

# THE COW PASTURE ROAD BY HARDY WILSON



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THE COW PASTURE ROAD

TO THE STATESMAN, PHILANTHROPIST OR OTHER  
BENEFACTOR WHO, SEEKING FAR FOR GOOD OR FAME,  
ASPIRES TO BUILD CELESTIUM, AMONGST WHOSE STARS  
AND CONSTELLATIONS CELESTIANS, ALL FILLED WITH  
JOY, WOULD BE DWELLING IN A HEAVEN WHICH THEY  
NEVER COULD ATTAIN IN THE EMPYREAN HEREAFTER,  
T H I S   B O O K   I S   I N S C R I B E D

# THE COW PASTURE ROAD

BY HARDY WILSON



ART IN AUSTRALIA  
24 BOND STREET, SYDNEY

1920



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BY HARDY WILSON

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CHAPTER I.

WHEREIN THE PIONEER COW AND THE PIONEER BULL  
ESCAPE FROM SYDNEY AND A LIGHT ON A HILL-TOP  
LEADS TO THEIR RECOVERY. WHEREBY THE ROAD  
ACQUIRES ITS NAME.

The first harvest had not ripened when disaster overtook the colony of New South Wales. Accompanied by the bull the only cow strayed into an unexplored continent almost as large as Europe. These animals were Governor Phillip's valued possessions. The largest, a brindled cow, promised to make a name for herself. She was a good milker and like to become the mother of a profitable line of descendants. The other, an amorous bull, showed no regular industry, keeping to himself when not wooing his mistress and devoting much time to digestive experiments on Australian herbs and grasses. King George III. had presented this cow and bull to alleviate hardships endured by his subjects in a remote corner of his realm. These manifestations of his benevolence were guarded with care and enjoyed universal attentions. Grown upon virgin soil, oats stood nearly ready to be cut for the lovers and their unborn calf. No Admiralty frigate, coming to her anchorage in a rejoicing port seventeen thousand miles from home, brought freight so desirable as that within the brindled cow. Like a ship at sea she rolled on her peregrinations around the camp, receiving tit-bits and felicitations as heartfelt as any showered on Royal Barge leading pageants of State. The expected offspring of this sovereign couple presided at the head of tables where thanksgiving for meagre fare ended with supplications for a safe deliverance. Anticipations of roast beef, milk, cream and butter, puddings and delicacies roused in the hungry port memories of plenitude.

On a sunlit morning, when Nature had spread her clemency over the tranquil harbour, a gun on Pinchgut Fort sounded alarm. The report echoed around little blue bays where the process of founding the Pacific Pearl was steadily advancing. Along streets whose boundaries were marked by rough-hewn stakes, civilians, soldiers and prisoners hastened. Before mid-day wellnigh everyone had arrived at the Vice-Regal proclamation stump where Captain Arthur Phillip proclaimed the news of disaster. The Governor was a leader who knew neither fear nor despair, but in the loss of his cattle he saw contentment forsaking the colony entrusted to his care. Briefly he told of the escape and pursuit: How fifteen miles of country between Parramatta and the sea, land over which Sydney was destined ultimately to spread, held no sign of bull or cow. In the King's name he commanded every-one who could be spared to leave his occupation and scour the countryside beyond

outposts. Having spoken, the Governor placed himself at the head of a search party. Nightfall brought the searchers back to their shanties. For many weeks the search continued, and every morning the Governor issued bulletins. They were all alike, giving news of fruitless explorations. Eventually the quest was abandoned.

Several years elapsed. Governor Hunter ruled in Phillip's stead; the Pacific Pearl stood bedizened with buildings; the settlement had reached security; King George III. had not forgiven their loss when the cattle were found. A Poet, who was a pamphleteer by trade and had been deported for writing seditious verse, left Parramatta and wandered into the western bush rather than endure the tribulations of married life in a two-roomed house. This singer was in love with his art and preferred solitude in the bush to chores and a garrulous wife. In those days Nymphs and Satyrs frequented New South Wales. Until railways distributed daily newspapers they appeared at intervals, never resenting abuse nor retaliating on settlers who fired at them. Pioneers mistook these friendly beings for marauding beasts. They beheld a tiger in the person of an inquisitive Nymph. There was more truthfulness in their descriptions of a monster which has become known as the Bunyip. Tradition furnishes this monster with a body striped like a tiger's and with a calf's head from which bellows were said to issue with bovine regularity. Declarations sworn before the Governors leave no doubt that a Bunyip haunted the bush. Though sceptics in their inmost thoughts, the Governors regarded its appearances as helpful to the preservation of law and order. Liberty in the bush was a terrifying ordeal. The Governors therefore encouraged the encounters. There is good reason to suppose that the original Bunyip was none other than the pioneer calf which, in company with its parents, grazed on the outskirts of Sydney, thus terrifying pioneers who cherished its memory.

Tales of encounters with the Bunyip, and warnings of strange horned beasts which natives had reported in the vicinity did not deter the Poet of Parramatta. He set forth with a singing heart. At the end of his first day's wandering he prepared to sleep beneath a eucalyptus tree growing at the foot of a hump-backed hill. The night was lit with stars and planets almost as bright as the crescent moon shining overhead. This heavenly illumination falling on suspended eucalyptus leaves reflected from their oil-glazed surfaces innumerable points of light which, trembling in the west wind, hung the forests with twinkling lanterns. Upon this radiance the Poet gazed whilst seeking on his knees to invoke protection from beyond the stars. Having brought his supplications to an end he was about to repose, when through an opening in the trees a strange light appeared along the hill-top. It was no light of man's making. It was so bright that small irregularities on the dark edge showed clearly against the sky. Awed by the strangeness of the light the Poet was pondering on its cause, when to his astonishment he saw

a pair of horns rise above the crest. The horns were followed by the body of a cow. Finding the pasturage to her liking the cow grazed along the sky-line, whither she was joined by a string of companions amongst whom were many bulls and calves.

The Poet watched each arrival with delight, so pleased was he to behold cattle again. At the first glimmer of dawn he hastened in pursuit and in a valley beyond the hill he found the brindled cow and the pioneer bull, with fifty-eight descendants, gathering a repast on what is now called the Cow Pasture Road.

On sparkling nights, when the west wind blows, the hill-top, known as the Devil's Back, is lit with mysterious light. Geologists have no belief in countryside tales; nevertheless there is not the slightest doubt that friendly Satyrs light the ridge to guide Nymphs and county folk returning to the Cow Pasture from excursions within the Pacific Pearl. We should interpret their assistance and revelation of the cow as signs of friendliness, acknowledging such considerate spirits with honour and affection, leaving doubt to Scientists and Christians. Whether, if we behaved thus, Nymphs and Satyrs would condescend to become visible in New South Wales again is not known. But their appearance amongst us is desirable.

## CHAPTER II.

### WHEREIN THE ROAD BEGINS AND ITS BRIEF HISTORY IS TRACED FROM 1800 TO THE PRESENT DAY.

Fifteen miles westward from Sydney there is an old town called Parramatta almost as ancient as the capital. Parramatta is built upon a river site known to aborigines as the place "where eels sit down." In its early days the town was a haven whither travellers hastened from adventures with bushrangers along the Cow Pasture Road. Since the time when the Pamphleteer discovered the cattle it has been the haunt of poets. It is approached from the railway station by way of the street of the Poets, where there are houses in pairs called Cicero and Byron, Plato and Dante. Nowadays few eels tarry in the polluted river. A relic of former glory, Government House, where early Governors resided, stands Georgian, white and immaculate on a hill in the park.

Parramatta is renowned for a vine which surrounds the Bank of New South Wales on the main street and clusters the walls with luscious grapes. And it is no whit less celebrated for the gigantic stone-pines growing on the river bank and near Elizabeth Cottage.

Four miles beyond Parramatta, by way of the Great Western Road, there is a gate leading to Prospect Reservoir. The construction of the reservoir destroyed the first few miles of the Cow Pasture Road. Beginning nearer Parramatta, the road wound southward to Camden whither it was the most-used route until the Great Southern Road diverted its traffic. Then the Cow Pasture wheel-ruts crumbled and silted; rain and erosion furrowed new channels perilous to vehicles; and a peaceful solitude settled upon this old-time highway. Thudding hoofs and creaking wheels of an occasional wood-carter's team, or magpies fluting amid perpendicular saplings, are now the most important sounds breaking the silence over a greater part of the length. The Cow Pasture Road fills pedestrians with rejoicing. It has tranquillity and rewards its lovers with contentment. Sunshine is never so joyous, air never so benign as on the windless morning of a winter's day along the Cow Pasture Road. The few who drive thereon desire no other road to furnish them with swifter journeys. Placidly excavating their carts when engulfed in clay or jolting over sun-baked crevasses in summer they reach destinations without remonstrance.

Its brief career of popularity and importance began modestly. Settlers came in waggons and carts to dwell upon grants of many acres given them by the Crown. Wooden huts and brick homesteads arose in the wilderness. Soon they fenced the roadway, taking pains to get a true alignment. They felled ancient forest

trees capturing gentle little native bears that clung to falling branches uttering pitiful cries. They slew opossums and with their furs made warm rugs. They chased emus and marsupials into the unexplored interior. In due course crops arose on the clearings.

Meanwhile the aborigines contemplated these activities, and abhorring a life of toil and possessions, retired to undisturbed hunting grounds. A few thought to prevail over the intruders, but finally the wildest became docile and the tribe succumbed to rum and colonisation. These primitive Australians, indolent though they were, loved graphic art. They drew on clay banks and cut in flat rocks representations of the chase and portraits of great hunters. They knew not how to bake bricks nor to coin money, but they found happiness sitting on their naked buttocks in the sunlight drawing for the fun of it.

Having established themselves, the settlers raised flocks and herds and anticipated luxury won from the fruits of their toil. Thereupon a pestilence broke out upon their wheat, while new land was discovered beyond the mountain range, land on which the poorest saw wealth that rarely came to farmers by the Cow Pasture Road. An unforeseen misfortune overtook them when the Great Southern Road diverted traffic. Desolated by these mishaps, the Road became the derelict that it is to-day. Its gentle rises end in crests where wide expanses are revealed merging into opalescent horizons. On either side eucalyptus saplings grow beside the fences. The grass-land abounds with herbs and flowers and in flat places sweet-briar perfumes the roadway. The bush-land spreads an elusive fragrance and Nature is busily restoring her sovereignty on many an acre where crops and vines once grew.



### CHAPTER III.

WHEREIN TWO BEAUTIFUL HOMESTEADS APPEAR WHERE WE ARE SHOWN PIONEERS ON THEIR HILL-TOPS; AND BIRDS THAT CHUCKLE BY THE ROADSIDE CONCLUDE HAPPILY A CHAPTER THAT IS MOSTLY OF HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE.

To the southward of the road leading to the reservoir there is a steep hill thrust upward by some ancient eruption. A path bordered with white and red China roses interwoven in a riotous hedge ascends the hill on whose fertile slopes sleek cattle pasture or drowse in the shade of common olive trees. Almost hidden by trees on the summit, Greystanes, an old homestead, overlooks the Pacific Pearl which, though thronged with cinema-palaces executed in plaster and tin, nevertheless has the appearance from this altitude of an age-worn city, so baked and mellowed have its westward walls speedily become.

Greystanes is a widespread cottage ornamented in the style of the Greek Revival. At one end a circular bay, shadowed by a lofty thicket, arouses admiration even in those who are callous to the joy of sun-flecked architecture. Trees wave shadows across a flight of sunlit grey stone steps and strew their pattern across anthemion railings and on the threshold of a verandah whose inward walls vanish aloft into velvety blackness. Heaven, Demons and Ancient Greeks had each a share in fashioning this lovely thing. Lucifer laid the foundation by erupting basalt from his subterranean realm. The Great Architect of the Universe, perceiving an irreproachable site, took care to dower it with fertility. His humble servant Nelson Lawson, following in their immortal footsteps, planted Greystanes on Prospect Hill, selecting the art of classic Greece to give his Georgian home a savour of the gods. All three nourished the garden. They raised prolific oranges and olives and luxuriant oleanders; laurels side by side with pomegranates flourished on the crown of the hill; and the fragrant Franciscea whose flowers opening like the violet dawn imbibe blue from the mid-day sky and then, nearing the end of a life spent in perfuming their neighbourhood, turn pale as moonlit stars, and, like stars from the firmament, fall to the ground fragrant to the last.

Descending from Greystanes the world seems desolate. Over Prospect Hill the earth is scarred beside the great dam which retains the water that flows through channel and pipe to the Pacific Pearl.

Beyond Prospect Dam the Road begins. There is little to tell that it is a road. The ruts of vanished traffic lead on and ere long arrive at a white gate through which lies Horsley. A mile away, or it may be further,—a little journey that no



*Greystanes, on Prospect Hill.*

*Pencil Drawing.*

are high double doors glistening under white paint and polished brasses. On the walls there are remaining a few old portraits, crudely done, and other canvases that present fat tigers pausing in the act of seizing relatives of the Captain Charles Weston, who, having escaped these perilous adventures, left India and came to the Cow Pasture Road, where in 1817 he established himself on this serene hill. But the incomparable masterpiece, the most attractive relic, is locked in an old shed at the foot of the vegetable garden. It is the oldest vehicle in Australia, a four-wheeled carriage, a thing of graceful curves, and ironwork in the Neo-Greek style. A thousand times and more it must have rolled along the Cow Pasture Road, creaking up inclines and thundering down again over the hills that lie like peaceful waves on a petrified ocean between Horsley and the turn-off to Liverpool. In the night it must have glistened at the foot of the Devil's Back where the Road is lit by the light on that historic hill. On Sundays, with glossy horses at the pole, it carried fragrant worshippers to Church in Parramatta. And its high curved back would have sheltered them from bushranger's fusillades, showing dainty little parasols as targets for such dastardly aim.

The Road beyond Horsley where this carriage often travelled is now covered with trees, the domain of many birds. Magpies, thrushes, leather-heads, coachmen, butcher-birds and larks are songsters of the road; pee-wees, honey-suckers, finches, parrots and wagtails ornament it. The twitty-twat or soldier-bird, who makes most noise, cannot be truthfully described as a brave bird; he is not. The diamond bird is the road's ventriloquist, calling softly "I am here" and immediately announces loudly, "No! here" from another direction. Corpulent kookaburras sit upon the fences, and when a newcomer alights on their perch, all throw their heads back and laugh. Their merriment has no apparent reason, so this amiable bird is called the Laughing Jackass. Like the donkey it has no melody; and it chuckles to itself long after sensible birds are sound asleep.

## CHAPTER IV.

## INTERLUDE: ON MAP-MAKING, THE FRONTISPIECE AND BUNYIPS.

Alas! the art of map-making, in the hands of the scientific Geographer, has become overwhelmed with science. On most modern maps, mountain ranges twist like perished centipedes, continents are covered with minute letters and on dreary ocean spaces of wishy-washy blue the eye aches to find a sail or a dolphin, the frolicsome symbol of the sea. Clarity has become the map-maker's delight, and Beauty he seems to regard as a detraction from the exactitude which he has exalted. And yet the map remains a work of art as well as of science; continents retain their decorative forms and the border of the *Mappe Monde* is, as of old, the frame for a picture.

It is no part of the modern Geographer's intention to make his maps unattractive. If they are, it is because he has abandoned Art, his companion of centuries. It was not Art who turned from Truth and Clarity but the Geographer himself, who in the flood of scientific discoveries, forbore to learn to decorate.

No such neglect overtook map-makers in mediaeval days. True, they were often unscientific; they tried to make the world conform with the Bible; but they rejoiced in symmetry.

As did Ptolemy,<sup>1</sup> who, though he based his World-map on geography by guesswork, was guided by a love of symmetrical proportions.

As did Cosmas,<sup>2</sup> who constructed a religious system of geography from the Tabernacle of Moses and feared not to give Jehovah's Universe the form of a travelling trunk adorning it with superb texture and a monumental simplicity.

And though in the Fourteenth Century appeared the scientific Portolani<sup>3</sup> maps, still did Hondius<sup>4</sup> at the full tide of the scholarly Renaissance make his *Mappe Monde* a thing of loveliness.

Ancient maps exercise a curious fascination on the mind and we explore them with zest, not knowing what tit-bit may be forthcoming. Shall Posterity turn to modern maps with an equal zest when, in their turn, they have become primitive as, indeed, all maps must?

<sup>1</sup> Ptolemy. *Mappe Monde*, Second Century.

<sup>2</sup> Cosmas. Egyptian Monk, Sixth Century. Author of the oldest Christian maps in existence. See *Dawn of Modern Geography* by C. Raymond Beazley, M.A., F.R.G.S., pp. 277 and 281, Part 1.

<sup>3</sup> Portolani or Coast Charts. Early Fourteenth Century. First attempts at scientifically accurate maps. See "Henry the Navigator," by C. R. Beazley.

<sup>4</sup> Hondius, Jodocus. World-map, 1611. Reproduction in Public Library, Sydney, N.S.W.

The Cow Pasture Road Map is an attempt to place Beauty and Science, the Mediaeval and the Modern, side by side. No innovations are limned upon the Frontispiece. Like the coast lines on the Portolani charts, the roads are drawn with tolerable accuracy. We may follow them without fear of losing our way or meeting disaster, and their geography will be found to agree with the countryside should our footsteps lead us thither. Railroads have been omitted, not because of their modernity, but to avoid crowding the page. And the aqueduct had, perchance, to disappear in a mythical fashion where homesteads are congregated on its route.

The Cow Pasture Road Map has many features in common with Mediaeval examples. The panorama of homesteads and hilltops, together with legends and industries, and with Celestium, which is not unlike New Jerusalem—as described hereinafter,—placed in their midst, calls to mind the towns, castles, myths and monsters spread on maps like the Psalter of the Thirteenth Century which has Jerusalem, the navel of the earth, placed at its centre.

The homesteads on the map are faithful representations of the buildings, being designed from sketches executed on neighbouring summits.<sup>1</sup>

Hills are represented by conical erections, sometimes crowned with a tree to indicate woodland. This method allows the contour of the land to be more readily followed than does the centipede system, but it falls far short of the method adopted in the London Beatus<sup>2</sup> map, of A.D. 1109, which has beautiful mountains in the form of pineapples from which spring little flowers.

The Cow Pasture hills, homesteads, towns and villages are shown in elevation. Aided by the transition from plan to perspective in the landscape at the top of the map, this elevational system produces an illusion of distance, and it is much more informative of the architecture than bird's eye perspective or isometrical projection, both of which show more roof than facade.<sup>3</sup>

To the Spectator, accustomed to finding north at the top of maps, it may prove distasteful to find the south-west in this position. There are two good reasons for this departure from custom; one being to show Camden prominently at the end

<sup>1</sup> There is one exception, Cow-di-Knaves, situated near Carn Hill—also called Carn's Hill—which is a conjectural restoration. The building has disappeared. There is, however, little doubt that Cow-di-Knaves was a house of slabs planned on the lines of the Alchemist's establishment on Carn Hill as set forth in Chapter VI. It should be noted that the spelling of the name is taken from Well's Map of Cumberland and, according to Historians, should read Cow-di-Knowes. —(Hardy Wilson.)

<sup>2</sup> Beatus maps are a series based on a design made by Beatus, a Spanish priest of the Eighth Century.

<sup>3</sup> Mediaeval Map-makers usually show cities and castles in perspective, although the Byzantine Madaba, Mosaic, World-map of the Sixth Century shows Jerusalem part in elevation and part bird's eye. —(Dawn of Modern Geography, Part II., p. 580.)

of the Road where the eye can take in at a glance the whole course of the tale without reversing the page or twisting one's neck; the other, no less excellent, is that the orientation chosen gives the most symmetrical arrangement.<sup>1</sup>

In the Filly Paddock, towards the western edge of the map, is placed the head of an elderly Satyr, slightly Shavian and slightly Chaldean, who is engaged in blowing the west wind towards the Devil's Back.<sup>2</sup>

On the map border, prune-ants and eggs between them might easily be mistaken for the Roman roll and bead.<sup>3</sup> At the angles of the border is placed the symbol of a kiss, dear to lovers.<sup>4</sup>

The Road and its vicinity is slightly suggestive of the itineraries followed by Crusaders. Bordered with legends, it passes from town to town and inn to inn, eventually arriving at St. John's Church, Camden, in much the same way that the old itineraries led to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Cow Pasture Road map is drawn on parchment which is almost imperishable.<sup>5</sup> The skin is stained and treated to give some resemblance, however small, to

<sup>1</sup> Placing north at the top of maps is a modern practice. In early Mapped-mondes—particularly in the Beatus maps—east or south is placed at the top and Paradise is given prominence in that position.

Matthew Paris, who made a map of England in the Thirteenth Century, was the first map-maker in Northern Europe to place north at the top. Doubtless, this was done to accommodate the length of Britain to a sheet of his manuscript. (Beazley, Dawn of Modern Geography.) However, there is no evidence to show that the length of Britain led to the modern placing.

<sup>2</sup> Wind Blowers are a common device on ancient maps. The most interesting show a Wind-spirit seated on an Aeolus bag squeezing out the breeze. —(Dawn of Mod. Geog.)

<sup>3</sup> I disclaim any attempt at originality in the prune-ant border. Having observed how the incomparable Michael Angelo himself, who was original if ever an artist could be called so, did no more than alter classic forms, I believe that originality is a false ambition on the part of artists. The legs of the ants, which are the chief divergence from the Roman motif, are no more than a trifling novelty and, in justice to myself, I should add that the resemblance of ant and egg to roll and bead was accidental, being suggested, in looking over the manuscript for a suitable border, by the encounter of the Postmaster General with the prune-ants as set forth in Chapter VIII. And here, I venture to suggest that the border, although rather narrow for the map, would, perhaps, enhance the appearance of Cow Pasture postage stamps. —(Hardy Wilson.)

<sup>4</sup> An allusion to the memorable discovery in Narellan School of Arts, unfolded in Chapter XII. —(H.W.)

<sup>5</sup> This opinion is notably upheld by Edgar Poe in "The Gold Bug," wherein is described the finding, on the coast of Carolina, of a parchment on which was written the key to the whereabouts of Captain James Kidd's buried treasure. The parchment, after lying on the shore for centuries in all weathers, is stated by Poe to have been none the worse for its long exposure. The narrative is of course fiction, but the Author was too fine an artist and too meticulous a scribe to place the kernel of his tale on a perishable material. —(Hardy Wilson.)

the beautiful texture and colour of Cosmas' Sixth Century maps.<sup>1</sup>

After much careful deliberation, the most attractive picture on the sketch for the Cow Pasture Road Map was omitted on the frontispiece. This was a picture of the Bunyip standing amongst bullrushes and reflected in a pool at its feet. The beast, faithfully drawn according to reports found on early Australian manuscripts and placed in its favourite haunt, made a handsome medallion. There was nothing repulsive about it. In its bovine head gleamed a liquid eye, and its body, banded with stripes of the richest black, terminated in a graceful tasselled tail. In truth, it looked an amiable beast, one in which it were easy to believe, provided one knew nothing about it. Yet for all that, it lacked conviction on the Cow Pasture map.

Since the Nineteenth Century, when humankind placed its trust in machinery, monsters have vanished from the face of maps. The modern mind, dominated by science and mechanics, accepts only the marvels which have been investigated and proved by Chemists, Scientists and Inventors.<sup>2</sup> And Artists are content to depict, in a jocular vein, the monsters already established by use or tradition.

In the Bunyip is revealed mythology in the making. It is too modern a monster to bear depiction on a map where its picture leaves the spectator incredulous. Moreover, its appearances were made near at hand. If they had occurred at some remote spot, far from Christian habitations, one could overlook the lack of zoological evidence and accept the Bunyip with an equanimity which is extended to the Camelopard.<sup>3</sup> Until recently, rarely a year has passed without a visitation from the Bunyip being reported in the rural news-sheets of New South Wales. Such were the nature of these reports that only folk who dwelt in the neighbourhood and had good reason to fear the Bunyip's presence took the announcements seriously. They had better ground for their belief than the people of the Dark Ages who had faith in monsters which they knew only from travellers' tales and pictorial maps.

In the light of scientific knowledge, these ancient maps and tales appear amusing, even absurd, and the modern mind is apt to overlook how many of these absurdities have from time to time proved true and founded on the whimsical ways of Nature.

<sup>1</sup> To make a Mediaeval Parchment: Soak the skin in the staining fluid—whose hue will be to suit the taste of the user—allowing one minute's immersion for each century desired. It is the resulting tint is darker than intended—as well may happen—lay the parchment on the garden lawn for at least a fortnight; then bleach with peroxide to which has been added not more than three drops of ammonia. This treatment does not remove the natural grease which preserves the skin and adds brilliance to the blackest inks. —(H.W.)

<sup>2</sup> Huxley, however, refused to declare that miracles are impossible. —(H.W.)

<sup>3</sup> The Camelopard was described by Solinus, Third or Fourth Century, A.D., author of "the most wonderful tale of a miraculous world ever written in Europe,"—(Beazley, Dawn of Modern Geography)—and continued a universal favourite with Mediaeval Map-makers. Hondius in his world-map of the Seventeenth Century (Public Library, N.S.W.) shows the Camelopard in one of the oval medallions bordering his design. It is a camel covered with spots under which it is difficult to detect the now familiar giraffe.

Thus Rubruquis,<sup>1</sup> who, in the year 1254, went to the Court of the Great Khan at Karakorum in Mongolia where he heard of "the Chin-Chin or Kangaroo men who lived, and leapt, in the Far Eastern Countries beyond Cathay," hands down the story of some remote Traders, who sailing from China in search of treasure, were swept by adverse winds far to the south and east. Landing in a fear and tremble on the mystical shores of Australia they started from the concealing scrub an old-man Kangaroo, who, making off in great leaps on his two lengthy legs, appeared to their dumbfounded eyes as one of the race of men.

Thus also the Rabbi Petachia furnishes a tale at one with that of the Parramatta Poet who saw the light on the Devil's Back.

Whilst on a visit to Bagdad in the Twelfth Century, the Rabbi saw the mysterious light which Pilgrims to the Holy Land held in awe above the Tomb of the Prophets at Babylon.<sup>2</sup> Science has shown that this light was caused, then and now, by springs of naphtha.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, of all Mediaeval tales, what more unlikely than the adventures of Sindbad the Sailor?<sup>4</sup> Sindbad's adventures contain nothing more seemingly ridiculous than his encounters with the Roc, that fabulous bird which proves to have been true flesh, bones, blood and feathers.

In Sindbad's day, the Roc brooded in Madagascar, whence one of its eggs has been carried to Paris, and from remains found on that marvellous island, modern Zoologists have reconstructed the Aepiornis, a glorious bird which towered six times higher than an ostrich.<sup>5</sup> Bound to a leg of an Aepiornis, Sindbad would have incommenced it no more than a louse on the leg of a pullet.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rubruquis M.S.S., pp. 327-328, quoted in Dawn of Modern Geography, Part II, p. 360.

<sup>2</sup> Dawn of Modern Geography.

<sup>3</sup> On a clear night in the late Autumn of the year 1912, the Writer came to the Devil's Back from Horsley. The crescent moon shone overhead, and from the west the wind blew steadily. Along the crest of the hill was spread a faint illumination which may have been—indeed, probably was—caused by the lights of Sydney reflected in the sky. The approach was made from westwards. If such were the cause, this illumination could not have appeared at the time of the Poet's discovery, when Sydney was in magnitude no more than a village. Moreover, the Poet looked *towards* the West, away from Sydney. —(H.W.)

<sup>4</sup> Sindbad the Sailor, whose adventures "first delighted Moslem ears in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries," was Soleyman the Merchant, an Arab, who in the course of his travels reached Madagascar. —(Dawn Mod. Geog.)

<sup>5</sup> C. Raymond Beazley, F.R.G.S., makes the Roc "six times larger than an ostrich." Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveller, quoting from accounts of those who had seen the bird, gives the span across its outspread wings at sixteen paces which would be forty feet.

—(Dawn Mod. Geography, p. 445, part I.)

<sup>6</sup> The largest ostrich, upstanding at its prime, would scale about ten feet from head to toe, thus giving a full-grown Aepiornis the magnificent altitude of approximately sixty feet. Forty-eight feet, however, would be its average height. —(H.W.)

We have now seen, in the person of a Chin-Chin the commonplace Kangaroo; in the Camelopard a Giraffe; in the Roc an Aepiornis and in the miraculous light on the Prophets' Tomb nothing more strange than naphtha. Yet still does Science scoff at the map-monsters which, like the Bunyip, have not been identified. Truth to tell, some of these monsters seem beyond the possibility of scientific explanation. But others, no less absurd, are not beyond the bounds of reason.

Solinus, describing the marvels of Germany, presents "an exquisite creature, like a mule, with such a long upper lip 'that he cannot feed except walking backwards.'"<sup>1</sup> In the light of recent history may this not have been a delicate allusion to the Prussian attitude?

Solinus, master of myths and monsters, also describes the Blemmyes and Skiapods<sup>2</sup> whom we would be tempted to dismiss as false figments of his imagination if there were no other evidence to support his word. Both Blemmyes and Skiapods, however, appear so frequently on the picture Mappes-mondes of the Dark Ages and persist so long in the face of later erudition and geographical exploration, that it is difficult to reject an assumption that there was some foundation for belief in them.

The Blemmyes, a race of headless men with eyes and mouth in their breasts, were placed by Solinus in the unknown equatorial regions of Africa.<sup>3</sup>

Later Scribes and Geographers show that the Blemmyes were tall men, sometimes with only one eye in their breast, and they are invariably placed upon or southward of the Equator, either in Africa or the Australian continent which was considered their most favoured habitation.

Australia, at the Antipodes, was also made the resting place of the Skiapods or Shadow-footed men who had huge feet which they raised, like umbrellas, as a shelter against the rays of the equatorial sun.<sup>4</sup>

In those days Map-makers and Theologians supposed that the equatorial regions were bathed in a fierce light into which it was impossible for a Christian to venture without speedily being burned to a cinder. Nevertheless, it is possible to imagine a few brave but illiterate spirits, who caring naught for tribal divisions or family ties, did penetrate Africa as far as the equator and even beyond. Returning to their native cities without welcome or ovation, they spread around the neighbourhood tales which, in garbled form, reached the ears of geographers and monks.

<sup>1</sup> Dawn Mod. Geography, Part I, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Also called Skiapeds.

<sup>3</sup> Dawn Mod. Geography, Part I, p. 267.

<sup>4</sup> Solinus places the Skiapods in India, probably because he had already populated Africa and Australia. Popular opinion is clearly against him. On the Beatus Maps, Skiapods are shown in the Australian Continent.

Aided by the superior knowledge with which Zoologists, Biologists, Botanists, Historians and Geographers have enlightened the modern world, it is possible to enquire closely into the truth or falsity of these mediaeval reports, at the same time placing oneself in the position of an early wanderer, who, having reached the land of the Blemmyes, at or near the equator in Africa, would catch sight of a tall person stealing through the elephant-grass. In lieu of habiliments, which are commonly discarded in the equatorial air, the body of this person would be adorned with devices in pipe-clay or pigment. To the startled Christian's mind, the painted eye and mouth on the savage breast would assume the awful delineations of a monster unredeemed by the Blood of our Saviour, The Lord Jesus Christ. High amidst the tall swaying grass, the dark head of the monster would be invisible at a short distance, provided that it was small enough.<sup>1</sup> There is some likelihood that it was.

In Africa dwell the Zulus whose custom is to paint their bodies and whose chests would lie at the level of a mediaeval head as ancient armour tells. Now the Zulu is a bold wanderer, with small head and large feet, who, doubtless, roamed to the equator. In short the Blemmyes and the Skiapods existed in one and the same people who, in retiring to the more temperate South, may have enlarged their heads and diminished their feet. Is there evidence to support so strange an assumption? Nothing more likely. Australia advances this startling phenomenon: the Anglo-Saxon inhabitant, already taller than the parent stock, grows less in his head the while his feet wax larger. This change, most noticeable in the native born of the third and even the second generation, becomes more marked towards the tropical regions of the Continent. Still, northernmost heads are by no means invisible at a short distance nor do feet vie in dimensions with the umbrella-like extremities of the Skiapods.

But *did* the Skiapods hold aloft a foot as large as an umbrella during their mid-day siesta? They did not.

Choosing some sunlit morning or mellow afternoon to steal upon a long, lithe Australian lying asleep upon a grassy knoll, the investigating Geographer perceives in the sleeper's leg resting on a knee with foot extended as a shield between the sun and his eyes, a skiapodic attitude. Surely, the Map-makers of old have been

<sup>1</sup> It is quite possible that neither Blemmye or Skiapod was ever seen close at hand. In trading with the native tribes of the African interior, Moslem and Christian traders placed their goods on the ground and retired to some spot out of sight. The Natives then advanced and, if satisfied with the goods, took what they wanted and left in exchange an amount in ivory and gold. They in their turn retired. Thereupon the Traders returned and examined the exchange. If dissatisfied they withdrew again leaving the ivory and gold. Once more the natives advanced and either added to their store or replaced the Trader's goods. —(Dawn Mod. Geog.)

mised and the Shadow-footed men upheld their feet like Australians to shelter themselves from the burning rays of the Antipodean sun.

And if the Geographer examines further into the mysteries which Australia unfolds, taking into account all that Philosophers have said, he will learn that forms of political government are determined by the shape of the people's heads. Furthermore, he will observe, perchance, how the size of feet bears out, inversely, the same equation.

Taking the Southern quarter of the Continent where Government is most stable, the Anglo-Saxon heads have every-day proportions whilst feet are not enlarged. About the middle regions where feet grow slightly longer, Parliaments are quarrelsome and, at times, apt to lose their heads which are knobby rather than round and yet withal singularly even. Approaching the tropical zone in the north, chaos governs the discourse of Parliament and the curious ways of Nature are made more manifest. At the northern extremity of this illuminative land there is no government at all and efforts to establish harmonious rule have proved in vain.

Here then, at the far north, the eager Geographer must pause and await the advent of a second or perhaps a third generation in whom he will detect the vanished Blemmye and the long lost Skiapod, thus adding yet another verification to the list of exploded mediaeval myths. And the Newcomers, what of them? Being no longer weighed down by the weight of their heads, these northernmost Australians will become singular athletes, leaping on their huge elastic feet high into the air with an agility rivalled only by the ancient Chins who are now called Kangaroos.

Having seen in the wildest imaginings of Solinus but the embroideries of Truth, one can scarcely doubt the existence of the Bunyip. The earlier descriptions of this elusive creature are not so various or so baffling as mediaeval tales of Blemmye or Skiapod, nor are they less trustworthy. From them, one gathers that the Bunyip manifests itself in divers ways. It exhibits extraordinary prudence, avoiding contact with Mankind although it does not deign to avoid their neighbourhood. Its visitations were always rare and, of late, its caution seems to have been redoubled. Far from making its features better known, its appearances strengthen the obscurity in which it dwells, as the following tale, which, though abridged, is here set down with exactitude, will tell:

One hot, still day, three boys were gathering tortoises along the banks of Rope's Creek, a few miles from the Great Western Road. As they drew near a wide deep pool,<sup>1</sup> which lay in the midst of sombre casuarinas, their ears were startled by the sound of a sudden heavy splash. Imagining that a cow had become bogged amongst the bullrushes, which border the waters of Rope's Creek, all three

<sup>1</sup> Called the Bunyip's Pool on Frontispiece.

ran to the top of a bank overlooking the pool. Here they saw large ripples extending in circles from a spot in the deep water just beyond the edge of the rushes, and already the outermost ripples were beating on the opposite shore. No living thing was to be seen. The size of the ripples and the volume of the splash indicated that some body, as large as that of a cow or a well-grown calf, had plunged beneath the surface of the water. No tree spread overhead from which a branch might have fallen. No log could have had resting place near at hand. No earth-fall was possible. No newly-made hoof-marks were visible on the muddy verge of the pool. The tortoises of Rope's Creek are very small, and the perch, eels and gudgeons which frequent its waters could not have caused so great a commotion. There was no obvious solution of the splash unless, perchance, it was a meteorite that fell, or the deep and friendly waters had closed upon the Bunyip in precipitate retreat.

In this and many like occurrences there is a mystery which only ignorant Scoffers can have the assurance to say will never be penetrated.

And if no light is forthcoming and we become inculcated with the principles of Science, what then? We shall cherish the memory of the Bunyip with a pleasure which will end only with the discovery of its mortal remains.

REFERENCE BOOKS: The Dawn of Modern Geography, by C. Raymond Beazley, M.A., F.R.G.S. (three vols.)

Prince Henry the Navigator, by C. Raymond Beazley.

MAPS CONSULTED: In the Public Library, Sydney, N.S.W.:

Remarkable Maps of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.

Blaeu. World-Map, 1605.

Hondius. World-Map, 1611.

Also map of Cumberland, N.S.W., compiled by W. H. Wells, Sydney; about 1840.

Maps of Cumberland, by H. E. C. Robinson, Sydney; modern.

MSS. Examined:

In the Courthouse at Berrima, N.S.W. Papers dealing with reports by escaped prisoners who encountered Bunyips along the banks of the nearby Wingecarribee River.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A few years ago, a number of "Bunyip" Manuscripts were lodged, together with a large accumulation of Court correspondence, beneath the floor of the old Courthouse at Berrima where they could be readily examined by taking up a loose board and prospecting in the darkness with a long-handled rake until a likely-feeling bundle was encountered. Unfortunately, nearly all these manuscripts were written on much softer paper than the correspondence, and the opossums of the neighbourhood, who drew regularly from this store, preferred the MSS. as a lining for their nests. Thus, doubtless, perished many precious documents which could have shed further light on the Bunyip and its ways.

—H.W.

## CHAPTER V.

WHICH TELLS OF WHITEANTS, A TOWN PLAN AND LOVE  
AT THE TURN-OFF TO LIVERPOOL.

Between Horsley and the turn-off to Liverpool, whiteants are the Road's sinister and most silent inhabitants. These insects travel underground, seeking homesteads to invade. Architecture is nowhere without vicissitudes. Along the Cow Pasture Road where imperturbable farmers seldom disturb the old houses, destruction lurks unseen. The substance of rafters and of delicate mouldings is devoured slowly and secretly by the pestilential termites whose parchment-coloured bodies cannot endure the light of day. Whiteants devour wood with ease as though the toughest timbers had that succulence which others find in honey. Settled within cities hollowed out of woodwork, they digest suburbs and highways until only a shell is left to cover their presence. When discovered their end is terrible. Into the city an appetising poison is injected, on which the nearest ants feed and perish. These are devoured by their neighbours, who in turn provide a banquet for others more remote. They also perish. So this horrible feast progresses, suburb after suburb, course after course, until the last survivor, seizing a poisoned corpse, retires to some dismal recess in an architrave, dines and delivers up its detestable soul. Such creatures seem utterly beyond sympathy. Yet whiteants in Liverpool set two lovers embracing. The story, told at the turn-off, is somewhat as follows:

Five miles from the turn-off, in the town of Liverpool, there is a house of two stories whose gable and wide eaves proclaim its age as being of Governor Macquarie's term. During the thirties this house sheltered an Economist whose dearest friend, an Astrologer hailing from Bringelly, was versed in the mysteries of the stars. The two hobnobbed under the Economist's roof once a week, on which occasion the Economist's wife entertained a maiden lady of prudent age, who loved the Astrologer. On his part the Astrologer returned her love no less ardently, but he lacked courage to avow it. He was at his ease in celestial affairs, foretelling destinies with assurance, whilst in the presence of his lady he was timid and conventional. On her approach he plunged into Cow Pasture small-talk or the portents of the sky, while she was far too modest to lead his thoughts whither they both desired. The Economist and his wife sought to bring to a union this passion so eager and so shy. It was their custom to entertain the lovers with expositions of bliss; a conspiracy which not withstanding their experience failed to overcome the timidity of the one and the modesty of the other. Their efforts

drew no more than sighs from the lovers who imagined these signs of affection inaudible to anyone save themselves.

One Sabbath afternoon the Economist and the Astrologer, having gossiped with the ladies in the shadow of the eaves as was their wont, retired to the study where they resumed their elaboration of the plan of a little town which they anticipated would return splendour to the Cow Pasture Road, even then past the heyday of its fame. Celestium, as they called this little town, was projected as an arrangement of the starry firmament near the turn-off to Liverpool. It was destined from the outset never to pass beyond the linen it was drawn on because symmetry had fallen out of fashion and the plan was perfectly symmetrical. Celestium created no little excitement when the Economist made public his intention of floating a company to construct it. Controversy on its inns raged along the Cow Pasture as far as Camden and Parramatta. There were twelve provided. At The Ram, The Bull, The Twins, The Crab, The Lion, The Virgin, The Balance, The Scorpion, The Archer, The Goat, The Water Bearer and the Fishes, fermented and spirituous liquors were to be retailed for sale. And to accustom people to his idea, the Economist had the Zodiac printed on the first page of the New South Wales Household Guide for 1835, so that when Celestium came to be built no difficulty would be found in distinguishing taverns by their zodiacal signs. The Astrologer objected to this use of the Zodiac because he maintained there were not enough signs. He pointed out that in Hartley, a very small town on the Great Western Road, thirteen inns were spaced amid six dwellings, two churches and a courthouse. As he was unable to supply more inns from the sky and was loath to omit the Zodiac, Celestium was left to take its chance with twelve.

The collaborators were busily engaged on the centre of Celestium when a crash followed by a shower of plaster and clouds of dust ended their consultation. Raising their eyes from the plan, they were dumbfounded on beholding a graceful leg protruding from a hole in the ceiling. By a stroke of luck, the red-flannel drawers in which the limb was garmented, had become wedged in the hole. The Economist mounted upon a chair to render assistance, when perceiving that it was not his wife's leg, he hesitated to perform what might be taken as an unpardonable liberty. So he stepped down again. He remained calm and, turning his thoughts again to the plan, began musing on the centre or zenith, as it were, of Celestium. To himself he said:

"Mankind has shown no particular aptitude in emphasising the centre of towns. The Market Square, a familiar device, has the merit of convenience and expresses the importance of trade. At the heart of capitals Parliaments are sometimes housed, but they leave us cold. The sparkle of a fountain is a pleasant sight, but trivial. Crosses, obelisks, arches, monarchs and statesmen have been tried and found dull. A picture gallery is out of place, since towns do not love art. Nor is

a library fitting."

At this point the Economist became aware of lamentations in the room above. He listened for a moment and said:

"A graceful leg is a sorry object when suspended from a ceiling. In this position it appears without sex and arouses no admiration whatever."

He continued:

"Of celestial towns, New Jerusalem promises a magnificent centre. There the Tree of Life is to overhang the River of Life flowing from the centre. It is a plan that we cannot do better than follow in our humble little town. Under the tree of Happiness, Demos, at the zenith of Celestium, would receive universal salutations."

Here the cries above increased to a pitch that forced him to abandon his reverie.

Looking for the Astrologer, he saw him turning over the leaves of a book in a corner of the room. The Astrologer had recognised at first glance his beloved's leg. So he opened a book to avoid anguishing the soul of one who he knew would be distressed by the thought that he had seen too much of her. Thereupon the Economist grasped his opportunity, and indicating the ceiling with an eloquent gesture, he thrust the Astrologer towards the staircase. Returning to Celestium he saw, in the litter scattered over his drawing, a waxen-bodied ant gorged with floor-board. He lifted the insect from the planet Venus and at the window listened to lover's talk issuing from the ceiling, then with a benediction he flung the whiteant upon a rosebush and resumed his planning.

Celestium ended dismally. Everyone looked askance when invited to take shares in what was considered an impracticable whim. The Economist tacked his plan on the wall above his bureau where it became a roosting place of flies until one day while he was away, his wife tore it down and Celestium burst into flames under the copper in the wash-house.

Thus perished the Cow Pasture Road's last chance of becoming a lustrous thoroughfare.

Half-a-mile southwards, beyond the turn-off to Liverpool, in the midst of a tea-tree scrub, there is a patriarchal eucalyptus higher than all trees within sight. Its smooth bark has the roses of the dawn and silvery greys, and is pitted with little warts and scratched where the opossums go up and down on their nightly peregrinations. By day little green parakeets squabble in its leaves invisibly, so high are they. When the west wind blows, there is a rushing and a roaring sound overhead as if a broad stream were hastening over a shallow bed. Its huge girth and grandeur give this tree an appearance of age and solidity as enduring as the earth itself. Yet it is hollow even in its branches. Near the ground there is an

opening through which a man might crawl giving entrance to a chamber all black and charred by bush fires. Down through the blackness within comes faintly the fragrance of honey. There is a hive somewhere above. And in quest of honey little Dick Standaloff came upon a plan of Celestium hidden with a bundle of manuscript in a pocket of the trunk.

To one's mind rises a vision of the Bringly Astrologer riding homewards along the Cow Pasture Road, his thoughts aglow with stars and love in the beautiful night. And the Bushranger in the shadows by the road dreaming of plunder, his hopes sky-high as the Astrologer draws near. And then, by the light of a fire, his chagrin as he finds a celestial plan and an Astrologer's notes. But the bushrangers of old were not all of vindictive spirit. And this one was a kindly rascal, for he must have hidden the documents, meaning to send word to his victim of their whereabouts. What intervened we cannot tell. Peradventure a rope or a swifter bullet. Whatever it was we are indebted to the robber whose sinful ways preserved for our enjoyment this joyous plan together with explanations and comments, written on sheets bearing the Astrologer's crest that accompanied it.

The design reproduced herewith is evidently a sketch from the Economist's drawing. Limned in Chinese ink upon a linen handkerchief it must be an insignificant work compared with the original by the master hand, yet for all that it preserves the admirable arrangement, the celestial application and superb symmetry of the grander version. It is sufficient to convey a tolerably clear picture of Celestium as the town was intended to sit astride the Cow Pasture Road.

The heading states that Celestium is "In conformity with the starry heavens on the evening of the birthday of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, the twenty-fourth day of May, at eight o'clock." Here, in a nutshell, is the curious combination of the star-gazing Astrologer and the politic Economist. The Astrologer would choose the month when the Milky Way streams east and west across the heavens and the hour when many stars and constellations correspond with the plan. And the gracious compliment to the Queen is clearly the Economist's idea. Of the two, the Economist was assuredly the controlling mind. It is to his sense of form that Celestium owes its charm. His was the mind that bade the Astrologer's stars forsake their constellations, caused planets to wander from their orbits, and set the heavens topsy-turvy in order that Celestium be not disarranged. And to him may be credited a public vinery and many an eleemosynary thought. In the Astrologer we perceive a visionary, yet withal a meticulous scientist, imploring consideration of the equinoctial and the ecliptic and mildly remonstrating when spheres became square. Celestium must have been a wonderful arrangement in circles and circumvolutions, conforming with the stars in their courses, had he possessed the stronger will of the twain. It is to his knowledge that Celestium owes orbs and constellations placed correctly enough considering the limitations imposed on him.



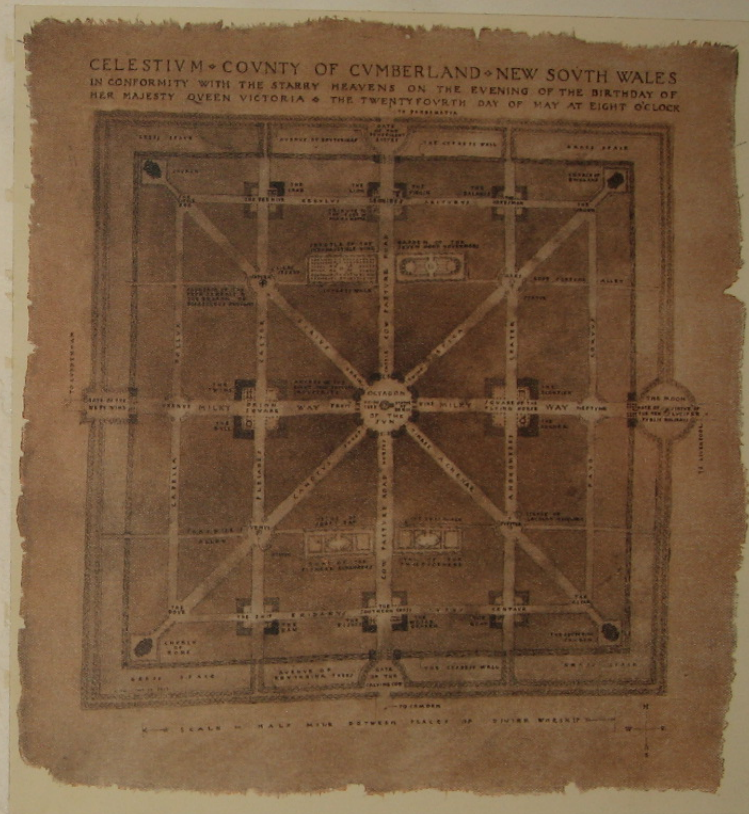
The plan of Celestium anticipates the trend of modern town planning. This is not at all surprising. Over and over again we observe ancient works of singular modernity. For the truth is that the gems of bygone days do not become old-fashioned. The simplicity of the plan lends it attractiveness. An examination discloses the Cow Pasture Road, the Sun, and diagonal stellar ways superimposed on the plan of Richelieu, that beautiful little town in France which was built for Cardinal Richelieu, and rests as a jewel on the bosom of the world. With this plan and the Astrologer's notes to guide, it is possible to imagine Celestium before us on the Cow Pasture Road. The larger plan, so carelessly destroyed, doubtless showed additional streets and secondary constellations, but their omission on the Astrologer's sketch is not of importance.

Approaching from the turn-off to Liverpool, the first sign of Celestium is the cypress wall whose stately shafts appear above an avenue of erythrina surrounding the town. At the time of spring the erythrina's leafless branches are aflame with scarlet flowers and in the summer time they bear a canopy of brilliant green, darker and richer than the planes surrounding Richelieu, but not so gay and animated. On the hottest day they cast a shadow in which no ray of sunlight glitters; a shadow, cool and inviting, that seems tinged with the green of the foliage. Across a grassy space where lies the moat of Richelieu, is the town wall, a double row of cypresses that in fifty years reach grandeur by the Cow Pasture Road.

The Gate of the Beneficent Satyrs gives entrance to Celestium on its northern side. It is called a gate like the other entrances out of regard for Richelieu's gates which it in no way resembles. All the gateways, according to the Astrologer's notes, were shown constructed of huge tree trunks hewn from the virgin forest covering the site, and supporting beams from which one can imagine vines trailing and clambering around the white-washed pillars. The importance of history is manifested in the names given to three of the gates. That by which we entered is towards the Devil's Back where the cattle were revealed by Satyrs. Westward is the Gate of the West Wind, the wind that blows when the Devil's back is aglow. And to the southward, on the Cow Pasture Road, is the Gate of the Calving Cow, recalling the escape of the brindled cow who calved southwards somewhere in the Cow Pasture as the country around Camden is called.

Within the Gate of the Beneficent Satyrs, at the Square of Leonides where the Cow Pasture Road meets the stellar streets, Regulus and Arcturus, are the Lion and the Virgin, two of the Zodiacal inns. Each of the inns of Celestium occupies a corner of a constellation. The forecourts are enclosed within a colonnade of tree-trunks, and the signs of the Zodiac, drawn within the squares, suggest the signboards hanging over the doorways.

Continuing from Leonides, the Cow Pasture Road bisects a rectangular garden surrounded by a cypress walk. That part to the east is called the Garden of the



The Plan of Celestium

Seven Good Governors and that opposite, the Pergola of the Inexhaustible Vine. The Astrologer's note on the Garden of the Seven Good Governors reads as follows: "Enclosed within a hedge of Francisca, an olive tree and red China roses; about a semi-circle at each end terminal heads of the Seven Good Governors and seven emblems of their virtues." Here we are placed in a quandary. There is nothing to denote who of the eight governors in New South Wales from 1788 to 1835 was omitted. Governor Bourke, whose term did not end till 1837, must have been included. He was of excellent virtue and it would have been unwise to leave him out. It is recorded of all early Governors how they exercised an influence in some way benign. By way of a solution let us assign to the Economist's passion for symmetry a choice by which seven governors, with one as a solid in the centre, go round a semicircle more equably than eight.

Crossing the road from the Garden of the Governors we enter the Pergola of the Inexhaustible Vine. There is no word of the Astrologer's to describe it. None is needed. The Economist's intention is clear. The stranger, arriving within the gate of Celestium by way of the Cow Pasture Road, hot and athirst on a summer's day, too poor to seek the Lion or the Virgin, turns aside into the cool vinery, where from grey logs spanning a forest of trunks, hang in abundance bunches of purple and amber grapes. And the vine, as we saw in Parramatta, covers in two generations an acreage sufficient to feast a multitude.

The Economist's thought appears again in the Octagon of the Sun, a wide space evidently intended as the Market, entered through eight arches symbolising the eight important Cow Pasture industries. The arches may be conjectured as built of rough red Liverpool bricks, with perhaps a cornice, depending for their beauty on texture, colour, simplicity and good proportion. Within the Octagon at the centre of Celestium stands a Ho-Ho, the tree of Happiness, whose leaves rustle and dance as with joy and whose branches are never without blossom. It is the most desirable of all trees and is readily propagated. In the shade of the Ho-Ho is the statue of Demos. The Astrologer's note, much discoloured by smoke, has been deciphered to read as follows: "Demos, facing the dawn, holds in his toil-worn hands an enlarging mirror in which the gloomiest Democrat, approaching from the Milky Way, beholds himself of gigantic size, like the statue that represents him, and arrives at the zenith of Celestium all smiles and satisfaction."

From the Octagon of the Sun radiate four avenues called Sirius, Spica, Canopus, and Achenar, terminating in the angles at the four churches, of which that to the north-west behind the Little Dog is not named probably because the Economist wished to avoid estranging churches which were not given a place on the plan of Celestium. Halfway to the churches are the planets Saturn, Mars, Venus and Jupiter, circular spaces surrounded with lilac-flowered cedar trees. Saturn contains the Dragon of Disastrous Drought placed at the centre of the Fountain of

the Four Cereals. The Astrologer's note explains that "the Dragon is to be represented writhing under four jets of water played upon him by Fauns who mock him with handfuls of wheat, maize, oats and barley." Jupiter, towards the south, at the intersection of Andromedes with Achenar, contains the statue of Lachlan Macquarie who is given a planet to himself, even though he is included with the Seven Good Governors. Lachlan Macquarie was the governor who between the years 1810 and 1821 marked his name on every kind of geographical feature on the map of New South Wales. It was he who had the audacity to build as though that great and glorious future foretold by Governor Phillip on Landing Day had overtaken the Pacific Pearl while he, Macquarie, ruled over it. It was he who saw imaginatively where so many have been without vision; he who gave the Cow Pasture glimmerings of greatness; and who, as the first and last to impose the Grand Manner on New South Wales, deserved a planet in Celestium.

Venus and Mars have statutes indicated but not allocated. One is inclined to credit the authors of the plan with becoming modesty in refraining from appending their names to the planets, trusting to the grateful inhabitants of Celestium to make the suggestion.

Eastwards, from the Octagon of the Sun, the Galaxy brings to view the Square of the Flying Horse, Pegasus, and the planet Neptune placed towards the sea and furthest from the sun, just as it should be. And beyond Neptune is the Gate of the Ten Public Holidays leading to the Moon without the cypress wall. At the centre of the Moon is the Statue of Lucifer. One would like to imagine him Lord of the Earth, occupying this distinguished position opposite the main gate of Celestium as a mark of the veneration in which he was held by the two Early Victorians. But to them, we know, was denied the flood of light thrown on this Celestial by M. Anatole France. The notes leave us in the dark owing to the discolouration of the Astrologer's writing which towards the bottom of the pages becomes so smoke-stained and charred that it is only through a powerful glass that a few letters are legible. It is likely that Lucifer was placed without the Gate of the Ten Public Holidays to warn Celestians as they trooped out on holiday mornings, whistling merrily, bound for the Pacific Pearl.

Returning from the Moon to the Octagon of the Sun, the Cow Pasture Road leads onwards to the Southern Garden corresponding with that in the north but dedicated to the Pioneer Explorers and Philosophers. The notes are undecipherable, but from the plan may be gathered the Economist's intentions. A hedge of sweet-bay encloses the Pioneers and the Philosophers within the ovals which have an opening on the sunny side and in the privacy and shelter of which Celestians could enjoy happy augury or repose. Here then is an admirable place to meditate on the rejection and subsequent destruction of the Economist's plan.

Although the proposal was regarded as absurd and impracticable there is nothing

on the Astrologer's sketch to show that this conclusion was not entirely wrong. Celestium is clearly neither a visionary's plaything nor an erudite freak. It is a common enough urban arrangement in planets, stars, trees and spaces. Unfortunately Macquarie two decades earlier missed this opportunity of gratifying his vanity. He was the patron needed to build Celestium.

The notes contain nothing to indicate what type of buildings was intended. Nevertheless it is possible to adduce from the plan the Economist's taste in architecture. The Neo-Greek style prevailing in the Pacific Pearl towards the end of the thirties might have contented his asymmetrical soul. But it is more likely that the simplicity, whitewash and two camellia trees that gave cottages of his time becomingness, would have satisfied his ordered mind and sensitiveness to beauty. Alas! speculation is fruitless. In our hearts we know that Celestium never could have figured on the map of Cumberland. Sorrowfully then we leave the garden, pass the Southern Cross and emerge at the Gate of the Calving Cow with the Cow Pasture Road stretching before us.

## CHAPTER VI.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF AN ALCHEMIST ON CARN HILL WHO MANUFACTURES ELIXIRS OF LIFE FROM COW PASTURE HERBS AND INGREDIENTS DISCOVERED BY CHINESE ALCHEMISTS LONG, LONG AGO; AND OF THE BOWL FROM WHICH HE POURS HIS ELIXIRS INTO AN AQUEDUCT ENDEAVOURING TO SEND LONGEVITY TO EVERYONE IN SYDNEY. AFTER WHICH LET NO SCOFFER CALL MAD THOSE WHO STRIVE AFTER THE UNATTAINABLE; FOR THEY ARE OF THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

Beyond the turn-off to Liverpool surveyors have marked Cow Pasture frontages into small farm-blocks whereon eucalyptus trees hold joyous possession. And beyond the trees are grassy hills where cattle pasture at the thresholds of deserted homes. The road itself has sudden outbursts. Without warning the air above the sun-warmed surface gyrates merrily, and gathering leaves and dust, rears into a column which pursues travellers and covers them in a cloud of Cow Pasture fragments. These whimsical little whirlwinds are called *Willie-Willies*. A Cow Pasture *Willie* is an adventure in which pedestrians, caught unawares, close their eyes and imagine themselves at the threshold of an ascent to Heaven, an accident that is fortunately averted by the force of gravity and a disinclination to leave so pleasant a thoroughfare.

Notwithstanding whirlwinds, this is the most tranquil stretch along the Road and at its end rises Carn Hill. Half-way up Carn Hill the Cow Pasture joins the Cross Road and beyond an aqueduct on the further slope resumes its former direction. Carn Hill is the haunt of an old man who gathers honourable secrets from sources known to alchemists, and like all good alchemists he seeks an elixir of life. So far his patient investigations have not been rewarded. He is no nearer a solution than all the alchemists who have sought an elixir since mankind thought to prolong at will a life so transitory.

Never heeding ancient failures nor his own disappointments, this old man pursues his experiments, fired with faith. Day by day he forages along the Cow Pasture Road gathering herbs and berries that seem useful for his potions. Perchance the groundberry makes one of his favourite ingredients. It has a delicious flavour and grows shaped like an apple, close upon the ground hidden under a flat and prickly little bush. Its skin is green striped with brown and underneath turns white; within its centre is one hard seed. Unfortunately its flavour vanishes quickly. Or he may gather that diminutive grass on which grow apples no larger than grains



Water-colour, in the collection of the Teachers' Training College, the University of Sydney

"Where Cattle Pasture at the Thresholds of Deserted Homes."

of sugar and almost as sweet. Of herbs he has a variety to choose from, but none so delectable as the grasses which scent the Cow Pasture in spring. Native centaury that grows amongst the grass has clusters of pink stars which with their stems provide a tonic bitter yet pleasant and a remedy for diarrhoea. Native pennyroyal may assist longevity; fleas and bugs abhor it; and many a traveller fretting through the night might have risen feeling younger had he strewn his bed with native pennyroyal. If colds and coughs must be defied in elixirs of life, then eucalypts holds reliable cures. Their leaves yield oils in some of which the scent of peppermint and lemons is noticeable, and many other pleasant perfumes exude when crushed. Purpletop may hold the secret—one cannot tell—but this giant verbena grows attractively by the wayside. Growing near deserted farms, the arum lily bears a leaf which wrapped around a poisoned wound withdraws impurities. And mushrooms should not be disregarded. These lovely things, satiny white and faded rose, are textured more exquisitely than flowers. Pearls of the grass-land, they sustain life even if they do not prolong it.

Laden with these or other comestibles and plants, the Alchemist returns home in the afternoon and employs the remaining hours of daylight in making preparations for his evening's brew. At sundown he descends from Carn Hill making straight for a bridge over the aqueduct. This channel conveys water, clear as crystal, to the inhabitants of Sydney. Leaning over the bridge-rail the Alchemist pours his elixir upon the water at the same time raising his eyes horizonwards where he can see smoke-haze ruddied by the setting sun marking the homes of mortals whom he toils to save. In due course his elixir reaches eight hundred thousand citizens of whom few, if any, suspect its existence in their draughts of water or in divers beverages made from it. His elixir spreads no taste either pleasant or peculiar nor any sign of longevity. Other drops as imperceptible find their way into the Pacific Ocean where fishes who rejoice in the water may notice a little peculiarity.

One Summer's day the Alchemist, having wandered a long way from his favourite haunt, became tormented by thirst. Happening upon a shepherd's hut, he asked for a drink of water. The shepherd handed him a bowl and pointed to the pump. This bowl was decorated in blue over a white ground. Its cobalt was blue as the sky and as clear as raindrops; and its white like ivory overlaid with satin surpassed the purity of frost and snow. It was a priceless thing, a gem of loveliness. Taking this bowl the Alchemist went to the pump and was drinking, when to his astonishment he saw a Five-clawed Imperial Dragon coiling itself around the pump handle and a Phoenix perched upon the stem. Being acquainted with Chinese mythology, he connected these strange creatures with the bowl in his hand. He knew the Dragon to be a Celestial who rises from crested waves high into the air where it opens its jaws and admonishes sinners in a voice

like thunder. The Phoenix he knew as an exotic bird, supreme ruler over everything feathered. He was flattered by their revelation to himself which he ascribed to that sympathy known to exist between Celestials and Alchemists. Profiting by his knowledge, he ventured to make a sign known to Alchemists the world over. The Dragon, hanging his head from the pump handle, was too dejected to reply. He mourned for an imperial master. But the Phoenix spoke and from this communicative bird the Alchemist learned the bowl's history. It was made for Wan Li of the Ming dynasty, who valued it beyond price. In 1599 Wan Li appointed the Dragon and the Phoenix its guardian angels. For three centuries they led a contented life looking on whilst the Imperial Court played chess or music or practised the no less elegant accomplishments of writing and painting. Then foreigners invaded Peking and looted the Palace of the Emperors. A soldier from the Cow Pasture searching for loot stuffed the bowl under his tunic, thus ending their long and happy security. The pair had no choice but to follow the bowl's vicissitudes. Reaching Liverpool the soldier filled himself with liquor until his pay was exhausted, when he set out along the Cow Pasture Road penniless and destitute except for the bowl which he valued as a memento of his profitless campaign. The shepherd found him sitting by the roadside, and yielding to his supplications, agreed to take the bowl in exchange for some bottled beer. Thus ended their wandering. But the Phoenix fretted in the society of this man who stank of sheep and onions; while the Dragon had not once spoken since they left Peking, so insoluble was he.

The Alchemist reasoned that a bowl with two Celestials watching over it must contain magical powers. So he determined to get possession of it. In reaching this decision, he took into account the endeavours of ancient Chinese Alchemists to manufacture an *elixir vite*. He was aware that they sought a life of a myriad ages and had better prospects of securing it than Alchemists of other nationalities. He knew that Huang-Ti, the inventor of Alchemy, succeeded in mixing an elixir which he drank with immortal consequences. Believing that the discoverer must be alive somewhere, the Alchemist on Carn Hill does not fail to scan the face of every Chinaman he meets, hoping to detect the venerable Huang-Ti. And he knew that the invention of porcelain was ascribed to an Alchemist's accidental discovery whilst searching for an elixir.

But he had no money. And the shepherd valued nothing else save his bowl. In this predicament he consulted the Phoenix, and the wise bird suggested that the Dragon should reveal himself. Which he did. Imagining that he was called to account for his frequent and solitary debauches, the shepherd agreed to exchange his bowl for a herb that the Alchemist assured him would obliterate the Dragon. Which, sure enough, it did.

After this pardonable robbery, the three hastened to the Alchemist's home.

They formed a queer procession along the Cow Pasture Road. The Alchemist led the way, holding the bowl with both hands firmly against his stomach. The Phoenix hopped over the ground or flew from post to post, pausing at intervals while the birds around made respectful obeisances. The Imperial Dragon wriggled and crawled to the best of his five-clawed ability, not being accustomed to an earthen track and wheel ruts from which he had to be frequently extricated.

Without misadventure the trio arrived on Carn Hill and everyone felt thankful when the Alchemist closed the door of his little house. The room in which they found themselves occupied half the building. Its walls were made of wooden slabs placed side by side ascending to the ceiling, and mud filled the cracks. The floor was of hard red earth, and canvas, stretched from pole to pole, formed a ceiling hiding the bark roof. Two small windows provided light, and a door in front and rear gave access. The whole of the walls and ceiling were covered with whitewash that had become mellowed and stained with wood-smoke. The furniture consisted of a round cedar table, two wheel-back chairs, a Windsor armchair beside the fireplace, a mahogany sideboard with Victorian consoles, a horsehair sofa on which the Dragon stretched himself, a food-safe on which stood a handmill for pounding elixir substances, and a bookcase stuffed with books dealing with the art of alchemy and on which the Phoenix made its home. But the most attractive feature was the fireplace, a vast recess taking up the whole of one side. It was built of soft bricks that were slowly crumbling away, showing bright red patches through the soot and whitewash. In the centre of this fireplace stood a colonial oven, an iron box fixed between wide stone hobs and on top of which a log smouldered. Suspended by a chain from an invisible beam high up in the chimney, an iron pot simmered over the fire, distributing the fragrant of a Cow Pasture elixir. Over the fireplace a shelf supported at either end a Sheraton clock and an ancient soapstone vase. This vase was an appropriate ornament in an alchemist's house. It was covered with bats holding peaches. In China where it was carved, bats are a symbol of happiness, and peaches, the fruit of life, a symbol of longevity. The clock at the other end of the shelf had no carving on its simple mahogany case, but it played at intervals of three hours, on eight silvery-toned bells, three verses of the Banks of the Dee, Garland of Love, Row Dow Dow, Easter Hymn, Mrs. McLeod, College Hornpipe, and Robin Adair. Of these tunes the Alchemist liked Banks of the Dee best. After they had settled down in this congenial establishment, the Dragon could not hear enough of the College Hornpipe to which he rarely failed to dance. And the Phoenix showed no particular choice, whistling all these tunes one after the other, so that the household was seldom without melody. Between these two treasures stood a small baked clay figure of Zozimus, the Prince of Occidental Alchemists. Over it a text was tacked to the wall. On the text was printed in large black type with

scarlet capitals:

Christ is the Head of this House,  
The Unseen Guest at every Meal,  
The Silent Listener to every Conversation.

The Phoenix on top of the bookcase spent much time in reading these lines over and over again and became very discreet in its remarks as a consequence.

No sooner had the Alchemist closed the door and his guests tied themselves than he invited them to eat and drink, offering tea, mutton, potatoes and damper, — a doughy bread that he baked in hot ashes. Neither partook of his fare. The Phoenix, however, consented to taste his latest elixir, but found it unpalatable although of a fruity flavour.

By the time the Alchemist had finished his meal, the sun was sinking behind Razorback Mountain yonder in the west. So he hurried to complete his preparations for that evening's visit to the aqueduct. To a quart of Cow Pasture herbal mixture he added seven thimblefuls of dew water condensed on a mirror at midnight in the light of a full moon. Then he measured a dram of hare's blood. The hare, according to Chinese mythologists, being a celestial creature which pounds elixir vitae from ice in the moon; its blood is essential in traditional elixirs. From a nest of spice boxes he then took pinches of powdered bamboo and pine leaves because these trees are always in leaf, and a pinch of plum blossom because the prunus has flowers on leafless stalks even in great age.

Native trees on Carn Hill are not deciduous. The tea-tree, wild-cherry, casuarina and many eucalypts bear leaves that should serve as well as those the Taoists took for their symbols of longevity. But then did not their Eight Immortals, incomparable herbalists, reach an endless life? For this reason the Alchemist poured in a noggin of peach juice. In the Taoist paradise the peach, the tree of life, fruits at intervals of three thousand years, when its crop contains the essence of immortality. From a celadon bowl he took next as much finely powdered jade as can be heaped upon a sixpence. No elixir is complete without jade. It is said to be the customary food of immortals. For centuries past the Chinese have placed all the faith in the wonderful powers of jade that nowadays we place in radium. And in China jade is still popular. Who then would say the Alchemist erred when he included it?

Thus far the old man follows Chinese precedent, but with other ingredients he has, willy-nilly, to concoct as best he can. He uses the fungus which glows in the night on Carn Hill, believing that it is as magical as *Polyporus Lucidus*, the magic fungus found in China. And he uses eggs of the platypus, which is the only animal in existence able to produce them. The platypus swims with the fishes, who are not companionable; and it burrows in the ground where other animals, fearing floods, do not venture. It cannot fly, so waterfowl treat this furry creature of the streams with contempt. Yet its eggs are miraculous. From the wing of a

Native Companion or Australian Crane he extracts an essence which he believes useful, although this bird has not been seen flying to Heaven with a soul on its back like the Crane in China, which bore Wang-Tzu Ch'iao to Paradise ages ago.

On this occasion the Alchemist relied most of all on the Ming Bowl. Having filled it and hurried to the bridge, he poured its contents into the water. His only dread was lest in brewing too little he might have omitted to provide for all. The following were days of anxious suspense.

At sunrise it is the Alchemist's custom to stand upon the summit of Carn Hill. Here he can overlook the Cross Road, Bringley Road, both parts of the divided Cow Pasture Road, the counties of Cumberland, Camden and Cook, and, on a clear day, the metropolitan cemetery where multitudes are buried whom he has been unable to save, and the sight of which never fails to spur him on to making new experiments. There he is to be seen silhouetted against the early morning light, which, irradiating his white hair and glistening on the edges of his long black alpaca coat, seems to shine through his frail body. As the Dragon remarked, he looks uncommonly like the ancient Shou or longevity mark which accompanies New Year gifts in China.<sup>†</sup> And there he waits for the Bringley postman, who brings him a morning paper from the city.

Thirteen days after his experiment with the Ming Bowl—that being the time he had calculated for his elixirs to percolate reservoirs and reach the Pacific Pearl—he stood watching the mailman ascending Carn Hill. To the watcher it seemed as though the mail would never reach the top. The horse zig-zagged from side to side striving to ease the steep grade of the road. Now and then it halted to recover its breath. The mailman saw him waiting and gaily waved his whip. He had no idea what cruel suspense his slow pace inflicted.

When at length he received a paper, the Alchemist's shrivelled old hands shook, and his eyes brightened as he opened it. He expected to see two joyous

<sup>†</sup> The Shou or Longevity mark is described by S. W. Bushell, C.M.G., B.Sc., M.D., in his Handbook on Chinese Art for the Board of Education, South Kensington Museum, as "a curious form known in Holland as the Spider Mark." Having no scholarship in Chinese mythology, I do not know whether the resemblance of the Shou mark to the human form has been noted.

A liking for symmetry led me to place the mark squarely on the Alchemist, falling within his legs and using the odd outside line on the right as a walking stick. This drawing, however, is wrong. The triangular shape at the centre of the figure should be a little towards the left side. Surely this position indicates that the inclination of the heart—which the triangle resembles—towards the left side was known to the Chinese in very ancient times.

I venture to suggest to Scholars that the human form with its essential heart was taken by the ancient Chinese Mythologists as the most appropriate mark of longevity, and the placing of the heart is a tribute to the scientific exactness of those whom it is our habit to imagine to have been the playfellows of the ancient world. —(H.W.)

columns; the one of marriages, the other of births. Alas! there was a third, in which undertakers continued their melancholy notices; Death still held sovereignty. And his grief was pitiful when he saw the fatal list as long as ever. His bowl had proved a disappointment. This matchless vessel was not without flaw. Something was missing; the secret as far off discovery as when Huang-ti vanished, taking it with him.

Running over in his mind all that he had used in his elixir, the Alchemist recalled the Red Crow with three feet, which roosts in the sun and has been observed from China flying down to Earth, where it is supposed to feed somewhere on the plant of immortality. Its three feet are symbols of masculine furnishings of fruitfulness, of which the sun is the fountain-head. An elixir in which the bird had bathed was sufficient, according to eminent Alchemists, to ensure wholesale longevity. So the old man keeps a sharp lookout for the Red Crow. When crows that fly hither and yon in the Cow Pasture croak overhead, he watches them closely; but they are all black, with two feet—unsavoury ravens that feast on carcasses. He neglects not to ply travellers with questions of this singular bird which may alight on Carn Hill, possibly under cover of night. It behoves all who desire longevity to watch and mark carefully the direction of its flight; that is if they should be so fortunate as to see it. The Alchemist, Carn Hill, is sure to find him.

When the mailman drove off to Bringelly, the Alchemist, in his distress, turned to his two companions who had become attached to him. But his entreaties, although they made the Phoenix mope, gained no useful information, and the Dragon proved just as uncommunicative. The Dragon, Lord of the Air, and the Phoenix, ruler of its feathered inhabitants, should be able to provide a clue. They have better facilities for penetrating the secrets of Heaven than are given to a lonely Cow Pasture Alchemist.

Carn Hill is not unlike the Hills of Longevity in Shou Shan, the Taoist Paradise, as depicted by Chinese artists. It has a peach tree and a bridge over the water. It has one poor mortal in place of the Immortal Eight and he has succeeded in reaching venerable age, filled with calm and steadfast zeal in discharging his mission. The idyll of his existence is an infinity of springs. And his elixirs are given to all, for he is the kindest soul that ever lived on the summit of a hill. Observant, scientific and generous, glowing with joyous expectation, he brews without reward to ensure our taking part in the mighty changes, the clear light of knowledge and all-conquering love which lie in the ages before the Pacific Pearl. What deed of man is more benign?

And if its herbs and berries contain no elixir of life, the Road itself has the secret of happy old age.

## CHAPTER VII.

## INTERLUDE: ON DESIGNING A PHOENIX.

To design a celestial Phoenix is one of those undertakings, exceedingly rare, in which erudition is indispensable to art. The invisibility of the bird attaches it to letters wherein may be conveyed most faithfully an appearance at once mystical and homely. Moreover, the annotations of Alchemists, to whom alone the Phoenix was wont to reveal itself, contain meagre yet explicit enough instructions about its form and habits. These annotations were inscribed on the margins of the Alchemist's memoranda for elixirs. From this source poets, mythologists and painters have taken words or delineations with which to clothe their pictures of the exotic bird. There are a great many phoenixes on Chinese bronzes, pottery, paintings, jade, porcelain and fabrics,—the fashionings of a thousand years, sprung from the characters of the Alchemists,—and not one has the truthfulness of the bird of the margins. Nevertheless, when we consider that the Phoenix has not revealed a feather of itself to artist or scribe, the depictions are remarkable for their similarity. In the works of needle, chisel and brush there are shown features and movements which have become an established tradition. Thus we see in the markings and fastidious footfalls of the Phoenix, relationship with the pheasant. But for the most part the bird is not of gallinaceous feathering.

In designing feathered celestials, Chinese artists excel, whilst Europeans are rarely at their ease. Nothing is known of the form of Western Celestials beyond that which imagination supplies. Perhaps that is why the West has winged bulls, sphinxes and lions of monumental grandeur, graced with none of the airy familiarity of the Phoenix.

Throughout the Christian era celestial feathering has been confined mostly to angels, who are given wings commonly like the swan's and of the swan's whiteness and practicability. At first sight angel's wings seem too earthly. They are very strong. They appear to be attached as a precaution against accident rather than as an embellishment. But caution and commonsense, inherent in the West, impose stout wings to bear angels, who are represented as weighing well nigh one hundred pounds avoirdupois, on their lengthy flights. Indeed, the choice of the swan's wings is good in more ways than one. Although the obscurity surrounding our Celestials raises limitations, European artists are bound to adhere to basic forms of Nature. Attempts to design celestially end in misunderstanding. It is possible that an artist may invent forms which, to himself alone, signify the persons of angels; but it would be folly to expect others to recognise them. Nor is the European mind to be convinced by that symbolism in which the Chinese rejoice.



It is not given to white people to admire water flowing uphill. Reason insists that it does not. Whereas in China an artist may flow his water whithersoever the pattern leads, or symbol or whim takes him. But let an European artist do likewise, and his work is unlikely to be taken seriously while he flouts the force of gravitation.

Many of the restrictions that apply to angels have no less force when designing a Phoenix which, revered by the Chinese, yet may be feathered with Grecian ornament. Its appearance in England during the Eighteenth Century under the glazes of Chelsea, Bow, Worcester and many other porcelain factories, or hovering on chintzes and wall-papers, or preening itself on Queen Anne lacquered cabinets, gave the Phoenix a popularity that has endured. Accomplished though they were, Georgian decorators erred in attempting to give the bird its Chinese expression. Their art, elegant and chaste, lacked Chinese austerity and, perforce, failed to preserve manifestations of the bird's celestial origin.

Profiting by their mistakes one does well, at the outset, to discard any intention of rivalling Chinese designers. Their's is the realm of symbolism and of celestial investiture. It is better to be true to Nature.

There is naught within the range of European art so fine with which to feather the Phoenix as the acanthus, the anthemion and the volute, evolved respectively from a thistle, the honeysuckle blossom and a shell. Plumes of acanthus, limned with gracefulness, give the bird an agreeable form; and an anthemion ornament at their base gives orderliness to its somewhat flamboyant tail. To maintain its balance, an under-tail may be gathered from the poultry-yard where the black cock, a noble bird, has admirable tail feathers; and for pinions, the foliations of Grinling Gibbons are useful. This gathering of plumes and pinions might well spread from a cornucopia ending in a head adorned with the cock's comb. Having drawn these enrichments, there remains but to encase the bird in fish-scale feathers which are like to keep its body dry whilst flitting to and fro between earth and the empyrean.

And when the design is finished, it is clear that despite the employment of rhythm and richness, the bird of the Alchemists' annotations is still the supreme Phoenix. Their words surpass delineations.



*Pencil Drawing*

*The Alchemist on Carn Hill*

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHEREIN HOMESTEADS FROM CARN HILL TO NARELLAN ARE PRESENTED IN SUCCESSION MORE SWIFTLY THAN SWALLOWS FLY AND AS RHYTHMICALLY AS MARSUPIALS BOUND IN HASTENING FLIGHT; AND WHEREIN IS REVEALED THE PIONEER POSTMASTER GENERAL WHOSE SOLILOQUIES ON THE SORROWS OF THE EARLY VICTORIAN POSTAL SYSTEM ARE INTERRUPTED BY A PRUNE-ANT, WHICH LEADS TO A NATURE STUDY OF ANTS ON THEIR HILL; A STUDY THAT GOES FURTHER THAN THE REVELATIONS OF FABRE IN THAT WE ARE SHOWN ON THE SPOT HOW THE INSECTS' EXAMPLE LED TO THE INVENTION OF POSTAGE STAMPS.

Beyond the aqueduct, signs of traffic are strewn upon the Road. It has become an alternative route, by way of the Cross Road, between Liverpool and Camden. Imperceptibly its appearance changes. The drays of firewood gatherers and farmers' carts pass to and fro, seldom so frequently that their number exceeds the hours of a day. Now and then an automobile ventures this way, at its peak when the earth is soft. Yet modern wheels have not invaded the Road's ancient customs; bush etiquette prevails where travellers nod and bid each other fraternal good-day.

Less than a mile from the Alchemist's bridge, a bush lane, bearing leftwards, leads to the Southern Road and Ingleburn on the railway. In the southward angle formed by this lane with the Cow Pasture Road lies Leppington. The homestead rests high on a steep hill, with its outbuildings strung along a narrow ridge, hidden amid olives clinging to the summit. Eastward a cluster of lower hills gives homage to Leppington, their grassy slopes furrowed where the red earth has washed away. From the Doric porch at Leppington, Liverpool is visible six or seven miles off, where it resembles some beautiful town in Tuscany. A square brick tower and cupola convey this impression, but closer sight reveals them rising above sorrowful buildings which litter this sun-kissed landmark. Beyond Liverpool, sand-hills and the Pacific glitter on the horizon. The white walls of Leppington show fairer than the noonday clouds that gather in the west behind them; and they jewel the hills at their feet. Against these walls giant forget-me-nots rear their tall blue clusters and, nearby, a plumbago hedge on the crest of the hill has the sky as a foil to its flowers of paler blue, no less exquisite.

Along the Cow Pasture Road, where it passes Leppington boundary fence, a

wooded ridge, higher than the bush land between, conceals Varraville, an Early-Victorian homestead encompassed by many oleanders. Varraville is famous for its association with the name of Raymond Plenty, pioneer Postmaster General of New South Wales, and inventor of postage stamps. Raymond Plenty lived at Varraville and he came upon his celebrated discovery along the Cow Pasture Road.

*Willies* and puddles are no more than the Road's seasonal diversions, never seriously troubling pedestrians, however absorbed in inwardly scrutinising their affairs or the aspects of nature around them. It was this security, and no doubt an affection for the Road itself, that led the Postmaster General to cross the ridge on his excursions, when it was his habit to ponder on the intricacies and shortcomings of the Early-Victorian postal service, unmindful of *willies* and holes about him.

At this time the department over which Raymond Plenty presided was being defrauded of its just and reasonable charges. A postman going his rounds in the Pacific Pearl frequently reached an address stated on an envelope, where he sounded the rat-tat of his kind, and waited on the doorstep to collect postage due. A pioneer, attending the knock, would read the inscription and return the letter to the postman at the same time signifying by a shake of his head that he could not accept delivery. In the face of this refusal, the postman had no choice other than to take the letter and return it to the Postmaster General without recompense.

Before the postman reached the corner of the street, the household behind that door would be all agog with news. The slope of a capital or some other pre-arranged sign cunningly placed on the repudiated letter conveyed illegal, but none the less useful and economical tidings. Thus was circulated expectations of an heir; a curious twist to the tail of Esquire gave warning that butter was going up or an investment petering out. Thus the prodigal announced his forthcoming return, whilst other sons advised gifts of bacon on the way. In short, the multitudinous affairs of domestic importance, all business advices, could be communicated through the post without payment. The Postmaster General sought to end these losses without seeming unjust or to interfere with the inviolability of correspondence entrusted to the department over which he brooded.

One sultry morning in summertime, Raymond Plenty set out on his customary walk along the Cow Pasture Road. The ground beneath his feet was fissured by a long drought. The sky had a metallic glare. Leaves drooped upon trees by the roadside. The smoke of bush fires enveloped the countryside in blue haze. At the same time spiders were busy spinning webs. A scarlet pimpernel beside a dry waterhole had closed its petals. The bush ants were hastening underground bearing trefoil seed and such-like provender; others were flying before a faint breeze. On Carn Hill soot was doubtless falling in the Alchemist's fireplace, and everywhere signs proclaimed a deluge, although no cloud held promise of rain.



*Water-colour, in the collection of  
J. Beresford Grant, Esq.*

*Along the Cow Pasture Road,  
by Leppington*

Absorbed in his official worries, the Postmaster General passed unheeding the preparations going on around him until, fatigued by the heat, he paused to sit and meditate awhile, selecting a log without being aware of a prune-ant's hill nearby. Here he repeated for the hundredth time his objections to the way men of business integrity and reputed virtue defraud governments.

"In doing this," he said to himself, "they consider themselves guiltless until they are detected. For it seems to be the commonly understood privilege of individuals to get the better of the State whenever they can. This attitude of mind appears to have existed since governments were first constituted. And it shows no signs of decreasing. On the contrary, it has become a settled instinct with many to enrich themselves, if only in a small way, at the expense of the State, that is of themselves. Such misguided folk thrust upon Government the difficult task of detecting those who take their money from one pocket and transfer it to another, adding profit to themselves in the process. The difficulty facing a Postmaster General is to convince the public that when it robs the Post Office it robs its neighbour, to say nothing of itself. Possibly the Post Office is not without fault. It certainly treats its customers in a manner scarcely calculated to enthuse them with its honourable intentions. Unfortunately vanity is apt to pervade souls engaged in a government monopoly. They are flattered by the sight of queues at the mercy of their whims."

At this vision of his troubled department, Raymond Plenty exclaimed:

"How unhappy is the lot of a Postmaster General! If the Post Office doesn't pay, those who rob it most are loudest in their abuse, threatening to vote against the Government when letters they refuse to receive are delayed or lost in transmission."

Just then the flow of his lament was broken by a prune-ant which had crawled up the leg of his breeches until, unable to go further, it struggled to extricate itself and bit furiously at his backside. Slapping himself, the Postmaster General looked about and saw the ants taking up their formations for attack. Two files were making a detour, evidently to outflank him, while the main body advanced, depending on numbers rather than on strategy to drive the intruder away. Meanwhile the colony on the hill followed their appointed tasks, more agitated by the coming rain than with prospects of battle.

Placing the log as a rampart between himself and the ants, the Postmaster General watched the activities on the gravel-covered hill, growing interested in the exhibition of prudent foresight he beheld. A guard was stationed about each hole, whose duty, it seemed, was to inspect each prune-ant's burden. As often as not the foragers returned laden with a small red seed, or it may have been an egg ruthlessly torn from some insect's depository. This load never failed to satisfy the guard who apparently attached importance to it, admitting the bearers after a rapid yet careful scrutiny, in making which one of them advanced and appeared to mark

the spoil with an adhesive seal. It did not surprise the Postmaster General to see their performance, for he had official perception and a taste for adhesive trifles.

Profiting by this reception of a small red particle which manifestly received official check, he hit upon the adaptability of the ant's load and their treatment of it to the use of postage stamps. Thus he united the universe in one vast interchange of ideas, emotions and wealth, made easy by a small gummy piece of paper readily procurable at the nearest post office. His invention made possible the despatch of a letter from end to end of the Cow Pasture Road, merely by the expenditure of one penny on a vermilion stamp on which is portrayed King George's profile, in the style of an emperor, supported by a kangaroo on one side and an emu on the other. Yet this beast and this bird have done nothing at all to deserve their distinguished positions. The kangaroo is an indolent creature that hops around secluded places; and the emu is a crotchety bird with a kick like a mule. The emu hen, moreover, lays eggs the colour of spinach, on which are carved puerile ornamentations to please tourists in search of curiosities. Nor has the wattle blossom, that looks like speckled oranges, any better claim to a place in the upper corners of a stamp which represents the land wherein Raymond Plenty and prune-ants divide the honour of its invention.

Postage stamps spread each country's pictorial fancy to far away races, indicating what standards of design and draughtsmanship—whether beautiful, curious or merely unskilful—and what strange monsters, plants, monuments, fads and monarchs prevail where they were issued. Thus we form conceptions of the inhabitants of Iceland who, in their turn, doubtless marvel at the amazing creatures, all out of drawing, symbolising Australia.

By the roadside, where a track winds over the ridge to Varraville, there is a big red-gum log with an ant-hill beside it. There lies material for a postage stamp design that would proclaim to the world the usefulness of history.

Beyond the log the Road leads on to Raby Barn. The ancient house of Raby, which stood beside the Barn, has been replaced by one ornamented with florid ironwork in the style of the eighties, a style that Gledswood, within hail, escaped by thirty years or thereabouts. Gledswood was built before simplicity and symmetry gave way to the picturesque. Surrounding the cottage is an enchanting garden unrivalled on the Road. Verbena, roses, larkspur, hollyhocks, flourish amongst flowers as rare as they are beautiful. Two cedars strew half an acre with lilac blossom whose fragrant in springtime floats over the neighbourhood. In a wide circle camellias grow, ring within ring, their dark glossy leaves almost hidden under scarlet, white and striped flowers, blooming when morning frosts sparkle on the meadow beyond. The grape twines over its pergola and woodbine overhangs the paths that wind about this luxuriant garden.

Three miles beyond Gledswood there is a lofty cypress tree standing like a



*Water-colour, in the possession of  
W. H. Gill, Esq., Melbourne*

*Raby Barn*

sentinel by the roadside. It is an outpost from a company of its kind gathered on a knoll where they are hidden from the Road by intervening eucalypts. The cypresses on the knoll conceal the homestead of Harrington Park, an old-time building, whose facades are without distinction save that of simplicity. The trees around the house hold undisputed supremacy. Pale lichen-covered olives grow wide, twisted and fruitful amongst the stately cypresses. Covering the knoll in beneficent shade these trees shelter Pan, who lurks beneath them, if he lurks at all on the Cow Pasture, as many would deny.

Where the cypress keeps its solitary vigil the road to Campbelltown branches off, and a stone's throw further along the Cow Pasture there is a white post bearing a board on which is written: "Stop! Look! Listen!" They are fortunate who follow the signpost's advice and behold the train from Camden come puffing on its way to Campbelltown. The engine, belching smoke, leads the way, rocking and bounding its fifteen miles an hour, which speed the engineer reduces to five as the Cow Pasture Road comes into view. Coupled to the engine is a single car, divided into five small compartments. Within the one next the engine is the guard, who presents his back to the Road, so busy is he checking and sorting turkeys, butter, melons and peaches, and a heap of packages reaching to his knees. Next the guard's compartment comes the first-class smoker, a tiny closet of a place in which one may often see Promise Brown, the Shire Councillor and builder from Narellan who, like every other passenger on the train, leans towards a window to watch the crossing of the Cow Pasture Road. As he gazes, there comes into the eyes of Promise Brown a gleam of comradeship for travellers on the Road. Next in order comes the first-class compartment, no bigger than the smoker, with two seats, on which Susiana, Promise Brown's lady-help, sits opposite the Rector. Then comes the second-class compartment, exactly as before, save that its occupants are the wives and babes of the men in the second-class smoker who, as like as not, are off with their employer in the first-class on a building expedition somewhere down the line. Probably there are others aboard who journey further than Campbelltown, at which junction an express whirls them away to the pitfalls and emporiums that await country folk in the Pacific Pearl. And at night they return, laden with oysters, to the valley of the Cow Pasture and its surrounding hills, recounting their adventures with hearts full of gratitude, as the engine, showering sparks on the up grade, draws them safe home again.

## CHAPTER IX.

**I**N WHICH WE REACH NARELLAN, WHERE THE STRATAGEMS OF PROMISE BROWN SEEM STRANGE BECAUSE HE IS A SHIRE COUNCILLOR. FOR IT IS EXPECTED OF SHIRE COUNCILLORS THAT THEY SHOULD BE WITHOUT THOUGHT.

Beyond the crossing of the railway line the Road bends rightwards to Narellan, a village clustered about an old fig-tree. By the side of the Road, where it enters Narellan, there is a stone, two squares high, with this inscription:

"Stranger! Pause before this little town. Look on its dwellings both ancient and modern, its institutions and its fountain. Then let your thoughts dwell in the future. What shall Posterity say of it? What say you of the little towns wherein the Pioneers thought of their sons. If in your heart lies gratitude, go you likewise and build a heritage lest your sons revile your memory."

On the summit of a hill overlooking Narellan dwells Promise Brown, incorruptible representative of the Cow Pasture Road on Camden Shire Council, Life Member of the Cow Pasture Literary Institute and Patron of Narellan School of Arts. It was he who inscribed the stone by the roadside.

The Councillor's word is a bond that he honours in business transactions, yet squanders recklessly whenever an election approaches. On these occasions he drives from farm to farm, listening with solicitude to his supporters' grievances, and for unfulfilled assurances whilst soliciting votes he is known throughout the district as Promise Brown. His companion on the road is an old roan horse, harnessed to a four-wheeled vehicle called a piano-box. This horse is full of guile. It proceeds slowly, limping as though every hoof-fall were painful. When a vehicle approaches from behind, it moves faster, and growing sounder and sounder of limb, develops an unexpected speed, showering gravel from its scarcely visible hoofs over every rival on the road.

Promise Brown is a builder by trade. By nature he is a philanthropist. In business it is his custom to give good work for contract amounts. When anyone gives him the benefit of a pound he believes in a recompense of twice that sum. He is a shrewd financier, and prosperous. In the Cow Pasture Literary Institute and Narellan School of Arts he has broadened a love of ancient art and literature from the study of records contained in these institutions, which, for the most part, were presented by himself. True, he is often befogged by the maxims of antiquity. But he brings to the treasures in both institutions an audacious mind, a graceful sense of beauty, a profound admiration for the fruits of the Mediterranean, and a clear perception of whatsoever he wants to learn.

Promise Brown married Thomasena Hobby, a pious Baptist, who placed tidiness next to godliness. Soon after they had settled down in the conjugal chamber, she awoke in the night to impart the news that she was moved to become a Seventh-Day Adventist. Promise accepted this announcement without comment. Then came a time of endless tidying. His workroom, hitherto chaotic, became orderly. For six years Promise Brown grovelled on his hands and knees, ransacking the waste-paper basket, searching the floor, under furniture, through drawers and pigeon-holes, behind rows of books, and in his pockets, for the thing he wanted most, and generally found, neatly placed, right under his nose. The situation became intolerable. He felt humiliated after his exhibitions of vexation. And he caught himself regretting the days when he pitched pens, papers, keys, drawing instruments and plans all over the place, where they remained until he needed them again. Moreover, while he inwardly revolted, Mrs. Brown kept him strictly to an Adventist's dietary, to which he had to submit for fear of wounding a soul who regarded him as a shining light. Towards the end of the sixth year he came to the limit of his patience and endurance. He said nothing ferocious; he was not a tyrant nor a man of violence; but he refused to be magnanimous and led his wife to believe that her vocation lay in China, where she could make the name of Thomasena Brown glorious by enlightening the Chinese on the sanctitude of Saturday. She perceived the call. Mrs. Brown shed a flood of tears, yet, truth to tell, went away in a state of exaltation and happy in the possession of a generous allowance. She took passage on a ship for Shanghai without resentment. On his part, Promise recalled that nothing more abusive than the locking of his workroom door had marked his desire to be rid of her.

Returning to Narellan after seeing Mrs. Brown embark, Promise had scarcely settled to his changed establishment when he began to work drafting a schedule that was to set his household moving every morning, performing appointed duties with the regularity of clockwork, under the eye of such an astute disciplinarian as himself. On his typewriter he clattered away at this document which spread to the magnitude of a sheet two feet long closely covered with typewritten instructions. Surreptitiously he tacked his schedule on the wall over the foot of the bed where his lady-help slumbers and where the early morning light, entering through a window, falls upon it. This lady-help has passed the joys of fruitful years. Like a pear overlooked upon a shelf, she has begun to wrinkle. She is of austere antecedents, but has no intellectual accomplishments worth mentioning. Adversity had driven her to the registry office where Mrs. Brown chose her from a row sitting with their hands folded or reading novelettes. Her smooth hair, flat chest and prodigious hips proclaimed an unmated mother; her red and scarred hands bore ravages of wash-tub and oven. She proved to be a priceless manager and a magnificent cook. Susiana,—for that is the name she prefers, without title of Miss, and

without loss of dignity, she being a lady born,—Susiana suffers from an impediment in her speech. Promise, a quick eater, usually manages to swallow his last mouthful before Susiana, across the table, splutters out a single comprehensive word.

Rising early in the morning Susiana reads the schedule from top to bottom, and discovering some trifle forgotten on the previous day, she begins her functions with a resolution to do better. While dew sparkles on the garden she gathers flowers for the day and arranges them according to schedule. There are named five glazed pottery vessels of varied shape and colour, an old pewter pot and a glass bowl; each apportioned one day a week and a list of flowers according to the month. The pewter pot is listed to contain blue orchids from the bushland throughout September. A suety-white, slip-glazed vase is to be resplendent under scarlet Christmas bush every Wednesday in December. Mauve wild carnations appear opposite a grey bowl over-run with a faded blue glaze. The purple wild verbena has a lemony basin, and wax-white tea-tree blossom is allotted a black baluster-shaped jar. And so on, through a list of native flowers and favourites in old cottage gardens, in following which Susiana is rarely at fault.

With vegetables and fruit her troubles never end. Somehow she cannot shake off habits acquired in her earlier training. Sometimes it is carrots that she boils a month too old. They are scheduled to appear on the table never thicker than Promise's finger. Occasionally she forgets to stuff iced rock-melons with grated nectarines, or she neglects to procure pumpkins while their withered flowers hold to tender skins. One day, the most miserable she ever spent, she served artichokes boiled to a pulpy mass, having failed to remember where the schedule directed how these succulent globes were to appear in the Parisian style, to be eaten leaf by leaf. All that meal Promise pretended neither to see nor to hear her. Six years of vegetarian fare accustomed Promise Brown to do without meat. At least he now confines himself to game that his workmen bring from the chase. Thus, although he has put his head into the Seventh-day manger, he retains a certain independency of diet. The schedule contains not a word about flesh. Nevertheless Susiana knows how to cook game without mentioning the subject. This she does so well that Promise, aware that it is incumbent on him to acknowledge her skill, compliments her without humiliating himself in the slightest. The bandicoot, an odorous little animal that burrows underground, makes frequent appearances on their dining table. Subsisting on roots which it excavates in the vicinity of watercourses, this creature, stuffed with herbs and roasted, has flesh as white as chicken, and a flavour not to be despised. Wild duck from the river, hares from the fields, pigeons and quail from the bushland provide delectable food in season. But gill-bird pie is Promise Brown's favourite dish. Susiana stuffs each bird, fat with honey from the bottle-brush and eucalyptus flower, with breadcrumbs, raisins, ginger and prunes, sage, thyme, savoury and cream.

After eating gill-bird pie, Promise Brown's thoughts invariably drift to pictures. He is uncommonly fond of pictures. Indeed there is nothing he likes better than to contemplate a landscape on the wall before him as he feeds or meditates. From his windows he can see Narellan, dazzling in the sunshine, or a delicate grey when cloud shadows spread over the valley, never presenting the same aspect for two days alike. Narellan's variations never grow wearisome, whereas at the end of a week pictures cease to have the same attraction for Promise Brown that they had when he first set eyes on them. So he does not keep a picture on the wall once he becomes used to it. On Saturday nights it is his wont to open a cupboard wherein are stacked works from which he selects seven that are due to appear one by one on the walls each day throughout the week, according to schedule.

Promise Brown designed and built the house which Susiana now runs to schedule. With the structural work and materials he had no great difficulty, being a builder. He used hand-made bricks to give texture to the walls which he coloured white, as on Florentine chapels. The roof he covered with tiles made of Narellan clay, after a Roman pattern. And he used native woods both for strength and beauty. Although he had a good eye for proportion and was not without knowledge of the orders and mouldings, the design presented difficulty. His association with architects did not encourage him to commission one. He dreaded the thought of dwelling in a multangular house, which he knew would issue from an architect's office. So he sought the shelves in the School of Arts. Here he poured over designs in the Italian Renaissance, all of which were too expensive. He passed swiftly through the French Renaissance, which he put aside as too scholarly for a Cow Pasture builder. He gave up half-way through English eighteenth-century architecture since not a single plan suited him, and in desperation he searched modern publications for something new and adaptable. He selected designs for small houses by Lutyens, Platt and Russell Pope. But when he tried to fit them to his hill-top south became north, and the scheme awry. At last he hit upon a portfolio of drawings by one Francis Greenway, stuffed between "Late Georgian Architecture in Australia" and Piranesi's etchings.

Francis Greenway, he learnt, was an accomplished architect who, during the early years of the nineteenth century, became bankrupt and, failing in the course of his misadventure to observe the laws of England, was deported to the Pacific Pearl. Governor Macquarie, at his wits end for an architect, discovered Greenway and appointed him Government Architect at a salary of three shillings a day, for which sum stately Georgian architecture was introduced into New South Wales.

From Greenway's portfolio Promise Brown secured tit-bits with which he managed, after making many trial sketches, to draw a design that grew in its appointed place four-square, gay and of hospitable appearance.

Whilst planning his house Promise Brown spent pleasant evenings on the



hill-top when the moon spread shadows from grey stumps, marking the graves of tall trees. There was a low wide stump on the spot where he pictured his verandah, and there he loved to sit and ponder. Sometimes a hare came lolloping over the shoulder of the hill on its way to barley fields towards Narellan. When it stopped at sight of him he saw two long ears upright in the grass before it vanished. Sometimes a curlew passed close, uttering lonely calls, but the bird was never visible. In this spot he dwelt on the form the plan should take.

"In planning a house," he said to himself, "one should consider the trend of thought in the Pacific Pearl. In that coastward city whose myriad lights, reflected in the sky, cast a glow like that of some vast unseen conflagration, equality is bound to be the watchword of the workers once they recover from their surprise at finding themselves in the shackles of mastery, weighted by responsibility, and without a tyrant to draw their wit or to load with villainies. Equality is but an illusion, capable of exploitation. In this novel and embarrassing state of society cooks will be flattered at finding themselves in a house which shows no sign of their sovereignty. The kitchen should be at one with the parlour.

"In the days of Greenway and King George III. the kitchen was detached at the rear of the house. It had its own four white-washed walls and shingled roof. A wide fireplace and a bread oven took up the whole of one side. The windows were small and barred. No word of praise nor of remonstrance could penetrate to the ears of an assigned cook who, trembling in the kitchen, caught the click of the prison lock in her overwrought fancy, whilst the gravy, all congealed and cold through no fault of her own, reached its destination on the family table. Nor could the spluttering grill send forth its cheer to the household within. The gap between the kitchen and parlour seemed infinite and friendless. Yet in the brief space of a century that gap was bridged, that banishment overcome. First sprang a covering roof, like a tendril that a vine puts forth, over the flags joining the kitchen with the back door. It was the brotherhood of man, vague and timid as yet, that placed the kitchen under the family roof. For long it stayed in a wing far at the rear whilst a parliament took shape. Queen Victoria had passed her middle-age before the kitchen continued its advance. Along the wing it came to where a verandah gave covered access to a passage leading to the parlour. The clatter of a saucepan lid or the splash of milk boiling over now reached ears around the dining table. Meanwhile all men had votes, but the elected were not of the wings. The advent of King Edward VII saw the kitchen arrive on the main floor. It was divided from the family only by a pantry, and men were divided only by party. Thus far has the kitchen advanced beside humanity on the march to equality. Ere long the kitchen may overtake and swallow the parlour, but in my house they shall be on equal terms."

Without attempting to follow humanity further on its march, Promise Brown

rose from his stump and found himself wet with dew.

Through the doorway between his kitchen and parlour Susiana is to be seen deftly lifting her savoury omelettes from the frying-pan, a sight that any host might well regard with delight.

In the decoration of this kitchen Promise departed from custom. He took pains to hang pictures which he thought would give most pleasure. "Happiness," said he, "is the purpose of art." He chose a reproduction of a kitchen interior by Chardin, a seventeenth-century Dutch still-life, in which a marvellously painted lobster rustled on a pile of onions, and a print of Rembrandt's carcasses which, hanging over the kitchen table, added zest to beefless preparations.

Although his greatest pleasures are to dwell on his hill-top and drive along the Cow Pasture Road, Promise Brown delights in books of travel; and he reads ancient history with no less enjoyment. From the shelves of the Cow Pasture Literary Institute he has gathered a store of knowledge concerning countries bordering the Mediterranean, a part of the universe which he compares favourably with his own countryside. Profiting by his study of the ways of people on sunny shores, he upholds their maxims and customs in Narellan where he sees Nature, working with magnificent determination, adapting souls from North Britain to a Mediterranean-like climate. In the eyes of Promise Brown purple feathers and boots of orpiment herald the siesta and song.

## CHAPTER X.

### WHEREIN WE TARRY AT NARELLAN WHERE A STRATAGEM OF PROMISE BROWN'S REJOICES HEAVEN ITSELF.

From the summit of the hill whereon dwells Promise Brown, we look down on Narellan spread around an ancient fig shadowing the Cow Pasture Road. Those cottages, so small down there in the sunlight that they look like oyster shells under their dark roofs, seem to say to watchers on the hill-tops, "Look! see what Italy, Greece and Promise Brown have done for us. Hear our story:

"For a long time after the pioneers were laid under the olives yonder where sheep pasture on the grassy slopes, we were neglected. We held no place in the hearts of men. They painted our walls and doorways in drab colours so that we could not smile at the sky. They tore away the past we held for them. They were deaf when we cried, 'Who will be your remembrancer?' So many of us were destroyed for no better reason than that we had grown old. Then to our protection came Promise Brown, in whom the spirit of the pioneers lingered. He gave again fresh hues to our dingy surfaces; renewed our small-paned sashes and repaired our crumbled sills. Now that we are no longer dilapidated, men take pride in us. Do they not know that this little village is a monument that shall hold their memory?

"Look on these gardens that surround our walls! The stone-flagged paths bordered with box and rows of red China roses; the tall camellias placed side-by-side, and violets in their shade; the bushy tree-box like sentinels at the corners of wild paths overhung with pomegranates; old Saffrona gnarled and fragrant before our windows, and sweet-bay close beside our walls. Can you see blue periwinkles in the shadow of olives over by the fences, and oleanders reaching out from the olives for sight of the sun, and at their feet the long grasses where purple flag and oxalis blooms? Beyond these leafy verges there are young trees planted to shade our children when the veterans have gone. They are planted where Posterity should have no need to uproot them."

Whilst the cottages hold our gaze, we descend the hill and enter the village. What wizard is this who has laboured here? There is no mistaking him. It is Time, the master one loves most. His tools are the sun, the wind and the rain. The craftsman does no more than provide him with stone, or brick, or wood, on which to inwork his mellowing. Time works on bare stones a beauty that the sculptor knows not how to better. On the shingled roof he spreads a silvery mantle; on the white-washed wall a thousand delicate hues. So it is the walls where Time has played, the courtyard corners where hydrangeas bloom, the gardens



*Water-colour, in the collection of  
Norman Dangar, Esq.*

*A Courtyard Corner*

where plumbago blossoms and the olive casts its flickering shadow, that delight us most. And to Time does Promise Brown look when he builds or plants anew. Never an ancient stone or tree is uprooted that can be spared. And the new mingle with the old in a harmony that abides in this little village. There is nothing grand, nothing ornate; just whitewash, red China roses and common olive trees.

Yonder, in that quiet corner of the garden before the School of Arts, under that leafy olive which has upborne its branches laden with little black berries each autumn for a century, there is a graceful stone vase. It was cut by Promise Brown's mason. Under an olive in the churchyard at Cobbitty, beyond Camden, there is a vase like it. There are others, old and beautiful, in the gardens of the Cow Pasture, but none so beautiful as the Cobbitty vase. Here under this golden fig at the centre of the village is a fountain from the hand that cut the vase under the olive. Its broad basin is contained within a shallowing rim, moulded gracefully; and from the ball at its centre a jet of water leaps no higher than eyes beholding its sparkle. There is no fountain in the Cow Pasture to match it. On the piazzas of Italy are its like. It came from the School of Arts.

The Cow Pasture Literary Institute and Narellan School of Arts are Promise Brown's favourite resorts when in need of designs or ideas with which to occupy happily his leisure hours. In these enchanting institutions he delves amongst a collection of scientific works, histories, works of art (mostly fragments), travels, portfolios of drawings, sheaves of sketches and a dray-load of leather-bound volumes dealing with the art of building as well as the less useful arts.

Audacious, yet with reverence for the past, Promise Brown delights to cluster Narellan with the fruits of his searchings. He visions the village abloom with a Mediterranean beauty, the sanctuary of Posterity, the cradle of truth-seeking builders. Thus the mason learned to excel in hewing fountains from a close-grained stone found in the neighbourhood; a stone as imperishable as marble and on which faintly chiselled lines remain definite under the bloom of a century's exposure.

Promise Brown the fountain-head from whence flow house and vase, rejoices in science no less than in beauty. In his constructive mind, he balances beauty with mechanics. And he turns his knowledge to good account in contenting souls in whom there is no feeling for the beautiful. One such dwells in a cottage beside the station yard. He is a strike-agitator, who broods on his own and the wrongs of the workers. A stirring preacher, he is a much better mechanic. It was his mechanical skill that enabled Promise, with the aid of the Literary Institute, to formulate an idea of a machine that would develop perpetual motion. Seated in the Institute he read how Scientists, Mathematicians and Artists have tried to perfect this contrivance. How, from time to time, Magicians, Navigators and

Abbots have proclaimed themselves successful, offering to sell their inventions to Monarchs or Company Promoters, all without avail. He read the story of Leonardo da Vinci's struggle with the riddle, and how he turned to painting as an outlet for his genius.

"If this is true," said Promise Brown, "the inscrutable smile on his *Mona Lisa* is meant to convey her knowledge of everlasting movement, the mystery that she alone has penetrated."

In a word, he learnt how myriads of figures and extraordinary engines became so much waste-paper and scrap-iron as the result of all investigations.

Notwithstanding his doubts about the success of the Agitator's experiments, Promise encourages him to persevere. Already more than seventeen hundred steel levers, joined in a complicated affair, writhe like an intelligent octopus under gentle pressure from a handle. Thus far the machine has always stopped when the pressure is removed. And whenever Promise Brown sees the Agitator brood, he gives him another steel bar, thus distracting him from the vicissitudes of Labour.

Four chains from the cottage where the Agitator dwells, there is a square garden, bordered with olives and containing four beds of red China roses. Through the midst of the roses is laid a stone-flagged path. At the end of the flags is Narellan School of Arts. The building is simple, small and symmetrical. It is modern. It looks modern. Yet it might have been designed by Greenway. The golden light on its walls of whitewashed brick is reflected on the plaster eaves and high in the spreading gable. The wide pilasters, projecting the width of one's hand, spring from an offset and end aloft in two small square bands, the one a necking, the other a cap, both continued on the walls; Greenway's eaves. Its roof of tiles, in a Roman pattern, is a miracle of loveliness. Each tile differs from its neighbour. They are golden-white, rose-red and purple-black, mingled with a myriad inter-hues. Rose-grey the whole, and over all is spread an elusive bloom reflected from the sky.

The Patron of Narellan School of Arts has presented that fortunate institution with a *Holy Family* by Perugino; a *Landscape with Cattle* by Gainsborough; a *Bacchanal* by Boucher; a *Lin Liang*, a gem of the Ming Dynasty; a *Child with a Cat* by Sir Joshua Reynolds; *Portrait of an Irish Lady* by Sir Thomas Lawrence; *Lord Kilwarden* by Romney; an *Adam and Eve* by Andrea Vaccaro, described as the only example of this great master, size 11 feet by 8 feet 6 inches; a *Bishop of Canterbury* by Holbein; *The Apostles* in three sets by Giotto; and prints of Gakutei's, Hokusai's, and Utamaro's. He came across the *Lin Liang* and the Japanese prints in the course of his searchings round the pawnshops of the port, whither they had come by the ships that trade to the Yellow Sea. The others he found by a stroke of luck while he was of small fortune.

One afternoon early in December in the year 1887, Promise Brown descended



Pencil Drawing

Olive and Urn in Cobbley Churchyard



humanity is seeking to communicate its sorrows to the Benefactor in the sky.

Thus elevated he saw companies of men and women gathered in circles, pointing trumpets at one another. He saw cathedrals and churches rising towards him, but their roofs were intended to throw off rain, and their gutters were not attractive. The earth offering nothing to enthuse over, the prospect grew wearisome. Then Promise Brown awoke to find himself on his verandah, overwhelmed with pity. His sympathy is singularly delicate, and from the depths of his resourceful mind he drew a carpet-bed. He told the gardener to plant in six-foot letters of lobelia on a ground of sweet alyssum: "Heaven Refresh Australia." This appeal has grown to be Narellan's pride. Promise regards it as the jewel of a district containing the most bewitching gardens in New South Wales. And the gardener never tires of showing off his horticultural triumph. With the vanity of one whose words make angels rejoice, he listens to the praises of his red China roses with calm indifference.

Full of pity, sensitive to the dullness of others less happily placed than himself, Promise Brown has made Narellan entertaining. And if ever a man deserved to live to an honoured old age amidst the fruits of his stratagems that man is Promise Brown.

Over the cedar desk before which the Librarian in the Literary Institute is seated, these words of Promise Brown's are pinned to the wall: "As it is not in my nature to think profoundly, the confession escapes me how in all my stratagems there was never one but in which I placed enthusiasm before reason."

Here on this wooden bench beside the doorway of this pleasant inn, shaded by its wide white eaves, let us rest, refreshing ourselves with wine of Minchinbury, the vineyard that covers the slopes of yonder olive-crowned hill, and let us peruse to our better enjoyment the peroration of Promise Brown, partaking of the sparkling wine whenever his preaching proves wearisome or praiseworthy.

## CHAPTER XI.

### INTERLUDE: PROMISE BROWN'S PERORATION ON ART IN AUSTRALIA.

The Peroration, preserved in the Archives of Narellan, was delivered by the Patron of the School of Arts when he presented the "Burgess" pictures to the Cow Pasture. In the earlier part of his speech he dwelt on art in the Northern Hemisphere, ending with a denunciation of the equator, which he described as the most humiliating barrier Beauty has ever known.

The Peroration began:

"The goal of Art is its own perfection; its province, to point the way to those who would pass blindly life's pleasantest favours. Perfection cannot be defined. Nor can we be certain when a work of art is perfect. There is no universal agreement amongst connoisseurs. The vase of China delights Paris no less than Pekin, but the best of French work does not kindle joy in the eye of a Chinese connoisseur. We can be sure only that joyousness is what artists love most in beautiful works.

"Perfection is more easily attained at the Antipodes than where masterpieces abound. In Australia, there is nothing more agreeable to compare with one's work than Nature; and Nature is rarely without faults.

"Nature is very flattering; she imitates art. When we look at the silent stretches of the Hawkesbury River, bordered on the one side with a golden pasturage and blue mountain range on the other, we see a Streeeton; by the creek side casuarinas arrange themselves in a Hilder; whilst sheep passing through the forest in sunlit haze imitate Heysen; and when evening veils the farm in pearly greys Nature presents us with a David Davies. On plains and mountains, in forests and fields, by the side of creek and ocean, we see in Nature the beauty that our painters, thus far, have taught her. We know the loveliness of our domain by the pictures that have made familiar elusive dawn and transparent noon. Indefatigable Nature waits to mimic for our enjoyment all masters to whom the eye is given to capture on their canvas the beauty that they vision. And the artist, seeking the revelations of those whom he venerates who have gone before him, goes forth and in his turn implants the beauty he sees on the countryside which will ever afterwards appear to us like that which he loved most.

"From the pictures gathered on the walls of this School of Arts he will pass to the sunlit threshold, where with quickening joy he will discover the sheep in the shadow of olives on the hillside depasturing as they do in that corner of the picture yonder where Perugino has placed his Holy Family in a shepherd's pasturage.

Beyond the threshold, amidst a grove of trees he will grow silent before the wonder of a Gainsborough, as on that glowing canvas where cattle graze. Then shall sheep and olive tree take on a loveliness other than Perugino saw, perchance more beautiful than that which Giorgione gave them. Then shall the grove where cattle drowse be given a beauty that Gainsborough knew not.

"There is no end to the harmonies that Nature, inspired by artists, will present to our delighted gaze. But the chances she is given are few. The artist is tardy. The picture from abroad that will quicken him comes seldom.

"Beauty is not one of the bulwarks of the British Empire. And Art in Australia that comes from abroad excels in morality which has nothing to do with Beauty.

"There are two attitudes towards painting and sculpture. The one in which Beauty is rendered joyously, pictures, but decorations for a wall; the monuments graced with rhythmical form. The other, much more complex, seeks delight in a multitude of thoughts; revels in representations of sentiment and suffering; puzzles over problem pictures; implants the poet's words on the painter's brushwork; applauds scenes of heroism and episodes from history; exposes the immoral and broods over chastity. Both attitudes have intermingled and both have proven themselves invincible. There are as old and venerable as humanity itself. Yet that which we call Beauty denounces that which we know as Popular Taste. And with no result whatever.

"In Narellan School of Arts Beauty and Popular Taste are placed face to face on opposite walls. It is an arrangement at once pleasant and judicious. The lover may turn his back on that which he does not love. On the one side he will flit like a butterfly from design to colour enjoying an echo of the painter's joy, while here, on this ampler wall, are pictures which should satisfy well-nigh every emotion. As for myself, I would be surprised to see a lover forsake one wall for the other.

"And when the walls have grown overburdened, and this chamber can no longer contain its pictures, we shall build around the China roses a cloister, bordered with chapels, wherein preacher, historian, patriot, each shall find his bliss. And the few shall foregather where Beauty hangs in valorous isolation. To Beauty's artists who shall enter her chapel we shall say: "Take these pictures and, disregarding historical order, country and convention, set them in a jewel-like pattern so that we see anew their loveliness. Thus shall turbulent souls be calmed and Beauty dwell within her sphere.

"Alas! no longer do pictures like this Gainsborough, this Holbein, this Reynolds, reach collectors of art in Australia. A tariff has closed the way.

"Art in Australia depends on ships. Art, language, religion, fashions and habits are brought from over sea by the grace of mariners. A tariff on beautiful works denies the usefulness of ships. Beauty is no supplicant, rather must she be

coaxed whithersoever are they who would rejoice in her light. A tariff serves but to drive Beauty away, and in her train follow Artists, one by one blithely forsaking their native land. As America found; as we shall find who follow in misguided footsteps.

"Hulls of wood and hulls of steel link art in Australia with that in Britain, whence it springs. And beyond Britain, aboard ship, art came from France, from Holland, from Spain, from Italy and from Ancient Greece. Yet we have stayed our ships of Art before their mission had scarce begun. So it becomes the duty of her lovers to release the bonds on Beauty, who comes knocking at the door of even those who would drive her away. And this duty I would fulfil by the help of God and ships.

"Situated as we are at the verge of civilisation, it behoves us not to forget the indispensability of ships, whether as conveyors of painting, or architecture, music, books, or of thought itself. For even as ships spread light, or we imitate the foolishness of the ostrich, so does the future appear roseate or gloomy.

"Nevertheless we owe the most accomplished art in Australia to slowness of sail and billow expanses. Long after the Renaissance had ended in Britain, and when revivals followed swiftly in its wake, the Cow Pasture knew naught of building fashions save those of the late Eighteenth Century. Here lingered a style, simple and stately, although of humble execution, which we call Old Colonial. There is a charm about the name "Old Colonial" that recalls broad eaves, white paint and hospitable porches set amidst sunshine and history. The scale, the symmetry, the broad surfaces textured beautifully, long colonnaded verandahs, six-panelled doors and twelve-paned windows, the staircase winding on its wall, all preserved the tradition of an earlier elegance.

"Lachlan Macquarie was the first to implant fine architecture in Australia. He was the Governor who set his name on tympanum, streets, squares, parks, towns, rivers, lakes, islands, plains and mountains in the same way that lesser men seek immortality by inscribing their initials and imaginings on benches and walls. Macquarie inscribed his name in a sovereign style. He lives in his vanity, which has endeared him to us. Do we not see ourselves in his inscriptions, the frequency of which arouses admiration the while we scoff at them?

"Macquarie's enthusiasm for fine architecture brought about his recall. King George III, hearing of his Governor's building, sent a commissioner, John Thomas Bigge, to see what madman this was who built for posterity in an insecure colony. The Commissioner, who was a man of facts, could find no fun in the Governor's enthusiasm. It was said he had a nature soured by his parents' levity.

"Macquarie left Greenway his architect disconsolate on the shore. No longer for the artist did Architecture smile.

"Greenway gave architecture in Australia a distinctive appearance. Without

thought of being original or Australian, his old forms took on new beauty, and on his plans an altered disposition grew. To wood and brick and stone, to sunlight and transparent shadows, to blue sky and grey-gold countryside, he left that beauty which distinguishes buildings in Australia from those in other lands. His was the happier way.

"When Government Architect, Greenway sat as often in the saddle as on his stool, joggling to outlying buildings where mason and carpenter embroidered his forms with their mouldings and simple devices. And in that work well-done, which is ours to care for and continue, we see the tragedy of righteousness. No Corinthian column was upreared on the "Old Colonial" of Australia. Carvers in Britain were without sin and the foliated capitals of the most slender Order baffled both mason and carpenter. Here is a monument to virtue we must deplore.

"Of all the building tradesmen it is the joiner whom we most admire. It was he who made the fanlights like cob-webs over the doorways where they might well have been spun by a Georgian spider furnished with a geometrical inside.

"In Greenway's best designs the pediment with broad sheltering eaves spreads like a benediction over its Doric supports. Yet his buildings that remain are not more beautiful than homesteads in the Cow Pasture which were upreared by the hill-top Squires who left column and doorway to turner and joiner. And by the homesteads were placed barns which have the most austere forms and pleasant textures. The builders of the barns laid stone on stone or brick on brick without thought of beauty. As their fathers had built before them, knowing but one way, so, too, they raised architecture to which the artist goes that he may learn.

"And now architecture has become the most respectable of the arts. The architect is no longer a builder. That is why I, a builder, strive to master the Mistress Art. Until builders learn to build as the barns were built, ugliness shall thrive.

"Let us save what we may of the beautiful old buildings which wait the axe of the demolisher whose short-lived structures gather like wind-strewn leaves beside the roadways. A leaf worn out with summer flutterings falls to the ground. Its work is done; its beauty fades, rots and passes to the earth whence it came. So, too, a flimsy building falls and is forgotten. But unlike a leaf, a building gathers beauty with age, merging with the ground on which it rests. To be surrounded with a city swiftly decaying like leaves is our approaching fate. A city over which Posterity will be writing, "They lived for profits and in dulness died."

"To Night that wreathes in shadow tall shapes above the street-glow, or raises them in veiled mystery beyond the harbour lights, we owe our blessings; and to the mists that lift before the warming sun on wintry mornings, trailing a veil through which golden stone and vague proportions delight our eyes for all their imperfections.

"When I journey through the higgledy-piggledy suburbs that surround the Pacific Pearl and see the buildings awry, I say to myself 'here are sailors.' When, emerging upon the water to pass from shore to shore on symmetrical ferry-boats that dart with swift precision through fog or traffic, I see ships with well-proportioned hulls and rhythmical lines; and when orderliness appears on barge and liner, there is no mistaking where lies the building genius of our race. We are sailormen ashore. Yet in the United States of America they that were of our kin are said to be no longer sailors. Perhaps that is why America has the big simplicity, the feeling for the Grand Manner, without which architecture flowers feebly. So I gather conviction that we, born on a continent, shall likewise become less sailor-like and, one day, model spaces and buildings as become a wide and sunny land."



## CHAPTER XII.

WHEREIN WE GO FORTH FROM NARELLAN AND REACH THE SUMMIT OF A HILL WHITHER CAMDEN, APPEARING ACROSS A RIVER, BRINGS UPON THE SCENE THE OFFICE OF THE CAMDEN WEEKLY OBSERVER AND THE EDITOR WHOSE UTTERANCES ON THE ART OF WRITING COW PASTURE HISTORY SHED LIGHT ON ITS TRUE WORTH; AND WHEREIN WE ARE SHOWN THE IMPORTANCE OF MONEY, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GEOGRAPHY AND THE POWER OF WORDS.

On either side of the Road where it issues from Narellan, signs of Camden's commercial activities appear upon the fences. Infallible cures for piles, and pills that banish crapulence and all afflictions of the liver are extolled in white and lemon letters on cobalt top-rails. Cyrus Honesty, the apothecary in Camden, acquaints the Cow Pasture Road that he dispenses these cures at his shop on the Main Street. At sight of the fences, valetudinarians recall their sufferings; and they who have forgotten in the joy of the Road the manners and impositions of towns, are brought again to face their wants and shortcomings. "Are you prepared to meet the Lord?" runs the blue top rail, followed, a few panels further along, by the announcement that Jonathan Pickup is the high-class tailor in Camden.

Despite inscriptions on the fences, that tranquillity, which has overspread the Road thus far, persists, though ever more faintly, unto the end. Before long the Cow Pasture Road ascends its last hill, from the summit of which Camden appears on the further side of a river. The intervening space is verdant with peach trees and checkered with vegetables planted by Chinamen in rows of orderly planning. On little knolls amongst the gardens, there are old farmhouses where great pear trees cast shadows on white-washed walls. The Main street in Camden is distinguishable between verandahed emporiums and pompous banks. The emporiums are those narrow but inexhaustible country stores in which all manner of things are gathered. Their windows are furnished with kerosene lamps, saucepans and sewing machines; underwear and hats are hung upon the sides and pyramids of celebrated soap rise up and disappear behind the fascia boards. It bewilders one to remember what thing is made that could not be procured from the depths of these cavernous establishments.

The haze over the Main Street is dust stirred by the passing of immense waggons that come laden with silver-ore from the mountains beyond and return, lightened, with provender. Each waggon is drawn by a team of sixteen horses



Water-colour, in the collection of  
E. G. Waterhouse, Esq.

Pear Tree Shadow on a Whitewashed  
Wall

whose shy eyes survey the town with alarm. Each horse is assembled in its team according to its coat of white or black or brown. By the side of the teams a teamster rides upon a pony or walks, as the mood takes him, followed by a dog. Amid the emporiums they tarry awhile talking Cow Pasture affairs, while the horses drowse by the roadside thinking perhaps of agistment at the back of Narellan, a hard-won respite from the rugged mountains, to which they come and go.

The steam rises rightwards of the Main Street where the diminutive train fusses about the station yard preparing for the journey to Campbelltown. Close to the station there is an old barn whose roof, a patchwork of mouldering shingles and gleaming tin, hangs at the eaves all tattered and frayed like the fringe to some venerable woven covering. Its walls of brick, once lily-fair with whitewash, are hidden now behind layers of posters, the ancient sheets torn in strips and patches, and ambered where the paste has caught the sunlight. The posters, of primary hues, bring word to Camden of elections, emporiums, heroes and heroines of the picture-play, Pacific Pearl newspapers and a circus; and to the walls lend gaiety.

This humble barn is the birthplace and vicarious shrine of the Camden Weekly Observer. There, under that silvery roof, is the sanctum of the Editor who, like Promise Brown, holds the Cow Pasture dear.

When Timothy Bothersall, Editor of the Camden Weekly Observer, alighted for the first time on the platform of Camden station, he had reached the threshold of middle age. He was a valiant soul, slightly bald and of kindly grey eye. On his nose blossomed a wen. The townfolk were fascinated by his nose until, growing used to it, they accepted its strange and comical appearance just as naturally as they regard the huge ruby-red bottle in the apothecary's window. The Editor's coming was heralded by his predecessor who, well satisfied with the transfer he had concluded, hailed him unctuously in a full-column welcome. Nevertheless nobody knew whence the new Editor had come. A mystery surrounded his past life, and for awhile he was left to himself. It was Promise Brown, quick to espy ability, who stood his friend. Gossiping wheel by wheel on the Main Street, Promise let fall threads of a tale of love and a broken heart. The Shire, always ready to condole with the unfortunate, wove his threads into a romance that sent many a subscriber hastening to greet the Editor with compassionate gentleness.

The Editor of the Camden Weekly Observer has a simple heart. He is by nature a world reformer. When he took over the editorship he was eager to speed-up and dazzle the Cow Pasture. For awhile he pursued fine thoughts and wrote furiously. But nobody took heed of the polished phrases or the quickening ideas that sparkled on the leader page of the Camden Weekly Observer. His aphorisms flowed away and were lost like a stream which discharges itself into the desert. Then despair came over him. He lost faith in his usefulness and became indifferent to the very truths which he had expounded with generous impulse and

expected to see accepted and spread. He saw ambitions that had buoyed his career dwindle into the boiling of the pot. Yet his brilliancy never entirely forsook him. Pearls issue willy-nilly now and then from his ink-pot.

Although the Editor abandoned those literary miscellanies which, printed beside columns of horses whose readiness to love is advertised in season, has given the pages of the *Observer* a cosmopolitan flavour, he retained zest in writing history. Shortly after his arrival in Camden he founded the Cow Pasture Historical Society whose meetings, reported in his paper on the last Saturday of the month, were often enhanced by his own contributions. On the occasion of his presidential address he said: "History is an art that is all the better for a foundation of truth on which to place the imaginings of an historian. Time, obliterating gently the triumphs and downfalls marking great happenings in the affairs of peoples, often leaves bewildering tales and myths on which to establish truthful statements. In New South Wales, the past, having no remote obscurity, is as a mirror to the historian whose convenience, moreover, has been cultivated throughout the Nineteenth Century when everyone left little to chance in recording most things thrust upon them. Still it is difficult to record Cow Pasture history truthfully. Memories are yet alive with versions that do not substantiate historian's tales. This only goes to prove what obstacles exist in the path of clarity when recording events that occurred even in the lives of our grandparents. History, we perceive, becomes more convincing as it delves further and further into the depths of antiquity when there are fewer to contradict it. We should therefore value historian's revelations by the amount of entertainment we get from them. The history of the Cow Pasture, mingled with that of the Pacific Pearl, presents a store of discovery, love and adventure that needs the lapse of centuries to set historians a-dipping with the enthusiasm it deserves."

Although the historical column brought profit to the *Camden Weekly Observer*, Timothy Bothersall found it hard to make ends meet. He sought to serve the Cow Pasture, but poverty was a bar to his schemes. His ideas came freely and they were all beneficent. He had a trick of thinking vertically. In his mind he had fixed a ladder with twenty-seven steps up which it was his ambition to climb by executing twenty-seven beneficent deeds, so that he would find himself in old age seated on the top rung considering a life of which he could say, "It is well spent." He chose twenty-seven steps because there are twenty-seven miles along the Cow Pasture Road. He intended to inscribe a cross on the milestones as he journeyed upwards so that his eye could judge the better how the steps in his mind progressed. When he had accomplished an act of which he was proud he would say, "There is a firm step to begin with;" and when he accomplished another he said, "This is much better," and began his ascent all over again. His was a modest soul. Poverty was his everlasting drawback. Poverty and love of

his ladder led him to float himself into a company which he called *Wise Expenditure Limited*. The Editor, like most men who have never had enough money for their needs, was sure that he had the art of spending largely, wisely and audaciously. He thought of himself as an artist ready to light the way for less enlightened persons. He saw that civilisation in the Cow Pasture was dull because the art of spending beautifully was not understood. Indeed, he saw all over the globe people busily earning money and few taking pains to spend it finely. In the counties of Cumberland, Camden and Cook he knew folk who had made wealth by their industry, frugality and shrewdness; and he imagined that he could make their lives less sorrowful by persuading them to trust him with some of their wealth. So he partitioned off an office in the roof of the barn and established himself as *Wise Expenditure Limited*. Then he printed an advertisement in the *Observer* and followed it with a leader expounding his idea, which was to show the rich how to spend their money. His beautiful honesty was known to the Cow Pasture, where he expected to accomplish most. He waited, but no one came to the office in the barn. Meanwhile he rummaged amongst the books in the Cow Pasture Literary Institute, learning how men spent from the time of Croesus to that of modern multi-millionaires. He discovered that a book on this art had been written by a Frenchman, but he could not learn his name nor obtain a copy. He found tales of American millionaires who showered libraries, chapels and works of art from Los Angeles to Boston, but in his estimation their methods were commonplace or too charitable.

One Summer's day when the air quivered with heat, Timothy Bothersall sat in the office of *Wise Expenditure Limited*, looking idly through the window towards Cobbitty. Across the flats cattle were resting in the shade of trees growing on the river bank. Nearer at hand Chinamen were at work in their gardens cultivating cauliflowers for the Pacific Pearl. As he watched the gardeners working, the Editor reflected: "These Chinamen come from the banks of the Yangtze, where for ages past their ancestors tilled the land. I perceive that one and all work without rest intervals, hoeing as though their happiness lay in their hoe, as in truth it does. They are unable to bring a wife from China to ensure immortality for themselves in their children; a desire nowhere more bountifully fulfilled than by their countrymen on the banks of the Yangtze. So they put into every stroke of the hoe determination to earn enough to establish themselves with a mate by their native river, at the same time diminishing their ardour by the exertion. Thus they have two birds to kill with every stroke. Doubtless, if one were to appear suddenly between the rows of cauliflowers, when they pause to wipe the sweat from their brows, baffled love would be seen in their melancholy almond eyes."

Whilst the Editor considered the gardeners he saw a vehicle crossing the bridge on the road from Cobbitty. He knew that it was the Hon. William Wake-Early,

the Mayor of Camden, on his way to bank a cheque for his peaches which that year were magnificent. Everybody knew that the Mayor averaged twopence apiece for his bountiful crop. Watching the Mayor slowly drawing near, the Editor continued:

"How little are we taught of the significance of geography. All through history are to be found the maxims of great and learned nations penetrating to less sophisticated neighbours. Geographically considered, China is our nearest source of knowledge. At first we depended largely for vegetables on the coolie from Canton. Now we have porcelain from Nankin and gateways from Japan. One day, perhaps, we shall rejoice in philosophy from Peking. The world may be saying of us, 'They are the most philosophic and the most polite of all the white peoples. It would not be the first time that a European people has profited from the Chinese.' At this point he saw the Mayor turn the corner of the street.

The Hon. William Wake-Early was generous and rich. And he loved the Cow Pasture. Moreover he had an affection for the Editor of the Camden Weekly Observer. When he saw the Editor at the window, the Mayor tied his team to the plane tree by the barn and climbed the steps that led to the office in the roof. His first words were to suggest a drink and together they went to the Queen's Arms.

The bar room of the Queen's Arms was hidden from the street by a swinging screen, on which was a mirror covered with a frosted device advertising a whisky. Behind the screen a narrow room was fitted with a counter and rows of shelves. An immovable window, covered in dust, admitted pallid light. A door to the side opened on the parlour, a stuffy little room in which stood a table covered with a drab tablecloth, ornamented with a majolica pot containing an artificial begonia on which myriads of flies had lodged. On the wall over the mantelpiece was a looking-glass rendered useless by the distillers who had printed an advertisement across it. A few chairs and a sofa completed the furniture. It was just as if the builders and the publican had conspired to plunge in sadness the thirsty souls who entered there.

The Editor drank quickly, then fretted at the slowness of the Mayor. At the sight of bottles of good red wine high on the shelves he said: "The grape still draws its friendly juice from the red earth and the sun which expands its clusters just as it did when men drank wine as their rightful heritage. What has become of the talk so gay, so serene, and so wise that entertained the drinkers? Men speak before the wine no longer of their loves, their gods, and their philosophies. Here the poet and the scholar are silent until their tongues speak awry."

Returning to the office in the barn, the Editor propounded his idea of a café in continental fashion on Camden Town Square. In glowing words he pictured the scene, and the Mayor, liking his reasonableness and enthusiasm, offered to hand over the cheque for his peaches, provided the Shire Council agreed to conduct the café. The Editor set to work preparing a petition to lay before the

Council at a public meeting. He expected opposition. When he had elaborated a scheme, he sought Promise Brown who saw in the café a Mediterranean blessing and undertook to draw a plan. Meanwhile the Editor wrote leaders in which he presented the Cow Pasture drinking on the Town Square without getting drunk. His pictures were fraternal and serene. As the day of the meeting drew near he felt he had the Churches converted and the brewers resigned to a change of business. In short he imagined himself already established on one step of his ladder.

The meeting was held in Narellan School of Arts which was cleared for the occasion. At three o'clock on that autumn afternoon the Mayor ascended three small wooden steps leading to a platform at the end of the hall, where two native bears dangled a swag of husks from their perch under the cornice. From this vantage the Mayor opened the meeting, taking care not to commit himself to one side or the other. He was followed by the Editor who in melodious voice read his petition which began with this prayer: "Oh! Thou who watch over the Universe and mark continents flying like sparrows in the lower air, grant us eyes to see that we are no longer on an island."

At that time John Castaway represented Cobbitty on the Shire Council. He was a born politician, divining the whims of the people in all his words. When Promise Brown had finally urged the Council to accept the Mayor's gift and maintain the café on the Town Square, and it seemed as though the vote was as good as carried, John Castaway arose and said: "The operations of strategic minds antagonise those who do not benefit by them. It is not to be supposed that the witchery of the Councillor for the Cow Pasture Road could reconcile god-fearing persons in Camden Shire to an enterprise for the sale of intoxicants under municipal management. Possibly this café could be made a haven for both body and soul of our citizens who have no pious appearances to maintain. But for those abstemious ratepayers who would be required to pay most of the upkeep there is naught in the venture save discredit and ignominy. Our worthiest folk would be abetting a sin mocking them at every step on the Town Square. 'Truly,' they might be tempted to exclaim, 'we have entered into an alliance with Satan.' Nor is it reasonable to expect that wines and ale, consumed under a cypress before the eyes of the Town, would have the same pleasantness as behind a bar-screen. There is an air of sin and defiance about bars that lends them attractiveness; for the charm of sin is secrecy. Is it a whit more likely that the tables on the Town Square would bear the tender words of lovers writing of their love? Sweethearts in the Cow Pasture would never inscribe their affection, as in Paris, on the marbles of the café; for love, like ale, is sweeter removed from observation. Furthermore the people of Camden regard this proposal with anxiety. This café threatens the sanctity of their homes. It is true homes are often dreary, yet who knows better than the Editor of the Observer that dreariness is sacred when it is a family

institution."

Thus spoke the Councillor for Cobbitty.

Mr. Goodluck,<sup>1</sup> licensee of the Camden Inn, then addressed the meeting on behalf of the publicans in these words: "My name has become an honoured toast wherever men drink at bars. Is that to be lightly swept away?"

Whilst murmurs arose in the School of Arts a voice of beautiful intonation exclaimed, "Pshaw!" It was Mr. Golightly, the Wesleyan Minister, who used this expressive yet infrequently spoken word.

He continued:

"We have seen the symbol of Rome placed upon the spire of the Anglican Church. Now we are asked to sanction a café, an iniquitous symbol of the French, on Camden Town Square. Shall we ascend to the Kingdom of Heaven with this sinfulness weighing heavily upon us?"

All the Publicans with one voice answered:

"We shall not!"

Councillors from far parts of the Shire spoke in turn. They heaped words on the meeting until the Editor's intentions were buried too deeply ever to come to light again.

As he sat watching cobwebs on the ceiling becoming slowly enfolded in shadows spreading from the walls, the Editor heard the voice of Mr. McCooley, the Councillor for Cawdor, saying: "Never! Never! Never! Whilst cows in the pastures give of their milk and the river glides to the sea, never shall men say of us: 'They sit with their women quaffing wine beneath the trees, sober yet unashamed.'"

Joyfully the Editor pondered, "How beautiful are words! They caress us with their music whilst they wreck the frail craft on which we have embarked our pitiful endeavours." That night he sat before an atlas and on the map of France let fall a tear.

<sup>1</sup> The names given to the persons of the Road are taken from the Cow Pasture and from old villages in Tasmania. Mr. Goodluck, strange though it may seem, was the first licensee of the Camden Inn. He is mentioned by the late Mr. J. B. Martin of Camden in his "Reminiscences," from which the comment on the Spire of St. John's is taken and is said to have been uttered by Mr. Lightbody, the first Wesleyan Minister in Camden.

### CHAPTER XIII.

AND LAST; WHICH CONTAINS A PLEASANT TALE OF HOW AN ORNITHOLOGIST'S LEGACY SECURED THE BLACK HORSE BED OF RICHMOND FOR THE COW PASTURE; AND AT THE TOP OF THE SPIRE OF A BEAUTIFUL CHURCH WE REACH OUR JOURNEY'S END.

One morning, long after he had returned the Mayor's cheque, the Editor of the Camden Weekly Observer descended from his office in the roof of the barn, carrying a hammer and a chisel. He was about to take down the sign of Wise Expenditure Limited, painted in Roman letters on a sheet of galvanised iron. While he stood before the notice hating to draw the first tack, he heard a flute-like voice calling his name. It was the Ornithologist from Cobbitty, his dearest friend and most valued contributor to the Camden Weekly Observer.

The Ornithologist of Cobbitty was a singular old man. His head was covered with long white hair, and of his face nothing could be seen save a pair of gentle eyes and the tip of a bird-like inquisitive nose. Without relatives, caring nothing for society, he loved birds. He lived in a little octagonal house which he had built under a great apple-oak, the largest tree in Cobbitty, which is a very small village beloved by invalids and birds. Through the apex of his conical roof he had fixed a moveable length of waterspout through which he could watch birds alight on the tree above without alarming them.

Every week he compiled a list of arrivals on the tree, which he sent with learned ornithological notes to the Editor who printed these contributions beside the personal column. The Ornithologist never knew his occupation become tiresome or uneventful. Indeed, there were days when his enthusiasm was roused to ecstasy, and his narration of events in the tree proved the most attractive reading in the Camden Weekly Observer.

His account of an eclipse of the sun, during which a Delicate Owl, whose presence he had not suspected, mistaking the darkness for approaching night, emerged from a hollow branch and sat preening itself before setting forth in search of a meal, was so charmingly written that for long after the Cow Pasture looked for the comings and goings on the Cobbitty apple-oak before reading the movements of Vice-Royalty.

In the Spring he wrote of birds at their mating. One of his stories, as tender as it was beautiful, told of a pee-wee who died of love. The poor bird discovered its reflection in the window of the Ornithologist's house. Thenceforth it loved,

for it was a handsome bird, all brilliant white and jet black. Day by day it wooed its image in the glass, pirouetting, caressing, and offering worms that it flew off at intervals to find, and finding, laid upon the sill. Its flights grew weaker, for it seldom paused to eat. The Ornithologist thought it was a foolish bird because it did not know its own sex. But when he found the pee-wee dead beneath his window he examined it and saw that it was an hermaphrodite.

The Ornithologist and his home were an attraction to visitors in the village. They cheerfully paid him a small charge for the sight of a bird through his spout. He was dependent on them and on his writing for his livelihood. It was not only curiosity and the novelty of the thing that attracted visitors to his house, although, no doubt, it was an attraction to wait for a bird to appear and speculate on whether it would be a Dollar bird or a Jackass. With an eye to the end of the spout, listening to the old man's talk, it may have been only a Tom-tit rejoicing on a twig that aroused in spectators veneration for the mysteries of science. The waterspout had the virtue of making one feel scientific, and it was a delicious sensation.

That pleasant occupation ended suddenly. In the midst of a storm a thunderbolt struck the tree and half its trunk crashed to the ground, missing the Ornithologist who was writing through the tumult. Then the apple-oak withered and rotted. Its limbs hung like ribs around a shattered spine, and the birds came no more.

The Ornithologist, having lost his delight in life, wished to die beneath the venerable stump. Hence he came to take his savings, amounting to one hundred pounds, and went to seek his friend, the Editor of the Camden Weekly Observer. His arrival, at the moment when the Editor was about to remove the sign of Wise Expenditure Limited, was most fortunate. The Ornithologist gave his money to his friend to spend for the happiness of the Cow Pasture. Then he returned to Cobbitty, where he passed away and was buried under the big carob tree beside the church.

Timothy Bothersall sat in his office in the roof of the barn pondering how he should spend the Ornithologist's hundred pounds. "For the happiness of the Cow Pasture," the old man had said. On the desk before the Editor lay a pile of unopened letters containing historical contributions to the Camden Weekly Observer. He was faced with the task of compiling the historical column for the next issue. A year had passed without a step gained on his ladder, yet he turned his thoughts to history with a cheerful heart.

"History," he reflected, "presents the story of a people in such wise that they are filled with admiration for themselves. It has the happy faculty of making the vanquished victorious and the little great, provided the historian is one of them. But what a pity it is that we do not learn from history to laugh at ourselves."



Pencil Drawing

The Great Apple-Oak of Cobbitty

With these words he began opening the letters before him, and found one, written in a large feminine hand, which bore the title :

A TRUE HISTORY OF THE BLACK HORSE BED AT RICHMOND

Here is the tale he read :

In the first fifty years of the nineteenth century it was the universal custom of society bride and bridegroom to drive to Richmond after their wedding in Sydney. They spent their honeymoon at the Black Horse Inn. In those days the Inn was a pleasant little place, shaded by trees, noted for its fare and the thoughtfulness with which the publican and his family set at ease couples who were embarrassed at the situation in which they found themselves. As the high-backed carriages drew up before the inn, white-washed walls gleamed pale in the twilight and the shingled roof, elusive and dark against the sky, assured friendly shelter for crinolined bride and tall-hatted bridegroom. In springtime the fragrance of wistaria blossom hanging from verandah and wall mingled with the perfume of the roasting chicken. The publican's wife with experienced tongue extracted news of the bushranger eluded on the journey, whilst the publican produced the register wherein were inscribed names that are famous throughout Australia.

Then the publican's daughter led the couple to the bridal chamber where they beheld the bridal bed. Its four cedar posts, hewn from Illawarra forests and turned in the Early Victorian taste, glistened in the candlelight with beeswax and turpentine. From the cornice hung chintz besprigged with flower. Cream-white the counterpane, bordered with roses, and of dazzling whiteness the sheets folded over at the head. Thus stood the cradle of Australia's aristocracy.

There it stood long after the honeymooners came no more. Vanished the chintzes ; dulled the polish ; no longer does the spatchcock splutter ; inquisitive visitors peer through the door-way and hear the changing publicans say : " This is the bridal bed. Mine is a bar trade ! " Alas ! for them it is a sorry sight : just a commonplace little room and a big bare wooden bed.

What are those beds, guarded with care, on which Napoleon or Washington have slept, often but for a night, beside this which has earned the affection of a nation ? Amidst what rejoicing would Americans build in Central Park a palace in the Florentine or Greek style to house their ship the *Mayflower* whence emerged the Fathers of their nation ? With what celerity would the agent of Cook announce special train or boat to bear the curious in their millions to see an authenticated fragment of Noah's Ark whence emerged humanity ? Yet our bed, the *Mayflower* of Australia, the ark of august lineage, stood unheeded.

Once again, in this reign of King George, the Black Horse Inn changed hands. Now the bed is gone from the bridal chamber. The publican holds the body, whilst a neighbour has the posts. Shall this be its end ? This aged

precious bed lost to the people whose leaders made it famous? Where are the historians who argue about dates? Where the Ministers of State who talk of our glorious future whilst a thrice-glorious past passes without monument? Stir yourselves, Historians! Wake Ministers from your dreams and portraits of yourselves for posterity! The Black Horse Bed is going, and if it goes there will be no place for you in many a patriot's heart."

At the ending the Editor read the name "Purulia," then he reached for his hat.

He borrowed two horses and a waggon from the Mayor and set out for Richmond. Swift was the bargain made when he found the body of the bed, covered with bottles, lying in a barn. Swifter the Ornithologist's gold was paid when in another yard he saw chickens perched upon the posts. That night he slept in the Black Horse Inn and saw his soul resting on a ladder.

Next morning at sunrise he harnessed his horses. He passed by Castlereagh and came to the railway at Penrith. Down the mountain side, three miles away, sped the morning express bearing city men to their offices. Guard your treasure well, Timothy! Take no careless step! Your load will be making Australia rejoice down through the ages. Whoa! Booby! Whoa! Joshua! lest harm befall the bed. Past the crossing rushes the train while passengers point to the old man with a comical nose sitting on a waggon beside his grandmother's four-poster. Past the Filly Paddock, through Luddenham, then Bringelly, past Merrylands buried in olives high on its hill. The first stars were alight when he reached Narellan where Promise Brown awaited him. Together they bore the bridal bed to safe sanctuary in the School of Arts.

The morrow was a holiday, Foundation Day, the day when Phillip landed. Taking beeswax, rags and rubbers, the Editor was early on the road to Narellan. He would not trust others to clean and polish his prize. He found the School of Arts deserted. Sunlight streamed through the round-arched windows and lit the shabby wood on which he was soon at work. He washed and rubbed until the wood showed clear through its patina. Then he laid the polish on and stood back to admire his handiwork on headboard shining between two glistening posts. Under the glaze he saw thousands of tiny crosses scratched in the wood. In parallelogram and square, triangle and circle, haphazard and in rows, they were spread about the head and, like Chinese legends, they climbed the posts. At the centre, in the form of twin hearts, there were thirteen cut by the same hand, and low on a post was a nought.

"Ah! Timothy," said Promise Brown, who had come to measure lengths for new calendered chintzes, "in those days there were men."

"That," replied the Editor, "is an illusion into which every generation has fallen."



Pencil Drawing

"In Company with Dark Perpendicular  
Cypresses"



"These crosses," he continued, "are the head-stones of departed caresses. Like those which lovers inscribe at the end of their letters they mark the termination of passionate longings. Symbols of love, their appearance is a welcome sight even in the secret depths of pious souls. And like Joy and Sorrow who pass hand in hand, they fill us with sadness too. Like the stones in the churchyard they recall the passing of our youth."

"For my part," said Promise Brown, "I wish there were more of them."

"Notwithstanding that regret," the Editor said, as he resumed his polishing, "this is a monument in which any nation might well take pride."

"The Black Horse Bed," he continued, "is a salutation to the Dawn of a People." It has upborne the Fathers who led us to the threshold of a valiant and respected nationhood. It is a venerable shrine before which true Patriots will pause and exclaim: 'Here is the foundation of Parliaments, Arts and Letters; here Life itself is monumented.' Curiously enough creation, the fundamental purpose of life, is seldom revered. Possibly this is because creation is one of the touches of Nature that make the world kin, and in honouring it we should be honouring everybody. Yet what more worthy of our admiration? Australia, having greater need of population than most lands, might well venerate creation in the shape of this bed, when the humble and the great alike, journeying hither, would profit by the inscriptions on the head-board—whose appeal is to the hearts of all—and go forth, Patriots, to the renown of their country. Indeed, we may yet see these four cedar posts become the symbols of our national security."

"And once again," added Promise Brown, "the value of history would be manifested."

When the bed was restored and chintzes covered with birds depended from the cornice, its fame spread along the Cow Pasture Road and beyond. Historians and honeymooners from the Pacific Pearl now come to covet and admire it. And all agree that in the Black Horse Bed the Editor of the Camden Weekly Observer made a singularly wise expenditure.

Let us leave that simple soul, under yon silvery roof, filled with joy at his purchase and firmly established just one step from the bottom of his ladder.

Away to the leftwards of the barn there is a tall chimney without smoke, whose shaft is proportioned gracefully like a column. Beside the chimney stood a mill to which pioneers brought their wheat to be ground. Now the mill has been removed brick by brick to enlarge St. John's, an Anglican church, on the summit of a hill overlooking the town. St. John's is a beautiful church in the Decorated Gothic style. Its roof of grey shingles and walls of glowing brick emerge from olive trees that overarch a pathway ascending from the town. It lacks a century by a score of years, but its bricks and traceries of stone have bleached and mellowed and they are shaped and textured by skilful hands.

The red brick tower mounts to the sky in company with dark perpendicular cypresses. These noble trees attain maturity in this genial air while others in Europe of equal age are yet as babes. And, doubtless, Nature will close their lives in a century or two regardless of their beauty.

High in the sky, soaring above the tip of the tallest cypress, is the spire, a symbol of Camden's ambition to reach Heaven. And like that ambition the spire dwindles as it grows nearer the goal. Spires are the signposts of God's houses, distinguishing them amongst shafts and cupolas marking the whereabouts of commerce, art and science. They stand upon the sinner's haven, even as palms in the desert mark beneficent springs. Nevertheless thunderbolts crash upon them. So they terminate in a lightning-rod, a symbol of that wisdom and resourcefulness without which humankind could not well continue god-like.

From the apex of St. John's spire--were it possible to reach that exalted spot--would be seen the Cow Pasture Road, stretching away to Narellan, where Promise Brown might be discovered hatching a stratagem. Beyond that in the middle distance Carn Hill would be revealed and possibly the Alchemist gathering elixirs. Horsley would be hidden by Cecil Hills and Greystanes out of view. A purple smudge on the horizon would be the only sign of the Pacific Pearl's vast establishment, unless the west wind blew seaward. And beyond Camden a grey ribbon twisting over foot-hills would mark the continuation of the Cow Pasture Road under another name. Under another name its tale is ended.

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