

Following the Equator, Part 2 eBook

Following the Equator, Part 2 by Mark Twain

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CHAPTER IX.

It is your human environment that makes climate.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

Sept. 15—Night. Close to Australia now. Sydney 50 miles distant.

That note recalls an experience. The passengers were sent for, to come up in the bow and see a fine sight. It was very dark. One could not follow with the eye the surface of the sea more than fifty yards in any direction it dimmed away and became lost to sight at about that distance from us. But if you patiently gazed into the darkness a little while, there was a sure reward for you. Presently, a quarter of a mile away you would see a blinding splash or explosion of light on the water—a flash so sudden and so astonishingly brilliant that it would make you catch your breath; then that blotch of light would instantly extend itself and take the corkscrew shape and imposing length of the fabled sea-serpent, with every curve of its body and the “break” spreading away from its head, and the wake following behind its tail clothed in a fierce splendor of living fire. And my, but it was coming at a lightning gait! Almost before you could think, this monster of light, fifty feet long, would go flaming and storming by, and suddenly disappear. And out in the distance whence he came you would see another flash; and another and another and another, and see them turn into sea-serpents on the instant; and once sixteen flashed up at the same time and came tearing towards us, a swarm of wiggling curves, a moving conflagration, a vision of bewildering beauty, a spectacle of fire and energy whose equal the most of those people will not see again until after they are dead.

It was porpoises—porpoises aglow with phosphorescent light. They presently collected in a wild and magnificent jumble under the bows, and there they played for an hour, leaping and frolicking and carrying on, turning summersaults in front of the stem or across it and never getting hit, never making a miscalculation, though the stem missed them only about an inch, as a rule. They were porpoises of the ordinary length—eight or ten feet—but every twist of their bodies sent a long procession of united and glowing curves astern. That fiery jumble was an enchanting thing to look at, and we stayed out the performance; one cannot have such a show as that twice in a lifetime. The porpoise is the kitten of the sea; he never has a serious thought, he cares for nothing but fun and play. But I think I never saw him at his winsomest until that night. It was near a center of civilization, and he could have been drinking.

By and by, when we had approached to somewhere within thirty miles of Sydney Heads the great electric light that is posted on one of those lofty ramparts began to show, and in time the little spark grew to a great sun and pierced the firmament of darkness with a far-reaching sword of light.

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Sydney Harbor is shut in behind a precipice that extends some miles like a wall, and exhibits no break to the ignorant stranger. It has a break in the middle, but it makes so little show that even Captain Cook sailed by it without seeing it. Near by that break is a false break which resembles it, and which used to make trouble for the mariner at night, in the early days before the place was lighted. It caused the memorable disaster to the Duncan Dunbar, one of the most pathetic tragedies in the history of that pitiless ruffian, the sea. The ship was a sailing vessel; a fine and favorite passenger packet, commanded by a popular captain of high reputation. She was due from England, and Sydney was waiting, and counting the hours; counting the hours, and making ready to give her a heart-stirring welcome; for she was bringing back a great company of mothers and daughters, the long-missed light and bloom of life of Sydney homes; daughters that had been years absent at school, and mothers that had been with them all that time watching over them. Of all the world only India and Australasia have by custom freighted ships and fleets with their hearts, and know the tremendous meaning of that phrase; only they know what the waiting is like when this freightage is entrusted to the fickle winds, not steam, and what the joy is like when the ship that is returning this treasure comes safe to port and the long dread is over.

On board the Duncan Dunbar, flying toward Sydney Heads in the waning afternoon, the happy home-comers made busy preparation, for it was not doubted that they would be in the arms of their friends before the day was done; they put away their sea-going clothes and put on clothes meeter for the meeting, their richest and their loveliest, these poor brides of the grave. But the wind lost force, or there was a miscalculation, and before the Heads were sighted the darkness came on. It was said that ordinarily the captain would have made a safe offing and waited for the morning; but this was no ordinary occasion; all about him were appealing faces, faces pathetic with disappointment. So his sympathy moved him to try the dangerous passage in the dark. He had entered the Heads seventeen times, and believed he knew the ground. So he steered straight for the false opening, mistaking it for the true one. He did not find out that he was wrong until it was too late. There was no saving the ship. The great seas swept her in and crushed her to splinters and rubbish upon the rock tushes at the base of the precipice. Not one of all that fair and gracious company was ever seen again alive. The tale is told to every stranger that passes the spot, and it will continue to be told to all that come, for generations; but it will never grow old, custom cannot stale it, the heart-break that is in it can never perish out of it.

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There were two hundred persons in the ship, and but one survived the disaster. He was a sailor. A huge sea flung him up the face of the precipice and stretched him on a narrow shelf of rock midway between the top and the bottom, and there he lay all night. At any other time he would have lain there for the rest of his life, without chance of discovery; but the next morning the ghastly news swept through Sydney that the Duncan Dunbar had gone down in sight of home, and straightway the walls of the Heads were black with mourners; and one of these, stretching himself out over the precipice to spy out what might be seen below, discovered this miraculously preserved relic of the wreck. Ropes were brought and the nearly impossible feat of rescuing the man was accomplished. He was a person with a practical turn of mind, and he hired a hall in Sydney and exhibited himself at sixpence a head till he exhausted the output of the gold fields for that year.

We entered and cast anchor, and in the morning went oh-ing and ah-ing in admiration up through the crooks and turns of the spacious and beautiful harbor—a harbor which is the darling of Sydney and the wonder of the world. It is not surprising that the people are proud of it, nor that they put their enthusiasm into eloquent words. A returning citizen asked me what I thought of it, and I testified with a cordiality which I judged would be up to the market rate. I said it was beautiful—superbly beautiful. Then by a natural impulse I gave God the praise. The citizen did not seem altogether satisfied. He said:

“It is beautiful, of course it’s beautiful—the Harbor; but that isn’t all of it, it’s only half of it; Sydney’s the other half, and it takes both of them together to ring the supremacy-bell. God made the Harbor, and that’s all right; but Satan made Sydney.”

Of course I made an apology; and asked him to convey it to his friend. He was right about Sydney being half of it. It would be beautiful without Sydney, but not above half as beautiful as it is now, with Sydney added. It is shaped somewhat like an oak-leaf—a roomy sheet of lovely blue water, with narrow off-shoots of water running up into the country on both sides between long fingers of land, high wooden ridges with sides sloped like graves. Handsome villas are perched here and there on these ridges, snuggling amongst the foliage, and one catches alluring glimpses of them as the ship swims by toward the city. The city clothes a cluster of hills and a ruffle of neighboring ridges with its undulating masses of masonry, and out of these masses spring towers and spires and other architectural dignities and grandeurs that break the flowing lines and give picturesqueness to the general effect.

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The narrow inlets which I have mentioned go wandering out into the land everywhere and hiding themselves in it, and pleasure-launches are always exploring them with picnic parties on board. It is said by trustworthy people that if you explore them all you will find that you have covered 700 miles of water passage. But there are liars everywhere this year, and they will double that when their works are in good going order. October was close at hand, spring was come. It was really spring—everybody said so; but you could have sold it for summer in Canada, and nobody would have suspected. It was the very weather that makes our home summers the perfection of climatic luxury; I mean, when you are out in the wood or by the sea. But these people said it was cool, now—a person ought to see Sydney in the summer time if he wanted to know what warm weather is; and he ought to go north ten or fifteen hundred miles if he wanted to know what hot weather is. They said that away up there toward the equator the hens laid fried eggs. Sydney is the place to go to get information about other people's climates. It seems to me that the occupation of Unbiased Traveler Seeking Information is the pleasantest and most irresponsible trade there is. The traveler can always find out anything he wants to, merely by asking. He can get at all the facts, and more. Everybody helps him, nobody hinders him. Anybody who has an old fact in stock that is no longer negotiable in the domestic market will let him have it at his own price. An accumulation of such goods is easily and quickly made. They cost almost nothing and they bring par in the foreign market. Travelers who come to America always freight up with the same old nursery tales that their predecessors selected, and they carry them back and always work them off without any trouble in the home market.

If the climates of the world were determined by parallels of latitude, then we could know a place's climate by its position on the map; and so we should know that the climate of Sydney was the counterpart of the climate of Columbia, S. C., and of Little Rock, Arkansas, since Sydney is about the same distance south of the equator that those other towns are north of—it-thirty-four degrees. But no, climate disregards the parallels of latitude. In Arkansas they have a winter; in Sydney they have the name of it, but not the thing itself. I have seen the ice in the Mississippi floating past the mouth of the Arkansas river; and at Memphis, but a little way above, the Mississippi has been frozen over, from bank to bank. But they have never had a cold spell in Sydney which brought the mercury down to freezing point. Once in a mid-winter day there, in the month of July, the mercury went down to 36 deg., and that remains the memorable "cold day" in the history of the town. No doubt Little Rock has seen it below zero. Once, in Sydney, in mid-summer, about New Year's Day, the mercury went up to 106 deg. in the shade,

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and that is Sydney's memorable hot day. That would about tally with Little Rock's hottest day also, I imagine. My Sydney figures are taken from a government report, and are trustworthy. In the matter of summer weather Arkansas has no advantage over Sydney, perhaps, but when it comes to winter weather, that is another affair. You could cut up an Arkansas winter into a hundred Sydney winters and have enough left for Arkansas and the poor.

The whole narrow, hilly belt of the Pacific side of New South Wales has the climate of its capital—a mean winter temperature of 54 deg. and a mean summer one of 71 deg. It is a climate which cannot be improved upon for healthfulness. But the experts say that 90 deg. in New South Wales is harder to bear than 112 deg. in the neighboring colony of Victoria, because the atmosphere of the former is humid, and of the latter dry. The mean temperature of the southernmost point of New South Wales is the same as that of Nice—60 deg.—yet Nice is further from the equator by 460 miles than is the former.

But Nature is always stingy of perfect climates; stingier in the case of Australia than usual. Apparently this vast continent has a really good climate nowhere but around the edges.

If we look at a map of the world we are surprised to see how big Australia is. It is about two-thirds as large as the United States was before we added Alaska.

But where as one finds a sufficiently good climate and fertile land almost everywhere in the United States, it seems settled that inside of the Australian border-belt one finds many deserts and in spots a climate which nothing can stand except a few of the hardier kinds of rocks. In effect, Australia is as yet unoccupied. If you take a map of the United States and leave the Atlantic sea-board States in their places; also the fringe of Southern States from Florida west to the Mouth of the Mississippi; also a narrow, inhabited streak up the Mississippi half-way to its head waters; also a narrow, inhabited border along the Pacific coast: then take a brushful of paint and obliterate the whole remaining mighty stretch of country that lies between the Atlantic States and the Pacific-coast strip, your map will look like the latest map of Australia.

This stupendous blank is hot, not to say torrid; a part of it is fertile, the rest is desert; it is not liberally watered; it has no towns. One has only to cross the mountains of New South Wales and descend into the westward-lying regions to find that he has left the choice climate behind him, and found a new one of a quite different character. In fact, he would not know by the thermometer that he was not in the blistering Plains of India. Captain Sturt, the great explorer, gives us a sample of the heat.

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"The wind, which had been blowing all the morning from the N.E., increased to a heavy gale, and I shall never forget its withering effect. I sought shelter behind a large gum-tree, but the blasts of heat were so terrific that I wondered the very grass did not take fire. This really was nothing ideal: everything both animate and inanimate gave way before it; the horses stood with their backs to the wind and their noses to the ground, without the muscular strength to raise their heads; the birds were mute, and the leaves of the trees under which we were sitting fell like a snow shower around us. At noon I took a thermometer graded to 127 deg., out of my box, and observed that the mercury was up to 125. Thinking that it had been unduly influenced, I put it in the fork of a tree close to me, sheltered alike from the wind and the sun. I went to examine it about an hour afterwards, when I found the mercury had risen to the-top of the instrument and had burst the bulb, a circumstance that I believe no traveler has ever before had to record. I cannot find language to convey to the reader's mind an idea of the intense and oppressive nature of the heat that prevailed."

That hot wind sweeps over Sydney sometimes, and brings with it what is called a "dust-storm." It is said that most Australian towns are acquainted with the dust-storm. I think I know what it is like, for the following description by Mr. Gape tallies very well with the alkali duststorm of Nevada, if you leave out the "shovel" part. Still the shovel part is a pretty important part, and seems to indicate that my Nevada storm is but a poor thing, after all.

"As we proceeded the altitude became less, and the heat proportionately greater until we reached Dubbo, which is only 600 feet above sea-level. It is a pretty town, built on an extensive plain After the effects of a shower of rain have passed away the surface of the ground crumbles into a thick layer of dust, and occasionally, when the wind is in a particular quarter, it is lifted bodily from the ground in one long opaque cloud. In the midst of such a storm nothing can be seen a few yards ahead, and the unlucky person who happens to be out at the time is compelled to seek the nearest retreat at hand. When the thrifty housewife sees in the distance the dark column advancing in a steady whirl towards her house, she closes the doors and windows with all expedition. A drawing-room, the window of which has been carelessly left open during a dust-storm, is indeed an extraordinary sight. A lady who has resided in Dubbo for some years says that the dust lies so thick on the carpet that it is necessary to use a shovel to remove it."

And probably a wagon. I was mistaken; I have not seen a proper duststorm. To my mind the exterior aspects and character of Australia are fascinating things to look at and think about, they are so strange, so weird, so new, so commonplace, such a startling

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and interesting contrast to the other sections of the planet, the sections that are known to us all, familiar to us all. In the matter of particulars—a detail here, a detail there—we have had the choice climate of New South Wales' seacoast; we have had the Australian heat as furnished by Captain Sturt; we have had the wonderful dust-storm; and we have considered the phenomenon of an almost empty hot wilderness half as big as the United States, with a narrow belt of civilization, population, and good climate around it.

CHAPTER X.

Everything human is pathetic. The secret source of Humor itself is not joy but sorrow. There is no humor in heaven.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

Captain Cook found Australia in 1770, and eighteen years later the British Government began to transport convicts to it. Altogether, New South Wales received 83,000 in 53 years. The convicts wore heavy chains; they were ill-fed and badly treated by the officers set over them; they were heavily punished for even slight infractions of the rules; "the cruelest discipline ever known" is one historian's description of their life.—[The Story of Australasia. J. S. Laurie.]

English law was hard-hearted in those days. For trifling offenses which in our day would be punished by a small fine or a few days' confinement, men, women, and boys were sent to this other end of the earth to serve terms of seven and fourteen years; and for serious crimes they were transported for life. Children were sent to the penal colonies for seven years for stealing a rabbit!

When I was in London twenty-three years ago there was a new penalty in force for diminishing garroting and wife-beating—25 lashes on the bare back with the cat-o'-nine-tails. It was said that this terrible punishment was able to bring the stubbornest ruffians to terms; and that no man had been found with grit enough to keep his emotions to himself beyond the ninth blow; as a rule the man shrieked earlier. That penalty had a great and wholesome effect upon the garroters and wife-beaters; but humane modern London could not endure it; it got its law rescinded. Many a bruised and battered English wife has since had occasion to deplore that cruel achievement of sentimental "humanity."

Twenty-five lashes! In Australia and Tasmania they gave a convict fifty for almost any little offense; and sometimes a brutal officer would add fifty, and then another fifty, and so on, as long as the sufferer could endure the torture and live. In Tasmania I read the entry, in an old manuscript official record, of a case where a convict was given three hundred lashes—for stealing some silver spoons. And men got more than that,

sometimes. Who handled the cat? Often it was another convict; sometimes it was the culprit's dearest comrade; and he had to lay on with all his might; otherwise he would get a flogging himself for his mercy—for he was under watch—and yet not do his friend any good: the friend would be attended to by another hand and suffer no lack in the matter of full punishment.

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The convict life in Tasmania was so unendurable, and suicide so difficult to accomplish that once or twice despairing men got together and drew straws to determine which of them should kill another of the group—this murder to secure death to the perpetrator and to the witnesses of it by the hand of the hangman!

The incidents quoted above are mere hints, mere suggestions of what convict life was like—they are but a couple of details tossed into view out of a shoreless sea of such; or, to change the figure, they are but a pair of flaming steeples photographed from a point which hides from sight the burning city which stretches away from their bases on every hand.

Some of the convicts—indeed, a good many of them—were very bad people, even for that day; but the most of them were probably not noticeably worse than the average of the people they left behind them at home. We must believe this; we cannot avoid it. We are obliged to believe that a nation that could look on, unmoved, and see starving or freezing women hanged for stealing twenty-six cents' worth of bacon or rags, and boys snatched from their mothers, and men from their families, and sent to the other side of the world for long terms of years for similar trifling offenses, was a nation to whom the term “civilized” could not in any large way be applied. And we must also believe that a nation that knew, during more than forty years, what was happening to those exiles and was still content with it, was not advancing in any showy way toward a higher grade of civilization.

If we look into the characters and conduct of the officers and gentlemen who had charge of the convicts and attended to their backs and stomachs, we must grant again that as between the convict and his masters, and between both and the nation at home, there was a quite noticeable monotony of sameness.

Four years had gone by, and many convicts had come. Respectable settlers were beginning to arrive. These two classes of colonists had to be protected, in case of trouble among themselves or with the natives. It is proper to mention the natives, though they could hardly count they were so scarce. At a time when they had not as yet begun to be much disturbed—not as yet being in the way—it was estimated that in New South Wales there was but one native to 45,000 acres of territory.

People had to be protected. Officers of the regular army did not want this service—away off there where neither honor nor distinction was to be gained. So England recruited and officered a kind of militia force of 1,000 uniformed civilians called the “New South Wales Corps” and shipped it.

This was the worst blow of all. The colony fairly staggered under it. The Corps was an object-lesson of the moral condition of England outside of the jails. The colonists trembled. It was feared that next there would be an importation of the nobility.

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In those early days the colony was non-supporting. All the necessities of life—food, clothing, and all—were sent out from England, and kept in great government store-houses, and given to the convicts and sold to the settlers—sold at a trifling advance upon cost. The Corps saw its opportunity. Its officers went into commerce, and in a most lawless way. They went to importing rum, and also to manufacturing it in private stills, in defiance of the government's commands and protests. They leagued themselves together and ruled the market; they boycotted the government and the other dealers; they established a close monopoly and kept it strictly in their own hands. When a vessel arrived with spirits, they allowed nobody to buy but themselves, and they forced the owner to sell to them at a price named by themselves—and it was always low enough. They bought rum at an average of two dollars a gallon and sold it at an average of ten. They made rum the currency of the country—for there was little or no money—and they maintained their devastating hold and kept the colony under their heel for eighteen or twenty years before they were finally conquered and routed by the government.

Meantime, they had spread intemperance everywhere. And they had squeezed farm after farm out of the settlers hands for rum, and thus had bountifully enriched themselves. When a farmer was caught in the last agonies of thirst they took advantage of him and sweated him for a drink. In one instance they sold a man a gallon of rum worth two dollars for a piece of property which was sold some years later for \$100,000. When the colony was about eighteen or twenty years old it was discovered that the land was specially fitted for the wool-culture. Prosperity followed, commerce with the world began, by and by rich mines of the noble metals were opened, immigrants flowed in, capital likewise. The result is the great and wealthy and enlightened commonwealth of New South Wales.

It is a country that is rich in mines, wool ranches, trams, railways, steamship lines, schools, newspapers, botanical gardens, art galleries, libraries, museums, hospitals, learned societies; it is the hospitable home of every species of culture and of every species of material enterprise, and there is a church at every man's door, and a race-track over the way.

CHAPTER XI.

We should be careful to get out of an experience only the wisdom that is in it—and stop there; lest we be like the cat that sits down on a hot stove-lid. She will never sit down on a hot stove-lid again—and that is well; but also she will never sit down on a cold one any more.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

All English-speaking colonies are made up of lavishly hospitable people, and New South Wales and its capital are like the rest in this. The English-speaking colony of the

United States of America is always called lavishly hospitable by the English traveler. As to the other English-speaking colonies throughout the world from Canada all around, I know by experience that the description fits them. I will not go more particularly into this matter, for I find that when writers try to distribute their gratitude here and there and yonder by detail they run across difficulties and do some ungraceful stumbling.

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Mr. Gane ("New South Wales and Victoria in 1885"), tried to distribute his gratitude, and was not lucky:

"The inhabitants of Sydney are renowned for their hospitality. The treatment which we experienced at the hands of this generous-hearted people will help more than anything else to make us recollect with pleasure our stay amongst them. In the character of hosts and hostesses they excel. The 'new chum' needs only the acquaintanceship of one of their number, and he becomes at once the happy recipient of numerous complimentary invitations and thoughtful kindnesses. Of the towns it has been our good fortune to visit, none have portrayed home so faithfully as Sydney."

Nobody could say it finer than that. If he had put in his cork then, and stayed away from Dubbo—but no; heedless man, he pulled it again. Pulled it when he was away along in his book, and his memory of what he had said about Sydney had grown dim:

"We cannot quit the promising town of Dubbo without testifying, in warm praise, to the kind-hearted and hospitable usages of its inhabitants. Sydney, though well deserving the character it bears of its kindly treatment of strangers, possesses a little formality and reserve. In Dubbo, on the contrary, though the same congenial manners prevail, there is a pleasing degree of respectful familiarity which gives the town a homely comfort not often met with elsewhere. In laying on one side our pen we feel contented in having been able, though so late in this work, to bestow a panegyric, however unpretentious, on a town which, though possessing no picturesque natural surroundings, nor interesting architectural productions, has yet a body of citizens whose hearts cannot but obtain for their town a reputation for benevolence and kind-heartedness."

I wonder what soured him on Sydney. It seems strange that a pleasing degree of three or four fingers of respectful familiarity should fill a man up and give him the panegyrics so bad. For he has them, the worst way—any one can see that. A man who is perfectly at himself does not throw cold detraction at people's architectural productions and picturesque surroundings, and let on that what he prefers is a Dubbonese dust-storm and a pleasing degree of respectful familiarity. No, these are old, old symptoms; and when they appear we know that the man has got the panegyrics.

Sydney has a population of 400,000. When a stranger from America steps ashore there, the first thing that strikes him is that the place is eight or nine times as large as he was expecting it to be; and the next thing that strikes him is that it is an English city with American trimmings. Later on, in Melbourne, he will find the American trimmings still more in evidence; there, even the architecture will often suggest America; a photograph of its stateliest business street might be passed upon him for a picture of the finest

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street in a large American city. I was told that the most of the fine residences were the city residences of squatters. The name seemed out of focus somehow. When the explanation came, it offered a new instance of the curious changes which words, as well as animals, undergo through change of habitat and climate. With us, when you speak of a squatter you are always supposed to be speaking of a poor man, but in Australia when you speak of a squatter you are supposed to be speaking of a millionaire; in America the word indicates the possessor of a few acres and a doubtful title, in Australia it indicates a man whose landfront is as long as a railroad, and whose title has been perfected in one way or another; in America the word indicates a man who owns a dozen head of live stock, in Australia a man who owns anywhere from fifty thousand up to half a million head; in America the word indicates a man who is obscure and not important, in Australia a man who is prominent and of the first importance; in America you take off your hat to no squatter, in Australia you do; in America if your uncle is a squatter you keep it dark, in Australia you advertise it; in America if your friend is a squatter nothing comes of it, but with a squatter for your friend in Australia you may sup with kings if there are any around.

In Australia it takes about two acres and a half of pastureland (some people say twice as many), to support a sheep; and when the squatter has half a million sheep his private domain is about as large as Rhode Island, to speak in general terms. His annual wool crop may be worth a quarter or a half million dollars.

He will live in a palace in Melbourne or Sydney or some other of the large cities, and make occasional trips to his sheep-kingdom several hundred miles away in the great plains to look after his battalions of riders and shepherds and other hands. He has a commodious dwelling out there, and if he approve of you he will invite you to spend a week in it, and will make you at home and comfortable, and let you see the great industry in all its details, and feed you and slake you and smoke you with the best that money can buy.

On at least one of these vast estates there is a considerable town, with all the various businesses and occupations that go to make an important town; and the town and the land it stands upon are the property of the squatters. I have seen that town, and it is not unlikely that there are other squatter-owned towns in Australia.

Australia supplies the world not only with fine wool, but with mutton also. The modern invention of cold storage and its application in ships has created this great trade. In Sydney I visited a huge establishment where they kill and clean and solidly freeze a thousand sheep a day, for shipment to England.

The Australians did not seem to me to differ noticeably from Americans, either in dress, carriage, ways, pronunciation, inflections, or general appearance. There were fleeting

and subtle suggestions of their English origin, but these were not pronounced enough, as a rule, to catch one's attention. The people have easy and cordial manners from the beginning—from the moment that the introduction is completed. This is American. To put it in another way, it is English friendliness with the English shyness and self-consciousness left out.

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Now and then—but this is rare—one hears such words as piper for paper, lydy for lady, and tyble for table fall from lips whence one would not expect such pronunciations to come. There is a superstition prevalent in Sydney that this pronunciation is an Australianism, but people who have been “home”—as the native reverently and lovingly calls England—know better. It is “costermonger.” All over Australasia this pronunciation is nearly as common among servants as it is in London among the uneducated and the partially educated of all sorts and conditions of people. That mislaid ‘y’ is rather striking when a person gets enough of it into a short sentence to enable it to show up. In the hotel in Sydney the chambermaid said, one morning:

“The tyble is set, and here is the piper; and if the lydy is ready I’ll tell the wyter to bring up the breakfast.”

I have made passing mention, a moment ago, of the native Australasian’s custom of speaking of England as “home.” It was always pretty to hear it, and often it was said in an unconsciously caressing way that made it touching; in a way which transmuted a sentiment into an embodiment, and made one seem to see Australasia as a young girl stroking mother England’s old gray head.

In the Australasian home the table-talk is vivacious and unembarrassed; it is without stiffness or restraint. This does not remind one of England so much as it does of America. But Australasia is strictly democratic, and reserves and restraints are things that are bred by differences of rank.

English and colonial audiences are phenomenally alert and responsive. Where masses of people are gathered together in England, caste is submerged, and with it the English reserve; equality exists for the moment, and every individual is free; so free from any consciousness of fetters, indeed, that the Englishman’s habit of watching himself and guarding himself against any injudicious exposure of his feelings is forgotten, and falls into abeyance—and to such a degree indeed, that he will bravely applaud all by himself if he wants to—an exhibition of daring which is unusual elsewhere in the world.

But it is hard to move a new English acquaintance when he is by himself, or when the company present is small and new to him. He is on his guard then, and his natural reserve is to the fore. This has given him the false reputation of being without humor and without the appreciation of humor.

Americans are not Englishmen, and American humor is not English humor; but both the American and his humor had their origin in England, and have merely undergone changes brought about by changed conditions and a new environment. About the best humorous speeches I have yet heard were a couple that were made in Australia at club suppers—one of them by an Englishman, the other by an Australian.

CHAPTER XII.

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There are those who scoff at the schoolboy, calling him frivolous and shallow: Yet it was the schoolboy who said "Faith is believing what you know ain't so."

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

In Sydney I had a large dream, and in the course of talk I told it to a missionary from India who was on his way to visit some relatives in New Zealand. I dreamed that the visible universe is the physical person of God; that the vast worlds that we see twinkling millions of miles apart in the fields of space are the blood corpuscles in His veins; and that we and the other creatures are the microbes that charge with multitudinous life the corpuscles.

Mr. X., the missionary, considered the dream awhile, then said:

"It is not surpassable for magnitude, since its metes and bounds are the metes and bounds of the universe itself; and it seems to me that it almost accounts for a thing which is otherwise nearly unaccountable—the origin of the sacred legends of the Hindoos. Perhaps they dream them, and then honestly believe them to be divine revelations of fact. It looks like that, for the legends are built on so vast a scale that it does not seem reasonable that plodding priests would happen upon such colossal fancies when awake."

He told some of the legends, and said that they were implicitly believed by all classes of Hindoos, including those of high social position and intelligence; and he said that this universal credulity was a great hindrance to the missionary in his work. Then he said something like this:

"At home, people wonder why Christianity does not make faster progress in India. They hear that the Indians believe easily, and that they have a natural trust in miracles and give them a hospitable reception. Then they argue like this: since the Indian believes easily, place Christianity before them and they must believe; confirm its truths by the biblical miracles, and they will no longer doubt. The natural deduction is, that as Christianity makes but indifferent progress in India, the fault is with us: we are not fortunate in presenting the doctrines and the miracles." But the truth is, we are not by any means so well equipped as they think. We have not the easy task that they imagine. To use a military figure, we are sent against the enemy with good powder in our guns, but only wads for bullets; that is to say, our miracles are not effective; the Hindoos do not care for them; they have more extraordinary ones of their own. All the details of their own religion are proven and established by miracles; the details of ours must be proven in the same way. When I first began my work in India I greatly underestimated the difficulties thus put upon my task. A correction was not long in coming. I thought as our friends think at home—that to prepare my childlike wonder-lovers to listen with favor to my grave

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message I only needed to charm the way to it with wonders, marvels, miracles. With full confidence I told the wonders performed by Samson, the strongest man that had ever lived—for so I called him. “At first I saw lively anticipation and strong interest in the faces of my people, but as I moved along from incident to incident of the great story, I was distressed to see that I was steadily losing the sympathy of my audience. I could not understand it. It was a surprise to me, and a disappointment. Before I was through, the fading sympathy had paled to indifference. Thence to the end the indifference remained; I was not able to make any impression upon it.” A good old Hindoo gentleman told me where my trouble lay. He said “We Hindoos recognize a god by the work of his hands—we accept no other testimony. Apparently, this is also the rule with you Christians. And we know when a man has his power from a god by the fact that he does things which he could not do, as a man, with the mere powers of a man. Plainly, this is the Christian’s way also, of knowing when a man is working by a god’s power and not by his own. You saw that there was a supernatural property in the hair of Samson; for you perceived that when his hair was gone he was as other men. It is our way, as I have said. There are many nations in the world, and each group of nations has its own gods, and will pay no worship to the gods of the others. Each group believes its own gods to be strongest, and it will not exchange them except for gods that shall be proven to be their superiors in power. Man is but a weak creature, and needs the help of gods—he cannot do without it. Shall he place his fate in the hands of weak gods when there may be stronger ones to be found? That would be foolish. No, if he hear of gods that are stronger than his own, he should not turn a deaf ear, for it is not a light matter that is at stake. How then shall he determine which gods are the stronger, his own or those that preside over the concerns of other nations? By comparing the known works of his own gods with the works of those others; there is no other way. Now, when we make this comparison, we are not drawn towards the gods of any other nation. Our gods are shown by their works to be the strongest, the most powerful. The Christians have but few gods, and they are new—new, and not strong; as it seems to us. They will increase in number, it is true, for this has happened with all gods, but that time is far away, many ages and decades of ages away, for gods multiply slowly, as is meet for beings to whom a thousand years is but a single moment. Our own gods have been born millions of years apart. The process is slow, the gathering of strength and power is similarly slow. In the slow lapse of the ages the steadily accumulating power of our gods has at last become prodigious. We have a thousand proofs of this in the colossal

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character of their personal acts and the acts of ordinary men to whom they have given supernatural qualities. To your Samson was given supernatural power, and when he broke the withes, and slew the thousands with the jawbone of an ass, and carried away the gate's of the city upon his shoulders, you were amazed—and also awed, for you recognized the divine source of his strength. But it could not profit to place these things before your Hindoo congregation and invite their wonder; for they would compare them with the deed done by Hanuman, when our gods infused their divine strength into his muscles; and they would be indifferent to them—as you saw. In the old, old times, ages and ages gone by, when our god Rama was warring with the demon god of Ceylon, Rama bethought him to bridge the sea and connect Ceylon with India, so that his armies might pass easily over; and he sent his general, Hanuman, inspired like your own Samson with divine strength, to bring the materials for the bridge. In two days Hanuman strode fifteen hundred miles, to the Himalayas, and took upon his shoulder a range of those lofty mountains two hundred miles long, and started with it toward Ceylon. It was in the night; and, as he passed along the plain, the people of Govardhun heard the thunder of his tread and felt the earth rocking under it, and they ran out, and there, with their snowy summits piled to heaven, they saw the Himalayas passing by. And as this huge continent swept along overshadowing the earth, upon its slopes they discerned the twinkling lights of a thousand sleeping villages, and it was as if the constellations were filing in procession through the sky. While they were looking, Hanuman stumbled, and a small ridge of red sandstone twenty miles long was jolted loose and fell. Half of its length has wasted away in the course of the ages, but the other ten miles of it remain in the plain by Govardhun to this day as proof of the might of the inspiration of our gods. You must know, yourself, that Hanuman could not have carried those mountains to Ceylon except by the strength of the gods. You know that it was not done by his own strength, therefore, you know that it was done by the strength of the gods, just as you know that Samson carried the gates by the divine strength and not by his own. I think you must concede two things: First, That in carrying the gates of the city upon his shoulders, Samson did not establish the superiority of his gods over ours; secondly, That his feat is not supported by any but verbal evidence, while Hanuman's is not only supported by verbal evidence, but this evidence is confirmed, established, proven, by visible, tangible evidence, which is the strongest of all testimony. We have the sandstone ridge, and while it remains we cannot doubt, and shall not. Have you the gates?"

CHAPTER XIII.

The timid man yearns for full value and asks a tenth. The bold man strikes for double value and compromises on par.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

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One is sure to be struck by the liberal way in which Australasia spends money upon public works—such as legislative buildings, town halls, hospitals, asylums, parks, and botanical gardens. I should say that where minor towns in America spend a hundred dollars on the town hall and on public parks and gardens, the like towns in Australasia spend a thousand. And I think that this ratio will hold good in the matter of hospitals, also. I have seen a costly and well-equipped, and architecturally handsome hospital in an Australian village of fifteen hundred inhabitants. It was built by private funds furnished by the villagers and the neighboring planters, and its running expenses were drawn from the same sources. I suppose it would be hard to match this in any country. This village was about to close a contract for lighting its streets with the electric light, when I was there. That is ahead of London. London is still obscured by gas—gas pretty widely scattered, too, in some of the districts; so widely indeed, that except on moonlight nights it is difficult to find the gas lamps.

The botanical garden of Sydney covers thirty-eight acres, beautifully laid out and rich with the spoil of all the lands and all the climes of the world. The garden is on high ground in the middle of the town, overlooking the great harbor, and it adjoins the spacious grounds of Government House—fifty-six acres; and at hand also, is a recreation ground containing eighty-two acres. In addition, there are the zoological gardens, the race-course, and the great cricket-grounds where the international matches are played. Therefore there is plenty of room for reposeful lazying and lounging, and for exercise too, for such as like that kind of work.

There are four specialties attainable in the way of social pleasure. If you enter your name on the Visitor's Book at Government House you will receive an invitation to the next ball that takes place there, if nothing can be proven against you. And it will be very pleasant; for you will see everybody except the Governor, and add a number of acquaintances and several friends to your list. The Governor will be in England. He always is. The continent has four or five governors, and I do not know how many it takes to govern the outlying archipelago; but anyway you will not see them. When they are appointed they come out from England and get inaugurated, and give a ball, and help pray for rain, and get aboard ship and go back home. And so the Lieutenant-Governor has to do all the work. I was in Australasia three months and a half, and saw only one Governor. The others were at home.

The Australasian Governor would not be so restless, perhaps, if he had a war, or a veto, or something like that to call for his reserve-energies, but he hasn't. There isn't any war, and there isn't any veto in his hands. And so there is really little or nothing doing in his line. The country governs itself, and prefers to do it; and is so strenuous about it and so jealous of its independence that it grows restive if even the Imperial Government at home proposes to help; and so the Imperial veto, while a fact, is yet mainly a name.

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Thus the Governor's functions are much more limited than are a Governor's functions with us. And therefore more fatiguing. He is the apparent head of the State, he is the real head of Society. He represents culture, refinement, elevated sentiment, polite life, religion; and by his example he propagates these, and they spread and flourish and bear good fruit. He creates the fashion, and leads it. His ball is the ball of balls, and his countenance makes the horse-race thrive.

He is usually a lord, and this is well; for his position compels him to lead an expensive life, and an English lord is generally well equipped for that.

Another of Sydney's social pleasures is the visit to the Admiralty House; which is nobly situated on high ground overlooking the water. The trim boats of the service convey the guests thither; and there, or on board the flag-ship, they have the duplicate of the hospitalities of Government House. The Admiral commanding a station in British waters is a magnate of the first degree, and he is sumptuously housed, as becomes the dignity of his office.

Third in the list of special pleasures is the tour of the harbor in a fine steam pleasure-launch. Your richer friends own boats of this kind, and they will invite you, and the joys of the trip will make a long day seem short.

And finally comes the shark-fishing. Sydney Harbor is populous with the finest breeds of man-eating sharks in the world. Some people make their living catching them; for the Government pays a cash bounty on them. The larger the shark the larger the bounty, and some of the sharks are twenty feet long. You not only get the bounty, but everything that is in the shark belongs to you. Sometimes the contents are quite valuable.

The shark is the swiftest fish that swims. The speed of the fastest steamer afloat is poor compared to his. And he is a great gad-about, and roams far and wide in the oceans, and visits the shores of all of them, ultimately, in the course of his restless excursions. I have a tale to tell now, which has not as yet been in print. In 1870 a young stranger arrived in Sydney, and set about finding something to do; but he knew no one, and brought no recommendations, and the result was that he got no employment. He had aimed high, at first, but as time and his money wasted away he grew less and less exacting, until at last he was willing to serve in the humblest capacities if so he might get bread and shelter. But luck was still against him; he could find no opening of any sort. Finally his money was all gone. He walked the streets all day, thinking; he walked them all night, thinking, thinking, and growing hungrier and hungrier. At dawn he found himself well away from the town and drifting aimlessly along the harbor shore. As he was passing by a nodding shark-fisher the man looked up and said——

"Say, young fellow, take my line a spell, and change my luck for me."

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"How do you know I won't make it worse?"

"Because you can't. It has been at its worst all night. If you can't change it, no harm's done; if you do change it, it's for the better, of course. Come."

"All right, what will you give?"

"I'll give you the shark, if you catch one."

"And I will eat it, bones and all. Give me the line."

"Here you are. I will get away, now, for awhile, so that my luck won't spoil yours; for many and many a time I've noticed that if——there, pull in, pull in, man, you've got a bite! I knew how it would be. Why, I knew you for a born son of luck the minute I saw you. All right—he's landed."

It was an unusually large shark—"a full nineteen-footer," the fisherman said, as he laid the creature open with his knife.

"Now you rob him, young man, while I step to my hamper for a fresh bait. There's generally something in them worth going for. You've changed my luck, you see. But my goodness, I hope you haven't changed your own."

"Oh, it wouldn't matter; don't worry about that. Get your bait. I'll rob him."

When the fisherman got back the young man had just finished washing his hands in the bay, and was starting away.

"What, you are not going?"

"Yes. Good-bye."

"But what about your shark?"

"The shark? Why, what use is he to me?"

"What use is he? I like that. Don't you know that we can go and report him to Government, and you'll get a clean solid eighty shillings bounty? Hard cash, you know. What do you think about it now?"

"Oh, well, you can collect it."

"And keep it? Is that what you mean?"

"Yes."

“Well, this is odd. You’re one of those sort they call eccentrics, I judge. The saying is, you mustn’t judge a man by his clothes, and I’m believing it now. Why yours are looking just ratty, don’t you know; and yet you must be rich.”

“I am.”

The young man walked slowly back to the town, deeply musing as he went. He halted a moment in front of the best restaurant, then glanced at his clothes and passed on, and got his breakfast at a “stand-up.” There was a good deal of it, and it cost five shillings. He tendered a sovereign, got his change, glanced at his silver, muttered to himself, “There isn’t enough to buy clothes with,” and went his way.

At half-past nine the richest wool-broker in Sydney was sitting in his morning-room at home, settling his breakfast with the morning paper. A servant put his head in and said:

“There’s a sundowner at the door wants to see you, sir.”

“What do you bring that kind of a message here for? Send him about his business.”

“He won’t go, sir. I’ve tried.”

“He won’t go? That’s—why, that’s unusual. He’s one of two things, then: he’s a remarkable person, or he’s crazy. Is he crazy?”

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"No, sir. He don't look it."

"Then he's remarkable. What does he say he wants?"

"He won't tell, sir; only says it's very important."

"And won't go. Does he say he won't go?"

"Says he'll stand there till he sees you, sir, if it's all day."

"And yet isn't crazy. Show him up."

The sundowner was shown in. The broker said to himself, "No, he's not crazy; that is easy to see; so he must be the other thing."

Then aloud, "Well, my good fellow, be quick about it; don't waste any words; what is it you want?"

"I want to borrow a hundred thousand pounds."

"Scott! (It's a mistake; he is crazy No—he can't be—not with that eye.) Why, you take my breath away. Come, who are you?"

"Nobody that you know."

"What is your name?"

"Cecil Rhodes."

"No, I don't remember hearing the name before. Now then—just for curiosity's sake—what has sent you to me on this extraordinary errand?"

"The intention to make a hundred thousand pounds for you and as much for myself within the next sixty days."

"Well, well, well. It is the most extraordinary idea that—sit down—you interest me. And somehow you—well, you fascinate me; I think that that is about the word. And it isn't your proposition—no, that doesn't fascinate me; it's something else, I don't quite know what; something that's born in you and oozes out of you, I suppose. Now then just for curiosity's sake again, nothing more: as I understand it, it is your desire to bor——"

"I said intention."

"Pardon, so you did. I thought it was an unheedful use of the word—an unheedful valuing of its strength, you know."



"I knew its strength."

"Well, I must say—but look here, let me walk the floor a little, my mind is getting into a sort of whirl, though you don't seem disturbed any. (Plainly this young fellow isn't crazy; but as to his being remarkable—well, really he amounts to that, and something over.) Now then, I believe I am beyond the reach of further astonishment. Strike, and spare not. What is your scheme?"

"To buy the wool crop—deliverable in sixty days."

"What, the whole of it?"

"The whole of it."

"No, I was not quite out of the reach of surprises, after all. Why, how you talk! Do you know what our crop is going to foot up?"

"Two and a half million sterling—maybe a little more."

"Well, you've got your statistics right, any way. Now, then, do you know what the margins would foot up, to buy it at sixty days?"

"The hundred thousand pounds I came here to get."

"Right, once more. Well, dear me, just to see what would happen, I wish you had the money. And if you had it, what would you do with it?"

"I shall make two hundred thousand pounds out of it in sixty days."

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"You mean, of course, that you might make it if——"

"I said 'shall'."

"Yes, by George, you did say 'shall'! You are the most definite devil I ever saw, in the matter of language. Dear, dear, dear, look here! Definite speech means clarity of mind. Upon my word I believe you've got what you believe to be a rational reason, for venturing into this house, an entire stranger, on this wild scheme of buying the wool crop of an entire colony on speculation. Bring it out—I am prepared—acclimatized, if I may use the word. Why would you buy the crop, and why would you make that sum out of it? That is to say, what makes you think you——"

"I don't think—I know."

"Definite again. How do you know?"

"Because France has declared war against Germany, and wool has gone up fourteen per cent. in London and is still rising."

"Oh, in-deed? Now then, I've got you! Such a thunderbolt as you have just let fly ought to have made me jump out of my chair, but it didn't stir me the least little bit, you see. And for a very simple reason: I have read the morning paper. You can look at it if you want to. The fastest ship in the service arrived at eleven o'clock last night, fifty days out from London. All her news is printed here. There are no war-clouds anywhere; and as for wool, why, it is the low-spiritedest commodity in the English market. It is your turn to jump, now . . . Well, why, don't you jump? Why do you sit there in that placid fashion, when——"

"Because I have later news."

"Later news? Oh, come—later news than fifty days, brought steaming hot from London by the——"

"My news is only ten days old."

"Oh, Mun-chausen, hear the maniac talk! Where did you get it?"

"Got it out of a shark."

"Oh, oh, oh, this is too much! Front! call the police bring the gun —raise the town! All the asylums in Christendom have broken loose in the single person of——"

"Sit down! And collect yourself. Where is the use in getting excited? Am I excited? There is nothing to get excited about. When I make a statement which I cannot prove, it

will be time enough for you to begin to offer hospitality to damaging fancies about me and my sanity.”

“Oh, a thousand, thousand pardons! I ought to be ashamed of myself, and I am ashamed of myself for thinking that a little bit of a circumstance like sending a shark to England to fetch back a market report——”

“What does your middle initial stand for, sir?”

“Andrew. What are you writing?”

“Wait a moment. Proof about the shark—and another matter. Only ten lines. There——now it is done. Sign it.”

“Many thanks——many. Let me see; it says—it says oh, come, this is interesting! Why——why——look here! prove what you say here, and I’ll put up the money, and double as much, if necessary, and divide the winnings with you, half and half. There, now—I’ve signed; make your promise good if you can. Show me a copy of the London Times only ten days old.”

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“Here it is—and with it these buttons and a memorandum book that belonged to the man the shark swallowed. Swallowed him in the Thames, without a doubt; for you will notice that the last entry in the book is dated ‘London,’ and is of the same date as the Times, and says, ‘Ber consequentz der Kreigesefflarun, reife ich heute nach Deutchland ab, aur bak ich mein leben auf dem Ultar meines Landes legen mag’——, as clean native German as anybody can put upon paper, and means that in consequence of the declaration of war, this loyal soul is leaving for home to-day, to fight. And he did leave, too, but the shark had him before the day was done, poor fellow.”

“And a pity, too. But there are times for mourning, and we will attend to this case further on; other matters are pressing, now. I will go down and set the machinery in motion in a quiet way and buy the crop. It will cheer the drooping spirits of the boys, in a transitory way. Everything is transitory in this world. Sixty days hence, when they are called to deliver the goods, they will think they’ve been struck by lightning. But there is a time for mourning, and we will attend to that case along with the other one. Come along, I’ll take you to my tailor. What did you say your name is?”

“Cecil Rhodes.”

“It is hard to remember. However, I think you will make it easier by and by, if you live. There are three kinds of people—Commonplace Men, Remarkable Men, and Lunatics. I’ll classify you with the Remarkables, and take the chances.”

The deal went through, and secured to the young stranger the first fortune he ever pocketed.

The people of Sydney ought to be afraid of the sharks, but for some reason they do not seem to be. On Saturdays the young men go out in their boats, and sometimes the water is fairly covered with the little sails. A boat upsets now and then, by accident, a result of tumultuous skylarking; sometimes the boys upset their boat for fun—such as it is with sharks visibly waiting around for just such an occurrence. The young fellows scramble aboard whole—sometimes—not always. Tragedies have happened more than once. While I was in Sydney it was reported that a boy fell out of a boat in the mouth of the Paramatta river and screamed for help and a boy jumped overboard from another boat to save him from the assembling sharks; but the sharks made swift work with the lives of both.

The government pays a bounty for the shark; to get the bounty the fishermen bait the hook or the seine with agreeable mutton; the news spreads and the sharks come from all over the Pacific Ocean to get the free board. In time the shark culture will be one of the most successful things in the colony.

CHAPTER XIV.

We can secure other people's approval, if we do right and try hard; but our own is worth a hundred of it, and no way has been found out of securing that.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

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My health had broken down in New York in May; it had remained in a doubtful but fairish condition during a succeeding period of 82 days; it broke again on the Pacific. It broke again in Sydney, but not until after I had had a good outing, and had also filled my lecture engagements. This latest break lost me the chance of seeing Queensland. In the circumstances, to go north toward hotter weather was not advisable.

So we moved south with a westward slant, 17 hours by rail to the capital of the colony of Victoria, Melbourne—that juvenile city of sixty years, and half a million inhabitants. On the map the distance looked small; but that is a trouble with all divisions of distance in such a vast country as Australia. The colony of Victoria itself looks small on the map—looks like a county, in fact—yet it is about as large as England, Scotland, and Wales combined. Or, to get another focus upon it, it is just 80 times as large as the state of Rhode Island, and one-third as large as the State of Texas.

Outside of Melbourne, Victoria seems to be owned by a handful of squatters, each with a Rhode Island for a sheep farm. That is the impression which one gathers from common talk, yet the wool industry of Victoria is by no means so great as that of New South Wales. The climate of Victoria is favorable to other great industries—among others, wheat-growing and the making of wine.

We took the train at Sydney at about four in the afternoon. It was American in one way, for we had a most rational sleeping car; also the car was clean and fine and new—nothing about it to suggest the rolling stock of the continent of Europe. But our baggage was weighed, and extra weight charged for. That was continental. Continental and troublesome. Any detail of railroading that is not troublesome cannot honorably be described as continental.

The tickets were round-trip ones—to Melbourne, and clear to Adelaide in South Australia, and then all the way back to Sydney. Twelve hundred more miles than we really expected to make; but then as the round trip wouldn't cost much more than the single trip, it seemed well enough to buy as many miles as one could afford, even if one was not likely to need them. A human being has a natural desire to have more of a good thing than he needs.

Now comes a singular thing: the oddest thing, the strangest thing, the most baffling and unaccountable marvel that Australasia can show. At the frontier between New South Wales and Victoria our multitude of passengers were routed out of their snug beds by lantern-light in the morning in the biting-cold of a high altitude to change cars on a road that has no break in it from Sydney to Melbourne! Think of the paralysis of intellect that gave that idea birth; imagine the boulder it emerged from on some petrified legislator's shoulders.

It is a narrow-gage road to the frontier, and a broader gauge thence to Melbourne. The two governments were the builders of the road and are the owners of it. One or two

reasons are given for this curious state of things. One is, that it represents the jealousy existing between the colonies—the two most important colonies of Australasia. What the other one is, I have forgotten. But it is of no consequence. It could be but another effort to explain the inexplicable.

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All passengers fret at the double-gauge; all shippers of freight must of course fret at it; unnecessary expense, delay, and annoyance are imposed upon everybody concerned, and no one is benefitted.

Each Australian colony fences itself off from its neighbor with a custom-house. Personally, I have no objection, but it must be a good deal of inconvenience to the people. We have something resembling it here and there in America, but it goes by another name. The large empire of the Pacific coast requires a world of iron machinery, and could manufacture it economically on the spot if the imposts on foreign iron were removed. But they are not. Protection to Pennsylvania and Alabama forbids it. The result to the Pacific coast is the same as if there were several rows of custom-fences between the coast and the East. Iron carted across the American continent at luxurious railway rates would be valuable enough to be coined when it arrived.

We changed cars. This was at Albury. And it was there, I think, that the growing day and the early sun exposed the distant range called the Blue Mountains. Accurately named. "My word!" as the Australians say, but it was a stunning color, that blue. Deep, strong, rich, exquisite; towering and majestic masses of blue—a softly luminous blue, a smouldering blue, as if vaguely lit by fires within. It extinguished the blue of the sky—made it pallid and unwholesome, whitey and washed-out. A wonderful color—just divine.

A resident told me that those were not mountains; he said they were rabbit-piles. And explained that long exposure and the over-ripe condition of the rabbits was what made them look so blue. This man may have been right, but much reading of books of travel has made me distrustful of gratis information furnished by unofficial residents of a country. The facts which such people give to travelers are usually erroneous, and often intemperately so. The rabbit-plague has indeed been very bad in Australia, and it could account for one mountain, but not for a mountain range, it seems to me. It is too large an order.

We breakfasted at the station. A good breakfast, except the coffee; and cheap. The Government establishes the prices and placards them. The waiters were men, I think; but that is not usual in Australasia. The usual thing is to have girls. No, not girls, young ladies—generally duchesses. Dress? They would attract attention at any royal levee in Europe. Even empresses and queens do not dress as they do. Not that they could not afford it, perhaps, but they would not know how.

All the pleasant morning we slid smoothly along over the plains, through thin—not thick—forests of great melancholy gum trees, with trunks rugged with curled sheets of flaking bark—erysipelas convalescents, so to speak, shedding their dead skins. And all along were tiny cabins, built sometimes of wood, sometimes of gray-blue corrugated iron; and the doorsteps and fences were clogged with children—rugged little simply-clad

chaps that looked as if they had been imported from the banks of the Mississippi without breaking bulk.

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And there were little villages, with neat stations well placarded with showy advertisements—mainly of almost too self-righteous brands of “sheepdip.” If that is the name—and I think it is. It is a stuff like tar, and is dabbed on to places where the shearer clips a piece out of the sheep. It bars out the flies, and has healing properties, and a nip to it which makes the sheep skip like the cattle on a thousand hills. It is not good to eat. That is, it is not good to eat except when mixed with railroad coffee. It improves railroad coffee. Without it railroad coffee is too vague. But with it, it is quite assertive and enthusiastic. By itself, railroad coffee is too passive; but sheep-dip makes it wake up and get down to business. I wonder where they get railroad coffee?

We saw birds, but not a kangaroo, not an emu, not an ornithorhynchus, not a lecturer, not a native. Indeed, the land seemed quite destitute of game. But I have misused the word native. In Australia it is applied to Australian-born whites only. I should have said that we saw no Aborigines—no “blackfellows.” And to this day I have never seen one. In the great museums you will find all the other curiosities, but in the curio of chiefest interest to the stranger all of them are lacking. We have at home an abundance of museums, and not an American Indian in them. It is clearly an absurdity, but it never struck me before.

CHAPTER XV.

Truth is stranger than fiction—to some people, but I am measurably familiar with it.
—Pudd’nhead Wilson’s New Calendar.

Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn’t.
—Pudd’nhead Wilson’s New Calendar.

The air was balmy and delicious, the sunshine radiant; it was a charming excursion. In the course of it we came to a town whose odd name was famous all over the world a quarter of a century ago—Wagga-Wagga. This was because the Tichborne Claimant had kept a butcher-shop there. It was out of the midst of his humble collection of sausages and tripe that he soared up into the zenith of notoriety and hung there in the wastes of space a time, with the telescopes of all nations leveled at him in unappeasable curiosity—curiosity as to which of the two long-missing persons he was: Arthur Orton, the mislaid roustabout of Wapping, or Sir Roger Tichborne, the lost heir of a name and estates as old as English history. We all know now, but not a dozen people knew then; and the dozen kept the mystery to themselves and allowed the most intricate and fascinating and marvelous real-life romance that has ever been played upon the world’s stage to unfold itself serenely, act by act, in a British court by the long and laborious processes of judicial development.

When we recall the details of that great romance we marvel to see what daring chances truth may freely take in constructing a tale, as compared with the poor little conservative risks permitted to fiction. The fiction-artist could achieve no success with the materials of this splendid Tichborne romance.

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He would have to drop out the chief characters; the public would say such people are impossible. He would have to drop out a number of the most picturesque incidents; the public would say such things could never happen. And yet the chief characters did exist, and the incidents did happen.

It cost the Tichborne estates \$400,000 to unmask the Claimant and drive him out; and even after the exposure multitudes of Englishmen still believed in him. It cost the British Government another \$400,000 to convict him of perjury; and after the conviction the same old multitudes still believed in him; and among these believers were many educated and intelligent men; and some of them had personally known the real Sir Roger. The Claimant was sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment. When he got out of prison he went to New York and kept a whisky saloon in the Bowery for a time, then disappeared from view.

He always claimed to be Sir Roger Tichborne until death called for him. This was but a few months ago—not very much short of a generation since he left Wagga-Wagga to go and possess himself of his estates. On his death-bed he yielded up his secret, and confessed in writing that he was only Arthur Orton of Wapping, able seaman and butcher—that and nothing more. But it is scarcely to be doubted that there are people whom even his dying confession will not convince. The old habit of assimilating incredibilities must have made strong food a necessity in their case; a weaker article would probably disagree with them.

I was in London when the Claimant stood his trial for perjury. I attended one of his showy evenings in the sumptuous quarters provided for him from the purses of his adherents and well-wishers. He was in evening dress, and I thought him a rather fine and stately creature. There were about twenty-five gentlemen present; educated men, men moving in good society, none of them commonplace; some of them were men of distinction, none of them were obscurities. They were his cordial friends and admirers. It was "Sir Roger," always "Sir Roger," on all hands; no one withheld the title, all turned it from the tongue with unction, and as if it tasted good.

For many years I had had a mystery in stock. Melbourne, and only Melbourne, could unriddle it for me. In 1873 I arrived in London with my wife and young child, and presently received a note from Naples signed by a name not familiar to me. It was not Bascom, and it was not Henry; but I will call it Henry Bascom for convenience's sake. This note, of about six lines, was written on a strip of white paper whose end-edges were ragged. I came to be familiar with those strips in later years. Their size and pattern were always the same. Their contents were usually to the same effect: would I and mine come to the writer's country-place in England on such and such a date, by such and such a train, and stay twelve days and depart by such and such a train at the end of the specified time? A carriage would meet us at the station.

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These invitations were always for a long time ahead; if we were in Europe, three months ahead; if we were in America, six to twelve months ahead. They always named the exact date and train for the beginning and also for the end of the visit.

This first note invited us for a date three months in the future. It asked us to arrive by the 4.10 p.m. train from London, August 6th. The carriage would be waiting. The carriage would take us away seven days later—train specified. And there were these words: “Speak to Tom Hughes.”

I showed the note to the author of “Tom Brown at Rugby,” and he said: “Accept, and be thankful.”

He described Mr. Bascom as being a man of genius, a man of fine attainments, a choice man in every way, a rare and beautiful character. He said that Bascom Hall was a particularly fine example of the stately manorial mansion of Elizabeth’s days, and that it was a house worth going a long way to see—like Knowle; that Mr. B. was of a social disposition; liked the company of agreeable people, and always had samples of the sort coming and going.

We paid the visit. We paid others, in later years—the last one in 1879. Soon after that Mr. Bascom started on a voyage around the world in a steam yacht—a long and leisurely trip, for he was making collections, in all lands, of birds, butterflies, and such things.

The day that President Garfield was shot by the assassin Guiteau, we were at a little watering place on Long Island Sound; and in the mail matter of that day came a letter with the Melbourne post-mark on it. It was for my wife, but I recognized Mr. Bascom’s handwriting on the envelope, and opened it. It was the usual note—as to paucity of lines—and was written on the customary strip of paper; but there was nothing usual about the contents. The note informed my wife that if it would be any assuagement of her grief to know that her husband’s lecture-tour in Australia was a satisfactory venture from the beginning to the end, he, the writer, could testify that such was the case; also, that her husband’s untimely death had been mourned by all classes, as she would already know by the press telegrams, long before the reception of this note; that the funeral was attended by the officials of the colonial and city governments; and that while he, the writer, her friend and mine, had not reached Melbourne in time to see the body, he had at least had the sad privilege of acting as one of the pall-bearers. Signed, “Henry Bascom.”

My first thought was, why didn’t he have the coffin opened? He would have seen that the corpse was an imposter, and he could have gone right ahead and dried up the most of those tears, and comforted those sorrowing governments, and sold the remains and sent me the money.

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I did nothing about the matter. I had set the law after living lecture doubles of mine a couple of times in America, and the law had not been able to catch them; others in my trade had tried to catch their impostor-doubles and had failed. Then where was the use in harrying a ghost? None—and so I did not disturb it. I had a curiosity to know about that man's lecture-tour and last moments, but that could wait. When I should see Mr. Bascom he would tell me all about it. But he passed from life, and I never saw him again.. My curiosity faded away.

However, when I found that I was going to Australia it revived. And naturally: for if the people should say that I was a dull, poor thing compared to what I was before I died, it would have a bad effect on business. Well, to my surprise the Sydney journalists had never heard of that impostor! I pressed them, but they were firm—they had never heard of him, and didn't believe in him.

I could not understand it; still, I thought it would all come right in Melbourne. The government would remember; and the other mourners. At the supper of the Institute of Journalists I should find out all about the matter. But no—it turned out that they had never heard of it.

So my mystery was a mystery still. It was a great disappointment. I believed it would never be cleared up—in this life—so I dropped it out of my mind.

But at last! just when I was least expecting it——

However, this is not the place for the rest of it; I shall come to the matter again, in a far-distant chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

There is a Moral sense, and there is an Immoral Sense. History shows us that the Moral Sense enables us to perceive morality and how to avoid it, and that the Immoral Sense enables us to perceive immorality and how to enjoy it.

-Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

Melbourne spreads around over an immense area of ground. It is a stately city architecturally as well as in magnitude. It has an elaborate system of cable-car service; it has museums, and colleges, and schools, and public gardens, and electricity, and gas, and libraries, and theaters, and mining centers, and wool centers, and centers of the arts and sciences, and boards of trade, and ships, and railroads, and a harbor, and social clubs, and journalistic clubs, and racing clubs, and a squatter club sumptuously housed and appointed, and as many churches and banks as can make a living. In a word, it is equipped with everything that goes to make the modern great city. It is the largest city of Australasia, and fills the post with honor and credit. It has one specialty;

this must not be jumbled in with those other things. It is the mitred Metropolitan of the Horse-Racing Cult. Its race-ground is the Mecca of Australasia. On the great annual day of sacrifice—the

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5th of November, Guy Fawkes's Day—business is suspended over a stretch of land and sea as wide as from New York to San Francisco, and deeper than from the northern lakes to the Gulf of Mexico; and every man and woman, of high degree or low, who can afford the expense, put away their other duties and come. They begin to swarm in by ship and rail a fortnight before the day, and they swarm thicker and thicker day after day, until all the vehicles of transportation are taxed to their uttermost to meet the demands of the occasion, and all hotels and lodgings are bulging outward because of the pressure from within. They come a hundred thousand strong, as all the best authorities say, and they pack the spacious grounds and grandstands and make a spectacle such as is never to be seen in Australasia elsewhere.

It is the "Melbourne Cup" that brings this multitude together. Their clothes have been ordered long ago, at unlimited cost, and without bounds as to beauty and magnificence, and have been kept in concealment until now, for unto this day are they consecrate. I am speaking of the ladies' clothes; but one might know that.

And so the grand-stands make a brilliant and wonderful spectacle, a delirium of color, a vision of beauty. The champagne flows, everybody is vivacious, excited, happy; everybody bets, and gloves and fortunes change hands right along, all the time. Day after day the races go on, and the fun and the excitement are kept at white heat; and when each day is done, the people dance all night so as to be fresh for the race in the morning. And at the end of the great week the swarms secure lodgings and transportation for next year, then flock away to their remote homes and count their gains and losses, and order next year's Cup-clothes, and then lie down and sleep two weeks, and get up sorry to reflect that a whole year must be put in somehow or other before they can be wholly happy again.

The Melbourne Cup is the Australasian National Day. It would be difficult to overstate its importance. It overshadows all other holidays and specialized days of whatever sort in that congeries of colonies. Overshadows them? I might almost say it blots them out. Each of them gets attention, but not everybody's; each of them evokes interest, but not everybody's; each of them rouses enthusiasm, but not everybody's; in each case a part of the attention, interest, and enthusiasm is a matter of habit and custom, and another part of it is official and perfunctory. Cup Day, and Cup Day only, commands an attention, an interest, and an enthusiasm which are universal—and spontaneous, not perfunctory. Cup Day is supreme it has no rival. I can call to mind no specialized annual day, in any country, which can be named by that large name—Supreme. I can call to mind no specialized annual day, in any country, whose approach fires the whole land with a conflagration of conversation and preparation and anticipation and jubilation. No day save this one; but this one does it.

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In America we have no annual supreme day; no day whose approach makes the whole nation glad. We have the Fourth of July, and Christmas, and Thanksgiving. Neither of them can claim the primacy; neither of them can arouse an enthusiasm which comes near to being universal. Eight grown Americans out of ten dread the coming of the Fourth, with its pandemonium and its perils, and they rejoice when it is gone—if still alive. The approach of Christmas brings harassment and dread to many excellent people. They have to buy a cart-load of presents, and they never know what to buy to hit the various tastes; they put in three weeks of hard and anxious work, and when Christmas morning comes they are so dissatisfied with the result, and so disappointed that they want to sit down and cry. Then they give thanks that Christmas comes but once a year. The observance of Thanksgiving Day—as a function—has become general of late years. The Thankfulness is not so general. This is natural. Two-thirds of the nation have always had hard luck and a hard time during the year, and this has a calming effect upon their enthusiasm.

We have a supreme day—a sweeping and tremendous and tumultuous day, a day which commands an absolute universality of interest and excitement; but it is not annual. It comes but once in four years; therefore it cannot count as a rival of the Melbourne Cup.

In Great Britain and Ireland they have two great days—Christmas and the Queen's birthday. But they are equally popular; there is no supremacy.

I think it must be conceded that the position of the Australasian Day is unique, solitary, unfellowed; and likely to hold that high place a long time.

The next things which interest us when we travel are, first, the people; next, the novelties; and finally the history of the places and countries visited. Novelties are rare in cities which represent the most advanced civilization of the modern day. When one is familiar with such cities in the other parts of the world he is in effect familiar with the cities of Australasia. The outside aspects will furnish little that is new. There will be new names, but the things which they represent will sometimes be found to be less new than their names. There may be shades of difference, but these can easily be too fine for detection by the incompetent eye of the passing stranger. In the larrikin he will not be able to discover a new species, but only an old one met elsewhere, and variously called loafer, rough, tough, bummer, or blatherskite, according to his geographical distribution. The larrikin differs by a shade from those others, in that he is more sociable toward the stranger than they, more kindly disposed, more hospitable, more hearty, more friendly. At least it seemed so to me, and I had opportunity to observe. In Sydney, at least. In Melbourne I had to drive to and from the lecture-theater, but in Sydney I was able to walk both ways, and did it. Every night, on my way home at ten, or a quarter past, I found the larrikin grouped in considerable force at several of the street corners, and he always gave me this pleasant salutation:

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"Hello, Mark!"

"Here's to you, old chap!"

"Say—Mark!—is he dead?"—a reference to a passage in some book of mine, though I did not detect, at that time, that that was its source. And I didn't detect it afterward in Melbourne, when I came on the stage for the first time, and the same question was dropped down upon me from the dizzy height of the gallery. It is always difficult to answer a sudden inquiry like that, when you have come unprepared and don't know what it means. I will remark here—if it is not an indecorum—that the welcome which an American lecturer gets from a British colonial audience is a thing which will move him to his deepest deeps, and veil his sight and break his voice. And from Winnipeg to Africa, experience will teach him nothing; he will never learn to expect it, it will catch him as a surprise each time. The war-cloud hanging black over England and America made no trouble for me. I was a prospective prisoner of war, but at dinners, suppers, on the platform, and elsewhere, there was never anything to remind me of it. This was hospitality of the right metal, and would have been prominently lacking in some countries, in the circumstances.

And speaking of the war-flurry, it seemed to me to bring to light the unexpected, in a detail or two. It seemed to relegate the war-talk to the politicians on both sides of the water; whereas whenever a prospective war between two nations had been in the air theretofore, the public had done most of the talking and the bitterest. The attitude of the newspapers was new also. I speak of those of Australasia and India, for I had access to those only. They treated the subject argumentatively and with dignity, not with spite and anger. That was a new spirit, too, and not learned of the French and German press, either before Sedan or since. I heard many public speeches, and they reflected the moderation of the journals. The outlook is that the English-speaking race will dominate the earth a hundred years from now, if its sections do not get to fighting each other. It would be a pity to spoil that prospect by baffling and retarding wars when arbitration would settle their differences so much better and also so much more definitely.

No, as I have suggested, novelties are rare in the great capitals of modern times. Even the wool exchange in Melbourne could not be told from the familiar stock exchange of other countries. Wool brokers are just like stockbrokers; they all bounce from their seats and put up their hands and yell in unison—no stranger can tell what—and the president calmly says "Sold to Smith & Co., threepence farthing—next!"—when probably nothing of the kind happened; for how should he know?

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In the museums you will find acres of the most strange and fascinating things; but all museums are fascinating, and they do so tire your eyes, and break your back, and burn out your vitalities with their consuming interest. You always say you will never go again, but you do go. The palaces of the rich, in Melbourne, are much like the palaces of the rich in America, and the life in them is the same; but there the resemblance ends. The grounds surrounding the American palace are not often large, and not often beautiful, but in the Melbourne case the grounds are often ducally spacious, and the climate and the gardeners together make them as beautiful as a dream. It is said that some of the country seats have grounds—domains—about them which rival in charm and magnitude those which surround the country mansion of an English lord; but I was not out in the country; I had my hands full in town.

And what was the origin of this majestic city and its efflorescence of palatial town houses and country seats? Its first brick was laid and its first house built by a passing convict. Australian history is almost always picturesque; indeed, it is so curious and strange, that it is itself the chiefest novelty the country has to offer, and so it pushes the other novelties into second and third place. It does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies. And all of a fresh new sort, no mouldy old stale ones. It is full of surprises, and adventures, and incongruities, and contradictions, and incredibilities; but they are all true, they all happened.

CHAPTER XVII.

The English are mentioned in the Bible: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

When we consider the immensity of the British Empire in territory, population, and trade, it requires a stern exercise of faith to believe in the figures which represent Australasia's contribution to the Empire's commercial grandeur. As compared with the landed estate of the British Empire, the landed estate dominated by any other Power except one — Russia—is not very impressive for size. My authorities make the British Empire not much short of a fourth larger than the Russian Empire. Roughly proportioned, if you will allow your entire hand to represent the British Empire, you may then cut off the fingers a trifle above the middle joint of the middle finger, and what is left of the hand will represent Russia. The populations ruled by Great Britain and China are about the same —400,000,000 each. No other Power approaches these figures. Even Russia is left far behind.

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The population of Australasia—4,000,000—sinks into nothingness, and is lost from sight in that British ocean of 400,000,000. Yet the statistics indicate that it rises again and shows up very conspicuously when its share of the Empire's commerce is the matter under consideration. The value of England's annual exports and imports is stated at three billions of dollars,—[New South Wales Blue Book.]—and it is claimed that more than one-tenth of this great aggregate is represented by Australasia's exports to England and imports from England. In addition to this, Australasia does a trade with countries other than England, amounting to a hundred million dollars a year, and a domestic intercolonial trade amounting to a hundred and fifty millions.

In round numbers the 4,000,000 buy and sell about \$600,000,000 worth of goods a year. It is claimed that about half of this represents commodities of Australasian production. The products exported annually by India are worth a trifle over \$500,000,000. Now, here are some faith-straining figures:

Indian production (300,000,000 population), \$500,000,000.

Australasian production (4,000,000 population), \$300,000,000.

That is to say, the product of the individual Indian, annually (for export some whither), is worth \$1.15; that of the individual Australasian (for export some whither), \$75! Or, to put it in another way, the Indian family of man and wife and three children sends away an annual result worth \$8.75, while the Australasian family sends away \$375 worth.

There are trustworthy statistics furnished by Sir Richard Temple and others, which show that the individual Indian's whole annual product, both for export and home use, is worth in gold only \$7.50; or, \$37.50 for the family-aggregate. Ciphared out on a like ratio of multiplication, the Australasian family's aggregate production would be nearly \$1,600. Truly, nothing is so astonishing as figures, if they once get started.

We left Melbourne by rail for Adelaide, the capital of the vast Province of South Australia—a seventeen-hour excursion. On the train we found several Sydney friends; among them a Judge who was going out on circuit, and was going to hold court at Broken Hill, where the celebrated silver mine is. It seemed a curious road to take to get to that region. Broken Hill is close to the western border of New South Wales, and Sydney is on the eastern border. A fairly straight line, 700 miles long, drawn westward from Sydney, would strike Broken Hill, just as a somewhat shorter one drawn west from Boston would strike Buffalo. The way the Judge was traveling would carry him over 2,000 miles by rail, he said; southwest from Sydney down to Melbourne, then northward up to Adelaide, then a cant back northeastward and over the border into New South Wales once more—to Broken Hill. It was like going from Boston southwest to Richmond, Virginia, then northwest up to Erie, Pennsylvania, then a cant back northeast and over the border—to Buffalo, New York.

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But the explanation was simple. Years ago the fabulously rich silver discovery at Broken Hill burst suddenly upon an unexpectant world. Its stocks started at shillings, and went by leaps and bounds to the most fanciful figures. It was one of those cases where the cook puts a month's wages into shares, and comes next month and buys your house at your own price, and moves into it herself; where the coachman takes a few shares, and next month sets up a bank; and where the common sailor invests the price of a spree, and next month buys out the steamship company and goes into business on his own hook. In a word, it was one of those excitements which bring multitudes of people to a common center with a rush, and whose needs must be supplied, and at once. Adelaide was close by, Sydney was far away. Adelaide threw a short railway across the border before Sydney had time to arrange for a long one; it was not worth while for Sydney to arrange at all. The whole vast trade-profit of Broken Hill fell into Adelaide's hands, irrevocably. New South Wales furnishes for Broken Hill and sends her Judges 2,000 miles—mainly through alien countries—to administer it, but Adelaide takes the dividends and makes no moan.

We started at 4.20 in the afternoon, and moved across level until night. In the morning we had a stretch of "scrub" country—the kind of thing which is so useful to the Australian novelist. In the scrub the hostile aboriginal lurks, and flits mysteriously about, slipping out from time to time to surprise and slaughter the settler; then slipping back again, and leaving no track that the white man can follow. In the scrub the novelist's heroine gets lost, search fails of result; she wanders here and there, and finally sinks down exhausted and unconscious, and the searchers pass within a yard or two of her, not suspecting that she is near, and by and by some rambler finds her bones and the pathetic diary which she had scribbled with her failing hand and left behind. Nobody can find a lost heroine in the scrub but the aboriginal "tracker," and he will not lend himself to the scheme if it will interfere with the novelist's plot. The scrub stretches miles and miles in all directions, and looks like a level roof of bush-tops without a break or a crack in it—as seamless as a blanket, to all appearance. One might as well walk under water and hope to guess out a route and stick to it, I should think. Yet it is claimed that the aboriginal "tracker" was able to hunt out people lost in the scrub. Also in the "bush"; also in the desert; and even follow them over patches of bare rocks and over alluvial ground which had to all appearance been washed clear of footprints.

From reading Australian books and talking with the people, I became convinced that the aboriginal tracker's performances evince a craft, a penetration, a luminous sagacity, and a minuteness and accuracy of observation in the matter of detective-work not found in nearly so remarkable a degree in any other people, white or colored. In an official account of the blacks of Australia published by the government of Victoria, one reads that the aboriginal not only notices the faint marks left on the bark of a tree by the claws of a climbing opossum, but knows in some way or other whether the marks were made to-day or yesterday.

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And there is the case, on records where A., a settler, makes a bet with B., that B. may lose a cow as effectually as he can, and A. will produce an aboriginal who will find her. B. selects a cow and lets the tracker see the cow's footprint, then be put under guard. B. then drives the cow a few miles over a course which drifts in all directions, and frequently doubles back upon itself; and he selects difficult ground all the time, and once or twice even drives the cow through herds of other cows, and mingles her tracks in the wide confusion of theirs. He finally brings his cow home; the aboriginal is set at liberty, and at once moves around in a great circle, examining all cow-tracks until he finds the one he is after; then sets off and follows it throughout its erratic course, and ultimately tracks it to the stable where B. has hidden the cow. Now wherein does one cow-track differ from another? There must be a difference, or the tracker could not have performed the feat; a difference minute, shadowy, and not detectible by you or me, or by the late Sherlock Holmes, and yet discernible by a member of a race charged by some people with occupying the bottom place in the gradations of human intelligence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It is easier to stay out than get out.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

The train was now exploring a beautiful hill country, and went twisting in and out through lovely little green valleys. There were several varieties of gum trees; among them many giants. Some of them were bodied and barked like the sycamore; some were of fantastic aspect, and reminded one of the quaint apple trees in Japanese pictures. And there was one peculiarly beautiful tree whose name and breed I did not know. The foliage seemed to consist of big bunches of pine-spines, the lower half of each bunch a rich brown or old-gold color, the upper half a most vivid and strenuous and shouting green. The effect was altogether bewitching. The tree was apparently rare. I should say that the first and last samples of it seen by us were not more than half an hour apart. There was another tree of striking aspect, a kind of pine, we were told. Its foliage was as fine as hair, apparently, and its mass sphered itself above the naked straight stem like an explosion of misty smoke. It was not a sociable sort; it did not gather in groups or couples, but each individual stood far away from its nearest neighbor. It scattered itself in this spacious and exclusive fashion about the slopes of swelling grassy great knolls, and stood in the full flood of the wonderful sunshine; and as far as you could see the tree itself you could also see the ink-black blot of its shadow on the shining green carpet at its feet.

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On some part of this railway journey we saw gorse and broom—importations from England—and a gentleman who came into our compartment on a visit tried to tell me which—was which; but as he didn't know, he had difficulty. He said he was ashamed of his ignorance, but that he had never been confronted with the question before during the fifty years and more that he had spent in Australia, and so he had never happened to get interested in the matter. But there was no need to be ashamed. The most of us have his defect. We take a natural interest in novelties, but it is against nature to take an interest in familiar things. The gorse and the broom were a fine accent in the landscape. Here and there they burst out in sudden conflagrations of vivid yellow against a background of sober or sombre color, with a so startling effect as to make a body catch his breath with the happy surprise of it. And then there was the wattle, a native bush or tree, an inspiring cloud of sumptuous yellow bloom. It is a favorite with the Australians, and has a fine fragrance, a quality usually wanting in Australian blossoms.

The gentleman who enriched me with the poverty of his formation about the gorse and the broom told me that he came out from England a youth of twenty and entered the Province of South Australia with thirty-six shillings in his pocket—an adventurer without trade, profession, or friends, but with a clearly-defined purpose in his head: he would stay until he was worth L200, then go back home. He would allow himself five years for the accumulation of this fortune.

"That was more than fifty years ago," said he. "And here I am, yet."

As he went out at the door he met a friend, and turned and introduced him to me, and the friend and I had a talk and a smoke. I spoke of the previous conversation and said there something very pathetic about this half century of exile, and that I wished the L200 scheme had succeeded.

"With him? Oh, it did. It's not so sad a case. He is modest, and he left out some of the particulars. The lad reached South Australia just in time to help discover the Burra-Burra copper mines. They turned out L700,000 in the first three years. Up to now they have yielded L120,000,000. He has had his share. Before that boy had been in the country two years he could have gone home and bought a village; he could go now and buy a city, I think. No, there is nothing very pathetic about his case. He and his copper arrived at just a handy time to save South Australia. It had got mashed pretty flat under the collapse of a land boom a while before." There it is again; picturesque history — Australia's specialty. In 1829 South Australia hadn't a white man in it. In 1836 the British Parliament erected it—still a solitude—into a Province, and gave it a governor and other governmental machinery. Speculators took hold, now, and inaugurated a vast land scheme, and invited immigration, encouraging

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it with lurid promises of sudden wealth. It was well worked in London; and bishops, statesmen, and all sorts of people made a rush for the land company's shares. Immigrants soon began to pour into the region of Adelaide and select town lots and farms in the sand and the mangrove swamps by the sea. The crowds continued to come, prices of land rose high, then higher and still higher, everybody was prosperous and happy, the boom swelled into gigantic proportions. A village of sheet iron huts and clapboard sheds sprang up in the sand, and in these wigwams fashion made display; richly-dressed ladies played on costly pianos, London swells in evening dress and patent-leather boots were abundant, and this fine society drank champagne, and in other ways conducted itself in this capital of humble sheds as it had been accustomed to do in the aristocratic quarters of the metropolis of the world. The provincial government put up expensive buildings for its own use, and a palace with gardens for the use of its governor. The governor had a guard, and maintained a court. Roads, wharves, and hospitals were built. All this on credit, on paper, on wind, on inflated and fictitious values—on the boom's moonshine, in fact. This went on handsomely during four or five years. Then of a sudden came a smash. Bills for a huge amount drawn the governor upon the Treasury were dishonored, the land company's credit went up in smoke, a panic followed, values fell with a rush, the frightened immigrants seized their grips and fled to other lands, leaving behind them a good imitation of a solitude, where lately had been a buzzing and populous hive of men.

Adelaide was indeed almost empty; its population had fallen to 3,000. During two years or more the death-trance continued. Prospect of revival there was none; hope of it ceased. Then, as suddenly as the paralysis had come, came the resurrection from it. Those astonishingly rich copper mines were discovered, and the corpse got up and danced.

The wool production began to grow; grain-raising followed—followed so vigorously, too, that four or five years after the copper discovery, this little colony, which had had to import its breadstuffs formerly, and pay hard prices for them—once \$50 a barrel for flour—had become an exporter of grain.

The prosperities continued. After many years Providence, desiring to show especial regard for New South Wales and exhibit loving interest in its welfare which should certify to all nations the recognition of that colony's conspicuous righteousness and distinguished well-deserving, conferred upon it that treasury of inconceivable riches, Broken Hill; and South Australia went over the border and took it, giving thanks.

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Among our passengers was an American with a unique vocation. Unique is a strong word, but I use it justifiably if I did not misconceive what the American told me; for I understood him to say that in the world there was not another man engaged in the business which he was following. He was buying the kangaroo-skin crop; buying all of it, both the Australian crop and the Tasmanian; and buying it for an American house in New York. The prices were not high, as there was no competition, but the year's aggregate of skins would cost him £30,000. I had had the idea that the kangaroo was about extinct in Tasmania and well thinned out on the continent. In America the skins are tanned and made into shoes. After the tanning, the leather takes a new name—which I have forgotten—I only remember that the new name does not indicate that the kangaroo furnishes the leather. There was a German competition for a while, some years ago, but that has ceased. The Germans failed to arrive at the secret of tanning the skins successfully, and they withdrew from the business. Now then, I suppose that I have seen a man whose occupation is really entitled to bear that high epithet—unique. And I suppose that there is not another occupation in the world that is restricted to the hands of a sole person. I can think of no instance of it. There is more than one Pope, there is more than one Emperor, there is even more than one living god, walking upon the earth and worshiped in all sincerity by large populations of men. I have seen and talked with two of these Beings myself in India, and I have the autograph of one of them. It can come good, by and by, I reckon, if I attach it to a “permit.”

Approaching Adelaide we dismounted from the train, as the French say, and were driven in an open carriage over the hills and along their slopes to the city. It was an excursion of an hour or two, and the charm of it could not be overstated, I think. The road wound around gaps and gorges, and offered all varieties of scenery and prospect—mountains, crags, country homes, gardens, forests—color, color, color everywhere, and the air fine and fresh, the skies blue, and not a shred of cloud to mar the downpour of the brilliant sunshine. And finally the mountain gateway opened, and the immense plain lay spread out below and stretching away into dim distances on every hand, soft and delicate and dainty and beautiful. On its near edge reposed the city.

We descended and entered. There was nothing to remind one of the humble capital, of butts and sheds of the long-vanished day of the land-boom. No, this was a modern city, with wide streets, compactly built; with fine homes everywhere, embowered in foliage and flowers, and with imposing masses of public buildings nobly grouped and architecturally beautiful.

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There was prosperity, in the air; for another boom was on. Providence, desiring to show especial regard for the neighboring colony on the west called Western Australia—and exhibit a loving interest in its welfare which should certify to all nations the recognition of that colony's conspicuous righteousness and distinguished well-deserving, had recently conferred upon it that majestic treasury of golden riches, Coolgardie; and now South Australia had gone around the corner and taken it, giving thanks. Everything comes to him who is patient and good, and waits.

But South Australia deserves much, for apparently she is a hospitable home for every alien who chooses to come; and for his religion, too. She has a population, as per the latest census, of only 320,000-odd, and yet her varieties of religion indicate the presence within her borders of samples of people from pretty nearly every part of the globe you can think of. Tabulated, these varieties of religion make a remarkable show. One would have to go far to find its match. I copy here this cosmopolitan curiosity, and it comes from the published census:

Church of England,.....	89,271
Roman Catholic,.....	47,179
Wesleyan,.....	49,159
Lutheran,.....	23,328
Presbyterian,.....	18,206
Congregationalist,.....	11,882
Bible Christian,.....	15,762
Primitive Methodist,.....	11,654
Baptist,.....	17,547
Christian Brethren,.....	465
Methodist New Connexion,.....	39
Unitarian,.....	688
Church of Christ,.....	3,367
Society of Friends,.....	100
Salvation Army,.....	4,356
New Jerusalem Church,.....	168
Jews,.....	840
Protestants (undefined),.....	6,532
Mohammedans,.....	299
Confucians, <i>etc.</i> ,.....	3,884
Other religions,.....	1,719
Object,.....	6,940
Not stated,.....	8,046
Total,.....	320,431



The item in the above list "Other religions" includes the following as returned:

Agnostics,
Atheists,
Believers in Christ,
Buddhists,
Calvinists,
Christadelphians,
Christians,
Christ's Chapel,
Christian Israelites,
Christian Socialists,
Church of God,
Cosmopolitans,
Deists,
Evangelists,
Exclusive Brethren,
Free Church,
Free Methodists,
Freethinkers,
Followers of Christ,
Gospel Meetings,
Greek Church,
Infidels,
Maronites,
Memnonists,
Moravians,
Mormons,
Naturalists,
Orthodox,
Others (indefinite),
Pagans,
Panteists,
Plymouth Brethren,
Rationalists,
Reformers,
Secularists,
Seventh-day Adventists,
Shaker,
Shintoists,
Spiritualists,
Theosophists,
Town (City) Mission,
Welsh Church,
Huguenot,
Hussite,

Zoroastrians,
Zwinglian,

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About 64 roads to the other world. You see how healthy the religious atmosphere is. Anything can live in it. Agnostics, Atheists, Freethinkers, Infidels, Mormons, Pagans, Indefinites they are all there. And all the big sects of the world can do more than merely live in it: they can spread, flourish, prosper. All except the Spiritualists and the Theosophists. That is the most curious feature of this curious table. What is the matter with the specter? Why do they puff him away? He is a welcome toy everywhere else in the world.

CHAPTER XIX.

Pity is for the living, Envy is for the dead.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

The successor of the sheet-iron hamlet of the mangrove marshes has that other Australian specialty, the Botanical Gardens. We cannot have these paradises. The best we could do would be to cover a vast acreage under glass and apply steam heat. But it would be inadequate, the lacks would still be so great: the confined sense, the sense of suffocation, the atmospheric dimness, the sweaty heat—these would all be there, in place of the Australian openness to the sky, the sunshine and the breeze. Whatever will grow under glass with us will flourish rampantly out of doors in Australia. —[The greatest heat in Victoria, that there is an authoritative record of, was at Sandhurst, in January, 1862. The thermometer then registered 117 degrees in the shade. In January, 1880, the heat at Adelaide, South Australia, was 172 degrees in the sun.]

When the white man came the continent was nearly as poor, in variety of vegetation, as the desert of Sahara; now it has everything that grows on the earth. In fact, not Australia only, but all Australasia has levied tribute upon the flora of the rest of the world; and wherever one goes the results appear, in gardens private and public, in the woodsy walls of the highways, and in even the forests. If you see a curious or beautiful tree or bush or flower, and ask about it, the people, answering, usually name a foreign country as the place of its origin—India, Africa, Japan, China, England, America, Java, Sumatra, New Guinea, Polynesia, and so on.

In the Zoological Gardens of Adelaide I saw the only laughing jackass that ever showed any disposition to be courteous to me. This one opened his head wide and laughed like a demon; or like a maniac who was consumed with humorous scorn over a cheap and degraded pun. It was a very human laugh. If he had been out of sight I could have believed that the laughter came from a man. It is an odd-looking bird, with a head and beak that are much too large for its body. In time man will exterminate the rest of the wild creatures of Australia, but this one will probably survive, for man is his friend and lets him alone. Man always has a good reason for his charities towards wild things,

human or animal when he has any. In this case the bird is spared because he kills snakes. If L. J. he will not kill all of them.

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In that garden I also saw the wild Australian dog—the dingo. He was a beautiful creature—shapely, graceful, a little wolfish in some of his aspects, but with a most friendly eye and sociable disposition. The dingo is not an importation; he was present in great force when the whites first came to the continent. It may be that he is the oldest dog in the universe; his origin, his descent, the place where his ancestors first appeared, are as unknown and as untraceable as are the camel's. He is the most precious dog in the world, for he does not bark. But in an evil hour he got to raiding the sheep-runs to appease his hunger, and that sealed his doom. He is hunted, now, just as if he were a wolf. He has been sentenced to extermination, and the sentence will be carried out. This is all right, and not objectionable. The world was made for man—the white man.

South Australia is confusingly named. All of the colonies have a southern exposure except one—Queensland. Properly speaking, South Australia is middle Australia. It extends straight up through the center of the continent like the middle board in a center-table. It is 2,000 miles high, from south to north, and about a third as wide. A wee little spot down in its southeastern corner contains eight or nine-tenths of its population; the other one or two-tenths are elsewhere—as elsewhere as they could be in the United States with all the country between Denver and Chicago, and Canada and the Gulf of Mexico to scatter over. There is plenty of room.

A telegraph line stretches straight up north through that 2,000 miles of wilderness and desert from Adelaide to Port Darwin on the edge of the upper ocean. South Australia built the line; and did it in 1871-2 when her population numbered only 185,000. It was a great work; for there were no roads, no paths; 1,300 miles of the route had been traversed but once before by white men; provisions, wire, and poles had to be carried over immense stretches of desert; wells had to be dug along the route to supply the men and cattle with water.

A cable had been previously laid from Port Darwin to Java and thence to India, and there was telegraphic communication with England from India. And so, if Adelaide could make connection with Port Darwin it meant connection with the whole world. The enterprise succeeded. One could watch the London markets daily, now; the profit to the wool-growers of Australia was instant and enormous.

A telegram from Melbourne to San Francisco covers approximately 20,000 miles—the equivalent of five-sixths of the way around the globe. It has to halt along the way a good many times and be repeated; still, but little time is lost. These halts, and the distances between them, are here tabulated.—[From "Round the Empire." (George R. Parkin), all but the last two.]

Miles.

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Melbourne-Mount Gambier,.....	300
Mount Gambier-Adelaide,.....	270
Adelaide-Port Augusta,.....	200
Port Augusta-Alice Springs...	1,036
Alice Springs-Port Darwin,....	898
Port Darwin-Banjoewangie,...	1,150
Banjoewangie-Batavia,.....	480
Batavia-Singapore,.....	553
Singapore-Penang,.....	399
Penang-Madras,.....	1,280
Madras-Bombay,.....	650
Bombay-Aden,.....	1,662
Aden-Suez,.....	1,346
Suez-Alexandria,.....	224
Alexandria-Malta,.....	828
Malta-Gibraltar,.....	1,008
Gibraltar-Falmouth,.....	1,061
Falmouth-London,.....	350
London-New York,.....	2,500
New York-San Francisco,.....	3,500

I was in Adelaide again, some months later, and saw the multitudes gather in the neighboring city of Glenelg to commemorate the Reading of the Proclamation—in 1836—which founded the Province. If I have at any time called it a Colony, I withdraw the discourtesy. It is not a Colony, it is a Province; and officially so. Moreover, it is the only one so named in Australasia. There was great enthusiasm; it was the Province's national holiday, its Fourth of July, so to speak. It is the pre-eminent holiday; and that is saying much, in a country where they seem to have a most un-English mania for holidays. Mainly they are workingmen's holidays; for in South Australia the workingman is sovereign; his vote is the desire of the politician—indeed, it is the very breath of the politician's being; the parliament exists to deliver the will of the workingman, and the government exists to execute it. The workingman is a great power everywhere in Australia, but South Australia is his paradise. He has had a hard time in this world, and has earned a paradise. I am glad he has found it. The holidays there are frequent enough to be bewildering to the stranger. I tried to get the hang of the system, but was not able to do it.

You have seen that the Province is tolerant, religious-wise. It is so politically, also. One of the speakers at the Commemoration banquet—the Minister of Public Works—was an American, born and reared in New England. There is nothing narrow about the

Province, politically, or in any other way that I know of. Sixty-four religions and a Yankee cabinet minister. No amount of horse-racing can damn this community.

The mean temperature of the Province is 62 deg. The death-rate is 13 in the 1,000—about half what it is in the city of New York, I should think, and New York is a healthy city. Thirteen is the death-rate for the average citizen of the Province, but there seems to be no death-rate for the old people. There were people at the Commemoration banquet who could remember Cromwell. There were six of them. These Old Settlers had all been present at the original Reading of the Proclamation, in 1536. They showed signs of the blightings and blastings of time, in their outward aspect, but they were young within; young

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and cheerful, and ready to talk; ready to talk, and talk all you wanted; in their turn, and out of it. They were down for six speeches, and they made 42. The governor and the cabinet and the mayor were down for 42 speeches, and they made 6. They have splendid grit, the Old Settlers, splendid staying power. But they do not hear well, and when they see the mayor going through motions which they recognize as the introducing of a speaker, they think they are the one, and they all get up together, and begin to respond, in the most animated way; and the more the mayor gesticulates, and shouts "Sit down! Sit down!" the more they take it for applause, and the more excited and reminiscent and enthusiastic they get; and next, when they see the whole house laughing and crying, three of them think it is about the bitter old-time hardships they are describing, and the other three think the laughter is caused by the jokes they have been uncorking—jokes of the vintage of 1836—and then the way they do go on! And finally when ushers come and plead, and beg, and gently and reverently crowd them down into their seats, they say, "Oh, I'm not tired—I could bang along a week!" and they sit there looking simple and childlike, and gentle, and proud of their oratory, and wholly unconscious of what is going on at the other end of the room. And so one of the great dignitaries gets a chance, and begins his carefully prepared speech, impressively and with solemnity—

"When we, now great and prosperous and powerful, bow our heads in reverent wonder in the contemplation of those sublimities of energy, of wisdom, of forethought, of——"

Up come the immortal six again, in a body, with a joyous "Hey, I've thought of another one!" and at it they go, with might and main, hearing not a whisper of the pandemonium that salutes them, but taking all the visible violences for applause, as before, and hammering joyously away till the imploring ushers pray them into their seats again. And a pity, too; for those lovely old boys did so enjoy living their heroic youth over, in these days of their honored antiquity; and certainly the things they had to tell were usually worth the telling and the hearing.

It was a stirring spectacle; stirring in more ways than one, for it was amazingly funny, and at the same time deeply pathetic; for they had seen so much, these time-worn veterans, and had suffered so much; and had built so strongly and well, and laid the foundations of their commonwealth so deep, in liberty and tolerance; and had lived to see the structure rise to such state and dignity and hear themselves so praised for honorable work.

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One of these old gentlemen told me some things of interest afterward; things about the aboriginals, mainly. He thought them intelligent —remarkably so in some directions— and he said that along with their unpleasant qualities they had some exceedingly good ones; and he considered it a great pity that the race had died out. He instanced their invention of the boomerang and the “weet-weet” as evidences of their brightness; and as another evidence of it he said he had never seen a white man who had cleverness enough to learn to do the miracles with those two toys that the aboriginals achieved. He said that even the smartest whites had been obliged to confess that they could not learn the trick of the boomerang in perfection; that it had possibilities which they could not master. The white man could not control its motions, could not make it obey him; but the aboriginal could. He told me some wonderful things—some almost incredible things—which he had seen the blacks do with the boomerang and the weet-weet. They have been confirmed to me since by other early settlers and by trustworthy books.

It is contended—and may be said to be conceded—that the boomerang was known to certain savage tribes in Europe in Roman times. In support of this, Virgil and two other Roman poets are quoted. It is also contended that it was known to the ancient Egyptians.

One of two things either some one with is then apparent: a boomerang arrived in Australia in the days of antiquity before European knowledge of the thing had been lost, or the Australian aboriginal reinvented it. It will take some time to find out which of these two propositions is the fact. But there is no hurry.