CHAPTER XII.

WORK, AND LOVE, AND PARADISE.

It is twenty years after the demolition of the Austral Bank by the Revolutionists, under the leadership of Oliver Spence.

The sun is shining brightly through the trees, the sky is as beautiful in its heavenly blue as only an Australian sky can be, the birds, filled with the joy of living, are twittering merrily.

Two well-dressed men are strolling leisurely along, chatting together in a friendly manner. The elder of the two is probably about forty-four years of age, the other some ten years younger.

"I suppose, Jack, that your pension will soon be due," says the younger man.

"Not for another year yet, Tom," says the other. "I am not forty-five yet, and the pension is not due until I reach that age."

"Times were very different when we were young, Jack. No labour day of four hours and a retirement pension at forty-five then. Nothing but uncertainty of employment, low wages, long hours, and the possibility of a pauper's grave stared us in the face."

"You may well say that, Tom. I am older than you, and I have seen more, but I never saw a workman going to his work dressed as we are, nor taking his time about it, as we are. And the misery that existed among the workers was appalling. It is marvelous how they could have endured it so long. I would willingly have gone through two revolutions to abolish such an iniquitous tyranny as that of the usurious plutocracy which then held sway. Under the old *regime* no man could be certain that his life would not terminate amidst scenes of abject pauperism or desperate criminality. Now we are all certain of a suitable occupation and an honorable career. There is work for all, and overwork and slavery for none."

"What do you think of the new law, giving every man and woman in the country a vote?"

"I quite approve of it. At the same time, although many find fault with the Revolutionists for seizing political power, and holding it without consulting the majority, I think they did right. The majority at that time had not sufficient courage to take up arms against any government, Revolutionary or otherwise, but they had been so deluded by the press, the politicians, and the rest of those who were "in the swim," that they would certainly have voted against the Revolutionists had they been given the power."

"They have changed now, Jack."

"Yes, for not only have the government teachers of economics been abroad, but people have now had several years convincing experience of the happiness that is possible in a land where the usurer, the land-monopolist, and the profit-monger are things of the past. I am glad that Oliver and Mary were re-elected with such almost unanimity."

"Yes, Jack, they are wise, good, and courageous rulers. Of course, they have been malignantly slandered, and attempts have been made to assassinate them, but that must always be expected by any public man who honestly tries to do good and to act justly, particularly if he directs his efforts against the immoral cupidity and tyranny of rich men. Well, I must leave you now, Jack; here's my shop."

With these words, the younger man disappeared within the doors of one of the Government boot factories, while his comrade, a furniture worker, proceeded on his way.

We will leave him, and freely using the privilege of authors and their readers, respectfully listen to the conversation of the noble-looking couple who are now approaching. The man is apparently about fifty years of age, his wife but a few years younger. They are walking arm-in-arm and cling together with an evident undisguised love for each other, which, though common enough among married people in these times, was seldom observed in the years of moral night which preceded the Revolution.

"I could die happy now, my sweet Mary," said the man, "my mission is accomplished. The Australian people are not only free, but happy, and the happiness which follows freedom from care is a glorious boon."

"Do not talk of dying, my own dear Oliver," answered his wife, "we have many more years to live, and much good to do, even yet. There are people called Anarchists, who object to the payment of taxes and desire to do as they please, free from all governmental interference. They may make trouble yet."

"I think not, my dear. Australia is large enough to enable me to help the Anarchists to form a settlement somewhere in the interior, where they may live according to their ideas and without government, if they can. Let us talk no more of politics, let us rather talk of love, which transforms even the deformed, but makes of the beautiful the angelic. My darling *you* are my angel, and I love and adore you with the same fervor as in my youth."

"My own dear faithful Oliver," said Mary, as her eyes brightened and her face flushed with the fervour of her love for her husband. "You darling," she said, as she passionately kissed his lips. "Let us go home."

But the married lovers did not go home. They sought a little rustic seat, and there the rulers of a great empire sat pouring out to each other vows and protestations of eternal, unchanging love. The occasional passers-by turned away their heads with a pleased smile, and even the birds on the trees seemed to sing with greater joy, but the lovers heeded them not.

Hours passed away, and the sky became stormy, red, and flaming, as the sun sunk down like a dying Revolutionist. amidst the blood-tinged clouds, but the lovers beheld it with serenity and confidence, for they knew that to-morrow it would rise upon a land of peace and plenty, where the insults of the rich and the whines of the slave were alike unheard; and where just laws, wise government, and an equitable social system were making an earthly Paradise of what had been a veritable Inferno,

THE END.



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