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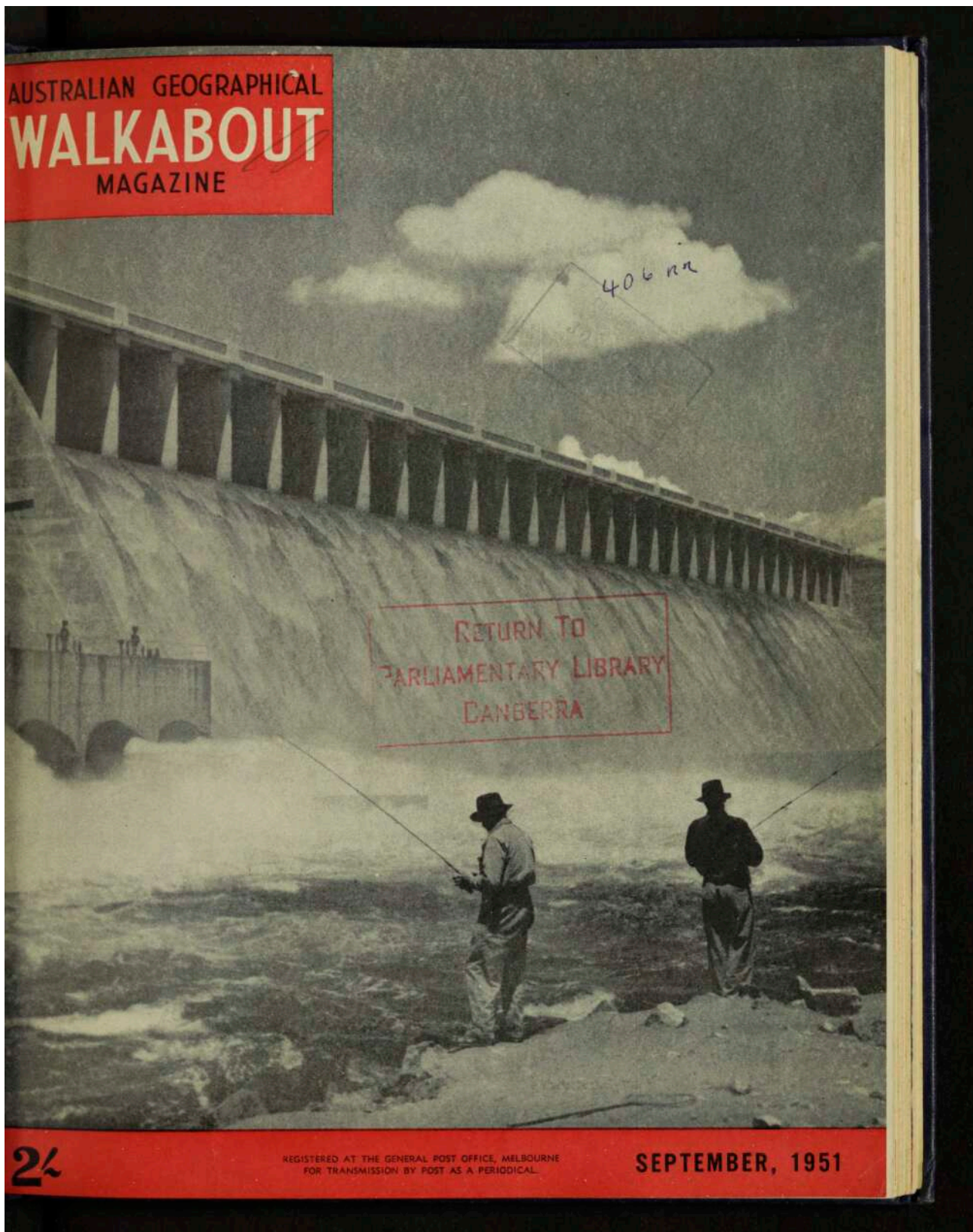
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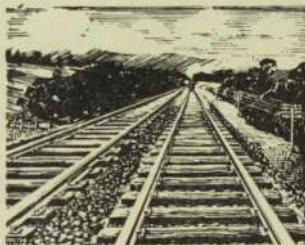
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WALKABOUT, September 1st, 1951

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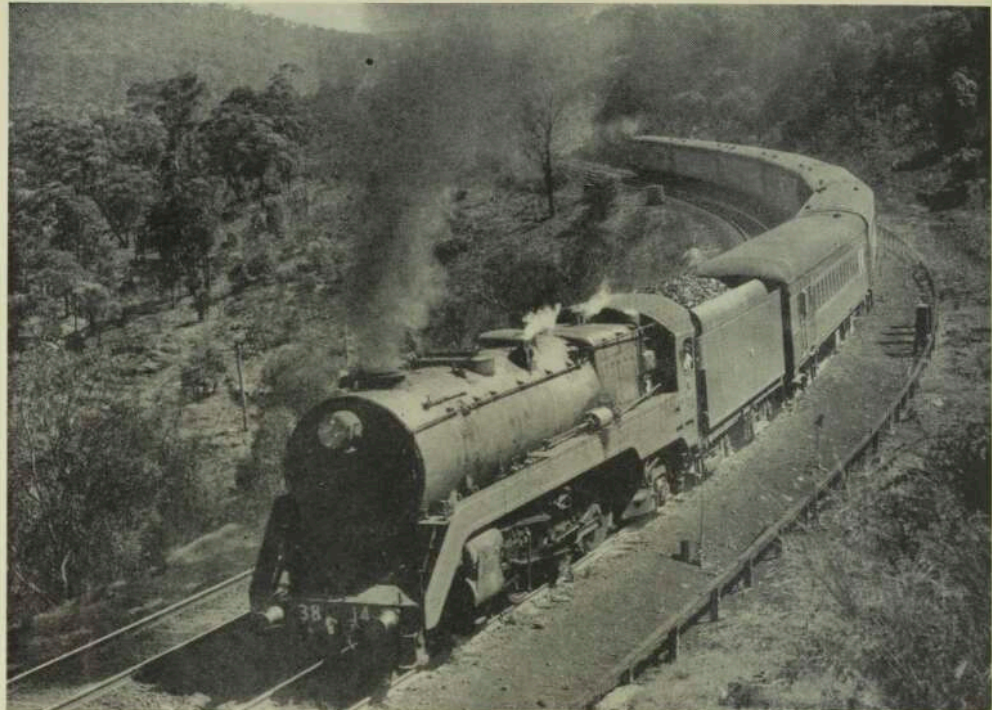
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W. A. ANDERSON,
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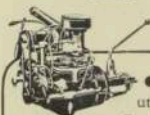
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5

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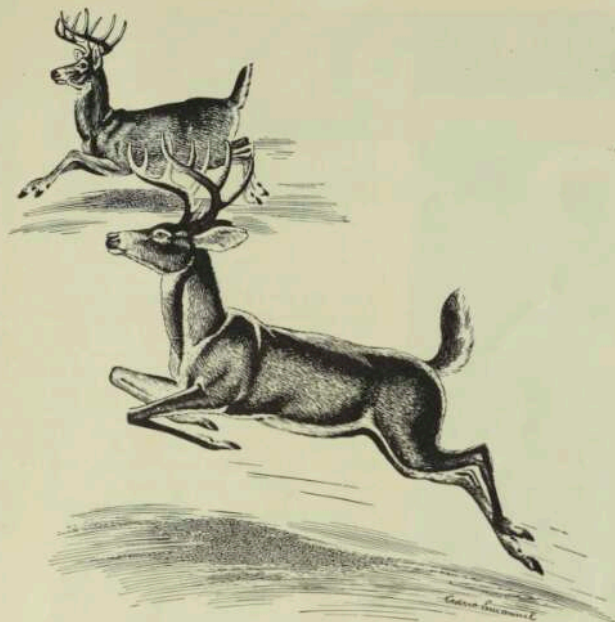
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OUR AUTHORS' PAGE



PAUL MCGUIRE

PAUL MCGUIRE is one of those Australians who seem much better known abroad than at home. The other day I asked in three local bookshops for his book *Freedom for the Brave*. None had it in stock. Yet this book drew a full-page editorial from *Life*. *Time* made a close analysis of it, not in its Books section, but under International News. *The New York Herald Tribune* gave it the front page of its Book Review. Ross Hoffman called it "a wise and noble utterance . . . what Burke himself would have said to our perverse generation that has closed its mind to the principles of liberty." Richard McDonagh, speaking over the National Broadcasting Corporation Networks, said, "I'd like to see a full-dress United Nations debate on this book, and I wish it could be made mandatory reading for every member of Congress."

McGuire has written twenty-five books. He has been translated into German, French, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Hungarian and Danish. Within the last few months fine editions of his *Australian Journey* have appeared in the German and Dutch languages. This book, first done in 1938, has since been revised four times to meet a continuing demand; it has appeared in six separate formats in the English language alone.

McGuire is a South Australian, son of a one-time Commissioner of Railways there. Five of his brothers served in War I, and three were killed in action. He served in War II with the Royal Aus-

tralian Naval Volunteer Reserve, in which he is now Lieutenant-Commander.

He was educated at the Christian Brothers' College in Adelaide and at the University of Adelaide, where he was Tinline Scholar in History. He married Frances Margaret Cheadle, who has made her own contributions to Australian letters. They collaborated in *The Price of Admiralty*, a book built about the service in War II of H.M.A.S. *Parramatta* and her ship's company. Mrs. McGuire later wrote *The Royal Australian Navy*, a comprehensive survey of the R.A.N. in its organization as well as its history. Her *Twelve Tales of the Life and Adventures of St. Imaginus* has been a very successful book in both England and America.

The McGuires were much abroad during the late twenties and through the thirties. Both have lectured in the United States. Paul McGuire has made five coast-to-coast tours, speaking in fifty cities or more on each tour, and to audiences of up to 20,000 people. In the three years before the war he was in thirty-five countries as a special correspondent for various papers. During the Spanish Civil War he was a member of the Duke of Wellington's Committee for Relief Work in Spain; and he was largely responsible for restoring thousands of children to their homes and families. Many years earlier, while still a university student, he had helped to organize in Australia the Save the Children Fund for relief amongst Russian children in the famines following War I and the Revolution.

His first book appeared in 1931. His list includes fiction, verse, literary criticism, historical studies, travel books. There is a certain pattern evident in the four books by which he is probably best known. The first, *Australian Journey*, is a highly personal response to his own country: to its history, people and landscape, to its political and social and moral issues and problems. The second is *Westward the Course*, mostly written while he was moving about the Pacific, Indonesia and Malaya during 1940 and 1941. It too surveys history, landscape, peoples and their problems in our part of the world. It appeared in the United States almost as the Pacific War began, and naturally drew more than ordinary attention.

The war in the Pacific abruptly interrupted McGuire's writing. But in May 1945 he was demobilized from the Navy and went to Europe as a Special Correspondent for the Melbourne *Argus*. He was in Germany for some time in 1945 and made a round of most European countries west of the Curtain. He attended the first meetings of the United Nations in London and at Lake Success; and in 1946-7 he made another lecture-tour of the United States.

In 1947 he began work on what are probably his two major books. *The Three Corners of the World* (it was published

in the United States as *Experiment in World Order*) is a study of the development of the British Empire and Commonwealth. Its approach is historical; but it advances to a consideration of our present problems and makes proposals for new means and methods of collaboration amongst the Commonwealth countries and between the Commonwealth and the free peoples generally. It was primarily because of these proposals, we may assume, that McGuire was invited to act as an adviser at the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in January, 1951. In his Milne Memorial Lecture last year our Prime Minister had said that his own views on Commonwealth relations were very much in line with those proposed by McGuire in "his recent brilliant books." Even *The Chicago Tribune* responded, not too grudgingly, to the book's "argument of Empire."

Freedom for the Brave is a study of world politics, and more: it is, as *The New York Times* said, "a challenge to the living," written, Paul Hallett holds, "with the knowledge and perspective of a Toynbee and the grasp of principle of a Burke."

These four books thus represent the movement of McGuire's mind from Australia itself to the extending contexts in which Australians must live and work: the Pacific and South-East Asia, the British Commonwealth and the world at large. In all these books Australia remains his theme. And his abiding passion for his own place and people appears again in the work to which he returns whenever time and fortune make the opportunities. For years he has been gathering and organizing the material for a history of the Australian people: of who came here and when, and how, and why; of the growth of our economy and our institutions; of the movements of people out across the wide, brown land; of the making of our roads and railways, of our houses, villages, towns and cities.

In his house on the top of Mt. Lofty, above Adelaide (our photograph was taken in his garden there), McGuire has rooms full of notebooks, files and Australiana, all gathered towards this tremendous job. "I expect," he said the other day, "to get what I call by-product books as well as the major piece. Some themes call urgently for special treatment. They just pop out of the files. An essay on the Australian Theatre has already been published by the Oxford University Press. A book on the old Australian inns is now in the press. It just had to be written. The old inns played, in the development of our social economy, a larger part even than the inns of England's history. Australian transport is another theme that needs its book. And Australian housing, Australian education, Australian folklore. And dozens of others. We'll get round to them, I hope, in time . . . if the time will let us. But a working Australian author has to think of other markets. This

all has to be pretty much a labour of love. We are still, as a people . . . as a book-buying people, certainly too indifferent to our own backgrounds and traditions and to the life and labours of our fathers. Still, we'll grow up some day, grow up sufficiently to see that a people's history is its memory and that those who ignore their past cannot understand the present or plan for the future. Our history is the mirror in which we can see ourselves, our values, habits, vices, virtues. The job of the historian here is to raise that mirror, and to trust that sooner or later he'll have his effect."

Paul McGuire was honoured by His Majesty the King in the New Year, when he was made Companion of the Order of the British Empire for his services to the British Commonwealth and to literature.

—Charles H. Holmes.

GREAT BARRIER REEF

by William J. Dakin

So much has already been written on the Great Barrier Reef that one is apt to be rather blasé about any new book in this well-trodden field. However, it's impossible to be blasé about Professor Dakin's recent work, because it combines the best features of the scientific and of the popular books that have been written about the Barrier in the past.

It is not generally known that Professor Dakin wrote his book during the closing stages of the lengthy and agonising illness that eventually led to his death; such was his indomitable spirit that this work seems to have gained in stature from the almost impossible circumstances surrounding its birth.

Here we find the same easy conversational style that characterises all of his popular writings, the intense appreciation of beauty, and the rare gift of imparting scientific knowledge in an unobtrusive and entertaining way.

The visitor (new or veteran) to the Barrier, who reads this book, will see the world of corals and coral reefs through different eyes—those indeed of a man who was not only a world figure in zoology, but who had the gift of stimulating in others his abiding love for the sea and its creatures.

A. N. COLEFAX,

Senior Lecturer in Zoology, University of Sydney.

AUSTRALIAN HANDBOOK NEW EDITION

A reprint (eighth edition) is now available with up-to-date figures. Popularly known as the "Blue Book", this publication is a compendium of authoritative information on the geography, history, government, industry, trade and social constitution of Australia. The book comprises 120 pages, size 9½ in. x 7 in., and is profusely illustrated with photographs and maps.

Price, 5/-, including postage within Australia. The book can only be purchased direct from the Australian National Publicity Association, Railway Building, Flinders Street, Melbourne, or Endeavour House, 33 Macquarie Place, Sydney.

On receipt of a remittance for the amount involved, the book will be forwarded by post enclosed in a stout mailing carton.

AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHICAL WALKABOUT MAGAZINE

The title, "Walkabout", has an "age-old" background and signifies a racial characteristic of the Australian aboriginal who is always on the move. And so, month by month, through the medium of pen and picture, this journal will take you on a great "walkabout" throughout Australia and the islands of the South-west Pacific.

"Walkabout" is the journal of the Australian Geographical Society, an educational and scientific organization formed with the object of promoting geographical knowledge of Australia and adjoining islands.

The Honorary Board of the Society comprises Sir Harold Clapp, K.B.E., Sir Charles Lloyd Jones, K.B., T. J. Hartigan, Esq., C.M.G., Sir Leslie Morshead, K.C.B., K.B.E., C.M.G., D.S.O., Major G. B. Walker, M.C., R. G. Wishart, Esq.

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(Photo: J. Street)

COVER PHOTOGRAPH
★ Hume Dam Across The River Murray
Near Albury.

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No. 9

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CHARLES H. HOLMES,
Managing Editor.

FIFTY YEARS OF FEDERATION —AND THE AUSTRALIAN WAY OF LIFE

By Dr. W. E. H. STANNER

*Reader in Comparative Social Institutions, the Australian
National University*

FEDERATION gave us national unity in the political sphere, but no mere political instrument, however disciplined, however visionary, could hope to take the measure of the immense social changes then in motion.

We tend now to idealize 1900 as an age of calm, but it was not really so. This is our version of the American's "moonlight and magnolia" myth of the old South. The world as a whole in 1900 was moving close to one of the great watersheds of history, in faith, art, science, politics and human relations.

The founders of Federation did not see this clearly, nor could they reasonably have been expected to do so. What sort of world will it be in 1960? None of us can say. Nor could they in 1900 see that there were landslides already moving on higher country in the distance.

I need not speak of how, within twenty years, four Empires collapsed and, within fifty, seven Empires and innumerable thrones; or of how the "age of freedom" passed out of existence elsewhere, leaving us, perhaps, freest of all; or of how changes that would then have seemed inconceivable swept over the spirit, life and works of universal man.

The Australians of 1900 assumed, reasonably for their day, if not a wholly constant world (for they believed passionately in "progress"), at least a world of small-scale changes on a straight line of transition, a world in which men, money, goods, ideas and spirit would remain universally free. They also assumed an integral Australian "way of life" unfolding itself, but keeping its fundamental character intact. You may see all this fairly plainly in the complacent, untortured art of this middle period; in the literature that now seems romantically idealistic; in the rosy prophecies of the leading statesmen; in the blind optimism of the general outlook.

Many of our forefathers' expectations, as we know to our cost, were not fulfilled. Absolute structural changes have altered, almost unrecognizably, the outlook and organization of the world, the foci of international power, and even some of the principles of world organization. What could Bikini and Buchenwald have signi-

fied in 1900? The Federal machinery, then designed by the best minds in Australia, has creaked badly for some time. Who could then have imagined a Commonwealth reducing the States almost to impotence, and demanding, as of right, ever-increasing powers that lead to the need for yet other powers? And the Australian way of life has altered subtly, in spirit and aims, if not in its formed institutions. Could anyone then have imagined a generation of Australian children who would forget the meaning of Anzac, or prefer Superman to Thunderbolt and Robin Hood? Or a section of adult Australians owing a secret allegiance to a foreign political authority?

This is an enormous topic, and I have space to say only a few leading things. Let us begin by being clear about what the problem is.

II

There is a fine, proud, confident ring about the phrase "the Australian way of life." I often wish I could be quite certain what it means, and that it means what most people seem to think. When we use it, we usually idealize in a very human, but misleading, way. I imagine we think first of the externals, the physical circumstances, of Australian life: our golden climate, our scenic grandeur, our open skies, all those natural glories which give an unmistakable tang and zest to the personal and social style of life we have worked out. From these beginnings our mind's eye ranges over our soaring skylines, our almost opulent wealth, our high material standards, our fields of grain, our legions of sheep and cattle, our shops and warehouses crammed with good things and, depending on our personal experiences and interests, a hundred other parts of our civilization.

But these, after all, are externals, no more. In themselves they are not a "way of life." If they were all, it might be difficult to point to anything truly characteristic of Australia. We mean a great deal more by the phrase than can be expressed in visual and sensory impressions, in statistics of wealth, in economic ratios of employment, savings and prices, in aggre-



The Opening of the First Commonwealth Parliament, after the painting by Tom Roberts, which is now in St. James Palace, London. (Australian Official Photograph.)

gates of amusement, sport, education and livelihood.

The phrase is a piece of shorthand in which we try to assess the final balance of our history, our struggle and our achievement, a something much deeper than words can depict. It suggests a characteristically Australian style of outlook, conduct and character, setting us apart from others, and based in some way on inner principle, as true of the coal-belt life of Greta and Balgownie as of life on the western plains at Cloncurry or Deniliquin.

We imagine we see this inner principle running like a golden thread of consis-



tency through everything important that we think or do. We imagine we see some kind of "pattern" formed by the beliefs we hold most widely in common, by the common behaviour and purposes shared most widely by neighbour and neighbour. We link all this with the freedom, the security, the justice and the individualism of life in this sunburned, muscular continent, and we say, "This is our way of life."

By abstracting, we generalize a "pattern"; by idealizing, we gloss over an immensely complex reality; by speaking of "the Australian way of life" we hold before our mind's eye a symbol, equating what is and what ought to be. How true is it all?

The trouble about most of the grand

abstractions that people develop in this way is just this: they make imaginary unities out of things that may, in fact, be confused, incoherent or even self-contradictory. It is often nearly impossible to give them any precise meaning in terms of the facts they are supposed to reflect. They are slogans in which myth, fable and fact are all intermixed. All nations, all groups, all social movements need them. This is part of the psychological and social nature of man. The two most important questions to ask about them are these. What is the quality of the common will behind them, seeking to make them become, or hold, true? Are the expectations they express valid, that is, attainable and durable in the condition's ruling in the world of reality?

III

The idealized version of the Australian "way of life" is certainly difficult to reconcile, at the moment, with the actuality of daily experience. Our life today seems to be suspended between two dimensions.

One dimension shows us turmoil, material discomforts, antagonism of group against group, and divisions of mind to such a degree that, if we think in terms of this dimension alone, disunity rather than unity seems to be the dominant theme of our way of life.

The other dimension shows us one of the world's highest living standards, with all that it implies for healthy, super-abundant vitality, leisure and probing intellectual experiment; one of the world's highest educational standards, with all

that it implies for sturdy self-respect and self-confidence; freedom of thought, assembly, speech and worship, with all that they imply for personal dignity, individual liberty and group autonomy, especially when guaranteed by constitution; incorruptible processes of law, democratic processes of election, and legal restraints on arbitrary authority, with all that they imply for men's rights to make of their own lives what they will.

The second "dimension" might be thought of, I suggest, as the provenly valid achievements of the Australian way of life, unfolding within traditional channels and forms provided by a basic British type of society. No other civilization in to-day's world has finer things to show. The first "dimension" might be thought of as all the strong egotism and vitalities, from the idealistic to the blindly selfish, pressing against the established forms an unsystematic array of new ideas and aims for which validity is claimed or demanded. Half of them are plainly invalid, but are so urgent and egotistic that they can easily produce a catastrophic instability. In all these we share a now universal condition.

Since 1900, Australian development has by no means been wholly under our own control, and less so now than then. It has become, in a very unselfconscious way, broadly what we may have wanted it to become, but the options were at times narrow. Several depressions, two world wars, and compulsive world movements of a score of kinds narrowed our area and right of choice and limited our principles of choice. The events of history thus exercised a very large measure of compulsion. But roughly speaking, we now witness a "balance" between two sets of "forces": the forces of our tradition, marking out a broad path we wished and tried to take; and the forces of new or changed ideas and aims, persuading this section or that away to one side of, or off, that part of the path left clear by history and tradition for voluntary choice.

Whatever the victors of changes in our way of life may have been in detail, we must clearly give an important place to the extent which we have "internalized" ideas and aims that, in 1900, were still unknown, or were still so foreign and uncongenial as to be without influence. Many of them are strange, experimental, spiritual or ideological "isms" that were part of the turbulence already arising in the world of 1900. They range from the worship of the Welfare State to abstract art; from dialectical materialism to autonomous ethics; from the class war to the *Führer Prinzip*; from Freudianism to the idealism of world brotherhood.

We see this most sharply, perhaps, if we consider how meaningless in 1900 would have been the tawdry "philosophies" of Fascism and Communism; the perverted moralism of the Fifth Column; the white-anting of political stability by "scientifically" planned propaganda. I

choose these illustrations because they are more dramatically familiar than others equally important, but many fashions of thought other than political fashions have changed.

We still possess the characteristically British equipment of civilization that we had fifty years ago. In the same way as

the streets, buildings and general landscape are identical with, or are recognizably, those of 1900, so too are the main institutions within which we live. But new ways of thought are nibbling at their edges. A great effort is needed to bring the constructive, destructive and obstructive forces of the day into some



"We might proudly point to a wilderness conquered in 150 years." (Reproduction of a section of the painting "Pioneers", by Frederick McCubbin, by courtesy of the Trustees, National Gallery, Melbourne.)

kind of coherence with a magnificent tradition which, whatever its faults, is the depository of the authentic insights of many centuries.

IV

To-day it is unmistakably true that in nearly every field of Australian life, in religion, politics, economics, industry—even in art, philosophy and science—if we examine them closely—great gulfs exist between different sections of the community in respect of their beliefs, actions and purposes.

It is no longer true, for example, that we are in any really deep sense a Christian people. In a sense, we never were, but, to-day, larger numbers profess a merely nominal Christianity, or are almost entirely faithless. The religious conformity is certainly much weaker than in 1900. One consequence is that the secularism, materialism and hedonism, which were supposed to be the "rational" way out of earlier social problems, are helping to produce a general cynicism and unrest destructive of all prospects of social stability. Once the "tone-setting" elements of a community lose their "values" an automatic regression sets in throughout the wider community. The search for new "values" (our present phase) must necessarily be confused and disorderly, with a babel of conflicting counsels.

Many would think it doubtful whether, strictly speaking, we are any longer a wholly democratic community, except by a precarious balance. A certain section of the Australian community clearly yearns for a regimented form of society as a solution of their worries; another section is busy devising ways and means to that end; another yawns with boredom over the whole issue. Some plead with Government to carry burdens they wish to evade as individuals; others are so confused that they defend in the name of "democracy" actions which logically, and in some cases by intention, must cut the throat of democracy; yet others plead that "freedom" is really slavery, and that totalitarianism is really "democracy".

We should find it hard to deny the increasing unrest in industry; the growing cynicism and lack of altruism in much of our politics; the disrespect for dignity and for precise standards of honour in public life; the weakened regard for sexual conventions; the instability of marriage; the unprincipled activity of economic pressure groups.

Is the black market in cars, cement and butter part of the Australian way of life? Why, no, most of us would say. Is a devoted obedience to law? Why, yes. Is a steady regard for the general public interest? Why, yes. Yet the facts are against us. We have a black market; our industrial law is almost daily brought into contempt; and we are all squeezed by sectional pressure groups.

All these unpleasantnesses could be merely temporary, and we would all differ



"... our open skies"

in estimates of their importance and extent. My intentions in discussing them so frankly is to suggest the reality of a danger. The idealistic thoughtless conception of "an Australian way of life" can easily become a fable, blinding us to unpleasantness that could become permanent unless a sternly severe movement against them sets in. National slogans which are no more than grand abstractions, emptied of all their references to reality, are simply a means of self-delusion. There are many elements of life in 1951 that no one in 1900 "wanted",

but the seeds were then sprouting. The first "dimension" I referred to contains some ugly growths already above ground. With another generation of unchecked growth they will make our social problems much greater than our problems of today are compared with those of 1900.

V

Before Australia had anything that could properly be called a "history" it had a tradition, a British tradition. From it we took three things.

The first was a certain kind of "out-

look." One might think of it as the sum of the "idea-systems" widely recognized as characteristically British; ranging from the conceptions of common law to the notion of what good poetry was; from the idea of sportsmanship to that of Parliamentary democracy; from the concept of the "gentleman" to the understanding of empirical science; from established decencies in the use of power to the sanctity of a man's home.

The second was a kind of structural "framework" underlying social life: the forms of all our social groups, family, church and Parliament among them.

The third, putting it broadly, was familiar social habit, that is, our "institutions," the valued aims and patterns of individual and group behaviour in every important field of life.

Outlook, group-styles and institutional behaviour together made up a basic "way of life" too tough and ancient to be broken even by the harshness of our beginnings in a strange continent. This was the ground-pattern on which we put a characteristically Australian overlay. But it is not easy to say what is "characteristically Australian." Our life is still British wholecloth, so to speak, and though the warp-threads may have turned a little, they are still strong; we have only coloured and arranged the weft-threads a little differently.

For example, there is nothing yet corresponding to, say, Irish or American "custom," except for a few trivialities here and there. A new vocabulary, a style of accent, intonation, and pitch of speech; a certain something about our clothes and manners; a few food habits; a style of house; our strange, rather boorish habit of splitting into sex-groups at public and private functions—these do not actually rank as "custom," though they modify our total way of life slightly, and may do so more as time goes on.

The tradition is still dominant except, perhaps in the psychological and temperamental qualities we may have begun to show, and in the "philosophy" of life we have evolved almost without realizing it. But I would not be dogmatic about either.

We have kept parts of the tradition intact. We have developed other parts in ways not easily distinguishable from other British countries. And with some parts we have justifiably taken considerable but still rather inconclusive liberties.

Let me give some illustrations, all from the one field, say, Parliament.

Procedures at Canberra and Westminster are virtually identical. The area of everyday life now directly affected by Parliamentary edicts is in both cases approximately equal, but immensely wider than fifty years ago. However, the Commonwealth Parliament is not supreme in Australia (because of the terms of our Constitution) in the sense in which the Westminster Parliament is supreme in the United Kingdom.

This differentiation is the essence of the "Australianizing" process. We must accept it as an inevitable part of life expanding in new ways in new circumstances. It can develop some strange twists and turns, for social processes sometimes have a life of their own. We see this most clearly in new institutions evolved locally. Let me give an example familiar to everyone. The Commonwealth Public Service regulations were designed, among other things, for the purpose of preventing arbitrary political interference. They have been turned nearly inside out in use, so that a vested bureaucratic interest has been created that severely handicaps effective government. We are now widely affected by such unintended, unexpected consequences of our own experiments. Some promise to be discomforting, especially in our industrial relations. Nevertheless, Australian life, on the whole, testifies more to the enormous staying power of established British ways than it does to the strength of efforts to vary them. This is somewhat remarkable in view of the innumerable reasons, opportunities and pressures to veer away that we have experienced in Australia over 160 years.

What is most characteristically "Australian" is, I feel, mostly a result of two things. One is simply experimentalism in coping with new circumstances. The other is a deliberate throwing off of traditional British styles of customary self-restraint, prior to evolving new and firm distinctions, new forms, new outlooks, new institutions. We are, I believe, still rather in a "tween-stage". The old-style recognition of England as "home" seems to be dying fast. I have not myself heard the expression used for many years. But we have not actually yet attained an absolutely solid cultural ground of our own. We are slowly doing so, but, so far, we have loosened and experimented rather than created firm, viable new things proved and ennobled by use. One of our great difficulties is that we are now passing out of—I should say, we are well out of—a period of transition from relatively unitary ideals and homogeneous culture into a period of conflicting ideals and mixed, jangling schemes of life. Only the ignorant are confident of knowing exactly what to do. The problem is one of not quite knowing with what (or how) to replace things against which, for good reasons, we revolted because of new circumstances. The old standards are rejected: the good new ones aren't yet here. There is always a risk of falling between two stools. Have not the ageing spinsters of Manchester a saying: "clogs wouldn't do and shoes wouldn't come?" We are entering a period when our national character will be severely tested.

People with an eye for "character" noted certain things about us a long time ago. By the middle 19th century someone remarked that in Australia Jack was

not only as good as his master—he was twice as good. This was understandable exaggeration. We had good reason to develop a dislike of special rank or status, of superior castes or classes, of inherited inequities of any kind that diminished the worth or lessened the dignity of the individual. Our early viewpoint was a spiritual (and very practical) revolt against the inherited status ideology that was dying in Europe in the 18th century. But, in an unexpected way, this revolt became one of the roots of a problem of modern Australia. The trouble is that new status systems tend to arise on the ruins of old ones, and are not necessarily better, more just, or more genial. An old battle is now being fought all over again in a time of much confusion. Our attitudes and our factual situation are somewhat at cross-purposes.

This links up with some elements widely noted in the Australian "character." For example, Hancock, the distinguished historian, spoke recently of the "dualism" of the Australian character. He said that mixed up with great practicality, vitality, forcefulness, outspoken down-to-earthness, optimism and confidence, you find other qualities, a certain indolence, easy-goingness, carelessness. He linked this "dualism" with our rather slipshod philosophy of "near-enough," our lack of interest in and failure to understand first-class quality in many things. Almost as though, with one part of our mind, we were still living in the colonial days when anything went, since that was all there was there. So, today, we tolerate the "near enough," the second-rate, because "it will do," and because we have never known the first-rate. I have some doubts about all this. It is a large and complex subject, in which it is unwise to generalize and indiscreet to be aphoristic. I myself feel fairly sure that there is a certain psychological and sociological unity underlying qualities in us which, superficially, seem widely separated. Flowers and weeds can grow in the same garden if the gardener is inattentive. Among the "flowers" are the dashing military quality our troops have shown; our sometimes indiscriminate generosity; our vitality, energy, initiative and incurably optimistic experimentalism; the relative unimportance of status, class and rank among us; our passionate insistence on a man's right to be his own man and no one else's. Among the "weeds," perhaps, are that curious impulse in the Australian mob that prompts it to attack a struggling policeman; our rather unsatisfactory military discipline when no enemy is present; our impatient disposition to break the rules; our disinterest in quality in so many things; our philosophy of "near enough" and "that'll do"; our habit of depreciating our living leaders; our absurd desire to take the eminent down a peg; the strain of latent violence frequently to be noted in our speech and conduct.



★ "... this sunburned, muscular, continent."

Should we really call all this "dualism"? Might it not simply be a complicated expression of a single, basic quality in our make-up? We might perhaps think of all these things as the tangled outcome of a general impatience with restraint, and of a freedom allowing us to indulge that impatience high, wide and handsome.

We Australians quite clearly detest restraint of any kind, even the restraints inherent in the acceptance of high standards. In this respect we are, I think, suffering, not from a vice, but from the

defect of something which was once a virtue. And, strangely enough, many of the finest qualities of our way of life are the merits of our defects. On what tests can a passionate insistence on freedom be called "bad"? For a time, even an abuse of freedom can have a golden charm.

We can say only this. The test of any social ideal lies in its results in actual circumstances. Are we realizing "the Australian dream"? Think of the unpleasantnesses mentioned earlier.

It would require a very long list to

name all the restraints with which we are impatient, but, granting them all, it is not difficult to see how they give an outward appearance of "dualism," even if we feel none. From the beginning the majority of Australians never liked "sticky" social conventions, highfalutin manners, boasts or assumptions of special distinction ("skite," as we used to say). What men of British stock could put up with fixed social status, rank, or any form of arbitrary inequality amid the practical challenge of a raw new continent? We still detest the idea of a highly stratified society. We have never much admired pretensions of authority, eminence and special distinctions unless personally earned, sometimes not even then. From such beginnings, how could we? But, as I say, there is another side to these social distinctions: you either have them, or you get others, sometimes just as unpleasant. We have been slowly acquiring them in our new circumstances. A society stratified by new wealth and by the arbitrary use of power can be as unpleasant as a society with any other basis of stratification.

And there is another aspect, too. It has to do with the ability to look frankly at one's own position, however displeasing. I would call it simply a sense of reality.

We credit ourselves, for example, with "believing" in justice, freedom, equality and liberty. All of these, in one sense, might be called "philosophies of unrestraint" unless their interpretation is very disciplined. There also are some subtle differences in these matters, and they can easily become meaningless words if the actual circumstances of life are misread.

Justice, yes; but, unlike Shakespeare, some of us do not quite believe that the forces of society are such that they must be "both right and wrong . . . between whose endless jar, justice resides." Many of us want a one-way justice, always on our side, however shallowly we interpret our interests.

Freedom, yes; but we have had, so far, no compelling reason to realize that freedom is much more than freedom *from* something: it is also freedom *for*—what? More freedom? The mere absence of arbitrary restraint, expressed in a demand for unlimited freedom, can become the source of moral, psychological and social disaster.

Equality, yes; but many of us are not prepared to admit that an unstratified modern society, without any form of inequality, is just an impossibility. Unhappily, there is no reason whatever to suppose that a society of complete equality has ever existed, or could ever exist.

Liberty, yes; but many of us talk, often somewhat vacuously, of liberty with no apparent realization that we already possess it in a measure probably unequalled by any other country in history. Yet we demand more of it. To what end?

I am suggesting that many Australians hold a romantic conception of the possible nature of human society. We are impatient with restraint because we are impatient with reality, and, so far, by amazing luck, we have got away with it. I should think that three things are responsible. We were given a flying start by our British origins in all the substantial elements of justice, freedom, equality and liberty. The British navy gave us more than a century of absolute security to experiment in adapting traditional ideas and institutions to new circumstances. Our remarkable rise of material prosperity has dazzled us into a state of uncritical indifference towards confusions now manifestly arising in many aspects of Australian life.

With great wealth, security, and an astonishing degree of internal justice there is certainly no "logical" reason for the acute conflicts developing in Australia. Unless it is the "logic" of things which we prefer not to see, but which press irresistibly for recognition.

VI

Let me make one thing quite clear. Our way of life, however we might agree to describe it, is a miracle for this kind of world. The danger lies in thinking of it as "natural" and as likely to endure without a passionate determination to preserve and defend it. It is pure romanticism to suppose it can go on, automatically, by its own strength. Wealth without continued work; security without defence; freedom without self-discipline; liberty without self-restraint; justice without sacrifice—all these are romanticist ideals. All our achievements are valid, but not all our expectations.

What the "pattern" of the Australian "way of life" is at present, I for one do not profess to know. The fact is that no one has yet studied the "whole" or the "totality" at all carefully. Nor do I profess to know what our "way of life" will become. I can only say that some visible, very concrete trends seem to me singularly unpleasant, and that, as I said earlier, great effort is needed to bring the constructive, obstructive and destructive forces of the day into some kind of coherence with a magnificent tradition. It does not do, of course, to underestimate the common sense of our basic viewpoints, or the resilience and fundamental sanity of the Australian people. Social facts are always changing, and some deep things come to our rescue. There are already signs of a strong, perhaps a sufficiently strong, reaction against the loss of perspective, the illusions and the destructive exuberances of recent years.

I sometimes wonder what one of the great observers and philosophers of the human scene would say about modern Australia. We are too close to it all. We need the services of the wise traveller, the external observer, even the satirist. Some-

one, perhaps, like a de Tocqueville or a Lord Bryce, a Spengler or a Danilevsky, a Toynbee or a Schweitzer, even a Jean Paul Sartre, an Evelyn Waugh or a James Thurber. We might be both incredulous and furiously indignant at what they might say. Would we have the nerve to invite them as guests of the nation?

If some of these observers questioned us, we might proudly point to a wilderness conquered in 150 years, to all the magnificences of the second dimension. We might say: "All these in so short a time, starting from nothing. Are these not matters for pride?"

Well, of course they are. I have said that, to me, Australian life is a miracle for this kind of world, and I mean precisely that. But a philosopher like Schweitzer might say: "You did not 'start from nothing.' You drew on the richness of British civilization, which had solved the main problems of human society long before Australia was settled. In the main you are enlarging their handiwork, but are you so sure you are perfecting it? Your present civilization seems to have a weak ethical basis. There seems to be little altruism left in your politics, little goodwill in your industry and social relationships. You have a strong will to live, but you seem driven hither and thither by shallow, selfish ideologies. You may have conquered a wilderness, but is there any point in doing so unless you exercise some control of your own moral dispositions?"

What I imagine any of these men might do would be to try to take in the full, broad vision of Australia as a whole. They would study our history and our traditions. They would look at the innumerable groups, sections and segments into which we break down. They would look at the interests round which we organize ourselves, the aims and values we are trying to realize, and the quality of the ideas and expectations which prompt us. Then they might ask some questions. Let me put them, first, in their most uncomfortable form, on the simple principle of avoiding self-complacency.

Why do you insist you are really "British at heart" when you seem so plainly to have abandoned that essential British principle—the supremacy of Parliament?

Precisely why do you make so much of the "right to strike" when there are 250,000 unfilled jobs? Are you quite sure that to call it a "right" exhausts its meaning?

Why are some of your Universities nearly bankrupt when you drink and gamble enough each week to give them security for ten years?

Can you compensate for internal hatreds by external acts of generosity or extravagant gestures of international goodwill?

Why do you picture yourselves to yourselves as a "young" people when

your society show so many signs of "old age": increasing internal disturbances; a galloping overdevelopment of urbanism; a strong taste for compulsory instead of voluntary social relations; a decline of faith; selfish sectionalism; and a derision of your forefathers' ideas simply because they are your forefathers' ideas?

Why do you find it so difficult to raise a defence force when you seem to agree that war is "probable"?

Are they fair questions? To find satisfying answers to them (satisfying, that is, to both sides) would not be easy.

Gloomy old Spengler (a notorious pessimist) might say: "Ah! You see! This is your Indian summer, not your youth; you are going straight into your spiritual winter, not to the Utopia you imagine. For, look, you have lost your spiritual intuition; you have only a scientific irreligion; you are soaking in materialism; your culture is becoming eclectic and cosmopolitan; you have no real feeling for tradition; you are over-urbanized; you have carried the cult of the metropolis too far; your small towns are bleak and seem to care nothing for the traveller; most of your hotels are vile; your new architecture is either boringly functional or gropingly experimental, and your old architecture just plain dull; your art is imitative and derivative, or restless and vaguely searching, not formative; you talk too much about the class-struggle while saying you have no classes; you talk too much about your rights and don't think enough of your duties; your pleasures are mainly sensual—sun, surf, drink, horses, dogs." And so on in a hundred details.

A de Tocqueville might say: "How rich, comfortable and sheltered your way of life is; but yours is not yet a really creative civilization. Why is there scarcely a name in Australian letters, drama, music, art, philosophy or science that could, with real conviction, be included among even the *less* eminent creative geniuses of this or the last century? Why is Australia still one of the most difficult countries in the world for talent, let alone genius, to succeed in? It is not just a matter of indiscriminate wealth, or misspent leisure, or any aridity of spirit; it is just huge blanks and emptinesses, touched here and there with the mark of the Philistine. You may disagree with me, but suppose I suggest that the great Australian desert is not in the 'dead centre'? That it lies in Toorak and Bellevue Hill."

What Thurber would write or draw I would give much to know. Perhaps a picture of an enormous Sacred Cow, named Full Employment of Cloud Cuckoo, around which everyone, including the Man from Snowy River, now stands with head reverently bared.

All that may seem a little hard, and we needn't believe it, but let us leave room in our minds for the thought that an An-



"... our soaring skylines"

drew Marvell, a Pope, a Hogarth, a Sinclair Lewis and a Thurber might legitimately say things of certain aspects of the Australian way of life that would not please us.

There are several points here. No civilization today, judged by universal standards, could make a better showing than Australia. But we may achieve wonders in material development, in physical standards, in political ingenuity, in military and scientific activity, and yet remain essentially uncreative in other cultural fields. Being "uncreative" means being incapable of, as well as being indifferent to, new insights, new outlooks, new possibilities of thought and living. Restlessness and discontent in these matters are things we should strive to keep. But there is also the question of our ability to take the real measure of existing or new prob-

lems in our style of life as it is. Inability might be due merely to complacency; or to a reactionary disinclination to throw off the handcuffs of ideas, slogans and principles which, if we would but look candidly at our experience, would show themselves as false; or to a romantic misconception that our society can be anything we want it to be, without great care or effort. This, I suggest, is our real weakness. We have an enormous vitality, but our standards of comparison have become vague, and we risk throwing away things we know are good for things we merely hope will be better.

VII

Sometimes, returning to this country from overseas, I feel almost as though a weight had fallen from my shoulders. The genial intimacy of Perth; the comforting

security of Adelaide; the solidity of Melbourne; the reassuring uproar of Sydney—all these seem to me almost like a benediction after the strain and anxiety of Europe, the racial hatreds of Africa, the turmoil and misery of Asia. I find myself saying: "This is a country without a real problem, tearing itself to pieces over third-rate problems." We have no racial divisions like America; no fanatical wars of faith like India; no explosive frontiers like the Balkans; no suppressed minorities like the old Austria; no inherited social castes like Spain; no distortion of the food economy like Great Britain. The truth is that there is simply not a first-rate problem here—as yet. We Australians just do not comprehend our fortune. How long can we hope to enjoy these very special, very sheltering, perhaps very temporary advantages?

The problems we are developing for ourselves are of other kinds than those that afflict many other countries. We have the "issue" of the Commonwealth v. the States, two mere forms we can do with what we will if we can read the problem of power aright; the "conflict" of rural and city interests, though neither can live without the other; a corrosive "dispute" of labour and capital, in which men carrying resentments of 1895, 1917 and 1931 try to assist the children of 1975 to revenge themselves on their fellows. From all these we are manufacturing some very real problems indeed, but none have yet reached that inveterate stage which many problems have reached in Europe, Asia and India.

I can only suggest to my countrymen that they lodge in their deepest minds the realization that Australian civilization, the product of so brief a period, is one of the real wonders of the earth. This may call forth a productive impulse that will help to settle, by goodwill and altruism, the always difficult issues of right and wrong. You need to have seen at first hand the conditions of others to perceive how great our fortune is, and how fragile is the barrier between us and some of their problems. It is not a matter for self-congratulation, smugness or complacency. It is, however, a challenge to have the courage always to look the Australian way of life in the face, and to see it, as it is, for what it is becoming. The actuality of the process of "becoming" correctly foreseen in 1900, was such that we might have avoided many pitfalls, had men's insight been great enough, had they taken less for granted.

It may well be that we are at a point of time in the development of the Australian way of life at which one of two epitaphs is being written. "They had freedom, but did not understand it," or "They had freedom, but were not blinded by the sun."

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Peanuts, Kingaroy district.

(Photo: Dept. of Agriculture and Stock.)

PEANUTS AT KINGAROY

By JOHN K. EWERS

KINGAROO, the natives called the place, meaning "the red ant".

It is not clear whether red ants were at any time more prolific thereabouts than elsewhere. But the name, anglicized to its present form, Kingaroy, was first given to a certain paddock on Taabinga, a pastoral property taken up in 1846. Today the old meaning of the word is almost forgotten. When you say "Kingaroy" you mean peanuts. In this progressive town in the South Burnett district of southern Queensland from 80 to 85 per cent. of Australia's peanut crop is stored in huge silos from which it is distributed to various States.

Kingaroy lies south-west of Maryborough and north-east of Brisbane—about equidistant from the two as the crow flies. By rail, it may be reached from Maryborough via Theebine, and from Brisbane through Gympie and then out, via Theebine. This latter is a long, roundabout way of getting there. A more direct route is followed by fast service

cars from Brisbane—a distance of 145 miles covered in about five hours. This is through picturesque country along the valley of the Brisbane River, across the Great Divide, and then into the gently undulating agricultural and dairying areas of the South Burnett.

A board outside the town of Nanango says, "Welcome to Nanango. First settlers 1848." It is a pleasing reminder of the past and recalls to us that the South Burnett was discovered in 1843 by Henry Stuart Russell, who returned later with his flocks of sheep and took up land on the Burrandowan Flats. With him were his brother Sydenham and two others. They had almost continuous trouble with the blacks and the property changed hands several times. Finally, sheep were abandoned in favour of cattle. The Taabinga run of 305 square miles was taken up by two brothers, C. and B. Haly, in 1846. It, too, was originally a sheep property, changing later to cattle. In 1875 it was sold to T. Alford, and three years later

was subdivided, 3,430 acres being taken up by C. Markwell and an adjoining area of 1,875 acres by his brother, W. Markwell. In 1883 these leases were converted to freehold tenure and conjointly became known as the Kingaroy Paddock.

As a matter of fact, the huge peanut silos that today dominate the town are erected on the site of what was fifty years ago known as the Taabinga Corner. One of the few existing reminders of the pastoral beginnings of this rich mixed farming area is the old Taabinga homestead, still standing a few miles out of town. But there was yet another phase in the district's development. In the early years of this century Kingaroy was a busy timber centre. In 1904 it was timber that prompted the extension of the railway line from Kilkivan. As the timber was cut, pastures were laid down and dairy herds established. Today the district is more agricultural than pastoral, with dairying still persisting.

The moment you arrive in Kingaroy

you are aware of the peanut silos. You remain aware of them all the time you are there. From the extent to which they obtrude themselves upon your notice you would be pardoned for concluding that peanuts were the be-all and end-all of Kingaroy. This is not so.

The South Burnett is an extremely fertile district with a rich and varied agricultural economy. Its maize crop was expected in 1950 to be 25,000 tons, a greater quantity than that of the Atherton Tableland and better in quality, too, owing to its lower moisture content. Between 10,000 and 15,000 acres of grain sorghum are cultivated each year. Navy beans—they are what you get when you order baked beans on toast—are a very profitable crop, realizing about 31/- a bushel. Poona peas, linseed, potatoes and onions do well, and the last few seasons have seen excellent crops of wheat. Dairying is widespread, and there are butter factories at Kingaroy, Wondai, Nanango, Murgon and Proston. There are also two cheese factories, and Kingaroy is the largest rail-trucking centre for pigs in Queensland. In addition, the district produces two-thirds of the State's certified seeds—maize, beans, sudan grass, etc.

So, when you say that Kingaroy means peanuts, what you are really saying is not that peanuts are its only crop, nor even its main crop—but that Kingaroy produces nearly all the peanuts grown in Australia. The plant does best in well-drained soil with an open texture and a high humus content. It will thrive on heavier types of soil, but these create difficulties in harvesting. The pods mature under the surface of the ground, and heavy soils that cling to the pods are to be avoided. Not only do they slow up harvesting, but they also cause heavy

losses, particularly with varieties which readily shed the pod. An abundance of loose, friable soil in and around Kingaroy has led to the extensive cultivation of peanuts there.

It is over thirty years since Kingaroy farmers started growing peanuts. They experimented with two or three acres and gradually increased the area up to 40-50 acres. But during the early 'twenties they found that, although the harvest returns were good, the prices they received for their product varied considerably. This led to a demand for controlled marketing, and in 1924 a Marketing Board was set up. The Queensland Peanut Growers' Co-operative Association Ltd was established in 1927. This Association pays no dividends, except those that are obtained by growers as a result of the improved methods of marketing made possible by the existence of the Board, which uses the assets of the Association in marketing the product. Shares are issued to growers in return for 3d per lb levied on their peanut crop. Old growers no longer in the industry may receive back the value of their share, less depreciation, and new growers by their levies take out fresh shares in their place.

The Board is constituted under the Primary Producers' Organization and Marketing Act (Queensland), at the wish of the growers to ensure the orderly marketing of their product. The life of the Board is extended automatically from time to time, but growers have the right at any time to ask for a poll to determine whether or not it shall cease to function. Originally the Board was constituted for periods of three years, but in 1947, following an extensive building programme, its life was extended for eleven years without any

opposition. Its members are elected triennially and at present consist of Mr C. F. Adermann, M.H.R., Chairman; Mr N. J. McAllister, of Wondai; Mr R. R. Nothing, of Rockhampton; Mr W. Kelly, of Atherton, and Mr H. Hunter, Director of Marketing, an ex officio member by virtue of his office.

The Association has assets amounting to £281,000. Except for small depots at Rockhampton and Atherton, these assets consist of the huge storage silos at Kingaroy, their plant and their machinery. The silos are in four main blocks, centrally situated and convenient to the railway line. Number one block was erected in 1928 and consists of fifty-eight wooden bins, each sixty feet deep. They have a gross capacity of 2,800 tons of the Red Spanish variety, although both Red Spanish and Virginia Bunch were being handled there when I visited Kingaroy. Number two block, erected in 1938, is a concrete structure containing twenty-four round bins, each eighty-three feet deep, and fourteen star bins, each seventy-six feet deep. The star bins are so-called because of their shape. They utilize the space between the circumferences of four adjacent circular bins, and altogether the second block has a capacity of 4,600 tons of Virginia Bunch. Number three block, erected in 1948, is similar in design, but has twenty-seven round and sixteen star bins and a capacity of 5,200 tons of Virginia Bunch. The fourth block, unused as yet and without any machinery installed, consists of twelve round and six star bins with a capacity of 2,300 tons. Thus there is a total storage space at Kingaroy for approximately 15,000 tons of peanuts.

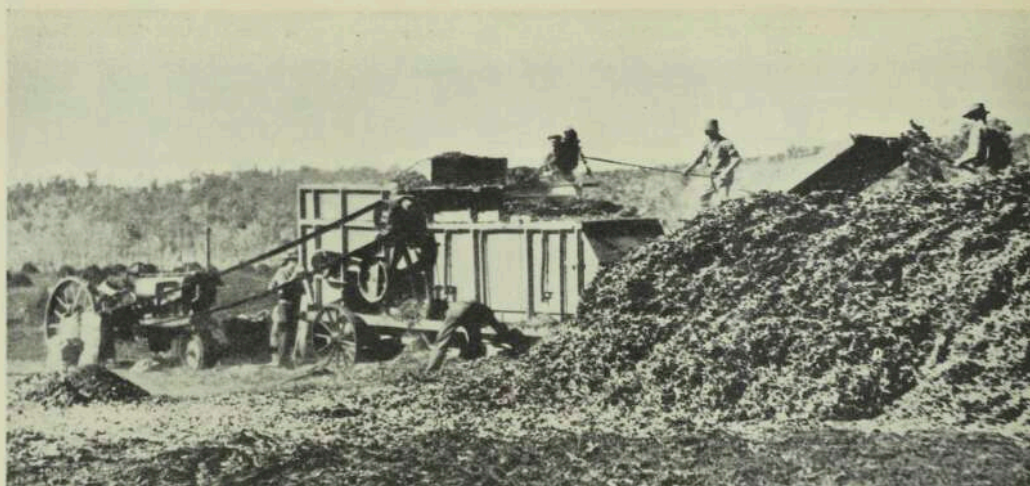
ON arrival from the farms bags of peanuts are emptied at ground level and are taken by elevators to the top of the silos. They then gravitate through chutes to various levels, where they are cleaned in a number of different machines. A "sticker" removes sticks and any other coarser rubbish left after threshing. A "raveller" continues the process with smaller rubbish. Lighter material—dust, empty or broken shells, etc.—is carried off by "blowers", and what remains passes over the sieves, after which the peanuts (still in their shells) may be said to be as clean as it is mechanically possible to make them.

In the first two blocks the machinery used in these processes is exposed; that is to say, it is possible to watch every stage of the cleaning. But in the third block the whole process is automatically carried on in enclosed machines.

After cleaning, the peanuts are weighed. Here again there is a difference between the old method and the new. In number one block they fall into a container which when full holds 350 lb. At this point it empties itself, and this fact is automatically recorded. Each emptying signifies that 350 lb of a grower's produce has been



(Photo: Dept. of Agriculture and Stock.)
Portion of a field of stooked Virginia Bunch Peanuts.



Threshing peanuts.

(Photo: Eto Peanuts Ltd.)

received. Any residue, i.e. any remaining part of the 350 lb, is weighed separately and added to the record card, which is then sent to the office for filing. The newer silo has an "Adequate Weigher" installed. This measures the weight as the peanuts pass through on a moving conveyor-belt. An indicator on a clock-face dial revolves once for every 100 lb, and each revolution is ticked up on a meter, similar to that of a speedometer, or a gas- or water-meter. The total of any one grower's produce is then recorded on a card by an operator in charge of the weighing.

These cleaning and weighing processes are carried on simultaneously in all three blocks at present in use, after which the nuts are taken by elevators and conveyor belts to the storage bins. Care is taken to see that stored nuts do not become overheated, which would cause loss through mould and decrease in germination. Thermometers in each bin are consulted at regular intervals, and when the temperature becomes too high the contents of that bin are taken out and cooled by passing them over a series of elevators and conveyor-belts before they are returned to the bin.

Nuts required for the processing factories or for seed go back to blocks number one and two, to which the third block is connected. Here they spill down a "four-ways" chute into four shelling machines which break the shells and drop the kernels into cylindrical graders. These sort them into first, second and third grade, according to size. Suction removes dust, broken shells and small nuts, the last falling into a separate chute to be handled again and subsequently mixed with the third grade, from which oil is extracted. The first-

grade nuts pass to the picking-room, where over twenty women sit, day in, day out, and hand-pick the nuts as they pass by on a slowly-moving conveyor-belt. Undersize or misshapen nuts are removed by deft fingers, and the remainder flow into open bags which when full contain 130 lb of Virginia Bunch or 140 lb of Red Spanish.

The output of the Peanut Marketing Board since its inception is shown by the following figures:

Season	Growers	Acres	Tonnage	Value of Crop
1924	100	691	231	£10,657
1925	86	450	142	7,624
1926	250	3,000	827	38,418
1927	358	6,500	2,246	79,711
1928	557	11,500	2,886	107,930
1929	387	5,500	3,618	116,400
1930	350	2,300	727	25,773
1931	428	5,000	2,673	103,334
1932	216	2,000	551	19,788
1933	307	2,700	1,205	44,385
1934	562	9,500	3,241	118,143
1935	452	12,500	4,294	135,583
1936	850	15,155	7,292	195,381
1937	650	9,000	4,277	139,759
1938	800	18,700	7,474	163,179
1939	500	12,000	5,609	159,809
1940	500	10,000	5,522	189,042
1941	600	13,500	5,968	217,215
1942	500	14,000	5,222	201,296
1943	666	22,000	7,897	347,235
1944	600	17,800	9,419	395,426
1945	620	21,000	11,322	507,278
1946	774	32,000	13,403	558,522
1947	1,114	52,800	23,164	1,048,965
1948	1,061	65,000	15,881	725,612
1949	938	33,000	11,080	692,000
1950	642	24,000	8,520	

The fluctuations of these figures call for some comment. In many cases they were due to seasonal conditions, but it will be noted that the industry made steady progress up to the years 1928-29. At this time, however, it was found that production was more than could be absorbed in the Commonwealth, and, as exporting was not profitable, a reduction of acreage followed in the ensuing years. With the passing of time local demand increased,

and so did the acreage under cultivation, until in 1947 peanut-growing became an industry worth over a million pounds. A larger acreage was planted in the following year, but unfavourable conditions of rainfall—too little over the growing period and too much at harvesting—brought disappointing results, so that growers became cautious in 1949 and 1950. In a district as varied in its output as the South Burnett farmers do not concentrate on one crop and it is easy to transfer to another when the peanut returns appear less profitable than formerly. However, an increasing interest in this crop is forecast, following the rise of the price to the grower in recent times. In 1945 the grower received 4d per lb; in 1949 it was 5½d; and for the 1950 crop it was expected to be over 6d.

On delivery growers receive an advance payment of 3½d per lb, which, allowing for the 3d levy by the Association, leaves 3d per lb nett to the grower. A final payment is made when the whole crop has been sold and the nett proceeds have been realized. Thus the final value of the 1950 crop cannot yet be assessed as it is usually twelve months after harvesting that the second payment is made.

The average peanut grower has about fifty acres under crop, although the largest individual area grown in 1950 was 450 acres. Planting takes place between October and January. The seed is sown by mechanical planters in rows thirty-six inches apart, at depths of from two to three inches. The Virginia Bunch variety is spaced about ten to fifteen inches apart, the Red Spanish, a smaller variety, from six to ten inches. It is absolutely essential to keep the crop free of weeds, and harrowing is done in the early stages, after which

the soil is hand-chipped. In the last cultivation the rows are usually hilled to give a free entrance to the fruiting pegs.

BEFORE harvesting the plants are examined to ensure that a majority of the pods are mature. Most of the harvesting is done by hand. The tap-root is cut by specially designed blades attached in pairs to tractors, after which the plants are pulled by hand and the soil shaken free. They are then placed in stooks, remaining there for a period of from fourteen to twenty-eight days, according to the weather conditions. The plants must be dry if the pods are to come away cleanly from the plant during threshing. The stooks are conveyed on low waggons to the threshers, which move from time to time to convenient positions in the field. Threshing is mostly done by contractors with machines specially designed for handling this crop.

Peanut-growing has its peculiar problems. Because the ground must be kept free of weeds and because residue left after threshing has little fertilizer value, there is no humus to be ploughed in after the crop has been taken off. This causes the soil to become exhausted sooner after peanuts than after most other crops. Wise husbandry demands that they should be grown in the same ground not more often than one season in every three, or preferably three seasons in every ten. The mixed agricultural economy of the district makes this easily practicable, although not all growers have yet fully realized its necessity.

Until six or seven years ago there was little disease in the peanut crop, but it is now found that crown rot is liable to occur in plants grown in old worked ground. This is overcome by treating the seed with an organic mercury dust, and this pickling is carried out by the Board, which distributes specially selected seed to the growers.



The peanut silos rise at the end of one of the two main business streets of Kingaroy.

Of more concern at the moment is faulty germination, thought to be due to overheating of the seed while in the silos. As has been pointed out, the temperature of the bins is closely watched and their contents are given an airing if it becomes too high. But the damage may already have been done. To overcome this, seed is brought in from other districts, notably Atherton and Central Queensland, where the same storage conditions do not occur. Perhaps the ultimate solution will be to store seed peanuts in bins specially designed so that the temperature will not rise beyond a certain point. The Board is looking into this matter.

A major problem confronting this as

well as most other industries is the dearth of labour available at harvest time. This may be in part overcome by the introduction of mechanical harvesting, but no machines available have proved suitable for the local conditions. Here again the Board is seeking its own solution by designing and building a harvester which, it is hoped, will prove satisfactory.

Meanwhile the citizens of Kingaroy do not seem to be letting these difficulties worry them unduly. In this clean, well laid out town of 4,600 souls there is an air of prosperity and cheerfulness, due no doubt to the fact that peanut-growing is only one of its many interests. Among the growers themselves I found faith in the future of the industry and in the efforts being made by the Board on their behalf.

One thing I did not find—and that was a peanut anywhere in Kingaroy, except over at the silos. Although it produces between 80 and 85 per cent of Australia's total crop, it is the last place in the world where you are likely to go around singing that senseless song, "Found a Peanut." Because, if you did, you might be asked to explain where you found it, and that could lead to trouble. All peanuts grown must pass through the hands of the Marketing Board, which distributes them to various States for processing. Of attempts to outwit the Board in this respect this is hardly the place to speak, but I did hear some stories of trucks making mysterious night-trips to the south . . . stories that lead me to believe that an enterprising writer of crime fiction might find in Kingaroy a new slant to a story that would soothe the jaded nerves of harassed business-men and weary housewives.



Peanuts being transported to the silos at Kingaroy.

TASMAN FLIGHT

By JOHN BÉCHERVAISE

SPACE is an abstraction that men have always comprehended in terms of time and effort. Each year, by the speeding and multiplying of transport and communication facilities, these factors diminish and the peoples and places of the earth become more fully integrated. With increasing efficiency of machines the intervals grow finer, measured in hours round the world's circumference.

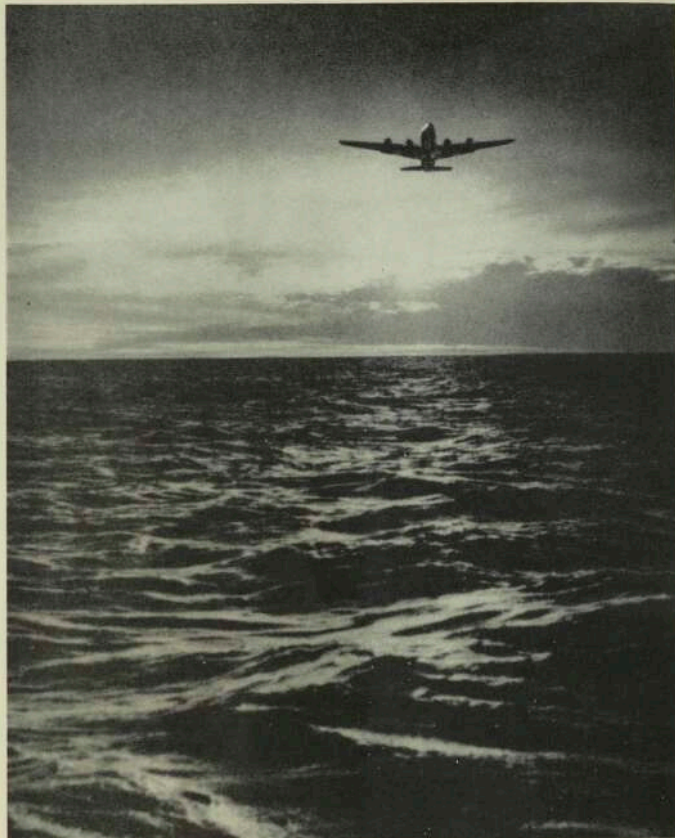
New Zealand, the varied land, is geographically most isolated, further from Australia than is the Mediterranean from Britain, yet her glaciated mountains and lovely lakes, her astonishing thermal springs and geysers, her pastures and cities, may be exchanged with the Australian scene between sunset and dawn.

The inauguration, by Tasman Empire Airways Limited, of a direct air-service between Melbourne and Christchurch, a distance of 1520 miles, marks a new phase of trans-Tasman travel, linking the South Island of New Zealand with Australia by weekly flights taking about eight hours. The TEAL Skymaster Service leaves Melbourne late at night, reaches Christchurch soon after breakfast and returns to Melbourne the same evening. By night you fly towards the dawning and by day you follow the sun. The journey is so effortless, swift and comfortable that it must provide some sense of triumph over distance for all but the most surfeited voyagers.

It is pleasant, at the international airport of Essendon, idly to watch the baggage being loaded from smooth-running trolleys into the shining belly of the plane while attendants, dwarfed by the wings, fasten the fuel caps in position . . . especially at night, when lights focus all action.

Everything you'll need for the journey is in your attaché case or handbag or just your overcoat pockets . . . everything . . . for fifteen hundred miles of travel. An amplified voice pages all passengers and you stroll across the tarmac to a smiling hostess and a spacious lounge—a considerable improvement on the fleeting carpets of Arabia.

The seasoned travellers read their papers while the engines are tuned and tested on the ground—the roar swells and fades from each in turn—and they do not look up even when the aircraft taxis to its take-off and sweeps into the night wind. People entertain the hours in many ways . . . reading, taking refreshments, smoking, playing chess, chatting, dreaming . . . For some there is fascination in cloud-forms or clear stars, in the glint on the wings or in the glow from engines whence the power of six thousand black horses tugs you through the sky.



★

You adjust your chair and doze, lost in a new wave-length of silence. Time passes. The plane steadies itself from a patch of turbulence and you stir, are half awake, reassured instantly by the surge of power thrusting, miles a minute, tirelessly. Only a dim light or two remains within the plane; white mists and a scurry of sleet twist past the windows.

Nowhere so visibly as high in the air does the dawn thrust back the night. It reaches up in a wide glowing crescent, transmuting the engine cowls from lead to gold an hour earlier than it flushes the spires of the city left sleeping astern. The night, trailing a few brief stars, shrinks to a grey-blue cloud on the world's edge.

Passengers stretch themselves, promenade, and sponge away sleep. Ten thousand feet below the wrinkled sea is visible as, ahead, the sun climbs effortlessly over the alps. Enthrilled you watch the completion of a Tasman crossing . . . or you

concentrate on your grape-fruit and breakfast cereal.

Below now are the powdered peaks; beyond, the patched Canterbury Plain; behind, the ocean; and, far out along the starboard wingtip, the twelve thousand foot summit of Mount Cook—Aorangi, the Cloud-Piercer. You follow a wide grey river, Waimakariri, down from the ranges; circle Christchurch before landing. The sun is two hours older than in Australia.

It will be a long time before living memory fails to span the years to the first great ocean flights. Then perhaps *Southern Cross* will connote only the stars and Kingsford-Smith and his staunch companions be great names unaccompanied by visions of the purposeful faces and whimsical smiles by which we knew them. If, in that day, men take all for granted, they shall be the poorer with the poverty that has lost wonder and delight in fine achievement.



Cattle Drive, South Westland (Arawata area)

NEW ZEALAND

CAMERA SUPPLEMENT

New Zealand, little larger than the United Kingdom, ranges a thousand miles of temperate latitude and possesses 4,300 miles of coastline. No part is, therefore, far from the sea and extremes of temperature are rare on this account. More than half the land surface has been developed agriculturally or as pasture; the remainder provides a great diversity of interests for tourists and travellers. Parts of the rugged South-West are still virtually unexplored.

The main cities are Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The population of New Zealand approaches 2,000,000; it is fairly evenly distributed throughout the country, though two-thirds of the people dwell in the North Island.

The high alps of the South Island contain considerable peaks and glaciers, and cradle tranquil lakes. The North Island holds an extraordinary thermal region of geysers, boiling pools and mineral springs within sight of snow-capped mountains. The beauty and majesty of New Zealand scenery attracts visitors from all over the world, and, in recent years, air services from both sides of the Pacific have greatly reduced its physical isolation.

This selection of photographs, published by courtesy of the New Zealand Government Tourist Department, reveals something of the variety of Australia's sister Dominion.



- (Above) : Lake Monapouri, Otago, South Island. Most of the great southern lakes fill ancient glacial depressions and are still fed from the high *névé* of the perennial snows. Lake Monapouri is the deepest lake (1,458 feet) in the Dominion and is famous for its scenery and trout-fishing.
- (Right) : Franz Josef Glacier, Westland. This panorama is seen from the Graham Saddle. The Franz Josef Glacier is unique in such latitudes, its terminal ice reaching to within six hundred feet of the sea. It is said that each year one hundred and fifty feet of snow is added to the *névé*-fields visible in the upper part of the picture. In summer, parts of the glacier move fifteen feet a day.

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- (Above): The Hermitage, Mount Cook. The Hermitage, a well-appointed government-owned hotel catering for skiers, climbers and sight-seers in the heart of the alps, is here seen with the Blackburn Range in the background. From the Hermitage, Mount Cook (12,349 feet) is clearly visible above the Tasman Glacier.
- (Left Top): At Rotorua. *Whakairo*, carved ancestral image, a good example of the traditional three-fingered hand so often featured in Maori carving.

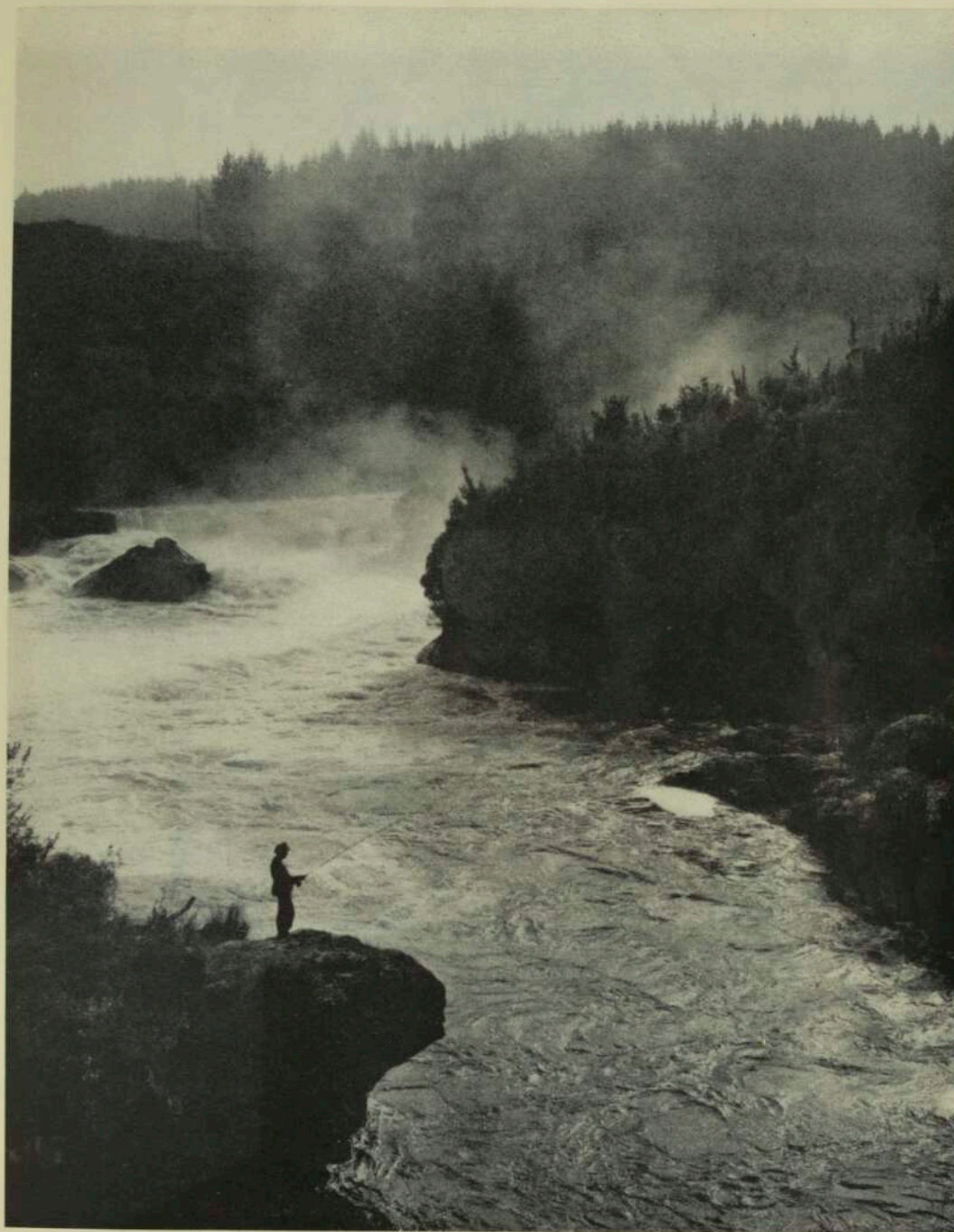
Pohutu Geyser, at Rotorua, North Island. This is one of the most spectacular geysers in the thermal area. It plays, intermittently, sending a scalding jet high in the air.
- (Left Below): Ngauruhoe in eruption. Almost centrally placed in the North Island are three occasionally active volcanic mountains. From the craters of Ngauruhoe (7,715 feet) and Ruapehu (9,175 feet) there are sometimes spectacular displays. Tongariro, the other member of the trio, besides possessing the famous boiling springs of Ketetahi, gives its name to the great National Park that contains them all.



- (Above) : Christchurch City, Canterbury. This aerial view shows the Dominion's third city (population 164,000). The larger centres of Auckland (pop. 289,800) and Wellington, the capital (186,100), are both in the North Island.
- (Right) : Trout fishing, Waikato River. The Waikato is New Zealand's longest river (220 miles), flowing from Lake Taupo in a north-westerly direction. In the Lake Taupo thermal area are some of the finest trout fishing waters in the world.

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(Above) : Mount Egmont (8,260 feet) dominates the pleasant farmlands of Taranaki, North Island.
(Below) : Chateau, Tongariro National Park, Wellington. The golf course, with Mount Ruapehu in the background.



TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL CARVINGS

By JESSIE S. LUCKMAN

BEFORE the coming of the white man the island of Tasmania was peopled by a primitive race having dark-brown skin and curly or woolly hair, distinct from the natives of the Australian mainland. Very little first-hand knowledge is available concerning their arts and crafts, except that relating to the making of stone implements, spears, baskets, etc., although Tasmania was first settled by white men in 1803 and the aborigines did not die out until some seventy years later. Of that seventy years, however, the last forty were spent by the aborigines in confinement on Flinders Island after they had been rounded up in 1835, and no doubt prior to that date the early white settlers were too concerned with wresting a living from the new colony to bother themselves with study of the culture of such a primitive people. Among the few who took the trouble to study their language and arts was George Washington Walker, who particularly noticed their singing. Phonetic versions and literal translations of two aboriginal songs appear in his journal dated 15th October, 1832, and are quoted in *Early Tasmania* by James B. Walker. Recordings of several of their songs, made towards the end of last century by Mrs. Fanny Cochrane-Smith, are in the possession of the Tasmanian Museum. Unhappily, the cylinder bearing the titles and words of the songs was broken in recent years.

Several references exist concerning their drawings done with charcoal on bark, notably those of Peron at Maria Island in 1802, Robinson on the West Coast in 1831, and Calder at the Surprise River in 1840, but no specimens of this form of their art appear to have been preserved. As regards rock-carvings, four sites bearing designs attributable to the aborigines have so far been found. These are at Devonport (N.W. Coast), Nubeena, Tasman's Peninsula, in the south, Trial Harbour (West Coast), and Mt Cameron West (West Coast), the last named being by far the most impressive and containing the most numerous examples of this type of native art. According to residents of the district near Mt Cameron West, stockmen have known of the existence of the carvings since the middle of last century, but did not, apparently, consider them of any unusual interest. It was not until 1931 that a Hobart man interested in native arts visited the area and photographed the few carvings which were



Sketches of the designs were made with the aid of a grid. (Photo: Leo Luckman.)

visible. Since then no work of importance was done until February, 1950, when a party of five of us spent a week excavating, plotting and photographing as many of the carvings as was possible in the time.

We were given the use of an old, but comfortable, cottage perched on the side of Mt Cameron West, about an hour's walk from the carvings and commanding a fine view along the flat coastal plains and beach. The carvings are located near the end of the beach and are in two areas—a small one containing three carvings and a large one of over fifty carvings about seven chains further north. All the carvings are executed on a soft calcareous sandstone which occurs in two outcrops at the sites mentioned, apparently the only stone of this type in the district.

In the lesser area portions of the small cliff still remain, apparently untouched by the natives, the carvings here being done solely on three large blocks lying at its base. The largest of these is approximately six feet long by four feet nine inches at its widest part and two feet at its narrowest, and bears a design of circles, straight lines and triple parallel rows of indentations. This last feature has not so far been found on any other Tasmanian carvings. Owing to the fact that this particular carving was showing signs of rapid erosion, we later removed it for safety to the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, where it will shortly be on view to visitors.

The larger area consists of a sandstone cliff about forty feet high which overhangs somewhat near the top to form a shallow cave, while around the base of the cliff, and apparently fallen from it, lie

thirty or more blocks varying in size from about fifty lbs. to several tons. Some of the more isolated blocks have three or four sides exposed; others show only one. But whatever the position in which they lie, all available surfaces have been carved. In more recent years the nearby creek apparently became silted up, dunes formed on the seaward side, and the majority of the carvings became buried under sand and vegetation.

UNIL our arrival the only carvings visible were those on the overhanging cliff and about twelve blocks belong. After removing a large quantity of shrubs and creepers and some tons of sand we uncovered fourteen more blocks, the total number of carved surfaces now visible being fifty-one. These surfaces vary greatly in shape and size, some being as small as one square foot, others more than thirty-five square feet, yet all the designs, which fill the area of the surfaces, have been made with an excellent sense of balance and proportion. Most of the surfaces have a groove cut roughly parallel with the edge of the rock, thus forming a frame for the whole design.

Because of the softness of the sandstone it would have been fairly easy to carve it in the first place. It has been suggested that the natives made the carvings by first punching indentations close together and then connecting the holes thus formed. This would appear to be the method used on the largest carving in the small area. However, hammering, rubbing or gouging, or a combination of these, was probably used on most of the other designs, while on some of them final

rubbing is certainly the only method by which the aborigines could have obtained the sharp edge which exists even to-day despite years of weathering. During our excavations we were interested to find a number of small, rather flat oval stones. Since they fitted the grooves of the designs above them, it is possible that they were the actual implements used for rubbing or gouging, although they bore no apparent signs of wear.

Owing to the damp sand eroding the surface of many of the blocks, and the penetration of fine rootlets flaking off whole layers in some cases, excavation work was a slow and laborious job. First the bushes and creepers were pulled out and the bulk of the sand hoed away to within some inches of the rock surface; then the remainder of the sand was carefully removed by hand, and when the carving had dried off sufficiently it was lightly brushed. Photographs were then taken of the designs untouched, and, later, lightly chalked in for better definition. Drawings on squared paper were



After shrubs and sand were removed, the designs were lightly chalked in.
(Photo: Leo Luckman.)

made with the aid of a grid (made by one of the party from strings strung at four-inch intervals on a wooden frame), and the positions of individual carvings in relation to the cliff were plotted by means of a plane-table survey.

The designs on the cliff itself consist of a group of circles on the flat top of the cliff and other circles on the ceiling of the shallow cave. These latter are about eight feet above the floor of the cave and quite out of reach of the average person standing below, so it would have been necessary for the designer to stand on some kind of support, possibly a large stump—or perhaps even the back of a fellow artist!

Some of the most interesting and extensive carvings in this area are to be found on six large blocks which

form a most impressive group. When we arrived this group was almost entirely buried; in fact, the only section visible was the foremost surface of the top block bearing two concentric circles in bold relief. Removal of a very considerable quantity of sand and vegetation was necessary before the full extent of the carvings was revealed. The largest surface of this group is a nearly upright slab leaning against the bank and measuring six feet eight inches from its base to the highest point by five feet seven inches across at a height of five feet. To the right of this slab and at about right angles is a buttress-shaped block about five feet high. Further right again, and also leaning against the bank, is a vertical slab about one foot ten inches wide by five feet four inches high. Balanced across these last two, and forming a kind of "roof," is another block, about three feet by three feet by five feet, the foremost surface being the first visible part mentioned above. Still further to the right are two more blocks balanced one above the other, each about four feet high. While excavating the sand from beneath the roof block we made an interesting discovery. After digging out about fourteen inches of sand we came on a layer of midden material—mostly small mussel shells averaging $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long—together with a quantity of charcoal in the innermost corner. Beneath this was a layer of clean sand, then another layer of midden material, which included mussel, turbo and haliotis (mutton-fish) shells, as well as charcoal. This midden layer was about four inches deep. We dug through sand again for a depth of about fourteen inches and found a third layer of midden materials, much the same as the second one, but this time fully nine inches deep. About half-way through this last midden layer we found a waterworn rock still bearing traces of red ochre on one side; from its shape, which fits the hand easily, we think it was probably used as a grinding stone or pestle. The removal of a further few inches of sand brought us to the base of the carvings at the innermost corner, but it was necessary to dig away still more before we reached the bottom of the two vertical blocks to the right.

From the presence of these three distinct midden-layers it is apparent that for at least three periods the shelter afforded by the carved blocks was used as a cooking-fire by the natives, and it is, of course, evident that the carvings were in existence while the aborigines were still living in the district, which means that they were made at least prior to 1835.

As regards the designs, most of these consist of circles of various sizes, often concentric, and of parallel straight lines either by themselves or drawn vertically across the circles. A feature which is repeated on several blocks is a circle with a tangent running down from one side to touch another circle below. This occurs on the big slab to the left of the group of

six, the inner surface of the "buttress" block, and the top one of the two vertical blocks to the right. The outer edge of the buttress, although badly eroded, still shows the outline of vertical and horizontal grooves dividing it into a series of rectangles, giving a gridded effect. This gridding also shows up boldly on the two visible surfaces of the lower vertical block to the right, and on the corner of another block nearby, while the inner surface of the buttress block has a somewhat similar pattern of rectangles. This surface also has a groove cut in an anti-clockwise spiral, the only true spiral which we found on any of the carvings.

OF the other carvings in the area, most of them feature the circle motif. On at least three of them, however, the circles have been quartered by two diametric lines, and on one block each quarter has one or more indentations in it. Two blocks some distance apart bear five short parallel lines, while similar groups of lines appear on at least four other blocks, but contained within a circle, the outermost lines being curved slightly to fit the circumference. Another block has oddly arranged short lines, set at various angles to one another, with two sets of five indentations, the whole design being quite different from any of the others.

No doubt when these carvings were first made, and while the aborigines still lived in the vicinity, the surrounding country provided good hunting and camping. Rocky reefs jutting out from the point a few chains to the north would supply shell-fish; there were several streams of fresh water, one of which apparently flowed between the two areas of carvings; while the swamps and plains inland would provide birds and game. To judge from the extent of the nearby middens, which contain both shells and bones as well as stone implements, the surrounding scrub of tea-tree and other coastal shrubs and trees must have given considerable shelter from the storms and gales which continually lash this coast. Today, however, as a result of over-grazing by stock, the sheltering scrub has dwindled to a few isolated clumps of bushes and the sand dunes have choked most of the streams and are slowly spreading inland over the swamps and plains. Only the carvings, the warm brown of their sandstone, standing out against the harsh whiteness of the sand, bear witness to the fact that this was once the happy home of a happy people, their story and meaning, like the people themselves, lost forever.

Notes on foregoing article contributed by Donald J. Tugby, Ethnologist, National Museum.

A RESUME of views on Tasmanian petroglyphs has not been made; but as far as Australia is concerned, even as late as 1937 it was suggested that a number of hares in the inner harbour at Woy Woy, Sydney, were made by Asiatics

voyaging down the coast. For the most part, however, such hypotheses have now been discarded and the general similarity of the Mt Cameron carvings to those on the mainland points to their native origin.

The stone masons of the Middle Ages who spent a lifetime glorifying cathedrals have their counterpart in the religiously inspired natives whose skill and patience produced these carvings. Only men inspired would undertake the great labour which these carvings represent to Stone Age men, whose most important technological achievements were the making of fire and the chipping of stone.

In the Sydney area it has been shown that the petroglyphs marked sacred sites normally only visited by priests or elders of the tribe who had advanced far in the mysteries of the cult. It seems not unlikely that the Tasmanian carvings represent similar cult objects. Comparable designs are also found on the trees of the sacred Bora grounds of northern New South Wales.

Although carving on stone was apparently unknown to Bonwick, he does mention in his book, *The Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, published in 1870, geometrical drawings on bark being made in the Ouse Valley. Other Tasmanian tree carvings show concentric circles and lines; generally they are rougher than those made by Australian aborigines. Although Ling Roth, another great chronicler of Tasmanian native life, has thrown doubt on the authenticity of the bark drawings, he does mention that similar geometrical designs are used in painting the body.

The Mt Cameron carvings do exhibit an appreciation of the available surface. It is possible that adjacent carvings have a meaning relative to one another. The use of the frame groove shows an appreciation of the totality of the working surface, a common faculty among the Australian aborigines. The circle with the diametric lines is, however, not found in the mainland petroglyphs. The mass of confused lines might represent a native map; similar designs have been so identified by natives in N.S.W., and are common among other native peoples.

The system of punctures afterwards joined by lines was used by the aborigines of the Sydney area. The stones found near the Mt Cameron carvings could represent those used for re-incision of the lines before a ceremony when it was necessary to restore the full glory of the cult objects. Some pecked outlines appear in western N.S.W. and are not smoothed.

The method of manufacture is controlled to some extent by the medium. In the case of soft sandstone of the kind described, drilling holes and joining them by drilling and gashing, with a scraping and polishing technique, seems most likely.

No one has seen petroglyphs being made—even in Australia. On the mainland this might be explained by the inviolated nature of the culture which had

already reached a zenith when the white man came. When disintegration set in, the native cult adherents found little incentive to make new ceremonial objects. Such considerations would apply even more strongly to the Tasmanian natives.

Careful investigation at Mt Cameron may reveal more material and some clues as to who visited the site. Only four such sites have been reported—more may exist. They only need to be recognized and preserved by the same type of careful and

diligent work as has been carried out on this new discovery. Not all sites are being destroyed and lost; some are only now being revealed. This is the case with the ceremonial stones, called Cylcons, of the Darling River Valley in N.S.W., which are now more common than forty years ago owing to the weathering process which has exposed them. The collecting and recording of these historic objects is an important task. Those to whom it falls should at all times seek expert advice.

CLEANING CHANNELS

By HENRY G. LAMOND

PASTORAL Queensland has had a succession of good seasons. The ground now is full and tight, not cracked and dry. The rivers will run freely when the wet season commences—and that may be due at any time within the next couple of months. That would mean there will be much cleaning of channels to have them free of sheep when those rivers run a banker, when they spread in their billabongs, when they sweep everything ahead of them and carry danger in their floods.

First, perhaps, it is advisable to have a look at what the people of western Queensland call "rivers". There are the Barcoo, Thompson, Diamantina, Alice, Darr, Hamilton, while there are many creeks which vie with rivers for size. I have not mentioned Georgina, Burdekin and Flinders, as the two first-mentioned traverse cattle country, and this story deals mainly with sheep; Flinders is a coastal delivery which does not spread in wide billabongs like the others.

An apt description of a western river was given by an early English visitor: "A broken chain of dry waterholes." These western rivers run only during the wet season, and for so long after it as the earth is draining enough water to keep them flowing. They are dry for the rest of the year. They have waterholes scattered along their courses—spaced irregularly, though one might be nearly correct in saying the average distance between permanent waterholes would be eight to ten miles.

The typical river is composed of a net of billabongs, interlacing channels, and five miles wide is nothing out of the ordinary. To cite one instance—one of many—the Hamilton River, on the Boulia-Winton Road, is almost five miles from outside channel to outside channel—and there are forty-five of these channels. The main channel is the one which runs first, runs last, and is usually the only one which is known by name in that maze of billabongs. The main channel does not always run in the centre, or in a central position. It may, or it may not, take that position

of importance; it might meander aimlessly from side to side, even, on occasions, degrading itself to the position of outside channel. But, wherever it runs, it is the Main Channel, the king of its tribe, and all others are just overflows from it.

The danger from the channels occurs at the end of the year, before the wet season, when grass is dry and water scarce. Sheep and other stock are supposed to make for high ground when rain and storms threaten. Unfortunately for those in charge of them, stock do not read text-books; they are just as likely to be caught as any fool humans. The permanent waters in a river are usually in the main channel. That fellow may be central, or it may be over the far side; stock have to enter the channels to get to it—they may have to go in two or three miles, or more. There seems to be something peculiarly sweet about channel grasses and those which grow on frontages—the sheep like to linger in the channels and about them.

That is where the danger lies. A sudden storm on the watershed might bring that river down over-night. It seems to be controlled by some devilish device; it sends a sudden spurt of water down an outside channel, which is fed by a local stream; all sheep inside that running water are trapped. Sheep do not willingly face water and cross it. They lack the combative spirit; they seem to prefer to lie down and die rather than fight for life. They have a stoicism which is most irritating—and that is putting it mildly.

That brief description, perhaps, explains an earlier statement, that there should have been but little channel cleaning even in spite of recent floods and rains: the running water in outside channels will keep sheep out just as surely as it will pen them in; and those channels have been running practically all the year.

Things are not always like that, though. There have been some stupendous losses of sheep by flood. Mainly these losses occurred in the early years of settlement in pastoral Queensland. Men had yet to learn the whims of the weather; there were no outside permanent waters then to keep

sheep out of the channels during the wet season; where there was one paddock then there are now anything up to twenty of them—they used to handle sheep in bulk in those days. But in spite of all modern improvements wet seasons still come with a bang; rivers build up and surge down with outflung arms during the night; sheep are still trapped; the need remains to clean the channels.

In this case, we shall assume, the season is dry just before the breaking of the rains. While we admit it is bad management to run sheep in low-lying paddocks when the wet season is due, often it is necessary to take some slight risk. Perhaps, and it is more than likely, the only paddocks available are those which have frontages to some creek or river.

The management, as it always does, takes precautions: the channels are cleared of sheep every afternoon; first priority is given to the work of cleaning the channels in Quarryanne Paddock immediately rain starts.

Clouds hang low as the sun sets; the manager paces the veranda after dinner at night; he analyses those clouds; he

notes the flashes of lightning on the horizon; he counts the seconds between the flash and the following rumble of thunder; he computes the distance in miles—five seconds to a mile. He asks his overseer for the twentieth time whether he is sure that Jack and Bill, who were sent to do it that afternoon, made a good job of clearing the sheep off the frontage and out of the channels in Quarryanne. Then, after one last glance at the clouds, and using a watch instead of his own count, he times the difference between the lightning and the thunder. The storm is drawing closer.

DURING the night a clap of thunder rattles the galvanized iron of the roof of the homestead. Almost coincident with it there is a dead heat between the manager springing from his bed and a gust of air heavy with that sweet scent of rain. It is a matter of a photo-finish: the manager reaches the veranda just as the first heavy patter of rain-drops hits the roof.

It is still raining when a watery dawn comes lead-coloured from the east. There is no thunder with sudden sweeps of

spouting rain about this lot—it has settled down to the steady pour of the wet season. The manager does not wait: he splashes through the water and mud as he makes his way to the rain gauge. He holds that up to the light; three inches twenty-eight points. He curses, yet in his heart he blesses the rain. He does not enter the house where he would leave mud marks and trails of water on the floor, but plods round to the cook's room to tell him action is needed for an early start; he goes across to the men's quarters to wake them, to tell a boy to make it lively with bringing the horses to the yard, to warn the men to prepare for a bad day in the channels.

That manager knows sheep—he must. He knows, in spite of the channels being cleaned in Quarryanne yesterday afternoon, that sheep will have wandered back there during the night. He knows, with three and a half inches of rain during the night, that Galah Creek is going to come down big—he can guess what rain has fallen higher up, and he knows how the rain will run from that tight catchment area. The manager knows all those things. He also knows the unwritten law of the bush: the boss must lead.

The horses come to the yard just as the men complete their breakfasts. The horses try to play as they splash through puddles; the men tread gingerly in futile efforts to dodge the mire. The horses have balls of mud swinging from their tails. The men go to the saddle-room to get their gear; the horses settle down in the yard and, from force of habit, stand head-and-tail and pretend to swing their tails to swish flies away which are not there.

"It ain't too bad," Bill calls, in a spurious effort to appear cheerful. "It's on'y in odd places th' mud comes above th' sole of me boot. See?" he adds, lifting his foot for inspection.

Brown, the manager, has spirits as damp as the weather. He explains to Bill: "A man can walk over bog where nearly every other animal will sink in. A man can walk where even a dog would break the crust."

The banter goes on among the men. An occasional one growls. The growler is usually old and experienced. The younger ones, though they would stoutly deny the impeachment, look on the job with a spirit of adventure.

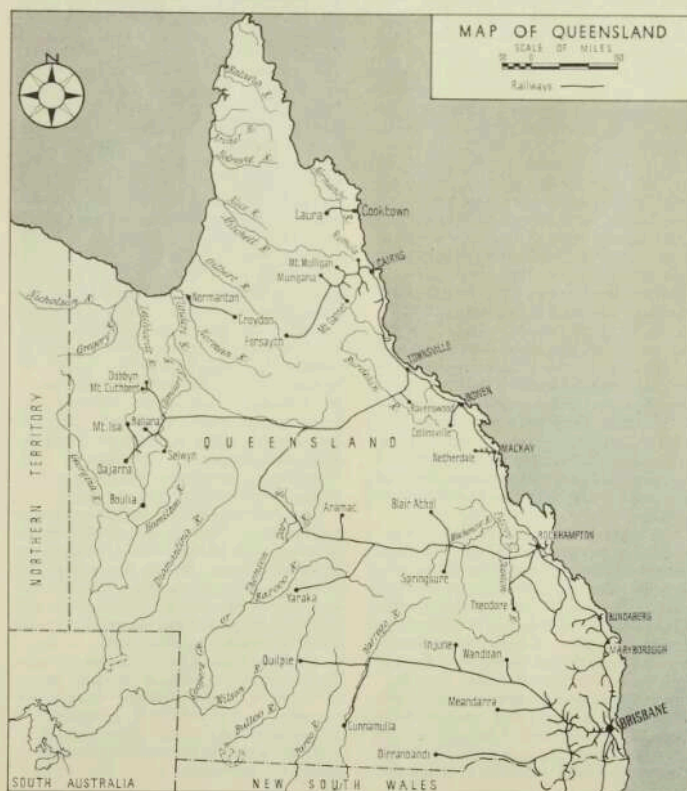
"How am I goin' to keep me lunch dry?" one asks.

"Eat it," another advises him. "Put it inside you."

"Hey!" Bill calls as he puts his saddle over his head as he carries it to the yard. "Have a screw at this!"

"That's just what I was telling you," Brown advises. "That little bit of added weight makes all the difference. You could walk on top of the mud when you weren't carrying anything. When you add the saddle to it you sink up to your ankles."

"Who'd have thought it!" Jim whispers in mock wonder.



"The horses will!" The boss pushes the moral home. "In addition to carrying themselves over the mud they have to hump you as well as the saddle. Don't knock 'em about. Take 'em steady."

The men are directed by the manager: two of them go to the channels in one paddock; two go to another danger spot; one man is sent to have a look at possibilities which might become dangerous if the floods rise; Brown himself, with Jack and Bill, go to the riskiest place of the lot, the channels in Quarryanne Paddock.

The horses plough through the mud, backs humped, water running in runnels down the channels of their buttocks. There is no joy about them as they draw sucking feet from mud, tails hanging limply, making labour of every stride. The men who ride them sit with hunched shoulders, with the rain pelting off them, with hands too soaked with rain to roll a cigarette or cut tobacco. A wily-wagtail flies round the horses. It chirps and puts up a pretence of joy as it feints at insects which are not there. Greatly daring, and its feathers heavy with rain, it even presumes to rest for a second on the rump of one of the horses. Further over, stalking sedately over the downs, a water-logged plain turkey strides through the grass in imitation of seeking grasshoppers. In spite of its brave assumption of dignity it looks, and is, the picture of misery.

ONLY the sheep dogs enjoy the day. They skip lightly over the muddy ground; they splash through gilguys and grin as the water sprays about them. They know they have nothing to dread on a day like this. The air is cool, moist, almost dripping wet. The horror of thirst is forgotten. They know the work will be in short bursts, no sinew-straining efforts of long distances in a hurry. They have cause to be merry and bright. Old Towser so far forgets his dignified pose as to bark his pleasure as he tosses a bit of stick in the air, claws at it, pretends to try to catch it in his mouth as it falls.

The men reach the gate leading into Quarryanne. Galah Creek, half a mile down on the left, swirls in brown haste as its muddy waters lip the banks of the channels, dribble over, send sneaking streams prying for places on which to run. Clumps of lignum stand in isolated islands with water spread all round them; coolibah trees dip their branches in the flood and sway as the current grips them; water rises in the cane-grass, and all manner of creeping and crawling things climb the stems to safety.

"We've got six miles to go to the top of the paddock," Brown tells his listeners, a fact they already know. "There's no need to cross the creek: we've got no sheep in Gidyea Paddock on the other side. Then we've got six miles to come back again before we start for home. Come behind, you brute!" He completes his summary by calling his dog to heel.

Much of the frontage of the channels is quite good riding. It is claypan. The horses appreciate it.

"There's a mob," Brown observes. "Take 'em steady, Bill. Start 'em out and let 'em string. Don't rush the things—string 'em. Let them pick their own way."

"There's another mob over there, Mr Brown," Jack points out to the boss. "They're inside the channel, too," he adds.

The first mob started is picking its way cautiously through heavy mud. Left alone, they were prepared to lie where they were, let the water surround and cover them. Given a start, allowed to choose their own track, they walk out on the downs, up the rise, to safety.

Brown and the men go after the lot sighted by Jack. They are huddled together under a clump of coolibahs. They are jammed together as tightly as they can be; their backs are humped, their heads held low; some chew the cud; most of them are too depressed even to do that; they stand there, making no efforts to move, while the water rises about them. When they are disturbed they show as a mob of about 250.

These sheep have been quite resigned to death at one moment. When a dog whips round them and disturbs them they race from it in fear, they break and try evasive tactics which could better have been employed in a more worthy cause. Luckily, the ground beneath them is a firm claypan. Had it been black soil they would all have bogged to the briskets.

Brown and the men steady the sheep and drive them carefully to the outside channel down which just a dribble of water has commenced to run. The sheep splash through puddles, disregard small lakes, seeming to have lost their dread of water. But when they come to that small stream—the only thing which stands between them and safety—they magnify it in their horror to a raging torrent. They refuse to face the thing. They break. They race away. They will not pay attention when Bill grabs an old ewe, skuldrags her by the ears, pulls her across in front of the mob to give them a lead.

The men spend the best part of half an hour getting those sheep together again, driving them from place to place, taking them back to the spot where first they had refused to cross. And when they return to it this time that dribble of water has grown from a trickle to a full-blown flood; it is at least twenty feet wide, running strongly, deep enough to make them swim in places.

The sheep, with all the cussedness which is a peculiarity of their breed, face that torrent. They regard it as a thing of small moment. An old ewe leads them in as casually as if she were crossing a dry road. She takes them out on the other side and shows them the way to the open downs and safety.

But some have gone down in the crush on this side; odd ones have been bogged as they climbed the bank on the other side,

after one hundred or more have made it soft and spewy. But the main fact is they have got out to safety.

The work continues. Little mobs are rounded up in boggy places and forced into some fork in the channels. They are pushed into the flood. Men tumble in after them, swim with them, steer them out to the other bank, aid them to their feet when they are held in clinging mud. One mob, in a maze of channels, huddled under trees on the highest spot of an island, have been left to take their chance. More than half of them would have gone down in the heavy going had the men tried to drive them; a number would have been lost in the many swims. The day is not long enough to attend to other and more urgent matters.

"It's a good job we haven't got to deal with rams," Brown remarks, trying to keep conversation alive and look on the brighter side of life.

"I thought them old blokes was good to handle," Bill grunts.

"So they are," Brown agrees. "Rams have got brains. But they're that heavy in th' head they can't swim. At least," he corrects himself, "I never saw a mob that could."

"It's th' weight of horns as does it, I suppose," Bill agrees.

"It looks like it," Brown continues. "I never saw one which could do more than half a dozen strokes. After that their heads go down, their rumps go up. Once they get the wool on the head wet that adds to the weight."

"It's a good job there ain't no rams here, Boss," Jack agrees. "We're havin' enough trouble with these ewes. I suppose you know there's another mob of about a hundred just over that channel," he adds drily, pointing to the sheep bunched together.

THE work continues. So does the rain. Luckily Brown finds a sandalwood tree about midday. Jack and Bill sceptically watch him splutter half a dozen matches until he gets one to break into flame. Though they pretend to take it as a matter of course, they each secretly marvel at that wood burning when water-logged. Each of the men decides to make a mental note of it for future use. They boil their quarts. The hot tea and sodden sandwiches put a new joy of life in them. They even manage to make smokes. Then they turn for the journey home.

The rain continues. That matters little: practically all sheep are safe. With outside channels running there is no danger of their returning to flooded areas.

The men are weary. The horses draw their hooves from the mud which kisses them as it sucks. They know they are going home. They gain courage from that knowledge. The dogs frisk on ahead, fresh as when they started. And an old crow swishes the air with heavy sweeps a cheery farewell through a break in the clouds.

Sydenham Sanctuary for Vanishing Basalt Flowers

(A Peerless Orchid is Saved)

By J. H. WILLIS, B.Sc.

IN the long grass on the Keilor plains and near Sunshine (Vic.) this very fragrant species (*Diuris alba*) was at one time exceedingly plentiful, but is now becoming scarce." So wrote Victoria's orchid authority, the late W. H. Nicholls, in 1934 ("Sun Nature Book," No. 5). Older observers had described the White *Diuris* as occurring "like patches of snow" on the paddocks just west of Footscray. No Victorian orchid is more beautiful: the large delicately scented flowers, about two inches from tip to tip, have paired white petals directed upwards, deflexed greenish sepals like two long tails, and a central spade-shaped lip streaked or spotted with mauve.

It was a curious twist of circumstance that restricted this lovely flower to the basaltic plains near Melbourne and placed it right in the path of future industrial expansion. Since 1934 more intensive grazing, rapidly developing factory areas and housing sites had whittled down its numbers, so that by 1950 the White *Diuris* was in dire peril of extinction; only two or three very small patches remained—along the ungrazed railway enclosures which were subject to periodic burnings by the Department.

Plant-lovers in the Victorian Field



No Victorian orchid is more beautiful than the White *Diuris* of Melbourne's nearer basalt region, where it is now extremely rare.



Yellow-green, fragrant fluffy flower-spikes of the "Pussy-tails"—a native relative to *Amaranthus*.

Naturalists Club were concerned about the impending fate of this and other rare basalt flowers, vanishing at an accelerated pace before the march of progress. What could be done to save them? The answer was provided by Miss Winifred Waddell, founder and secretary of the Native Plants Preservation Group within that Club, who insisted on a stock and rabbit-proof enclosure of sufficient size. Exploring every avenue by which this objective might be achieved, she was fortunate to awaken sympathetic interest in the Postmaster-General's Department, and Director-General G. T. Chippindall set apart an area of about two acres adjoining the A.B.C. wireless station at Sydenham. More than that, the postal authorities fenced the area with wire-netting, removed some of the larger weeds and provided labour to help re-stock the plot with sods of native vegetation taken from nearby permanent ways.

It is the aim of the Native Plants Preservation Group to establish all over Victoria small enclosures of undisturbed vegetation. Beside the obvious function of protecting rare wildflowers, these sanctuaries will serve to show future generations something of the original countryside "as nature made it." In most instances it is merely necessary to make a selected piece of the roadside or bushland proof against rabbits and leave nature to do the rest; but the Melbourne basalt plains are exceptional, demanding much more than this. Here was a natural grassland, almost treeless from the beginning and heavily grazed for a century or longer. Those native plants that had survived were exposed to ever-increasing competition from aggressive introduced weeds—cardoon, capeweed, flatweed, thistles, wild sage,

boxthorn, plantains, clovers and other rank invaders. Any enclosure would involve some cleaning up of wood growth and replanting with native subjects, before it could be considered representative of the original flora.

Undoubtedly the railway reserves—last refuge for indigenous plants in settled or agricultural areas—still contain the richest variety of flowers peculiar to these black-soil plains west of Melbourne. They could be made into excellent sanctuaries but for the necessity of persistent firing. An occasional fire does little actual harm to native plants, which are mostly deep-rooted perennials or of resurgent bulbous type, fitted by nature to withstand harsh, arid conditions; but each successive burn tends to favour the quickly spreading weed rather than the slower native, and that is why a railway sanctuary was deemed unsatisfactory—the last decade has shown a very marked deterioration of plant cover along the Ballarat and Bendigo lines out from Melbourne.

Several naturalists with local experience, including Messrs W. H. Nicholls and D. Matthews, of Footscray, visited the proposed sanctuary area at Sydenham and made a careful selection from the land available. A site was chosen, having natural drainage pattern and plenty of surface rock; it had been eaten almost bare and was quite indistinguishable from the surrounding terrain, but it had potentialities for good growth. A quick survey in April 1950, before the fence was up, revealed thirty different native plants and seventeen kinds of weed. Then the area was netted in and Miss Waddell proceeded at once with the organization of working bees to remove weeds and replace them



Golden Billy-buttons en masse.

with native herbage—often through the winter of 1950 she was the only “bee” who turned up at the plot! Special attention was given to the White Diuris, of which several large clumps were moved in, with ample depth of soil, from the railway near Tottenham; fifty-five other species typical of the region were also added to the sanctuary, including Red Gum and Murray Pine, which were original (if scattered) trees on the basalt plain.

That was a year ago, and it is time to appraise the results of this venture. The plot now stands in striking contrast against a background of virtually bare land outside its fence. Tall grasses are abundant, e.g. wallaby, kangaroo, silky blue and plump spear grasses. The White Diuris orchids flowered magnificently during late spring and are shooting up in strength again this winter. A most pleasing feature is the way in which thirty other native plants, not noted on the first census, have come up in the reserve as a response to protection from browsing animals—adder’s-tongue, saltbushes, pussy-tails and daisies among them.

It is fortunate that so many ferocious weeds of the basalt, like *Cynara*, *Centaurea*, *Salvia*, *Diplotaxis* and *Foeniculum*, are absent from Sydenham wireless station. Big thistles of several kinds, though present, are comparatively easy to eradicate. The two worst offenders are Buck’s-horn Plantain and Subterranean Clover. A ceaseless war has been waged on rosettes of the plantain, and it is encouraging to find a native burr-daisy (*Calotis scapigera*—also a rosette-former and vigorously stoloniferous) beginning to occupy soil from which this alien pest has been removed. Clover presents a difficult problem, its very numerous long-lived seeds germinating constantly from cracks in the heavy clay soil. Probably the sanctuary

will never be made entirely weedless, but it is important to hold the aliens in check until native plants can come into their own again, as they usually do when given a chance. A native pea (*Psoralea tenax*) and the indigenous “caustic-weed” (*Euphorbia Drummondii*) are spreading rapidly over earth long bare of herbage.

The transformation in just twelve months is astounding and patently demonstrates the wisdom of making such enclosures before it is too late. With another year’s planting ahead, the tally of species on this two-acre plot should approach 200, and there will not be a season when some plant is not in bloom—on March 24th last we found twenty-nine species still flowering attractively, after a long dry summer.

The basalt community—of small tussocks, rosette herbs, bulbous plants, tiny ephemerals and very low shrublets—can hardly be described as spectacular. Those large impressive Australian myrtle, protead and heath families find no place there, grasses and little composites predominating instead. Yet it is fascinating, and most colourful in season are the sheets of gold or white daisy-flowers, the masses of blue-bell and flesh-pink convolvulus. Miss Waddell, and the postal authorities who came to her aid, must be complimented upon the Sydenham project. They have made a distinct contribution to science by arresting the disappearance of plant species, none more rare or worthwhile saving than the beautiful White Diuris. And let those who may visit this sanctuary walk with circumspection, heeding Miss Waddell’s counsel: “This tiny area is no more there to be trampled on than is any other garden” (*Vict. Nat.* 66: 90, Sept. 1949).

(Note.—Photographs of basalt flowers were taken by Mr. H. T. Reeves inside the Sydenham Sanctuary.)

MINING FOR MICA (NORTHERN TERRITORY)

By MARY HOLYOAKE

IN Central Australia, about eighty miles north-east of Alice Springs, lie the Harts Ranges. The way to them is along rough red roads winding through the green-grey spinifex and white ghost gums. From a distance these flat-topped ranges look deep purple, but in reality they are of the same red-ochre colour as the rest of the “dead heart.”

In them are the best mica mines in Australia, and scattered in clusters around the mines are the tents of the miners. They are covered over with leaves and limbs of trees to keep out the deadening heat. There is a large communal mess to every camp, which is gauzed-in as a protection against the flies, and has all the mod. cons. that are possible for this part of the world—including refrigerators. Here the miners, who are mostly Italians, have their meals and enjoy their rest periods in comfort. These Italians have been working in the mica mines of Central Australia for about twenty-five years or more, and were originally encouraged and financed by a large processing firm in Adelaide. During the war some were interned, but many of them were released to go back to the mines. To-day the mines are owned and worked, with only one or two exceptions, by the Italians, and although companies have been formed from time to time, they have not been successful, and the system of one or two men owning and working a mine has proved to be the best method. No wages men are employed, but men often work in partnership. Mines worked by a company were found to lack the skilled direction needed for mica mining, and the amount of mica produced was not enough to satisfy overseas demands. At present there is a big call from overseas for Australian mica. It is considered superior in quality to Indian mica, which has always been of high standard.

Mica mining in Australia developed greatly during the war, when the Department of Supply took it over. The best fields were found to be in the Harts Ranges and in Yinnietharra in Western Australia. The former field, embracing the Plenty River field, runs along the Harts Ranges for about one hundred and fifty miles, and is reputed to be the largest mica field in the world. It is two thousand square miles in area. The Government acquired all the mica on the field in 1941, and from then on purchased the total output at prices fixed by the Commonwealth Prices Branch. More miners were encouraged to come out, and roads were constructed to all mines that had any possibility of development. Better mining equipment was hurried to the

scene of action and hired out at a rental, and conditions generally were greatly improved. So much so, in fact, that a hundred or more miners settled there with their wives and families. The effects of these improved conditions are apparent on the fields to-day, and the development of the industry owes a tremendous amount to the Government's interest and direction during those war years. Unfortunately, however, concessions were withdrawn in 1949, and the population now is about forty-five men with production down to about half that of war time.

The reason why the Government did all this was because it *had* to have more mica, and have it quickly. During the war this mineral was an indispensable part of the war machine, as it was necessary for radar, condensers, commutators and radio valves and for use in all electrically controlled appliances as well as in assembly plants. And in addition to defence, the reticulation of electric power and energy to industry in city and country areas demands that more and more mica be produced.

THE word "mica" is applied to a group of minerals that are usually found in the form of thick flakes or leaves with glistening faces. Mica crystals form in sizes ranging from the microscopic to two or

three feet across and a foot or more in thickness. The larger crystals are known as "books," because they can be split into plates or sheets like the leaves of a book.

The best quality muscovite mica is usually a ruby, brown or green colour. There are many members in the mica group of minerals, and most of them have some commercial use. Muscovite, which is known as electrical mica, is obtained from rocks called pegmatites; these rocks contain crystals of mica large enough to yield useful sheets. The texture of the rock is so coarse that individual masses of quartz or felspar may amount to many tons. Both beryl and garnet are sometimes found scattered through the pegmatite and may occur embedded in crystals of mica, spoiling part of the "book." Tourmaline also has this habit and sometimes forms slender needles enclosed in the mica. But mica is not evenly scattered throughout this pegmatite, but is found in areas called pockets; sometimes streaks of mica are found along a wall of pegmatite, leading to these pockets. Work so far is confined to shallow depths, usually nothing deeper than one hundred and twenty feet, but the deeper one goes the better the mica.

After being mined, the rough mica comes up in the form of "books" ranging in size from about three inches to three

feet across. Shattered, badly warped mica is discarded, and adhering fragments of rock are broken from the edges of the books, which are then ready for splitting into sheets about one-sixteenth of an inch thick. This process is called rifting and is done with a strong knife with a dulled point. After that comes the trimming, the object of which is to remove the ragged and tangled edges from the sheets and to cut out areas containing cracks or metallic streaks. Finally comes the cleaning and packing. Block mica is packed in cases tightly packed to prevent it from slipping and being broken or scratched.

From Alice Springs the mica is sent by train to Melbourne, where it is stored in the mica store in a Beckett Street. From there it is sent to different processing firms, who select it and then fashion it in its rough state into dimensions suitable for manufacture. This is a highly specialized job and requires great skill. It is sold, according to its quality, at prices varying from 1/3 per pound to £9 per pound.

AN interesting fact about this valuable mineral is that, although nearly every one of its qualities is surpassed in some other substance, no other single material combines so many valuable features. It is to this combination, rather than to any single property, that mica owes its importance. The thicker plates of mica are tough and flexible as well as transparent, and are firm enough to be able to support heating elements and the filaments of radio valves. Mica is chemically stable and is not easily affected by oil, water or acid solutions, and can be heated to a dull red heat with no ill effect. On the other hand, it is soft enough to be easily machined, and is not brittle, like glass or porcelain. Since the war there has been a heavy demand for low quality mica for domestic appliances, such as irons, toasters and so on, and manufacturers have had to import a considerable amount from other countries, notably India.

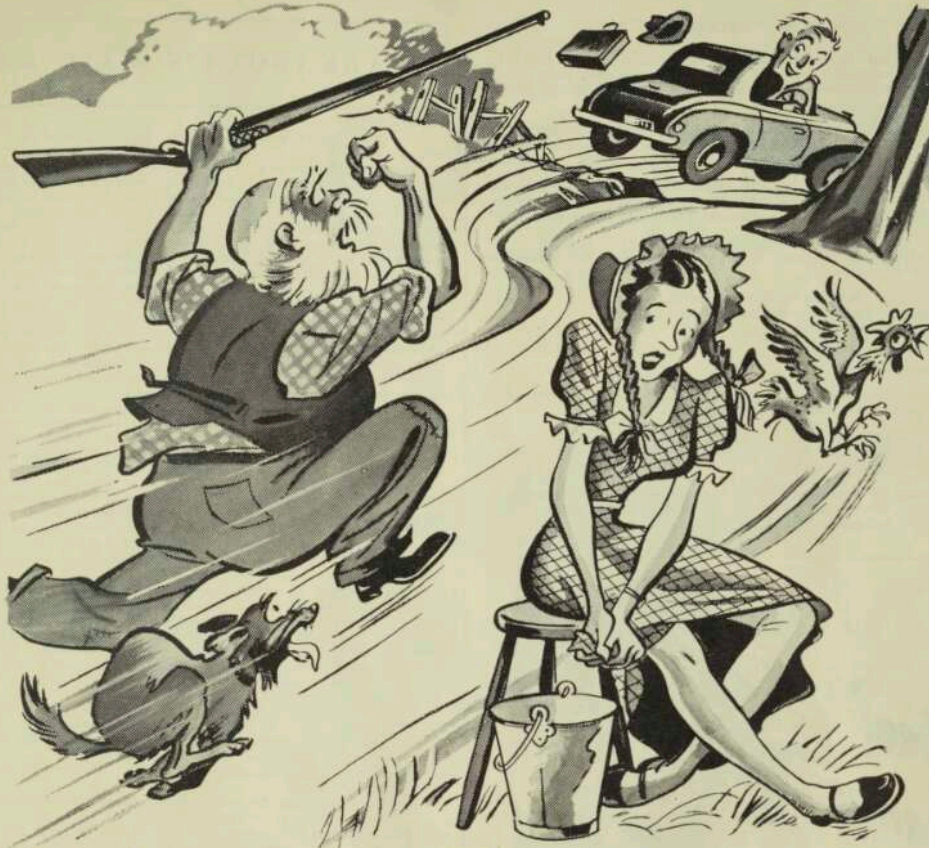
We import more mica than we produce, and during the last war we imported roughly a quantity of the value of a quarter of a million pounds, Australian money. What we need is more mica.

Some of the mica miners are leaving the field for the Wolfram fields as Wolfram is a very high price at present and the present price of mica is not payable unless you have an extremely good show. Although the price of everything here has increased considerably of late, the price of mica has not been raised for some time.

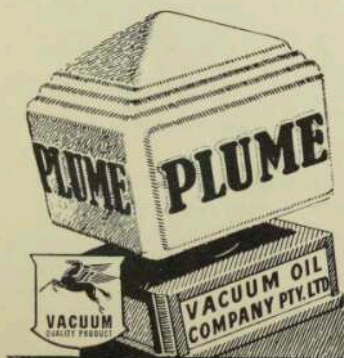
The mining of this mineral has a tremendous future if expertly handled, and an attempt at mass production would receive every encouragement from the Government. In these uncertain times the production of mica is especially important for defence purposes, which makes it all the more imperative that as much be obtained as possible.



Splitting mica "books" with a knife—a highly specialized job. This particular "book" is worth £1,000.



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The Australian National Publicity Association, which publishes "Walkabout," has maintained the price at 1/6 per copy since April, 1947, but greatly increased costs make it obligatory to charge 2/- a copy as from this issue.

The magazine is not published for private gain and any profits which accrue are devoted to advertising Australia overseas, and, occasionally, to assisting the work of The Australian Geographical Society.

The publishers feel sure that the increased price will not affect the popularity of the journal, and that the present demand for 34,000 copies monthly will continue. To date close on 5,000,000 copies have been sold.

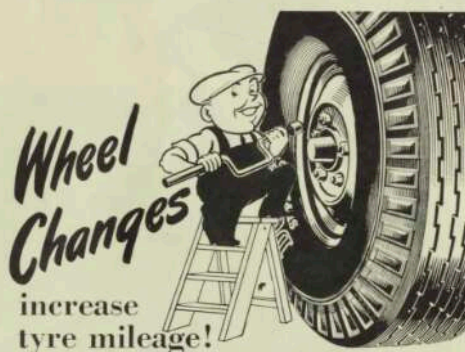
Details of subscription rates, as from and including the September issue, are as follows:—

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Other Empire Countries	£1/9/-
Foreign Countries	£1/13/-

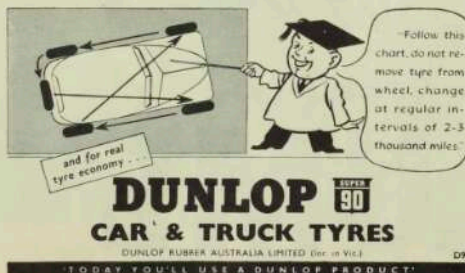
Current subscriptions will be continued at the present rate until expiry, when the new rates will operate.

Overseas subscription rates, which include increased postal rates, are quoted in Australian currency. Overseas subscribers paying by cheque should add 1/- to cover exchange.

Applications for subscriptions should be addressed to the Subscription Department, "Walkabout", Railway Building, Flinders Street, Melbourne, or 33 Macquarie Place, Sydney.



Tyre tread wear varies according to type of vehicle and operating conditions. On most trucks and buses for instance, the wear would be on tyres carrying the load, i.e. the rear tyres. On cars with modern suspension and braking systems the wear is on front tyres. Also there is a difference in wear between near-side tyres and off-side tyres. That is why wheels should be changed around every 2,000 to 3,000 miles, so that wear can be evenly spread over each tyre—including the spare wheel. This will cut down unequal tread wear—increasing over-all tyre mileage.



WALKABOUT'S MAIL BAG

PLANNING MORE AND BETTER HOTELS

Sir,

Over a number of years I have experienced hotels in some twenty-five countries and feel safe in expressing the opinion that on the average those of Australia are amongst the worst to be found anywhere. I refer particularly to the accommodation aspect, which usually concerns the Australian traveller and overseas visitor to a greater degree than does that of the appalling drinking conditions. Upon the whys and the wherefores, such as "tied houses" with Brewery Monopoly and a majority of Lessees or Managers who have little general hotelier experience or interest I do not propose to dwell in this letter. I do, however, briefly suggest that within these two points lies the majority of the trouble. In countries where the hotels are privately controlled and the owner or manager has vision beyond the bar, the resident guest does receive consideration and departs in a happy mood. During five or six years of using hotels fairly continually in Australia, I find that practically every casual conversation among guests turns upon the unsatisfactory state and service in these institutions.

The Australian National Publicity Association and other interests are trying to sell Australia to overseas visitors, whose money—particularly dollars—would be a welcome asset to Australia. As has so often been said, you do not have continually to produce goods, such as wool, butter or manufactured articles to get their money. What the tourist wants—scenery, sunshine, beaches, etc.—are always there and he brings his money to this country solely to see and enjoy what nature has given us as a permanent asset. But some consideration is due to this tourist, and he at least wants hotels somewhere near the standard he can enjoy in his own and other countries. Unless we bring this about, efforts by the Australian National Publicity Association, etc., are likely to be largely abortive.

I am prompted to submit this letter to the editor of *Walkabout* as the result of a recent tour of almost three months through the length and breadth of New Zealand. There I found hotel accommodation and service of a standard far superior to that provided in Australia, despite their 40-hour week and labour conditions akin to our own. This applied in rural centres as well as in the large cities and meant that a visitor had little or no complaint about his hotel and left New Zealand as a good advertising medium for that country.

Some aspects of New Zealand hotels in the above connection are:—

- An office adequately manned at all reasonable hours; a friendly greeting; a porter to escort one with luggage to the room; and a genial "mine host" atmosphere.
- Quiet, polite and efficient service by suitably dressed maids in dining rooms.
- Early morning tea and usually a newspaper provided; individual teapots at breakfast.
- Bedrooms and public rooms, generally of good size.
- Bedrooms, public rooms, and corridors having wall-to-wall carpets and good lighting.
- Bedrooms have beside reading lamps in most cases and running water as a general practice.
- Bathrooms, showers and lavatories are kept clean and provided with ample hooks.
- The dining and other public rooms are well equipped with lighting and adequately heated during cold weather.
- The writing rooms (still unfortunately tabbed "Commercial Room" in Australia) have ample tables or desks with lighting which does not drive one to the oculist.
- Ample bedclothes are available, and a blanket is provided between the lower sheet and the mattress.

It will, I think, be agreed by most frequenters of Australian hotels that few of these amenities are provided here, except at some of the main hotels. They are what one would expect as a minimum in leading hotels and certainly what are generally found abroad.

The comforts provided in New Zealand seem to be appreciated by the guests and one finds little rowdiness or vandalism—a discouraging factor occurring only too freely in our country.

Nevertheless there is no doubt that if we are to take the tourist business seriously, both for overseas visitors and residents of Australia, some steps will have to be taken to bring our hotels to, and see that they are maintained at, a general standard far in advance of that which has to be suffered at present.

—T. P. Martin.

Sydney.

LAKE EYRE

Sir,

Readers of *Walkabout* may be interested in these notes on the present state of Lake Eyre following the articles on it last year ("A Lake Like an Inland Sea," "By Boat Down the Lower Cooper," November, 1950.)

Continued on page 41



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WALKABOUT'S MAIL BAG (Continued)

The highest level of water was reached late in 1950, at which time the water cover in Lake Eyre North extended completely to the shoreline as shown in maps. Inflow of water was maintained for a while at a gradually diminishing rate by Cooper's Creek, which ceased flowing in February, 1951. Meanwhile an exceptionally hot and dry summer caused evaporation to lower the water level, which had fallen four feet from the highest level by February, 1951, and had fallen a further two feet by the present time. It is not known how much of the total area is now covered, but while there is still adequate cover at the south-eastern corner it is surmised that the northern half is dry.

The salinity of the water has increased progressively. At high water the lake was little more salty than the sea. At present it is over three times as salty. The high salinity has resulted in the death of the larger fish, only a type of tiny, salt-resistant ones now surviving. Birds, such as seagulls and pelicans, still remain, but doubtless their number is smaller than formerly when fish were more plentiful.

In May I took a party to the southern end of Lake Eyre North to collect some meteorological information from which it is hoped a more accurate assessment of the rate of evaporation may be derived.

A series of continuous observations was made over seven days, and it is hoped that a similar one will be made in the coming summer. This work forms one aspect of a geographical study of Lake Eyre that is being made by a South Australian committee.

Only one foot of water remained in the bay where the party camped. A new flood is now coming down Cooper's Creek—for the third year in succession—but unless it contributes a considerable quantity of water to the lake, this bay will soon become dry. If there is no further flooding the remaining water will retreat to the deeper, inner parts of the southern end of Lake Eyre North before drying up entirely within perhaps twelve months.

—C. Warren Bonnython.

Adelaide, June 3rd, 1951.

ANTARCTIC NOTES

The Antarctic Division of the Department of External Affairs reports that personnel at Heard and Macquarie Islands were recently changed over and that the new parties have settled down to twelve months' stay at the islands. This year considerable difficulties were encountered in relieving the Island Stations. *H.M.A.L.S.T. Labuan*, while carrying out her fourth successive annual voyage to Heard Island, experienced prolonged conditions of storm, head winds and high seas on the way to the island and suffered considerable damage.

Fortunately a spell of calm weather on the return trip enabled the ship to reach Fremantle safely, although she had to be towed for the last 100 miles. The condition of the ship made it apparent that she would never again be able to undertake voyages under the severe conditions which normally exist south of 40° latitude.

The withdrawal of the *Labuan* made it necessary for the Antarctic Division to find at short notice a ship capable of relieving Macquarie Island, where the 1950 party was anxiously waiting to return to Australia. The Australian Shipping Board made available *s.s. River Fitzroy*, and with this ship the relief of Macquarie Island was successfully carried out. The *River Fitzroy*, of 8,400 tons displacement, is by far the largest ship ever to visit Macquarie Island.

The Macquarie Island trip was made in May when, owing to the onset of winter and the short hours of daylight, the operations were more than usually hazardous. When attempting to land supplies at Lusitania Bay, an amphibious duke was wrecked on the rocky beach and Expedition men spent a cold night ashore before being picked up by a surf whaleboat next morning.

Reports from Adelie Land indicate that the scientific programme of the French Antarctic Expedition is proceeding satisfactorily and the Australian Observer, Dr. F. Loewe, is thoroughly enjoying the life at this southern base.

Plans for Australia's new Antarctic ship are being drawn up, and it is hoped that construction might commence early next year.

CORRECTION

Owing to a typographical error which occurred in *Walkabout* office, a Mail Bag item published in May, 1951, issue states—"the *Speke* was lost on February 22nd, 1940." This should have read "1904."

GRAZING IN NATIONAL PARKS

Sir,
I was most interested to see Mr Sewell's letter on this subject in your April issue and I endorse most strongly his statement that sheep and cattle are most destructive of native flora. I have already provided evidence of this through the columns of *Walkabout's* mail bag.

Having recently returned from another visit to Mt. Buffalo, I am distressed at the continuance of grazing on that plateau, in spite of the fact that the regulations of the Committee of Management, prominently displayed in this national sanctuary for flora and fauna, read to the effect that no person shall bring into the National Park or allow to wander therein any horse, sheep, cattle, etc.

Continued on page 44

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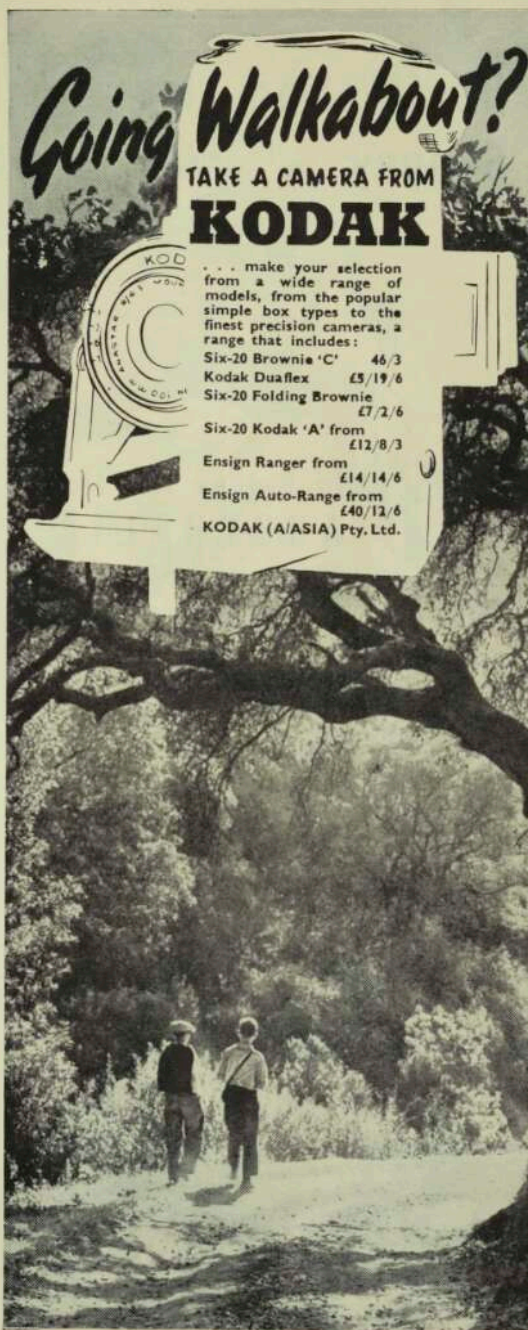
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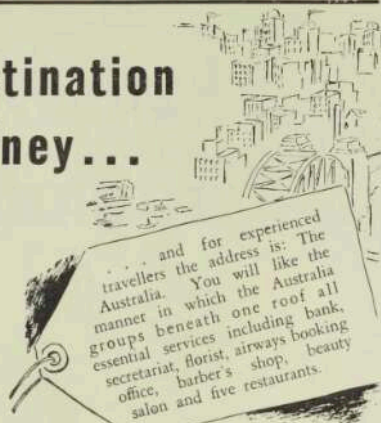
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WALKABOUT'S MAIL BAG (Continued)

Upon making inquiries from the managing body I have been given their reason for this anomaly. Apparently the National Park is actually leased to one reputable scrub cattle dealer for the amazing sum of £80 per annum in the hope of preventing otherwise illegal trespass of stock! Such is the counsel of despair!

Besides any direct damage the cattle may do, the secondary effects have been more evil. It seems that wherever there is a grazing licence in a national park, by a damning coincidence, fires occur. (See Stretton Report, Forest Grazing, 1946.) The evidence of fire on the Mt Buffalo plateau is obvious and tragic, as even the short mile walk between the Chalet and Lake Catani reveals. (Even the bridge built by Catani was burnt.) Other national parks have suffered too.

Time for reform is overdue. How long is this tragic destruction of our own and posterity's heritage to be allowed to continue through ignorance and official inertia?

—A. G. Campbell.

HEARD ISLAND

IT is possible that some who read the most interesting description by Captain J. K. Davis in "Early Visitors to Heard Island" had ancestors who had landed and worked on the island before the visit of Captain Rogers in 1860. Indeed, by the law of chance one or more of their descendants may have been members of the company of H.M.A.S. *Australia* on her recent mission.

What follows is the story of an expedition which left Hobart Town in 1857 to take sea elephant and whale oil from Kerguelen and Heard Islands and the Southern Ocean. The outline of the narrative was written in 1908 by my father, E. L. Crowther, M.D., when recovering from an illness. Other details were given me in 1927 by Captain J. H. Harrison, who had served as an apprentice on the *Offley* at the time, and was then aged 85, while others are taken from contemporary newspaper reports.

My father was a boy of sixteen when the ship returned to Hobart Town, and he had constant association with the masters of his father's ships. He made two voyages at least in them, once to New Zealand in the *Isabella* and another to Port Phillip in the *Offley*, and so from the viewpoint of both owner and master, knew of these happenings at first hand. Here then is his narrative.

The late W.L.C. (W. L. Crowther, F.R.C.S.) noticed in the papers that a ship, when becalmed off Herds Island some 300 miles past Kerguelen Land, was boarded by an American whaler. One of the crew was ill and they wanted to get him away, so the ship took him on with her and landed him in Melbourne. He related a most interesting series of facts.

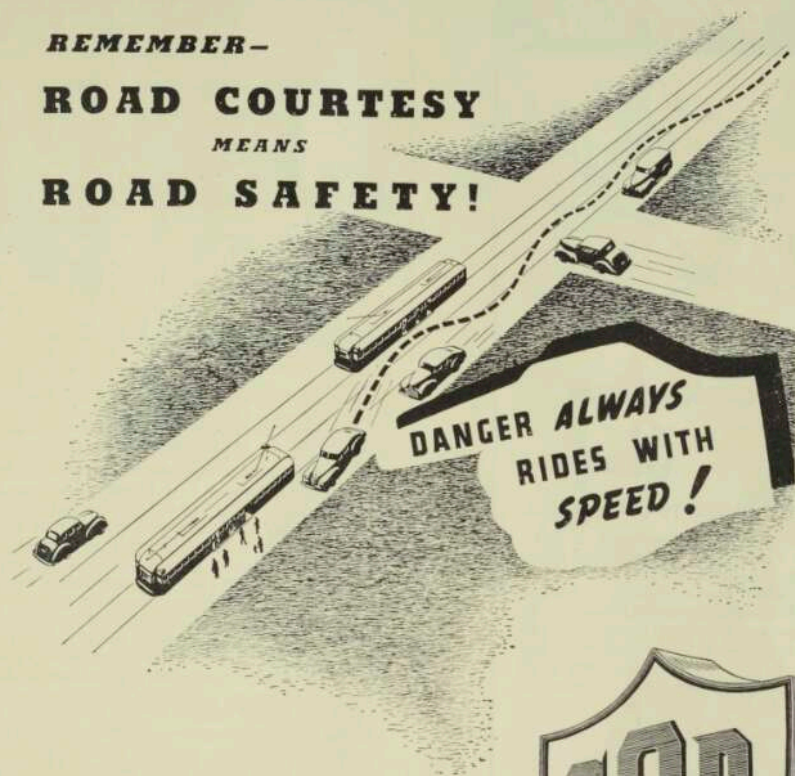
For some time the Americans had had the whole of the important and lucrative trade in sea elephant oil to themselves. Herds Island is an open roadstead, and only small vessels with very heavy moorings can hang it out there, and that only for a very short time; hence all the whalers work in pairs, a big ordinary whaler and a smaller one as tender to the big ship. The smaller lands her crew, kills, skins and cuts up the blubber of the sea elephants, which swarm on the Island, puts the same in casks, rafts it off to the tender, and when full makes for Christmas Harbour in Kerguelen Land. There she fills the big ship, which has been whaling round Kerguelen Land for Right Whales, when she makes for home and is followed by the tender, which has gone back to get her load.

W.L.C. got in touch with the sick man (he actually brought him to Hobart Town for the purpose) and, when he had got all possible information, called in two of his whalers, the *Offley* and *Elizabeth Jane*, and at once fitted them out regardless of expense. When ready for sea his instructions were: the *Offley* to whale and make for Christmas Harbour; if there before the schooner, wait for her to go on to Herds Island in company. There land the crew and whale round Desolation Land, till the tender fills up, then take in the blubber, wait for the *Elizabeth Jane* to fill and thus return home. The *Offley*, whaling on her way, reached her destination without hitch. The *Elizabeth Jane* got within 300 miles of the Island, but, as she was leaking a little, the crew refused to go further, so she turned tail and ran back to Mauritius, where she was condemned and sold. This is what they say almost invariably happens there, condemned the ship is certain to be . . . for many years after she was carrying cattle between Madagascar and Mauritius.

A long time passed before Captain Jacobs of the *Elizabeth Jane* was able to get this bad news to my father. He immediately bought the *Flying Squirrel* and at great expense fitted her out and got her away. My father decided, owing to the prevailing westerly gales, to send the *Flying Squirrel* to the Kerguelens, east about, that is by way of Cape Horn. The crew, however, got tired of it long before they got to Desola-

Continued on page 46

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Continued from page 44

tion Land (a seamen's name for the Kerguelens), mutinied and bore up for Valparaiso. There she sold her stores and made her way leisurely home. Captain Robinson of the *Offley* was now at his wits' end. He landed some of his crew and killed a number of sea elephants, but as his ship could not stay there, it was almost impossible to get the blubber off, so he reluctantly decided to give it up and whale home. Strangely enough, his troubles were overcome in this way. The *Mary Powell*, an American schooner, was in Christmas Harbour waiting for her consort, who never came. The *Offley* and she mated and landed their crews on Herds Island, got in casks and then loaded on to the *Mary Powell* 400 tons of blubber.

She was starting for Christmas Harbour when, through the cable not being fastened at the end, it ran out, and before anything could be done she was on shore under ice cliffs considerably higher than her top mast. But for the bravery of one young active American sailor they had all lost their lives. He took a lance warp and got out on the yard arm. When she rolled into the cliffs he jumped, held on, and with a tomahawk he cut his way to the top. When he had reached there he passed his lance warp out and hauled the lightest man up. Then these two got the next heaviest, and so on till all were rescued. They had much privation. Many lost toes, and some fingers, with frostbite, but eventually all were rescued by the *Offley*. 48,000 worth of blubber and two vessels were gone.

When the *Offley* turned up at Hobart Town she had with her 100 tons of sea elephant and other oil, the loss on the trip being over £5,000. One cask of this blubber was picked up many years after by the *Flying Childers*, and was hers by right. It was found off the Chatham Islands and had drifted 4,000 miles. Captain Robinson had his wife with him on the *Offley*; she had a son while there, born on the ship and named Kerguelen. He afterwards died of thirst when prospecting in Western Australia.

A sad sequel to the voyage was that the injured men brought an action against my father for the injuries, mostly frostbite, that they had sustained. He was exonerated as it was proved that he done everything in his power to provide for the safety of his ships and crew.

It is fitting now to consider the part played by Melbourne in this strange enterprise. At Hobart Town no difficulties were experienced in fitting out the whaler and its tender. It would be an everyday affair in a port that at that time had probably forty such vessels based on it. The whaling crews, too, with their pay spent, would be only too ready to accept a few pounds in advance on their "lay" for the coming voyage and sign on for the venture. There was, however, some difficulty in regard to the shore party, but, in response to advertisements in the Melbourne Press, a number of men crossed to Tasmania and joined the expedition for the required period of eighteen months. These formalities concluded, the *Elizabeth Jane*, laden with tools, frame houses and other necessities, on June 10, 1858, cleared for Heard Island. Within a month the *Offley* followed, whaling as she proceeded on her westerly course. At the outset disaster was narrowly averted. Off the Tasmanian coast three boats were lowered and made fast to a very large whale, which dashed off to windward at a tremendous rate. The boats hung on till one a.m., when it was decided to cut and return to the ship. The ship was reached only when the Captain had given up hope of his men's safety.

In late October the ship came to its destination. Captain Harrison has recorded his impressions of the landfall:

Nearing Heard's Island, in squally weather, as we looked we could see the coastline and intervening what was evidently a long reef. At the same time there broke upon our ears a continuous and mighty bellowing. It partook of the magnitude and volume of distant thunder, and it came over to us driving from leeward, rising above the crash of the surf and travelling directly in the teeth of the gale. As we passed the point, Fairchild's Beach burst on our view, a half moon of white sand upon which broke a huge surf and which was covered with myriads of sea elephants and seals. It was from these that the giant bellowing went up.

With five anchors down, the ship found herself in company with several American sealing vessels, but of the *Elizabeth Jane*, then over five months out, there was of course no sign.

Losing no time the shore party was landed on October 29, 1858. This is how one of them described his experience on his return to Hobart Town (*Hobart Town Advertiser*, 18/2/1860):

We were all ordered on shore on an island covered with ice and snow and without any shelter or covering for our heads or bodies and amid the most intense and bitter cold with snow dropping, having no fuel to make a fire to warm our numbed and frost-bitten limbs. At length we succeeded in finding along the beach some old portions of a wreck with which we managed to erect a place sufficiently large for us to crawl into. We were fully two days in erecting the few poles and a sail over them which was

Continued on page 48



PHILLIP PARKER KING

Captain Phillip Parker King, a son of Governor King, was sent from England in 1817 to complete the exploration of the north-western coast of Australia.

On arrival in Sydney, he was given command of the cutter "Mermaid", and sailing by way of Bass Strait to North West Cape, commenced his survey along the coast towards Arnhem Land.

During his four voyages off the northern and north-western coasts, King named Port Essington and Buccaneer's Archipelago (after Dampier), proved the insularity of Melville Island and charted the coastline. He also sailed up the west coast from Rottneet Island to Cygnet Bay and surveyed the entrance to Macquarie Harbour, Tasmania.

On the occasion of the Jubilee of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Bank of New South Wales — Australia's pioneer bank, established in 1817 — honours the explorers who opened the way for the development of this great country.



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Continued from page 46

our home—in this place, you will hardly credit it, we had to exist for upwards of six months... our fireplace was tussocks of ground and our fuel consisted of elephant blubber and penguin skins, for we could get no other.

From this habitation they emerged day by day at 4 a.m. to travel over rocks, snow and sand to the beach to kill, flense and cut up the sea elephants at the rookery, returning at 4 p.m. to their miserable abode for the second meal of the day. During a considerable period of their stay the party of seventeen had to share their rations with the Americans and for the last month eke them out with "wild" penguins, sea elephants' tongues and "wild cabbage." For this last they had to dig five or six feet in the snow. After the loss of the *Mary Powell* the shore party were carried by American ships to Christmas Harbour and rejoined the *Officer*. During their absence a party from the ship had been sent by whale-boat to procure eggs from the penguin rookery. This entailed a pull of over twelve miles and the crossing of rough snowy country. Having obtained a thousand eggs, the party commenced to return by water against adverse winds and heavy seas. After pulling six miles the boat was driven back, filled, and was abandoned. An attempt to cross the mountain failed, and the frozen, soaked men took shelter in a hut. For some days before their rescue they sucked the blood from the heads of albatrosses for sustenance, and when found all were in some degree frostbitten. One, Williams, lost both hands and several of his toes. The narrator comments:

This poor unfortunate man may now be seen in this deplorable state at the Crown and Kettle public house, where, helpless and powerless for life, he remains to be seen, a warning and beacon to poor seamen against shipping on such voyages.

A live sea elephant he brought back with him was for a while to be seen at the same address and, it is hoped, while it lived provided a lucrative return to its unfortunate owner.

This sad tale of happenings of long ago was written from the Sailors' Rest at Hobart Town on February 15, 1860, under the signatures or marks of twenty-five of the crew, and concludes with these words:

Some of us, Sir, who were sent for from Melbourne by Dr Crowther, came over in the *City of Hobart* twenty-one months ago, upon the understanding that a pleasant voyage was before us, and a fortune awaiting us, and we joyfully left our wives and families, hoping to return with joyous hearts and full pockets to our homes in Melbourne again. But, Sir, what a fate is ours. Poor and miserable, distressed in mind, and injured in person, we are compelled to remain here, in the wretched plight in which we now appear before the public, and without one ray of hope in the distance or one cheering word of prosperity to meet our families again in that land from whence we came.

Ninety years later we may hope that they receive from "that land" the recognition they deserve as the first of our stock to join the Americans in the hazardous adventure at Heard Island.

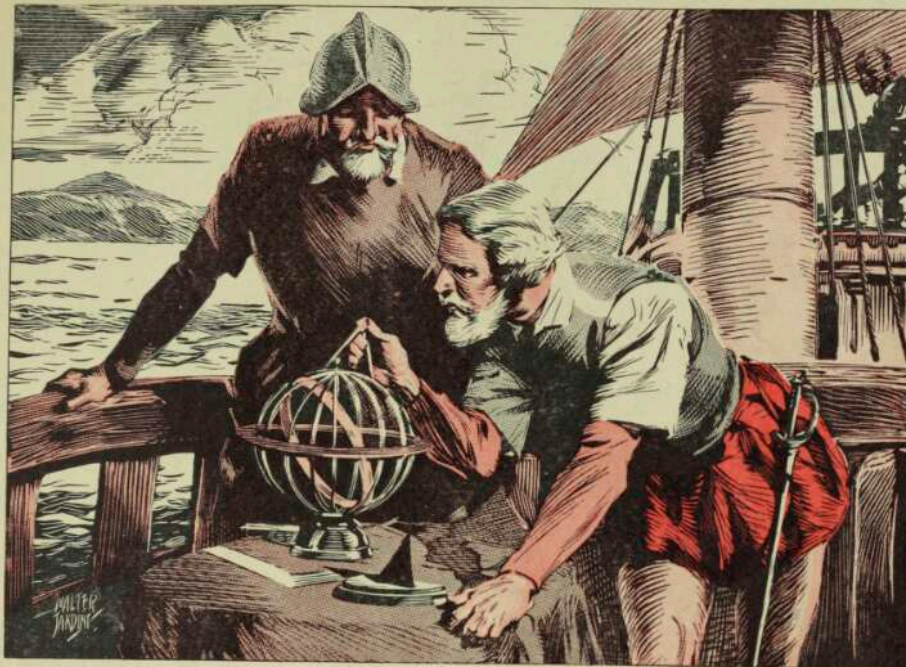
—W. L. Crowther.

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